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Exploring Teachers' Beliefs Through Collaborative Journaling: A Qualitative Case Study of Japanese Preservice Teachers' Transformative Development Processes in an EFL Teacher Education Program

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EXPLORING TEACHERS' BELIEFS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE JOURNALING:

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF JAPANESE PRESERVICE TEACHERS'

TRANSFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

IN AN EFL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Toshinobu Nagamine

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2007

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: Exploring Teachers' Beliefs through Collaborative Journaling: A Qualitative Case Study of Japanese Preservice Teachers' Transformative Development Processes in an EFL Teacher Education Program

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This qualitative case study was implemented to describe, interpret, and document preservice EFL teachers' learning processes through collaborative journaling and gained awareness for all participants (including myself as a participant-observer).   Four preservice EFL teachers in Japan (two males and two females) participated in the study. At the time of the investigation, they were all undergraduate students studying in an EFL teacher education program at a Japanese university.   To investigate their learning processes, a prime focus was placed on the participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching.   Thus, this study was to understand what it meant for the participants to learn how to teach through collaborative journaling in the setting studied and what it possibly meant for them to change (or not to change) their beliefs during the term of the investigation.

The data collection was done over a nine-month period that covered the participants' practicum.   This study consisted of three research phases: pre-practicum phase, mid-practicum phase, and post-practicum phase.   In the pre-practicum phase, I entered the participants' community and asked the participants to form a collaborative-learning group and keep a collaborative journal.   As a participant-observer, I kept the journal together and discussed what we had written in bi-weekly meetings.   I used the collaborative journal for two purposes: (a) to collect the

main qualitative data; and (b) to assist in the development of the participants as professionals.   I applied multiple modes of inquiry and triangulation.   I employed five data-collection methods: a questionnaire, observations, interviews, journals, and documents.   Using the various types of qualitative data, I conducted within- and cross-case analyses to look for salient, recurring themes regarding all participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching.   The research findings revealed the transformative nature of the participants' beliefs and the uniqueness of the participants' learning processes in the setting studied.   It is particularly worth noting that the participants' belief (re-)construction was observed at two different levels: individual and group levels.   Drawing upon the insights into preservice teachers' beliefs and development processes, this study offers implications for further studies on the same, or similar research agenda, as well as for ESL/EFL teacher development.

One thing is certain:

That is that the power of belief, the power of thought,

will move reality in the direction of what we believe and conceive of it.

If you really believe you can do something, you can.

That is a fact.

. . .

Change begins from the moment you muster the courage to act.

When you change, the environment will change.

The power to change the world is found nowhere

but within our own life.

- Dr. Daisaku Ikeda

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I am deeply indebted to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Ben Rafoth and Dr. Nancy Hayward, for their patience, knowledge and expertise in the TESOL field.   Your constructive feedback and suggestions added great value to my work.   I truly admire your dedication and scholarly attitudes as academicians, researchers, and teacher-educators.   I only hope that I can emulate some of your exceptional qualities.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Todd M. Miller for his long-term friendship as well as for his editorial work on my research publications including this dissertation.   Due to our friendship, I came to terms with the fact that it is indeed possible to accept, appreciate, and mutually understand people of differing racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds. To my other precious friends both in the United States and Japan (including four participants of this study), too numerous to name individually, I owe you my sanity, and for making my life really pleasant and enjoyable.   I thank you for all your good wishes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, divided into four sections, provides the foundation of my dissertation research. The first section presents an overview to the research project. The second section is the statement of the problem which illustrates three major reasons why research on teacher development is especially needed in Japanese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. A crucial theme underlying these reasons is the modernization of Japan and its repercussions for the current education system. I argue that the quality of education and teachers has been misconceived in Japan. The third section is the descriptions of the research project. In this section, I first describe the purpose of the study. I then present nine research questions classified into two categories: descriptive questions and interpretive questions. Subsequently, I provide the descriptions of the research settings, the focus, and the significance of the study. In the fourth section, I sum up the major points discussed in this chapter.

Overview to the Study

This dissertation project was not a deductive, hypothesis-testing study. It was an inductive, qualitative case study. I implemented this study to describe, interpret, and document preservice EFL teachers' learning processes through collaborative journaling

in Japan and gained awareness for all participants (including myself as a participant-observer).   To investigate the learning processes, I put a prime focus on preservice EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching.   Thus, this study was to understand what it meant for preservice EFL teachers to learn how to teach through collaborative journaling in an EFL teacher education setting and what it possibly meant for them to change (or not to change) their beliefs during the term of the investigation.

The idea of incorporating collaborative journaling into this study has stemmed from my doctoral coursework in Composition & TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where I have come to the conviction that writing has the power to enhance preservice, as well as inservice, teachers' reflective thinking.   I personally believe that writing, when done collaboratively with others, prompts the (re-)construction processes of discipline-specific knowledge and helps preservice teachers explore their teaching beliefs and practices in depth.

Four participants, preservice teachers in an EFL teacher education program at a Japanese university, took part in the study.   I entered their community and asked the participants to form a collaborative-learning group.   Then, the participants and I began collaborative journaling.   We exchanged journal entries over the Internet in the form of a Microsoft Word file attached to an e-mail.   The collaborative-learning group was formed in November, 2005 (i.e., six months before they started their teaching practicum)

and continued till July, 2006 (i.e., one month after the practicum was completed).   The

term of the investigation was nine months in total.

This research project was composed of three phases: pre-practicum phase,

mid-practicum phase, and post-practicum phase.   Throughout these phases, the four

participants and I kept a collaborative journal and attended bi-weekly meetings to share

and discuss journal entries.   In addition, I applied multiple modes of inquiry and

triangulation.   I employed a total of five data-collection methods, including a

questionnaire, observations, interviews, journals, and documents.

Statement of the Problem

There are three major reasons why this type of dissertation research regarding

teacher development is needed in Japanese educational contexts, particularly in EFL

teacher education settings.   These three reasons are: (a) in the past and also in the

present educational reforms in Japan, the quality of education and teachers has been

misconceived; (b) teachers' pedagogical skills and subject matter knowledge have been

excessively emphasized in Japanese EFL teacher education programs; and (c) very

little research has been conducted on preservice teachers' development processes in

Japanese EFL contexts.

The first two reasons might be attributed to the past nation-wide movement to

modernize the Japanese education system.   Until quite recently, we have tried to

create national-level conformity so as to unify the quality of education. This conformity has made it possible for Japan to claim its excellence in basic education rooted in the rigid compulsory education system (cf., Muta, 2000). Nevertheless, when we examine the socio-historical aspect of the development of the Japanese education system, we can see that this very conformity in the quality of education, in fact, has generated repercussions for Japanese teachers living in the postmodern era.

In the postmodern era, as seen in other countries, Japanese teachers live with insecurity and uncertainty that stem from the repercussions of modernity (cf., Edwards, Gilroy, & Hartley, 2002; Hargreaves, 2003). Scientific knowledge and mathematical certainty were excessively valued and actively sought in the Japanese education system, while humanistic aspects of education were underestimated (cf., Toulmin, 1990). As Grossman (2004) asserts, the quality of today's education is thus called into question, and teachers have been blamed for the degraded educational excellence (see Hargreaves, 1994; McCarty, 1995). Examining the socio-historical aspect of the development of the Japanese education system, I elaborate on the first two reasons; subsequently, I discuss the third.

Japan was once a closed country. The official closing of Japan was decreed by the ruling Tokugawa shogunate in the 1630s (the Edo period: 1603-1867). During this time so called *sakoku* (i.e., national seclusion), the Japanese government banned foreign books and travel and restricted the communication of the government with

4

Korea and Ryukyu (i.e., Okinawa).   Commerce was also restricted.   Japan forbade

the Portuguese and Spanish to do business.   Thus, only the Dutch, the Chinese, and

some persecuted Christians were allowed contact with the Japanese.   To strengthen

its power and diminish challenges to its reign, the Japanese government maintained the

national seclusion policy for approximately 300 years until Commodore Matthew C.

