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An analysis of the development of teacher belief constructs during teaching practice and in the novice year of teaching: A case study of English language teachers in the Malaysian context.

by

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Abstract

If you ask a group of people “What are the qualities of a good teacher?” they are more likely to say that a teacher must be knowledgeable, compassionate, firm and fair. If you ask the same group of people “How do we prepare teachers to have all those good qualities?” you are more likely to get as many suggestions as there are people in the group. We all seem to agree on the quality teacher we want but we are less in agreement about the ways in which we might achieve those objectives.

Over the years several models of teacher education have been suggested. These models testify to the continuous search for the best way to prepare teachers. There are varying viewpoints on whether teachers are better prepared if they spend more time in school so that their knowledge is acquired through practical means or whether teachers should receive sufficient knowledge on campus studies before they are let loose. What is sufficient theoretical and practical knowledge for the beginning teacher anyway? Do we know enough about how the participant on the teaching program makes sense of the knowledge acquired from the program when against his/her life experiences?

This study explores the process of learning to teach by eight young women on the B.Ed degree link program as they prepare themselves to become English language teachers for secondary schools in Malaysia. The study follows their progress as they make the transition to beginning teachers. Specifically, the study explores the construct of their beliefs about teaching and learning prior to teaching practice, during teaching practice and in the post-training situation. Discussion of the findings from this longitudinal study is followed by recommendations for improving the preservice program and the support for beginning teachers in the novice year of teaching.

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CHAPTER 1

Context of Research

1. 0 Introduction to Research

When I was given the opportunity to pursue my doctoral studies I was advised to choose a topic that would contribute new information to the existing body of knowledge in my area of specialism and more importantly to find a research problem that would sustain my interest for the duration of my study. I was also warned that if I didn't have a problem to research on then I really had a problem!! Being a teacher and a teacher educator I was quite confident that there would be a great number of researchable problems in teaching.

The research problem had existed at an implicitly unconscious level three years before I ever contemplated doing further studies. It was brought about by a conversation with several experienced teachers who had just completed a specialist program in TESL at the teaching college I was serving in. Part of the requirement of the course was that the in-service teachers would be placed in schools near to the teaching college for four weeks on teaching practice. I visited the teachers that were assigned to me in their classes, observed their practices and engaged in post lesson discussions with them. As I was a member of the team that was responsible for designing the syllabus and the curriculum for the program, I also wanted the teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the course from their perspective. So over several cups of coffee and several conversations with several very articulate teachers, I

gained an insight into the teachers' personal perspectives on the specialist program and how it impacted on them.

The teachers expressed satisfaction with the program and found that they had gained new ideas about teaching activities and strategies and had generated their own ideas as well. They expressed approval of working in collaboration with other teachers during the course and during teaching practice. So could they use some of the activities and strategies, they had learned on the course, as they did on teaching practice, in their own schools, in their own classes? With much hedging and hesitating and long explanations, the answer was No, they could not.

To be sure, I had not expected that the program had all the answers to all teaching and learning problems but the discrepancy between the teachers' approval of the program and their inability to transfer some of the aspects of the course they had evaluated told me that that this was more than a mismatch between program objectives and teacher needs. From their comments it was clear to me that they had made a conscious decision to try out as much as they could the 'new' strategies they learned on the program but only during the training. For a short time the teachers knew that they taught as they ought but by the end of the program, they were already prepared not to use what they had learned in their work place. Whether or not the program had effected any conceptual change, it had not impressed the teachers to change their mode of practice.

So the question I asked was why did the program only manage to achieve a short term impact on the teachers when surely the aim was for long term professional development? This was how I had visualised my research problem as an impact study on the input-output nexus. Initial discussions with my supervisors and subsequent library research enabled me to redefine the scope of my research problem. I was easily persuaded to move away from the input-output nexus for two main reasons:

firstly in education it is difficult to correlate teaching with learning; secondly, I was more interested in finding out the teachers' perspective on the situation rather than searching for ways to justify the program that I had helped to design.

I was confident that a study looking at the problems that beset teachers on a teaching program from the perspectives of the teachers themselves would provide insightful information. Having made the decision to involve the personal perspective of teachers, this study was developed on that premise.

From my conversations with the in-service teachers I was aware that the teachers had preconceived belief constructs in relation to their teaching context. Over the years of teaching, the teachers had developed personal theories about teaching and learning that were used as frame of reference to include or exclude new knowledge. The aim of my study was therefore to find out what presuppositions about teaching and learning were held by teachers (section 1.1 The Study). Since constructing beliefs is a behaviour that takes a period of time, the study was a longitudinal one. For reasons of logistics and practicality, a small group of eight preservice teachers learning to become English language teachers (section 1.2.2 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program) was taken as a case study. Originally, ten student teachers, two men and eight women, volunteered to be involved in the study but I was unable to locate the two men post training. Therefore I was left with eight women subjects.

I chose to study preservice student teachers following a link degree program (section 1.2.2 Link Teacher Education Projects) because of their unique experiences as student teachers. Due to the split nature of the degree program (section 1.2.2 B. Ed degree program), student teachers were able to observe experienced teachers teaching in different cultural settings. This experience enhanced their overall professional development. In addition, the study design was also developed to follow the critical phases of training (section 4.2 Research Design). Real insights would lie in what was happening to the student teachers as they progressed through the critical phases of

their program (section 5. 2 Phase 2: Interviews and Observations, section 5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews).

The investigation continued into the novice year of teaching where the eight women student teachers are now fully fledged teachers of English as a second language. The insights from their experiences as new teachers illuminate the problems that new teachers need to address in order to find their niche in the school subculture (section 5. 4 Phase 4: Interviews, chapter 6 Case Study Insights).

Belief constructs about teaching and learning, emerging from the critical phases of their training program and later in the novice year, were ascertained through the process of reflection. Since I was committed to engage my subjects in deliberating over their personal perspectives, the process of reflection was a medium that was available to gather the required information. To that end several research tools were identified that would serve the dual purposes of getting the relevant data for the investigation and of enabling subjects to dig deep into their inner thoughts about teaching and learning. These comprised questionnaires, interviews that were carried out using the stimulated recall technique, post lesson interviews and observations of classroom teaching (section 4. 2 Research Design).

My experience with the in-service teachers led me to explore possible causes for the low impact of the teaching program on the teachers from the teachers' perspective rather than from the program's perspective. Thus the focus of this investigation focused on how the subjects reflected on public theories of teaching in relation to their personal theories and what understanding they derived from the reflective processes at the critical phases of the training (section 2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach). Since in-service and preservice teaching programs for the preparation of English language teachers administered by the teaching colleges in Malaysia are committed to preparing reflective practitioners, it was important to the development and

implementation of future TESL teacher programs (and for other subject disciplines) that the investigation reveal the possible factors that prevented teachers from building or refining their personal theories through the reflective process.

The sections in this thesis reflect the major areas that were involved in exploring teacher beliefs and the constructs of those beliefs. There are eight chapters in total and within each chapter there are sections and subsections so that the information gathered through a period of three years is presented as coherently as possible.

Chapter 1 describes the context of the investigation from the personal and professional perspective. I discuss my personal and professional reasons for taking on the investigation from the perspectives of the subjects within the general context of teacher education. Specifically my investigation focused on a particular group of preservice teachers in the process of learning to become English language teachers for secondary schools in Malaysia. Information about the context of teacher education in Malaysia and the historical links it has with United Kingdom in the field of education are described in this chapter.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the models of teacher education on which teacher education programs have been modelled over the years, leading up to the current reflective model. The models were significant in that each highlights some aspects of the professional dilemma that we face in our search for the best way to prepare teachers for the profession.

An essential component of a teaching program is the practical training which gives opportunities for student teachers to operationalise acquired knowledge in the classroom. There are several approaches to teaching which are reflected in the fundamental philosophy that underlie teaching programs. Alongside the cognitive and

reflective approaches to teaching, I am presenting the constructivist approach to teaching as an alternative and important approach to preparing practitioners.

Chapter 3 presents explanations about the nature of teacher beliefs from the view point of clinical psychology. How beliefs are constructed, why they remained stable and how they influence the behaviour of the believers are explained in this chapter. Over the decade, many research studies have documented teacher beliefs as teachers progress through the different critical stages of their teaching career and the impact they appeared to have on teacher thinking and teacher development. The studies also reveal insightful data about beliefs derived from experiences prior to training, during training and post training.

Chapter 4 explains the relevance of using a qualitative research paradigm in this study. In order to understand the nature of teacher beliefs, this investigation was committed to explore the development of beliefs within the contextual framework of teaching and learning as experienced by the subjects of this study. Beliefs are arguably difficult to ascertain because they are held at an unconscious level in an individual. It was therefore necessary to identify several research methods that could elicit such well hidden information. Multiple research methods were useful as a means of triangulation and validation. Three primary methods – questionnaire, interviews and observations – were identified for the purpose of obtaining useful data that could provide real insights into teacher beliefs. The research design was developed in tandem with the stages of the teaching program. It was crucial to the investigation that at certain phases of the training, information was gathered; thus I made contact with student teachers during those important stages prior to teaching practice, during teaching practice and in the novice year of teaching.

Chapter 5 reports the findings gathered over the three year period of the investigation. The reporting has been structured according to the phase in which data was collected

and the methods that were used to obtain them. The findings in each phase are discussed and related to the issues that were investigated by this study. This chapter reports the collective findings of all eight student teachers. The analysis and discussion are based on the findings across the group; in this way emerging patterns of belief constructs of the student teachers as a group were identified.

Chapter 6 presents the results of the investigation as a case study. Four subjects have been selected for this purpose. Through individual cases, it is possible to scrutinise the development of teacher beliefs as each subject make her way through the teaching program and into the novice year. The findings reinforce the importance of understanding the personal development that each subject experienced in order to become a teacher. The experiences were unique and were significant to each person in different ways.

Chapter 7 discusses the findings within the scope of teacher belief constructs and teacher reflectivity. The nature of teacher beliefs and the formulation of beliefs are discussed in relation to information emerging from the subjects as they attempt to make sense of their experiences. Investigating teachers' personal constructs has provided important evidence which might inform the design of future programs for developing English teachers.

The recommendations in chapter 8 are presented in the form of assertions that might be considered by the various agencies involved in preparing teachers. The recommendations are made following a careful study of the data gathered over a period of three years thus tracing the development of subjects on a teaching course and as they step into their profession as a novice teacher. The multivariate nature of development experienced by each subject in this investigation illuminates significant aspects of the training program and the experiences in the beginning year of teaching.

1. 1 The Study

The general aim of this study is to explore the development of teacher beliefs in eight young women as they prepare to become teachers of English as a second language teachers for secondary schools in Malaysia.

Specifically, the study seeks:

1. to identify the nature of beliefs about teaching and learning held by student teachers prior to and during teaching practice
2. to ascertain the possible relationships between developing beliefs and classroom practices during teaching practice
3. to explore the nature of beliefs about teaching and learning developed in the beginning year of teaching
4. to investigate changes to beliefs held during training and post-training

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers
 - (a) prior to teaching practice?
 - (b) during teaching practice?
2. Do emerging beliefs inform student teachers in their classroom practices?
3. Do belief changes occur when student teachers become beginning teachers? What is the nature of these changes?

4. How do beginning teachers respond to changes in beliefs developed during teaching practice and the beginning year of teaching?

1. 2 Teacher Education in Malaysia

The task of preparing teachers for primary and secondary schools run by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (MOEM) is undertaken by the Teacher Education Department (TED), a division of the MOEM, the International Islamic University situated in Kuala Lumpur and eight local universities (Ratnavadivel, 1999). Pre-service training is organised in two ways: at university level and at college level.

(a) University level

At the university two types of pre-service teaching course are available.

- (i) A post-graduate teaching diploma where a degree in a discipline relevant to schools such as history, is the basic entry requirement into this one year course.
- (ii) A Bachelor of Education degree course which combines education and subject discipline especially subjects taught in schools such as geography.

Teachers graduating with either one of the qualifications above, are sent to become teachers in secondary schools in Malaysia.

(b) College level

Teacher education colleges are directly under the control of TED. There are thirty-one teacher education colleges in Malaysia conducting both pre-service and in-service

teacher education programmes. Since the subjects of this study are pre-service student teachers, I will limit my explanations to pre-service teaching programmes.

- (i) A diploma in education programme where participants are prepared for teaching in primary schools. Those who attend this three year teaching programme usually comprise recent secondary school leavers.
- (ii) A post-graduate teaching diploma where the entry requirement is a basic degree in any discipline. This course is also known as a one year conversion course. Participants in this programme are mostly graduates who have a basic degree from a local or an international university, trained for a non-education profession and who may have embarked on a career in that profession before signing up for a teaching diploma, thus converting from a non-education profession. Upon receiving the certification, teachers are sent to secondary schools in Malaysia.
- (iii) A Bachelor of Education programme specialising in the teaching of English as a second language, a four-year teaching degree programme preparing English language teachers for secondary schools in Malaysia. This course is conducted in only one teaching college in Kuala Lumpur as a joint project with five teaching institutions in the United Kingdom. Since the subjects for this study come from this programme, it is discussed in greater detail in the next section, within the context of link projects.

1. 2. 1 Link Teacher Education Projects

Malaysia has a history of close co-operation with the United Kingdom on a number of teacher education projects. From the 1950s to 1962, Kirby College and Brinsford Lodge in the United Kingdom conducted teaching programs for Malaysians who were destined for schools in Malaya (which became known as Malaysia in 1963).

A second major project involving the education of preservice teachers, started in 1983 between the Schools Division of the MOEM and several institutions in the United Kingdom. Participants of this project were based in participating institutions in the United Kingdom for a period of six years. At the end of six years, successful participants were awarded a teaching degree and were sent to secondary schools in Malaysia as English language teachers. This project has since ended.

The experience of successful collaboration in major education projects such as those mentioned above, led to a third major link project between the MOEM and several institutions in the United Kingdom in 1992. This project is described in some detail in the next section since participants of this project were subjects of this study.

1. 2. 2 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program

This is a link project designed to provide a preservice degree program to prepare teachers of English for Malaysian secondary schools. It is a project between the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the MOEM and five universities in the United Kingdom. The five universities had, at various times, worked with one another to provide the previous six year program. For this project, the universities worked more closely with each other and with the TED, in order to accommodate the common first and fourth year courses provided by the participating teaching college in Malaysia. The Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas (MPIK), in Kuala Lumpur, established in 1957, which has been providing both preservice and in-service teaching programs, is conducting for the first time a teaching degree program.

(a) Program Structure

Unlike the first two projects where participants were based in the United Kingdom for the duration of the program, this program situates its participants in both Malaysia and the United Kingdom. The table below illustrates the structure of the program and the movement of participants between United Kingdom and Malaysia.

Table 1 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program Structure

YEAR 1	YEAR 2 AND YEAR 3	YEAR 4
In Malaysia: MPIK	In five participating universities in United Kingdom	In Malaysia: MPIK

The program can be accessed by young Malaysians through two academic qualifications – the Sijil Pendidikan Malaysia (SPM) and the Sijil Tinggi Pendidikan Malaysia (STPM).

Briefly, the SPM certificate is awarded to seventeen year old students who successfully pass the national exams in the final and fifth year of secondary school education. When accepted to the B.Ed (Honours) degree program, participants are required to attend a two year Matriculation course. Registration for the degree program takes place after a successful completion of the Matriculation program (Table 2 Access to the Link Degree Program).

Young Malaysians, after obtaining the SPM certification, may choose to attend a two year sixth form course, at the end of which, they sit for a national exam. The certificate awarded to successful candidates of this exam is the STPM. Successful candidates for the B.Ed (Honours) degree program with STPM certification are

registered as Year 1 undergraduates. The table below summarises the pathways to the teaching program.

Table 2 Access to the Link Degree Program

CERTIFICATION	MATRICULATION COURSE	MATRICULATION COURSE	DEGREE PROGRAM
SPM	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1
STPM	-	-	Year 1

The intake for the link degree programs with either the SPM or the STPM certification started in 1992. While the intake of participants with STPM certification was completed in 1994, the intake of participants with SPM ended in 1998. An example of how each intake would proceed through the link degree program according to certification is tabled below. The SPM cohort in Table 3 is the subject of this study.

Table 3 Movement of intake through the link degree program according to certification

CERTIFICATION/ ACADEMIC YEARS	SPM CERTIFICATION	STPM CERTIFICATION
1992/1993	Matriculation Year 1 in MPIK	B.Ed Year 1 in MPIK
1993/1994	Matriculation Year 2 in MPIK	B.Ed Year 2 in five universities in the United Kingdom
1994/1995	B.Ed Year 1 in MPIK	B.Ed Year 3 in five universities in the United Kingdom
1995/1996	B.Ed Year 2 in five universities in the United Kingdom	B.Ed Year 4 in MPIK- graduates at the end of this academic year.
1996/1997	B.Ed Year 3 in five universities in the United Kingdom	
1997/1998	B.Ed Year 4 in MPIK – graduates at the end of this academic year	

The three intakes of student teachers with STPM certification graduated in 1996, 1997 and 1998. The first intake of student teachers with SPM certification, the subjects of this study, graduated in 1998. The last intake with SPM certification will graduate in June 2002.

(b) Course Structure

The course content was developed through careful liaison among the participating institutions to provide a coherent structure to the program. The common content of courses taught in Year 1 and Year 4 in MPIK (Table 1), entailed a degree of commonality in the courses offered in Year 2 and Year 3 by participating universities in the United Kingdom. Each university, while maintaining its own variation of courses taught to student teachers in Year 2 and Year 3, conformed to the need for overall coherence in the structure of the degree program.

In Year 4 of the program, the course is fully based in MPIK (Table 1) where the main teaching practice takes place for 12 weeks. Prior to this, complementary preparatory programmes for teaching practice are conducted in Year 3 in the United Kingdom by the respective universities participating in this project. It is the cognitive behaviours of student teachers during the period of practical teaching and in the novice year which is the focus of this study. As such the next section takes a look at the teaching practice component of the program.

(c) Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is conducted during the final year of the degree program while student teachers are based in MPIK. But the practice of placing student teachers in schools for fieldwork begins in the final three weeks of Year 1, before student teachers leave for Year 2 and Year 3 in the United Kingdom.

Briefly, in Year 1, student teachers are placed in secondary schools, in and around Kuala Lumpur, for three weeks. The overall purpose of the school placement is to provide student teachers with initial orientation to schools and to the classroom. In the main, student teachers are required to observe experienced teachers teaching English language lessons. Often the observed teacher is one who has been assigned to provide support to student teachers during the placement. Student teachers are also required to conduct language learning activities in the classes assigned to them. A folio is kept by each student teacher documenting the three week school experience. The folio is a record of student teachers initial involvement in teaching and serves as a source reference in future courses. Supervisors from MPIK and co-operating teachers are assigned to each student teacher during this period to engage student teachers in discussion related to the school experience.

In the fourth and final year, the main teaching practice of 12 weeks takes place. The structure of the teaching practice component follows the pattern shown in the table below. The dates in the table below, however, specifically set out the teaching practice program for the subjects (and their cohort) of this study.

Table 4 Structure of Teaching Practice

SESSIONS	DURATION	DATES
TP Intensive Preparatory course	10 hours	4 August-29 August 1997
TP Block 1	4 weeks	15 September-10 October 1997
Review of TP Block 1	30 hours	October-November 1997
TP Block 2	8 weeks	23 March-15 May 1998

Source: Teaching Practice Handbook for students 1997

The objectives of teaching practice as stated in the Teaching Practice Handbook for students (1997) are:

- (1) to give opportunity to become familiar with the organisation and administration of the school
- (2) to give practice in classroom organisation and management
- (3) to put into practice theory and skills acquired
- (4) to reflect on theory and practice as a step toward professional growth
- (5) to manage teaching and learning of English
- (6) to develop self-confidence, self-awareness and professionalism through actual classroom teaching
- (7) to establish close rapport with school staff and peers and finally
- (8) to participate in the wider aspects of school life such as co-curricular activities and pastoral care.

The recommended teaching periods of between 10-12 periods per week at 45 minutes per period work out to between eight to nine hours of teaching per week for each student teacher. During teaching practice, student teachers are required to plan lessons and to fully conduct the lessons in the classroom. They may also engage other student teachers or their co-operating teachers as teaching partners in some of their lessons.

Supervision and assessment of teaching during this period are carried out by the teachers who are assigned to the student teachers, known as co-operating teachers, for the duration of teaching practice and by lecturers based at MPIK. A minimum pass in teaching practice is required to obtain the degree but it does not contribute to its classification.

(d) Host schools

Student teachers are usually placed in schools situated in and around the Klang Valley in Kuala Lumpur for purposes of convenience of student teachers as well as supervising staff. Apart from reasons of practicality, the schools have often had the experience of hosting student teachers (and their supervisors) for practical teaching. Although schools are obliged to accept students on practice, this program had sent out letters inviting their participation. To that end, student teachers are placed in schools willing to host them.

The schools in and around the Kuala Lumpur and Klang Valley comprise both new schools and old schools with one hundred year traditions. Some schools are co-educational and others are single sex. All host schools are governed and funded by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. Consequently, the teachers and the Principals, have teaching qualifications from universities or teaching colleges. Therefore, student

teachers are usually supervised by co-operating teachers who are fully trained and experienced.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

2. 0 Introduction

Teaching and learning to teach demand a great deal from student teachers and teacher educators. Teaching situations are fraught with unpredictable demands and the teacher is fully expected to assume charge of any situation so that learning may take place effectively. In so doing, the teacher is placed in a position which requires her to engage in complex and interrelated sets of reflection and action when dealing with the situation. By the very unpredictable nature of the teaching situation and the equally unpredictable possible responses from the learner, it is no wonder that there is a perennial search for effective approaches to teacher education so that the preparation of teachers encompasses the multivariate professional role they will need to perform.

In this search teacher education programs have evolved in aims, philosophy and content. According to Northfield and Gunstone (1997), teacher education serves two basic purposes; first, to assist teachers with important ideas and skills about teaching and learning and second, to realise the teachers' potential to improve teaching and learning. Studies on teaching in the last four decades (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974, Doyle, 1977, Clandinin, 1986, Russell, 1997), suggest that teachers, novice or experienced, are required to function in several domains, each domain having its own peculiar demands. Within the classroom domain, for instance, beginning teachers require knowledge of the subject matter, student needs and pedagogic skills (Grossman and Richert, 1988, Wilson, Shulman and Richert, 1987; Shulman 1986).

In the larger domain beyond the classroom, such as the institution, teachers are participants in curriculum design for the school. Beyond the classroom and institution, teachers are responsible for liaising with parents and maintaining links with the community. Teachers, therefore, require some form of knowledge which will allow them to function ably in all of these contexts. With these expectations of teacher behaviour, it is not surprising to find diverse conceptions of teaching and equally diverse philosophies underpinning many teacher preparation programs.

Whichever philosophy teacher preparation programs subscribe to, there are two distinct but interrelated aspects that are evident; firstly, learning how to teach and secondly, learning about how to be a teacher. The first process involves the learning of cognitive and pedagogic knowledge and skills required for use in the classroom; the second process deals with the scope of professional responsibilities in and beyond the classroom domain. While many would not disagree with this view, there is, however, an ongoing discussion about the content and structure of programs to develop beginning teachers.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988), Hunt (1987, 1991) and Louden (1991) have investigated the interrelated nature of theory and practice of teaching. Their studies report that beginning teachers (and in-service teachers) feel that more practical and hands-on experience in the classroom is what a teacher needs. The view by teachers of the relevance of practice over theory perhaps lies in a misconception about the nature of theory and practice. According to the studies, theory and practice are seen as two separate entities rather than as two entities which are inextricably linked and mutually dependent. In as much as theories about teaching, developed from numerous studies, inform teachers about useful classroom practices ((Knowles and Cole, 1994), practices in the classroom, in turn, inform teaching theories. It is important, therefore, that beginning teachers are given opportunities to perceive the link between the theories in classroom practices, during lectures as well as during teaching practice.

Teaching practice has become an integral component within the structure of many current teacher preparation programs.

Programs have evolved over the last four decades reflecting the research findings and thoughts which prevailed at the time. The models of teacher education discussed in the next section reflect the ever changing trends which affect the development of teacher education program through the years. Each new model seems to have developed from the previous one, adding on to the existing body of knowledge with the objective of improving the quality of teaching programs and teacher effectiveness. In order to appreciate the nature of the B.Ed teaching program, the focus of this study, this section looks at various models of teacher education which have influenced its development.

The following part of this chapter (section 2.2) discusses issues surrounding teaching practice. It looks at evidence from various studies on the impact practical teaching experiences have on student teachers in their personal and professional development. It also explores polarities in views about teaching. In this way we may be better placed to decide our preferred approach.

2. 1 Teacher Education Models

Wallace (1991) suggests three models of teacher education: the craft model, the applied science model and the reflective model. Each of the models will be discussed with respect to its underlying philosophy.

2. 1. 1 The Craft Model

This approach to teacher education is modelled along the lines of an apprentice observing and learning from the expert who is usually someone with a number of years experience in the profession and probably much respected by colleagues and the community for professional craftsmanship. There are several features identifiable with this model: learning is imitative, knowledge moves in one direction, that is, from expert to apprentice and finally knowledge is transferred down from one generation to the next. Such a model is highly effective if the job routinely requires a set of behaviours to respond to a set of situation.

While the craft model is recognised for promoting observation as essentially a good thing (provided the apprentice is exposed to good practices), one criticism levelled at this model is that it did not take into account of the various roles that are expected of the teacher and the nature of teaching. The apprentice in this model depended on the expert for knowledge and was not expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. This mode of expected behaviour perpetuated the transmission syndrome of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. The expert craftsman taught as he was taught and passed on skills that were passed on to him by his master. The role of the apprentice was thus limited to that of sponging as much knowledge and skill as possible from the master.

In response to a growing understanding of the nature and the processes involved in teaching and learning, more appropriate approach to learning to teach with the was needed. For example, in the case of language teaching, advances in the understanding of linguistics resulted in the emergence of specialism areas such as sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, which in turn, led to alternative models of teacher education (Wallace, 1991).

2. 1. 2 The Applied Science Model

The applied science model of teacher education programs was developed on the basis of evidence gathered from ‘hard’ research knowledge of experts (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992). Teacher education programs adopting this model were developed on research findings into teacher variables and their impact on student achievement (Shulman, 1987). The studies following this trend mainly focused their research on the correlational relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. This approach to research became known as process-product research with notable contributions in the past from Brophy and Good (1983), Gage (1978) and Dunkin and Biddle (1974).

According to Richards (1990), the findings of studies of teacher-student interactions in the classroom which systematically observed and statistically quantified these interactions, gave rise to the assumption that “teaching can be characterised by recurring patterns of behaviors. The teaching process is viewed in terms of the repertoire of strategies (eg. control of question patterns and wait time) employed by the teacher during instruction”(p. 7). This idea that professional knowledge about teaching and teacher behaviour can be derived from applying scientific theory and technique is termed ‘technical rationality’ by Schon (1983). Empirical research in various areas of teaching argued that “teaching problems can be solved by the application of empirical science to the desired objectives” (Wallace, 1991, p. 8).

Schon (ibid) raised a number of criticisms about the concept of applying an established set of problem solving behaviours that had been scientifically categorised on the basis of applied science. He argued that should a problem fall outside the parameters of the expected problem solving behaviours the practitioner will not be able to choose from the standard repertoire of behaviours, to solve the problem.

Schon quoted examples of behaviour from other professions such as psychiatry, social work and town planning where a framework to resolving conflicts had not been established. These professions, according to Schon, engaged in a line of inquiry which led them outside the parameters of the model of technical rationality in search of specific solutions for specific problems.

Another criticism levelled at this approach is the split between research and practice and with it the implied superiority of those who research over those who practise. According to Schon (ibid), "It was to be the business of the university-based scientists and scholars to create the fundamental theory which professionals and technicians would apply to practice... But this division of labour reflected a hierarchy of kinds of knowledge which was also a ladder of status." (p. 36). In addition, this concept of 'outside-in' (Hunt, 1987), where teaching and learning ideas were imposed from outside with little teacher autonomy, showed "a disrespect for teachers' professionalism and quality of their classroom judgements" (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p.3).

A third criticism lies in the way findings from the process-product research were aggregated into patterns or styles of teaching to represent naturally occurring composites of teaching styles and behaviour. According to Shulman (1987), effective teacher behaviour was identified by researchers "through an act of synthesis... in which the individual behaviors associated with desirable pupil performance were aggregated into a new composite" (p. 12). In sum, the findings were not the outcome of observed classroom behaviour but rather as result of manipulations of variables by researchers.

Shulman (ibid) commented that although researchers such as Evertson and Brophy (1979), Good, Grouws and Ebmier (1989), found that teachers who were trained to use the composites of desired behaviour produced higher learner achievements, they

also discovered that these teachers did not engage in the desired teaching behaviour any more frequently than the control group. The studies also found that even when teachers taught as they ought, it did not always achieve the desired learner behaviour (p.12). Thus the criticisms toward teacher education programs conceptualised on behaviourist, context-generic approaches and based on findings of process-product research which identified pre-specified behaviours in which to prepare teachers, were perhaps well justified.

While it is acknowledged that confidence in developing teacher preparation programs based on process-product studies was eroded by inconclusive empirical evidence, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), the studies offered “a well founded knowledge base of what constitutes ‘good teaching’, and what works and what doesn’t...” (p. 3) (although this is still passionately contested). What the studies did not reveal was why some ways of teaching do work and some do not. According to McIntyre (1988), “there is not, nor can there be, any systematic corpus of theoretical knowledge from which prescriptive principles for teaching can be generated” (p. 101). Therefore, teacher preparation programs grounded on findings of scientific research found that these could not justify the teaching methods they promote (Hargreaves and Fullan, *ibid*).

2. 1. 3 The Reflective Model

What has gained much attention in recent studies of teaching is the way in which teachers think, introspectively and retrospectively, about their practice and the possible links between reflection and action in the development of classroom practice. Many teacher preparation courses claim to have adopted the concept of reflective practice (Furlong, Whitty, Barrett, Barton and Miles, 1994). Teacher education

programs adopting this approach seek to “facilitate teachers’ development of their own theories of educational practice, understanding and developing a principled basis for their own classroom work” (Calderhead and Gates, 1993, p. 2).

The subjects in my study follow a teaching degree course which, although it makes no claim to the reflective model, has as one of its stated objectives as “to encourage reflective behaviour” in the preparation of student teachers (B.Ed degree course outline, 1992). As a result, it is the intention of this study to investigate the nature of reflectivity practised by student teachers during training and in their novice year of teaching (section 1. 1 The Study). It is, therefore, appropriate that I explore the concept of reflection and its influence teacher education before I look at how the concepts are realised in the B.Ed program (section 2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach)

The concept of reflective thinking was described by Dewey (1933) as

in distinction from other operations to which we apply the name of thought, involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity (p. 12)

Dewey saw reflection as a way for teachers to work out meanings from puzzling situations to enable their learners to learn and for themselves as teachers to be effective practitioners. Teachers needed to “cultivate the attitudes that are favourable to the use of the best methods of inquiry and testing” (ibid, p. 29), in order to enhance their reflective capacity. He outlined three attitudes for this purpose: open-mindedness, whole-heartedness and responsibility. Briefly, by open-mindedness, Dewey referred to a preparedness in the teacher to receive ideas and views that may be contrary to her own. Whole-heartedness, he said, was illustrated when the teacher is seen to be fully involved and engaged in the teaching-learning process whereas

responsibility referred to the teacher's understanding of the consequences of her actions on the teaching-learning situation.

While Dewey saw the cultivation of these attitudes as essential constituents of a reflective disposition, the process of reflection comprised five phases (which do not necessarily operate in this order): suggestions, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing. Suggestions refer to alternatives teachers have to consider before a course of action is taken to solve a problem. Problems were carefully considered within the context of the whole teaching-learning situation rather than on a piecemeal basis. A hypothesis was formulated from observing and monitoring the problem situation so that "the senses of the problem *becomes more adequate and refined* and the suggestion ceases to be mere possibility, becoming a tested and, if possible, a measured probability" (ibid, p. 110). Reasoning involved bringing in current information as well as past experiences to bear on the problem situation. Testing of hypothesis was an opportunity to confirm the thoughts that were engaged to solve the problem. According to Dewey, "nothing shows the trained thinker better than the use he makes of his errors and mistakes" (ibid, p. 114). Dewey recognised that the phases tended to overlap but nevertheless they explained the concept of looking to past experiences to determine the course of future action.

The concept of reflection in teacher preparation programs is an appealing one. It has come to be associated with all things good: enabling teachers to analyse and to change their practice; to understand the context in which change can be effective and to empower them to make reasoned decisions. The enthusiasm for reflective practice was stimulated by Schon's (1983) description of reflection on the basis of knowledge gained from one's own practical experience. He made a powerful distinction between technical rationality and knowledge of practice when he wrote about engineers, architects, town planners and clinical psychologists. But the relevance of his concept

to the teaching profession was quite evident. Schon (1983) identified two forms of reflection: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action.

Schon's conception of reflection-on-action is similar to the notion conceived by Dewey. The term focuses on conducting an evaluation on an event that has taken place; to be thinking, introspectively and retrospectively, on one's previous action with the aim of identifying the course for future action. This behaviour involves contemplating past events, evaluating the outcome of those events and the planning of future events and behaviour with the objective of improving the situation even further.

The concept of reflection-in-action was based on the idea that intuitive knowledge is valid. Schon (1983) conceived reflection-in-action as the spontaneous behaviour from an individual who is trying to make sense of a puzzling situation or an interesting phenomenon and "as he tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings which have been implicit in his action, understandings which he surfaces, criticises, restructures, and embodies in further action' (p. 50). It is knowledge that is inherent in all of us "an intuitive performance of actions of everyday life, we show ourselves to be knowledgeable in a special way" (ibid, p. 49). The knowledge is in part acquired from past experiences and thinking about the situation while interacting in the situation itself (ibid, p. 54). Thus, Schon's idea of reflection-in-action is when "the practitioner consciously interacts with a problematic situation, converses and experiments with it" (Clift, Houston, and Pugach, 1990, p.12). Judgements are, therefore, contextually determined.

Schon's idea of reflection is appealing in the notion of an individual responding to a situation by reconstructing or extending their existing knowledge framework in an attempt to accommodate new ideas or to create new ones. What is important to the notion of reflection is what personal meaning is construed by the teacher from the

events, the ideas, the experiences in the classroom. Findings from studies (Sugrue, 1996, Powell, 1992, Lortie, 1975) confirmed that young preservice teachers enter their teacher preparation programs with strong beliefs about teaching and personally constructed theories of classroom instruction from years of observing teachers teach and by interacting with them. It must also be of concern that prior experiences, according to studies by Anderson (1984), Buchman and Schwille, (1983), Crow (1987), Hollingsworth (1989) and Shulman (1987), intervene with the learning of new knowledge in the teacher preparation programs (see section Studies on Teacher Beliefs). Underlying this perspective of personal meaning to teaching and learning, is the concept of personal construct (section 2. 3. 3 Constructivist Approach).

The concepts that shape the different models of teacher education are also responsible in determining the shape of teaching practice. The next section explores the issues that surround teaching practice within the parameters of the models of teacher education.

2. 2 Teaching Practice

This section of the study discusses three important aspects of teaching practice; firstly, the concerns expressed in various studies about the relevance of teaching practice to teaching programs; secondly, about cultivating in teachers appropriate dispositions of teacher behaviour, and finally, the dichotomous views about professional practice which influence how teachers are prepared for their future profession.

Over the years various forms of practical training have been instituted as part of an overall policy of systematic training of teachers. A common understanding exists among course providers of the relevance and the importance of practical teaching to the overall development of the teacher so that teaching practice has become an integral part of teaching programs. Zeichner, Tabachnick and Densmore (1987) noted that in their study of pre-service preparation programs, the two major components are educational methods and foundation courses, and school based experiences.

Opinions, however, continue to differ about the duration of the school based practical training and the stage of training at which it will be useful to the student teacher. Ironically, while we now debate how long student teachers ought to be based in school for the practical, the earliest systematic training of teachers in England, started in the early nineteenth century, according to Gardner (1993), was fully conducted in schools. Adult trainees were sent to schools for a period of no longer than two months “to be trained in the principles of the system” (p.25). Trainees observed teachers teach in the classrooms and replicated observed teacher behaviour in their classrooms. According to Gardner (1993) “this notion of effective teaching as the replication of set principles was to be a powerful one, finding many echoes, for example, in the professional memories of the last generation of pupil teachers, trained in the first three decades of the twentieth century” (p.25). In short, trainees learnt prescribed forms of knowledge and teaching skills and thus perpetuated the system. However, this notion of learning to become a teacher through the transmission of knowledge during fully based training in school has since moved on.

Learning about teaching, according to Knowles and Cole (1994), as we saw in section 2.0, involves, firstly, learning about how to teach. This involves learning aspects of pedagogic knowledge and practising this acquired knowledge in real classroom situations. Thus, many preservice teacher programs are formulated on the theory-practice premise.

During the course of learning to become a teacher, student teachers usually experience the practical aspects of becoming a teacher through the components of school experience and or teaching practice. Both components usually require student teachers to be based in school for a certain period of time. The duration and conduct of the placements are determined by the objectives of the exercise.

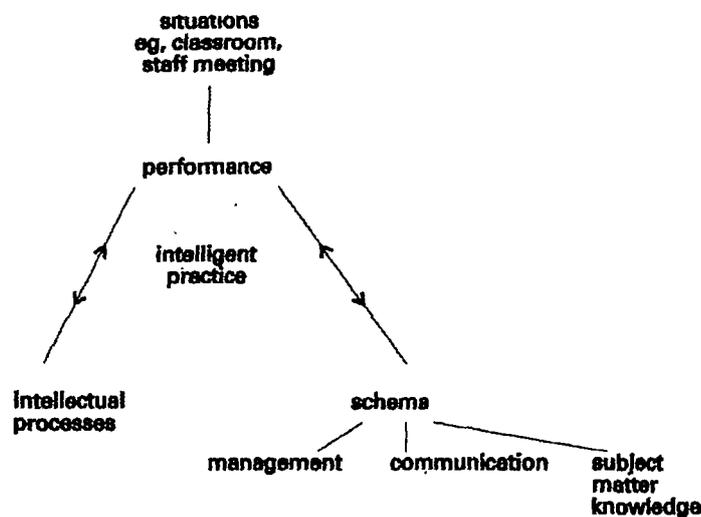
Learning to be a teacher goes beyond acquiring pedagogic knowledge and skills, according to Knowles and Cole (1994). It is about understanding the roles and responsibilities associated with being a teacher, in the classroom or away from the classroom. School experience, therefore, provides learning opportunities beyond classroom practices. It also provides an element of professional development which includes other aspects of being a teacher such as understanding staff relations, discipline procedures (Wallace, 1991) and managing co-curricular activities. It includes the wider notion of learning about teaching by enabling student teachers to explore their roles beyond the classroom. School experience may be conducted as a series of visits to host schools and the course is of shorter duration than teaching practice.

Teaching practice, according to Wallace (1991), is about “providing opportunity given to the trainee to develop and improve her professional practice in the context of a real classroom, usually under some form of guidance or supervision.”(p.121). Freeman (1990) situates teaching practice within a wider context of “any form of teaching, from micro teaching to teaching an individual lesson to a sustained practicum over which the student has direct and individual control.” (p.104). Orem (1981) succinctly describes teaching practice as wanting “to know what they (student teachers) do, how and why”. Schon (1983, 1987) argues that teaching is more than just applying previously learnt knowledge in the classroom. Since events occur in unpredictable ways, teachers cannot learn predetermined ways of responding to the

events. Therefore, the need to learn ways of coping with unexpected events in the classroom usually begins under guidance during teaching practice.

Dunne and Harvard (1993) assert that intelligent practice involves the three elements of performance, intellectual processes and professional schema. Teachers perform, they say, beyond the classroom to include other locations such as in the staff room, in conferences and in board meetings. The teacher, therefore, needs to develop intellectually, the ability to process information and to deal with a variety of experiences during teaching practice. A professional schema in competencies such as management, communication and knowledge of subject matter, ensures that teachers develop a shared outlook and a value system about their profession (p. 119). The three elements, according to Dunne and Harvard (ibid.), establish a paradigm for professional development.

Fig. 1 Development of the model of teaching



Source: Dunne and Harvard (1993): A Model of Teaching and its implications for mentoring in McIntyre, D., H. Hagger and M. Wilkins (1993), Mentoring: Perspectives on school-based teacher education, Kogan Page, London

School based teaching experience, where student teachers spend time on campus before moving to school for the practical experience and returning once again to complete the teaching course has become part of many teaching programs. Student teachers, who are subjects in this study, however return to the school for a second session of teaching experience (section 1. 2. 2 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program), thus following a campus-school-campus-school-campus pattern.

Both patterns of teaching practice serve two purposes. In requiring student teachers to break from teaching practice, the program is practising a form of non-directive intervention where the purpose is “to provide the student teacher with a forum to clarify perceptions of what she is doing in teaching and for the educator to fully understand, although not necessarily to accept or agree with those perceptions” (Freeman, 1990, p. 112). It is also an opportunity for course providers to engage student teachers in serious contemplation about their recent teaching experiences and to explore what constructs about teaching have developed from those experiences. In addition, the break provided by the teaching practice pattern, as adopted by the B.Ed link program, gives opportunities to course providers to re-evaluate training plans (if necessary), following an interface with student teachers and supervisors for the next block of teaching practice.

Each teaching program will set clear teaching practice objectives. The objectives inform course providers and student teachers what the program hopes to provide and the kinds of teachers the program hopes to develop. Moreover, from these objectives one can extrapolate the objectives of the teaching program as a whole. One such example is the objectives as stated in the B. Ed Link program teaching practice handbook (section 1. 2. 2 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program).

In no order of hierarchy, the objectives listed in the handbook, may be grouped in terms of, firstly, providing opportunities for applying pedagogic knowledge and skills

in the classroom (objectives 2, 3, 4, 5); secondly, as developing personal and professional growth (objectives 4,6, 7), and finally, in enabling student teachers to understand the school ethos (objectives 1, 8). If the number of stated objectives reflect an emphasis on providing teaching skills, it is only to be expected in a preservice teacher education program. Most student teachers are concerned with being able to perform in the classroom and with surviving their initiation into the teaching profession, albeit supported by supervisors and co-operating teachers.

The importance of teaching practice to the development of teachers cannot be overly stated. Over the last two decades, educational research on teacher education found that student teachers placed a high value on the practical aspects of their course such as teaching practice and school experience (Lanier and Little, 1986, Calderhead, 1991, Grossman, 1992, Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997). Studies by Folkert (1978) Paese (1985) and Calfee (1983) quoted in McIntyre and Byrd (1996), found that regardless of the length of time, student teachers gained positively from their teaching practice experience.

A study conducted by the Committee for English Language Programs for schools in Malaysia (1995) on training needs of English language teachers in Malaysia shows a similar finding. 1573 beginning teachers of English voluntarily participated in the study. Among other questions, the teachers were asked to list ways to improve preservice teaching programs for the preparation of English language teachers. The teachers recommended twelve ways of improving the training of teachers (Appendix D).

Table 5 Recommendations for improvement of preservice teacher education program for the preparation of English language teachers.

No.	Recommendations	Total	Percentage
1	More practice in real classroom situation	479	26.56
2	Longer and more teaching practice	284	15.15
3	Teaching practice in different areas/situations/environment	252	13.44
4	Training to be more practical based rather than theoretical	221	12.0

Source: Training Needs of Beginning ESL Teachers (1995) Committee for English language programs in schools in Malaysia

The study found the four highest ranked recommendations by beginning teachers are related to teaching practice. The study reported that in retrospect, during teaching practice, 26.56 % of beginning teachers wanted more time teaching in real classrooms with real learners whereas 15.15 % clearly wanted longer time for teaching practice. 13.44 % of beginning teachers recommended teaching in different situations as a positive aspect of teaching practice. 12 % of the teachers preferred a practically oriented teaching program over a theoretically oriented one. The study concluded that extended practical teaching was perceived by beginning teachers as a strong factor in their development.

Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) offer the following explanations why teaching practice is of immense value to student teachers. Firstly, teaching is viewed as an action oriented behaviour (p.10). Teaching involves moving about in the classroom, talking to students and other teachers, writing on the blackboard, grading exercises and even shifting of classroom furniture for group work. Reading, researching and reflecting about teaching and learning are not viewed as action oriented activities and are, thus, less appreciated and remembered. In addition, there is an emotional attachment to teaching practice. Interpersonal relationships established between

student teachers and teachers and with learners in the school pushes into obscurity the more mundane aspects of the teaching course (ibid., p. 10) like writing up assignments and attending tutorials. According to Britten (1988), it is necessary that student teachers (and others) realise that becoming a teacher is not limited to overt and observable behaviours in or away from the classroom. Student teachers need to be persuaded that the less 'active' activities such as researching and writing of assignments, are equally important in the process of building appropriate cognitive constructs.

Dunne and Harvard (1993) assert that it is undeniable that teaching practice provides "powerful learning experiences" (p. 117) but they stress that while studies reveal that teachers think that longer time spent in school-based activities is a desirable aspect of their training, and they wished it could have been longer, it cannot be assumed that "more experience is better experience" (Dunne and Harvard 1993, p.117) neither does it always lead to more learning. Other factors such as good counselling from supervisors may yet influence what student teachers learn during school based experiences regardless of the length of time spent in school. The assumption that practice can improve one's teaching is evident in reflective teaching programs which aspire to develop teachers who, according to Lucas (1991), are predisposed to engage in "systematic enquiry into personal practice...in order to improve that practice...and to deepen one's understanding of it" (in Dunne and Harvard, 1993, p. 117).

No model of teacher education can do justice to the complexities of training teachers. However, each model highlights important factors. What can be drawn from the models is information that can help to develop teaching practice programs. It seems that two polarising views have emerged on how best to prepare teachers for the profession. The first model explained below relates to competencies.

The craft model and the applied science model of teacher education emphasise the importance of developing teaching competencies. The assumption is that teachers who master teaching competencies are considered to be ably prepared to deliver their lessons and to manage learning. The craft model favours the modelling approach to mastering the necessary skills required for teaching i.e. working alongside the experience teacher. Like the applied science model, the skills required for teaching are broken down into component parts or skills and a mastery of these parts ensures the mastery of teaching skills. According to Maynard and Furlong (1993), this approach is basically sound for student teachers who will need “first-hand experience” (p. 79) of the teaching situation in order to develop professional schema. Working alongside experienced practitioners, they say, will provide student teachers with ‘recipes’ for teaching, settle them into routines and will help them understand the significance of what is happening in the classroom at this early stage of professional practice.

This approach to teaching practice, in my view, defines teaching as no more than that of a technician following the route already set by other predecessors. It simplifies the complexity of the teaching process for student teachers. It takes the student teacher away from the responsibility of complex decision making processes and of making professional judgements for her actions in the classroom. Maynard and Furlong (1993) are careful to point out that this approach is useful at the beginning stages of student teaching “when they are learning to see” (p. 79) real students and real classroom situations. Teaching practices are constantly changing and there is a need to offer student teachers more than a survival teaching kit or teaching recipes. *Extending the repertoire of teaching routines is not a bad thing; neither is modelling on successful practices bad.* They are useful in themselves. But, teaching is often messy because teaching situations can be predictably unpredictable.

The second view of teaching practices relates to the ability to exercise professional judgement in teachers. This is a quality which sets apart the effective teacher from the less effective one. In order to achieve this ability, student teachers must be placed in situations where they learn to make systematic enquiry into their own practices. They have to learn by doing the teaching and at the same time develop a new schema for professional practice or modify existing ones. The cognitive approach to preparing teachers, which underpins the reflective and constructive approach to teaching, has at the heart of its argument, the understanding that there is more to teaching than just an accumulation of efficient teaching skills. Under this view, priority is given to student teachers developing personal insights into professional practice, to cultivating investigative dispositions and to deliberate on aspects of teaching that a teacher considers important. In this way, cognitive constructs developed from contemplating various aspects of teaching serve to enhance the development of a thinking teacher. Teacher cognition, which is an important consideration in the reflective and constructivist approach to teaching, is discussed in the next section.

It is important that the two opposing views about teaching are discussed because teaching programs may find themselves having to structure their teaching practice based on the philosophy underpinning the overall program. In my opinion, the extreme views discussed here are just that – extreme. Teacher preparation programs are more likely to include elements from both views. This is an acceptable position given that the business of preparing teachers has, over the years, swung from one extreme view to another and back again to somewhere in between. The ongoing debate will surely benefit the teaching profession and the programs that prepare teachers.

2.3 The Role of Mental Constructs in Approaches to Teaching

In a survey of “learning to teach studies”, published or presented between 1987 and 1991, Kagan (1992) found that the studies were predominantly concerned with “the cognitions, beliefs and mental processes that underlie teachers’ classroom behaviours” (p.129). This shows that there was a shift in the trend among those concerned with the teaching profession, to understand how teachers think and how they perceive their interactions in the classroom. It was also an important shift in that the scale of interest was now tipped toward studies making attempts to understand what sense teachers make of classroom events and about teaching and learning in general. In short, the insiders’ (i.e. teachers’) account of teaching and learning events and their interpretation those events, received more attention than ever before.

This section attempts to look at the role of mental constructs in the development of three approaches to teaching: the cognitive approach, the reflective and the constructive approach. As more studies about teacher thought processes appear, an examination of relevant literature on the nature of cognitive constructs in this section is appropriate. The plethora of studies has resulted, as we will see later, in diverse meanings being attached to the various terms that are supposedly expounding the same meaning. Since my study explores belief constructs in students who are learning to become teachers, it is indeed necessary that I examine, in this section, various explanations of teacher thinking offered over the years by prominent studies. These studies form the framework and basis for further discussion and analysis of data collected on the construction of teacher beliefs in student teachers in the B.Ed link program in subsequent chapters (chapter 5 Data Analysis; chapter 6 Case Study Insights).

What has emerged from the interest generated in the concept of cognitive processing are three approaches reflecting the philosophical stance of each approach: the cognitive approach, the reflective approach and the constructivist approach. Each of these approaches is examined as a concept which has become useful to course providers engaged in preparing students for their teaching profession.

2. 3. 1 Cognitive Approach

It is important to bring to attention the fact that prior to 1987, there were studies on cognitive processing underlying teacher's decision making as exemplified by models developed by Peterson and Clark (1978) and Shavelson and Stern (1981). Just as the process-product studies influenced the development of skills-based teacher preparation programs in the years leading into the seventies (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997), studies on teacher cognition were influencing the content of teacher preparation programs in the eighties and nineties.

Teachers in the classroom face competing demands and often have to make decisions on how to respond to these demands. Shulman (1975), Doyle (1977) and Fenstermacher (1979) pointed out that the complex social structure within the school requires teachers to make judgements and decisions in uncertain situations not unlike those in other professions such as medicine. Thus the outcome of on-going debate and research saw the need for an alternative approach to prepare teachers beyond pedagogic knowledge and pedagogic skills, to include the "wisdom of the practitioner" (Shulman and Lanier, 1976). As noted by Macleod and McIntyre (1977), "the multiplicity of decisions which have to be made and the volume of information relevant to each decision are such that for the teacher, logical consideration and decision making seem impossible..." (p.266). The emphasis of research concerns

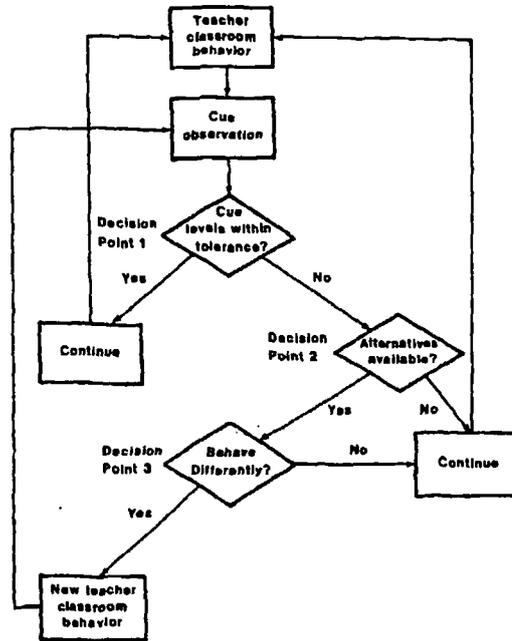
moved toward the investigating the influence of less observable factors such as thought, judgement and decision making on teacher behaviour.

Investigations of this nature raised awareness of issues concerning the cognitive processes through which teachers make their decisions and judgements and carrying them out before, during and after teaching. Perhaps one of the earliest studies to link teacher's mental constructs to teacher behaviour was conducted by Jackson (1968). He suggested that there were different stages to lesson planning, and for each stage, the teacher had to work within a psychological framework in order to anticipate the kinds of lessons and teaching behaviour required. He felt that the covert cognitive processes underpinning teaching decisions were complex and were responsible for the overt behaviour of the teacher in the classroom. He concluded that understanding the 'hidden' side of teaching may further extend our understanding of the processes of teaching and learning.

This idea was brought to the attention of participants at the National Conference on Studies in Teaching (National Institute of Education, Michigan), in 1974 by Shulman (1975) and his panel of experts. They argued for further research on teacher thinking in order to understand the "relationship between thought and action"(p. 1). Early attempts explaining the complexities of teachers' cognitive processes in the form of diagrams were developed by Peterson and Clark (1978) and Shavelson and Stern (1981). A brief discussion of each model provides an overview of the development of the cognitive concept.

Clark and Peterson (1978) developed a model to explain the complex thought processes involved in teachers' interactive decision making during instruction. When a teacher assesses that a lesson is not progressing as planned, several alternative courses of action are available to the teacher as illustrated in the figure below.

Fig. 2 Peterson and Clark's (1978) model of teacher interactive decision making



Source: Clark, C. m. and Peterson, P. L. (1986). *Teacher Thought Processes*. In *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (ed.) Merlin C. Wittrock (1986) Macmillan Publishing Co. New York

Decision points 1, 2 and 3 in the figure mark the alternative paths of information processing teachers may take during classroom teaching. The alternative paths in the model reflect teachers' level of tolerance of learner behaviour during lessons. If learner behaviour during teaching is within teachers' tolerance level, teacher's instructional behaviour continues as planned. This is illustrated in the figure by the arrow leading from decision point 1. At decision point 2, two paths describe the ways in which a teacher may process learner behaviour; if the teacher is unable to think of a course of action to redress the situation, then the instruction continues as planned; this is shown by the arrow leading from decision point 2 upward. Another arrow points downward to new teacher behaviour if the teacher thinks of an alternative course of

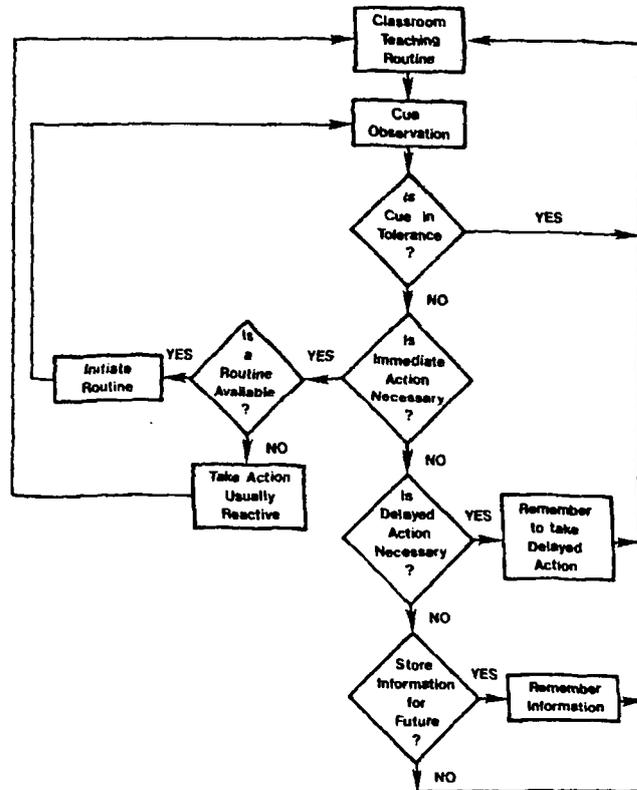
action. The path leading from decision point 3 illustrates a teacher's decision to act on her thoughts.

This model is thus conceptualised as a cyclical process of observation where learner behaviour is assessed against teachers' level of tolerance, followed by a decision to find an alternative course of action by the teacher in order to bring about learner behaviour to a desirable tolerance level.

One criticism levelled at this model is that it did not take into account of the number of alternatives that teachers may consider, at once, in the process of making a decision. In a study by Morine and Vallance (1975) of 38 teachers, each teacher considered three alternative courses of action while Marland's (1977) study found a majority of teachers considered two alternative courses of action. In addition, the infrequent times with which teachers think of different teaching strategies during a lesson are not reflected in the model suggested by Clark and Peterson (1978).

Shavelson and Stern (1981) posited an alternative model to explain the cognitive processing procedures engaged in by teachers when making decisions during a lesson.

Fig. 3: Shavelson and Stern's (1981) model of teacher interactive decision making



Source: Clark, C. M. and Peterson, P. L. (1986). Teacher Thought Processes. In Handbook of Research on Teaching (ed.) Merlin C. Wittrock (1986) Macmillan Publishing Co. New York

This model introduces the concept of teaching as a routine and the interactive decision making is a process that interrupts this routine. Teachers have three ways to respond to the interruptions – to decide on an immediate alternative course of action and act on it, delay it or not to act on it at all.

Like the previous model, the Shavelson and Stern (1981) model is based on the recurring notion that teacher action is cued from learner behaviour and teachers'

tolerance of that behaviour. In the process of making decisions, the teacher is viewed as being dependent on learner behaviour. This explanation reflects some residue left over from the process-product tradition. The idea that teacher action is solely dependent on learner response, ignores other factors which can complicate teacher decision making such as level of learner cognition, the teacher's repertoire of teaching strategies, availability of teaching materials and even the time of day. It did not reflect the complex cognitive processing that takes place when teachers make decisions and judgements.

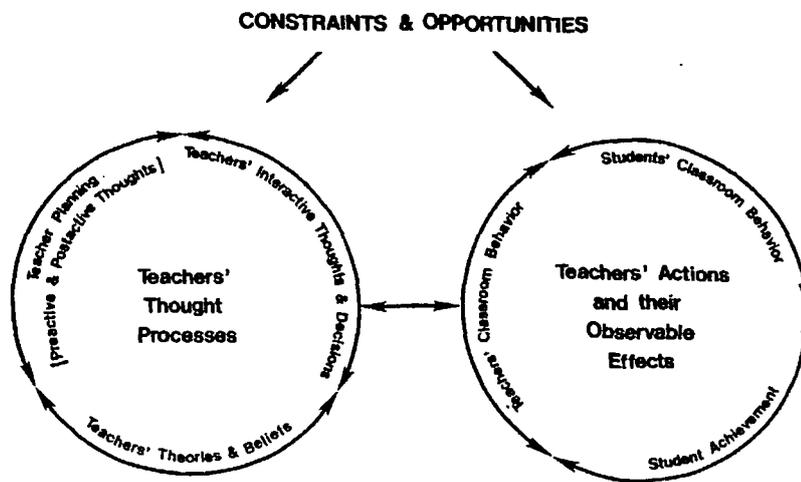
Both models trace the various cognitive paths in the process of making judgements in the classroom. The models offer a series of steps in which teacher's decision making and judgement work in a routine manner not unlike a "computer subroutine" (Shavelson and Stern, 1981). In doing so, both models failed to take into account of the infinite nature of cognitive deliberations and the possible alternative actions available to the teacher as a result of those deliberations.

Another underlying assumption in both models is that if the teacher judges that learners are learning as expected, the teacher will choose a certain cognitive path in order to move the lesson along; however, if learners are learning less than expected, i.e below teacher's tolerance level, the teacher chose a different one. The assumptions of a tolerance level and an activating mechanism were never confirmed by any study (Clark and Peterson, 1986, Shulman, 1986) and maybe inaccurately represented in the models.

Studies into teacher's interactive decision making (Mackay and Marland, 1978, Wodlinger, 1980 in Clark and Peterson, 1986) enhanced the value of looking at less obvious or observable behaviours in the classroom. It is relevant at this point to look at current studies on teacher thought processes and to investigate how they illuminate our understanding of teacher cognition in a teaching and learning situation.

Clark and Peterson (1986) developed a heuristic model offering an explanation of cognitive processing and the overt behavioural responses which take place when teachers are engaged in planning lessons, implementing them and reflecting on the outcome of the lesson. The phenomenon of cognitive processing involves two interrelating domains: the domain of teacher thought processes and the domain of teacher actions. The two domains are represented below in Fig. 4

Fig. 4: A model of teacher thought and action



Source: C .M. Clark and P. L. Peterson, 1986, in M.C. Wittrock (ed.) Handbook on research in teaching, Macmillan Publishing Co., New York.

According to the model, teacher thought processes operate at an invisible level but the outcome of this domain is made visible through teacher-learner actions and the events that take place in the classroom. The two domains are thus linked. This model operates on the level of reciprocity: teachers plan lessons in response to learner behaviour and learner needs; learner achievements and learner behaviour are, in turn, affected by the lessons and teacher behaviour. The reciprocal relationship between

teacher and learner is represented in this model in a cyclical and circular motion, to illustrate the ongoing interactions between teacher and learner.

From the figure, we can see that within the scope of teacher thought domain, there are three categories: teacher planning, teachers' interactive thoughts and teachers' theories and beliefs. Clark and Peterson (ibid) quoted empirical evidence from studies, such as Jackson (1968) and Borko et al (1979) to support their view of the existence of distinctively different thought processing taking place before, during and after a lesson. Within these phases, teachers were found to engage in different thought processes appropriate to their planning purposes (McCutcheon, 1980, Peterson, Marx and Clark, 1978, Yinger, 1977, Morine-Dersheimer, 1977, Zahorik, 1975) and consequently, they affect teachers' lesson planning decisions. Teachers' theories and beliefs which may develop, according to Clark and Peterson (ibid), from ongoing interactions between teacher thought, decisions and planning, may also contribute to teacher thoughts and planning (p.258).

The model shows factors that constrain teacher thought and teacher-learner behaviour in the lesson planning process such as constraints of examinations, bureaucracy and school ethos, to name a few. Alternatively, these factors may be seen as giving teachers opportunities to engage in interactive thought processes and decision making. This model highlights the notion of introspective and retrospective behaviour in teacher behaviour as they went about planning, implementing and evaluating their lessons.

The notion of reflective behaviour is however not a new one. When Dewey (1933) posited the concept of reflective teaching, it offered an alternative approach for understanding the complex mental constructs underpinning teacher behaviour. The next section discusses the reflective approach to language teaching and their relevance to the B.Ed teaching program.

2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach

Many course providers agree with the philosophy underpinning the aim of developing of teachers with a predisposition to reflect. Since the 1980s a number of teacher education courses adopting the reflective approach (Calderhead, 1988, Russell, 1988, Zeichner and Liston, 1987) found that the challenge remains in deciding the best approach to prepare teachers with a predisposition to reflect on their teaching. As suggested by Calderhead (1989), reflective teaching involves the evaluation of “one’s effectiveness as teacher and the questioning of one’s purposes; reflective teaching is a critical approach to practice requiring one to justify as well as shape, classroom action”(p. 375). Recent studies on reflective teaching have raised several questions such as how should the desired habits of reflection be promoted in student teachers (Clift, Houston, Pugach, 1988). Do student teachers need to be taught to reflect? (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997) and how does one prioritise the subject matter for reflection? (Calderhead and Gates, 1993). These are questions that continue to haunt course providers.

Grimmett, Mackinnon, Erickson and Riecken (1990), examined several studies on teacher education and, consequently, developed a system of categorising course providers’ conception of reflection based on the relationship between knowledge and reflection. Knowing how knowledge and reflection are integrated in other teaching programs, at this point of my study, enables the discussion of similar concerns in the B.Ed program in section 1. 2. 2. According to Grimmett et al. (ibid.), the conceptions can be organised into three categories: (1) “the source of knowledge that is reflected upon, (2) the mode of knowing represented by the particular conception of reflection and, (3) the use to which that knowledge is put as a result of the reflective process” (p.22).

The first perspective is a reflective process that would lead to a mediation of action. The purpose of reflection is to assist student teachers (and experienced teachers) to reproduce classroom practices which have been empirically proven to be effective. The sources for examples of effective classroom practices are to be found in published studies and teaching journals. Knowledge gained from reading is reflected upon and used to direct teaching practices. This approach to reflectivity attempts to cultivate reflective practices under controlled conditions similar to conditions during micro teaching (p. 23).

A second perspective of reflection involves a “deliberation and choice among competing versions of good teaching” (p. 25). Although good versions of teaching practices are mediated by knowledge gained from literature, they are tempered by discussions with peers and the teaching context. Through the process of reflecting on various versions of good practices within situated knowledge, theoretical knowledge informs good practices rather than directs them.

A third perspective of reflection leads to reorganisation or reconstruction of experience. This involves making sense of teaching experiences and giving personal meaning to them. Knowledge is gained through the process of puzzlement and subsequent action is guided by reflecting on the situation within context, leading to a personal understanding of the situation. It is a process “in which practitioners recast, reframe, and reconstruct past understandings in such a way as to *generate appreciations ..*” (ibid., p.27). In this way, practice-based reflection involves teachers *making inquiries and engaging in critical reflection of assumptions and routines* within the context of personal experience and personal knowledge. Teacher’s understanding of the experiences is thus transformed by contextual experiences. Data gathered for this study is discussed in the context of the third perspective. A summary of the three perspectives are as follows:

Table 6 A Summary of Three Perspectives on Reflection in Teacher Education

Perspectives on Reflection	Source of Knowledge for Reflection	Mode of Reflective Knowing	Purpose of Reflection
Reflection as instrumental mediation of action	External authority (mediated through action)	Technical	Directs
Reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching	External authority (mediated through context)	Deliberative	Informs
Reflection as reconstructing experience	Context (mediated through colleagues/self)	Dialectical	Apprehends and transforms

Source: Grimmett, P., Mackinnon, A., Erickson, G. and T. Riecken (1990). Reflective Practice in Teacher Education. In Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education (ed.) Clift R. T. ,Houston W. R. and Pugach M. C. Teachers' College Press New York

Grimmett et al' s (ibid.) summary highlights the complexities in the relationship between knowledge and reflection. The findings presented in Table 6 show that while many teacher education programs may have adopted the reflective stance, the framework on which each program is based determines the nature of the training of the teachers and the kinds of teachers produced at the end of the training program. It also hints at the kinds of strategies and activities used in the program that will foster the kinds of reflective behaviour consistent with the conceptions held by course providers. Some of the main activities used in the B.Ed teaching program to foster reflection in student teachers such as reflective writing and reflective dialogues are discussed later in this section.

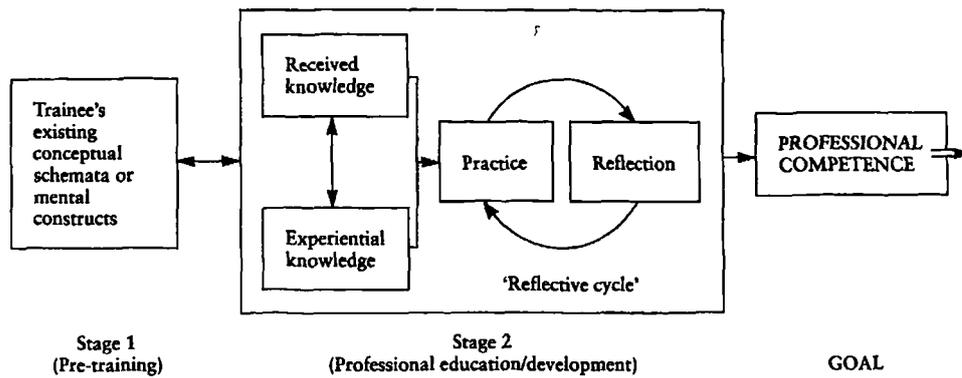
The desired product of any teaching program which adopts a reflective approach must be teachers having the predisposition and the capacity to reflect on and to work through problems. Schon (1983, 1987) argues that practical experience in reflecting coupled with appropriate supervision, enhances reflective teaching. This idea of the relationship between theoretical knowledge and experiential knowledge coming together during practical teaching is best understood by examining the reflective model of professional education developed by Wallace (1991).

According to Wallace (ibid.), there are two stages towards achieving professional teaching competence. The first stage relates to pre-training. Prior to training, student teachers develop a conceptual schemata about what teaching and learning might be over many years of being learners and being with teachers. Investigations reviewed in this study concluded that student teachers enter teaching with preconceived ideas about teaching and learning (Carter, 1990, Kagan, 1992, Powell, 1992) which, according to Dunkin, Precians and Nettle (1994), are “very difficult to replace or modify” (p. 395). We also know that student teachers (and experienced teachers) draw upon a variety of sources such as personal knowledge learnt during training, personal experience and personal beliefs about teaching and learning to inform their classroom practices (Clark and Peterson, 1985).

Upon admission to a teaching program, student teachers enter the second stage of professional development, bringing with them inherent beliefs about teaching and learning. During this stage, they learn to become teachers through the process, termed by Wallace (ibid.) as, ‘received knowledge’ and ‘experiential knowledge’ (p. 52). The components that make up ‘received knowledge’ are courses which are often associated with learning to become a teacher such as theories of teaching and learning, educational psychology and micro-teaching. ‘Experiential knowledge’ on the other hand, involves gaining practical teaching experience by teaching in real classrooms with real learners. Learning to teach through the experiential is the core of

the reflective model. According to Wallace (ibid.), the crux of this model is that “the ‘received knowledge’ element should both directly inform ‘experiential knowledge’ element and can be directly informed by it” (p. 52) showing the reciprocal behaviour between the two forms of knowledge, symbolised by the arrow in Figure 5.

Fig. 5 Reflective practice model of professional educational development

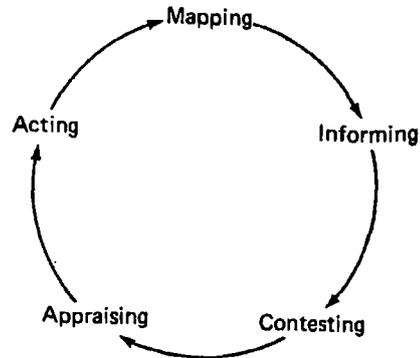


Source: Wallace, M. (1990): Training Foreign Language Teachers: A reflective approach. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 49

These cycles of reflective activity take place when student teachers are engaged in a process of re-evaluating their teaching practices in the light of real teaching experiences and knowledge learnt on campus.

The process of reflecting is essentially a private activity but the elements for reflecting may be explained by a diagram by Bartlett (1990) in Figure 6.

Fig. 6 The elements of a cycle for the process of reflective teaching



Source: Adapted from McTaggart and Kemmis (1983); Smyth (1987)

Bartlett (1990, p. 200) suggests the five elements involved in the cycle of reflection are neither linear nor sequential. The elements may not follow one another in the manner presented in the diagram and some elements may be omitted altogether during the course of reflecting. The cycle may be repeated by student teachers as many times as they think necessary in order to understand their practices. The five elements within the cycle, mapping, informing, contesting, appraising and acting, are summed up as follows:

- Mapping involves obtaining as much information as possible about one's teaching practices by for example keeping journals, examining observation and evaluation sheets from supervisors or even video or audio recording of one's teaching. The purpose is to raise personal consciousness about teaching by examining personal teaching practices in relation to personal views about teaching, personal beliefs, personal lives and critical incidents in the classroom which might impact on one's teaching behaviour.

- Informing is the next element in the cycle. It involves asking questions and sharing of personal views about teaching and learning, which were derived from mapping out personal teaching experiences. By discussing and sharing experiences, student teachers begin the process of breaking down long held beliefs and re-examining these beliefs within a wider context.
- Contesting means testing personally held views about teaching by engaging in discussions with peers, lecturers or other interested parties like principals. This process forces student teachers to confront their assumptions about their practices and about teaching in general. Any inconsistencies and contradictions appearing from the confrontation, will need to be addressed so that future teaching practices will develop consistent with newly developed assumptions.
- Appraisal involves thinking about how best to teach, consistent with new consciousness about teaching and learning. It is an exploratory phase where alternatives for teaching, tempered with new understanding, are assessed for their effectiveness.
- Acting on reflective thoughts by teaching in the classroom, means bringing to public attention to what is essentially a private activity. From observing teaching acts in the classroom, it may be possible to ascertain how much understanding has developed within the student teacher having gone through the process of reflection.

The cycle of reflection describes clearly the kinds of behaviour that indicates reflectivity but it also shows how much effort and understanding of the concepts of reflectivity is required of a teacher for the teacher to engage in reflective behaviour. Reflective teaching is indeed a desirable disposition for teachers. Although Schon (1987) posited his ideas about reflective behaviours and the positive consequences of

reflective behaviours, he could only speculate on how reflective behaviour might be developed. It has been left to course providers to employ various strategies to develop in student teachers the disposition to reflect.

Bartlett (1990) examines three studies describing the ways in which reflection is perceived and interpreted. A discussion of the outcome of these studies, here, is intended to highlight how reflective teaching programs prepare their student teachers for reflective teaching behaviours. In my view the studies examined by Bartlett (1990) summarises the progress that has been made toward understanding the concept of reflection and the processes by which we could achieve reflective behaviour. Bartlett's review of studies by Cruickshank and Applegate (1981), Zeichner and Liston (1985) and Gore (1987) also highlights the different perspectives held by various researchers about reflective teaching and how each perspective influence the way reflection is conducted during teaching practice. The review raises pertinent points which serve as a basis for reference in the discussion of data collected from the subjects of this study (chapter 5 Data Analysis; chapter 7 Discussion)

Cruickshank and Applegate (1981) define reflective teaching in terms of the behavioural outcome of teacher thinking about classroom practices. Although the teacher engages in cognitive behaviour, the purpose is to find alternative ways to enable learning to take place in the classroom. Bartlett (ibid) reckons that "reflection is reduced to the psychologistic process of thinking... where the development of teaching techniques is regarded as the most important means of helping teachers to improve their practice" (p. 202). This corresponds with Van Manen's description of a level of reflectivity he calls technical reflection where the primary concern of reflective thoughts is to improve pedagogic skills.

Zeichner and Liston (1985) describe reflective behaviour as involving more than searching for appropriate teaching techniques; it includes "being able to reflect on the

origins, purposes, and consequences of their action, as well as the material and ideological constraints and encouragements embedded in the classroom, school, and societal contexts in which they live” (p. 4). This perspective proposes the notion that a teacher’s action in the classroom is influenced by other factors such as her life experiences and the norms of behaviour demanded by the society she lives in.

Gore (1987) views reflective teaching practices as a means for student teachers to share experiences with others. Through this process of sharing of experiences, according to Gore (ibid.), student teachers may learn to value their personal teaching experiences and also increases the possibility of collegiality.

Bartlett (1990) sums up the reflective behaviour in teaching programs in Table 7

Table 7 Cycles of reflection within different reflective teaching programs

<i>Reflective teaching program</i>	<i>Before lesson</i>	<i>Immediately after lesson</i>	<i>Later after lesson</i>
<i>Cruickshank</i> Peer teaching Any stage of teacher education	PREPARE	⇌ REFLECT group – shared: verbal	
<i>Zeichner</i> School teaching Final year of teacher education	PLAN ⇌ PREPARE ⇌	REFLECT self or supervisor: verbal or written	⇌ REFLECT group: verbal
<i>Gore</i> Peer teaching First semester of teacher education	PLAN ⇌ PREPARE ⇌	REFLECT group – shared: verbal	⇌ REFLECT ⇌ REFLECT self: self or written group: critique written in journal or verbal

Source: Bartlett, L (1990) *Teacher development through reflective teaching*. In Richards, J. C and R. Nunan (1990): *Second Language Teacher Education*, Cambridge University Press

The cycles of reflection presented here promote the notion of student teachers taking greater responsibility for their own professional growth. Professional growth is pursued by way of discussion and or through writing down teaching experiences. Both activities, verbal and written, may be conducted as a shared experience or as an individualised experience. But what is important about reflective teaching practices is a sense of working towards enabling student teachers to empower themselves with their own professional growth, beginning with teaching practice.

Developing a teaching program that will foster reflective practitioners is challenging but implementing one is even more so because of the unobservable nature of the mental processes that take place during reflection. A range of activities to promote teacher reflectivity has been developed over the years. It is a fact that all activities are suggestions and their effectiveness cannot always be immediately observable. Below is a list of some of activities carried out during teaching practice by student teachers of the B.Ed link program to cultivate reflective behaviour.

(a) Reflective writing

This takes on various forms of writing. Reflective writing is an important aspect of teaching practice for two reasons. It provides an avenue for student teachers to practice at analysing their personal practices, written down in their own words and in their own hand. Secondly, having done so, and if they wished to, they are able to return to the written script again and again. In this way, they may be “forced” to examine closely their own reasoning for the kind of analysis they have made of their teaching. There are several forms of reflective writing by student teachers on the B.Ed link program.

During teaching practice, student teachers are required to write reflective reports, promptly, at the end of every lesson on the lesson plan (B.Ed (TESL) Year Four,

Teaching Practice Handbook for Supervisors, 1998, Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas and United Kingdom). In the handbook for students, the purposes of the required task are clearly spelt out. The reports are “to be analytical rather than descriptive and should state the evidence on which your judgements are based....The evaluation might frequently take the form of a comparison of the ideal stated in the lesson plans with the reality experienced in the classroom, giving reasons for the differences. Implications for future lessons should be stated” (p. 5).

The intention of the writing task of developing teachers with a predisposition to conduct a systematic enquiry into personal practice, is evident from the handbook extract. Student teachers are required to critically evaluate their own lesson, to justify their decisions based on evidence and to plan for a future course of action.

Another reflective writing task, is a self-evaluation report (ibid., p.6) written at the end of teaching practice. Six questions guide student teachers to reflect on aspects of teaching and learning, such as effective use of teaching resources in a systematic manner. The questions challenge student teachers to examine, closely, and systematically, their personal decisions.

(b) Reflective dialogues

In the B.Ed link program, there are two sets of persons with whom student teachers engage in reflective dialogues – teaching practice supervisors from College and host school and other student teachers. The dialogues between student teachers and their respective supervisors serve as feedback on what meaning student teachers make of their practices. The interface reveals what are essentially private thoughts. It is a useful means of ascertaining student teacher’s thought orientations and thus provides an opportunity for supervisors to guide student teachers toward a self-critical mode.

One of the problems that student teachers face during teaching practice is that situated knowledge is different from theoretical knowledge. Student teachers find that theoretical and pedagogic knowledge learnt on campus seems irrelevant to what they require in the school situation. The tendency has been to denounce knowledge learnt as totally inapplicable to 'real' classroom practices. Reflective dialogues, therefore, serve as a means of engaging in a discussion about aspects of knowledge learnt that can be usefully employed in 'real' classroom situations, either in their immediate form or in a modified form. In the process of puzzling out problems such as this and other problems, professional knowledge is, thus, gained experientially.

Reflective discussions may not solve differences or even succeed in developing predisposition to reflect that is immediately apparent but they do serve the purpose, even for a moment of making student teachers pause and question their personal practices.

Reflecting on classroom practices, whether through dialogues with significant persons or writing personal journals, appear to promote student teachers' thinking. The immediate observable benefits such as improved pedagogic skills and knowledge are fundamental objectives of any teaching program. However, it is more difficult to determine if such as the development of a predisposition to reflect on classroom practices have been achieved because by nature reflective practices are less visible.

2. 3. 3 Constructivist Approach

The constructivist approach to teaching and teacher education has evolved from the personal construct theory which was developed for use in clinical psychology and psychiatry by George A. Kelly (1955). Since then the theory has been applied to other

general areas of research and problem solving by Bannister and Mair (1968), Bannister and Fransella (1971, 1977, 1978) and Thomas and Harri-Augstein (1977). Kelly (1970a) however, was keen to point out that the theory has been viewed in so many ways:

Personal Construct Theory has also been categorised by responsible scholars as an emotional theory, a learning theory, a psycho-analytic theory (Freudian, Adlerian, and Jungian – all three), a typically American theory, a Marxist theory, a humanistic theory, a logical positivistic theory, Zen Buddhist theory, a Thomistic theory, a Behaviouristic theory, an Apollonian theory, a pragmatistic theory, a reflective theory, and no theory at all. It has also been classified as nonsense, which indeed, by its own admission, it will likely some day turn out to be (p.10).

The personal construct theory is a descriptive theory of learning rather than a prescriptive one. As pointed out by Kelly in the above extract, the theory means different things to different people. Perhaps this is the crux of the theory which makes it appealing to a profession such as teaching which is often beset with uncertainties and unpredictable outcomes. It is therefore pertinent that the personal construct theory and its relationship to the constructivist approach are clarified here. The explanation will provide the theoretical framework for the discussions of findings in my study (chapter 5 Data Analysis; chapter 6 Case Study Insights). A discussion of findings from several studies, in this section, on the constructivist approach to teacher preparation, provides a basis for further discussion of my own findings.

2. 3. 4 Personal Construct Theory

The central philosophy underlying the personal construct theory (PCT) is a concern about how each person makes sense of the world. To enable an individual to do so, Kelly (1955) says man has to possess the attributes of a scientist. In this way, the individual is said to be constantly engaged in observing, interpreting and theorising about the world around him. The world surrounding an individual is constantly changing and individuals find themselves in the midst of it all. Kelly (1970) observes that

the events we face today are subject to as great a variety of constructions as our wits will enable us to contrive. This is not to say that one construction is as good as any other... But it does remind us that all our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration, and it does broadly suggest that even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we were inventive enough to construe them differently (p. 1)

The individual is continually engaged in interacting with life experiences, and through this engagement, the individual construes a version of the world in ways which are meaningful to him. Blumer (1966) elaborates this notion by saying that

since action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges, one would have to...take the role of the actor and sees his world from his standpoint (p. 542, in Pope and Keen, 1981)

In this way, the versions of reality take on “the perspective of the personal” (Pope and Keen, 1981). Kelly (1977) reminds us, however, that the constructed versions of reality may not necessarily be correct but they are personally significant and real to

the individual who created those versions. The constructions can be as inventive as the individual wants them to be because

to represent an event by means of a construct is to go beyond what is known. It is to see the event in a way that could possibly happen again. Thus, being human and capable of construing, we can do more than point realistically to what has happened in the past; we can actually set the stage for the future.

Thus we transcend the obvious! (p. 4).

The personal construct theory draws attention to the endless possible outcomes which could be derived from the process of constructing the present and the future. It is possible for the individual to set the “stage for the future” even as the individual is engaged in the present. Kelly (1970), however, places less emphasis on past and future events as factors determining an individual’s course of action. What is more important to understand are the ways in which an individual anticipates the events.

Events do not tell us what to do, nor do they carry their meanings engraved in their backs for us to discover. For better or worse we ourselves create the only meanings they will ever convey during our lifetime...Our present task is to devise ways of anticipating their occurrences (p. 3).

The crux of the PCT can be summed as follows:

- Individuals make meaning of the events or world around them from a personal stand point
- The versions of reality construed by an individual are personally significant
- The versions are not necessarily viewed as true or accurate by others
- Of particular importance is not the event itself but the ways in which individuals anticipate the event(s)

It is not difficult to see the appeal of the PCT in view of the prevailing trend in teacher education of preparing practitioners with a predisposition to reflect on their practices. The constructivist approach, which has its philosophical base on the PCT, does not determine how an individual should learn or teach; it simply describes how an individual goes about the business of learning or teaching (Richardson, 1997).

I would like to highlight the ongoing discussion about what really is the constructivist approach: what it is, what it is not. It is not list of dos and don'ts of teaching; it does not suggest a model of teaching neither does it offer advice on course content for preparing a constructivist teacher. Richardson (1997) suggests that there are disagreements in the ways in which the constructivist approach is understood.

One view is focused on psychological constructivism where the individual is viewed as the primary source in the process of constructing meaning. In this role of meaning-maker, the purpose of the teacher is to engage her learners in activities that would lead them to "toward higher levels of understanding and analytic capabilities" (p.5). The activities are chosen for their ability to challenge existing "concepts and thinking processes; and certain forms of questioning that dig deeply into students' beliefs, turn the beliefs into hypotheses, and provide a non-threatening atmosphere in which those beliefs may be examined" (p.5).

While the psychological constructivism view encourages individuals to question, for example, accepted knowledge and to reinterpret knowledge in ways that are personally meaningful, there is a real concern about the acceptability of reinterpreted knowledge within existing norms. As a member of a larger social environment, the individual may find that the outcome of personalised meaning may contradict the general view. I share Richardson's (ibid.) concern with this approach to constructivism in the dilemmas it creates for the individual (p. 7).

The social constructivist on the other hand, considers the social elements of learning an important feature in the construction of knowledge. This view of the constructivist approach maintains that when individuals attempt to make sense of their experiences, they are affected by the context of the situation. The situation informs the individual to enable her to take a certain course of action. Knowledge is therefore experientially constructed and reformulated in relation to the experiences of the individual. In this way, the individual, the situation and the action are interrelated.

The two views of the constructivist approach demonstrates the problem of what is the central meaning of constructivism. Explanations of the personal construct theory on which the constructivist approach is based, are open to interpretation. This creates a dilemma for teacher educators who lean toward the concepts of personal construct theory as a basis for program design. Various studies exploring how student teachers and experienced teachers construct meaning from their experiences have provided insightful information to sustain interest in the constructivist approach.

Constructivism is a means to explain the cognitive processing behaviour in student teachers and experienced teachers as they attempt to interpret their teaching experiences within the framework of existing knowledge and pre-teaching experiences. It is gaining ground in the teaching profession as it is able to provide a sound explanation to account for the diverse interpretations that could be made on a single teaching event.

2. 3. 5 Studies on Constructivist Approach to Teaching

Studies exploring teacher constructs, discussed in this section, used multi methods in their attempt to elicit accurate and insightful evidence. A research tool, the repertory

grid matrix, used by some studies discussed in this section, deserves an explanation here for the way it charts the progress of teacher constructs over a period of time.

The grid is a technique developed by Kelly, originally, for use in investigating role relationships between clients in therapy and persons significant to them. It is a mathematical matrix designed to make known the system of existing personal constructs of an individual so that the constructs may be reviewed. According to Kelly (1955), its function was “to reveal pathways or channels along which the individual is free to move” (p. 203). Since the fundamental postulate of the personal construct is focused on the individual making sense of the world or events in ways meaningful to him, the elements in the construct matrix to be reviewed are drawn from the individual’s own experience. The value of the matrix, as a research tool, is enhanced further by the discussions it generates in order to determine what these elements are. The elements are often derived from within the individual’s own experience may include events, ideas, and perceptions made known through process of discussion. However, these elements may also be gathered from other sources such as literature or conversations.

According to Yaxley (1991), a repertory grid is,

“... a ‘construction’ matrix, which relates elements, representing the phenomenon entailed in an individual’s experience, and the bipolar constructs that the individual uses to conceptualise that experience” (p. 31).

McQualter and Warren (1983) used the repertory grid to ascertain the mental representations student teachers have about teaching and learning during teaching practice. During the process of drawing up the bipolar elements of their thoughts about teaching and learning, student teachers were reported to have been ‘forced’ to examine their “personally held deep cognitive structures”(p. 178) within the context

of the teaching practice situation. In doing so, the study concluded that student teachers experienced a conceptual shift in their perception about teaching and their own role as teachers.

Yaxley (1991) applied the repertory grid matrix on teachers participating in an inservice course. The elements in the construct matrix were developed by course participants as a group. Like the student teachers in McQualter and Warren's study, the inservice teachers had to re-examine their personal thoughts about teaching and learning before setting them down as elements in the construct matrix (p. 91). Yaxley (ibid) reports that in building the matrix, the teachers became aware of the bipolar dimensions of effective teaching and learning and were thus able to reconsider other alternatives about their effectiveness.

The matrix below, Table 8, is reproduced here to illustrate how the relationships between the bipolar constructs are presented by Yaxley (p. 96) to show how dependent they are on one another and how closely related they are to other elements.

Table 8 Descriptions of Effective Teaching and Learning-Initial Bipolar Statements (constructs)

Construct	Initial pole	Emergent pole
1	Effective learning involves interaction between the teacher and the learner	Effective learning involves the learner's own initiatives
2	Effective learning depends on the individual learner's attitudes	Effective learning depends on the attitudes that develop from the relationship between teacher and learner
3	Effective learning is learner-centred	Effective learning requires teacher input
4	Effective learning focuses on individual needs	Effective learning focuses on the needs of the curriculum
5	Effective learning is based on practical experiences	Effective learning precedes practical experiences
6	Effective learning needs to be purposeful for the learner	Effective learning needs to be purposeful for the teacher
7	Children learn at different rates	Children learn at the same rate
8	Effective learning involves self-evaluation by the learner	Effective learning involves external evaluation
9	Effective learning focuses on the whole child	Effective learning focuses on specific developmental areas of the child
10	The learner should be actively involved in the learning process	The learner should learn from a teacher model
11	Effective learning involves learner evaluation of learning performances and application to new situation	Effective learning involves learning behaviours established by the teacher

Source: Yaxley, G. (1991). *Developing teachers' theories of teaching: a touchstone approach*. London: Falmer Press, p. 96

Sendan (1995), on the other hand, used the repertory grid matrix to study conceptual changes in student teachers' personal theories about teaching before and during teaching practice. He found that at different stages of the training program, a shift occurs in the mental constructs in student teachers. As an example, a student teacher's perception of the ideal teacher was set within the bipolar dimensions of 'ideal self' and 'current self', i.e. the teacher he wants to be and the teacher he thinks he is now (Sendan and Roberts, 1998).

The ratings from one student teacher, Orhan, were gathered before teaching practice and during teaching practice. By comparing the ratings, the study reported that Orhan maintained his perceptions of an 'ideal teacher' but there was a negative change in the way he perceives himself as a teacher now, the 'current self'. Such findings are further evidence of the cognitive complexities involved as student teachers process new experiences into their existing framework of experiences. The way student teachers make meaning out of their teaching experiences and what responses were derived from the experiences are factors that ought to inform the structure and the management of teacher preparation programs.

While the three studies reported extensive use of the grid matrix, all three studies reaffirmed their evidence with other research procedures such as interviews and dialogues. Other procedures such as student teacher journal entries and interviews (Black and Ammon, 1992), concept mapping, think-aloud transcripts and stimulated recall technique (Powell, 1992) and narrative stories (Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann, 1986) have been used to study the mental constructs of student teachers and experienced teachers. Some implications about the need to consider the constructivist approach to teacher education, can be drawn from the studies mentioned in this paragraph. They can be summed up as follows:

- The studies suggest that a preservice curriculum which takes into account of the need for preparing teachers for conceptual change (Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann, 1986)
- Student teachers must be made aware that just as they experience a gradual change in their understanding of being a teacher, their learners go through the same gradual process (Black and Ammon, 1992)
- Personal theories and prior life experiences influence student teachers' thinking about teaching and teacher role (Powell, 1992)

From the studies discussed in this section, the constructivist approach is seen as a powerful alternative view to teacher preparation. It is neither a model of teacher education nor a method of teaching. The constructivist approach provides a useful way of viewing teaching and learning from the stand point of the student teacher. It is a humanistic perspective to attempt to understand the student teacher as being the central concern of any teacher preparation program. As Bell and Gilbert (1996) say

Teacher development as learning by teachers needs to take into account the existing knowledge, experiences, opinions and values of the teachers. This will include their prior knowledge of teaching and learning, and the nature and status of knowledge. It will also include taking into account their ways of learning. In doing this, teacher development convenors or facilitators need to expect and plan for unintended learning outcomes (p. 58).

So far the constructivist approach has been presented as an individual's endeavour to come to terms with the world to fit into existing personal framework. Teaching, however, is far from being an isolated activity. Teaching is a people-oriented activity. Teaching is an interactive activity. Teachers interact with each other, students, administrators, parents and in fact with the community in general. In the classroom, teachers and learners are involved with one another in the teaching and learning

process, with teachers having as much to learn from their learners as learners from their teachers. According to Salmon (1988),

the teaching-learning encounter is essentially a meeting between the personal constructions, the subjective realities of teacher and pupil. This means we cannot understand school learning without acknowledging both sorts of reality (p. 14).

As Williams and Burden (1997) suggest, student teachers (and experienced teachers), “make their own sense of the world, but they do so within a social context, and through social interactions” (p. 28). A study by MacKinnon and Scarff-Seatter (1997) illustrates the individualistic and social dimensions of constructivist thinking used when teaching science. Student teachers in their study learnt to teach science concepts effectively by using the learning constructs of their young learners. In the process, student teachers discovered that socialising with their learners in the classroom, resulted in successful learning of the concepts they were keen to teach. Being able to perceive learning from the perspectives of the learner, according to MacKinnon and Scarff-Seatter (ibid.), requires a reconstruction from the part of the student teacher. It gives student teachers ways of working effectively with their learners by looking at where their learners are at, before putting into practice pedagogic knowledge and skills.

In conclusion, the constructivist approach to teaching emphasises the need to look at the practice of teaching and learning from where the teacher is at. It looks at teaching from the stand point of the immediate recipient of the teaching program, i.e. the student teachers and what meaning they make from the program. Findings from studies discussed in this section, highlight both existing differences and changing perceptions as student teachers reconstruct their perceptions about teaching and learning as they progress through their teaching program.

The next chapter looks at teacher beliefs and how they relate to the process of learning to become a teacher.

CHAPTER 3

Teacher Beliefs

3. 0 Introduction

Since the focus of my study is teacher beliefs, it is important that I investigate the nature and the various meanings of belief as defined by numerous studies. Since the formulation of beliefs involves the cognitive, I have searched for the explanations from the field of cognitive psychology as well as from various educational studies. In view of current interest in the cognitive aspects involved in teacher development, highlighted by various studies (Peterson and Clark, 1978, Clark and Peterson, 1986, Peterson, Marx and Clark, 1978, in section 2. 3. 1 Cognitive Approach), I feel it is right to study the definition of beliefs within the psychological framework so as to bring closer the connection between the cognitive aspects involved in the teaching and learning process. Various educational studies on teacher beliefs have greatly contributed toward defining the meaning of beliefs within the educational context (chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs). It is hoped that by looking at beliefs from different fields of study, teacher beliefs will re-examined not only from the context of education but within the overarching framework of cognitive psychology.

In this section, I will investigate, first, the properties of belief systems drawn from works in the field of cognitive psychology by Rokeach (1968), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Abelson (1979) whose description of the concepts of beliefs and their formulations offer insightful information about beliefs. Secondly, I will refer to various studies from the field of education whose findings on teacher beliefs and their

relevance to teacher preparation and teacher development are particularly useful for my study.

3. 1 The Nature of Belief Systems

Milton Rokeach (1968) believes that by the time a person reaches adulthood, the number of beliefs manifested in that person is huge. In view of the huge number of beliefs held, he believes that they are surely held in some form of system so that the beliefs are easily accessible to the individual. Rokeach (ibid.) describes a belief system as “having represented within it, in some organised psychological but not necessarily logical form, each and every one of a person’s countless beliefs about physical and social reality” (p.2). Accordingly, belief is defined by Rokeach as

a simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase ‘I believe that...’ (p. 113)

From the definition beliefs are viewed as being descriptive or existential, evaluative and exhortatory or prescriptive. A statement presenting incontrovertible facts such as “I believe the sun rises in the east”(p. 113) he says, typifies descriptive or existential belief. The second type of belief is evaluative belief where an element of assessment is evident in the statement for example, “I believe this ice cream is good”(p. 113). Finally, an exhortatory or prescriptive belief is identifiable in that the statement will appear to recommend a course of action, for example, “I believe it is desirable that children should obey their parents” (p. 113). Therefore, beliefs may predispose an individual to action.

Beliefs are said to exist in the minds of the individual as a set of system where the parts that make up the system are organised along what Rokeach (ibid.) calls, a *central-peripheral dimension*. The notion of centrality in the belief system means that beliefs are held, by the individual, in order of importance. But not all beliefs are equally important to an individual. However, the more important or central a belief is to an individual, the more resistant it is to change. Another feature of this idea of centrality of beliefs is that the more central a belief is, the more connected it is to other beliefs held. Therefore, if change was to occur to a belief held close to the central-peripheral dimension, the consequences to the individual and to other beliefs held are more widespread.

Another feature of the nature of belief system is the notion of congruence. Rokeach (ibid.) defines belief congruence in terms of importance and similarity. He asserts that an individual tends to appreciate more, other beliefs that are similar to beliefs held by the individual. In a situation where there are two similar beliefs, the belief which is thought to be important, by the individual, will be the one that has a lot of similarity to existing beliefs. Hence, other beliefs outside existing beliefs are appreciated more and deemed important by the individual, if they are found to have a degree of congruence with beliefs presently held by the individual. In this way, new beliefs are incorporated if they are judged as being compatible within the framework of existing beliefs.

A belief can be formulated through a combination of direct observation and inference. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975),

beliefs refer to a person's subjective probability judgements concerning some discriminable aspect of his world; they deal with the person's understanding of himself and his environment. Specifically, we have defined belief as the

subjective probability of a relation between the object of belief and some other object, value, concept or attribute (p. 131).

The term 'belief object' in the extract above includes among others things, persons and culture. In the process of formulating beliefs, the belief object is often ascribed with various attributes. According to the writers, for example, if a person is observed to be wearing a gold band on her left finger, the observer through experience or custom, infers that the person who is wearing the gold band is married. The gold band through custom is indicative of a person's marital status. Those who have a different custom about symbols of marital status may perhaps not share nor give similar attributes to the ring.

Beliefs formed as a result of direct observation are said to be descriptive beliefs. Those that are formed as a result of inference from external sources such as the media and colleagues are known as inferential beliefs.

The nature of belief system may be further explained by exploring belief systems in relation to knowledge systems. Abelson (1979) points out that belief systems and knowledge systems are distinguishable from each other by features which are unique to each system as much as features which are common to both systems.

According to Abelson (ibid.) belief systems contain the elements of nonconsensuality in that beliefs are conceived by individuals and held independent of beliefs conceived and held by others. In this way, beliefs are distinctive in that they vary at the conceptual level and in highly complex ways (p.356). He says that a fine line exists between what constitutes belief systems and knowledge systems. For example, in a culture that believes in witches, witchery forms part of a knowledge system but those who do not share a similar culture, witches and witchery are regarded as beliefs.

Another aspect of nonconsensuality is that which concerns the existence or nonexistence of conceptual entities such as beliefs in God and in extra-sensory perception. These beliefs are “immutable entities that exist beyond individual control or knowledge” (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). Beliefs in the existential entities are essentially situated close to the central-peripheral dimension (Rokeach, 1968). Consequently, beliefs in the existential are characteristically personal, not open to persuasion and resistant to change.

This concept of beliefs in the existential is explained further by a study conducted by Nespor (1987) on trained teachers teaching in the eighth grade. He found that this concept can exist in more mundane situations like in the classroom. Two mathematics teachers, subjects in the study, expressed strong beliefs about learner entities. One teacher who believed that learning maths comes from lots of practice, gave learners more maths to do in individualised setting. This teacher believed that learners who are ‘lazy’, did not do well in this subject. Another teacher who believed that learning mathematics was part of a maturation process, acted on her beliefs. She placed learners in groups so that in the process of solving the mathematical problems, the different maturity levels in the learners is compensated by the group activity. The teacher felt that learners cannot be ‘forced’ to levels of maturity through practice drills and working in groups would help in the maturation process.

Beliefs are also conceived as creating alternative worlds which are utopian in outlook (Abelson, 1979, p. 357). In order to create a ‘perfect’ world, which conforms to a personalised utopian ideology, old rules are discarded or manipulated to be replaced by new ones which conform to the newly created ‘idealised’ world. Nespor (1987) discovered that teachers in his study adopted a utopian outlook in their practices. He found that his subjects planned and taught lessons in ways that they have neither prior experience nor knowledge of. One English language teacher modelled her lessons on an alternative version from those lessons she had endured as a child. She attempted to

create a fun-filled and stress free learning environment. In doing so, she allowed her learners to dictate the pace of her lessons to the extent that her lessons were never completed and her lesson objectives never achieved. In this case, the idealised or utopian state was seen to be no longer compatible with the reality of the teaching situation. However, this does not necessarily devalue her belief in the significance of the utopian state.

Beliefs according to Abelson(1979) consist of strong elements of subjective evaluations. The notion of good and bad “exert a strong organising influence on other concepts within the system” (p.358) and as a result, impacts on thoughts and behaviour in important ways. Findings from the study by Nespor (1979) clarify this point. History teachers who value their subject matter in different ways, reflect their difference in their teaching goals. Thus, history teachers who felt that learning history is more than the acquisition of factual knowledge, preferred to use the subject matter in teaching learners lifelong skills such as manners and how to organise writing tasks.

Pivotal to the formation of beliefs are striking personal experiences, episodes or events which are stored in the memory as critical episodes (Abelson, 1979). These critical images are a source of reference to reaffirm a believer’s stance about an existence of belief. In the study, Nespor (1987) found that the English teacher, mentioned earlier, ‘referred’ to her memories as a child learning in school, to create her vision of an alternative lesson – one that she would have liked to experience as a child. Negative instances of learning in the past, had impacted upon the English teacher; other teachers in the study owned that past experiences were used as reference for their present behaviour in the classroom. This experience is reported in several teacher belief studies discussed in sections 3. 2, 3. 3 and 3. 4.

Another feature of belief systems is the state of unboundedness (Abelson, 1979, Nespor, 1987). What this means is that beliefs “have no clear rules for determining

the relevance of beliefs to real events and situations” (Nespor, *ibid.*, p. 321). Beliefs are therefore formulated in relation to their significance and relevance to the believer but not to others (Rokeach, 1965). It is not possible to draw a boundary to exclude aspects of experiences, situations or concepts which could be considered irrelevant in the formation of beliefs because the criteria for their exclusion is unclear and unpredictable (Abelson, 1979).

Group consensus is, therefore, not a prerequisite for the acceptability or validity of a belief or belief system. Abelson (1979) uses the term nonconsensuality to describe the independent nature of belief system where “the elements of one system might be quite different from those of a second in the same domain” (p. 356). In short, the belief may be disputable but less malleable to change (Rokeach, 1965). When change occurs to a belief or a belief system, it is not a result of reasoned argument or based on evidence but rather a matter of “conversion or gestalt shift” (Nespor, 1987, p. 321) over turning previously held beliefs with widespread repercussions (Rokeach, 1965). They change in ways that are deemed important by the believer. Beliefs are covered in a cloak of invisibility until the believer behaves in a manner which reveals his or her beliefs. Beliefs are also said to be made up of a system of interconnected network so that a shift or change in one belief may result in a massive repercussion on other beliefs. Thus beliefs can be both resistant to external influence yet sensitive to internal influence.

In the field of education, there exists a large body of literature that supports the notion of the role of cognitive constructs in the development preservice teachers. Kagan (1992) found in her survey of “learning-to-teach” studies that the most dominant theme emerging from her review, 27 empirical studies in all, focused on changing behaviour, beliefs or images held by preservice teachers as part of their professional growth.

As a consequence of many studies, a plethora of terminologies has emerged to describe teacher beliefs, among them - “attitudes, values, judgements, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy”(Pajares, 1992:309).

The large number of terms highlight attempts by researchers to “make explicit and visible the frames of reference through which individual teachers perceive and process information”(Clark and Peterson, 1986). Upon admission to a teacher preparation program, student teachers make their first formal contact with the teaching profession as prospective teachers. But as prospective teachers, they enter into the profession with beliefs about teaching developed over a number of years. As learners in schools interacting with teachers and others in the profession has led to an establishment of beliefs about teaching (Lortie, 1975, Powell, 1992, LaBoskey, 1993). Prior knowledge about teaching learnt in this way has led student teachers to develop a variety of cognitive representations about the program they are about to enter (Pintrich, 1990) in ways which are personal to the believer and not open to critical examination or evaluation (Nespor, 1987).

Bearing in mind that prospective teachers enter the teaching domain with prior beliefs, it is useful to explore these beliefs and how their conceptions impacted on student teachers’ attempts at learning to become teachers. According to Ely (1991),

by recognising and acknowledging our own myths and prejudices we can more effectively put them in their place... Greater self-knowledge can help us to separate out thoughts and feelings from those others, to be less judgmental, to appreciate others’ experiences and thus go beyond our own understandings and to develop professionally (p. 122).

Because there are many studies on teacher beliefs published over the years, I have chosen to discuss here a selection of studies, on the basis of their relevance to the foci of my study. Since my study explores teacher beliefs developed during training and post-training, I will discuss studies which reflect the development of teacher beliefs in similar circumstances. In addition, and with reference to the properties of belief formation as posited by Rokeach (1965) and Abelson (1979) that early conceptualisations of beliefs tend to remain consistent and resistant to change (section 3. 1 Nature of Belief Systems), it is therefore important to discuss studies investigating teacher beliefs.

This section will therefore discuss the development and influence of teacher beliefs prior to training, during training and in the beginning year of teaching .

3. 2 Teacher Beliefs: Prior to training

Several studies have reported that student teachers enter a teaching program with personal beliefs and preconceptions of teachers, teaching, students and learning to teach (Wubbels, 1992, Calderhead, 1991a, Zeichner and Gore, 1990, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann, 1987, Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). Images formulated through personal experiences influence the ways in which student teachers interact with the teaching program. So what sort of images do prospective teachers have of the teaching domain?

Holt-Reynolds (1992), used the term lay theory to describe:

beliefs developed naturally over time without the influence of instruction. Preservice teachers do not consciously learn them unannounced, recognised moment from formal teaching/learning episode. Rather lay theories represent tacit knowledge lying dormant and unexamined by the student (Barclay and Wellman, 1986). Developed over long years of participation in and observation of classroom (Lortie, 1975) and teaching/learning incidents occurring in schools, homes or the larger community (Measor, 1985, Sikes, 1987). Lay theories are based on untutored interpretations of personal, lived experiences(p. 326).

According to Goodson, (1992), student teachers' lay theories are developed within the dimensions of cultural myths and historical contexts because emerging classroom practices "are transmitted and reshaped never existing in isolation from larger social traditions" (p. 242). As an example, the philosophy of teaching as adopted by all teacher education programs conducted by teaching colleges in Malaysia, places a great deal of emphasis on the teacher's role as a leader within the community.

In a study by Sugrue (1997), nine regular students (late adolescents) and six mature students were interviewed within five months of the start of the teaching course, before teaching experience. The study found subtle variation in its findings, reflecting the differences in the experiences of regular student teachers and mature student teachers. One theme emerging from the study is how personal identification of self as teacher was developed by observing teachers through comments from significant others.

Regular student teachers show that lay theories about teacher role were developed through observing teachers teach over the years and through comments from people significant to them. Observing the respect teachers received from the community helped shape a positive perception of teaching and being a teacher (Calderhead and Robson, 1991, Grossman, 1989).

Critical episodes (Abelson, 1979, Nespor, 1987) in their life experiences such as baby sitting and helping younger siblings with homework, reinforced the construction of an image of themselves as having a persona suitable for teaching. A case study conducted by Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1986) illustrated how Janice, a pre-service teacher, felt her experience of teaching her siblings to do farm work like driving the family tractor, laid the groundwork for the teaching profession. Janice relied on the way she was taught, how she taught her sibling and the school textbook as her sources of pedagogic knowledge (p. 244). She felt teaching was about getting into the classroom using common sense or things she already knew (p.245). She also had developed a stereotypical notion that girls like to read about romance while boys want to read action oriented books. More invidious was that the reading program during the teaching course perpetuated her assumption that learners from low income families are low achievers.

Mature student teachers developed beliefs about teaching from life experiences, much in the same way as regular student teachers, but the scope of experiences is often wider than those of regular student teachers. Incidences in their life experiences such as instructing someone to wind surf, trouble shooting in the financial services and parenting, were critical episodes in constructing beliefs about teacher qualities (Sugrue, 1997). Such work experience reinforced their belief of self as teacher.

Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann's (1986) study found that unlike Janice, Sarah, a mature preservice teacher and a parent, found education courses, such as educational psychology, relevant. She was able to extrapolate knowledge from education courses to inform her teaching practices (p. 248). In addition, Sarah learnt to teach by observation during her fieldwork and by practice. The study found that the teaching program had reaffirmed Sarah's personal belief that teacher behaviour and teaching are influenced by the classroom context (p. 251). The case study of Janice and Sarah, concluded that their approach to pedagogic thinking and differences in the rate of

progress made in their conceptual shift to becoming a teacher were influenced by personal history.

As more preservice teaching programs open their admissions to mature students (Bullough and Knowles, 1990), their experiences working in non-educational environment are seen to impact on the teaching program in different ways from regular students (Powell, 1992, Calderhead and Robson, 1991). Similarly, Powell (1992) found significant differences in the way the traditional students (regular students) and non-traditional student (mature students) responded to the teaching program and that this reflected the kinds of personal theories that the two groups used to make meaning of their current experiences.

Both groups were given the task of concept mapping their thoughts about teaching in the first session of a methods course. In the second week of the methods course, student teachers were asked to teach their peers a brief lesson. Preconceptions about teaching were captured when student teachers had to rely on past experiences to articulate their beliefs about teaching and also to plan and implement their lessons (section 2. 3 The Role of Mental Constructs in Approaches to Teaching). Three categories emerged from the analysis of the data, life experiences, schooling experiences, and personal features.

Within the life experiences category, the non-traditional student teachers attributed their confidence to prior work experiences such as being church preacher and being marketing and sales consultant as well as to non-teaching duties like parenting. Traditional students, on the other hand, referred to significant others such as family members.

In the schooling experiences category, two significant findings were noted. Traditional student teachers developed their beliefs about teaching based on positive

or negative images of past teachers. Non-traditional student teachers referred less to past teachers as role models. The second finding was that non-traditional teachers planned lessons following what little strategies were learnt in the introductory methods course whereas traditional students were predisposed to plan and to teach as they were taught in schools. These findings show that the longer a student teacher is away from the teaching domain, before entering a teaching program, other experiences and course inputs are used more as sources of reference.

Beliefs and values about teaching and students were significant influences on both groups. Student teachers were able to express empathy with learners. Both groups made observations about the importance of treating learners as individuals and with trust. Traditional student teachers based their observations on their recent experiences as learners whereas non-traditional student teachers drew on parenting knowledge and previous employment experiences.

The findings highlight the fact that the life experiences-based beliefs preservice teachers bring to formal teacher preparation impact differently on the pedagogical development of traditional and non-traditional student teachers. Student teachers who left school a long time ago are found to be more open to the concept of learning to become teachers through a teacher preparation program while student teachers fresh from school rely on images of how they were taught. In order to facilitate pedagogical development, student teachers need to be helped to re-examine and to critically re-evaluate existing beliefs within the context of personal experiences and personal interpretations of. As pointed out by Holt-Reynolds (1991), the potency of prior experiences on interpretations of appropriate pedagogy “work behind the scenes as invisible, often tacitly known criteria for evaluating the potential efficacy of ideas, theories, and strategies of instruction they encounter as they formally study teaching” (p. 81, in Knowles, Cole and Presswood, 1994).

Teacher images developed from observations of how others teach or go about the business of teaching can result in a highly idealised image and expectations of self as a teacher. Outstanding examples of good teaching observed over a number of years, held as strong mental images often collude with contextual experiences. Limited knowledge of the learners (Florio-Ruane and Lensmire, 1990) or unrealistic expectations about the learners they are about to teach, distort the realities of teaching and learning.

It has also been well documented (Wubbels, 1992, Bullough, 1991, Cole, 1990, Zeichner and Gore, 1990), that a persistent positive teacher image has led preservice student teachers to model their teaching practices on those images regardless of contextual realities. Cole and Knowles (1993) find that, as prospective teachers, many preservice student teachers experience a sense of disillusionment upon re-entry into the school environment. As a consequence, preservice student teachers find the task of re-evaluating prior beliefs and stance about teaching and teacher role juxtaposed against current experience, a difficult one. But strong persistent image prior to entering the teaching program, is not always bad. Knowles (1992) finds student teachers who had strong images about teaching and teachers had less difficulty coping with the teaching context than those who had weak images. There is also the possibility of congruency of some of the images which would reaffirm student teachers pre-existing images.

Kagan's (1992) review of empirical studies showed that personal beliefs exhibit the quality of stability and are resistant to change. They function as filters through which all knowledge is processed and interpreted. Holt-Reynolds (1992) found in her study that filters caused problems of communication between student teachers and teacher educators. Student teachers in the study interpreted that learners can be considered to be actively participating when listening to lectures or during instruction; the teacher educator, on the other hand, considered such activities as passive. Because these

differences were not recognised, meaningful discussion between student teachers and the teacher educator to address this concern was not carried out. The study found that the processes that might effect belief reconstruction were, thus, not possible.

From the perspective of professional development, it is essential that course providers recognise the potent force of lay theories or beliefs which shape teaching identities and influence over pedagogic developments among student teachers. It is necessary that student teachers are engaged in making explicit beliefs that are implicit at the start of a teaching program because pedagogic knowledge and practices offered during the program have to compete with existing beliefs. The process of belief reconstruction can be put in place when all participants in the teaching program recognise the existence of prior beliefs and the impact they have on teacher development.

3. 3 Teacher Beliefs: during training

Beliefs developed prior to training form a knowledge structure about teaching and learning take on the role of filtering all aspects of new knowledge and experience (Munby, 1982, Clark and Peterson, 1986, Nespor, 1987, Pintrich, 1990, Pajares, 1992). A review of these studies gave rise to three assumptions, firstly, teacher beliefs affect teachers' perceptions and decisions in classroom practices; secondly, teacher beliefs influence how teachers make sense of new knowledge received during training and teaching; and finally, teacher preparation programs need to understand the impact of teacher beliefs on teacher development in order to improve pedagogic knowledge and practices. Belief systems, therefore, shape the way teachers construct their thoughts and their actions.

By exploring the psychological context of teaching and learning, we become more aware that efforts to promote teacher knowledge must take into account of teacher beliefs and how teachers conceive their training (Berliner, 1987, Calderhead, 1988, Zeichner, Tabachnick and Densmore, 1987). Since my study attempts to explore the nature of beliefs developed over the period of training especially during the teaching practice period (section 1. 1 The Study) and how pre-service teachers conceive their training in the light of contextual realities, I have selected a number of studies which have investigated issues relevant to my own study. I hope to discuss my findings within the framework of previous findings and to highlight pertinent facts about the nature of professional teacher development emerging from my study (chapter 6 Case Study Insights).

Although there is overwhelming evidence about the influential nature of prior beliefs, there is also a view that beliefs developed from years of observing teachers teach and through interacting with teachers and from the view of a learner is a one-sided view. Practices in the classroom are outcomes of teacher thoughts and teacher decisions not shared with learners. Learners have no way of knowing of the thinking and decision making processes which teachers go through prior to teaching. Empirical evidences also support the view that latent theories about teaching and learning developed from the position of learners are vague in form and untested. Yet they continue to be used as a source of reference for most teachers.

According to Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984), there is an on-going view that teacher preparation programs have the effect of strengthening student teachers' experiences and in fact complement teacher development. They agree that while those who subscribe to this opinion view the preparation of teachers within the larger sociopolitical context (p. 29), more information is needed to study the impact of teacher preparation programs on the development of the personal and professional perspectives of the student teacher.

Recent studies provided insightful information on the importance of personal beliefs in professional development. Kettle and Sellars (1996) conducted a case study on the nature of student teachers' practical theories and what theories were evolved from training. Although I have consistently used the term, teacher beliefs, with reference to my own study, I am aware of the various terms used by various researchers to describe a schema which have hitherto been "informal, private and unarticulated" (Bullough and Knowles, 1991). The term practical theory of teaching as defined by Handal and Lauvas (1987), is yet another attempt to provide a clear explanation about a mental construct that is not immediately obvious but all the same is a fine explanation of the notion of teacher beliefs. According to Handal and Lauvas (ibid) practical theory is:

A person's private, integrated but ever changing system of knowledge, experience and values which is relevant to teaching practice at any particular time. This means, first of all, that 'theory' in this sense a personal construct which continuously established within the individual through a series of diverse events (such as practical experience, reading, listening, looking at other people's practice) which are mixed together or integrated with the changing perspective provided by the individual's values and ideals... it is indeed a practical theory, primarily functioning as a basis or background against which action must be seen, not as a theoretical and logical 'construct' aimed at the scientific purposes of explanation, understanding or prediction.

The subjects in Kettle and Sellars' (1996) case study are, Annie, a regular student (section 3. 2 Teacher Beliefs: prior to training) and Janice, a mature student who had worked in a non-education environment before resigning for motherhood. The investigation took place over two teaching practices carried out in the first and second semester in the third year of a four-year BEd degree program. Annie and Janice (and

other student teachers) were placed in schools for two weeks in the first semester of teaching practice and for three weeks in the second semester. Both student teachers were interviewed to ascertain what constructs about teaching and learning existed prior to teaching. It also allowed the researcher to assess the influence of practical teaching on the development of practical theory.

The study reported that Annie and Janice entered the teaching program with views about what is involved in teaching developed from past experiences. As they progressed through teaching experience, both student teachers appeared to re-evaluate their practical theories and to refine the broad base theories into more 'realistic' concepts. For example, at the beginning of her teaching experience, Annie felt inadequate and was concerned with her ability to conduct a lesson and to be liked by her students. Toward the end of the study, Annie was showing evidence of a shift in concerns; she was moving toward assessing her effectiveness in terms of learning outcomes rather than what she can do in the classroom (p. 19). The study also found that Janice was able to clarify her practical theories even more after her teaching experiences (p. 19).

Kettle and Sellars (1996) were certain of the catalytic impact of teaching experiences on the evolution of practical theories in student teachers. Both subjects re-examined practical theories they brought to the program in the light of their practical teaching experiences. In comparison to the simplistic view of teaching and learning held prior to teaching practice, there was a greater degree of realism in their conception of teaching and learning toward the end of the study. The study concluded that the combined factors of personal biography, classroom teaching situation, institutional biography and the teaching program contributed to the professional development of student teachers.

Tillema's (1994) study, on the other hand, attributed the effectiveness of a teaching program on the degree of congruity between teacher beliefs and the knowledge presented during the training. With reference to views in studies by Mannes and Kintsch (1988) and Bereiter (1990), Tillema (ibid. p. 601) agrees that knowledge built over the years covering many aspects of teaching and learning forms a powerful base in teacher cognitions (p. 601) and is, therefore, not easily dislodged by new knowledge (Rokeach, 1965, Abelson, 1979).

In the study by Tillema (1994), teachers training for special needs certification were randomly placed in two groups. Unknown to them, one group was exposed to concept-based training and the other experienced-based training. A concept-based approach emphasises on trainer led teaching and learning of concepts. It takes no account of teacher beliefs and past experiences in its approach. Experienced-based approach makes use of personal beliefs and past experiences and a sharing of experiences among participants. Diagnostic information on teacher knowledge from both groups were made available to respective trainers.

Results from the study showed that the closer teacher beliefs are to the knowledge presented, the more learning took place. In addition, the training was more successful when trainees' knowledge structure is close to trainers' expectation. Evidence from the study suggest that in order to restructure existing knowledge especially among experienced teachers, teaching programs must contend with a broader knowledge structure developed from years of teaching. This behaviour is explained by Clark and Peterson (1986) in their model of teacher thought and action (Fig.4).

Teacher behaviour in the classroom develops from constant interaction between teacher and learner leading to an establishment of some routine behaviour between the two parties. The establishment of expected behaviour from teacher and learner toward each other is an outcome from many hours of negotiation, knowingly or

unknowingly conducted, during lessons. Thus, knowledge conceptions evolved from practical teaching experiences are not “merely conceptual in nature but also intermingled with evaluative meaning and action potential” (Tillema, 1994, p. 613).

Studies of the cognitive dimensions in pre-service teachers learning to become teachers of English as a second language (ESL) are recent contributions to the already extensive research in teacher cognition (Johnson, 1994). The findings of three recent studies illustrate additional aspects contributing to the cognitive development in the preparation of ESL teachers.

Gebhard (1990) investigated the behaviour of seven ESL student teachers as they proceeded through sixteen weeks of teaching practice. He felt that more investigations are needed to focus on the interactions among student teachers in order to understand what opportunities are made of the teaching situations in changing teacher behaviour and toward teaching as a whole. Collecting data as a participant observer, he recorded shifts in teaching behaviour in four areas: setting up and carrying out lesson, using classroom space, selecting content for teaching and treating learner errors (p. 122). Gebhard (ibid.) reckoned that changes in teacher behaviour occur because student teachers were in a setting which enabled them to experiment with various teaching activities as well as to talk with other student teachers about their teaching experiences.

In Gebhard's (1990) study, June, a student teacher, did not treat learner errors because she had read influential material positing a view that error treatment could not help her students master the language. On a number of occasions June was 'shown' how learner errors were treated-when she observed a fellow student teacher teach, another article dealing specifically with different strategies for treating errors and seminar discussions on error correction – all contributed toward changing her belief in dealing with learner errors in the classroom. Through various activities, June

worked through her own doubts and beliefs before making a decision. June was engaged in belief reconstruction in the light of her current experiences in the classroom and outside the classroom. Evidence from other studies (section 3. 1 The Nature of Belief Systems), beliefs grounded in experience are consistent with teacher behaviour.

According to Johnson (1994), Cathy, an ESL pre-service teacher, showed her belief in the traditional notion that teachers are in charge if they are in absolute control of what goes on in the classroom. Cathy also believed in conducting language activities that resemble real life such as debating a controversial issue. In one debate activity, when a learner preferred to be a member of the opposition party rather than the one she assigned him, Cathy resolved the dilemma by asking the whole class to view the debate as role play. Thus although her espoused belief was that she used language activities that were drawn from real situations, in reality she was unable to do so without jeopardising her lessons. To deal with the dilemma she was experiencing, she justified her decisions with explanations that were not accurate so that her decisions appear to be congruent with her beliefs (Nisbett and Ross, 1980, Pajares, 1992). Johnson (1994) was of the view that “more often than not, such traditional images seemed to completely override these teachers’ projected images of themselves as second language teachers and of second language teaching.” (p. 449). Evidence from her study suggests that traditional images were retained not because of many years of observing teaching (Lortie, 1975, Pajares, 1992) but because alternative images of ESL teaching, congruent to the projected images of themselves as teachers, were weak

Woods (1996) in his study, found that teacher B, an ESL student teacher, was influenced by both his past experience of learning a second language and his early teaching experiences as an ESL teacher. Teacher B found living in a French speaking environment, enabled him to master the communicative aspect of the language than

when he was learning it in a formal language class. After attending a linguistic course, his belief in learning a second language holistically and communicatively, was reaffirmed. When he taught immigrants, using communicative strategies, he was met with resistance. He became aware that his learners expected a formal grammar lesson much as they were used to in their home countries and were unhappy with his communicative strategies. It was evident that his learners did not share his experience of learning French. According to Woods (*ibid.*), “this conflict was the beginning of a major development in his beliefs about learning and teaching related to who is responsible for what in the management of learning” (p. 206). Smith (1996) found that ESL teachers who professed to the communicative based view to language teaching had different goals from those with a grammar based view. There was evidence in this Canadian study, that the teachers behaved consistently with expressed beliefs.

However, ESL teachers do not always behave according to expressed beliefs. Studies of teacher beliefs about reading by Duffy and Anderson (1986) and Hoffman and Kugle (1982) found that teachers used teaching strategies which did not reflect their expressed beliefs. A similar finding was made by Yim (1993) on ESL teachers in Singapore whose stated preference for communicative language teaching was not evident in their instructional behaviour. Like the two other studies referred to here, the need to conform to a prescribed curriculum was quoted as one reason for the discrepancy between teacher behaviour and expressed beliefs.

Student teachers have also been known to refer to their personal experience of learning a second language to filter models of language teaching presented to them during training and to remodel them accordingly. Almarza (1996) found that one student teacher attributed her success in teaching to the direct method of teaching model taught during the course. Three other student teachers rejected the model citing their belief that learner experience ought to be central to teaching. This study

reaffirms Tillema's (1994) findings that the more congruent a belief is to knowledge presented, the greater the possibility that new knowledge is internalised.

3. 4 Beginning Teachers: Issues and Concerns

The first year of teaching is seldom easy or trouble free. It is a year when most beginning teachers will need to find their niche in the order of things in the school. It is often filled with uncertainties and anxieties. The causes of teacher anxiety are not the primary concern of this study but understanding how new teachers make the transition from a student teacher to a novice teacher is. Increased understanding of how beginning teachers make meaning of real world experience within the framework of existing beliefs and expectations may help future students teachers and teacher educators plan a better teaching program.

To enlighten this study, several published studies highlighting the issues and concerns of beginning teachers are discussed in this section. The findings from these studies provide illuminating evidence of the common concerns that beginning teachers share and those that are specific to the context in which they teach. Other studies (section 3. 1 The Nature of Belief Systems) have documented evidence that first contact with learners in school during training has, usefully, informed student teachers on various aspects of teaching and learning. Under 'controlled conditions' of teaching practice, student teachers were forced to re-examine their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about teaching and learning (section 3. 3 Teacher Beliefs: during training; section 5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations). Thus, it is not incorrect to assume, that in the novice year of teaching, beginning teachers go through again the process of re-examining existing notions of teaching and learning developed during training.

Studies in the beginning teacher provide information of dual value; firstly, for the planning and the conduct of future teaching programs and secondly, for establishing a school based induction program for beginning teachers. Veenam (1984) reviewed 83 studies on perceived problems of teachers in their first year of teaching. He defines problem as “a difficulty that beginning teachers encounter in the performance of their task, so that intended goals may be hindered” (p. 143). He found that there were eight perceived problems among beginning teachers in elementary and secondary schools: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students’ work, relationship with parents, organisation of class work, inadequate teaching materials and dealing with problems of individual students. If we reclassify Veenam’s listing of perceived problems, it highlights the two main areas of concern that beginning teachers encounter lie in dealing with people, i.e. students and parents, and in planning and teaching lessons.

Veenam’s review draws attention to the concept of “reality shock” that beginning teachers experience when they move from the situation of learning to become a teacher to working as a teacher. Reality shock

indicate[s] the collapse of missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of the classroom life...[it] deals with the assimilation of a complex reality which forces itself incessantly upon the beginning teacher, day in and day out. This reality must be mastered continually, especially in the first period of actual teaching (p. 143-144).

Muller-Fohrbrodt, Cloetta and Dann (1978, in Veenam, 1988) have identified five indicators of reality shock which provide the notion that reality shock is tangible and real. Although the list was drawn up so many years ago, findings from recent studies confirm that reality shock continues to plague beginning teachers. More importantly, my own investigation on experiences of beginning teachers also points to evidence of

reality shock (section 5. 4 Phase 4: Interviews; chapter 6 Case Study Insights). The five indications of reality shock (Muller-Fohrbrodt, Cloetta and Dann, 1978, p. 144) are as follows:

1. Perceptions of problems: This category describes complains of work load, psychological and physical stress experienced by beginning teachers.
2. Changes of behaviour: This category describes implicit changes to teacher behaviour which do not conform to personal beliefs brought about by external pressures.
3. Changes of attitudes: This category describes shifts in belief constructs about teaching and learning.
4. Changes of personality: This category deals with the idea of emotions and self-concept of beginning teachers.
5. Leaving the teaching position: This category refers to a situation where inability to reconcile to the teaching conditions, beginning teachers leave the profession.

Schmidt and Knowles (1993) investigating four women teachers at the beginning of their teaching profession found that they faced common areas of difficulties. Personal histories impacted powerfully on the way the four teachers perceived themselves as teachers. Anna remembered the teacher who made learning fun whereas Nancy recalled the teacher who made efforts to establish a relationship with her. They all reflected on the teacher they least liked as the ones who were unhelpful and seemed distant. Also they based their belief about how a student wants to be disciplined on the way they had responded to discipline when they were students.

Having developed some notion about what they found most pleasing in teachers, they strove to be like the pleasing and caring teacher with unfortunate consequences. Gail, Anna and Nancy saw themselves in the role of counsellors which eventually proved to be ineffective. Schmidt and Knowles (1993) reported that the teachers began to

view themselves as uncaring teachers when they were unable to reconcile their behaviour with the role they had assigned to themselves.

In instructional matters, the feeling of failure is further enhanced by their past successes as summer camp tutors. All four teachers were not assigned to teach their subject specialism. It was thus not unexpected that they should express uncertainty about their knowledge of the subject they were teaching. Anna was demoralised whereas Angela and Gail persevered with the lesson, ignoring the students who professed to know what was being taught (p. 433). In attempting to live up to the self imposed image of a teacher, more often than not they were distracted from their planned lesson. This led to a constant shift in their teaching approaches which further undermined their confidence.

Establishing relationships with colleagues and students posed problems to the teachers. The feeling of wanting to be liked by people permeates their relationship with their colleagues and students. When the principal did not comment on her teaching, Nancy thought that the principal disliked her. Gail, however, felt that the reason why her mentor did not comment on her teaching was because she [Gail] was an incompetent teacher. All four teachers worried that students did not like them. Although each teacher was able to identify positive learner behaviour toward them, it was not enough to build confidence in the perception of themselves as competent teachers.

The reality of the classroom situation in the first year of teaching demands that the teachers re-evaluate once again existing beliefs in the context of real classroom experiences. According to Schmidt and Knowles (1993), the teachers' inability to comprehend that unsuccessful practices cannot be attributed to the teacher alone had led them to a feeling of disillusionment about their own capabilities as teachers. At

the end of the first year of teaching, Schmidt and Knowles (ibid.) reported that the teachers left the teaching profession.

Cooke and Pang (1991) conducted a year long study on 129 novice teachers, in Hong Kong, who were identified within categories of trained, untrained and partially trained teachers. Cooke and Pang (ibid.) defined trained teachers as having completed a post-graduate certificate in education, untrained teachers were graduates without a teaching certification and partially trained teachers were graduates who had attended a one week intensive teacher preparation course. It is the findings of the trained group of teachers that I will discuss because like the subjects of my study, they are university graduates with a teaching certification. The study by Cooke and Pang (ibid.) looked at the teachers at three different points of the initial year corresponding with the school academic year.

Like the teachers in the study by Schmidt and Knowles (1993), 35% of trained cohort in the study by Cooke and Pang (1991) confirmed that first year of teaching was not easy. The study reported that beginning teachers spent a great deal of time on lesson preparation at the beginning of the year but gradually decreasing by the end of the year. Trained teachers were said to experience no discrepancies in their expectations of the kinds of work loads they were made to carry or in their expectations of unmotivated and badly behaved learners. In other words, the reality of the situation matched their expectations of work conditions. According to the study, the reality shock was least experienced by trained teachers whereas the partially trained group was reported to experience the greatest shock.

Cooke and Pang (1991) reported that the teachers made more significant job adjustments at the beginning of the year than they did at the end of the year. The teachers had difficulty in adjusting to the idea of heavy work load required of a teacher. They felt that it prevented them from doing their best. The teachers were able

to adjust to the scope of responsibilities and to feelings of collegiality. There was also a growing sense of confidence in carrying out their responsibilities properly .

By the end of the first year of teaching, 24% of the whole group of trained, untrained and partially trained teachers declared their intention to leave the teaching profession but in reality, the study reported that only four teachers left after the first year of teaching. The study found evidence among the teachers who left, of a feeling of unsuitability for the teaching profession and the inability to reconcile their ideals of a teacher with school expectations as reasons for leaving the profession. Although four actually left the profession, it is important to note that 24% declared their intention to leave. The study however, did not report the reasons why they wanted to leave, but did not do so. This raises questions as to whether they chose to remain teachers maybe because they loved teaching despite encountering problems or because they had not been trained to do other jobs.

Novice teachers considered an induction programme desirable to assist them with their duties as teachers. The programme they suggested included regular meetings with senior teachers to monitor their progress, class visits by experienced colleagues followed by post-lesson discussion and social activities that would bring about a feeling of belonging. They wished however to be given less teaching and extra-curricular load; neither did they want to be assigned to teach examination classes.

Olson and Osborne (1991) conducted a study on four elementary teachers in Canada in their first year of teaching. Like the teachers in the study by Schmidt and Knowles (1993), the teachers in the study by Olson and Osborne (*ibid.*) also experienced discrepancies between their expectations of teaching and the reality of the classroom. The teachers initial sense of disorientation arising from the discrepancies threatened to overwhelm them. The report found that a greater part of the first year of teaching was spent in reconciling the discrepancies. Part of the problem lay in the expectation

of their ability to plan and to teach wonderful lessons where students learn many things. The reality was that they planned lessons that were unachievable and this led to a feeling of inadequacy.

Like the teachers in the Hong Kong study, they assumed a great deal of responsibility in teaching and this caused anxiety. As they became more confident, they began to realise that they were not solely responsible for the problems in the classroom. Problems arose over uncertainties about how much control they needed to exercise over events in the classroom. Olson and Osborne (1991) reported that the teachers made progress by becoming more anticipatory rather than reactionary in their behaviour to events in the classroom.