Perry from the United States forced the Japanese government to end the policy in 1854.

The opening of the country meant more than starting to do business with other

countries; it meant the beginning of modernization, national-level westernization and

industrialization.

Following the Edo period, the Meiji period (1868-1912) began.   As this period is

often called the enlightenment period of Japan, some predominant characteristics of

modernization can be observed in the Meiji period (Figal, 1999).   Because *sakoku*, the

national seclusion period, lasted for such a long time (i.e., about 300 years), the

Japanese might have felt starved for information from foreign countries, especially the

Western countries.   Japanese clerisy thus began accessing documents written in

foreign languages (particularly, Dutch and English) and translating them into Japanese

(cf., Koscielecki, 2000).   As the body of knowledge (specifically, knowledge of science

and technology) extracted from the translated foreign documents increased, the

Japanese became aware of the national position in international affairs (i.e., immature

state of development) and realized that countries in the West had been highly

industrialized and modernized.

The Japanese held strong aspirations for industrialization and westernization. This became a triggering factor for the government to rush to bring about infrastructural reform of education (cf., Figal, 1999; Lucien, 2001; Muta, 2000).   Thus, the first system of teacher training was established for elementary and middle school teachers in the early 1870s (Grossman, 2004).   In the 1870s and 1880s, national teacher-training schools started a special training program for foreign language teachers because of the increasing demands for the diversified study of foreign languages, particularly, English. It should be noted here that foreign languages were learned and taught through a translation-reading method (or grammar-translation method), *yaku-doku,* so as to further extract knowledge of science and technology from translated documents (Koscielecki, 2000).

Before and during World War II, the Japanese thought it was an urgent need to build a unified country to catch up with, and hopefully, compete with the advanced Western countries (Muta, 2000).   This awareness of "global competitiveness" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 5) urged the Japanese government to implement a series of educational reforms in order to institutionalize "scientific disciplines after Western models" (Figal, 1999, p. 77).   As such, knowledge of science and technology was naturally assumed to promote the productivity and prosperity of Japan and stabilize the national position in international affairs (Figal, 1999).   In the United States and some

European countries, a similar tendency was observed (Edwards et al., 2002; Hargreaves, 1994, 2003; Toulmin, 1990).   To fill the gap between Japan and the other developed countries, Japan needed to develop the united, standardized quality of education based primarily on the knowledge of science and mathematics, which can be easily quantifiable for the assessment of learners' achievements (Edwards et al., 2002).

After World War II, therefore, a series of local-level as well as national-level educational reforms were implemented one after another to unify the quality of education and the education system.   One of the educational reforms included the development of modern education law, the first education law in Japan (cf., Muta, 2000). This education law was developed to control the status of teachers and students, the goals and subject matter of education, textbook selections, and most importantly, the quality of teaching.   The attempt to achieve the conformity of education and the centralization of the education system in the process of seeking for certainty and stability, however, changed the way the Japanese were educated.   Japan, like other countries, lost the humanistic perspectives to see education and teachers (McCarty, 1995).

On the one hand, a series of educational reforms to centralize the education system appears to have been successful, in that they helped establish the foundation of the current Japanese compulsory education in grades K-12 known as a model of the high-quality basic education (Lucien, 2001).   Some statistics, for instance, show that

over 95 percent of Japanese are literate, and that Japanese students' performance in international mathematics tests has been ranked either at or near the top every year (Edwards et al., 2002; Lucien, 2001).   On the other hand, however, a series of educational reforms seem to have manipulated and have degraded teachers' work as well as the quality of teaching.   In fact, despite such achievements in basic education in science and mathematics, the quality of education, especially the area of liberal arts, has been called into question (McCarty, 1995).   Moreover, there has been wide-spread dissatisfaction among the Japanese (Grossman, 2004).

A strict entrance examination system has been often considered to be a primary reason why Japanese people have been dissatisfied with the quality of education (e.g., Lucien, 2001; Murphey, 2004; Muta, 2000).   Indeed, as Bay (1998), Lucien (2001), and Muta (2000) indicate, entrance examination reform has been aspired not only by students but also by teachers.   Nevertheless, the heart of the matter is not the entrance examination system *per se*; what should receive more attention is the content of learning and teaching characterized by the entrance examination system developed in the process of modernization.

It is the modernization process that prompted the Japanese to build the entrance examination system, which, in turn, had them misconceive the quality of education and teachers.   The rigid entrance examination system has, for example, characterized the content of learning and teaching as fact-based learning and teaching (Bay, 1998;

Murphey, 2004) with much emphasis "on memorization of facts and accepted ideas" (Kuboda, 1999, p. 24). Until quite recently, what teachers needed to do in class has been to transmit subject matter knowledge to students. At one time, teachers who led students to enter prestigious universities were considered excellent teachers (cf., Bay, 1998; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). This rather distorted conceptualization of teachers has created uncomfortable educational conditions for teachers where they struggle with their self-images as educators, motives for change or develop as professionals, and most importantly, their actual teaching practices (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004; see also Hargreaves, 1994, 2003).

During the U.S. occupation period after World War II, teacher education was officially incorporated into junior colleges and universities approved by the U.S. occupation government. Currently, 32 out of 48 national universities of education in Japan hold teacher education programs (Grossman, 2004). The aforementioned misconceived ideas about teachers and education have affected teacher education programs. Namely, most of the teacher education programs tend to stress pedagogical, instructional skills and subject matter knowledge (San, 1999; Shannon & Nasman, 1998). The same holds true for EFL teacher education programs in Japan. The importance of teacher development as professionals, for instance, through reflection-type activities has been overlooked in Japanese EFL teacher education programs (Grossman, 2004; McCarty, 1995; Murphey, 2004; San, 1999; Shannon &

Nasman, 1998).

Because quite a few Japanese EFL teacher education programs still employ

traditional approaches to teacher education based on "the knowledge transmission

model" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 1), it has been pointed out that many teachers

do not know how to deal with problems or concerns specific to real teaching contexts

(Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).   (See also Bailey et al., 2001; Britzman, 2003; Gebhard &

Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Richards, 1998; Richards

& Lockhart, 1996; Richards & Nunan, 1990; San, 1999.)   Despite such facts, the

Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (hereafter

MEXT) still implies that the improvement of teachers' teaching methods and subject

matter knowledge should be enhanced through EFL teacher education programs

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology [MEXT], 2003, March

31).

With current demographic changes (i.e., low fertility rates and aging populations),

the economic challenges of globalization, and wide-spread dissatisfaction about the

quality of education (Grossman, 2004), Japan has started undertaking major

educational and curriculum reform, beginning in 2003.   This educational reform derived

from the recent movement to decentralize the educational system is expected to

transform highly rigid examination-oriented education system to a more flexible,

humanized education system (Lucien, 2001; Muta, 2000).   Nevertheless, teachers'

authentic voices are not taken into consideration in the reform process (cf., Grossman, 2004; Murphey, 2004; Muta, 2000).   This point might become clear when we look into the current action taken by the government.

The Japanese government has begun to reduce the number of formal teacher education programs in national and municipal colleges as well as universities by consolidations and mergers of existing programs (Grossman, 2004; San, 1999). Based on the fact that Japan has been experiencing some fertility-rate problems, it can be assumed that the government saw the demand for teachers decreasing in Japan (Grossman, 2004; San, 1999).   It might also be seen, however, as a fact that the government underestimated teachers' authentic voices and well-acknowledged role as a central mediator in education (cf., Freeman & Richards, 1996; Nunan & Richards, 1990).

Despite a series of educational reforms in the past to produce the conformity of education, the quality of education has been degraded.   Consequently, what the Japanese call *shishits* (i.e., the quality of teachers) in inservice, as well as preservice teachers, has recently been called into question; this issue has indeed become a crucial theme of today's educational debates in Japan (Grossman, 2004).   In light of the fact that the highly centralized education system is still maintained in Japan today (Muta, 2000), what we really need to consider may be more tangible, micro-level measures to support individual teachers and promote the quality of teachers and education, keeping

in mind the following cautionary note of Britzman (2003):

> [C]onformity, in its adherence to the dictates of social convention, privileges
>
> routinized behavior over critical action.   Its centripetal force pulls toward
>
> reproducing the status quo in behavior as it mediates our subjective capacity to
>
> intervene in the world.   Education, when dominated by the discourse and
>
> discursive practices of conformity, scripts a mechanistic training.   The
>
> euphemistic label "teacher training" captures the essence of this project.   (p. 46)

Quality education is not possible unless we have quality teachers.   Seemingly,

we, the Japanese, may have forgotten this for such a long time.   Where teachers

obtain more professional development, asserts Abaya (1997), the education of the

students improves.   Accordingly, as part of tangible, micro-level measures, it should be

a legitimate action to reconsider the way of improving the quality of teachers and

teacher education (Grossman, 2004).

While I was staying in the United States as a graduate student in TESOL, I kept

asking myself a question: how can we upgrade the quality of EFL teacher education and

hence promote the quality of EFL teachers in Japan? (Not in terms of their skills and

subject matter knowledge, but in terms of awareness and attitude to develop as

professionals, that is).   This fundamental question induced me to think of this

dissertation research on teacher development in a Japanese EFL context.   Based on

this fundamental question, a more realistic question might be addressed: what do we

know about how EFL teachers, particularly preservice teachers, learn to teach in an EFL teacher education program in Japan? In an attempt to answer such questions, I discovered that there had been very few comprehensive studies conducted on preservice EFL teachers' development processes, and still less in Japanese EFL contexts where qualitative research has not yet popularized (S. Borg, 2003; Shin, 2001). As for research on preservice teachers' beliefs conducted with Japanese native speakers, it was extremely rare (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).

Descriptions of the Study

Purpose and Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to explore the meaning of teacher learning (i.e., the process of learning to teach) that was deeply situated in a particular context (i.e., an EFL teacher education program at a Japanese university). In light of the nature of such exploration, I did not consider generalization a goal of this study. Rather, I aimed at the in-depth understanding of particular cases (i.e., preservice EFL teachers' learning through collaborative journaling) in a specific context.

Since keeping a journal is often considered a personal activity, the participants of this study might have become reluctant to write and share journal entries with others. In addition, because the Japanese do not like "losing face" in public, some participants might have refused to write about negative learning and/or teaching experiences.

1 3

When observed during the investigation, such possible problems were speculated to be culture specific.   Based on these speculations, I conducted group discussions in bi-weekly meetings in order to allow the participants to openly discuss their overall journaling experiences and clarify problems, concerns, and difficulties.

The following is a set of research questions categorized into two types, descriptive (A and B) and interpretive (C and D).   I formulated these nine questions in order to guide this study in exploring the participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching and their learning processes through collaborative journaling.   Each set represents my researcher's (and teacher's) perspectives as well as participants' (i.e., preservice EFL teachers') perspectives.

A.   Descriptive Questions: Emphasis on Preservice EFL Teachers

1. What are the beliefs of preservice EFL teachers who study in a Japanese EFL teacher education program?   More specifically, what are their beliefs about language learning and teaching?

2. What happens during bi-weekly meetings held before, during, and after their teaching practicum?

3. How do their beliefs about language learning and teaching possibly transform through collaborative journaling in a Japanese EFL teacher education program?

B.   Descriptive Questions: Emphasis on My Development as a Teacher and Researcher

4. As an EFL teacher, what problems do I encounter in having preservice EFL teachers keep a collaborative journal and holding bi-weekly meetings with them in a Japanese EFL teacher education program? How do I work at trying to solve such problems?

5. As a researcher, what problems do I encounter? How do I work out such problems?

C.   Interpretive Questions: Emphasis on Preservice EFL Teachers

6. How has the experience of collaborative journaling possibly given preservice EFL teachers opportunities to explore their beliefs and practices? How has the experience of collaborative journaling possibly blocked them from such exploration?

7. What socio-cultural factors (if any) have affected preservice EFL teachers' collaborative journaling and development processes?

D.   Interpretive Questions: Emphasis on My Development as a Teacher and Researcher

8. What have I learned from having preservice EFL teachers keep a collaborative journal and holding bi-weekly meetings to discuss their journal entries?

9. What have I learned from conducting the research that has helped me develop as an EFL teacher, an EFL teacher-educator, and a researcher?

Settings of the Study

I conducted my study mainly at Eastern Miyazaki University (henceforth EMU),

Miyazaki, Japan.   EMU was founded as a four-year university in 1993.   Since then,

EMU has been recognized as an institute for liberal arts education where students study

a variety of academic fields.   EMU is a comparatively small university, and it has only

one department, the department of humanities (major in Intercultural Studies).

Currently, there are about 800 students studying at EMU.

EMU offers an EFL teacher education program.   Students who wish to obtain a

teaching certificate and start teaching English at Japanese junior-high or high schools

are required to complete the EFL teacher education program successfully.   Without a

teaching certificate, students are not allowed to take an employment examination

annually held by a prefectural board of education in Japan.   Obtaining a teaching

certificate does not guarantee their employment.   This annually-held employment

examination is known to be highly competitive, and no exemption is given to students no

matter how good their academic coursework is (Yoshida, 1999).

In addition to electives as well as required liberal arts courses, students enrolled in

the EFL teacher education program at EMU are supposed to complete the following 13

courses: (a) Introduction to the Teaching Profession; (b) Educational Theory and

Curriculum; (c) Educational Psychology I & II; (d) Educational Administration; (e)

English Teaching Methods I & II; (f) Moral Education; (g) Curriculum and

1 6

Extra-Curricular Activities; (h) Educational Methodology; (i) Student Guidance; (j)

Educational Counseling; (k) Seminar for Integrated Study; (l) Teaching Practicum; and

(m) Human Rights Education.   Every year, only 25 to 30 students (out of 200 senior

students) complete the teacher-education program.   Seniors who have completed

English Teaching Methods I & II must complete Teaching Practicum.   Teaching

Practicum is a course in which students practice their teaching in real educational

settings in Japan for at least four weeks (cf., Gebhard, in press).   According to the

Japanese MEXT, this four-week period is the minimum length expected of all students to

go through; this is a relatively new regulation set by MEXT in 2003 (Asaoka, 2003).

Prior to students' taking Teaching Practicum, they are placed either in a junior high

school or a high school based on their preference.   In this study, when the participants'

practicum sites were determined, I obtained permission to access the practicum sites,

observed participants' teaching, and individually interviewed the participants.   I

implemented the observation once at their practicum sites.   Therefore, during the

participants' practicum, I carried out my study at individually different practicum sites.

Focus of the Study

In order to investigate the participants' development processes, I focused on one

aspect of teachers' thinking, preservice EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning

and teaching.   The participants of this study were four Japanese undergraduate

students (two males and two females) enrolled in an EFL teacher education program at EMU.   All the participants were seniors who were to take the Teaching Practicum course during the term of the investigation.

Regarding my position in this dissertation project, I had no rights to grade participants' performances before, during, and after their practicum.   I did not possess a voice in whether or not the participants would pass or fail in their practicum course. There are, in fact, full-time EMU faculty members who were supposed to evaluate the participants.   I was not involved in such evaluation processes.