The teachers expressed a need for affiliation with other members of staff as a means to build their confidence and as a source of emotional security. They also felt that this would enable them to seek support from senior members thus preventing them from feeling isolated. The study found that the teachers progressed from initially planned lessons that were content focused to process-based lessons. The beginning teachers felt confident and secure enough to plan lessons that met with student needs as well as curriculum needs. As they become more aware of the reality of teaching, the study found that the teachers re-evaluated their role in relation to practical experiences. The study reported that belief change in novice teachers was slow, painful and accompanied by feelings of uncertainty and insecurity.

Discussions of several studies in this section highlight the common areas of concern faced by beginning teacher, be they in Hong Kong or in Canada. The studies show that beginning teachers do make sense of teaching as they progress in the first year of teaching but their progress is fraught with uncertainty and feelings of inadequacy. All novice teachers expressed a desire for an induction year where they would benefit from a buddy system with an appointed senior teacher.

In a study by Rust (1993) the two beginning teachers in her study expressed feelings of growing distrust of the principal and experienced a sense of isolation and insecurity. She commented that while the training has prepared teachers to teach, it has been less successful in enabling beginning teachers to cope with less definable aspects of being a teacher, for example, in establishing collegiality with faculty members. Establishing relationships with members of staff who have been together over the years and having to come to terms with the prevailing ethos of school in general proved to be daunting for the subjects of this study (section 5.4 Phase 4: Interviews; chapter 6 Case Studies Insights). Therefore finding a way to support beginning teachers, such as establishing a mentoring program, is desirable as a long term measure benefiting the novice teacher, the institution and the profession.

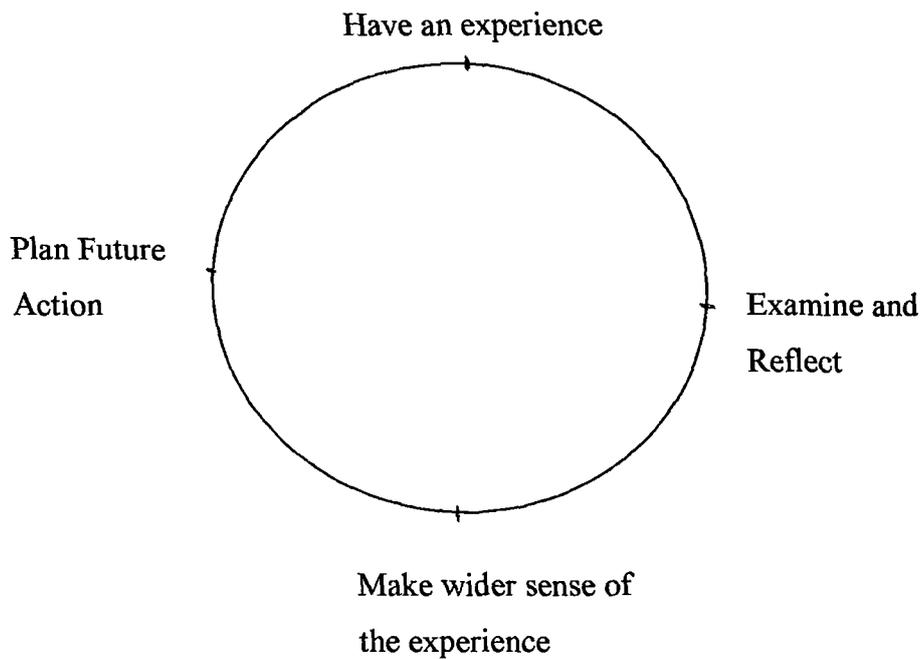
Mentoring, according to Hamilton (1993) is “a way of helping another understand more fully and learn more comprehensively from their day-to-day experience” (p. 21) Watkins and Wally (1993) and Acton et al (1992) assert that the objective of mentoring is to enhance the professional role that is required of the profession and the mentor’s role is to enable the novice (or the student teacher) to make wider sense of the experience.

Mentoring of beginners is an important follow-up element for the professional development of newly qualified teachers. It has multi-faceted concept enabling the beginners of a profession not only to learn their new roles but to learn to engage in critical assessment of their own performance in their new profession and to continue to do so beyond that crucial first year. In their study of mentoring of newly qualified teachers, they found that having someone to talk to benefited the new teachers and their mentors. Consequently, the two-way flow of constructive criticisms and feedback were valued by both parties. Experienced teachers who became mentors found that in having to make clear their decisions and behaviour, they had to re-

examine their own practices. Beginning teachers also appreciated the on-the-job guidelines and advice from the mentors.

Kolb's four stages in an experiential learning cycle (Jayne, 1995) gives useful insights into the stages of learning which resemble the gradual process in which beliefs about teaching developed among the subjects of my study through the critical stages of their training and in the first year of teaching. In addition, versions of this cycle, Fig. 7 below, establish the framework on which various mentor projects have been developed.

Fig. 7 Kolb's experiential learning cycle



Source: Jayne, E. (1995): Mentoring: A universal panacea for staff development. *Teacher Development*, October 1995, p. 43

Briefly, there are four points on the cycle indicating the stages of experiences. Stage one denotes the experience itself before moving on to stage two which is examining and reflecting on the experience. In stage three, the experience is viewed within the perspectives of existing knowledge and practices so that much more sense is derived from the experience and added to existing repertoire of knowledge, practices and experiences in stage four. All the stages in the learning cycle offer a challenge to beginning teachers and their mentors. In the process of engaging reflection, the novice teacher and the experience teacher have to proceed on mutual trust and respect. Reflecting accurately, whether on your own or with assistance from the experience teacher demands a great deal of openness at a time when beginning teachers have been reported to be feeling vulnerable and inadequate (section 5.4 Phase 4: Interviews; chapter 6 Case studies). Mentors on the hand may feel pressured to be a 'perfect' model or to go into a teaching mode. Neither behaviour would benefit either one.

In order to have any kind of dialogue between the new teacher and the mentor, some observation of teaching, by either party in their class, is desirable. Observation is a familiar tool in training but it takes on a new dimension when it is conducted during the transition phase of training and in the beginning year of teaching. Being in the same classroom, one teaching and the other observing, provides a common pedagogic framework on which the parties could refer to during the dialogue. This enables the parties to re-examine and re-evaluate their personal perspectives about teaching and learning in relation to other peoples' perspectives too.

Mentoring during the transition phase is a system enabling the novice to be initiated into a lifelong career where support for a novice from an experienced personnel is provided on the basis of professional negotiation and gradually withdrawn on mutual agreement between the parties. In this way, the foundation for a long term positive outlook in the chosen professional career is developed at the beginning of the career.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology and Design

4.0 Qualitative Research Paradigm

The nature of involvement between the researcher with the phenomenon under investigation and the methods used to gather detailed information about the phenomenon are elements that identify qualitative research from quantitative research. The debate between the proponents of qualitative and quantitative research is on-going although qualitative research has become more widespread and popular among researchers in education for reasons explored below.

Quantitative research methods in education have been the most accepted and most widely used. Being congruent with the notions of scientific psychology, quantitative methods lean towards a science bias. Thus, quantitative research studies were said to appropriate the characteristics usually associated with science and scientific experiments such as objectivity and generalisability. According to Fenstermacher (1986), “in specific context, quantitative methods are also known as confirmatory, hypothesis testing, or predictive methods” (p. 41, in M. Wittrock, 1986) gathered in various ways such as experiment, correlational study and survey research. The results from quantitative research are reported and interpreted with the backing of strong statistical analysis.

According to Fenstermacher (1986), in a bid to establish qualitative research as a viable research approach, qualitative educational studies took on board elements

usually associated with quantitative research such as generalisability concepts and cause-effect. Proponents of qualitative research say such presuppositions are appropriate when dealing with experiments in physical science but they are difficult to apply when dealing with the human psyche. As a consequence, research elements which were lauded in physical research such as predictability and control, weakened the popularity of quantitative research as the only viable form of research for education. As Cronbach (1975) states succinctly:

The goal of our work [qualitative research]...is not to amass generalisations, atop which a theoretical tower can someday be erected...the special task of the social scientist in each generation is to pin down the contemporary facts. Beyond that he shares with the humanistic scholar and the artist in the effort to gain insight into contemporary relationships, and to realign the culture's view of man with present realities. To know a man as he is is no mean aspiration (in Fenstermacher, p. 42, 1986).

Cronbach's statement reflects the assumption underlying qualitative research. It is a significant statement in that it marked the shift of research emphasis, firstly, to the individual in his/her setting, and secondly, to what the researcher can learn from the individual in context. The starting point of a qualitative research begins with the individual and his/her environment and what information is revealed (Patton, 1990). The purpose of qualitative research is, therefore, to understand an individual or individuals behaving in a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction. What it is not, is to prove or disprove a theory, neither does it seek to generalise its findings to other individuals and to other settings. In view of the exploratory nature of my research focus, the naturalistic orientation of qualitative research, appeared to be an appropriate choice, in addition to other features summarised in the later part of this section.

This focus on personal responses in natural settings is a strong feature of the naturalistic approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 1998, Bailey, 1991, Cohen and Manion, 1990, Merriam, 1988, Guba and Lincoln, 1981). The definitions below outline the features of this type of inquiry.

Wolf and Tyritz (1977) view naturalistic inquiry as

aimed at understanding actualities, social realities and human perceptions that exist untainted by the unobtrusiveness of formal measurement or preconceived questions. It is a process geared to uncovering many idiosyncratic but nonetheless important stories told by real people, about real events, in real and natural ways... Naturalistic inquiry attempts to present 'slice-of-life' episodes documented through natural language and representing as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are (p. 28).

Concurring with the view held by Wolf and Tyritz, Stake (1985) offers his definition.

"The study of objects in their own environment, with a design relatively free of intervention and control. The work is often recognised around issues of interest to lay people (as opposed to specialists) and perhaps reported in ordinary (rather than technical) language (p. 28)".

From the definitions by Wolf and Tyritz (1977) and Stake (1985), qualitative methods which are 'unobtrusive' and non-interventional in nature are preferred over the strict empirical methods often associated with quantitative research. In the learning-to-teach studies she surveyed, Kagan (1992) found that over the last four decades, qualitative research methods have become more evident. These included interviews (Calderhead and Robson, 1991), stimulated recall (Bennett, 1991, Calderhead, 1981),

student teachers' written assignments (Chamberlain and Vallance, 1991, Florio-Ruane and Lensmire, 1990), tapes of conferencing (McLaughlin, 1991, Magliaro et al, 1989), video tapes (Wendel, 1989), seminar meetings (Bullough, 1990), experimental tasks (Calderhead and Robson, 1991, Grossman, 1989) and teaching logs/plan (Wildman et al, 1989).

My own reading of studies on teaching add the following methods to the growing list of qualitative research methods: repertory grids (Saka, 1995, Sendan, 1992, Yaxley, 1991, Coporaal, 1991, Diamond, 1991), personal narratives, teacher stories or anecdotes (Loughran, 1997, Russell, 1997, Richert, 1997, Sugrue, 1996), metaphor analysis (Bullough, 1996), portfolio assignments (LaBoskey, 1997), classroom observations (Wood, 1996), journals (Richards, 1994) and drawings of teacher images by student teachers (Weber and Mitchell, 1996). This list also suggests an increased preference for qualitative methods of inquiry when researching classroom based issues.

Typically, data collected in this way come from fieldwork. The researcher spends time in the field wherever the situation, events or people are important to the study. This entails the researcher immersing herself/himself in the life of the informants or the situation in the study. The researcher collects data by interviewing, conducting first hand observation and/or taking down field notes (Patton, 1990, Creswell, 1994). The data is valued for its 'insider' account (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and the perspectives and the meanings they have for the 'insider'.

Merriam (1988) views the role of the researcher as a

primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, the researcher, rather than through some inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or machine (p. 19).

Merriam (*ibid.*) goes on to explain that as a mediator of data, the researcher constantly acts on information gathered for the study to make on-the-spot decisions about the kinds of methods required to reveal even more information. What this implies is that methods are added on to existing ones (or taken away) depending on the researcher's evaluation on how much existing methods contribute to the study.

Before embarking on my fieldwork, I had pre-planned the conduct of my research which included identifying research tools that would obtain maximum information from my subjects (p. 117 Table 9 Study Design) such as teaching practice diary entries. Student teachers were asked to record their personal responses to the experiences during practical teaching as diary entries as often as they felt necessary. Following the principles of naturalistic inquiry, the frequency of entries and the length of each entry was left to the discretion of the individual student teacher. In order to maintain reliability and validity of the data as a record of personal response to events as they occur, and not a product of an afterthought or hindsight, the entries were scheduled to be gathered at the end of teaching practice. Unfortunately, the student teachers were unable to make diary entries during teaching practice and therefore were busily employed in the teaching activities. As a result, I had to abandon them as a potential source of data.

Another adjustment I had to make was to the questions that I had prepared to ask student teachers prior to the interviews. Having read about interviews going awry, I prepared a list of questions which were based on the themes developed from data gathered from the questionnaire survey in Phase 2 (Table 9 Study Design). During the interviews, I found that the themes were useful because the scope within each theme was broad enough to cover topics and experiences that student teachers wished to talk about and at the same time the themes reminded me of my research focus. In view of the naturalistic orientation of this study, the questions were used to stimulate the interaction as well as to probe into subjects' inner thoughts. The direction of the

interview and the questions that were asked were determined by both subjects' interest and research focus. As a consequence, some questions on the prepared list were asked, others were not.

It is therefore not surprising to find multiple methods in a naturalistic inquiry as a means of cross checking information as well as offsetting problems that may arise. In view of the fact that naturalistic inquiry often deals with opinion and interpretations, using more than one method reinforces the findings. Triangulating of information gathered through multiple methods adds rigour to the data and reaffirms findings. Many methods mean greater validity and reliability of the findings (Patton, 1990). Wood's (1996) research into teacher cognition in language teaching, for example, used several methods – interviews, classroom observation and video tapes for stimulated recall. In addition, logs, lesson plans and field notes were used to provide some degree of triangulation of data. In this way, in-depth data, specific to the research subject, are collected.

The element of generalisability of findings to a wider context was never a goal of naturalistic inquiry. However, the in-depth nature of the inquiry means that the findings give insightful explanations of a phenomenon which could be useful to other people in similar situations (Allwright and Bailey, 1991, Fenstermacher, 1985). As van Lier (1988) points out that

the first concern [of naturalistic inquiry] must be to analyse the data *as they are* rather than to compare them to other data to see how similar they are" (in Allwright and Bailey, 1991, p. 51).

A summary of the features of naturalistic inquiry here serves two purposes: firstly, to conceptualise the principles underlying naturalistic inquiry; secondly, to make a case for conducting my research with an orientation toward naturalistic inquiry.

- An investigation with naturalistic leaning will use qualitative research methods intended to reveal a holistic picture of a phenomenon. The whole phenomenon is studied as one structure so that the sum total of the phenomenon is revealed rather than parts of it. In this way, the findings reflect real world conditions where one gains better understanding of a phenomenon seen as a whole rather than as bits of discrete information. In investigating the development of teacher beliefs at different stages of their training and post-training, I find that this principle is sound. Teacher beliefs have been reported to develop over a period of time (see chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs), and can only be ascertained if the believers choose to reveal them to the researcher. Consequently, my findings from investigating this phenomenon are strengthened if the beliefs revealed a complete picture of what concerns student teachers during training and in their beginning year of teaching.
- Naturalistic inquiry promotes researching in a natural setting. Naturally occurring variables which continue to exist under these conditions, become part of the outcomes of a research. The emphasis lies in understanding a phenomenon in its natural setting so that the findings will reveal real world conditions in which the phenomenon operates. In order to achieve this, researcher manipulation is kept to a minimum, thereby, ensuring, as much as is possible, a true finding. By design, the conduct of my study, is set to allow for contact with my subjects in their natural teaching settings at different stages of their teaching program. This would enable me to record insightful data on teacher beliefs as they occur in settings familiar to teachers.
- Essential to naturalistic inquiry is the role of the researcher. The researcher's role is non-interventionist and non-manipulative in nature. The researcher is expected to come in close contact with the phenomenon or informants in the study, but, at the same time to keep a certain distance from the informants or from the phenomenon in the study for the purpose of maintaining objectivity. In my view, by getting close to informants, for example through participative observation, the researcher encourages trust, making the informants more confident about

interacting with the researcher. Much information, perhaps not thought of before the investigation, can be obtained in this way.

In order to achieve an in-depth investigation, it was prudent and practical to select a small group of subjects for this purpose. The advantage of investigating a small group is that more time could be found to elicit in-depth accounts from the informants about issues which concerns them as well as the perspectives developed from interacting with them. The emphasis is indeed on what sense the informants make of those experiences. Therefore, it was felt that the group was best investigated as a case study following closely the principles of naturalistic inquiry.

4. 1 Qualitative Case Study

Case study approach to research in education is relatively new in comparison with its use in other disciplines such as psychology, medicine and law. According to Merriam (1988), an imprecise definition of case study and what constitutes a case study approach, has led to a great deal of confusion. In order to have a better understanding of what constitutes this approach, this study takes a look at several definitions that are offered by various researchers.

The phrase, “bounded system” by Louis Smith (1968) is often quoted by various researchers (Stake, 1988, 1994, Merriam, 1988, Nunan, 1992) to explain what a case study is.

The crux of the definition is having some conception of the unity or totality of a system with some kind of outline or boundary. For instance, take a child with learning disabilities as the bounded system. You have an individual

pupil, in a particular circumstance, with a particular problem. What the researcher looks for are the systematic connections among observable behaviors, speculations, causes and treatments. What the study uncovers depends partly on what you are trying to do. The unity of the system depends partly on what you want to find out (p.255).

Several elements of case study can be picked up from this early definition. It is the study of a specific issue and a patterned behaviour. It is particularistic in nature in that the study is bound by features or elements that are identifiable as belonging within the boundary of the case. Features that do not fall within the boundary, do not become part of the case. So a researcher could pre-set the criteria that determine the boundary of a case in relation to the objectives of the research. Hence if a teacher with managing learner behavioural problems is to be viewed as a case study, then several other specific features have to be identified, for example, experienced teachers with five years of teaching experience and teaching English as a second language to children in the last two years of primary education in an urban school. A teacher not possessing these features does not form part of the case.

The data collected from this approach conforms to the notion of science in that like any other research method, it is capable of delivering empirical data. The data gathered are seen as ‘strong in reality’ (Alderman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1980) because it is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within real life context” (Yin, 1984 in Nunan, 1995). The relevance of case study approach for my study is reinforced by the distinctive elements of the qualitative orientation of case study as defined by Merriam (1988).

Qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are

particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources (p. 16)

This definition highlights four features of a qualitative case study approach which Merriam (ibid) summarises as: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive. The properties described below also highlight the advantages of using a case study approach (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1980) for my own investigation.

A case study is said to be particularistic because a case is viewed as a unit of analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As a unit of analysis, a case study investigates a single phenomenon, an event, a program or a situation occurring in a bounded context. It, therefore, has the properties of specificity and intensity.

In a case study, reports of the investigation are usually presented, according to Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1980) in “a more publicly accessible form” and therefore serve multiple audiences (in Cohen and Manion, 1994). The presentation of the investigation makes it possible for a less specialised audience to understand the phenomenon being investigated. Instead of reporting in statistics, “the description is usually qualitative” (Merriam, 1988).

In this way, case study report also contributes to the democratisation of knowledge in its reader. It is heuristic in that it enables the reader to make personalised interpretations of the phenomenon, leading to a better understanding of the issues reported as well as enhancing personal knowledge of the issues or the phenomenon.

Another feature of a qualitative case study approach is in the inductive reasoning attached to the manner in which generalisations and conceptualisations about the phenomenon are formulated. Concepts, hypotheses and generalisations are derived from an understanding of emerging data rather than predetermined from the outset of the investigations. What emerges as a result is “strong in reality” (Adelman, Jenkins

and Kemmis, 1980) and of great value to understanding the phenomenon under investigation.

Stake (1994, in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) looks at case study as being of intrinsic interest or of instrumental interest for the researcher. An intrinsic interest in the case study, according to Stake (ibid.) is when issues are investigated by the researcher with the aim of achieving a personal understanding of the issues investigated. It does not seek to explain or to disprove any hypothesis. An instrumental case study, however, is one where the issues are examined to prove or to disprove a hypothesis. The case identified is used as a research tool to facilitate understanding of an issue beyond the case itself. It can be said that the difference between intrinsic and instrumental case, largely determines how the case is managed, what kinds of research methods are used and in what manner the findings are reported.

Having studied the definition and the properties of qualitative case study offered by various researchers, I chose to conduct my investigations as a qualitative case study. One feature of a study with a qualitative tradition is that it places a great deal of importance on the meaning revealed by the results of an investigation. The qualitative case study looks at an investigation into a phenomenon in its entirety that is according to Patton (1985) “to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and interactions” (section 4. 0 Qualitative Research Paradigm). In contrast, a case study approach with a quantitative tradition examines an issue or a phenomenon on a piecemeal basis; the pieces are taken apart and then they are put together in order to understand the whole issue or phenomenon.

Following the discussion earlier of the criterion of boundedness (Smith, 1968, Stake, 1988, Merriam, 1988, Creswell, 1998), eight student teachers were treated as a case study (section 4. 2 c Sampling). The study on the group was conducted, longitudinally, over a period of three years (Table 9 Study Design). What is particularly important to

this study was that the investigations were carried out at two critical points in their professional development as teachers of English: firstly, during teaching practice, in April 1998 and secondly, at the end of five months in the initial year of teaching as fully qualified teachers, in February 1999 (p. 117 Table 9 Study Design).

The group was chosen to be key informants in this study. As entrants to the link teaching degree program, they were products of the same educational system and had similar basic entry qualifications. They are also participants of the same teaching program. These are the basic criteria which bind them together as a unit (section 4. 2 (c) Sampling). Although this unit is linked together by background and by lack of teaching experience, each informant is the product of her particularistic life experiences and not clones of each other. The informants bring to the study multilevel perspectives about their personal experiences. Since this study is exploratory and its outcome is not predetermined by hypotheses, insightful information is gleaned from the views expressed by the group.

Multiple sources of information, such as interviews, video materials and surveys, were used to collect in-depth and personalised views on various belief issues from the case study group (Table 9 Study Design). In this way, the accounting of experiences by the case study group and the meanings attached to these experiences by the group, are reaffirmed and strengthened by the process of cross checking the sources of information. A qualitative case study approach enables me to build a portrait of a unit of people, bounded by a similar teaching program, but studied as a unique case.

4. 2 Research Design

A design for qualitative research is usually a structure which is flexible enough to enable pertinent changes to be made to its design in order to accommodate important developments which might arise during the process of collecting data. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “the design of a naturalistic inquiry ...*cannot* be given in advance; it must emerge, develop, unfold...” (p. 255). But a word of caution is needed in that the very dynamic quality which promotes qualitative research could also be its weak link. It was however necessary to the investigation that I balanced the advantage of a flexible design and the need to ensure that data was collected at the critical points of the training program as planned. Therefore, the appropriate research instruments were determined prior to fieldwork but the precise content of each instrument was developed during the process of data collection.

The process of collecting data may be viewed as a series of interrelated activities where the researcher may engage several research procedures in order to obtain insightful data on some aspect of human behaviour. Since this study deals with the complexities surrounding the construction and development of teacher beliefs, the multi-method (Cohen and Manion, 1994) approach was used. Underlying this approach, is the concept of triangulation (Denzin, 1989, *b*).

Triangulation means looking at a research issue from more than one standpoint. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), ‘triangulation is a way to get to the findings in the first place – by seeing or hearing multiple instances of it from different sources, by using different methods and by squaring the finding with others it needs to be squared with’ (p. 267). Triangulation is based on the assumption that inherent

bias in data is neutralised when a cross checking mechanism such as multiple sources, is applied (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

I am using the multiple approach as a means to draw intensive data on a complex phenomenon such as the nature and development of belief constructs from my subjects. In addition, it is always worthwhile to remember that fieldwork can lead to critical problems such as a sudden loss of information brought about by various unanticipated events. In my case the diary entries which student teachers were supposed to keep during teaching practice were not available to me because my student teachers did not write them as they were busy with various tasks during the teaching practice period as reasons. Therefore, in order to ensure confidence in the field data gathered for this study and to prevent sudden loss of information, the multiple approach was necessary.

The multiple approach to the design of this study was decided on the basis of what can best investigate the problems raised in the research questions and what can best provide insightful and reliable information. Denzin (1970 in Cohen and Manion, 1998) offers six types of triangulation:

1. **time triangulation:** the use of cross sectional and longitudinal design in order to take into account the process of change
2. **combined levels of triangulation:** the use of different sets of people – the individual, the group and the organisation, culture or community
3. **researcher triangulation:** the use of more than one researcher, investigator, observer or evaluator
4. **method triangulation:** the use of multiple methods in the study such as questionnaire survey and interview
5. **theory triangulation:** the use a variety of theories to interpret the data

6. **space triangulation:** the use of cross cultural techniques in order to overcome parochialism

To ensure that investigations of the research issues conducted within established standards appropriate to a doctoral level and that the findings are corroborated, this study, incorporates the following triangulation procedures in its study design: time, method and combined levels of subjects i.e the entire final year B.Ed student teachers and a group of eight student teachers from the same cohort.

Table 9 Study Design

PHASE	DATA COLLECTING DATES	RESEARCH METHODS	SAMPLING
1	April 1997	Questionnaire	Pilot group: 15 second year B.Ed (TESL) student teachers based at CELTE, University of Warwick
2	August 1997	Questionnaire	Study group: 123 student teachers who re-registered at MPIK for reorientation week after spending two years in universities in United Kingdom
3	March-April 1998	Three interviews each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one independent of lesson interview • two post-lesson interviews (the final interview used stimulated recall technique) Two observations each	8 student teachers in schools in and around Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in their final phase of teaching practice.
4	February 1999	One interview each	8 beginning teachers in the first year of teaching in schools in Malaysia

(a) Time

It was essential to this study that the study was conducted in multiple phases in order to ascertain the developmental process of belief constructs. The phases corresponded, specifically, with the placement of student teachers in schools for teaching practice. The phases were also determined by the termination date of the degree program and the start of a teaching career (Table 1 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program Structure). In this way, the study has applied the time related process so that information on the nature of belief constructs prior to training, during training and post training are duly recorded, analysed and interpreted within the context of preservice teacher training. The four phases are briefly described below.

- Phase 1 is piloting a questionnaire on a group of student teachers who share almost similar profiles as the main study group (see Sampling in this section)
- Phase 2 involves administering the questionnaire piloted in phase 1, and adjusted, on the entire final year cohort of the B.Ed teaching program upon returning to Kuala Lumpur from United Kingdom
- Phase 3 involves the practical teaching of eight student teachers and conducting post-lesson interviews during teaching practice
- Phase 4 takes the investigation into the beginning year of teaching of the same group of teachers interviewed in phase 3.

(b) Data collecting dates

The dates or time when data was gathered were determined by the structure of the teaching degree program. Built into the degree program, were predetermined courses which the samples were set to experience at a certain stage of their teaching program

(Table 1 Bachelor of Education (Honours) Program Structure; Table 4 Structure of Teaching Practice). Since this study attempts to investigate the nature and the development of belief constructs during teaching practice and in the first year of teaching, the period for collecting data was, therefore, closely linked to student teachers' teaching practice schedule and their first posting as a qualified teacher. A time related triangulation was used to secure data reflecting the experiences of the group over a three year period.

(c) Sampling

Sampling, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), is “taking a smaller chunk of a larger universe” (p.30). The richness of the data, according to van Manen (1977), is further strengthened when the data is obtained from individuals in specific situations, making observations reflecting their personal, “perceptions, assumptions, prejudgements, presuppositions” about the situation they find themselves in. In doing so, the data is imbued with personalised interpretation of the issues or the situation concerned.

Two levels of sampling were used to gather evidence: a cross section of the population and individual sampling. According to Cohen and Manion (1998), meaningful data is more likely to emerge from combined sampling than from single sampling. Data from the sample were gathered as follows:

- In Phase 1, 15 student teachers pursuing a B.Ed (TESL) degree, at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education, University of Warwick, were used as a pilot group. A questionnaire survey was tested on this group to ensure the questions will elicit data relevant to the study (Appendix B Phase 1: Pilot Study;)
- In Phase 2, the entire cohort of fourth and final year B.Ed (TESL) student teachers returning to MPIK, Kuala Lumpur, from their respective universities in the United

Kingdom was taken. A cross-section view from 123 student teachers was more likely to enhance individually expressed views (Cohen and Manion, 1998).

- In Phase 3 and 4, eight student teachers were chosen as a sample. Because the study was a longitudinal one, a smaller number was deemed to be practical for two main reasons: to ensure close and personalised contact and to minimise sample mortality especially when student teachers become fully fledged teachers and are sent to any school in any part of the country. More importantly, there was a better chance of conducting in-depth study on a smaller sample size than on a larger one.

Adhering to the concept of triangulating methods, several methods for gathering information were used in this study: questionnaire survey, independent interview, post lesson interview (section 4. 5 Interviews), stimulated recall (section 4. 5. 2 c) and field notes (section 4. 4 Observations).

The qualities and relevance of each instrument in relation to the study are discussed in the following section.

4. 3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire survey is a popular research tool because of its economy in design and its potential for obtaining responses from a wider population (Cohen and Manion, 1998, Creswell, 1994). If the questions are closed, the responses are easily analysed and quantified. However, the questionnaire is only effective if the items are directly referenced against the objectives of the study (Nunan, 1992).

Open questions are also said to be more likely to yield free-form responses, but there is a danger that the responses may distort or misrepresent the data. Therefore, wording the questions in the survey for this study was a challenge. On the one hand, there was a need to get free-form responses which were potentially useful and insightful; on the other hand, the responses may turn out to be useless. Furthermore, the free-form responses served another important purpose. When collated, the responses would provide themes for questions in subsequent interviews.

Because the responses from the survey were a platform on which other research activities were based and in recognition of the pitfalls which could beset untested questions, a piloting phase was included in the research design. Details of the pilot study are presented in Appendix B. A brief description of the pilot study provides the context for the implications of the results of the pilot study in relation to the main study questionnaire.

The questions in the pilot questionnaire (Appendix A Pilot Study Questionnaire) were developed with the purpose of eliciting information to answer the following research question: What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers prior to teaching practice? There are two sections to the questionnaire: a general section where the questions aimed to establish the background of school experiences (Appendix A) and the second section aimed to discover existing beliefs about teaching and learning. The implications for the main study questionnaire derived from the results are presented here.

(a) Statements 1-8: Implications for the Study

During the discussion, after the questionnaires were returned to the researcher, the pilot group raised questions about the intention of the space 'Comment' following

each statement (Appendix A); firstly whether it was necessary to write their comments at all and secondly, whether the comments required were in relation to what they saw specifically or what they knew about teaching and learning English as a second language and finally if they had to relate their comments to personal teaching experiences.

The uncertainty expressed through the three questions raised by respondents were indeed reflected in the wide-ranging ways in which the comments were treated by the pilot group. It was found that the word 'Comment' meant different things to each person in the pilot group. There were a number of statements without comments. Yet other comments were brief or were expressed in vague terms. Clearly, the comment section which was designed to stimulate student teachers' critical abilities, failed in its objective.

Another problem lay in the way the statements were phrased. All the statements in this section contained the word 'able'; for example in statement 2: I was able to learn how to manage group work. Respondents were then asked to circle Yes or No. In a teaching scenario where there was evidence of group work, respondents circled, Yes; but where there was no evidence of group work, respondents circled, No.

A negative response gave rise to some uncertainty. Did a 'No' response mean that there was group work in the classroom but student teachers were unable to learn anything from it? Or did a 'No' mean no group work took place in the classroom for student teachers to observe?. Indeed, a negative response in all eight statements evoked ambiguity and uncertainty about what each negative response meant. Thus, the purpose of the statements, which was to give evidence of student teachers' ability to observe and to reflect on classroom practices, was not achieved. The statements were slanted to favour positive responses only.

Based on the oral feedback and the analysis of written responses, it was deemed beneficial to the study if statements 1-8 in this section were replaced with another procedure.

(b) Questions 9, 10 and 11: Implications for the study

The three questions were designed with the purpose of obtaining examples of successful and unsuccessful teaching and learning from the perspectives of student teachers. They were also intended to elicit the nature of reasons offered by student teachers. Details of the purposes and results are presented in Appendix B. The implications of the results are presented here.

From the examples of classroom practices given in this section, it was clear that the pilot group focussed their attention on observed classroom practices. In addition, it was also evident that the practices were perceived in relation to how they contributed to the success or the failure of a lesson. This was particularly important to both the design of the question and the study as a whole. In addition, these questions successfully revealed that student teachers did engage in reflective behaviour if the right stimulus was applied.

In view of the range of examples of good and bad teaching and learning practices listed in response to the three questions, they were retained in full in main study questionnaire.

(c) Conclusion

Briefly, the feedback from the pilot study is summarised as follows.

General information: Question 1: to be retained and adjusted to include the word ‘school visits in the United Kingdom’ in the stem.

School experience: Questions 1-8: completely deleted from questionnaire for the following reasons:

- The space provided for comment resulted in disparate responses, reflecting uncertainty over what was expected from the word ‘Comment’. The pilot group were not only uncertain if they ought to respond but also what was the nature of response expected from this cue word.
- The statements were loaded toward only positive responses. Negative responses misrepresented the pilot groups’ knowledge about teaching and learning.
- The predetermined statements were found to be a form of close-ended question. The pilot group were controlled by the statements in their responses. As a result, data gathered from this type of question were not helpful to the study.

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Questions 9, 10 and 11: to be fully retained in the main study for the following reasons:

- The pilot group found the questions were framed in a direct manner so that the scope of the responses were clear to them.
- A range of responses to the questions indicated that the information required from the questions was within the pilot group’s personal experiences.

Based on feedback from the pilot study group and an analysis of the findings, the final questionnaire (Appendix C) was redesigned as follows:

(d) General information: Questions 1 and 2

The purpose of this section was to provide information about the name of the university which the respondent is registered with and secondly, to give information

about the period when respondents visited schools in the United Kingdom for school experience.

(e) Lessons you observed: Questions 3, 4 and 5

Questions 9, 10 and 11 have been retained in full and renumbered as questions 3, 4 and 5.

(f) A Teacher's Credo: Question 6

A teaching credo makes explicit and visible, especially to oneself, personal beliefs about teaching and learning. Studies have found beliefs to exist in the subconscious of individuals (chapter 3:Teacher Beliefs) and thus, not easily accessible to others.

Implicit thoughts serve as a source on which student teachers interpret the teaching they observed and influenced their decisions about good or bad practices. Student teachers in the main study are required to write ten statements as a teaching credo.

There are two objectives of the writing down a teaching credo: first, to stimulate student teachers to reflect on their inner most thoughts about teaching and learning English as a second language and second, to make explicit what personal meanings they derived from their beliefs about teaching and learning.

4. 4 Observations

Observing student teachers engaged in the process of learning to teach is an institutionalised activity carried out by various persons usually at different times.

Observations carried out during teaching practice were meant as feedback to the parties concerned, with the intention of assisting and guiding student teachers to

become better classroom practitioners. There is also an element of assessment present in the observation process of this nature.

In this degree program, at different times of teaching practice, student teachers often find themselves observed by their peers, their co-operating teacher, a college supervisor and a representative lecturer from one of the link universities (section 2. 2 Teaching Practice). For eight student teachers participating in this study, their list of observers included myself in the role of a researcher.

The fundamental difference between researcher observation and supervisor observation lies in the purpose of the activity. Unlike the guide-and-grade purposes of supervisor observation, researcher observation as carried out in this study is “the act of noting a phenomenon, often with instruments, and recording it for scientific or other purposes” (Morris, 1973 in Denzin and Lincoln, p. 378, 1994). According to Merriam (1988, p.88) observations are useful in that they enable the researcher to observe behaviour in context and to record them as potential data. Being on-site means that the observer records first hand events or activities as they unfold perhaps obtaining data unnoticed by anyone.

According to Adler and Adler (1994), qualitative observation is

fundamentally naturalistic in essence; it occurs in the natural context of occurrence, among actors who would naturally be participating in the interaction...it enjoys the advantage of drawing the observer into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold (p. 378).

In the context of this study where the emphasis is obtaining data in natural settings noting them as they occur (section 4. 0 Qualitative Research Paradigm), it was therefore necessary for the researcher observer to come in direct contact with the

subjects. Hence, I observed each student teacher teaching, twice (p. 117 Table 9 Study Design).

Over the years a number of observation schemes have been developed to assist the researcher in the process of observation. Several schemes, matching the purposes of the research, have been used to observe interactions occurring in the classroom, among them, the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) and the Flanders Interactional Analysis (cited in Nunan, 1992). An observation scheme can be a useful tool but it can also be a restrictive one. Observation schemes set a predetermined structure on what the observer is required to observe.

In a study such as this one, where the focus of investigation is on issues which cannot be readily observable, an observation scheme was inadequate. Therefore, observations in this study were guided by the purposes of the research and by data gathered from previous meetings with student teachers. At prearranged times, I sat at the back of the classroom when student teachers participating in this study conducted their lessons, and noted down what took place in the classroom. The on-site notes were then used to guide two post-lesson interviews. They were also referred to when during the stimulated recall session in the final post-lesson interview. Thus observations in the classroom and on-site notes had dual functions. By observing student teachers in their classroom, I was able to identify possible incidence which might provide rich data for the interviews. The notes were also used to cross-check information as well as to reinforce them during post-lesson interviews. These support roles were yet another means of triangulating primary data.

The observation notes taken during teaching practice were immensely useful, one year later, when I met my subjects again during the novice year of teaching. Based on the notes, I was able to develop some questions which linked the experiences in training with the experiences in the novice year. The notes therefore served to

complement and to supplement information needed for the interviews conducted during training and post training.

4. 5 Interviews

The interview method is chosen to answer the following research questions:

1. What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers during teaching practice?
2. Do emerging beliefs inform student teachers in their classroom practices?
3. Do belief changes occur when student teachers become beginning teachers? What is the nature of these changes?
4. How do beginning teachers respond to changes in beliefs developed during teaching practice and in the beginning year of teaching?

The purpose of using interviews in this study are two fold:

- (1) To investigate and to establish pre-existing beliefs about teaching and learning among student teachers before student teachers become fully involved in teaching. This investigation is followed by a study of developments to pre-existing beliefs as student teachers move toward the completion of their final weeks of teaching practice.
- (2) To study the extent to which student teachers reflect on classroom practices and to explore what constructs about teaching and learning were derived from their practices

Face-to-face interviews between a researcher and respondent(s) have been widely used on a wide range of topics in the social sciences (Brenner, 1985, Nunan, 1995). Allport (1942) feels that the best way “to know something about people’s activities... was to ask them” (in Brenner, 1985, p. 2). As a research tool, oral interview has evolved and has been used in studies where the views and opinions of respondents are used as scientific data. This willingness to use the ‘actors’ as a valuable source of information is in keeping with the naturalistic approach to research favoured by this study (section 4. 0 Qualitative Research Paradigm). But the interview has not always been regarded in this way. The definitions below reflect the evolution of interview as a research tool.

Cannell and Kahn (1968) defines interview as

a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purposes of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation (in Cohen and Manion, 1990, p.307).

In this definition, the emphasis of the interview is on obtaining data based on a predetermined agenda set by the researcher. The interaction which takes place between the researcher and the respondent has an element of control with the researcher in the driving seat in terms of what questions to ask and in what sequence (Nunan, 1995, Cohen and Manion, 1990). This form called directed or structured interview, however, has relative merits over the questionnaire as a research tool. Direct interaction in structured interview, enables the researcher, according to Tuckman (1972) “to access to what is inside a person’s head” (in Cohen and Manion, 1990, p. 309).

Brenner (1985) views interview as a process of negotiation:

An interview...is taken as any interaction in which two or more people are brought into direct contact in order for at least one party to learn something from the other (p.3).

The notion of sharing between the parties during the interview is implicit to this approach. Thus this technique used corresponds closely to the notion of a conversation rather than interrogative questioning as implied in structured interviews. Since this study favours qualitative approaches, the idea of using conversation to obtain information residing in someone's mind, was an appealing one. According to Patton (1980)

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of the observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world-we have to ask people those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

This study chose to use a less structured form of interview for the reasons quoted above and for the following reasons:

- The face-to-face contact allows for greater flexibility for both parties to explore the meanings of the questions and the responses as well as to clarify any misunderstandings rising from the engagement (Nunan, 1995, Brenner, 1985). In

addition, non-verbal feedback such as facial expressions can steer a researcher toward a more productive line of questioning.

- Because the two main thrusts of this study were to gain access to the perspectives held by the person or persons being interviewed and to understand their introspective skills, there was a need to exercise great care during the interview so as “not to put things in someone else’s mind (for example, the interviewer’s perceived categories for organizing the world)” (Patton, 1980, p. 196). The less structured format of the interview used in this study made room for individual respondents to define the world in their own way (Denzin, 1980).
- Interviews, in general, allow the researcher access to events in the past or to events where the researcher is prevented from attending (Merriam, 1988). In this study where respondents were required to engage in retrospective and introspective behaviour about events and thoughts in the past and the present (chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs), more and better data was gained from a respondent-directed interview.
- Under the circumstances where the researcher does not know enough about the phenomenon or phenomena, as was the case in this study, it was particularly useful to determine themes for questions which were thought to encourage respondents to project their personal views and thus reveal insightful data on teacher beliefs and reflection. At the same time it enabled respondents to raise issues which have, hitherto, escaped the researcher’s notice (Denzin, 1980). Questions formulated were thus set within the context of the information from the respondent as well as within the parameters of the research questions.
- The naturalistic position which this study has adopted, has also adopted the interactionist approach to the interview. This approach values respondent’s accounts as viable sources of information and considers the social context within which the data originated from, intrinsic to the understanding of the data (Silverman, 1993). Consequently, to enable respondents in this study to construct

their experiences as they see them, open-ended questions were preferred over close-ended questions.

Using the interview as a research tool has its downside. Although the objective of this method, in this study, is to encourage variable interpretation of experiences from respondents, the dynamics in an interview, in many respects, are complex. Firstly, it has been said that in a research interview, a researcher and the respondent do not operate on a level playing field. Nunan (1992) identifies the inequitable relationship between interviewer-interviewee, and in this study, the researcher-respondent, as a source of bias. In this asymmetrical relationship, the researcher poses the question, the respondent answers the questions. The researcher is seen in a more dominant role over the respondent. In this way, data may be affected by the dynamics of power play between researcher and respondent.

Brenner (1985) uses the term “underreporting” of past experiences where the experiences had taken place the experiences were not significant to the individual when they occurred. In the process of recalling the events during an interview, the recalled experiences are either given little attention or, in contrast, given undue significance when the experiences were of no consequence whatsoever. Ericsson and Simon (1980) quoted in Shavelson and Stern (1981, p. 459) warned of the danger of using weak probes to access into past experiences. There is a danger, that in their attempt to recall past events, respondents, may unintentionally, generalise and or fill out incomplete or missing memories.

Silverman (1993) raised the issue of the status of data from interviews especially in narratives as fact or fiction. The question of whether respondents fabricated personal experiences and distorted information in their eagerness to assist this study is duly acknowledged. Distortion of information from respondents is inherent in any research method but it is not a problem that cannot be overcome. Glassner and Loughlin

(1987), recommended that one could always examine the sources and the frame of reference used by the respondents and also validate the data with other research methods such as observation (Table 9 Study Design). Through the ‘methodology of listening’, Glassner and Loughlin (ibid. cited in Silverman, 1993, p.100), found that they were able to obtain data from the respondents’ perspective.

But the situation is not as impossible as it appears to be. According to Denzin (1970), “while the interviewer [the researcher] is the expert at asking questions, the respondent is the expert as far as answers are concerned” (cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 76). It would thus appear that, the researcher’s questions could be dictated by responses from the respondents as well as by the scope of the research questions; under these circumstances, the researcher, therefore, is not always the person in control of the interview.

4. 5. 1 Interview schedule during teaching practice

For the reasons discussed above, the interview was used as a tool to elicit in-depth information from student teachers on the nature of belief constructs developed as they progressed through teaching practice as well in the novice year of teaching. Interviews took place on two occasions: during teaching practice, and in the first year of teaching. Using a tight schedule drawn up with the help and permission from student teachers (who were the respondents), in all, 24 interviews, I was able to carry out the interviews as scheduled.