Significance of the Study

ESL/EFL teaching is dynamic, complex, and deeply situated in contexts (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002).   Hence, researchers need to take into account intertwined contextual variables: for instance, language learning strategies, learners' educational and cultural backgrounds, teacher's beliefs and assumptions, teacher's decision making, and teacher's experiences and knowledge (cf., Klein, 1986; Spolsky, 1989).   Until quite recently, in both ESL and EFL contexts, much research has been conducted on students' learning and achievement (Suppes, 1978).   To the contrary, however, teachers' (both pre- and inservice teachers') learning processes have not received much research attention till a few decades ago (Freeman, 1996b).   Stevick

(1996) once claimed that "the literature about what goes on inside the teacher is much slimmer than the literature about students" (p. 175). Indeed, the literature on teacher learning and development was quite slim, especially in Asian EFL contexts (Kurihara, 2006).

Because of the dearth of research on teacher learning, and also due partly to the recent demands of drastic educational reform "at national and local levels" (Freeman, 2001, p. 608), many ESL researchers and scholars alike have recently begun to pay particular attention to how teachers learn to teach (and why), what teachers know, and why teachers do what they do in real teaching contexts. (See Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; S. Borg, 2003; Fang, 1996; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Gebhard, 1990a; Johnson, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Richards, 1998; Woods, 1996.) Consequently, today's conceptualization of teachers has completely changed in the TESOL field. Teachers are now viewed as "people who construct their own personal and workable theories of teaching" (Basturkmen et al., 2004, p. 244), instead of being regarded as "people who master a set of general principles and theories developed by experts" (Basturkmen et al., 2004, p. 244). Thus, teaching is now conceptualized as a thinking activity that includes teacher's action, thought, and the intricate interaction of the two in socio-cultural contexts (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Basturkmen et al., 2004; S. Borg, 2003; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999).

Unfortunately, most of the research on teacher learning and development was

conducted in ESL contexts and thus, there has still been a dearth of research in EFL

contexts (Kurihara, 2006).   As Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) have recently called for

comprehensive research on EFL teachers' learning and development, much research is

needed, especially in Asian EFL settings such as Japan (S. Borg, 2003; Shin, 2001).

Therefore, by providing descriptive accounts of preservice teachers' learning processes

in a Japanese EFL context, teacher-educators (i.e., those who instruct, train, and

educate prospective as well as practicing teachers) in the TESOL field may be able to

gain some important insights into how preservice EFL teachers develop during their

enrollment in an EFL teacher education program and how EFL teacher-educators need

to support and facilitate their learning.

In addition, since I conducted my study in such a way that the term of the

investigation covered preservice EFL teachers' practicum, some implications might also

be available for teacher-educators who are in charge of supporting and supervising

preservice EFL teachers' practicum in Japan.   Furthermore, this study might refine the

applicability and feasibility of collaborative journaling for EFL teacher development.

Therefore, as a possible contribution to the TESOL field, and particularly to Japanese

EFL teacher education, this study may provide some renewed insights into the use of a

collaborative journal.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I first presented an overview to the dissertation research.   I then described the statement of the problem in which I elaborated on three prime reasons with reference to some socio-historical facts.   I made an attempt to clarify why my dissertation research on teacher development was needed in Japanese educational contexts in general and in Japanese EFL education in particular.   These three reasons were: (a) in the past and the present educational reforms in Japan, the quality of education and teachers has been misconceived; (b) teachers' pedagogical skills and subject matter knowledge have been excessively emphasized in Japanese EFL teacher education programs; and (c) very little research has been conducted on preservice teachers' development processes in Japanese EFL contexts.   A crucial theme underlying these reasons was the modernization of Japan and its repercussions for the current education system.

Also presented in this chapter were the descriptions of the dissertation project.   I set out the purpose of the study and provided nine research questions, categorizing them into two types, descriptive and interpretive.   Each set represents participants' as well as researcher's perspectives.   In addition, I described the research settings, the focus, and the significance of the study.   The significance of the study can be summarized as follows:

(a) Teacher-educators in the TESOL field may be able to gain some insights into

how preservice EFL teachers develop during their enrollment in an EFL

teacher education program and how EFL teacher-educators need to facilitate

their learning.

(b) Some implications may be available for teacher-educators who are in charge

of supporting and supervising preservice EFL teachers' practicum in Japan.

(c) Some implications for the applicability of collaborative journaling to preservice

teacher development in an EFL context may also become a possible

contribution to teacher education in the TESOL field, and particularly to

Japanese EFL teacher education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a literature review as it relates to this dissertation project. Because this study was qualitative in design, the researcher was a primary research instrument.   Thus, this chapter is developed to achieve accountability for what theoretical foundation I drew upon for this dissertation project.

In the first section, I discuss major characteristics of current approaches to ESL teacher education.   As will be seen, my understanding and perception of ESL teacher education has shaped the way I see current Japanese EFL teacher education. Teachers' beliefs are closely interrelated with teachers' knowledge, and these two entities intricately function together in teachers' decision making.   In the second section, I thus elucidate what has been investigated and understood in the TESOL field in terms of teachers' thinking and teacher learning.   I also present an operational definition of the term teachers' belief.   This section becomes the basis on which I further elucidate how recent conceptualizations of teachers' thinking have been integrated into various teacher development activities and activity procedures in the next section.

From the third to the fifth section, I narrow the focus from three major exploratory ways (i.e., observation, action research, and teaching journals) to gain awareness of

teaching beliefs and practices and develop as professionals to one specific exploratory

way, a teaching journal, used in the present study.   The third section discusses the

three major exploratory activities, illustrating that the recent conceptualizations of

teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and decision making are drawn upon in these exploratory

activities and activity procedures.   The fourth section deals with the applicability of

collaborative journaling to the present study.   I examine what it means for preservice

teachers to keep a collaborative teaching journal.   This final section is to provide a

rationale for conducting the present study in a Japanese EFL context.

Current Approaches to ESL Teacher Education and Development

Teacher Training vs. Teacher Development

Today's ESL teacher-educators put much emphasis on the developmental aspects

of teacher learning (Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard, in press).   Teacher learning is seen

as a process, not as a product of training (Bailey et al., 2001; Britzman, 2003; Freeman,

1989; Gebhard, 1990a; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999).   Current ESL

teacher-educators take into account this conceptualization of teacher learning as a

primary theme when they approach teacher education.   This process-based

conceptualization of teacher learning stems from a controversial dichotomy between

teacher training and teacher development.   As will be seen, this dichotomy offers us

important insights into the quality of teacher education (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Teacher education through training is based on the presupposition that all teachers are trainable. They often receive discrete, decontextualized knowledge or skills to master by the end of training. They are also instructed so that they can accomplish the acquisition of predetermined skills through "imitation, recitation, and assimilation" (Britzman, 2003, p. 46). Thus, the outcomes of such teacher learning are evaluated by teacher-educators on the basis of externally observable and often quantifiable teachers' changes in terms of competence or performance. Quantifiable changes are generally a one-time event; when training ends, such quantifiable changes are likely to end as well.

There are a number of limitations in this training-oriented approach (cf., Johnson, 1999). For instance, Richards (1989) points out that the training-oriented approach is rooted in the assumption that preservice teachers are deficient. In addition, Johnson (1999) claims that what they acquire through training is "inert knowledge" (Whitehead, 1929 as cited in Johnson, 1999, p. 8). Inert knowledge refers to the knowledge understood and/or produced by learners, but not to the extent where the knowledge can be utilized for effective problem solving outside the classroom (i.e., the inert knowledge problem). A number of studies have shown that traditional approaches to instruction (such as readings, lectures, and demonstrations of key points which focus on declarative and procedural information) often produce inert knowledge (e.g., Bransford, Franks, Vye, & Sherwood, 1989). According to Bailey et al. (2001), preservice

teachers cannot rely upon this type of knowledge when their extemporaneous action is needed in context-specific, problem solving situations (see also Dewey, 1997; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Moreover, in the educational literature, Britzman (2003) adds that the training-oriented approaches underestimate preservice teachers' capability of "changing or constructing knowledge" (p. 46).

Teacher education through development is based on the presupposition that all teachers can develop attitude and awareness to change or construct acquired knowledge and skills at their disposal (Freeman, 1989; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999). Preservice teachers are thus led by teacher-educators to gain awareness through various contextualized activities so that they can begin the "process of reflection, critique, and refinement" (Freeman, 1989, p. 40) of teaching practices and the process of independent decision-making (Gebhard, 1984, 2005b). Because they are often internal and invisible, the outcomes of such teacher learning, as well as expected changes in teachers' beliefs and practices, are not always observable or quantifiable (cf., Freeman, 1989; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999). Furthermore, since teacher education through teacher development initiates career-long teacher learning (Britzman, 2003; Freeman, 1989; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Gebhard, in press; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Richards, 1989; Richards & Farrell, 2005), some changes in preservice teachers' awareness may occur over time (Freeman, 1989).

Accordingly, teacher-educators are required to approach the evaluation of teacher

learning differently. Richards (1989) argues that if teacher education is to equip

teachers with "conceptual and analytical tools" (p. 83) and direct them to continual

growth and development, the training-oriented approach to teacher education is not

sufficient (cf., Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Freeman (1989) asserts that both teacher

training and teacher development are thus necessary in teacher education, preserving

the term education as "the superordinate" (p. 37) that embraces both training and

development. Furthermore, Gebhard (2005b) claims that the idea of development

needs to go beyond the idea of improvement.

Teacher Learning through Exploration

Another characteristic of current approaches to ESL teacher education is the

emphasis on teacher learning through exploration. Namely, teachers' exploration is

seen as a crucial process of teacher learning (Fanselow, 1977, 1987, 1988, 1992, 1997;

Gebhard, 1996, 2005b, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). As Gebhard (1992, 2005b)

and Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) contend, the more opportunities and freedom are

given to teachers to engage in exploratory activities, the more informed decisions they

can make, which, in turn, directs them to successful teacher learning (cf., Bailey et al.,

2001) and further career-long exploration (Gebhard, 1992, 1996, 2006; Gebhard &

Oprandy, 1999).

This exploratory approach is based on new perspectives to see teacher learning. Johnson (1999), for example, sees teachers as "first and foremost people who come to the teaching profession with particular ways of understanding their experiences" (p. 10). Preservice teachers, as well as inservice teachers, have individual conceptions of learning and teaching. They interpret and reinterpret their professional experiences in order to make sense of "what they say and do in the classroom" (Johnson, 1999, p. 10). Additionally, Britzman (2003), in the educational literature, provides another crucial perspective to see teacher learning:

> Learning to teach is a social process of negotiation rather than an individual problem of behavior. This dynamic is essential to any humanizing explanation of the work of teachers. Teaching concerns coming to terms with one's intentions and values, as well as one's views of knowing, being, and acting in a setting characterized by contradictory realities, negotiation, and dependency and struggle. (p. 31)

Teacher learning must include the processes of exploration, interpretation, and negotiation through which teachers investigate the sources of their knowledge and beliefs, as well as their "personhood" (Mori, 2003, p. 14). Gebhard (2005b) adds that in such processes, teachers are recommended to explore and learn the affective side of teaching because they tend to base their interpretations of the professional experiences especially on teachers' beliefs (cf., Oprandy, 1999). Teachers are encouraged to

2 8

explore their teaching beliefs and practices (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999) and "the

completeness of teachers' understandings of themselves, their students, and the places

where they work" (Johnson, 1999, p. 11) by making best use of various types of

activities.

There are at least two important premises underlying this exploratory approach:

(a) viewing one's teaching from different perspectives promotes the quality of teaching

(Edge, 1992; Fanselow, 1987; Gebhard, 1996, 2005b, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy,

1999); and (b) teacher's exploration ensures quality teaching (Abaya, 1997; Bailey et al.,

2001; Fanselow, 1997; Gebhard, 2006).   It may be worth mentioning here that

research conducted by teachers to explore their own beliefs and practices, for instance,

in the form of action research or diary studies is thus regarded as an invaluable

opportunity for self-exploration and self-improvement (Bailey, 2001; Bailey et al., 2001;

Freeman, 1989, 1998; Gebhard, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999;

Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Wallace, 1998).   According to Sato and Kleinsasser (2004),

such opportunities are not given to preservice EFL teachers in Japan.

Prescription vs. Description: Teacher Autonomy

Stressing the importance of teacher exploration, assert Richards and Lockhart

(1996), necessitates bottom-up and internal approaches to teacher learning.   That is,

as opposed to transmitting external knowledge and skills to teachers (as we can see in

most Japanese EFL teacher education programs), teacher learning is viewed as a process of activating internal awareness as well as previously constructed knowledge and beliefs.   Such bottom-up and internal approaches to teacher learning, unlike traditional top-down and external approaches, require teachers to avoid a set of predetermined rules or procedures, which was once evident in traditional approaches (Britzman, 2003; Fanselow, 1987, 1988, 1992; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).

Relative to this study, I applied bottom-up, internal approaches to help the participants activate internal awareness and previously constructed knowledge and beliefs.   I believe that the quality of preservice teachers' learning can be promoted when teacher-educators stop insisting on the use of a predetermined set of rules or procedures as seen in traditional approaches.   The key is to focus on a descriptive set of alternatives (i.e., multiple-activities).   The efficacy of a descriptive set of alternatives has been supported, for instance, by Fanselow (1977, 1987, 1988, 1992, 1997), Gebhard (1984, 1992, 1996, 2006), and Gebhard and Oprandy (1999).   These scholars all claim that with various types of alternatives (or opportunities), teachers can take an initiative in exploring, examining, interpreting their own teaching in order to become reflective teachers (Farrell, 2004; Gebhard, 1992; Murphy, 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Wallace, 1991) and develop critical awareness of teaching (Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard, 1992, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   Thus, as Matsuda and Matsuda (2004) demonstrate, teacher autonomy comes into play in the process of

teachers' exploration for professional development.

Believing that teacher learning needs to include an active process of exploration (Gebhard, 1996, 2006), I regard preservice teachers as autonomous learners.   Thus, after asking my participants to begin keeping a collaborative journal, I did not provide any prescribed instructions about how they should proceed with collaborative journaling. Instead, I provided minimal guidelines that they could refer to in the process of journaling.   By doing so, it was possible to explore how the participants took an initiative in their learning and explored their teaching beliefs and practices.

A Nonjudgmental Stance in Exploratory Teacher Learning

Another crucial characteristic of current approaches to ESL teacher education is the avoidance of a nonjudgmental stance in the process of teacher exploration. Attempting to eliminate the aforementioned set of prescriptive rules or procedures characterizes current approaches to ESL teacher education in terms of the supervision and evaluation of teacher learning (cf., Bailey et al., 2001; Fanselow, 1987, 1997; Gebhard, 1984; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   One of the main reasons is that a nonjudgmental stance enables teachers to take risks (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Fanselow, 1997; see also Fanselow, 1987; Gebhard & Ueda-Motonaga, 1992).

Preservice teachers' growth should not be restricted only because they are observed or supervised with a judgmental stance.   In order to evaluate teacher

learning validly, ESL teacher-educators are advised to take a nonjudgmental stance and provide an atmosphere where preservice teachers can, in effect, choose among various alternatives at their disposal and avoid the prescribed way of learning. In addition, when supervision is to be done, argues Gebhard (1984), teacher-educators' supervisory behaviors should be constantly examined so as to broaden their scope to select an appropriate model of supervision.