It was fortunate for me that the student teachers were confident of themselves and of their abilities to allow a researcher into their classroom and to conduct post lesson interviews during teaching practice in addition two other teaching practice supervisors who scheduled their visit when the researcher was not in the classroom. In view of Nunan’ s comments about the unequal relationship between researcher and

respondent, I was determined to project myself to my subjects as a researcher with a distinctly different role in the classroom from that of a teaching practice supervisor. Toward that end I engaged the student teachers in a discussion to impress upon them the differences in observations for assessment purposes and those for research.

It was with great relief on the part of the researcher, that student teachers not only permitted audio taping of the interviews but also consented to wear an external microphone during the interviews. Thus the clear quality of the recording made listening to playback recording, easy. More importantly, the tapes of interview were made use of intensively and extensively by the researcher as the main source of data reference. With permission, each student teacher was recorded teaching in the classroom using a camcorder. Using the video material as a stimulus, a post-lesson interview was conducted (section 4. 5. 2 c Stimulated recall technique).

The figure below shows the schedule of interviews for each student teacher during the teaching program. The interview schedule corresponded with the different phases of teaching practice (Table 9 Study Design).

Table 10 Interview schedule for each student teacher during teaching practice

TYPE OF INTERVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE	TEACHING PRACTICE WEEK	SOURCE OF QUESTIONS
1. Independent of lesson	Audio taped	2	Phase 2 data
2. Post-lesson	Audio taped Observation notes	4-5	Phase 2 data Notes from interview (1)
3. Post-lesson	Stimulated recall Audio taped Observation notes	5-6	Phase 2 data Notes from interview (1) and (2)

4. 5. 2 Types of interview

As can be seen from the schedule, each student teacher was interviewed three times during the course of teaching practice. The first interview was an independent-of-lesson interview while the second and third, were carried out as post-lesson interviews.

(a) Independent-of-lesson interview

This interview was carried out in the second week of teaching practice when student teachers were in the process of getting to know their learners and their setting. Most of the lesson activities in the classroom, at this time, were geared toward assessing learner ability and for student teachers to find their way around the classroom. Thus the parameters of this interview were extended beyond one particular lesson. This first interview was deliberately set to take place at this particular time, so that emerging thoughts and belief constructs about classroom practices were gathered from the start of teaching practice. Hence, the developmental aspect of the study was fully captured from the beginning.

Source of questions

A flexible interview structure was adopted to allow student teachers freedom to express freely their perceptions about their classroom experiences. Information gathered from responses in the questionnaire from Phase 2 were used to formulate questions in the interview but the interview was not limited by them. Neither was it based on any one lesson taught by student teachers.

The interview had two foci: first, to investigate student teachers' introspective thoughts on their first real teaching experience, for example:

You seemed concerned about a teacher's role being very flexible and approachable. How did you get this idea about a teacher being flexible and approachable? (student teacher 1)

Questions were asked to discover the impact of their teaching experience on pre-existing beliefs and thoughts about teaching and learning, for example:

You found group work tough because students are not used to this kind of strategy? How did you make it easy for yourself? (student teacher 1)

Data from this interview and data from questionnaire responses in Phase 2, were analysed together to determine the nature of belief change.

(b) Post-lesson interviews

The purpose of conducting post-lesson interviews was to elicit student teachers' personal response about their practices as soon as lessons ended. This was to ensure that important details of information in relation emerging from teaching contexts which may show teacher beliefs and or how they cope with changes to their beliefs are gathered before student teachers forget them.

By the fourth week of teaching practice, two post-lesson interviews were carried out as scheduled. It was fair to assume that by the time these interviews took place, student teachers had more classroom experience than at the start of teaching practice. With added classroom experience and with guidance from college supervisors and co-operating teachers, student teachers were in a better position to make informed observations than they were at the beginning of teaching practice.

Source of questions

Questions in these interviews focused on what interpretations student teachers made of their experiences in the classroom in relation to pre-existing beliefs and to emerging beliefs. The line of questions in the post-lesson interviews was influenced by three factors: the teaching that was carried prior to the interview, notes made by the researcher observing student teachers conducting the lesson (section 4. 4 Observations) information from responses to questions in Phase 2 and responses from independent-of-lesson-interviews.

The scope of questions was, however, not limited by data gathered from previous contact with student teachers. In line with the principles of naturalistic inquiry, contextual questions emerged from student teachers' classroom practices. In the third interview, video taped material was also used to develop interview questions.

(c) Stimulated recall technique

Stimulated recall technique was developed and used by researchers investigating classroom behaviour and teaching practices. Like other modes of inquiry, stimulated recall has evolved since it was first used by Bloom in 1953 to investigate his subjects' thought processes about two different learning situations (Calderhead, 1981). Since then a number of researchers such as Kagan (1963, 1967), Peterson and Clark (1978), Calderhead and Robson (1985), Wendel (1989) and Bennett (1991), have used stimulated recall to conduct classroom based studies.

This technique involves the use of a video camera or an audio tape to record a teaching in the classroom (or elsewhere). The tape is then played back and stopped at

any point by the teacher to comment on or by the researcher as a means to elicit comments from the teacher.

This study used stimulated recall technique in the third and final post lesson interview for several reasons. As teaching practice approached its final two weeks (section 2. 2 Teaching Practice), student teachers have, over a number of times, been observed and assessed by college supervisors for their overall teaching performance. Student teachers were expected to make pedagogically sound decisions about their practices and to put into practice those decisions. The interviews, therefore, sought to explore what meaning and constructs were made of their teaching experiences.

Each student teacher viewed a video recording of their one lesson immediately after the lesson was taught. They were encouraged to stop the taped lesson at any point they thought relevant to them in any way. Upon occasions when student teachers did not seem inclined to stop the tape, I would do so in order to prompt or to stimulate a discussion to draw out insightful information from student teachers. This technique, according to Nunan (1992), “can yield insights into the processes of teaching and learning which would be difficult to obtain by other means”(p. 94). In this way, the technique was useful in illuminating student teachers’ introspective behaviour and equally important, their responses to the teaching experience in the context of developing beliefs

Shavelson and Stern (1981) found that this technique useful when asking a teacher to think aloud while teaching would interfere and disrupt the conduct of the lesson. Therefore when the teaching was played back, on video or on audio tape, “the teacher is assisted in recalling the covert mental activities that accompanied the overt behaviour” (p. 458). Calderhead (1981) reaffirmed that it was a means of “collecting teachers’ retrospective reports of their thought processes” (p. 215).

In addition, when the tape was stopped at a certain place, there could be no doubt that the freeze framed incident was used as a point of reference for the ensuing discussion between the researcher and the student. There is greater reliability with the data from an interview when the participants in an interview were clear which event or incident in a recent lesson was the focus of the discussion.

With the invention of portable and small sized camcorders I did not find recording student teachers in their classroom an onerous affair. I was always given a desk tucked away in the corner of the classroom so that I was able to place the camcorder on the desk, unnoticed for most of the time. To record the movements made by student teachers and learners in the classroom, the camcorder lens was turned toward the movements. By discreetly tilting the lens of the camcorder in this way, little attention was drawn to the recording of the lessons: the 'actors' thus continued to behave as they should (in as much as it was possible to behave normally, with an observer at the back of the classroom).

By using the video taped material, student teachers became aware of their teaching behaviour which had gone unnoticed before. Student teachers found themselves thinking about the causes for their actions in the classroom. Engaging student teachers in reflective behaviour with the aid of a video recording of their own lesson, has provided insightful data on student teachers' perspectives about teaching.

4. 5 3 Interviews in the first year of teaching

When student teachers successfully complete their degree program, they become fully fledged English language teachers. Usually, in August of the same graduating year, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, sends these new teachers to secondary schools in Malaysia. Eight student teachers identified as interview subjects in Phase 2 were

interviewed, once, about their new role as beginning teachers (Table 9 Study Design). I personally conducted and tape recorded all the interviews. Each interview took between 45 – 60 minutes.

School postings in August coincided with the last four months of the school year. When the interview was conducted for research purposes in February 1999, interview subjects have been teaching for at least five months - four months in the last term of the school year and one month in the first term of the new school year. Set out below is a diary to show the chronology of events leading up to the research interview in relation to the school years of 1998 and 1999.

Table 11 Interview schedule for beginning teachers

MONTH/YEAR	DIARY OF EVENTS
July 1998	End of degree program.
August 1998	Posted to schools as full fledged English language teachers. School year in final four months i.e. ends early December 1998
January 1999	Start of 1999 academic year for schools.
February 1999	Interview conducted on 8 beginning teachers (from Phase 2)

Source of questions

In view of new experiences in the initial year of teaching, it was important to the research that a flexible structure of interview questions was adopted to obtain introspective accounts of the experiences faced by novice teachers. The interview had two research foci: first, to discover the nature of beliefs emerging from experiences in the novice year and second, to investigate what personal responses were made by the teachers toward emerging beliefs.

As the study is a longitudinal one (section 4. 0 Qualitative Research Paradigm), a line of questions was developed from information gathered from Phase 2 and Phase 3. From Phase 2, a cluster of themes were identified from views expressed by student teachers in the questionnaire. These views reflected the areas of concern experienced by student teachers as they observed experienced teachers teach in the classroom. Generally the themes of concerns are related to teacher factors, lesson planning, execution of lesson, classroom management, use of teaching strategies and resources and student role (section 5. 2 Phase 2: Interviews and Observations).

Research interview questions in Phase 3 used themes identified from Phase 2 as a source of reference. The purpose of asking questions which correspond to existing themes, made it possible to trace the development of belief change from student teacher responses at various stages of their training and subsequent work placement. Within the theme of teaching strategies, for example, the following question was asked of one student teacher: *“What do you think when they [the students] could only do four [sentences] when you gave them more time....”* (teacher 6). Within the theme of lesson execution: *“When you read out the script showing the direction, were they [the students] able to draw the map?..... Why?”* (teacher 5) (section 5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations).

In Phase 3, while questions were largely within the themes identified, the scope of questions was widened even more to allow for the telling of new teaching experiences in real world conditions by the new teachers. As a result, new themes such as discipline strategies and teacher-teacher relationship emerged, highlighting new areas of concern arising from working as a new teacher (section 5. 4 Phase 4: Interviews; chapter 6 Case Study Insights).

CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis

5. 0 Introduction

Having collected what is hoped to be useful data, the next task is to make sense out of raw data. This involves shifting through every available piece of evidence and abstracting from them, information, which is relevant to the foci of the research questions. It is a messy business yet fascinating as interrelationships between emerging evidence are discovered. Abstracting information from the mass of raw qualitative data, according to Dey (1996), meant interpreting data collected and selecting from it, information that will contribute to the understanding of the researched phenomenon. Qualitative data does not lend itself easily to conversion to units of measure but rely on the degree of abstraction of information.

This section presents the thoughts and the awareness that went into deciding the main procedures used in analysing data from Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4. The findings and implications in each phase are discussed within each phase as well as across the phases where relevant. The link between one phase and another is important to this study as it provided the opportunity to explore the developmental aspects of teacher beliefs at different stages of training and post-training; information gathered from one phase was used to inform and to add new information to existing foci of the study in

the next phase. Although the phases are closely linked in this way, each phase has information which is unique to itself.

5. 1 Themes and Categories

When one reviews information collected for a study, with a purpose of getting a clearer picture of the investigated phenomenon, Dey (1996) suggests that relations between the data be established so that comparisons between and connections within evidences gathered can be identified. The data has to be viewed also in the way they interact with each other and with data from other sources, such as findings in similar investigations reported in journals, if any. The process of developing themes and generating categories is important in that the interpretation of data rests on the recasting of raw information into themes and categories.

This process however is intellectually challenging as it involves understanding the underlying patterns and recurring themes in the data. When I was creating categories from Phase 2 data, it meant noting the regularities and the patterns within emerging data. Data which share common features are placed within a category and in this way more categories are developed to accommodate emerging information. Guba (1978) identifies this search as the search for internal convergence and external divergence where categories are defined on the basis of features that are consistent with each other yet distinct from one another. For example in questionnaire findings of Phase 2 in the section on teacher' s credo where respondents were required to state explicitly their beliefs about teaching and learning, one emergent category was Teaching Approaches. The number of statements that fall within this category was immense therefore further sub categories needed to be developed so that the details of the information are highlighted. The sub-categories that were developed and defined by belief statements from respondents are as follows: Using drills, group work, graded tasks, role play and simulations.

In analysing interviews, the process first involves transcribing all the 24 interviews that were conducted in Phase 3 and Phase 4 (Table 9 Study Design). The transcription described the experiences of the interviewees. The transcribed notes were studied for the events, occurrences, words, phrases or statements that would identify themes. The list of categories developed from questionnaire findings was referred to for cross checking purposes and for establishing of themes emerging from the interviews.

Each verbal protocol was analysed and assigned to themes. For example in Phase 3 when post lesson interviews were carried out, statements such as *“I didn’t have to do much, actually. They were discussing in their group and I went around to facilitate, I just sort of nudged them along”* (1. 6 b) and *“every group would have one or two people who are good in the language, so they would help. I didn’t need to prompt these students and they would move it along”* (6. 6 b) identified the statements as belonging to one unit of theme that is group work. In the group work theme, all comments which refer directly or indirectly to the positive or negative impact of group work on learning and teaching are placed in this cluster. So the statements are validated by other statements with similar references.

From the themes developed in this way, it was possible to trace the development of beliefs of each subject as they experienced practical teaching. It was also possible to compare the experiences of each teacher with another teacher. The differences were just as significant as the similarities because they reflect the manner in which teaching experiences become meaningful to the individuals. It also shows that although differences of interpretation of the experiences exist, they actually tell a common tale.

5. 2 Phase 2: Questionnaire

The aim of the items in the questionnaire is to elicit information to illuminate the following research question:

What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers prior to teaching practice?

The questionnaire was given out to the fourth and final year student teachers of the B.Ed teaching program in the first week of their return to the teaching college in Kuala Lumpur (p. 117 Table 9 Study Design). With assistance from the academic staff, I was able to meet the cohort and complete the task of data collecting using the questionnaire in a single session.

Each of the questionnaires had been numbered so that the number distributed could be set against the number returned. Extracts taken from the questionnaire and used as evidence in this study are placed in parenthesis at the end of the quoted extract (for example, see (a) p. 148). Without disclosing too much information that might influence the responses to items in the questionnaire, I briefly explained that the purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information that would illuminate several research questions. Since the numbered questionnaires were randomly distributed, student teachers were assured of anonymity. In addition, they were not required to write their name on the questionnaire. They took about 20 minutes to respond to the items in the questionnaire and 109 questionnaires were returned at the end of the session.

Items in the questionnaire (see Appendix C) were grouped as follows:

General Information

Question 1 was to ensure that each respondent is a student registered with the university in the B.Ed link program and not from other teaching programs.

Question 2 was set to initialise student teachers' thought processes about their school visit experience in schools in United Kingdom

Lessons you observed

Question 3 (see Appendix C) was aimed at getting student teachers to identify lessons which they had observed in their school visits in the United Kingdom. Student teachers were indirectly required to apply a certain amount of assessment on the observed lessons so that they could list practices in the classroom as successful (3 A) or unsuccessful (3 B).

Question 4 (see Appendix C) required student teachers to select from their own list, 3 A, one instance of classroom practice they thought was successful and to explain the reasons for their choice. The purpose of this process was to engage student teachers in an assessment of the observed practices within a classroom context and to provide a rationale for their choice.

Question 5 (see Appendix C) was designed with a similar purpose as question 4 except that it required student teachers to choose from their personal list, 3 B, one classroom practice they thought caused the lesson to fail and to provide reasons for their choice.

A Teacher's Credo

Question 6 (see Appendix C) was an attempt to get student teachers to reflect on their personal beliefs about teaching and learning English as a second language and to write them down as ten statements. This exercise required student teachers to make clear existing personal beliefs about teaching and learning English as second language before they moved on to the next stage of their teaching program, i.e. teaching practice.

5. 2. 1 Results: Questions 1 and 2

Responses to questions 1 and 2 established the identity of the respondents and therefore there are no results to report. Question 3 (see Appendix C) where student teachers were required to write observed classroom practices they considered successful (3 A) and unsuccessful (3 B) without having to give reasons is a simply a list of good or bad teaching. The purpose of this question was to stimulate student teachers thinking about examples of good and bad practices. The list gave early evidence about what student teachers thought were good or bad practices.

5. 2. 2 Results: Questions 4 and 5

Results from responses to questions 4 and 5 are presented together. Student teachers were found to respond in two ways:

1. The practice identified by each student teacher to illustrate a successful practice observed in the classroom was different from the one chosen to illustrate an unsuccessful practice

2. Student teachers chose the same practice to illustrate both a successful and an unsuccessful one, like two sides of a coin.

In either case, student teachers were required to provide explanations for their choices of good and bad practices. The responses were processed according the established criteria (section 5. 1 Themes and Categories), and placed in the relevant categories. Information from responses to questions 4 and 5 were therefore grouped as follows: teacher factors, student factors, lesson planning, execution of lesson, teaching strategies, teaching resources, curriculum factors and external factors.

(a) Teacher factors: included in this category were aspects of teacherly qualities such as teacher personality, teacher confidence, teacher's attitude and standards toward language, teacher's enthusiasm and response to discipline problems.

(b) Student factors: describe learners' attitude toward the lesson and their overall behaviour in the classroom.

(c) Lesson planning: included in this category were comments related to aspects of planning lessons such as formulating aims, selecting interesting topics for the lesson, planning lessons which were appropriate to learners' level, issues of time management and lesson sequence.

(d) Execution of lesson: within this category were comments about teachers giving equal attention and opportunities to learners, catering for different levels of abilities and involving learners in the lesson.

(e) Classroom management: included comments about teachers giving clear instructions and lesson input, about creating a learning environment and rapport with learners, effectively managing activities and good control over learner behaviour.

(f) Teaching strategies: this included strategies that encouraged team work such as group work, project work and role play as well individual task such as process writing.

(g) Teaching resources: comments about the use of textbook and of audio visual teaching resources fall within this category

(h) External factors: in this category comments were made about duration and timing of lesson and class size.

Using the derived categories, the results from 109 student teachers are presented below:

Table: 12 Question 4 and 5: Results from observed classroom practices

Classroom practices	successful	unsuccessful	total
Teacher factors	2	14	16
Student factors	2	24	26
Lesson planning	16	18	34
Execution of lesson	38	13	51
Classroom management	27	18	45
Teaching strategies	14	3	17
Teaching resources	7	3	10
External factors			5

The table lists the practices that emerged as a result of question analysis. Following the design of the question, each practice was reported as causing a lesson or lessons to be successful or to be unsuccessful. The practices in themselves were not perceived as unsuccessful by student teachers but were observed to cause a particular lesson to fail.

(a) Teacher factors

16 comments were made about the teacher and the reasons for the teachers' successful conduct or failure to conduct a lesson. Student teachers observed that teacherly qualities such as confidence and enthusiasm contributed to a successful lesson but a teacher who displays an inflexible quality affected students' confidence and learning negatively: "*Students feel they are being patronised*" (27) or another example: "*One of the music lesson that I observed has a rigid teacher who rightly belongs to the middle ages! Everything has to be done to her specifications, and in many ways, affect the students' right and opportunity to express their creativity*" (22).

A teacher's confidence, in himself and in the students, was observed to be important in maintaining discipline, so that the lesson can progress as planned: "*The teacher threw tantrums in about 3 lessons though at the last lesson he mellowed dramatically because he was able to gain some control over the unruly students. However, I believe that it was the teacher's use of language and classroom behaviour of throwing papers and handling furniture roughly that aggravated the already chaotic classroom situation*" (63); "*Teacher does not have a confident attitude and perhaps teacher's unpreparedness contributed to that. As it is, students reacted by talking amongst themselves, ignoring the work he set, asking questions even when the answer was obvious*" (86). In addition, student teachers felt that a teacher's professional attitude toward language and toward maintaining standards affected what learners learnt: "*Spelling is so little emphasised in the class that children grew up still making the same spelling mistakes in their work*" (20)

(b) Student factors

24 comments came from student teachers who observed that bad learner behaviour caused lessons to fail. Bad behaviour in learners was observed in learners' perpetual

disregard for education and discipline: *“Students didn’t really want to learn”* (75). A non-conducive learning environment: *“There certain pupils who kept crying and shouting for attention”* (114); *“The teacher couldn’t get on with the lesson because one student kept on disturbing his fellow classmates and the teacher as well”*. Weak teacher also caused lessons to fail in the classrooms: *“The teacher failed to involve all the students ...the lesson was not interesting enough and some students did not do the work set by the teacher”* (18).

Badly behaved learners were identified as disruptive elements in the classroom as they obstructed teachers from teaching and prevented other students from learning: *“Some of the students in the class were quite disruptive. They distracted others by making noise and made fun of the teacher. The teacher couldn’t handle it even though he had repeatedly told them to be quiet”* (3); and influenced others to behave equally badly *“The class itself had a few naughty students who were making noise and distracted other students. Since the teacher didn’t bother much, the scene in the class became rather uncontrolled, noisy and then even the good students misbehaved”* (25).

Student teachers also observed that learners with a positive learning attitude responded to their teachers and were undeniably responsible for making the lesson successful: *“Good responses from the students show their commitment and interest in learning”* (4).

(c) Lesson planning

34 student teachers observed that teachers who planned their lessons by formulating clear lesson aims, chose topics and techniques appropriate to learners’ need and planned for a smooth transition between the stages of their lesson tended to have a successful teaching session: *“Good communication between teachers and*

students... because when teachers understand students' needs then they would be able to conduct a planned lesson that caters for all" (66); "By using the method of differentiated preparation, the students can perform their work more efficiently as they can work according to their own ability. As result, I don't think the students felt inferior as each of them managed to produce something..." (50). Student teachers were also aware of the consequences if the planning failed to include standby activities: "When the teacher was not prepared with an alternative activity the class became havoc. The time was wasted and students did not learn much for that day as they ended up reading their own books" (16). Or when there were too many activities in a lesson: "Students are not able to finish their tasks..."(41).

(d) Execution of lesson

51 responses were made about lesson implementation. Student teachers observed that teachers whose focus was centred on learners were more likely to have a successful lesson. Comments ranged from giving equal attention to learners to ensuring that all learners participated at their own pace. 21 responses attributed the success or failure of a lesson to learner participation in the lesson: *"Since the students were actively participating during the lesson, the teacher was able to carry out the lesson planned for the period" (46); "When students participate in a lesson, they show interest and motivation to learn" (23); "Students are able to express, explain and evaluate their opinions and views on the topic; therefore the teaching and learning is more interesting" (9).*

Student teachers were able to observe and to identify the kinds of participation that learners prefer: *"The exchanges made between students and teacher showed quite a good rapport. This enhances students' participation during the lesson. Therefore exchanges of information took place and made the lesson successful" (35); "students*

were given opportunities to participate... weak students did not feel inferior” (40); “She [the teacher] made them feel want to respond and not because they had to” (13); “When the students are able to talk with teachers, give their opinions and the teacher accept them...” (66).

In addition, student teachers observed classroom practices that did not encourage learner participation: *“... each lesson is for an hour; the students became rather restless because they had to concentrate on the lesson for a long time” (46); “When the teacher provided most of the input, students might be left with nothing to explore” (105); “Students were not allowed to talk or ask any questions at all” (37).*

(e) Classroom management

There were 45 responses attributing the success or failure of lessons to the management of the classroom. Student teachers observed that teachers who created rapport with learners could expect their lesson to progress smoothly. Student teachers were able to observe instances of teacher behaviour that had created or maintained rapport with learners: *“Teacher was treating students with respect” (109); “The teacher joked with the students, thus making the lesson more relaxed and fun” (8); “The teacher took extra effort to get to know the students as an individual rather than as a group” (30); “They [the learners] looked happy and did not feel stressed during the lesson as the teacher was willing to guide them” (16).*

From the observed lessons, student teachers also saw a range a of disciplining strategies to control bad learner behaviour: *“Firm control by the teacher prevented an escalating of unwanted behaviour by the students. This was done on the spot and the teacher resumed teaching, therefore lessons were not interrupted” (26); effective management of activities: “The role play may be taken from the syllabus list but the*

students are free to organise the practice session as well as the role selections. The teacher only organised the allotment of time during presentation as the students are invited to actively make their own approach in directing the play. All of these is very motivating, making it an emotional experience for all” (21); giving clear input, explanations and instructions: *“The students were very clear about what was required from them. They also knew that the teacher was guiding the flow of the lesson even though the activities were mostly exploratory exercises to be done in groups of three or four”* (86); *“Students are able to apply input in other circumstances”* (58); *“When the students understood what was going on (maths) they were able to solve similar problems/sums because they understood the mechanics of it”* (71).

Student teachers noted that the causes of mismanagement in the classroom can be attributed to the following factors: teacherly quality *“Lack of teacher’s control in handling disciplinary problems created havoc in the classroom and disturb others as well”* (8); overly active games: *“The pupils were excited and hyperactive until the noise and movement in the class was completely chaotic”* (33); and unclear instructions: *“students were uncertain about what was required of them so the lesson dragged on”* (3).

(f) Teaching strategies

There were 14 observations from student teachers giving evidence that where teachers employ a variety of teaching strategies, learners were observed to be fully engaged in the learning process. The strategies such as role play and project work, observed by student teachers, challenged learners to think: *“In one of the classes I observed, the students were given the chance to handle work on the school newspaper publication... there was a lot of enthusiasm among the students”* (19); *“By giving*

different tasks pertaining to the same subject, the students were able to understand the lesson at the end of the day” (68).

Reforming the class into various groups in one lesson was also observed by student teachers to be popular with learners and contributed to a smooth lesson: *“The pupils liked to work in groups. Teacher’s presence/control was therefore minimised. She facilitated and kept the pace of the group work in order and in time” (38).*

Student teachers saw that a bad teaching strategy was one that did not take account of learners who finished their task earlier can be disruptive making *“the students who were still on the task unable to concentrate” (113)* or an activity such as learner reading a page each from a prescribed novel was observed by a student teacher as monotonous and resulted in some learners in *“talking and whispering” (49)* among themselves.

(g) Teaching resources

10 comments were made by student teachers in relation to the role of teaching resources as a factor contributing to a successful or unsuccessful lesson. Student teachers observed that a wide range of teaching resources such as colourful visual displays on the wall, computer aided lessons and the use of a variety of realia enhanced the learning process. It was also observed that learner interest was sustained when teachers switched to more than one resource in a lesson: *“The teacher showed all the examples of the weapons described in the article they were reading and gave them opportunities to students to try the weapons themselves” (10); “The teacher knew how to attract students’ attention by using visual aid for example, pictures, flash card and a map” (19).*

Student teachers believed that over reliance on textbooks as a teaching source was not helpful to language learning because learners can become disinterested in the lesson: *“This may be due to practicality. However, this can lead to boredom”* (2); this situation worsens if the teacher made no attempt to involve learners with the contents of the textbook: *“The teacher sat on his chair and instructed students to open their book to a certain page of the textbook. The lesson was conducted strictly focussed on the contents of the textbook”* (60).

(h) External factors

Student teachers also quoted examples of external factors which may contribute to the success or failure of a lesson such as the duration of a lesson: *“The duration of each lesson took one hour in the UK. Students may lose their concentration because there was too much input”* (42), the time a lesson was taught: *“The lesson was conducted at 2.30pm, and the students were restless, kept on looking at their watch”* (11) and class size: *“Too many pupils for a teacher. Groups at corners were out of the teacher’s view. Pupils talked about their personal lives”* (27).

5. 2. 3 Results: Question 6

On the average, 109 student teachers wrote between six to seven statements as their teaching credo. The statements were analysed using the criteria developed from responses to questions 4 and 5 and consequently, were assigned to a similar set of categories. This is not altogether unexpected as the items in the questionnaire beginning from question 3 were designed to stimulate student teachers toward thinking about their beliefs in relation to teaching and learning.

The results from responses in question 6 are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13 A Summary of Teachers' Credo

Classroom practices	Total
Teacher factors	229
Student factors	32
Lesson planning	92
Execution of lesson	105
Classroom management	98
Teaching strategies	127
Teaching resources	39

Teacher factors, 229 in all, account for the largest number of credo statements, followed by teaching strategies with 127. 105 statements were made about lesson implementation and 98 statements were about managing classrooms. There were 92 credo statements on lesson planning whereas teaching resources and student factors, each had 39 and 32 respectively.

Details of information belonging to each category are presented in their respective tables and discussed following this paragraph. The detailed breakdown of the information is explained as separate units because each category serves to illustrate and to highlight aspects of teaching and learning that are already part of student teachers' belief constructs.

(a) Teacher factors

Table 14 Teacher factors

Teacherly qualities	76
Role models	35
Teacher response to discipline	26
Teacher's attitude to language learning	92

Student teachers believed teacher quality, such as teacher personality, was an important aspect of a teacher. A teacher's personality can do good things: *"I believe a good teacher personality can indirectly influence students to learn English better."*; *"I believe that the teacher's personality is important to ensure the success of a lesson as it helps the teacher to control the students."* Teacher quality also includes teacher confidence: *"I believe a teacher should trust herself first and have the competence to try new ideas"* and being respectful to learners: *"I believe the utmost success of teaching is to gain the respect from the student"*. Teachers, according to the following belief statements, should be approachable: *"I believe teachers have to make themselves approachable so that students have no fear in them"*; *"I believe that a teacher should present an approachable style of teaching"* but at the same time be firm: *"I believe a teacher can be lenient but still keep his/her authority in the classroom"*; *"I believe firm but [a] kind teacher will be more able to 'control' the class compared to a 'fierce' teacher"*.

Teachers are also viewed as models of good language users as well as in dress: *"I believe that the teacher should be a very good example to the learners for instance by speaking English all the time"*; *"I believe that teachers should dress smartly"*. In view of the standing that a teacher has in a community, teachers are examples of morally upright citizens; *"Teachers need to have appropriate set of moral values and*

behaviour”; “*I believe a teacher should instil decency and good taste in the classroom as well as for himself/herself*”. Imperfections in teachers are recognised by student teachers as exemplified by the following credo statements: “*I believe that teachers should admit that they do make mistakes and are not perfect*”; “*I believe teachers need to show they are human sometimes with feelings and can make errors*”.

The notion of dispensing discipline with a great deal of compassion was preferred to the authoritarian mode of discipline: “*I believe a certain degree of firmness and authority should be retained by the teacher*”; “*I believe we can all teach students to be good if we know how to manipulate our power or authority*”, but never as a means to bring shame on learners: “*I believe a quiet reprimand is better than the ones [that are] loudly proclaimed*”; “*I believe a teacher should be able to tackle students’ misbehaviour tactfully*”. However, two student teachers express a belief that severe punishment may be the answer to poorly behaved learners; “*I believe that students who have extremely bad behaviour should be caned*”; “*I believe corporal punishment is still necessary in enforcing the discipline in the classroom*”.

The following examples of credo statement also show that student teachers believed in the effective role of punishment on learner behaviour: “*I believe that punishment is still a very effective way of reinforcing behaviour depending on circumstances*”; “*I believe that praise and reward still plays a major role in encouraging and motivating students*”.

Credo statements relating to a teacher’s professional stance such as their attitude to language learning and their knowledge on various approaches to English language teaching appear to be significant to student teachers. Belief statements were made on the ways teachers should treat their professional knowledge: “*I believe teachers should not stick to one method*”; “*I believe that teachers should strive to present their lessons in many different approaches to get students’ attention*”.

Student teachers' statements on how language ought to be taught reflected their personal perspectives on language teaching: *"I believe grammar needs to be taught in the traditional mode at times to reinforce learning"*; *"I believe that students learn the grammar not by self-discovery but by covert guidance and overt learning"*; *"I believe that students should be exposed to the native speakers pronunciation so that they are aware of the different patterns of pronunciation"*. Statements were also made relating to teachers' attitude to assessment and error correction strategies. Their statements expressed their belief in the negative impact of a system that stressed on examination: *"I believe that the current exam oriented syllabus is not very helpful in expanding the students' language horizon"*; *"I believe teaching should not revolve around exam"*. Errors made by learners were believed to contribute to learning: *"I believe that students should be allowed to make mistakes so that they will be able to learn from them"*; *"I believe that errors and mistakes are helpful and as important as teaching itself"*.

Learners using Bahasa Melayu, the lingua franca, in an English language class was thought to be a viable alternative in certain situations: *"I believe that learners should be allowed to use their mother tongue to a certain extent in the lesson"*; *"I believe students should be allowed to speak in their mother tongue during discussions if it is the only way they can pool more brilliant ideas..."*. Code switching and translation during lessons were considered to be acceptable practices.

(b) Student factors

Table 15 Student factors

Students' attitude toward learning	11
Students' role as learner	21

Student teachers assert that learners' attitudes toward language learning influence their behaviour during lessons and that teachers ought to do all they can to encourage a positive regard for language learning: *"I believe that students who are relaxed and confident learn better, communicate better and are not afraid of mistakes"*; *"I believe students should sometimes be allowed to control their lesson"*. Peer influence was thought to be an influencing factor: *"I believe that students are influenced by their peers and their background and nothing can be done to change it"*.

A student's role on the hand was to learn as much as they can : *"I believe that intrinsic motivation to learn English in the students themselves"*; *"I believe that students should show interest in learning which ought to be encouraged by parents at home"*.

(c) Lesson planning

Table 16 Lesson planning

Need for planning of lesson	35
Planning for appropriate level of need	16
Selecting interesting topic and techniques	23
Selecting a variety of activities	18

The notion that the teacher is responsible for planning lessons that sustain learner interest was expressed in the following statements: *"Teachers have to have an instinct of knowing the suitability of a task"*; *"I believe teachers should vary their teaching styles in order to sustain students' interest"*. Suggestions of what kinds of activities are believed to appeal to learners are as follows: *"I believe that giving students chances to talk about the issues which interest them the most is good to promote their communication skills"*; *"I believe that choosing a topic which is relevant to*

Malaysian context enables students to relate the topic to their background knowledge”.

Pre-planned lessons are viewed as an essential teacher behaviour: *“I believe that teachers need to plan and prepare their lesson plans ahead of time”*; *“I believe that teachers should never come into class unprepared”*. The outcome from being prepared is a successful conduct of the entire lesson, leaving a good impression with learners and confidence. However, one student teacher commented that although a plan is a good thing, there is no need to get into a palaver about writing it down: *“I believe a teacher does not really need to have a well written lesson plan. A good material and a planned lesson in just a piece of paper is enough as long as you are confident”*.

(d) Execution of lesson

Table 17 Execution of lesson

Giving equal attention to students	27
Catering to personal expressions	27
Encouraging participation	36
Teacher’s questioning skill	6
Time management	9

Student teachers expressed the notion of personal attention from a teacher as a motivating factor for learners to learn: *“I believe that students of second language need the right motivation to learn”* ; *“I believe that students’ wrong answers or inappropriate opinion should not be rejected as it will de-motivate the students in learning the language”*. Several statements suggests ways in which teachers could encourage learner participation during a lesson: *“I believe that teachers should not*

force their students to speak; give them time and lots of comprehensible input”; “I believe that weaker students should be given a chance to participate in the class activities. Ignoring them is not a wise move!”.

A skilful teacher is also one who knows how to ask questions which will set learners speaking in the target language: *“I believe [a] teacher can encourage students to contribute to the lesson by posing questions which can create discussion among students”* and also to allow learners to ask questions: *“I believe that students should be encouraged to ask questions in class”*. Keeping to the time given for a lesson is also part of being a good teacher: *“I believe a teacher should manage their time carefully”; “Lessons should be completed five minutes before the official lesson ends, to tie up any loose ends”*.

(e) Classroom management

Table 18 Classroom management

Giving clear instructions	13
Giving clear feedback	16
Creating rapport with students	32
Creating a conducive learning environment	16
Effective lesson management	21

From the table above, the number of belief statements show that student teachers strongly believed that rapport between teachers and learners to be very important. The credo also suggest how teachers ought to go about building good rapport: *“I believe the teacher should remember students names rather than calling ‘you’”; “Very easy going with the class as long as they get my work done”; “I believe giving praise and recognition can also help in the teaching”*. Teachers are also held to be responsible

for creating a conducive learning environment by ensuring that learners are comfortably seated: *“I believe the class organisation (seating) should be flexible”*, or even move the entire class, if necessary, to optimise learning: *“The teacher can change the venue of her lessons; it is not restricted in the classroom only”*. The physical conditions of the classroom are believed to be equally important: *“I believe that the class (ventilation, seatings) environment contributes a lot to the success/unsuccessful lesson”*.

Effective class management meant different things to student teachers such as establishing routines: *“I believe a routine and consistent classroom practice will ensure effective classroom management”*; or a teacher’s attitude: *“I believe teacher’s attitude in managing the classroom is important in order to create conducive learning atmosphere”* can lead to better class control. Student teachers believed that managing the class is a fundamental skill that every teacher should have: *“I believe that a teacher should be able to have a good control of the class to gain respect from students and this will smooth out the teaching and learning process”*.

(f) Teaching strategies

Table 19 Teaching strategies

Group work	60
Oral drills	35
Role plays	11
Other strategies	21

Among a number of teaching strategies, student teachers believed particularly in group work as a means to learning English as a second language. Group work enables to learners learn to work as a team: *“I believe that asking students to work in groups*

in groups is beneficial as it allows them to speak in English and co-operate with the members of the group"; or independently: *"I believe that pair work and group work is highly beneficial in the learning process as it encourage the students to learn independently, promotes tolerance"*; in addition, it allows learners to practice all the four skills: *"I believe that classroom management especially pair work and groupings will allow students to practice their language skills"*; *"I believe group work enables students to interact with one another in the target language"*.

Another popular strategy among student teachers to optimise language practice during lessons, is the use of language drills. Language drills were perceived as useful in several ways. It promotes practice among learners whose proficiency level is generally low : *"I believe using drills as a technique to get very weak students to learn English"*; or as a means to improve a certain linguistic weakness such as in pronunciation: *"I believe using drills as a technique for 4 minutes or so often (maybe every lesson) can aid student pronunciation and stress and intonation"*. Using drills was also thought to be useful if they were used with other strategies: *"I believe that both traditional (drilling etc.) and communicative based learning may contribute to positive learning to students"*. But one student teacher believed repetitive drills limit learners' opportunities and rejects the notion of using them: *"I believe that using drills as a technique limits students interest in language learning because language is very wide"*.

Credo statements pertaining to simulations of real world situations during language lessons illustrate student teachers' beliefs in it as a worthwhile language teaching strategy. Mostly student teachers felt that role play helps to boost learner confidence and language fluency. Other strategies such as project work, process writing and group discussions were perceived as providing opportunities for learners to apply English in situations that mirror real world situations in a non-threatening atmosphere: *"I believe that discussion based activities (presentation by students) are*

practical for students to 'experience' English"; "I believe that by using more real life activities students will be able to learn English more effectively".

(g) Teaching resources

Table 20 Teaching resources

Audio-visual aids	20
Using authentic materials	19

Generally the credo statements reflect student teachers' belief in audio-visuals as an integral part of language teaching. They were seen as a means of enhancing language lessons and of maintaining learner interest in the lesson: *"I believe that use of audio-visual aids are to a certain extent, important since it creates variations to the style of [lesson] delivery"; "I believe in using visual aids to activate students' memory and arouse their interest".*

As teaching resources, student teachers believed that authentic materials were more useful than using prescribed texts. Authentic materials were seen to provide a slice of real world experience during lessons: *"I believe in using real-life/authentic materials in teaching English so that students could relate to it easily"; "I believe that using authentic materials in teaching can link the students with the real use of English".* Textbooks, on the other hand, were useful only if they were used in relation with other resources: *"I believe that lessons should be made interesting which means supplementing the textbooks with other relevant materials";* or adapted: *"I believe that is textbooks are to be used in the classroom, some suitable changes/adaptations should be made to add to life to the texts".*

5. 2. 4 Summary and Conclusion

Evidence gathered from questions 4 and 5, has provide insightful information about what classroom practices student teachers were able identify and to observe during their school visits. What is particularly important from their reports are the instances of classroom practices they chose to explain. Evidence from the instances quoted in questions 4 and 5 could be placed into two very broad categories - observable classroom behaviour and unobservable classroom behaviour.

Within observable classroom behaviour were aspects of classroom practice that were quite visible such as lesson implementation, classroom management, teaching strategies and resources and student factors. A teacher's behaviour and learners' behaviour inform student teachers of their (teacher's and learners') reactions toward each other and toward the lesson. In this way, student teachers were able to ascertain whether a particular lesson was successfully conducted or not. More important, from the explanations in questions 4 and 5, it was clear that student teachers interpreted the events they saw within the boundary of their personal experiences. The explanations were infused with personal perspectives making them real and relevant to the student teachers concerned.

It is not unexpected that aspects of teaching such as lesson planning and teacher factors did not account as much as those in the observable categories. In school visits, at this stage of the training program, student teachers were given the task of observing experienced teachers teach. Experienced teachers were not required to involve student teachers in the process of lesson planning. During a lesson, student teacher would need to observe, closely, teacher and learner behaviour and to interpret from those behaviours, about how much thought and planning had gone into the lesson. It is a difficult task because there is always the tendency to ascribe good planning to lessons

that succeed and to poor planning to ones that fail. Perhaps it is also expected that at this stage of the training, when the foci of courses have leaned more toward equipping student teachers with the technical aspects of teaching, student teachers are more likely to take notice of the practical aspects of teaching. But other aspects of teaching, such as educational psychology and reflective skills, form part of the training program.

The purpose of credo statements (Question 6) was to reveal the nature of beliefs held by student teachers before they begin teaching in the classroom. Visiting schools and observing experienced teachers function in the classroom provided student teachers with a frame of reference about the nature of teaching and learning from the stand point of a teacher. Bearing in mind that credo statements are meant to reveal perspectives about teaching and learning which have hitherto remained hidden, perhaps even to the student teacher, the percentage results, Table 21 show a significant interest in beliefs about a teacher's role in the teaching and learning process.

Table 21 A Summary of Teachers' Credo in Percentage

Classroom practices	Percentage
Teacher factors	41.4%
Teaching strategies	17.5%
Execution of lesson	14.5%
Classroom management	13.5%
Lesson planning	12.7%
Teaching resources	5.4%
Student factors	4.4%

Belief constructs about a teacher's position in the classroom and in the teaching and learning process is a dominant feature for this cohort. 41% of credo statements revealed that student teachers' thought a great deal about the teacher's role as a source of inspiration to learners as well as an authority on language teaching. The percentage shows that while student teachers believed that the technical aspects of teaching were important, the teacher is a significant figure in the teaching and learning process.

The teacher is believed to be the catalyst to learning. This is not to imply that there is a correlational element in teacher behaviour and learner performance. Student teachers believed that teachers inspire better learning and better behaviour in learners; and therefore, they must equip themselves with as much knowledge as possible about teaching and learning. It is natural that at the beginning phase of training student teachers should attribute much responsibility in the teaching-learning equation to the teacher.

The next section reports the findings from Phase 3 of the research (section 4. 2 Research Design). Student teachers have been placed in real classroom situations for teaching practice. Following this experience, it was possible to explore the nature of belief constructs arising from their personal practices and to see what belief changes have emerged from classroom practices.

5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations

In Phase 3, data was collected over a period of five weeks during the final eight weeks of teaching practice (section 4. 2 Research Design). The aim of collecting data

during this phase of the training program was specifically to answer the following research questions:

- 1 (b). What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers during teaching practice?
2. Do emerging beliefs inform student teachers in their classroom practices?

The main research tool used in collecting data in this phase was post-lesson interviews. At intervals during teaching practice, eight student teachers were each interviewed three times (Table 9 Study Design). The first set of interviews as independent-of-lesson interview, and the second and third, as post-lesson interviews. The stimulated recall technique was used during the third post-lesson interview (section 4. 5. 2 (c) Stimulated recall technique). The different types of interviews and their purposes are fully explained in section 4. 5. 2 Types of Interview.

As planned (Table 9 Study Design), each of the eight student teachers was observed, teaching, prior to the second and third interviews. During the observation, I was able to take field notes of the lesson. The on-site notes were used as a source of reference during post-lesson interviews, to help student teachers recall events they might have missed, and to stimulate the interview. They were also used as a cross-checking mechanism of other information in the study (section 4. 4 Observations). The purpose of observing classroom teaching was to collect information that might be used as a means to stimulate student teachers' thinking about their beliefs about teaching within the context real life classroom practices.