Therefore, because I employed an exploratory approach, it was crucial for me as a researcher and teacher-educator in this study to become aware of the importance of a nonjudgmental stance. I took a nonjudgmental stance throughout the investigation process not to interfere with the participants' exploratory learning. Especially in my study, such a stance would determine whether or not I could see what actually took place in the participants' exploration processes. I also encouraged the participants to become aware of the importance of taking a nonjudgmental stance in their learning processes.

Teacher Reflection and Reflective Teaching

Although the notion of reflective teaching is not new to the TESOL field (cf., Dewey, 1997; Schön, 1983; Zeichner & Liston, 1996), reflection is viewed in current approaches as a key to empower teachers' exploration through multiple-activities. Preservice/inservice teachers, as well as teacher-educators, are encouraged to

constantly reflect on their teaching beliefs and practices (cf., Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Bailey et al. (2001), Farrell (2004), Gebhard and Oprandy (1999), Murphy (2001),

Richards and Lockhart (1996), and Richards and Farrell (2005) all stress the importance

of reflection for professional development.   Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) and Johnson

(1999, 2000) add that critical reflection is necessary for teachers to identify who they are

as persons and professionals and make sense of their professional experiences.

Furthermore, according to Schön (1983), reflection, particularly reflection-in-action, is

important when teachers encounter and spontaneously cope with uncertain, unique

circumstances (see also Dewey, 1997).

In spite of the importance of reflection, however, one important issue should be

addressed here: there has been no clear definition of the term *reflection*.   Bailey et al.

(2001), Farrell (1999, 2004), Griffiths (2000), and Stanley (1998) all point out that the

term has been used without a clear definition in the field.   The prime meaning of the

term is intrinsically retrospective, but in the TESOL field, reflection is linked with future

action as well (Gebhard, 2005b; Pennington, 1996; Stanley, 1998).   The term may be

understood generally as a term referring to: (a) teachers' continuous, deliberate

consideration of attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and practices (cf., Richards & Lockhart,

1994; Zeichner & Liston, 1996); and (b) teachers' continuous examinations of

alternative actions (cf., Stanley, 1998).   Moreover, Gebhard (2005b) claims that the

more teachers explore, the more they gain the abilities to reflect-in-action, as well as

reflect-on-action (cf., Schön, 1983).

   I would like to clarify my understanding of the term *reflection* for both educational

and research purposes.   In order to do so, it may be helpful to consider Murphy's

(2001) discussion of the purposes of reflective teaching.   According to Murphy, there

are three major purposes of reflective teaching: (a) to understand one's

teaching-learning process deeply; (b) to expand one's repertoire of strategic options;

and (c) to promote the quality of learning opportunities one can provide for learners in

classrooms.   Thus, reflection or reflective teaching should be connected ideally with

some change in teachers' action in such a way that learners can benefit in classrooms.

From the same perspective to see reflection and reflective teaching, Bailey et al. (2001)

contend that constant reflection plays a critical role in empowering teachers to raise

their awareness (i.e., transitive consciousness) to a level of metaconsciousness and a

further level of critical awareness (see Figure 1).

| Level 1: Global Intransitive Consciousness |
| This level consists of consciousness of being alive and awake when we teach. |

↓

| Level 2: Awareness (Transitive Consciousness) |
| This level consists of attention and focusing on teaching. |

↓

| Level 3: Metaconsciousness |
| This level consists of practical awareness of teaching and discursive awareness of teaching. |

↓

| Level 4: Critical Awareness |
| At this level, voluntary action, reflective processes, and mindfulness are deliberate and purposeful engagement in actions. |

Figure 1. Levels of consciousness (adapted from Bailey et al., 2001).

Taken all together, through reflection and reflective teaching, teachers are expected to gain awareness of one's teaching beliefs and practices, see teaching differently (Fanselow, 1988; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999), and ultimately generate some change in action in order to serve learners better (Bailey et al., 2001; Murphy, 2001). Without "ample time and supported opportunities" (Johnson, 1999, p. 11) given to preservice teachers, however, it is difficult, if not impossible, for them to foster and sustain reflection as well as to generate change in their teaching beliefs and practices through reflection.

The following list illustrates my understanding of the term *reflection*. The listed

features of the term collectively represent an operational definition for the study.

   (a) It is teacher's continuous, deliberate examinations of self, beliefs, attitudes,

      and past and future behaviors in and outside of class.

   (b) It is a process of teachers' exploration to gain awareness of and an

      understanding of teaching beliefs and practices.

   (c) It is an endless, cyclical mental endeavor that necessitates sufficient time and

      a supportive environment.

   (d) It is a means for teachers to reach critical awareness so as to face the reality

      and cope with problems (including unforeseen problems in the future) skillfully.

   (e) It enables teachers to expand their repertoire of strategic options and hence

      become more flexible, spontaneous practitioners.

   (f) It is a means for teachers to better serve learners.

With this definition in mind, I stressed the importance of reflection during the term of the

investigation. The participants were all encouraged to reflect upon and explore their

beliefs about language learning and teaching to develop awareness. As a

diary-keeper of a collaborative journal and reflective journal, I also reflected upon my

beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

   Finally, Gebhard (1992) gives us a cautionary remark that a primary goal of

reflecting on professional experiences and gaining awareness is to "narrow the gap

between an imagined view of their teaching and reality" (p. 5).   He also stresses that

reflection or reflective teaching is only an aspect (i.e., a process) of teachers'

exploration: reflection is not an end itself (Gebhard, 2005b).

Teachers' Narratives and Teacher Learning

Various narratives have so far been documented, investigated, and published in

the TESOL field (e.g., Johnson & Golombek, 2002).   In current ESL teacher education,

teachers' narratives and narrative inquiry into teaching are used to help teachers

become aware of the context-bound nature of teaching (Bell, 2002; Britzman, 2003;

Golombek, 2000; Johnson, 1999), learn teachers' cognitive processes in context (e.g.,

decision-making process) (Bailey & Nunan, 1996), gain sensitivity to such socio-cultural

and/or socio-political issues as nonnative vs. native teachers in real teaching contexts

(cf., Bell, 2002; Braine, 1999; Fox, 1994; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Kamhi-Stein,

2004; Murphey, 2004).   Unlike traditional approaches, teachers, whether nonnative or

native, are seen as knowers.   Preservice teachers, as well as inservice teachers, are

considered to have insightful conceptions and experiences in learning and teaching,

namely, some stories to tell (Britzman, 2003; Freeman, 1996a).   Accordingly, even

preservice teachers studying in teacher education programs are encouraged to explore

their backgrounds and reflect on their language learning and teaching experiences and

share their narratives with others (Bailey et al., 2001; Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Gebhard &

Oprandy, 1999; Golombek, 2000; Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

In traditional approaches, teacher-educators are considered only knowers or authorities that transmit knowledge and skills to teachers. Bell (2002), Britzman (2003), Freeman and Johnson (1998), and Johnson (1999) all assert that teacher learning through such a traditional teacher education model is lacking authentic voices and narrows preservice teachers' perspectives to see the reality of teaching. Compared to such "oversimplified, decontextualized, compartmentalized" knowledge and skills (Johnson, 1999, p. 8), teachers' narratives derived from real experiences can enrich teachers' reflection and interpretation processes of exploratory teacher learning (cf., Freeman & Johnson, 1989; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Teachers' autobiographies or life stories, as well as reflective journals, are thus widely used in today's ESL teacher education. (See Bailey, Bergthold, Braunstein, Fleischman, Holbrook, Tuman, Waissbluth, & Zambo, 1996; Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Golombek, 2000; Johnson, 1999.)

As such, this dissertation project was designed to elicit stories that preservice EFL teachers told, particularly stories that represented their beliefs about language learning and teaching. Based on the assumption that teachers know stories in learning and teaching (Freeman, 1996a), I attempted to hear their stories by keeping a collaborative journal together, discussing journal entries, and interviewing each participant to clarify or elaborate on what they had to say. In so doing, I expected the participants to learn

from one another and grow as professionals.