Each interview was audio taped and transcribed. They were then analysed and themes were established based on information emerging from the interviews (sections 5. 2 Themes and Categories; 5. 2 Phase: Interviews and Observations). With reference to

the aims of research questions 1 (b) and 2, the themes derived from the analysed data were grouped as follows: reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action and teacher beliefs.

In presenting extracts from the interviews of student teachers, for purposes of clarity, each extract is identifiable by the numbers in brackets, for example (7.15c). The first number represents a student teacher, followed by the page number of the transcribed text of the interview and finally by a letter denoting whether it was the first, second or third interview. The first interview, a, denotes an independent-of-lesson interview, b, the post-lesson interview and finally, c, for the second of the post-lesson interview using stimulated recall technique.

5. 3. 1 Results: Reflection-on-action

From post-lesson interviews, I found that student teachers contemplated aspects of their practices which they felt did or did not contribute to their lessons. Student teachers identified instances that occur during instruction to explore in the interviews. They thought about how those instances helped move their lessons along. It became apparent, from the interviews, that student teachers reflected on the technical aspects of teaching such as lesson planning, and their relationship with their learners during instruction.

Reflection-on-action describes the process where student teachers consciously reflected on instances that occur during their lessons and made attempts to explain why they occur. Student teachers were, therefore, engaged at looking back at their teaching as well as looking forward to future teaching. It was a deliberate act by student teachers to systematically explore their practices in relation to the classroom context to enable them to plan for future lessons.

Specifically, student teachers reflected on how the following aspects of their lesson impacted on the planning and implementation of their lessons.

(a) Group work

Student teachers used group work for several purposes - to move a lesson along, to ensure full participation among students as well as a means to build confidence among students.

Student teacher 1, for instance, discovered that by setting a task to be completed as group work, interesting points were raised within each group. In the preparatory task for letter writing, learners were seated in groups to brainstorm on the topic why some learners wanted to drop out of school. She found group work to be a successful preparatory activity as learners were actively engaged in the group discussions; *“I didn’t have to do much, actually. They were discussing in their group and I went around to facilitate, I just sort of nudged them along”*. (1.6b). In fact when learners offered a *“few not-so-good advice”* (1.7b), student teacher 1 commented that it was part of class participation and was meant to be taken as joke.

Student teacher 6 on the other hand found that group work among mixed ability learners encouraged peer tutelage and learning and at the same time moved the lesson along. She found that learners placed in heterogeneous groups worked well because *“every group would have one or two people who are quite good in the language, so they would help. I didn’t need to prompt these students and they would move it [the lesson] along”* (6.6b).

Another reason for considering group work as a teaching strategy, was as a means of building confidence among the less proficient students. Teacher 8 felt that learners were more willing to speak up when they are seated in groups. This behaviour was

evident when no-one volunteered to come forward to the front of the class with their answers. She concluded that she might get more volunteers if she had allowed them to respond from where they were seated (8.7a).

(b) Student' s language needs

Seven student teachers were concerned that student's language learning needs had to be addressed within their lesson plans for several reasons. Each student teacher contemplated and found ways to overcome the disparate levels of language proficiency within their class and to enable their learners fully participate in the lesson at a level suitable to individual needs.

Student teacher 2 scaled down the task of evaluating advertisements to a language level that was suitable to her learners. In a class where learners were linguistically less proficient, student teacher 2 explained that she posed several questions aimed at getting learners to evaluate advertisements, using language structures she was teaching; in addition, several key phrases, products from a previous lesson with a more proficient class, were placed on the blackboard to provide further guidance: *“From the charts, its is obvious that they need some polishing up with their grammar so I'm thinking that for the next lesson with the class, I will ask them to do it in a correct sentence”*. (2.5b)

Student teacher 5 was certain that by providing clear cues less proficient learners felt confident enough to participate in her class. In a lesson describing animals, she noticed that one of her weakest students raised her hand to give an answer, because according to student teacher 5, the student had sufficient guidance *“on the blackboard”* (5.15c). In addition, the animals were familiar from science lessons (see below: familiar context to less familiar context). But she found that the lesson was less successful among her weaker learners when the lesson proceeded to sentence

level involving the use of adjectives to describe the animals; *“The weaker ones jumbled up the adjectives... Communicatively it was alright because the partner could understand and guess the animal. But grammatically they made some mistakes”* (5.15c).

Student teacher 3 was concerned that the mixed ability composition of her class determined the planning of her lesson because *“The classes that were given to me-most of them with mixed ability though they were streamed according to their subjects... There is a wide gap and that costs a lot of time. You just can’t ignore them if they can’t understand your lesson-there is no point in trying to finish the lesson...”* (3.3a).

Student teacher 3 approached mixed ability classes with lesson activities that were graded according to their ability giving more guidance to the less proficient students and more task for the more proficient. She reflected on how she would solve this problem: *“For the advanced students, instead of asking them to write five points, I’ll tell them it’s better if they can write more...But for the lower ability students, perhaps I’ll just try to talk to them and give them ideas so that maybe they can just write down..”*. (3.3a)

Student teacher 6 commenting on the linguistically mixed level of her class acknowledged that she had to learn to give more time for her learners or to have more teachers in her class to assist her: *“For this class, it [the lesson] was quite fast. They needed more time and explanation. It would be better to have more teachers around in that class because every student needed someone to help them with the language. They have the ideas but they just don’t know how to express them.”* (6.8b)

Student teacher 8, however, explained that she was keen to encourage her learners to produce their own language structures by giving less guidance as the lesson

progressed. In a lesson involving the teaching of appropriate expressions such as offering or asking for help and advice, she began by giving a task where learners matched the stimuli to the correct responses. In the later stage of the lesson, function cues were given instead of whole sentences. Student teacher 8 explained her reasons: “*I know some of them [students] can't do it but I must force them somehow to do things like this because they have been spoon-fed all this while. I mean everything has been guided for them. This is still guided but maybe not too controlled...*” (8.5a).

Although student teacher 8 wanted learners to develop a degree of spontaneity in their responses, she concluded that the lesson progressed at a slow rate because learners did not have enough language to provide the kind of responses she had expected from them (see Pace of lesson). Student teacher 8 felt her lesson which focused on direct and indirect speech was more successful because learners were required to underline examples of direct and indirect speech in the reading text and were able to do so (8.13c). Following the preparatory stage of the lesson, student teacher 8 concluded that learners were able to produce their own examples of direct and indirect speech.

From the extracts it was evident that teachers looked at several ways to engage learners with differing levels of proficiency to take part in the lesson.

(c) Adaptation and simplification of texts

Following on with the theme of planning lessons appropriate to learners' linguistic ability, three student teachers found that they had to apply their knowledge and skill of adapting and simplifying reading texts and tasks to the appropriate language needs of their learners.

Some of the tasks were designed to bridge the levels of proficiency in learners and that in the prescribed class readers. The tasks also ensured that the rate of reading among learners of different language abilities, progressed at a similar pace so that everybody completed reading the prescribed book at the same stage of the text.

Student teacher 3 found that a number of her learners were unable to understand the context of the story in a prescribed reader because of their weakness in English. She took the initiative to bridge the language in the reader by adapting the long reading text into a jigsaw reading activity. She was of the view that this “*would force [them] to read*” (3.6b) carefully before they could arrange the text in a logical order. She had studied the text and found internal cohesive devices and paragraph linkers to enable her learners to complete the task. Although she had identified a reading task that would compel them to read and at a language level which she thought was the correct level for them, they took far longer time to complete the task than she had anticipated (3.6b). She found that they were unable to recognise the language and content cues within the reading text (3.6b) Because they were slow to complete the jigsaw reading task, she reckoned that an additional time of twenty minutes might have enabled them to summarise the reading text (3.9b).

Student teacher 7, on the other hand, chose to adapt sections of the prescribed reader as ‘Wanted’ posters in the introductory stage of her lesson. The poster she explained provided learners with language examples and content structure. She then proceeded to ask questions which were designed to lead learners toward using adjectives found on the poster and also to generate other adjectives describing persons. She felt she was successful with the bridging task, when she found learners chose different characters from the prescribed reading text, using adjectives and adjectival clauses on their own ‘Wanted’ poster and appropriate to the character from the reader (7.10b).

Tasks were also adapted from published activities to suit the language focus of a lesson. Student teacher 4 adapted a word maze pronunciation task substituting the words for the sounds that she wanted her learners to use at the reinforcement stage of her lesson. The task which was a pronunciation drill was also developed as a communicative activity where learners in pairs were required to say the sounds in order to complete the word maze (4.7b).

Student teacher 7 contemplated adapting the tenses in an extract from the 'Diary of Adrian Mole' to include the tenses she was teaching: *"I was telling myself that if I have to, I will summarise whole tenses because there are future tenses about resolutions and some past tense, future and present as well. I planned to teach them about present perfect and past perfect"* (7.15c).

When a task needed to be adapted or simplified, the student teachers showed that they were willing to experiment and to write up activities which were designed to bridge the gap between learners' language ability and the proficiency that was expected of them.

(d) From familiar context to less familiar context

When planning for lessons, student teacher 5 explained that in her first lesson on prepositions, she relied on students' familiarity with the geography of the school grounds to teach prepositions of direction and location. She then progressed toward using a map of an imaginary town that she had prepared.

In another lesson, student teacher 5 again used students' previous knowledge, from their science classes, taught in Bahasa Melayu, to build a table of descriptions of insects, fish, mammals and reptiles: *"I know they have done this in their science*

lesson” (5.12c). She was of the view that the introductory stage of her lesson was successful because less proficient learners need only give single word descriptions of familiar animals to complete the table: *“For example, this girl is very quiet in class and her language and vocabulary is very poor. She’s quite weak. When I went to her table and helped her out with one animal, a fish, I asked for one example of fish, she raised her hand twice. I was very happy because she barely says anything in class. She was willing to say it because she was sure that she got the answer”* (5.14c).

(e) Pace of lesson

Student teachers also found that the pace of the lesson may not necessarily move at a rate they had anticipated. During the interview, it emerged that student teachers were still learning to identify learners’ proficiency level and what their language needs were. On reflection, student teachers felt that this had somewhat affected the pace of their lessons

Student teacher 8 concluded her lesson on the language functions of asking and offering for help and advice was unsuccessful because the pace was slow. She felt the pace of the lesson was affected by the lack of language preparation activities at the beginning of the lesson: *“I think I should increase the pace... maybe my input for the role play is insufficient for the weak students. It was okay for the good ones”* (8.10a).

Student teacher 1, on the other hand, reckoned that the pace of her lesson was affected by groups who were not ready to present their findings during the feedback session. Although this had caused the pace of her lesson to slow down, she was puzzled that after four weeks of teaching them, she was unable to determine exactly what the causes were.

Student teacher 3 however, was able to determine that the reason for her inability to carry out the reading lesson at the pace she thought was possible because she had set a reading task that was beyond the reading level of some of the learners in the class: *“I took it [the reading text] because I thought that it was the simplest text I could find for Form 4 level...”* (3.5b)

Student teacher 7 felt that the prescribed reader, part of extensive reading program, can be fully read by all learners within a certain time frame. To ensure that this happens, student teacher 7 developed several tasks based on the reader (7.10b). She found that after completing each task, learners made better progress with the reading and according to the time frame she had set : *“...although some of them had finished reading the book, I had them doing something...although some of them hadn't finished reading the book, I had them go on. I was quite focused. At least I got them to finish up to Chapter 5 so that I can ask them to go on to the next activity. I did not let them lead me by saying that they haven't finished the book. I lead them so that I can progress with the lesson”* (7.11b).

In this way student teacher 7 compelled her less proficient learners to read faster whereas the more proficient learners were given more tasks to complete so that their reading does not exceed too far beyond that of the less proficient ones. During the interview, student teacher 7 justified her decision to increase or slow down the reading pace by providing both groups of learners with different tasks because she said *“I have to go on with what I planned”* (7.11b).

Evidence from post-lesson interviews illustrate student teachers analysed lessons they had taught with a view of planning and implementing effective lessons in the future. Although student teachers reflected on the procedures of the lesson as a whole, their reflections centred on planning lessons that take into account the differences in linguistic proficiency within a class. Throughout the post-lesson interviews, student

teachers were often reflecting on what were the best options they could take that would enable learners with various proficiency levels to progress at a rate that was within their linguistic capability.

Clearly, student teachers wanted the gap between the linguistically proficient learners and the less proficient ones to close, by providing tasks and activities that challenged the proficient groups and raised the proficiency level of the weaker groups. Another particular concern, was the prescribed reader which every class has to complete as part of the overall English language program for schools. Since the reader has to be read by every one in the class, it poses a dilemma for teachers. The more proficient learners will complete reading the reader, as scheduled and perhaps unassisted, whereas the less proficient learners will not. Student teachers contemplated various ways to bridge the gap between the language level in the prescribed reader, which was the expected language attainment level, and the actual language level among students.

Student teachers were found to actively engage in retrospective and introspective behaviour in the process of planning their lessons. Extracts from the interviews provide strong evidence that instances that occur in the classroom inform the planning of the next lesson. The interviews also show that student teachers were capable of assessing their own practices in relation to what has taken place in classroom and to apply sound pedagogic principles to their practices. It appears that lessons learnt from past teaching experiences were added to current experiences and together, they inform future teaching experiences.

5. 3. 2 Reflection-in-action

If reflection-on-action is presented as a deliberate and purposeful act of thinking centring on achieving best practice in the classroom (and in all aspects of teaching

and learning), reflection-in-action may be viewed in a similar way. They are both acts of deliberate thinking as a way of responding to problems of teaching and learning but the element that distinguishes one from the other is when the reflective mode takes place. As explained in literature review (section 2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach), the act of thinking and responding to problems in teaching and learning as they occur describes reflection-in-action.

Data gathered from the interviews showed that student teachers reflected on instances in the classroom and made immediate decisions to change aspects in their lessons for many reasons. What was evident was that the decision to seek alternative ways to the ones already planned, was made on contextual basis. From the interviews, it was evident that decisions for changes to the lessons were in response to the situations. Below are aspects of teaching and learning that student that student teachers found merited change.

(a) Translating to Bahasa Melayu

Student teachers enter into a class expecting to conduct their lesson fully in English. But on the occasions, when learners ask for a translation of words or the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar English words, student teachers often comply with the request. During the interviews, student teachers showed that the decision was taken after considering how translating will affect understanding.

Student teacher 1 translated words from Bahasa Melayu to English when students were uncertain about the meaning and the pronunciation of certain words in a letter they had to read before they wrote their own individual letter: *“Some students were confused about some words they didn’t know how to say. They told me in BM [Bahasa Melayu] and asked me to translate”* (1.9a).

When learners used BM during group discussions, student teacher 6 chose not to interrupt the discussion by insisting that the discussion be conducted in English. Student teacher 6 justified her decision because discussing in the mother-tongue had enabled learners to come up with more ideas in Bahasa Melayu (6.6b) but the final product was delivered in English: *“They were actually discussing and doing their work. They were talking in BM but at the end of the lesson, you could actually see they did produce English sentences. I think that was good.”* (6.5b). While student teacher 6 did not insist that students spoke to each other in English, she was adamant that she would speak in English, to be seen as a role model for her students: *“They wouldn’t speak to me in English – they refuse to. But I’ll speak to them in English and they understand it. So at least they have an example of someone speaking in English”* (6.8b).

Student teacher 8 found that when, on request from students, she gave examples of direct and indirect speech in Bahasa Melayu, she found that weaker students were responding to her lessons better. This evidently convinced her to continue with more examples in Bahasa Melayu: *“Very few didn’t understand what is direct or indirect [speech]. For them I had to give examples in BM [Bahasa Melayu]. I have to use examples in the mother tongue for them to see direct and indirect speech”* (8.12c).

(b) Instructions, questions and answers

Three student teachers prompted their learners along with questions. But asking questions which were not prepared prior to the lesson caused more problems to learners and the student teachers.

When student teacher 3 conducted a lesson on formal letter writing, she assumed (and correctly, too) that learners understood the format of formal letter writing from lessons in other subjects such as Bahasa Melayu and, therefore, she had not planned

too spend too much time on the format. However, when learners showed that they were uncertain of the format of formal letter, student teacher 3, immediately attempted to clarify the situation by asking pertinent questions “*to try to give the nearest clue as possible*” (3.11c). But she realised that by asking questions “*so that they may recollect the information or their background knowledge [about the format of letter writing]*” (3.12c), she found learners got more confused (3.12c).

Student teacher 8 also found that giving unplanned and non-scripted instructions can result in confusion: “*I wasn't really prepared for it...I didn't have the exact words to say so I wasted time...There was one part of the instruction that I forgot to tell them - that I wanted the beginning of their sentences to written at the top of their papers...so while they were discussing, I disrupted them by telling them so. That wasted time*” (6.8b).

Student teacher 7 decided on impromptu questions as a means of drawing learners' attention to the lesson particularly with learners who were inattentive during her lessons. Using unprepared questions and as a disciplinary strategy, worked for this particular student teacher: “*I noticed one of them [learners in class] is trying – they know I'm trying and they are trying to help but I guess I need to have a chat with them at some point to find out what is troubling them and why they are not concentrating on my lesson*” (7.15c).

(c) Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies were changed in relation to learner response. When student teachers felt that a planned teaching strategy was not addressing learners' learning needs, it was replaced immediately by another one.

Student teacher 8 decided to spend more time on explanations of the expressions of giving and offering advice when she found she was unable to proceed to the next

stage of the lesson because weak learners could not complete the language tasks set in the preparatory stage of the lesson. She abandoned group work in favour of teaching the whole class from the front of the class justifying the change as follows: “*I think its better I explain the to the whole class than waste time repeating the explanations to groups.*” (8.11c).

On the other hand, student teacher 4 abandoned whole class approach to teaching prepositions when she found learners inattentive: “*Students were relaxing at the back of the class*” (4.15c). Instead student teacher 4 reduced her talk time and increased learners’ talk time by asking them to explain what prepositions are and how they are used on the town map in the task sheet.

Student teacher 7 decided to read aloud a paragraph of descriptions because she was concerned that learners who were sitting at the back of the class were unable to see the visuals she had on the blackboard in front of the classroom (7.14c).

Student teacher 4, on the other hand, stopped learners from taking turns at reading aloud when they were not reading loud enough for the whole class to hear (4.2a). She moved the lesson along to the next stage. A teaching strategy that was planned was also stopped because it was found to be unnecessary. Student teacher 4 stopped a pronunciation session when she found learners had no real difficulty in pronouncing the words she was teaching. In another lesson, she discarded the clues for a treasure hunt when she felt they had become unnecessary (4.15c).

(d) Disciplining strategies

Three student teachers found that they had to experiment with means of disciplining learners that they felt were more compatible with their persona.

Student teacher 7 opted for setting the parameters of good learner behaviour from the beginning of her contact with them. She felt that learners and teachers must know what to expect of one another in terms of acceptable behaviour in the classroom. She outlined the rules of behaviour for maintaining harmony in the classroom: *“When I step into the classroom in the first week, as an introduction, I made it clear to them that I can be friendly but also strict at times “You don’t want to see the strict side of me.” I told them they have to follow these rules – its an agreement between them and me...make sure when I am teaching you listen and not do anything else...”* (7.3a).

She was pleased that she was able to refocus learners’ attention back to the lesson when she implemented one of the rules she had set out – she stopped teaching when learners were talking among themselves: *“I just kept quiet and they suddenly realised that this is one of the rules she had pointed out earlier”* (7.3a).

Although student teacher 7 had succeeded in establishing ground rules of behaviour, she was challenged by a group of learners who she found persistently refused to participate in her lessons, for example, by doing homework on other subjects during her lesson. She had given them several warnings on other occasions before she finally threatened them that she would throw out their books. It was a decision she regretted but she justified the threat as follows: *“I had to tell them off – nicely at first and then I had to warn them against doing other exercises during my class. It was fine at first but they took the warning for granted. I had no choice but to give them another warning that I regretted. I said I would throw their books out if they did it again. I could have said that I’d confiscate their books but I want them to respect me as I respect them as individuals. At some point they left me with no choice and I had to make a decision on the spot”* (7.6b).

It was evident she would have preferred to confiscate their books but she felt, by continuing with their bad behaviour, she was justified in meting out a punishment

which would reflect her disrespect of them as individuals; hence, the threat to throw their books out: *“There are better ways of dealing with this matter rather than saying I would throw their books outside. It’s like I don’t respect them as an individual...”* (7.6b).

In another lesson, where a number of learners, ten minutes before her lesson and at the end of the school day, were restless and inattentive, student teacher 7 abruptly ended her lesson. She realised that her learners were aware that she was displeased but she felt she needed to impose her teacher persona: *“I know I had to make a firm stand there and let them know that I’m trying and they are not appreciating my work. I can just leave them if they are not paying attention.”* (7.7b).

She was however pleased with herself with her decision to show restraint in the face of disinterested and restless students: *“I didn’t just walk out of the class – I made them stand up and thank me. I said thank you and left the class”* (7.7b).

While student teacher 7 seemed to have a measure of success with the use of subtle discipline strategies on her sixteen year old learners, student teacher 4 found her thirteen year olds did not understand teacher silence or the abrupt ending of lesson as signs of teacher displeasure. In a lesson which involved learners moving out of the class in search of clues on bits of paper she had placed around the school before returning to class, student teacher 4 decided that the one learner who did not return would report to the discipline teacher: *“I didn’t see him at all. My students told me that he’s still outside and asked if I wanted him to be called in. I said “No” and said to leave him be – I’ll just tell Mr. G. about it”* (4.19c).

Disciplining strategies were applied in response to the demand of the situation. Student teacher 4 sent her errant learner to a discipline teacher rather than dealing with the problem by herself as a last resort. She felt that she had given ample warning

about the kinds of behaviour she expected and was, therefore, justified in sending her learner away for disciplining.

Extracts from post-lesson interviews highlight that student teachers were ready to make decisions when the need arose. In matters of best practice, for example, where the use of Bahasa Melayu during English language lessons is not encouraged, student teachers opted to use a limited amount of Bahasa Melayu, mostly in very weak classes. Throughout the interviews, student teachers who used some Bahasa Melayu offered reasons for doing so. It was clear that student teachers did not take the task of using Bahasa Melayu as a means to simplify their work but to simplify learning for their learners.

In matters of disciplining, student teachers appear to have some difficulty in reconciling their caring persona with the task of disciplining bad behaviour. But student teachers were quite aware that they needed to establish control over the class to enable any kind of teaching or learning to take place. Much to their dislike, it was evident that they have to behave in ways that are contrary to their persona in order to maintain learners' attention.

It was also evident that student teachers were aware that decisions instantly made, can and do, go wrong. On the occasions when their immediate response seemed to muddle up the lesson even more, student teachers did attempt to continue with the lesson as best as they could. During the interviews, student teachers, in retrospect, were able to work out what went right or wrong with their decisions.

The extracts also tell a compelling story of the attempts by student teachers to engage in reflective thinking even as they grapple with the principles of learning to teach. They attempted to make sense of their teaching circumstances which on a lot of occasions will not go the way they were supposed to. The change in the learning

circumstances i.e. from campus based training to school based training demands a certain degree of reorientation to their role. In training on campus, student teachers become accustomed to a certain amount of latitude in the way mistakes in teaching for example during micro teaching are treated by other student teachers and course lecturers. Mistakes and other weaknesses are viewed as a learning process. In training in school, the whole learning to teach ethos is perceived differently by significant others such as the class teacher whose class has been assigned to a student teacher. Although the school and the class teacher are aware that student teachers are in training, student teachers are expected to step into class and teach from where the teacher had left off in the syllabus and to carry on with the duties of the class teacher such as discipline misbehaving learners and take class attendance.

The expectations in-training school have an added dimension which is specific to particular school setting. A teaching program, no matter how excellent, can provide the fundamental training for an individual to begin teaching but the process of becoming a teacher is far longer than four years (see chapter 8 Recommendations).

5. 3. 3 Results: Teacher beliefs

Determining what parts of language in the interviews constitute beliefs was a difficult process. Munby (1987), for example, examined metaphors found in the language used by teachers to identify their conceptual thoughts about teaching and learning.

The analysis of the statements were approached in a holistic manner, i.e. by studying the statements within context of events that had taken place and what student teachers made of the events. It is, however, difficult to ascertain when thoughts are beliefs or have become one. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) “beliefs refer to a person’s subjective probability judgement concerning some discriminable aspect of his world;

they deal with the person's understanding of himself and his environment. Specifically, we have defined belief as the subjective probability of a relation between the object of belief and some other object, value, concept or attribute" (p.131).

Since belief formation appears to be subjective, open to interpretation and dependent on the perspectives of the individual, the interview transcripts of each student teacher were studied for statements illuminating student teacher thoughts about teaching and learning as a whole. In addition, emerging patterns or themes from the interviews were cross checked against belief themes emerging from credo statements from the questionnaire survey in Phase 2. In this way, the descriptions of teacher beliefs gathered from the interviews were consistent with those gathered from the credo statements, thereby, marking the boundary of elements which describe teacher beliefs.

Data gathered from post-lesson interviews illustrate two distinct areas of beliefs held by student teachers :

- (a) beliefs about teacher image
- (b) beliefs about how students learn

(a) Beliefs about teacher image

All eight student teachers had strong images about teacher role prior to the course. These images had been developed from direct interaction with either a particular teacher or someone significant to them such as a family member.

Student teacher 1 believed that teachers ought to be enthusiastic about their profession. This belief developed from her personal experience with an English teacher whose enthusiasm with the subject, influenced student teacher's attitude

towards the English language: “*She was just always enthusiastic. When she came to class, she was always happy and she encouraged us to read and do things such as joining clubs, debates...*” (1.1a). During the interview, student teacher 1 listed out the characteristics she saw in her teacher, and of what she believed to be a good teacher: “*She was always prepared – she was always happy. She does her work, she comes to class on time and if she doesn’t she tells us and gives her reasons. She was always dedicated to her job*” (1.1a).

An image of a teacher who was friendly but not ‘overly friendly’ (1.2a) remained at a sub-consciousness level. Student teacher 1 acknowledged that when she took time to speak to her students away from the classroom and to enquire into their activities such as choral reading, she modelled her behaviour on her observations of the behaviour of her former English teacher: “*...and sometimes she will ask us what we do at the club or in the field if she sees us.*” (1.2a).

Student teacher 5 built her personal teacher image on her experiences as a student with the younger members of the faculty. She felt that younger teachers, through their behaviour with students like herself, showed that they respected students. She attributed her current belief in mutual respect between teachers and students to on her interaction with her previous teachers (5.1a).

Student teacher 6 was also certain that the belief she has about teachers was based on her past English teacher. She felt she was good in English because her English teacher gave her a great deal of confidence and she went on to say “*I would like to be that kind of teacher...*” (6.3a).

Student teacher 7 commented that her belief that teachers ought to be flexible was based on her mother who taught pre-schoolers. She had observed the differences in

the behaviour of children and her mother's response to the behaviour and concluded that flexibility in a teacher was necessary for good teaching (7.5a).

However, a positive teacher image also generated some other teacher behaviour. Student teacher 4 formulated her teacher image and teacher behaviour on a maths teacher. She commented that her maths teacher gave lots of maths problems for students to solve and threatened to throw out the books of those who did not complete any homework given to them. Student teacher 4 believed that this was acceptable behaviour because she observed that away from formal lessons, the maths teacher was "*very nice to us*" (4.4a). However, student teacher 4 believed that although she admired her maths teacher, she believed that her preferred teacher image was that of a mother: "*I have to be like a mother because I think that these children need a lot of attention and [they] will do things to gain attention like drumming on the table*" (4.2a).

A negative image about teachers had influenced the belief held by student teacher 3. Her early experience that teachers are "*text book based...that they don't care*" (3.2a) to prepare learning activities for students. She readily admitted that she based her personal teaching image on negative images of teachers and teaching: "*Maybe through my experience that is why I think there is a need for me to do that kind of thing*" (3.2a) but this was contrary to the image that she has of herself as a caring teacher: "*Its my job to prepare lessons and to think about it*" (3.2a).

Beliefs about teachers and teaching developed before student teachers began their course remained within their subconscious. During this phase of training, these images were used as a frame of reference upon which teacher behaviour and teaching practices were modelled.

Evidence from the interviews show that while beliefs about teachers and teaching practices were constructed on their interaction with strong teacher role models, student teachers' beliefs were constructed over a period of time on a particular teacher. Through personal interaction with a particular teacher, seven student teachers observed consistent 'good' behaviour, reinforced many times and over a long period.

Significantly, student teachers remember most the teacher who believed in their ability to succeed and to cause them to succeed in their school work. Beliefs formed through constant reinforcement of positive images become the central core of belief structure within the mental framework in each student teacher. However, student teachers were clearly able to look at their past teachers with great admiration but they did not always fashion themselves in that mould. The positive features of teacher behaviour were analysed within the context of the situation. But there was evidence that student teachers have their own ideas about what sort of teachers they want to be, despite having the experience of observing good teaching behaviour.

The rapport existing between student teachers and their particular teacher was a significant factor in the construction of teacher beliefs. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the one student teacher who constructed her beliefs based on her teacher mother would retain her beliefs about teachers and teaching far longer than other student teachers.

Evidence from the data highlighted the fact that beliefs were constructed through a gradual process of careful consideration, constant observation and reinforcement. Beliefs were not constructed based on a one-off 'good' teacher behaviour. Underlying the expressions in praise of effective teachers, there are evidence that the expressions were made after careful and critical analysis of teacher behaviour and teaching practices. While beliefs about good teachers may have been made in relation to student teachers' own successful performance in their school work, it was by no

means limited by it. It is significant to this study that student teachers were able to equate good teachers and teaching beyond their own successes to include other teacher behaviours such as good rapport, teacher flexibility and the caring attitude of teachers toward students.

(b) Beliefs about how students learn

Beliefs about how students learn are constructed as student teachers put into practice their teaching skills. Student teachers work out how students learn best through a dual process of experiments and observations.

Group work activity was a preferred teaching strategy with student teachers. This is not an unusual strategy when student teachers have to deal with class sizes of between 40 – 50 students and the time for teaching is not more than 80 minutes. Although student teachers used group work as a means of getting many learners to learn as much English in the shortest possible time, the underlying reasons for group work illustrate how they believed students learn.

Student teacher 2 was aware that by placing learners in groups with their friends, the situation would inevitably lead to a “*chit-chat session*” (2.3a) but she believed that learners would work well under those circumstances. All she needed to do was “*to keep checking on them*” (2.2a).

Student teacher 4 was aware that help from friends within a group can hinder rather than help. She insisted that individuals respond first to her before she would allow other learners to prompt with correct answers: “*Sometimes they help too much – they give the sentence to their friends and not give them a chance to construct their own. That is why I tell them to keep quiet first and let this student answer*” (4.18c).

Student teacher 5 believed in pairing learners with others who are not their close friends. She believed that in doing so she would build “*mutual understanding between them*” (5.5a). This strategy had proven to be beneficial to student teacher 5 when she found that learners could assist each other in the classroom when she did not have the time to give individual attention (5.8b).

Student teachers believed that learners can learn from their own errors. Student teacher 2 used errors by learners to highlight the correct grammatical patterns that she was teaching. Error correction was both the main lesson as well as a means of consolidating the language patterns she wanted learners to learn (2.9b). Student teacher 6 also believed in allowing students to generate ideas about how parts of speech function in context before she began her explanations. She had however planned to use the errors as a focal teaching point (6.6a). Student teacher 8 expressed a similar belief (8.8b).

Active learner participation during the lesson was also seen as an effective way of learning. Student teacher 2 interpreted active involvement from learners should go beyond the class. She asked learners to look for advertisements as homework so that she could set tasks to them in class (2.8b). Student teacher 4, on the other hand, chose to disperse clues written on bits of paper over the school ground so that learners were involved, physically and mentally, in searching out for the papers which would lead them to a ‘treasure’ (4.12c).

Student teacher 8 used role play as a means to ensure full participation. She believed that learners become more confident if they were given opportunities to speak [8.1.3]. But she also believed that they ought to be encouraged to be autonomous learners through guided role play (8.5b). In another lesson, she was reconciled to the fact that while she believed in student autonomy in learning, her learners were not ready to be autonomous learners. Student teacher 8 found that she had to re-teach certain

language points because they were making too many mistakes: *“I took it for granted because when I went round the class while they were doing it, I noticed most could get it right. That is why I assumed that they got it”* (8.13c).

Student teacher 7, on the other hand, felt that learners could be persuaded to be involved in a lesson such as reading if some of their needs were met. She found that by understanding that teenagers generally love music, she negotiated for their participation in an often dreaded task of reading from the prescribed reader by playing their favourite music, softly, in the classroom: *“Before it took me some time to get that done. When I asked them to do their work when they were reading they complied. Its possible that they like this session because of the radio that I bring to class. Its an agreement I made with them that I’ll let them read a book in a leisure atmosphere with the radio on”* (7.8b)

Student teachers developed beliefs about how their learners learn in context of their interaction with them in the classroom. Evidence from the interviews show that student teachers were observant of learner response to their teaching strategies. They entered a classroom with the notion that learners are respectful of their teachers. But student teachers appeared to take bad behaviour in their stride when learners did not behave as expected. Student teachers were quick to think of a variety of strategies to neutralise bad behaviour, sending recalcitrant learners to discipline masters only as a last resort. However, managing disruptive learners in class during lesson was more difficult. Student teachers had to deal with various manners of negative class participation behaviour such as disruptive talking and persistent whisperings, failure to complete homework, reluctance in taking part in group activity and inaudible responses. During the interviews, it was clear to me that student teachers expected to be challenged by badly behaved learners. They also appeared to be prepared to establish their dominance over the class with the aim of ensuring lasting peace in the

classroom. However, managing negative behaviour in the classroom caused considerable anxiety to student teachers.

Significantly, belief constructs about how students learn were constantly being formulated. Student teachers appeared to be open to whatever learner behaviour that emerged from the interactions with each other. In the interviews, student teachers did not express in any pre-set notions that their class was supposed to be proficient or weak, or that the reputation of the school had led them to believe that their learners were capable of achieving even more (or less) than what they had been experiencing in the classroom. It therefore appears that beliefs about how learners learn and behave were constantly developed as student teachers continue to make meaning out of their current practices against existing notions, if any.

5. 4 Phase 4: Interviews

The aim of collecting data in phase 4 was specifically to answer the following research questions:

3. Do beliefs change occur when student teachers become beginning teachers? What is the nature of these changes?

4. How do beginning teachers respond to changes in beliefs developed during teaching practice and in the beginning year of teaching?

The interviews were conducted on eight teachers, who were student teachers and subjects of this study in phases 1, 2 and 3. By the time they were interviewed in February 1999 (Table 9 Study Design), they had successfully completed their teaching program and had graduated with a B.Ed degree specialising in the teaching

of English as a second language. They are now fully fledged members of the teaching profession and have been teaching English to students in their respective secondary schools since September 1998.

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 are currently teaching in their respective secondary schools situated in rural areas. The schools are co-educational and each has a student population of between 1,000 - 3,000 students, mainly from the surrounding villages and small townships. The six new teachers, who are subjects of this study, were the latest additions to the teaching staff in their respective schools. All the new teachers come from very urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Johor Baru and Ipoh. Teachers 6 and 7 have been teaching in secondary schools in an urban and a suburban school, respectively. Like the other six beginning teachers, they were the latest members of the teaching staff. The student population is co-educational and they number from between 2,000 - 4,000 students. In accordance with education policy, except for English, all subjects and all communication in all the school are conducted in Bahasa Melayu.

Except for one teacher whose interview was conducted on her school premises, the rest of the teachers were interviewed away from their school. Each teacher was interviewed once and each interview took from between forty-five minutes to one hour. The interviews were tape recorded with permission from the teachers and later transcribed. I made notes of each interview, giving my impressions or interpretations of information gathered from the interviews. The notes have not been used as a primary source but they serve to remind me of things I might have forgotten. Extracts of interviews from phase 4 have been given the letter, d, to distinguish it from the three other interviews conducted in Phase 3. Each teacher has been allotted the same number that was given to them in Phase 3, for example student teacher 2 is identified as teacher 2 in Phase 4.

During the interviews, the new teachers reflected on their experiences as professional teachers in relation to the teaching staff, specifically with other teachers teaching English, to their students and to their experiences with managing learning. Aspects of teaching and learning raised by the new teachers, during the interview, are broadly grouped as follows: relationships with other teachers, relationships with learners and managing learning.

The three categories were derived from information gathered through the interviews and distinguished on the basis of thoughts expressed by the novice teachers. Distinctive features within each category were regrouped to form sub-categories. Sub-categories were created to reflect the pertinent details that further subdivide a particular area of concern raised by the novice teachers (section 5. 1 Themes and Categories). They set out details of experiences and beliefs raised by the new teachers during the interviews for example, under the broad category of relationships with learners, a further subsection deals with distant learners.

Relationships with other teachers: This category describes the interactions between the new teacher and experienced teachers in the staff room in relation to professional matters and to personal matters. It describes efforts by the new teachers to establish professional conduct with help from their senior colleagues. Attempts by new teachers to socialise with members of staff who have been teaching together in the school are also described within this category.

Relationships with learners: This category describes learners' attitude toward learning, toward the new teacher and their behaviour in the classroom. It also includes learner behaviour toward the new teacher outside teaching hours.

Managing learning: Within this category are comments that describe how the new teachers thought about their lessons, plan them and implement them in the classroom. It also discusses discipline strategies and teaching strategies used during the lessons.

The new teachers approached their teaching experiences in the beginning year of teaching in two ways. Firstly, they were found to reflect on very similar areas of concern to those experienced during teaching practice. These were the elements within the categories mentioned above. However, the scope of concerns, though similar, has somewhat shifted and broadened. Secondly, new teachers appear to reflect on current practices and experiences in relation to their experiences during teaching practice. The ensuing discussion highlights the formulation of teacher beliefs within the context of new experiences.

5. 4. 1 Relationship with other teachers

(a) Building rapport with teachers

Teacher 5 attempted to establish a congenial working atmosphere with her colleagues. She commented that during teaching practice she did not make any effort to get to know any of the teachers then because she felt she was only going to be teaching for eight weeks: *“But right now in the real school, the teacher rapport is so important because you spent most of your waking hours in school”* (5.9d). However, she still felt she was an outsider because the teachers tended to talk to her about professional matters rather than social issues: *“If they come to me its normally about professional matters; they don’t talk to me about anything else; that’s why I feel left out”* (5.10d).

Teacher 4 made a similar observation as teacher 5, i.e. teachers do not socialise with each other during work time as she had expected: *“Everybody is busy with themselves... from my observation they seem to be doing their own thing most of the time”* (4.8d) and because they are usually senior teachers, she found it difficult to be part of the established circle (4.8d). Teacher 2 faced the same problem with senior teachers who have no time nor seemed to care enough to introduce a novice teacher to the profession (2.4d, 2.3d, 2.10d).

Teacher 7 created a situation which enabled her to socialise with other teachers in the school because she felt teachers needed to work with each other as well as with students: *“It’s a form of bonding; you can’t just think about bonding with the students, you have to bond with the staff as well... because you are not just an English teacher, you’re a teacher in the school”* (7.15d). Besides, through teacher social grapevine she discovered ways in which experienced teachers balanced non-teaching duties with teaching duties. Information dealing with professional matters such as the processes involved in setting exam questions and administering them, were obtained while she was socialising with senior teachers in the canteen (7.16d).

Teacher 6 however had a different experience. Being new and single, she was treated like a “kid sister” (6.7d) by senior English teachers. Her suggestions to reduce the work load of preparing lesson activities were welcomed and acted on by every member of the English department (6.6d).

(b) Dealing with professional matters

Teacher 5 found that she had to work within the system already established by experienced staff even when she felt the system would not benefit her learners in anyway. The English teachers in her school had the notion that learners would benefit from writing a page a day in English. Teacher 5 informed the teachers that she felt her

learners who were extremely weak in English would not be able to write a page a day in English and the task would not benefit anyone. Instead she got her weak learners to read and copy bits of information stuck on the English language notice board (5.15d). In principle, she felt she had conformed to the system, and was pleased with her decision.

Teacher 4 found senior English teachers went about their own work without consulting too much with each other: *“The teachers seem to do their own thing a lot. They usually refer to me , let say when they want to design test or exam papers but as for teaching and learning they don’t really ask”*(4.2d). Although senior teachers were not overly friendly, she found that they were willing to listen and help her sort out her teaching problems: *“I think one of the reasons is because we have to rely on each other a lot”* (4.8d).

Teacher 3 found herself in an environment where co-ordination between English teachers teaching the same form was non-existent. She found this a difficult situation as she could not see how they were going to set a standardised trial test for the learners in the same form if teachers were not progressing within the same set of syllabus items: *“When I come in and I see things like this, it just puts me off and I don’t know what to do because I am fresh”* (3.3d). She was unable to comprehend how teachers worked together without holding discussions: *“Its like when you are involved in it and I expected at least a meeting; but a meeting is not called and you don’t have this meeting, you can just pop in and if you want to suggest anything you can”* (3.3d). Apart from one senior teacher who made an effort to engage her in professional discussion, she was very much left to find her own way (3.6d).

Teacher 6 was able to work collaboratively with two new teachers who had graduated a year before. Together they formulated the idea that groups of teachers would produce teaching materials for use by all teachers who were teaching the same form.

The idea was accepted by the English teachers as a way of standardising learning and reducing work load. She was of the opinion that she was lucky because senior English teachers had accepted ideas from new teachers like herself (6.6d).

Teacher 4, however, had a less than enthusiastic reception to her ideas of building teacher resources such as work books and course books. She felt senior English teachers were less optimistic about getting teachers' books because it involved funding which was not readily available. She added that she had not really expected the teachers to be keen with her suggestions for staff development because this would take teachers away from their family even more: *"I don't think they think its so important; they all have their own families and the school runs a lot of activities that consume a lot of their energy and time"* (4.6d).

Teacher 2 also found that senior teachers do not have the time to show new teachers the ropes; in fact senior teacher had expected new teachers to learn about teacher duties and routines during training: *"Everybody was busy and they have no time for you, so I had to find my own way. They thought you've been told at college"* (2.2d) for example, in matters like keeping records of teaching in the official record book. Because of her specialist qualification, she was assigned the task of co-ordinating the English department. She informed her principal that she was least able to handle management duties: *"I was really confused and frustrated. I didn't know what to do. Everybody is busy, no time to explain exactly how to do it"* (2.3d). The principal's decision however did not seem to cause resentment or hostility; what it meant was that over and above her teaching duties, she became overloaded with duties in the department because she did not know how to delegate them (2.4d).

She confessed to breaking down in school because of the overwhelming responsibilities of non-teaching duties: *"Some people do not understand that teachers have a lot of work that is not teaching; it is all clerical work which I think is nonsense"*

for example you have to do folios for each class, collect exam fees, and fees for this and that plus sports is coming up..." (2.10d). In this respect, teacher 2 faced the same problems as her colleagues who themselves have not been successful in convincing the principal to reduce non-teaching duties.

Like teacher 2, teacher 7 was also overwhelmed with her first teaching duties when she reported for work in August 1998 to be given classes that were taking the national exams in October of the same year. Finding herself in this situation, teacher 7 decided on teaching strategies that provided intensive language practice especially in writing compositions and grammar (7.3d). The English department, however, had meetings at the beginning of the academic year in 1999, where teacher 7 was involved in helping to plan language programs for the forms that she was teaching in 1999 (7.4d). She observed that she shared more information with four other novice teachers like herself more than with the senior teachers.

Teacher 8 had looked to her new colleagues to make practical sense of her experiences especially when she was given a class that was about to sit for the national exams within a month: *"But I never thought it would be this difficult and I never thought that I wouldn't have help from other teachers because I thought "No problem, there will be other teachers that I can look up to and ask" but I don't have someone I can really sit and ask"* (8.5d).

As an inexperienced teacher, she commented that she would have welcomed advice from any teacher because of their experience with the routine (8.5d). Accordingly, when teachers teaching Bahasa Melayu were prepared to engage in discussions on language teaching, she consulted them more than she did her colleagues in the English department (8.9d).

The notion of mentoring appeared to be a feature that beginning teachers would welcome in the novice year of teaching. Beginning teachers who had other 'new' teachers appeared to be able to manage their situation better. The socialisation process of the novice teachers into existing teacher sub-culture was not as difficult for novice teachers who had other novice teachers in the staff room. Experiences were discussed and analysed as beginning teachers attempted once again to shift from in-training expectations to the expectations of a professional teacher (chapter 7: Discussion).