Finally, it is worth noting that, as the following quote depicts, this emphasis on teachers' narrative inquiry into teaching in current approaches reflects the recent epistemological paradigm shift manifested in academic research and teacher research in the TESOL field (cf., Bell, 2002; Britzman, 2003; Freeman, 1996a; Freeman & Johnson, 1998, 2000; Jacobs & Farrell, 2001; Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

[I]f we broaden our definition of theory to include the voices and experiences of classroom practitioners, we will begin to recognize that the process of theorizing need not be limited to an activity that is separate from the experience of teaching itself.   (Johnson, 2000, p. 5)

Collaborative or Cooperative Teacher Development

Even though teacher learning or teacher development can be done by an individual teacher, the process of teacher learning and development can be enriched by collaborative (or cooperative) efforts with other preservice teachers or colleagues (cf., Bailey et al., 2001; Collay, Dunlap, Enloe, & Gagnon, 1998; Edge, 1992; Fanselow, 1997; Gebhard, 1992, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Nunan, 1992a).   As Edge (1992) contends, teacher learning and development can be fostered by collaborating (or cooperating) in teacher development activities, having dialogues about learning and teaching, and exchanging reflective, constructive feedback with

other colleagues (Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard, 1984, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   Furthermore, Farrell (2001) and Franzak (2002) argue that the critical friendship of preservice teachers and colleagues, albeit difficult to build, should be pursued in teacher learning contexts, in that the process of teachers' reflection and interpretation can be enhanced by such collaborative relationships (see Collay et al., 1998; Farrell, 1999; Johnson, 1999).

Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) report that Japanese EFL teachers tend to view professional development as an individual endeavor.   In general, collaborative development is not pursued in Japanese EFL teacher education programs.   Thus, such external factors as interactions with other colleagues in socio-cultural context are not fully taken into account by most Japanese EFL teacher education programs (cf., Johnson, 1999).   As previously indicated, one reason might be that Japanese EFL teacher-educators, especially those who apply traditional product-based approaches, may still believe that it is sufficient to transmit knowledge and skills to preservice teachers (cf., Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 1999).   The participants of this study provided some evidence that this speculation is indeed true at least until the participants in the collaborative-learning group had chances to reflect on the nature of teacher development as well as their language learning and teaching experiences.

Teacher learning is an active process of an individual teacher constructing or reconstructing one's knowledge and beliefs.   Some input or feedback from other

preservice teachers or colleagues, however, promotes the quality of teacher learning

and development (Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005).   This is not to say that any types of

interactions with colleagues or preservice teachers are beneficial for successful teacher

development.   As Collay et al. (1998) claim, sufficient negotiations and preparations

should be done to create optimal conditions for effective collaborative learning despite

that optimal conditions or interactions among teachers vary depending on an individual

group or community (cf., Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).   In this regard, investigating

participants' interactions in the collaborative group, this study sheds some light on how

collaborative learning can be done for effective professional development.

Teachers' Thinking and Teacher Learning

Teachers' Knowledge

Since the early 1990s, numerous studies have been conducted to clarify teachers'

knowledge and beliefs (S. Borg, 2003; Smith, 1996).   In such studies, as well as in

actual teacher education settings, teachers' knowledge and beliefs have been vaguely

defined and separately conceptualized (cf., Ellis, 2006).   The distinction between

teachers' knowledge and beliefs can be regarded as "a problem of interpretation"

(Britzman, 2003, p. 23).   In addition, since teachers' beliefs and knowledge are closely

interrelated when they function in actual teaching practices, we can reconceptualize

them as almost the same entities in the TESOL field, particularly on the basis of social

constructivism (Nagamine, 2007).

In the aforementioned training-based approaches to ESL teacher education, teachers' knowledge is conceived as external, quantifiable knowledge that can be transferred to preservice teachers through training (cf., Johnson, 1999; Mori, 2003). This view stems from epistemological influences of applied linguistics (e.g., empirical research on second language acquisition) (Mori, 2003). In this view, preservice teachers are considered, so called, "blank slates" (Johnson, 1999, p. 18; see also Pinker, 2002). External knowledge and skills are expected to be imprinted in them through training (cf., Johnson, 1999). As Bailey et al. (2001), Britzman (2003), Freeman (1989), Johnson (1999), Johnson and Golombek (2002), and Richards (1989) argue, this view clearly has limitations in terms of the quality of teacher education.

Recently, however, this view has drastically changed in the TESOL field: teachers' knowledge is now regarded as an internal, socially-constructed experiential entity (Britzman, 2003; Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). This new view values teachers' agency in constructing or reconstructing knowledge in context (Britzman, 2003; Mori, 2003; Sharkey, 2004). In contrast to the traditional view of teachers' knowledge evident in training-based approaches to ESL teacher education, teachers' knowledge is seen as an entity that is closely connected with one's "personhood" (Mori, 2003, p. 14) and is reconstructable throughout one's professional career (cf., Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999). Thus, as

Almarza (1996), Fanselow (1997), and Sharkey (2004) indicate, even preservice

teachers are considered to have already acquired such personalized,

socially-constructed experiential knowledge when they start learning to teach.

In this dissertation project, preservice EFL teachers' knowledge that is highly

personalized socially-constructed experiential entity was viewed as their beliefs (cf.,

Woods, 1996).   Teachers' knowledge, according to Johnson (1999), includes subject

matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge (i.e., general knowledge about

teaching), pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., teachers' understanding of the

relationships between content and pedagogy), and knowledge of context (i.e.,

context-specific knowledge that teachers use to serve learners in a particular context).

Johnson asserts that all types of teachers' knowledge are inseparable from teachers'

prior experiences, values, and individual goals.   Thus, teachers' knowledge can be

defined as a combined form of experiential and professional knowledge deeply rooted in

teachers' beliefs (cf., Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002;

Mori, 2003; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).   In the write-up of this study, therefore, the term

teacher's belief is used to refer also to teacher's knowledge.

Teachers' Beliefs

Teacher's beliefs, that is, individualized socially-constructed experiential

knowledge, are deeply situated in socio-cultural contexts (cf., Richards, 1998).

According to Johnson (1999), teachers' beliefs are formed by the "accumulation of experiences" (p. 30) and hence, they are structured by episodic memories of prior learning and/or teaching experiences (M. Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992). Teachers' beliefs affect the processes of (re-)construction of knowledge and overall development as professionals (cf., M. Borg, 2001; S. Borg, 2003). Johnson (1999) reports that teachers' beliefs function as a filter "through which teachers make sense of new information about teaching" (p. 30). Thus, when preservice teachers engage in the sense-making process of learning and teaching experiences, what they consider as true or preferable comes into play and determines the knowledge construction process (cf., Johnson, 1999; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).

Nespor (1987) also reports that teachers' beliefs are affective and evaluative in nature. Johnson (1999) adds that teachers' beliefs that are deeply rooted in prior learning and/or teaching experiences create images that teachers can hardly get rid of (cf., Lortie, 1975). Such images control, and sometimes restrict (cf., Bailey et al., 2001; Johnson, 1999; Lortie, 1975), teachers' instructional practices, cognition, and perceptions in classrooms (M. Borg, 2001; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1998; Richardson, 1996). In addition to these characteristics of teachers' beliefs, the roles of teachers' beliefs in the process of change have also been identified as well. Richards, Gallo, and Renandya (2001, p. 41) summarize the roles as follows:

(a) Teachers' beliefs play a central role in the process of teacher

44

development;

(b) Changes in teachers' practices are the result of changes in teachers' beliefs; and

(c) The notion of teacher change is multidimensional and is triggered both by personal factors as well as by the professional contexts in which teachers work.