5. 4. 2 Relationship with learners

(a) Dealing with weak proficiency level learners

Teacher 1 found that she had to cope with sixteen and seventeen year old learners who were extremely weak in English, unused to working in groups and were extremely shy of working with mixed gender grouping (1.1d). She found that learners were unwilling to apply themselves to the task in hand and often left the work to be completed by a few learners. She found such attitudes from her learners, frustrating: *"Sometimes I spent a lot of time just asking them to do the work and I don't really like that because that's a lot of time wasted... I can't force them to write when they don't want to write"* (1.1d). Although she was disheartened by such behaviour, she was grateful that some learners made the effort of looking up in English-Malay dictionaries for meanings of words.

Teacher 8 also found her learners to be extremely weak (8.1). However, she also found them to be extremely hard working and this encouraged her to try a variety of teaching strategies (see Teaching Strategy). An added incentive was that her seventeen year old fifth formers were due to take the national exams at the end of the

year. This fact acted as a pressure as she found that she had to ensure that learners attained good results in English so that the overall exam results of the school will not be unduly affected by poor results from English.

Teacher 6 was willing to invest personal time on her weak learners. She spoke to weak learners who had expressed their willingness to work hard at improving English and has planned to prepare a remedial language program (6.11d). In fact, two other novice teachers were willing to start a remedial class for English, in line with other remedial classes set up in the school for subjects like mathematics.

Teacher 4 found her learners, though weak in English, were not motivated in anyway to improve their English. From her past experience, she found weak learners can be motivated to learn: *“The students are disinterested and they don’t want to do anything. The teacher has to do everything. Give the meanings[of words], translate everything. So its very different. That’s the one thing that I didn’t really expect”* (4.4d). Her despair was quite evident.

(b) Dealing with learner rapport

Teacher 5 found her learners did not behave in a manner that showed that they wanted to know her as a teacher. She felt this contrasted with her experience during teaching practice: *“But right now in this school I feel that that’s the only way they see a teacher and that is to teach them what is supposed to be taught and that’s it”* (5.5d). She made attempts to establish a warmer contact with learners by learning their names and to converse with them: *“I know their names and I would really try to establish something to show that I am not just concern about what I am going to teach”* (5.6d). She was unhappy that her thirteen year old learners did not approach her personally for added information or clarification: *“I don’t know maybe because I*

am in a rural school the students don't seem to come up to you for anything personally"(5.16d).

In this respect she felt less challenged and was unhappy when faced with learners who kept their distance. She believed that by establishing some rapport with learners, as she did during teaching practice her learners could be motivated to learn (5.7d). She, therefore, wanted to establish a similar atmosphere with her present learners.

Teacher 3 developed rapport with her learners through her lessons. A particular spelling game activity had gone down well with her learners and felt she had made positive impact on her learners: *"They got very excited and I felt happy for the whole day. I think its good I should do it at least once a week in a single period and that should be alright"* (3.4d). She also used her position as teacher in charge of the English language society to establish her rapport with other students and she thinks she has been successful because the membership has increased: *"It seems quite a number of student wanting to join the English language society... so I think it's a very, very good thing, a positive sign"* (3.12d).

Teacher 6, however, felt she had reasons for not actively seeking closer contact with her learners: *"During teaching practice, I was given only three classes have good rapport; so it was okay to have good rapport with the students. I was able to do that but now because I teach about 250 students, its practically impossible to have good rapport... maybe later on in the year. But, I don't think I need to be too friendly with the students. I think I need to be more authoritative"* (6.3d). She felt that since teaching practice was a temporary situation and that she would not see them again, therefore she could treat them as a friend (6.4d) but she felt that in her present permanent teaching situation being friendly to learners *"will affect my class control"* (6.4d).

She also believed that she preferred an authoritative image: *“I feel right now I have to be more authoritative. They need to be a bit afraid, not fear me but at least know who’s boss”* (6.4d). But what prompted her to take this stance was that her present learners are playful thirteen year olds in their first year in secondary schools. She was of the opinion that sometimes *“they forget they are supposed to be grown up. Some of them jumped around in the class and they play”* (6.5d).

Teacher 4 has developed a similar view, that of being an authoritarian figure and a disciplinarian. She now spends less time thinking about building rapport with her learners but is more keen to get lessons going. Creating a distance from her learners meant establishing herself as a teacher: *“Because if you are too good they will step all over you. They will fool around, not show any respect like standing up when the teacher comes in”* (4.10d). She realised, however, that this strategy only worked with the better classes; she found learners who were placed in the lower end of the academic level, greeted her as she had wished but they would continue to misbehave (4.11d).

Teacher 7 found her learners were beginning to interact with her (7.8d). She has attributed their reluctance to talk to teachers to cultural bias: *“They are interacting now. They would tell you straight away. Yes, it could be criticism”* (7.8d). She believed that as a teacher she must not expect forty learners to be well behaved all the time: *“[being mischievous] Its natural behaviour. You don’t expect forty students to sit quietly in the classroom, respect you, yes.. but sometimes being mischievous is fun in the classroom”* (7.16d). But she was aware that there were badly behaved students who were disrespectful of teachers and were incorrigible: *“Cutting classes [by students] is one of the problems in the school. I once caught some students walking by. I was teaching their class, I saw them. I called after them but they just walked away”* (7.17d). When such a situation occurs, teacher 7 commented that since her best efforts to keep them in class had not worked, there was nothing else she could do.

5. 4. 3 Managing learning

(a) Planning lessons

Teacher 5 felt that she was more conscientious in determining lesson objectives and lesson steps when she was in training. Now although she was determined to set clear objectives she found that she has not been so successful. She attributed her inability to do so on lack of time and too many classes: *“It [the objectives] doesn’t seem so clear; maybe because of lack of time to plan a lesson step by step... you cannot plan step by step lesson because you have very diverse groups and you have five different classes and all the five are so diverse. It is not like during teaching practice when you have similar groups... even if they are different they are just slightly different”* (5.13d).

Teacher 6, however, felt that not having to write detailed lesson plans, meant that she was able to think more about the kinds of activities she would take into class. An outline of her plans goes into her daily record book but a longer and more personal one is written elsewhere (6.11d). Teacher 4 admitted that she spends less time thinking of teaching objectives or of planning lessons. She has resorted to relying more on teaching lessons from the prescribed textbook (4.10d).

At times teacher 5 was at a loss about how to plan a language program for her learners because the English department of her school demands that certain things are done at the same time, for example a diagnostic test so that learners could be placed on the appropriate class reader level; but very weak learners meant that she was unable to teach enough English to administer the diagnostic test: *“I have two double periods and a single period [of English] for every class and I have not even started on the class reader program because I have not the time ... and this month I have a*

diagnostic class for the first month [in January] and I was lost because I haven't finish anything and how am I going to give them a test..." (5.13d).

(b) Teaching strategies

Teacher 6 found group working was effective for both her proficient learners as well as her weaker learners. Both sets of learners were given graded tasks so that all learners had to collaborate with the respective members of their group in order to complete their group task. Teacher 6 discovered that apart from the prescribed school textbooks, the staff room had a small library of other published English language course books. She was able to use materials from the staff room library to complement her lessons.

Teacher 4 admitted that she relied on school prescribed textbooks to prepare her lessons. The school is underresourced so that published course books were not available in the teachers' collection. To vary her teaching, and if they were appropriate to the language level needs of her learners, she used games and other teaching materials that she had prepared and used during teaching practice. At the time of the interview, she was contemplating planning lessons around video recordings of cartoons, from her personal collection, to generate interest in learning English.

Poor proficiency and low motivation characterised learners in the classes taught by Teacher 2. She observed that her learners seemed de-motivated when they were unable to complete low level language tasks such as matching activities. After two months of teaching, teacher 2 admitted that she has yet to successfully identify her learners' language level: *"When they can't think they are frustrated... They can't do it but they want to do it.... Their motivation goes down. So I have to choose the activities very carefully"* (2.8d). She has decided to use songs and blanked out lyrics

during her lessons. She was determined that her learners must feel that they were making some headway in learning English. To that end she has continued to translate as a temporary strategy.

Teacher 2 was finding it hard to reconcile that she has had to use word level activities when teaching writing compositions to her fifth formers when they should be writing free compositions according to syllabus requirements: *“Composition, building sentences....sounds crazy even for form 5 my strategy is different....I have never tried this before but I think it’s the only way I can help them. I don’t ask them to write compositions anymore instead I give them fill in the blanks [composition]”* (2.9d)

In 1998 when teacher 8 was given a class that was to take the national exams, also had to find some strategies that would provide intensive language practice. Obtaining suitable teaching resource for intensive work was a problem. She found she had to suspend her ideas that language learning is fun and instead concentrate on bringing in materials that resemble tests: *“I mean in exams you don’t get fun materials... they are usually serious materials”* (8.5d).

(c) Using Bahasa Melayu

Teacher 1 found that she had to resort to using Bahasa Melayu to instruct learners in order to move the lesson along (1.1d). She contemplated a similar situation when she was in training but commented that she used Bahasa Melayu more now: *“I mean you have some students who know a bit of English and some who don’t know at all [during training] ...here I speak BM all the time...it’s a bit tough and you have to explain everything and everything goes very slowly...so a lot of time is wasted and not much [of language] is covered”* (1.9d).

At the beginning of her posting, teacher 2 conducted her lessons fully in English, as she had done during teaching practice. She found her lessons did not go down well

and she was forced to reconsider using Bahasa Melayu during her lessons. But her decision to use a little or a lot of Bahasa Melayu depended on the proficiency level of her learners. She also decided on the idea of gradually decreasing the use of Bahasa Melayu in all her lessons (2.7d).

Teacher 8 also found translation as a teaching strategy in English language lesson a necessity because learners “*don't even listen to English on the radio or even like English [speaking] movies*” (8.19d).

(d) Disciplining strategies

Teacher 4 attempted to deal with discipline issues in her class through the soft approach. She was unable to take on the tough approach so when learners misbehaved, she counselled them with advice and was determined to be patient. When she failed to make any headway with one particular group, the group was sent to the discipline teacher. She reflected on that as a wrong decision so she made attempts to be even more patient with the group. Although they were hostile initially, in the end her efforts were rewarded when they ceased to misbehave during her lessons. On thinking about her strategy, she felt that she was still uncertain how to go about with deciding what was the best way to deal with problems of negative participation in the classroom (4.13d).

Teacher 7 was faced with a badly behaved learner who was placed in her class because his reputation had led him to be excluded from most classes. She gave him duties of monitoring bad behaviour in his class and instructed that he report to her first thing in the morning and before he went home. Eventually, she persuaded the teacher in charge of the Prefectorial board to nominate him as a prefect. In this she was successful. Her evaluation of the situation had led her to believe that he was not

given a chance to change because teachers were keen to find faults with him (7.9d, 7.10d).

5. 4. 4 Conclusions

The sense of individuals yet again attempting to make sense of their circumstances is evident. The extracts do give indications of their experiences and what they hope to accomplish in the novice year of teaching. Again there is this sense that the personal perspectives and theories they had developed during teaching practice needed immediate adjustments. The areas of concern grouped under the broad areas of relationships with other teachers and with learners, and managing learning captured can not cover fully the range of experiences that beginning teachers face in their respective schools. The information here conveys the beginning practices of novice teachers and is not to be seen as a measure of their or the teaching program's success or failure.

CHAPTER 6

Case Study Insights

6.0 Introduction

A close study of the data gathered across phases 2, 3 and 4 revealed interesting insights into the thoughts of eight teachers. The information gathered revealed shared areas of concern as well as their distinctive responses to the teaching situations and to other significant persons. Similarities and differences in the experiences of the eight subjects were discussed and themes were developed based on the common pattern of experiences that had emerged from the investigation.

But the specificity of experiences of each subject as they puzzle over their respective daily teaching practices revealed unexpected insights. In order to understand the uniqueness of experiences of the individual teacher in a particular context, it was therefore important that the phenomenon is discussed as case study (sections 4.0 Qualitative Research Paradigm; 4.1 Qualitative Case Study). As case studies, individual experiences were investigated not for the purpose of making generalised statements, but to understand what it meant for each teacher to be in that particular setting and what personal meaning was derived from it (section 4.1 Qualitative Case Study). It is hoped that the revelation of particularised experiences will bring about deeper understanding of the phenomenon and will inform future teacher preparation programs and the agencies that are partners in this process.

Within the constraints of a thesis it is appropriate to focus on four of the teachers for this purpose. This section discusses the particular experiences of each teacher as she

progresses through the critical phases of training and in the first year of teaching. The research questions which form the basis of this study were designed to elicit and explore teacher beliefs and experiences in the move from the in-training situation to post-training. The discussion of how each teacher makes meaning of their situation is structured in relation to the research questions. The sources of information and how the discussion is formatted are as follows.

Table 22 Research questions and sources of information

Research questions	Source of Information
1(a) what beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers prior to teaching practice?	Phase 2
1(b) What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers during teaching practice?	Phase 3
2. Do emerging beliefs inform student teachers in their classroom practices?	Phase 3
3. Do belief change occur when student teachers become beginning teachers? What is the nature of these change?	Phase 4
4. How do beginning teachers respond to changes in beliefs developed during teaching practice and in the beginning year of teaching?	Phases 3, 4

The teachers were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Their range of teaching experiences represent multivariate experiences encountered by beginning teachers
- The variety of responses to the experiences reflect the complex nature of interactions between beginning teachers and teaching situations
- The various thought constructs expressed by the teachers highlight both shared experiences and specific experiences

- Particularised responses from each teacher can show the influence of individual personalities of each situation.

For reasons of anonymity, the teachers are given the following pseudonyms: Lisa (teacher 3), Su (teacher 4), Juli (teacher 6) and Amelia (teacher 7). Each case is discussed within the context of the school in which the teacher is teaching. This information is given at the beginning of each case.

6. 1 Case Study: Lisa

The school is co-educational, set in a rural area. It is generally under-resourced in terms of teaching materials. Facilities such as photocopying and a teachers' library are not available. Because of its rural location, teachers travel some distance from home to school. Lisa relies on pool transportation and was thus dependent on the travel schedule of others for coming in to school in the morning and returning home at the end of the school day. The teachers appear not to have high expectations about learners' performance. Lisa's request to move to a school nearer home has been turned down but she has continued to pursue the matter with the local education office.

After three years in the teaching program and observing experienced teachers teach during school placements, it was evident from responses in the questionnaire (section 5. 2 Phase 2: Questionnaire) that Lisa was aware of the technical aspects of lesson planning. In question 6, where respondents were asked to state underlying beliefs about teaching and learning, Lisa's six statements were focussed on the technical aspects of language lesson planning such as "*I believe that practice is important in developing English language skills*" and "*I believe good timing is essential in planning and carrying out a lesson*", one was on building rapport with learners "*I believe in forming a good rapport with students in order for successful teaching and learning*" and the last statement was about teacher quality "*I believe that a good*

teacher is a teacher who is versatile in every way". There was also further evidence that her experimentation with a variety of practices in the classroom were fundamentally grounded in pedagogic principles.

During teaching practice, Lisa took the opportunity to plan lessons using learned strategies. In one lesson she wanted learners to orally interact with each other within their respective group as they put together a reading text in the correct sequence (4.1a). She discovered that learners had sequenced the text correctly but her main objective, that learners engaged in speaking as they carried out the task, was unsuccessful: *"I gave them the instruction and all but when they were actually doing it, they simply arranged the text without communicating with each other. They just arranged it according to numbers 1, 2, 3...they were not actually achieving the lesson objective which was for them to communicate"* (4.1a). She also found that her learners were unused to speaking in class. If she did manage to get them to speak they whispered: *"When I asked them to read it out, I found out that they read it so softly"* (4.2a).

Lisa was forced to re-evaluate her lessons in relation to the unexpected behaviour from learners. When I saw Lisa again in her class, the underlying objective of her lesson was clear – she wanted to ‘force’ her learners to speak up. In order to get her learners over the psychological barrier of speaking, she had planned a task for learners repeating in whole class chorus, in small groups and eventually as single response (4.3b). Lisa had made a decision about the stages that were necessary to get learner confidence and learner participation through controlled speech situations based on contextual factors. Within a week since I first spoke to her, Lisa was satisfied that her strategies worked: *"Today they had to practice [speaking aloud] with the whole class and when I asked them individually, they managed to do it loudly. That's an improvement"* (4.3b). Lisa had to modify her expectations of learner participation within the context of uncertainty.

It appeared that her desire to get learners to be actively speaking might be rooted in her wanting to make the experience of teaching more conducive: *“I felt the students were too quiet and I felt very uncomfortable because I really wanted to see a bit of response from them”* (4.3a). But Lisa’s discomfort might also be attributed to learners’ expectations of teacher behaviour: *“They like the teacher to be in control, to guide them and to assist them in every way”* (4.3a).

Lisa found herself revising her perception of communicative approaches in view of her experience with passive and quiet learners. There was also clear evidence from learners’ behaviour in class that they preferred a teacher led teaching approach. She reached the following conclusion: *“I don’t really believe that a communicative approach is better. I think it depends on the students themselves”* (4.3a).

The changes to her belief structures were based on the reality of the situation. Having interacted with learners and observed their behaviour during her attempts to encourage them to speak, Lisa had to include new formulations of beliefs, for example, about how learners wished to be taught. Using reality based understanding as her framework, she was able to justify the use Bahasa Melayu to instruct learners of their task, a practice not greatly encouraged in training: *“I have to repeat the instructions and to translate it into BM [Bahasa Melayu] so that they can understand. But they will do [their task] when they understand”* (4.4b).

Lisa experienced greater anxiety in the domains of discipline. The same class, which had caused her concern in the initial weeks of teaching practice because of their passivity, had become noisy and restless by the time I visited her in the sixth week of teaching practice. (Table 4 Structure of Teaching Practice). On a number of occasions she had to raise her voice in order to be heard. As a discipline strategy, she made wrongdoers stand in a corner or gave the culprit a good talking to. She had tried psychology and punishment. She was unable to understand why some boys in the

class were restless and noisy despite her attempts at controlling their behaviour: *“Then as the weeks go by, they became very open and the girls especially started talking a lot. Before they were very quiet but now they are getting rather cheeky with me. I don’t know if it’s good or bad. Maybe its good because they are comfortable with me but not good because its causing discipline problems in class”* (4.4c). It appeared her every attempt at disciplining had not impacted on the learners in ways that she had anticipated. She was at a loss at how to deal with persistent bad behaviour during lessons.

Her inability to impose a measure of control over unruly behaviour made her question her own quality as a teacher: *“Yes I am comfortable as a teacher and I think I am confident. I am not confident if the way I present myself is the appropriate way as a teacher. I’ve been told that I am not assertive at all that’s why the students take advantage of me”*. (4.5c). These feelings of uncertainty had undermined her confidence in ascertaining whether her learners did learn anything from her at all; she also entertained the idea that perhaps her learners preferred their own English teacher: *“Yes I am really worried if I am teaching them and that they are learning. If they prefer their own teacher to me or if they are learning more from her than from me. I just don’t know how to find out”* (4.6d).

Her worry was beginning to impact negatively on the way she perceived her ability to teach. However she was quite certain that she had made improvements in lesson planning but not without some help. She felt she had improved with the help of her co-operating teacher, she was writing better lesson objectives, she had varied her teaching activities and she had not used the prescribed textbook too often.

She was, however, unable to maintain the same effort of including activities within her lessons in her novice year as a teacher. There was a significant decline in her pre lesson preparation. At best it was skeletal and she used the prescribed textbook as her

main source of teaching material. She was not pleased with her lack of professional behaviour but offered no reason for this significant decline: *“I know I can do better. I am not doing well at all I think. I think I have got the teachers’ syndrome like writing simple lesson plans”* (4.10d).

She, too, was beginning to offer reasons why she was unable to start her duties as an advisor to the English language society because it meant either staying late into the evening or coming in on Saturday mornings or to give extra language classes: *“Like my student asked me to give extra classes I say no I can’t from the start even though I’d really love to help my student but I can’t because of the distance. Its so frustrating”* (4.7d). Lisa however did attempt at improving her professional practice as a good colleague when she made suggestions about having departmental meetings or gathering basic teaching resources such as games to teach writing skills. The teachers cited lack of funds for the former suggestion and family commitments for the latter.

Lisa appeared to function in concord with the norm established by the faculty. While her personal observations showed that she was anxious about her unprofessional behaviour, she was unable to make herself practice in ways that might possibly counter it. Her behaviour indicated her desire to behave in ways that were acceptable to the faculty. But her professional behaviour was less significant to Lisa than her emotional security she derived from being part of the faculty. Regardless of their response to her, Lisa was certain that she had to ensure her acceptance within the teaching circle: *“I think its more like an obligation now that I am a teacher myself because its really not nice if you stay alone in the staff room without talking to anyone”* (4.7d).

Lisa had a high degree of tolerance to disruptive learner behaviour in class. Her tolerance appeared to be grounded on her own reaction to the school teachers who

tried to discipline her and met with little success: *“I had a relaxed attitude about teachers because I was quite a naughty student I don’t really listen to them. ...now I can understand why the students are behaving or misbehaving in such a manner because I went through similar experiences myself. I’m able to relate...”* (4.4c). The notion she derived was based on the inimitable belief that her learners will change as she did – never mind that she had to take time out of every lesson to discipline learners.

During the novice year, Lisa continued to be plagued with badly behaved learners (4.13d). She blamed interruptions from school administration or from other teachers calling out her learners to other duties during her lessons for unsettling her class. She began to be even more de-motivated from planning interesting lessons. Lisa’s reasons illustrated the frustration when discipline problems were not successfully handled appeared to spill over into the problems of lesson planning. She expressed frustration over what she perceived as constantly having to play “catch up” with the syllabus requirements. In order to cope, Lisa became like other teachers in the school – teaching unplanned lessons and from school prescribed textbooks and writing skeletal records of lessons in the record book for administrative purposes rather than as a professional documentation of work.

She wanted to be a strong disciplinarian to combat the discipline problems she was facing but it was a wish that was motivated by her need to be accepted by the staff whom she observed were strong disciplinarians. Lisa was unable to bring to bear her professional evaluation and judgement to solve the problem of disruptive learners.

6. 2 Case study: Su

The school is located in rural surroundings. It is co-educational and the teachers lived in the surrounding small townships. The school has purposely built houses for teachers like Su who are not locals. As a policy practised by all secondary schools, fourth and fifth formers are placed in classes according to their choice of subjects – students in a science class will study science related subjects like biology and possibly additional mathematics; in the arts stream, the choice of subjects include geography, art. It has been the assumption that high performing students are placed in the science stream.

During teaching practice Su expressed concern about planning lessons for mixed ability classes. She found that the gaps in language competency existed not only within one class but also across the disciplines of her learners. She had one class of learners who had chosen science as their main discipline and another was arts based. Su attempted to develop lessons and activities that would serve the proficiency levels she had identified. But she discovered that Arts and science learners had distinctive approaches to learning: *“I think the only thing is that the Arts students want you to talk to them and show that you are concerned. Maybe the science students are more concerned with what they have to finish or learn or do maybe because of the exams. That kind of different learning pattern I think”* (3.3a).

Su unexpectedly found that she was faced with a class of learners whom she perceived as perhaps even smarter than she herself was: *“Sometimes I’m a bit afraid if they ask questions that I can’t answer. The science students here are very smart so you have to be very careful in what you say and you have to be very alert with the questions they ask you...I always have this dictionary with me because I’m scared that I can’t answer the question”* (3.3a). She was however prepared to deal with any eventuality of difficult language problems by arming herself with a good dictionary!

Su made real efforts in planning lessons not because it was a requirement of the course but because she was committed to her learners. But she related to me a lesson, which she evaluated as a failure because her learners were unable to do the pre-planned task. Su was unable to determine the cause of her learners' confusion over a jigsaw reading task. But as she was relating the incident to me, it dawned on her that the linkers and cohesive devices within the jigsaw text, which she thought were obvious, were not so to her learners (3.6a, 3.a7a, 3.8a). Learners took more time to complete the task than she had expected and in the end she was forced to abandon the rest of her plans.

This incident highlighted the kinds of unexpected situations that oblige student teachers to make immediate decisions in response to classroom occurrences. This situation could have ended badly with Su losing her already shaken confidence at having to teach 'smart' learners. Even as she puzzled over the confusion she was unable to isolate the nature of the problem. This situation in a way, mirrored real life classroom dilemma where teachers in their respective classroom encounter unexpected problems and are expected to solve them alone.

Su also learnt that mistakes demand a great deal of effort in order to correct them. Su discovered that in a particular lesson when she did not plan enough in detail the lesson led to unpredictable outcomes. At the post-lesson interview, Su was certain that she was the cause for the confusion during the lesson: *"I think I forgot to write the instructions and what I wanted them to do. Maybe I could just say 'Write an enquiry letter' or something but its not specific to whom I wanted them to write to. I've forgotten to write that and what I wrote on the roll up board it was upside down. I had to rewrite it on the board and it wasted a lot of time since the students were not doing anything at that time they started whistling..."* (3.14c). Su's comments captures the confusion in herself and in her learners when she was unable to think of

appropriate strategies that might solve emerging problems despite being able to identify what the problems were.

If attention to learners' response to lessons were an important determinant to her success during teaching practice, Su discovered it was even more important during the novice year of teaching. Su planned lessons that included language learning games in which learners participated well. Her lessons were grounded in her belief that learners ought to learn English language the fun way. She evaluated the success of her lessons on learner participation and response: "*They [the students] got very excited about it [vocabulary games] I felt happy the whole day...I should do this at least once a week*" (3.4d). Her belief in enjoyable lessons as a means of encouraging her learners to improve their English competency was reaffirmed by the successes she encountered with her learners.

As a teacher advisor to the school's English language society, Su applied the same learning principle of fun filled learning activities for the members to take part in. The result was an increased student membership in the society. Her actions in the classroom and the conduct of the society meetings were not as appreciated by other teachers as she had hoped. However Su was determined to pursue the course of action she had decided on, on the basis that her learners and the society members were happy with her plans: "*What I am more concerned is the English society... the students come and the more students want to come, it shows to you that you were doing OK for a start you know*" (3.14d).

Su's actions indicated that she was unable to modify her personal perspectives on professional practice in order to belong to the membership of the staff room. Although she faced negative feedback from experienced staff members she looked to the students, who were the reason she was there, to validate her practices. Su's

actions in the classroom and in the wider school context drew the parameters of what she considered was professional behaviour.

Like Su, Lisa too wanted to fit into the existing subculture of the teachers within her school. But her actions indicated that she was either unable or unwilling to draw her personal boundary, thus making clear to other teachers her personal principles of teaching. Lisa accepted that her practices had degenerated from preparing lessons and using them as guide in class to the present behaviour of teaching without making any effort to plan lessons and to rely heavily on prescribed school textbooks. Lisa's actions were significant in that they conformed to the norms of teacher behaviour existing in the school. While Su had looked to her learners and other students to reaffirm her professional presence as a teacher, Lisa had looked to senior teachers in the school and thus she grew to behave more like the teachers in the school – citing family commitments for not being able to start the English language society and distance of home from school for not being able to provide additional guidance to learners.

Feedback from colleagues is important to novice teachers. Although Su appeared to not to need approval from her colleagues, she continued to make efforts to maintain a professional working relationship with teachers who reciprocated her gestures with the belief that she could improve with help from her colleagues: *“These people are not talking, they just keep quiet and how am I supposed to get experience and knowing that I am a new teacher I need to get information...”* (3.8d). Su appeared reconciled to working in an atmosphere where her professional practices were merely tolerated. She sought to explain the situation with the idea that perhaps her training and her life experiences in urban Kuala Lumpur influenced the way she approached her work: *“I mean its totally difficult when you are trained in a different way, when you are put in a different are so that its difficult to blend in and to do things. Its like*

now I understand why people do not want to go to ulu places [rural and remote places] because perhaps they will not be welcomed or accepted...” (3.8d).

6. 3 Case study: Juli

The school is co-educational and located in the heart of the city of Kuala Lumpur. The faculty is made up of experienced and senior teachers. To get a position in an urban school, as a beginning teacher, is often by good luck or sheer persistence with the local education office. Juli was one of four novice teachers in the school. The faculty is often stable with teachers leaving because of retirement. The school is generally well resourced from donations from well to do parents and from well attended fund raising efforts. The parent-teachers' association is active. Publishers' representatives visit schools like this to make book sales to students via the teachers' recommendation. Hence, teachers' complimentary copies find their way into the teachers' library. The school activities are well organised and properly supervised by teacher advisors.

Prior to teaching practice Juli wrote part of her credo (see section 5. 2 Phase 2: Questionnaire) of the strong central role of the teacher in a classroom: *“I believe that teachers should have a firm control over the class. Students should know who is the boss”*. During teaching practice, the situation in the classroom reinforced Juli' s conceptualisation of the 'boss teacher'. The problem of a handful of disruptive learners led Juli to assess the success or failure of her lessons on the her ability to handle behavioural problems during her lessons. She related that several attempts to persuade learners to make up groups not necessarily comprising only their friends were met with little success (6.9b). Random grouping was important to Juli because as stated in her credo that she believed that learners learn from their peers as much as from their teacher and they could do so from activities would allow learner

collaboration. Thus for Juli, one determinant factor for unsuccessful behavioural management was her inability to persuade her learners to sit in random groups during group work.

Being able to manage disruptive behaviour was important to Juli and Lisa because this reflected their own problems in managing bad behaviour. Juli, for instance, attributed the success of her lesson (which I observed), to the absence of disruptive learners in her class that particular day: *“It happens all the time. A few boys were absent today and these are the really naughty ones in the class but this is the one time they haven’t been in class all of them at once. I think I need to do something about the four or five of them.”* (6.5b). The last statement captured her reluctance at having to handle a situation that was going to create even more stress to her at a time when she was already under great stress to try out her teaching practices. In the light of the actions she had to take to maintain discipline in class, it was not a surprise to find that Juli had re-evaluated her credo about teacher role: *“Now I think that teachers should assert themselves more. You have to look at the situation because in this school you need to be more assertive as a teacher”* (6. 1a).

During teaching practice, feedback from learners was important to Lisa, Su and Juli. The feedback functioned as a validating mechanism upon which they based their actions. Juli also used the development of learner autonomy as a yardstick for her successes. In one of the group work activities, she was quite pleased that her learners were able to generate many ideas without much guidance (6. 6b, 6. 7b).

Juli discovered that learner misbehaviour was not the only cause for a lesson to fail. Failure to prepare clear instructions before a lesson was another. Just as Su had discovered during teaching practice, having to work out instructions as the lesson is progressing demands a great deal of thought. The outcome in both Juli’s and Su’s classroom was confusion among the learners as they were uncertain of the exact

instructions and more time was wasted in trying to clarify the instructions (6. 8b). This incident highlights the problem that student teachers discover during teaching is that being able to determine the problem does not necessarily lead to a solution.

As discussed earlier the case studies of Lisa and Su, wanting to belong to the circle of teachers affected their behaviour in different ways. Juli was just as keen to belong to the inner circle of teachers for a different reason. A sense of permanence to her appointment as a full fledged teacher influenced her decisions about her behaviour toward experienced teachers in the school and to her learners.

Teaching practice was perceived to be a temporary situation and therefore she did not need to make 'friendly' overtures to the teachers in the host school. Juli however re-evaluated her situation in her current permanent teaching position and her current status in relation to other teachers: *"I mean school is as you know a closed society and you would have to get along with everybody not just the students"* (6. 14 d). Juli was more fortunate than either Lisa or Su for two reasons. First, Juli was one of three novice teachers posted to the school and thus she belonged to a group of people who were in the same situation as she was. Second, the novice teachers were fortunate in that their idea of sharing out the work of preparing teaching materials according to year level was welcomed by senior teachers. Finding the means to enhance the feeling of group affinity at so early in her career in the school eased Juli into the profession somewhat more easily than Lisa or Su. According to Juli, she was treated like everybody's *"kid sister"* (6. 7 d) and thus she was protected from isolation through a feeling of collegiality with the senior teachers.

The feeling of acceptance was enhanced in the way the school practised a policy of respecting teachers and the work they had to do. Teachers were given a choice about the kinds of duties they would like to do so that although everybody had a heavy work load, it consisted of preferred work rather than prescribed work. The policy of

equal treatment of novice or senior teachers enhanced Juli' s feeling of affinity with the teachers and the school (6. 9 d, 6. 10 d). In fact as all teachers were aware that they really did not have a choice of the amount of non-teaching duties, they were prepared to accept self selected duties to the required amount. According to Juli: *“Some teachers managed a society. But some managed games but no society but some of the teachers are in charge of the exams that's a lot of work for them already so they don't have to do any games or become discipline teachers. Discipline teachers have different responsibilities”* (6.10d). This particular policy was obviously a reflection of the school's overall policy of respecting the teachers' wishes as much as was possible. The result of this policy was evident in the way the teachers had respected the suggestions put forward by Juli and the other novice teachers. Throughout the interview about her novice year of teaching, Juli showed very high self esteem and never once expressed a feeling of being dismissed by anyone in the school.

Earlier I pointed out that Juli made gestures of friendship toward the teachers at her work place because she felt that her situation was a permanent one and therefore she had to find ways to make the situation work for her. Juli' s relationships with her learners were developed from a similar basis. Juli' s actions during teaching practice and work placement was based on the impermanent – permanent dichotomy. During teaching practice her primary objective was *“spent trying to test what sort of method would be best for this class and what would work for that class”* (6. 10 d). But her teaching behaviour in the novice year was driven by the view that *“you are going to be around much longer”* (6. 13 d). Juli' s relationship with her learners was also determined on the same premise: *“So whatever I do whatever I say will matter, however I act ... so during TP I could be a friend to them but now I can't be a friend because in the long run it will matter because it will affect my classroom control”* (6. 4 d).

Maintaining discipline in the classroom was a source of anxiety for Lisa, Su and Juli. Being able to handle misbehaviour in the classroom had a wider implication for the teachers. It brought out either the feeling of self confidence and self esteem or a sense of despair. They all saw management of discipline as a puzzling area of teaching which they needed to come to grips quickly especially in the novice year of teaching when they took on full responsibility for disciplining their learners.

6. 4 Case Study: Amelia

The school is located in semi rural surrounding easily accessible by a trunk road. The students come from middle to low income families. The school has basic facilities like a school library and a playing field but resources for teachers such as teaching materials are limited. The faculty is a mix of experienced and new. Hence, it was not unusual for Amelia to meet other beginning teachers in the faculty. Until Amelia and the other novice teachers reported for work, there were no teachers with ESL specialism teaching the lower forms 1, 2 and 3. The principal is keen to improve the overall academic performance of the school and thus has developed a program to achieve that objective such as inviting speakers who are considered experts in their subject.

Amelia certainly found herself in the deep end of discipline management in her novice year of teaching. But her management of the problem illustrated the self confidence she had developed from her experiences during teaching practice. Amelia's personal perspective of the teacher was one who was in charge of all the events that occur in the classroom – from preparing flexible and modifiable lessons to maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. The teacher was conceptualised as the source of positive or negative learner behaviour. Amelia reaffirmed her belief by being “friendly but strict at times” (7. 3 a) with her learners. During teaching practice she acted on her beliefs through several methods such as establishing ground rules of

acceptable behaviour on first contact with her learners and making sure that learners were aware that there were limits to her patience. In one incident she stopped teaching when she noticed that a group of learners were talking among themselves as she was attempting to teach (7. 3 a). Amelia' s strategy in handling discipline was seriously challenged when she was teaching as a fully fledged teacher. The difficulties encountered in achieving control in the novice year served to reinforce Amelia' s belief that a teacher' s responsibility goes beyond teaching (7. 2 a, 7. 3 a).

Amelia had an overwhelming sense of responsibility toward a student in her class who had a reputation for disruptive behaviour. Behaving with an internal sense of confidence, Amelia appointed the student to be the class monitor whose duties included keeping the class quiet and in well-behaved when a teacher is not in class. Amelia' s actions met with a lot of protest not least from the student' s classmates. But Amelia had instituted a mechanism to ensure that the student was in class every day and stayed there until the end of the session. She made him report to her every day first thing in the morning and at the end of the school day. Her student rewarded her with exemplary behaviour.

This incident captured Amelia' s conceptualisation of the extensive responsibilities of a teacher i.e. to go beyond the teaching and learning into pastoral areas. Lisa and Juli had similar concepts but their perceptions changed in the novice year of teaching when the reality of the responsibility for another person' s life proved too unrealistic and too demanding. They found the impossibility of maintaining the belief of knowing students beyond the classroom because of the sheer number of students they were responsible for and the work loads involved in teaching . Su however made adjustments to her initial perceptions of the extensive responsibilities of a teacher accepting the limitations imposed by school ethos. She was able to balance her desire to be involved in students' well-being yet conforming to the demands of the subculture within the school.

Amelia had realistic expectations about working with the teachers in the school. Like Juli, Amelia was one of five beginning English language teachers sent to the school. Peers were helpful in providing the initial feeling of comradeship to overcome feelings of inadequacy and isolation experienced in the beginning year of teaching. Being a part of a group of beginning teachers meant that they formed a natural self help group for discussing new experiences. Although Amelia indicated during the interview that she was able to discuss professional matters with other novice teachers, she was aware that there was an inner circle within the teaching staff that was important to her well being. Like Juli, Amelia's decision to work closely with senior teachers was motivated by a sense of permanence: "*You have no choice you have to keep in touch [with other teachers] now there is a different perception you know that I'm now teaching this school its going to be years you know you have to make contact*" (7. 14 d). So emotional security from senior teachers was as important as the emotional support provided by other novice teachers.

Amelia's conceptualisation of her role as a teacher included establishing relationships with all the teachers in the school regardless of their discipline: "*You know you are not only an English teacher you are a teacher of the school*" (7. 15 d). This statement illustrated novice teachers' readiness to be part of the teaching fraternity. What had happened to Lisa and Su was that even as they worked their way into the community of teachers, the teachers had behaved in ways that set Lisa and Su apart from the main body of teachers. Lisa had compromised her professional principles in order to be like other teachers yet remained on the fringe of the community. Su, on the other hand, facing rejection from the teachers, decided to adapt her teaching perspectives with the school's subculture but only so long as they did not cause her to abandon her principles of professional practice.

6. 5 Summary and Conclusions

A close study of Lisa, Su, Juli and Amelia as they attempt to make meaning of their experiences highlighted the shifts in their areas of concern as they move from being student teachers to novice teachers. What was evident was that within each stage of their development toward becoming a professional practitioner, each teacher faced problems that were specific to their situation. To solve the problems was not an easy task. Each teacher had to draw from their inner self ways to solve the problem because there was no other recourse. In some cases they failed and in others they succeeded. The lack of personal experience as a teacher limits their responses. But novice teachers must have noted from the behaviour of their very experienced colleagues that a lot of teaching experience does not necessarily guarantee professional responses. Lisa, Su, Juli and Amelia left their teaching program feeling reasonably confident about their pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic skills and quite capable of pedagogic reasoning to enable them to teach.

Evidence from each of the cases presented in this section shows that in the novice year of teaching, each teacher had to re evaluate the view of teaching and learning conceptualised during their training to take into account the new real life experiences. Present data support the view that novice teachers were able to abstract knowledge and skills learnt during training and to apply them in their teaching. However, beginning teachers continue to look for support from experienced teachers or other novice teachers as if to authenticate their practices.

The school ethos was another factor that influenced the teachers significantly in the novice in different ways. Su and Lisa found themselves in their novice year teaching in schools that were far removed from their experiences during training or in fact in their life experiences. The management appeared to allow teachers to manage teaching and their students without overt guidance. Amelia and Juli had principals

who were very involved with improving the academic standards of the school. Of the four teachers, Juli was helped to settle into teaching by the school's policy of respecting teachers. Amelia helped herself to settle into teaching and was aided by teachers who appeared to accept new teachers as a matter of course. Su and Lisa were completely isolated from the staff; Su by her own actions, Lisa by other teachers' behaviour.

CHAPTER 7

Discussion

7. 0 Introduction

This section takes into account the literature reviews on teacher belief constructs and the reflective practitioner (sections 2. 1. 3 The Reflective Model; 2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach), concerns that have been explored in this study. Insightful findings about teacher belief constructs has emerged from the study at critical phases of the training. The findings presented in sections 5. 2 Phase 2: Questionnaire, section 5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations and section 5. 4 Phase4: Interviews were treated as within phase and across phase analysis so that information from one phase contributed to the overall understanding of the investigation.

In this study, I explored the notion of teaching as conceptualised by my subjects within the context of training and in their novice year of teaching. The study also looked at how the student teachers interacted with their teaching situation during teaching practice and in their first posting as fully fledged teachers. Their concerns and what constructs each teacher made of their experiences individually and collectively are discussed in this section.

There are many divergent views about what knowledge guides teachers in their practices, how these practices inform teachers' knowledge or what knowledge

prospective teachers bring to their training course. In recent years teacher preparation programs have viewed teaching from the perspective of teacher knowledge and teacher reasoning (chapter 2 Review of Literature). The subjects of this study, for example, follow a teaching degree program, which might be said to be fundamentally conceptualised on these perspectives.

The dimensions of teacher knowledge in a teaching program generally comprise general education content, subject content and pedagogical content (chapter 2 Review of Literature). Shulman's work (1986, 1987a) established the notion of varieties of teacher knowledge as fundamental to the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers. Other researchers (Grossman, Wilson and Shulman, 1989, Grimmett and MacKinnon, 1992) had reinforced similar notions of work pioneered by Elbaz (1981). Studies like these had indeed proven to be influential in promoting the concept of varieties of teacher knowledge as a basic component of many teaching programs.

The teacher knowledge perspective focuses on what a teacher needs to know in order to teach and manage learners. To that end the three main areas comprising general education content, subject content and pedagogical content were designed in the B.Ed program to enable teachers to practice in class. Briefly, general education content might include several aspects for example, the general psychological and learning behaviour of learners and various theories of education. Subject content invariably is focussed on ensuring that potential teachers understand and know the subject matter or discipline specialised by the teacher for example, comprehending aspects of the English language if the individual is learning to become an English language teacher. The methods of teaching and assessing learner progress are included in the pedagogical content.

Other studies (chapter 2 Review of Literature; section 2. 3 The Role of Mental Constructs in Approaches to Teaching) have added the perspectives of teacher

reasoning into existing concepts of teacher preparation. Reasoning in teaching involves the notion of teachers interpreting pedagogic knowledge from contextual experiences and their responses to those experiences. The knowledge and the predisposition to respond in a particular way are developed through the interaction of the teacher and the situation. Hence, conceptions of teaching are outcomes of teacher deliberations over a teaching event.

Reasoning requires teachers to reflect on practices in the classroom and in the wider context of the school with the aim of finding ways to make sense of new happenings within the framework of past experiences. It is developing the predisposition to think introspectively and retrospectively that a teacher preparation program hopes to cultivate in its teachers (section 2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach).

Studies on teacher development have discussed the relevance and importance of understanding the role of teacher beliefs in preparing pre-service and in-service teachers. (chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs). Bearing in mind that studies have reported the impact of existing beliefs on student teachers cognition, it is important that we understand the nature of these beliefs and how they are formed so that we may develop a training program that will take into account these beliefs. As this study explored teacher development from the perspectives of beliefs constructed by teachers in the context of teaching experiences, it is worthwhile, before I continue with the discussion, to recall the definitions of some key terms as discussed in earlier sections.

The nature of belief is defined as “a person’s subjective probability judgements concerning some discriminable aspect of his world; they deal with the person’s understanding of himself and his environment. Specifically, we have defined belief as the subjective probability of a relation between the object of belief and some other

object, value, concept or attribute” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, in chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs).

Teacher beliefs on the other hand are defined as “tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students and, classrooms and academic material to be taught”(Kagan, 1992, in chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs).

The theory of personal construct observes that “the events we face today are subject to as great a variety of constructions as our wits will enable us to contrive. This not to say that one construction is as good as any other...But it does remind us that our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration, and it does broadly suggest that even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we were inventive enough to construe them differently” (Kelly, 1970, in section 2. 3. 3 Constructivist Approach; section 2. 3. 4 Personal Construct Theory).

Although the definitions appear to exist independently of each other, they provide an explanation about the nature and the processes of belief constructs. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), the nature of belief system is that they may be formulated through direct observation or inferred or a combination of observation and inference (section 3. 1 The Nature of Belief System). Findings from studies (Lortie, 1975) reaffirmed that student teachers inferred or observe directly teachers in the classroom and in the wider school context. The beliefs were found to be stable and were used as a frame of reference to interpret teaching and learning practices. Evidence from studies (Kagan, 1992, Calderhead, 1987, Powell, 1992, LaBoskey, 1993) have found entrants to teaching programs filter information received in training with existing beliefs in ways that were meaningful to them (chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs). This notion is expressed by Blumer (1966) that “since action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges, one would have to...take the role of the actor and sees his world from his standpoint” (section 2. 3. 4 Personal Construct Theory).

Findings from this study have illuminated information on teacher belief constructs emerging from practices through the process of reflective activity. These findings have been discussed in the various sections and chapter according to the phases of the training and post training (section 5. 2 Phase 2; section 5. 3 Phase 3; section 5. 4 Phase 4; chapter 6 Case Study Insights). I have decided to structure the discussion of the overall findings from the overview of (a) teacher belief constructs and (b) teacher reflectivity.

7. 1 Teacher Belief Constructs

In phase 2, from the questionnaire survey, 109 student teachers expressed their concern about teachers' role in conducting unsuccessful lessons (Table 12 Question 4 and 5: Results from observed classroom practices). In question 6 where student teachers were required to make known existing beliefs about teaching and learning, an overwhelming, 41% or 229 statements (Table 13 A Summary of Teachers' Credo) were made in relation to the pivotal role of the teacher in the process of teaching and learning (Table 14 Teacher factors). This belief in the importance of the teacher is reaffirmed and reinforced from several interviews with eight student teachers in phase 3 (section 5. 3. 3 Results: Teacher Beliefs).

The findings from both phases of training appeared to complement and to support the notion that strong images of teachers, firstly, existed within the individual and secondly were being referred to by student teachers. The images were evolved from past life experiences and most notably from contact with persons who were significant to the individual such as a teacher (teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8) or a family member (teacher 7). The images conceived by each student teacher represented the

way they perceived themselves as teachers and their role in the teaching and learning process.

In phase 2, student teachers were asked to respond to question 4 and question 5, and to record instances of behaviours of experienced teachers teaching in the classroom (Appendix C Phase 2 Questionnaire). The results from responses to this question show that on the one hand, the incidences of teacher behaviour they chose to describe were those that contributed negatively to the lesson such as patronisation and inflexibility. On the other hand in response to question 6, where student teachers were to make explicit implicit beliefs, 76 statements were made with reference to positive teacherly qualities such as approachability and exuding competence and confidence in what she was doing in class (Table 14 Teacher factors).

The strong image of the teacher, whether it was developed prior to training or during the period of training, brought to attention the extent to which student teachers were able to recall with clarity the teachers with whom they associate the image (section 5.3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations). They were also able to recall the context that made lasting impressions in detail. Student teacher 1 remembered the enthusiastic and happy teacher usually prepared for her lessons (1.1a), teacher 6 wanted to be like the teacher who inspired confidence (6.3a) whereas teacher 7 was raised to be a flexible teacher by observing the influence her teacher mother had on very young learners (7.5a). Just as positive images impacted on student teachers' beliefs, negative images worked in positive ways too. Teacher 3 for instance developed her image of the kind of teacher she wanted to be by contrasting it with uncaring and uninterested teachers (3.2a) in her experience.

The images were a stable source of reference through which ideas of teacher practices were filtered. They helped student teachers to form assumptions on which they based their practices. These findings bring to mind and confirm the relevance of Clandinin's

(1986) definition of image construct within the individual student teacher. Image, according to Clandinin, was “a personal, meta-level, organising practical knowledge in that it embodies a person’s experience; finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken” (p. 166).

The construction of teacher images did not appear to be a passive one, relying on experiences and events in the past. Evidence gathered from phase 4 of this study highlighted the dynamic nature of teacher images. The changes to teacher images were made in connection to relationships with learners in the classroom and other teachers in the wider context of the school. The evolving formulations did not replace existing images but instead appeared to add other dimension to them.

Teacher 6 added to her existing image of a friendly teacher to include the authoritative image (6.3d). So did teacher 4 (4.10d). Both teachers wanted to impress these images on their learners to maintain control and discipline on otherwise noisy and uncontrollable learners. But in both instances, the teachers wanted a quiet class so that lessons could be conducted. In a sense, the teachers had studied the existing situation, understood it and acted upon it. Teachers 3 and 5 on the other hand sought to maintain their belief in teacher-learner rapport despite finding the situation working against them. Both teachers found the means to build rapport with learners through lessons in the classroom (5.6d, 3.4d). Their actions for example to behave in an authoritative manner implied that their willingness to reformulate their personal beliefs in ways that facilitated teaching and learning. In the same way, where they were able to maintain the status quo of their beliefs they did so. This evidence showed that images do undergo a conceptual change where there are experiences that promote them to do so. In this respect an image as conceived by Connelly and Clandinin (1988) seems an appropriate description.

An image reaches into the past, gathering up experiential threads meaningfully connected to the present. And it reaches intentionally into the future and creates new meaningfully connected threads as situations are experienced and new situations anticipated from the perspective of an image” (p. 60).

The extract describes how the images built in the past were connected web-like with experiences of the present to facilitate the development of new images in the process of evolving personal practical knowledge. According to Kelly (1970), personal constructs are ways in which we perceive our experiences and continue to puzzle out and make meaning of everyday experiences (section 2. 3. 4 Personal Construct Theory).

In dealing with relationships with teachers during training and post training, it was found that the teachers in this study viewed these from a temporal perspective. In training, specifically during teaching practice, student teachers made no attempts to build an affinity with teachers in their respective host schools. They expressed no need of wanting to belong to the existing community of teachers because their placement in host schools was temporary. In addition, as student teachers their practices were very much in the domain of supervisors from the college. Supervisors were not only their primary source of advice, but were also responsible for awarding grades. Thus, it would not be surprising if we were to find evidence showing student teachers were more keen on building an affinity with supervisors than host school teachers!

Data gathered from phases 2 and 3 showed that while student teachers made reference to good teaching qualities they had observed or wished to cultivate in themselves, they made no reference with regard to establishing any contact with teachers in host schools. I could only infer from this absence of mention about teachers in the host

schools that as student teachers they believed that they did not belong to the teaching fraternity as yet and therefore behaved independently of other teachers. In addition, they were not given work loads and other duties usually assigned to fully fledged teachers and this increased their sense of being different from 'them'. A feeling of being detached from the activities of fully fledged teachers in the host schools reinforced the factors that differentiated their experiences from other teachers. The theory of personal construct (Kelly, 1975) explains that perceptions of events are open to question and reconsideration. In the novice year of teaching, beginning teachers reconsidered their relationship to teachers in their work place. If they had appeared to work as if in a parallel dimension with other teachers during teaching practice, in the work place, they all attempted to work in affiliation with other teachers. Teachers 6 (6.6d, 6.7d) and 7 (7.2a, 7.14d) successfully found ways to be included in the inner circle. Unfortunately, for teachers 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 their attempts to build a working professional relationship were ignored or rebuffed altogether (chapter 6 Case Study Insights).

What is important from these attempts was that it reminds us that student teachers and novice teachers had constructed versions of reality in ways that were significant to them within the situational context. Therefore, the teaching context and school ethos were factors that encouraged them to stay detached during training or to construe ways of creating an affinity with significant others. And as members of the teaching fraternity, beginning teachers discovered that if a certain course of action that would admit them to the teaching fraternity, it was more desirable. However, each teacher was faced with dilemmas that were specific to their situation and these needed to be interpreted through personal judgement (section 5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations, section 5. 4 Phase 4: Interviews, chapter 6 Case Study Insights).

Constructivism views the individual as a meaning maker and as a primary source of determining outcomes (see section 2. 3. 4 Personal Construct Theory). Evidence

gathered in this study showed that student teachers and later as novice teachers were aware of the significance of their role in relation to learner behaviour and learning. This is especially reflected in the way they constructed their version of authority. Juli and Lisa (chapter 6 Case Studies), as student teachers, had acted the flexible but firm teacher in their behaviour toward recalcitrant or resistant learners. As novice teachers this version was adapted to include the dimension of disciplinarian. The decision to readjust the template was derived after deliberate contemplation of the situation and also of how the teachers wished to be viewed by learners (chapter 6 Case Study Insights). Su and Amelia have continued to be close to their respective learners in the novice year of teaching.

The notion of the individual as meaning maker is central to constructivism. According to Kelly (1970) a person derives different meaning from a particular event from his personal standpoint. Taking this statement in relation to classroom practices, it would appear that although student teachers had attended the same teacher preparation program they would not necessarily construe their experiences in similar ways. Even when novice teachers belong to a particular group i.e. in their respective schools, they construe their particular experiences in particular ways which were significant to them.

7. 2 Teacher Reflectivity

The value of teacher reflection in the preparation of preservice or in-service teachers is well documented and well represented in teacher education programs. The term reflection is used to mean conscious and purposeful behaviour. Reflection involves teachers thinking about their practices, whether they are working or not. It involves teachers thinking about their practice prior to entering a class, during the class and

after the class. It involves teachers thinking about the relationship between the public theories they learned from attending teacher preparation courses and private theories developed through life experiences. Preparing teachers has moved on from the theory-practice nexus to include the inquiring teacher; hence prospective teachers are encouraged to be critical of their own practices in order to gain insights to enable them to move forward with these. The process of reflection requires asking questions, evaluating events and making decisions that will lead to anticipated consequences. The intentions of such teacher preparatory programs must be to engage prospective teachers to reflect on the purposes of their practices and to learn to anticipate the consequences: in addition to develop reflective behaviour as a life long habit.

That prospective teachers enter a teaching program with knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning gained from interacting with teachers or observing teachers in the classroom has been well documented (chapter 2 Review of Literature). What is particularly important is that although as students they are not privy to the teacher's thought processes, they think about teacher behaviour and make judgements, however inaccurate, from the perspectives of students. In short, as students, they reflected on teacher actions. As long time students the beliefs that develop in this way become powerful through the process of reflection and reinforcement. The findings of this study found that student teachers were able to recollect quite clearly from the past as students in school, the teachers on which they wished to model their own teaching behaviour (section 5. 3 Phase 3: Interviews and Observations). The significance of their recollections was that they remembered the emotional impact the teacher behaviour had as a critical episode in their life. For example teacher 6 remembered the teacher who 'singled' her out because she was proficient in English. Without recalling exactly what actions by the teacher displayed attentiveness to her, teacher 6 interpreted this behaviour as showing concern for her well being. The sense of emotional security she derived from this served as a template for her actions toward her learners.

The study found that the subjects found topics for reflection varied over time. In the training phase, student teachers reflected on aspects of classroom practice. These were often areas that caused them great concern. Student teachers engaged in retrospective behaviour as part of the process of lesson planning. Aspects of lesson planning such as the stages in a lesson, the choice of activities and language focus and management of the learners during the course of lesson were carefully considered in relation to previous lessons taught. If we view reflection in terms of stages that student teachers need to go through then the initial stages of learning to reflect involves reflecting on specific problems emerging from classroom practices. Reflecting on particular areas of concern in the classroom for example asking questions, serves to provide student teachers with opportunities for putting into practice the process involved in self reflecting.

Grimmett, Mackinnon, Erickson and Rieckon (1990) explained the relation between knowledge and reflective teaching from the perspectives of instrumental mediation, as deliberating with competing views and as reconstructing experiences (section 2. 3. 2 Reflective Approach). According to Grimmett et. al (1990) reflection from the perspective of instrumental mediation involves teachers using classroom practices that were found to be effective by empirical research. This meant that teachers took on practices identified by external sources as effective and applied them in class. The success or failure of the application was reflected on but only in relation to whether it conformed to the successes as identified by the study. From this perspective, reflection was not based on the context of the practices but was based on what experts said and wrote. Aspects of teaching on which the teacher reflected were confined to what was recommended by external sources. This form of reflection is unsatisfactory as it takes no account of the teacher' s individual style and personality, the setting and the multivariate levels of learner behaviour.

perspective on reflection involves discussion of competing versions of good practices from external sources but also from personal sources i.e. the teacher. The understanding derived from this procedure is based on contemplation and deliberation. It is evident that the reflective behaviour being promoted in the subjects of this study is clearly of this nature. This is illustrated by the training strategy used by the teaching program such as engaging student teachers in reflective dialogue and writing reflective journals during teaching practice. Student teachers were actively encouraged to reflect on their practices with peers and with teaching practice supervisors. It is important that contextually based decisions were made by the practitioners and not prescribed by an external source like the teaching practice supervisor. However the teaching practice supervisor plays an important role in engaging student teachers in the reflective process. In a post training situation, especially in the beginning year of teaching, this role should be incorporated into the buddy system (chapter 8 Recommendations).

The knowledge gained from practice is brought about by conscious and purposeful reflection. As student teachers become more accustomed to reflecting on their particular practices, the focus of reflection should broaden to include general issues. Personal theories that develop grounded on personal practice serve to inform and to guide future practices. Findings presented in this study showed that novice teachers at critical moments in the novice year of teaching made reference to practices during training. Teacher 1 for example compared working in collaboration with other student teachers during training with working in isolation in her novice year. Teacher 3 referred to fun filled lessons carried out during teaching practice as a basis for continuing with the practice during her novice year of teaching. During training teacher 5 learned that adapting lessons could lead to success. In service, she chose to adapt a task prescribed by the school which she thought was too advanced for her learners.

Reflection from the perspective of reconstructing experience involves teachers deliberating on preconceived notions about teaching and learning in relation to notions developed from practices. The outcome of the deliberation is a reconstruction of existing beliefs that have proven inconsistent with present practice. The reformulation of the constructs is personal and specific to the context. Information gathered in this study found several examples where novice teachers reconstructed existing beliefs in the light of their experiences in the work place. Teacher 6 and 7 made a conscious decision to build rapport with the teaching staff that in view of the fact that their position in the school was quite permanent. This was reformulated from the view held during teaching practice where they saw no need to socialise with the teaching staff in the host school.

Reflecting, as pointed out by Zeichner and Tabachnick (1991) is conducted as a private cognitive activity whereas teaching is a public activity. The outcome of the reflective thoughts may or may not be observable in teacher behaviour. However their studies have shown that teaching behaviour can be a consequence of reflective thoughts and can be observed in the ways teachers plan and implement their lessons. My investigation confirms this finding. Future lessons are shaped as a consequence of the meanings teachers make of the interactions of events in the classroom. In the process of shaping future lessons, a teacher's personal values are brought to bear on the decision making process.

Cultivating the predisposition to reflect and the habit of reflecting is the central objective of teacher education programs because according to Kemmis (1986) "reflection is not just an individual, psychological process... through reflection and the action which it informs, we may transform the social relations which characterise our work and our working situation" (p. 5). Reflection is thus not about an individual working in isolation. It is about thought behaviours occurring in an individual, responding to a situation and in relation to others in the community.

CHAPTER 8

Recommendations

8. 0 Introduction

The recommendations offered here reflect the concerns that have emerged from investigating the experiences of eight subjects who were preparing to become English language teachers and their experiences in the beginning year of teaching. The findings raise several questions in relation to areas of the preservice teaching program and to their initiation into the profession in the novice year of teaching. The emerging concerns revolve around the areas of personal, social and professional development of the teacher. Do we know what learning has been abstracted from a teaching program by preservice teachers that will serve them in all school settings? How do we prepare beginning teachers to teach and to cope with existing conditions in the school? What facilities have been provided to initiate beginning teachers into the profession? What post training support could beginning teachers avail themselves of?

My recommendations are presented in the form of assertions. Each assertion reflects the concerns that have emerged from this investigation and they are further developed as recommendations for future course of action.

8. 1 Assertion 1

The student teacher has prior life experiences which must be considered in the design and the implementation of the teaching program.

Studies discussed in chapter 3 Teacher Beliefs have highlighted the establishment of beliefs prior to admission to the teaching program which influenced student teachers' attempts at learning to become teachers. How and when beliefs develop in an individual remain as much a mystery as why they might remain stable. The nature of beliefs developed from life experiences are reportedly used as a frame of reference for all learning as well as a source on which all learning is interpreted. Preconceived beliefs are potent because they have been reinforced by observation and derived from inferences of behaviours, events and incidences over many years.

It is against this background that learning to teach programs have to work to prepare preservice teachers. Student teachers need to go through the process of making clear to themselves their existing beliefs about teaching and learning. The objective of the exercise must be to encourage student teachers to recognise these beliefs for what they might be - myths, prejudices, information or just plain silly. In order to do this, a program of activities must be drawn up to enable student teachers and course implementers to analyse the coherent status of existing beliefs in relation to new information. If new information is recognised as consistent with existing beliefs then it becomes even more central to core beliefs. However if student teachers and course implementers are aware of a state of incoherence existing between new information and prior beliefs then steps could be take to address the matter. Strategies for resolving the conflict cannot be prescribed by course implementers. Ways within the existing training framework must be found to bring about within the student teacher a recognition that beliefs cannot co-exist in conflict with causing problems to the teacher. The decision to change or to reformulate beliefs by student teachers is

inexplicable; therefore teaching programs need to create environments which will enable new and positive beliefs about teaching and learning to be developed.

Belief change cannot be forced hence student teachers need to find ways of adjusting their beliefs about being a teacher that will require them to work toward the benefit of the learners and to become members of the profession. Student teachers need to be aware of the demands from school, to adapt to those demands within the framework of existing beliefs such as the demands of the teachers in the staff room. Su, for example, was unable to find ways within her belief constructs to adapt to the school ethos. She has begun to approach the problematic situation by maintaining her stance of individuality and thus stands in isolation from other teachers. For how long she will be able to function in this manner remains very much with Su.

Student teachers, therefore, should be engaged in this process of making personal interpretation of a number of issues such as the one faced by Su during the training. It is not only for the purpose of rejecting existing beliefs about teaching and learning. It is a process that allows them perhaps for the first time in their lives to explore their own selves in relation to personal development and their professional development as teachers. It is important to student teachers that they know where they are at in relation to beliefs about teaching and learning before they can know where they are going.

8. 2 Assertion 2

The transition from being a student teacher based on campus to student teacher practising in schools involves more than understanding pedagogic principles and skills and applying them.

Findings from investigating eight student teachers showed that student teachers spend a great deal of time thinking and planning creative and interesting lessons during teaching practice. Lesson plans were characterised by carefully timed stages, multiple activities appropriate to learner needs, abilities and interests, carefully considered instructional language and a positive approach to the overall management of the lesson with the primary objective of ensuring maximum learner participation. Student teachers used the opportunity to experiment with innovative language learning activities prepared for various proficiency levels and also to learn to move learners into a variety of group combination within one lesson. Vignettes from student teachers (section 5. 3 Phase 3) illustrated their attempts at making snap decisions to adapt planned lessons in response to the needs of the learner do not always succeed. Su for instance found that asking questions without prior planning can create chaos among learners.

Part of the cause for student teacher anxiety during teaching practice is the inability to think of immediate solutions that work. Therefore it is essential that student teachers are given opportunities to review teaching and learning strategies over an extended period of time and especially at critical stages of training such as micro teaching and prior to teaching practice placement. The teaching and learning strategies selected for this purpose must represent the areas of concern experienced by student teachers so that the complexity of the issues may be thoroughly discussed. In the process of clarifying the problem, student teachers are engaged at two levels. At the cognitive level, they are required to generate as many ideas of teaching that might solve

problems identified by the cases being reviewed. At the practical level, they practise making snap but effective decisions about alternative ways to continue with a lesson.

Reflecting on past experiences whether from case study reports or from personal teaching experiences is an important aspect of learning to teach. Information gathered from this investigation showed that student teachers reflected on both successful and unsuccessful practices. In fact reflecting on unsuccessful practices served as a reminder to student teachers to plan with sufficient detail in order to anticipate and to prevent problems occurring during a lesson. The recommendation for teacher education includes preparing teachers to get into the habit of preparing contingency lesson plans. This is an important aspect of preservice education in view of the fact that preservice teachers, unlike experienced teachers, lack the wisdom derived from experiences to inform them of an immediate and alternative solution to emerging problems. The lack of personal practices thus limits the student teacher to search for solutions based on acquired knowledge rather than on experiential knowledge.

Learner misbehaviours in the classroom are a source of anxiety for student teachers. They have been cited as the cause for unfinished lessons. During the period of teaching practice student teachers found that they had to manage learner misbehaviour which ranged from refusal to sit in teacher assigned groups, disruptive talking caused by persistent whisperings or by talking loudly while the lesson is in progress, refusal to do assigned tasks, to truancy. Student teachers clearly regard misbehaviour management as an important determinant factor for a successful lesson because mishandling of poorly behaved learners had the potential to disrupt carefully planned lessons.

Student teachers practised several strategies in handling misconduct. In cases involving absenteeism from the class, the school discipline teacher's advice is sought before the truanting learner was reported to the disciplinary teacher for punishment.

Managing misbehaviours during the lesson was more difficult. Student teachers appeared to draw on knowledge of discipline management from personal life experiences i.e. how they were disciplined when they were students, from acquired knowledge and from discussions with peers and significant others such as the teachers in the host school or college supervisors. The range of disciplining strategies included planning more creative and interesting activities as a preventative means, announcing what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the class at the first point of contact with learners and attending to misbehaved learners immediately.

Since management of poorly behaved learners is an integral component for successful lessons, discipline management should also be an integral component of a teacher education program. Reading how-to-discipline learners from journals or listening to lectures on the same matter place disciplining learners to a level of theoretical knowledge. Judging from the findings of this study, student teachers needed more practical knowledge of dealing with badly behaved learners. Student teachers must be encouraged to explore ways of dealing with negative behaviours to bring about a personalised perspective on effective means of disciplining learners. Learning to reprimand learners without descending into an emotional outburst must be observed to be more effective.

Managing discipline is an integral part of teaching yet it receives less attention than it deserves during training. Student teachers need to be aware of types of misbehaviour and be able to identify appropriate procedures. There are misbehaviours such as truanting and bullying that call for severe disciplinary measures and must be dealt by external disciplinary body such as the disciplinary teacher. The other misbehaviour that confront student teachers (and all teachers) everyday is negative participation of learners. This includes persistent unwillingness to take part in any learning activity, cheating on tests and class work, not completing homework, persistent whispering and/or talking and insisting on the use of Bahasa Melayu. Persistent negative

behaviour can upset the smooth progress of a lesson if the teacher has to stop teaching often and take action on offenders. Student teachers can be prepared to deal with this issue by observing experienced teachers deal with learner misbehaviour. Information gathered from Phase 2 (section 5. 2 Phase 2: Questionnaire) showed that student teachers when observing teachers in the classroom, expressed their concern about learner misbehaviour. Their expressions illustrated their awareness of the detrimental effect of teachers who are too authoritative, too soft or uninterested in maintaining any semblance of discipline. But student teachers were able to recognise the beneficial outcome of teachers who dealt with disruptive learners immediately and firmly

This weakness is highlighted during teaching practice when student teachers were unable to find effective strategies. Except for Amelia who established ground rules of behaviour on first contact with her learners and thus had her learners behaving as they ought, Lisa, Su and Juli took a longer time to discover disciplining strategies that were acceptable to them and effective on the students. Lisa however was not very successful in this matter and her learners continued to misbehave throughout her teaching practice. To ensure that learners behave, Juli projected an image of teacher-is-boss at the start of the academic year but she hoped to be less so eventually. Often student teachers were able to identify learners who were persistent misbehavers but the nature of misbehaviour was unpredictable. Student teachers must learn to recognise that misbehaviour can be treated without loss of face to either teacher or student, without wasting time and energy and without scarring the emotions of either teacher or learner.

8. 3 Assertion 3

Close collaboration between the training institutions and the institutions receiving novice teachers will facilitate professional development.

There should be a comprehensive agenda drawn up by the institutions that prepare teachers and the institution that receives them to take into account of the various role expectations each institution demands of the novice teacher. This comment is based on the findings of this study which showed that novice teachers were caught between the discrepancies existing between the two institutions.

In the area of work related behaviour, one training institution practised the philosophy of collaborative behaviour for its student teachers as part of the process of working toward becoming independent teachers. The practice of providing and receiving emotional as well as professional support to fellow student teachers was an integral part of teacher preparation. However, in schools novice teachers often found themselves working without support from experienced colleagues. Novice teachers experienced a loss of security that was provided by working in a group and were often excluded from the inner circle of experienced teachers in the school. The sense of isolation experienced by novice teachers in the first year of teaching influenced their behaviours negatively.

Extending teacher mentorship to beginning teachers can provide the opportunity for them to develop within the context of the school. In the mentorship scheme, experienced teachers function as a guide to beginning teachers and provide the much needed support in the crucial transition phase of student teacher to fully fledged teacher. Toward that end, the institution must sanction such schemes so that the teachers involved in the mentoring scheme are recognised for the contribution they make to the profession. It is important that mentoring is recognised as part of the

professional duties of a teacher so that teachers who are in this scheme are given latitude in terms of the number of classes they teach.

Mentoring enables beginning teachers to engage in professional dialogue with experienced colleagues, who through their wisdom of practice, will extend the process of learning to teach within the institutional framework. The potential for professional growth is therefore continued within the school ethos (Rust, 1993, Jayne, 1995). Moon (1994) found that the teacher mentorship project in Bhutan was effective in several ways. The value of the scheme lay in the engagement of professional dialogue between novice teachers and experienced teachers; it encouraged professional support as a two way system; it engaged experienced teachers' thoughts about their routine practices and finally it encouraged the development of the listening teacher i.e. the teacher who listens carefully to criticisms, suggestions and advice.

There are clear implications for teacher education institutions and schools. It seems quite obvious that the two institutions need to work in close collaboration in the post training stages too. The present practice is that teacher preparation has been the prerogative of teacher education institutions; schools become involved mainly in the final stages of training i.e. when student teachers are placed in host schools. The duties expected of school teachers are mentoring duties. Currently, mentoring teachers are required to attend short courses on mentoring strategies at training institutions.

But collaboration between the institutions could be extended beyond mentoring during training. Bearing in mind that school based experiences are considered more real than campus based experiences, inviting school teachers to talk about teaching from their personal perspectives will bring together knowledge acquired and knowledge gained from practice closer. A series of talks representing the areas of

concern for teaching could be organised with any school. Currently, teaching practice host schools are in contact with training institutions but the problem remains with schools which are located quite a distance away from training institutions. These schools because of geographical location do not have any link with training institutions but they often receive novice teachers.

Findings from this investigation and other studies (Weiss, 1999, Rust, 1993) suggests that in the novice year of teaching, novice teachers were given duties that should be reserved for experienced teachers such as co-ordinator of examinations for a particular form, teaching learners who would be taking the national exams at the end of the year or acting as teacher advisor to the prefectorial board or disciplinary board. What was particularly stressful for the novice teachers was that these duties were given to them not because they were thought to be competent but as a means to offload unpleasant duties on to someone else.

In most cases, novice teachers were carrying out duties with huge responsibilities without supervision. The practise of distributing teaching duties and non-teaching duties could take into account of the lack of practical experiences of novice teachers. From this study, it was found that one school practised a policy assigning duties to teachers based on two criteria: teacher's preference and the responsibility attached to a particular duty. This is a more intelligent and mature way of assigning responsibilities which nobody likes.

Beginning teachers appeared to be ill-prepared for working with non-teaching tasks such as co-ordinating examination results for a particular form, writing letters to parents about a student's poor attendance, attending meetings as the principal's representative and being the secretary of their department. Rust (1993) commented that there are grey areas in the duties and responsibilities expected of teachers which are difficult to include in a learning to teach program. Subjects in this study perceived

these duties as extraneous to their role as a teacher. Yet in the working realities of the school these are the duties and responsibilities of a teacher. Little attention has been placed on the duties outside the walls of the classroom during training and this is a problem that needs to be address by the teaching institutions.

The recommendation is that novice teachers need a network of support from experienced teachers to show them the responsibilities of being a teacher. Support could take many forms that would *not cause additional work load for experienced teachers*. A buddy system could be instituted to *provide the initial support to novice teachers*. In this way, the notion of *collaborative work begun in preservice training is continued*. Links with training institutions could also be maintained for one year of the post training period. During that time, a lecturer from the college could be assigned to schools within a specific area with the purpose of providing support to novice teachers. The duties of the assigned lecturer should be determined through a discussion with the novice teacher, the ‘buddy’ teacher and the lecturer concerned. Working in tandem with the school in this way is immensely useful in bridging the gap that currently exists between institutions that prepare preservice teachers and those that receive them.

8. 4 Concluding statements

This final assertion reminds every one interested in the teaching profession that a preservice teacher education program aims to prepare teachers with fundamental training. The program is of short duration and within that period of time, prospective teachers are required to acquire a great deal of knowledge in relation to teaching and learning. Aspects of training often include a complex array of pedagogic skills and pedagogic reasoning skills with a view to preparing teachers who are predisposed to reflect on their practices. A preservice teaching program should be seen as a starting

point for a life long career. This implies that learning to teach does not stop upon graduating from the program but is a phase in the life long learning cycle. Prospective teachers and experienced teachers should view the novice year as an opportunity to engage in experiential teaching activities that would promote learning and understanding about what it takes to be a professional teacher.

To that end the progress toward personal development of the teacher is enhanced through professional support from experienced teachers as well as through the wisdom of personal practical experiences. The implication of this view is that teachers are just as much responsible for ensuring that they continue to make personal progress in learning to become a teacher. In short, teacher education programs are not the end of training but they point teacher toward several pathways that are open to each teacher. The choices that each teacher makes following the end of a training program, needless to say, reflects on the commitment that each teacher wishes to make as an educator.

Learning to teach demands a great deal from an individual. Continuing professional development schemes need to be viewed as part of the training process if we want to prevent 'back sliding' behaviour from new teachers.

The findings of this study illustrate the difficulty that student teachers face in training as well as in the novice year. As student teachers they began to look for theories of teaching within the context of teaching experiences and in the wider school context. As novice teachers they find themselves in a situation that demands other things. They begin once again the process of looking for personal theories of practice. The process involves a trial-and-error search for the ideal way of practising taking into account of new experiences and newly developed knowledge.

During training student teachers turn to supervisors, co-operating teachers and other student teachers to reaffirm their understanding of their practices. In the novice year, they turn to veteran teachers or other novice teachers to 'discover' a way of operationalising personal theories developed in training. It is at this crucial period when self doubt about teaching abilities sets in. The mentorship scheme provides a means to reorient beginning teachers' thoughts and perspectives toward the current situation. In this way the transition from student teacher to professional teacher is gradual and occurs in an atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality between the institutions that prepare teachers and the institutions that receive them.

In the wider context, preparing teachers who are pedagogically sound is a narrow outlook. It prepares teachers to conceptualise their role within a single dimension i.e teaching in the classroom. Experience and research findings support the view that a teacher's role is multidimensional and therefore they must be prepared to broaden their role conceptions beyond classroom walls and into the wider school context.

This investigation has raised several pertinent areas of concern which could form the basis of further studies but due to word limitations imposed on the thesis I will highlight two key areas of concern emerging from my own study. Emerging evidence have suggested the phenomenon of reconstructing beliefs about teaching as subjects become more involved in the chosen profession has been insightful. The shift from the teacher-in-training to teacher-in-employment are rich in data which may be used to help formulate an improved teacher education program.

Another potential area of research lie in exploring the experiences of novice teachers as they find their way round the labyrinth of teaching in school and in the teaching profession. This study found evidence that beginning teachers in order to be effective in the school, expressed a need for support from their experienced colleague. Further investigation into the kinds of support services expected of beginning of teachers,

what services are currently available for them and how these services serve beginning teachers (and experienced teachers) should reveal insightful data.

The success of teaching programs cannot be simply measured by the number of qualified teachers graduating from the various teaching colleges or by the number of graduates leaving with excellent certification. There needs to be a system within the teaching service which continues to provide opportunities for excellent graduates to perform excellently and to support others to achieve excellence and satisfaction in their chosen profession.

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Appendix A

Phase 1: Pilot Study Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to ascertain your views on your school experience in the UK. Any information given will be treated with strictest confidence. Thank you for your co-operation.

General information

Please tick and add information in the appropriate spaces.

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. When was your first visit to the school? | Date | Month |
| Year | | |
| last visit to the school ? | Date | Month |
| Year | | |

School experience

In this section you are asked to give your views on **your school experience in the UK**. Please circle **Yes or No** against each statement. Write your comments in the space provided.

During the school experience...

1. I was able to observe a range of teaching approaches which I could apply in the future. Yes / No
Comments:
2. I was able to learn how to manage group work. Yes/ No
Comments:
3. I was able to pick up useful classroom language such as how to praise, to give clear instructions. Yes/ No
Comments:
4. I was able to observe various ways of disciplining students. Yes / No
Comments:
5. I was able to see how teaching materials are used to encourage learning. Yes / No
Comments:
6. I was able to observe evaluation of students' learning. Yes / No
Comments:
7. I was able to pick out the different stages of each lesson. Yes / No
Comments:
8. I was able to discuss with the teachers about their approach to their lesson(s).
Yes/No
Comments

9. You have observed several lessons during your school experience in the UK. Make a list of the features of **successful and unsuccessful** lessons below.

A. Features of successful lessons	B. Features of unsuccessful lessons

10. Choose one successful feature and describe how it contributed to the **success** of the lesson(s) you saw.

11. Choose one unsuccessful feature and describe how it contributed to the **failure** of the lesson(s) you saw.

Appendix B

Phase 1: Pilot Study

Phase 1: Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was to find out if the items in the questionnaire will reveal data which may be used in the main study. According to Nunan (1992), the questionnaire is a popular method for gathering data, but constructing bias free questions, is “a highly specialised task” (p. 143). Questions were retained, rephrased or dropped from the questionnaire as a result of the feedback from the pilot study. Another reason for conducting a pilot study was that, from the feedback, it was possible to uncover research areas which were previously not apparent to the researcher. Also because the study was conducted on a small scale, it meant that less time was spent on analysing the data. Findings from the small scale study were used to decide the shape and the design of the questionnaire to be used in the main study.

Sampling

According to Bell (1990), the reliability of a research instrument is increased when it is tested on a pilot group which share a similar profile to the study group. 15 second year student teachers, from Malaysia, who were based at the Centre for English Language Teachers (CELTE), University of Warwick, were identified as having a profile that was nearly similar to the study group in many ways.

Like the study group, the pilot group had received their primary and secondary education in Malaysia. Consequently, as learners in schools, they had undergone “an apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie: 1965) of their local school teachers and, in almost similar learning environment. Both groups attend a B.Ed degree course specialising in teaching of English as a second language learning. Upon successful completion of the degree, they become teachers of English for secondary schools in Malaysia. As part of their teaching course, both groups of student teachers visited schools to observe experienced teachers teach.

Therefore based on a number of shared characteristics with student teachers in the study group, student teachers based at the University of Warwick were considered an ideal pilot group.

Method

In April 1997, the pilot group gathered in a classroom in CELTE and a questionnaire was given to each student teacher. A brief explanation of the purpose of the preliminary study was given to the pilot group by the researcher. Details about the study were kept to a minimum level so that the pilot study group would not be unduly influenced by the concerns in the study. The pilot group was given as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaire in manner that was satisfactory to them.

Within 20 minutes, the pilot group completed the questionnaire and returned them to the researcher. A discussion immediately took place between the researcher and the pilot group. The interface enabled the researcher to obtain feedback on the clarity of items in the questionnaire. Apart from the technical aspect of improving the design of the questions, it gave an opportunity for the pilot group to express their views about the concerns in the questionnaire. The feedback from responses in the questionnaire and the ensuing dialogue are presented in the next section as The questions in the pilot study questionnaire attempted to answer the following research question: What beliefs about teaching and learning are held by student teachers. Specifically, the items in the questionnaire were grouped as follows:

- To ascertain what aspects of teacher behaviour and learner behaviour were observed and reflected on by student teachers – Statements 1-8
- To determine what interpretations were made by student teachers on experienced teachers' classroom practices and learner behaviour – Questions 9, 10,
- To ascertain what beliefs about teaching and learning emerge from observing experienced teachers teach and what meaning was made of the practices by student teachers – Question 11

There are two sections to the questionnaire: general information and school experience

General Information: Question 1

Respondents were required to state the dates of their first and last visit to schools as part of the school experience component of their program.

Results

The pilot group was uncertain if this question referred to school visits in the United Kingdom or Malaysia. There were discussions over the real dates of the school visits.

Implications for the Study

This question was revised so that student teachers recorded the month and year when school visits took place in the United Kingdom.

School Experience: Statements 1-8

There were eight statements in this section. Responding was by means of circling Yes or No against each statement. Below each statement, space was provided for comments.

The purpose of the statements was two pronged: to prompt student teachers to think about various aspects of classroom practices and to find what teaching and learning behaviour was observed during school visits. The space for comments below each item invited student teachers to write their reflections on what they had observed in the classroom.

Component sections in the Teaching Practice form used in assessing final year teaching practice of the main group were used to guide the formulation of predetermined statements (see Appendix A Pilot Study Questionnaire) for example:

1. I was able to observe a range of teaching approaches which I could apply in future.
2. I was able to learn how to manage group work.

Results

The results for each item were as follows:

Table 1: A summary of responses to statements 1-8 and comments made

Statement Number	Yes	No	No response	comments	No comments
1	14	1		12	3
2	11	4		10	5
3	15	0		13	2
4	13	2		11	4
5	15	0		12	3
6	9	5	1	10	5
7	12	1	2	7	8
8	13	2		11	4

Following an analysis of the written comments, the pilot group had a tendency to express their views in the following manner.

1. The teaching and learning setting in the United Kingdom was compared to the setting in Malaysia but not substantiated with examples of approaches used by teachers in the two settings: (1) [observing a range of teaching approaches] *Most approaches were more eclectic compared to the traditional Malaysian teaching/ Malaysian and British teachers have different approaches to teaching/ having the chance to do practices in Malaysia and UK;* (3) [useful classroom language] *more praise used in the UK;* (4) [disciplining learners] *however discipline is not entirely strict here, more freedom given to students;* (6) [lesson stages] *The only time when I observed fully [teachers teach] was in a Malaysian secondary school*

2. Predetermined statements on the questionnaire were either confirmed or disagreed without appropriate examples to clarify their agreement or disagreement: (2) [managing group work] *Different students need different approaches* (3) [useful classroom language] *Definitely, not just by observing but by teaching too;* (4) [disciplining learners] *The area which I found most useful;*

3. Classroom practices were expressed evaluated and assessed rather than explained or analysed within contexts of teaching observed: (8) [discussion with teacher] *Not detailed strategies though;* (3) [useful classroom language] *Students need comments on their work;* (4) [disciplining learners] *The hardest area for teachers to tackle;* (5) [teaching materials used] *The use of worksheets and novels (for creative writing) was quite beneficial.* (7) *The introduction was clear, content was interesting, the ending was alright* (3) *The teachers were helpful as in giving tips about this kind of thing* [useful classroom language]; (7) *Nonetheless, these [lesson] stages must correlate with each other*

4. Remarks which did not offer comments on the predetermined statements:

(1) [observing a range of teaching approaches] *because most of the time I had to teach groups or whole class*; (4) [disciplining learners] *I did more teaching than observing*; (6) *Some [evaluation] but not as much as I wanted*

5. Remarks were made in relation to what they (student teachers) can or cannot do in the classroom: (2) *It [group work] can be difficult sometimes but teacher must know the students first in order to produce a successful lesson*; (4) *I still am hesitant to use some [discipline on students]*

Questions 9, 10 and 11

The three questions are linked to one another and are therefore treated together in this section.

Question 9

The purpose of this question was to determine, in retrospect, what examples of teaching and learning practices were considered good or bad by student teachers.

Under heading A, respondents were required to list successful features of teaching; unsuccessful features were listed under heading B. One concern with this question was that, respondents may give examples of classroom practices from their course or their reading rather than from observed classroom practices. In anticipation of this possibility, the pilot group was directed to the key phrase in Question 9 “observed lessons during your school experience in UK”.

Results

Each respondent in the pilot group wrote between two to four features under each heading of successful and unsuccessful features of observed lessons. There were two ways in which the responses were recorded. The negative or opposite versions of successful features were rewritten as unsuccessful features, not unlike that of two sides of a coin, for example: *good control of the class/teacher could not control the class; prepare full and thorough lessons/unprepared ones; teacher is calm, kind, patient/teacher is bad tempered*. Alternatively, the two sets of features were written as separate and unrelated to each other. Consequently, more information was gathered when the features were treated as separate lists.

Question 10 and Question 11

There are two objectives for items in this section. Firstly, the questions were designed to elicit examples of good or bad teaching observed by student teachers. Secondly, the responses would reveal the scope of reflective behaviour engaged by student teachers when they observed practices in the classroom.

The questions are formulated so that for the one example identified as a successful classroom practice and an unsuccessful one, the pilot group used pedagogic reasoning to explain their reasons for its success or failure. Below are extracts of responses to Questions 10 and 11:

Question 10: two examples of features contributing to successful lessons

Example 1

There was a use of different types of materials in the classroom which made the students interested and motivated and the teacher was informative-giving lots of examples that relate to students lives; and the explanation given were made simple, no use of metalanguage that could confuse children.

Example 2

In a year 9 classroom (14-15 yrs old), the students were doing 'Midsummer Nights dream' play. They enjoyed their lessons eventhough it was Shakespeare, coz their teacher made facial expressions and intonations according to the play. She made jokes and tries to bring the alive. It especially worked when the students engage themselves to doing role plays. They went 'all out' with it and understood their text well.

Question 11: two examples of features contributing to unsuccessful lessons

Example 1

If the teacher's voice is slow then the atmosphere of the class tends to be quiet and this distracts the students into talking among themselves (in one case, they pass notes around the class). Slow voice of the teacher also makes it difficult for students to listen/grasp what the teacher is saying.

Example 2

A class I observed has half the pupils in it constantly being disruptive. The level of noise in the class was sometimes unbearable that it discouraged other pupils who were interested in the lesson from paying further attention. As a result of being scolded constantly, the lesson progressed slowly and so, the work the class produced by the end of the day was mostly not up to their level.

In the discussion following the questionnaire survey, the pilot group stated that the parameters of response required for questions 9, 10 and 11 were clearly defined. They recommended that this section of the questionnaire be fully retained.

Appendix C

Phase 2: Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ascertain your views on teaching and learning English as a second language based on your school visits in the UK. Any information given will be used for research purposes and will be treated with strictest confidence. Thank you for your co-operation.

General information

1. In which UK institution are you registered as a student? _____
2. When was your first visit to a school in UK? _____ Month _____ Year
last visit to a school in UK? _____ Month _____ Year

Lessons you observed

3. During your school visits in the UK you **observed several lessons**. From your observations of these lessons, make a list of the features of **successful and unsuccessful lessons** below.

A. Features of successful lessons	B. Features of unsuccessful lessons

4. Choose **one successful feature** from the list above and describe how it contributed to the **success** of the lesson(s) you observed.

5. Choose **one unsuccessful feature** from the list above and describe how it contributed to the **failure** of the lesson(s) you observed.

6. A Teacher's Credo

All teachers work with an underlying set of beliefs about teaching and learning whether these are conscious or unconscious. You are invited to write 10 statements which make explicit your beliefs about teaching and learning English as a second language.

Example:

1. I believe that asking students sometimes to practice in pairs is beneficial to their learning because it allows students to speak in English.
2. I believe in using drills as a technique to get very weak students to learn English.

You could choose these two as part of the 10 or write 10 others which are more important to you. You may wish to state your beliefs in relation to **teacher quality, classroom management, lesson management, student behaviour, methodology**

1. I believe _____

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Appendix D

Recommendations for the improvement of preservice teacher education program for the preparation of English language teachers

Recommendations for the improvement of preservice teacher education program for the preparation of English language teachers

No	Recommendations	Total	%
1	More practice in real classroom situation	479	26.0
2	Longer and more teaching practice	284	15.2
3	Teaching practice in different areas	252	14.0
4	Training to be in more practical based rather than theoretical	221	12.0
5	Increase hours in proficiency	128	7.0
6	Effective strategies in teaching grammar and vocabulary	89	5.0
7	Techniques in dealing with proficient and weak students	88	5.0
8	Techniques on how to motivate students	56	3.0
9	Opportunities to participate in conferences	42	2.3
10	Preparing and utilising audio visual aids	40	2.1
11	Stints in schools for teacher trainers	31	1.7
12	Have sufficient qualified TESL students	27	1.4

Source: Training Needs of Beginning ESL Teachers (1995) by the Committee for English Language Programs in schools in Malaysia presented at the English Language Teachers' Conference in Melaka 1996