It is necessary for teacher-educators, as well as for preservice teachers, to understand what preservice teachers' beliefs are and how they are formed or shaped in and outside of teacher education programs because teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in determining the outcomes of teacher learning. It can also be said that it is necessary to examine teachers' beliefs in relation to teachers' action in class in order to capture and understand the changes on the development processes of preservice EFL teachers. Basturkmen et al. (2004), M. Borg (2001), Nespor (1987), and Pajares (1992) all agree on this point, claiming that teachers' beliefs have a great impact on teachers' spontaneous reasoning, decision-making, affect, and overall behavior in actual teaching situations.

Much literature indicates that it is not easy to examine teachers' beliefs and clarify what they are. For instance, Bailey et al. (2001), Gebhard and Oprandy (1999), and Johnson (1999) mention that it is hard for teachers to realize how much influence they have been receiving from their own beliefs. It is also difficult, if not impossible, for

teachers to identify what kinds of beliefs they actually possess.   Moreover, even if

teachers are aware of their "epistemic beliefs" (Johnson, 1999, p. 38), it is not easy to

change their belief structure (cf., M. Borg, 2001; S. Borg, 2003; Johnson, 1999; Pajares,

1992).   Nevertheless, it has also been reported that collaborative journaling enables

teachers to engage in constructive dialogues or discourse and hence promotes

teachers' reflectivity (e.g., Gebhard, 1999; Roderick, 1986).   In fact, collaborative

journaling allowed the participants of this study to identify and examine their teaching

beliefs, which, in turn, enabled them to perceive some changes in their beliefs.

Teachers' Decision Making

Teachers' knowledge and beliefs function in accordance with teachers' intentions.

Richards and Lockhart (1996) clarify this by differentiating types of decision making on

the basis of teacher's intentions.   When the teacher makes a decision, thinking of what

one's learners are learning from the lesson, then this type of decision making is called a

planning decision; when the teacher makes a decision, thinking of whether or not the

instructions are understood, then this decision is called an interactive decision; and,

finally, when the teacher makes a decision, thinking of whether or not the lesson was

successful, then this type of decision is called an evaluative decision.   Teachers' online

decision making is, however, more complicated than what this categorization illustrates.

Bailey's (1996) study, for instance, reveals some prime reasons why teachers alter

their instructional plans spontaneously, examining both *etic* and *emic* interpretations of teacher's online decision making. Based on her multiple sources of qualitative data, she asserts that there are six major principles that may guide interactive decision making: (a) serve the common good; (b) teach to the moment; (c) further the lesson; (d) accommodate students' learning styles; (e) promote students' involvement; and (f) distribute the wealth (cf., S. Borg, 2003). In the same line of research, Richards (1998) reports that a major reason why teachers modify planned activities may be "to maintain students' engagement and interest level" (p. 115). Such modifications are usually made due to such pedagogical factors as students' needs or teachers' awareness of "students' affective state" (cf., S. Borg, 2003, p. 94; see also Smith, 1996).

As can be seen, teachers' classroom implementations are "shaped by a wide range of interacting and often conflicting factors" (S. Borg, 2003, p. 91), including "affective, moral and emotional factors" (p. 93). M. Borg (2001) adds that teacher's online decision making entails teachers' pedagogical knowledge and "beliefs-in-action" (p. 187). In addition, Schön (1987) argues that reflection-in-action is included in the teachers' online decision making process. Bailey (1996), Nunan (1992b), Richards (1996), and Richards and Lockhart (1996) indicate that all these factors intricately interact with various external, contextual factors, which, in turn, requires researchers to examine teacher's intentions in relationship to such external, contextual factors as actual instructional activities and students' reactions to them (cf., Basturkmen et al.,

2004).

The complex nature of teachers' online decision making implies that when we are to examine teachers' beliefs in relation to actual teaching practices, we need to take into account different voices (i.e., teacher's, learner's, and researcher's voices). Nunan (1996) emphasizes the importance of listening to teachers' voices to present accurate descriptions and explanations about teaching practices. Accordingly, we need to collect qualitative data in the form of multiple-sources (e.g., interviews, journals, observations) to explore numerous variables as comprehensively as possible (e.g., Bailey, 1996; Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Nunan, 1996; Richards, 1996, 1998; Woods, 1996). By listening to teachers' authentic voices, Nunan claims that we can reduce the gap between theory and practice and the gap between teacher and researcher. Relevant to this claim, Nunan (1996) also suggests that we conduct collaborative research which promotes teachers' reflection on teaching and enables them to develop as professionals. In his view, theory, research, and practice are closely linked together; they are not mutually exclusive.

Previous Investigations regarding Teachers' Thinking

I have discussed the nature or characteristics of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and online decision making in relation to this dissertation project. These three aspects of teachers' thinking interact with other external contextual factors as well. Although my

4 8

research focused primarily on teachers' beliefs, it is worthwhile reviewing previous research on these cognitive aspects and their interactions.

Almarza (1996) focused on the relationship between preservice teachers' background knowledge and the knowledge they gained in a teacher education program (i.e., Post-Graduate Certificate Program in Education). She explored how the background knowledge interacted with the learning process and teaching experience during the teaching practice. Her primary research question was to determine the kinds of relationships that exist between knowledge and action with reference to the preservice teachers' knowledge. The data collection was done through journals, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall procedures. She also collected planning protocols and photocopies of classroom materials used in the lessons.

In the process of the data analysis, Almarza identified four main emerging themes: (a) pretraining knowledge; (b) teacher education/transfer to the concept of teaching method; (c) relationships between students' knowledge and teaching practice; and (d) relationships between pretraining knowledge and posttraining knowledge. It was revealed that even before they started learning to teach, all four preservice teachers had built an initial conceptualization of their profession not only through the interactions of teachers but also through the interactions with fellow pupils and other people (cf., Britzman, 2003; Collay et al., 1998; Fanselow, 1997; Johnson, 1999; Johnson &

4 9

Golombek, 2002).

Moreover, it was found that Almarza's participants interpreted their learning experiences differently (cf., S. Borg, 2003; Britzman, 2003). Such a research finding indicates that in this dissertation project, my participants may present diverse interpretations of the common experiences among them (i.e., collaborative journaling and interacting with one another in bi-weekly meetings). Almarza also reported that teacher education did not drastically alter preservice teachers' knowledge. Because teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in determining teachers' knowledge backgrounds, it can be said that the participants' beliefs did not change during their learning in the teacher education program. In other words, Almarza's participants' beliefs did not transform during the term of her investigation. By investigating teacher development processes with a primary focus on preservice teachers' beliefs, this dissertation project sheds some light on the reasons why preservice teachers' reactions to teacher education courses are individually different and why preservice teachers do not change (or possibly change) their beliefs.

Teachers' beliefs control not only teachers' action or behaviors but also fundamental teaching philosophy. Lortie (1975) argues that prior language learning experiences play an important role in determining teaching philosophy as well as teaching practices, and that teachers' knowledge (hence beliefs) is formed on the basis of prior learning experiences as students rather than as teachers. Lortie calls this

5 0

concept *the apprenticeship of observation,* a notion frequently referred to in teacher

learning.   This notion originally suggests a powerful influence of previous experience in

schooling on teachers.   Yet, the apprenticeship of observation can also be taken as

teachers' beliefs that are deeply rooted in the learning experiences of the teachers.

Accordingly, Bailey et al.'s (1996) study, which was based on the apprenticeship of

observation, is pertinent to this study.

Bailey et al. reported on a collaborative research project conducted at Monterey

Institute of International Studies.   Using journals and autobiographies as a database,

they described and examined teachers' learning experiences and the impact of the

learning experiences on teachers' teaching philosophy and practice.   Participants, who

were M.A. candidates and a professor in the TESOL program, wrote a prose summary

of their language learning history.   When they wrote the prose summary, they were

asked to answer a set of questions regarding the participants' knowledge, beliefs, and

practices.   In addition to this autobiography assignment, the students and the professor

were asked to keep journals.   Referring to sample autobiographies and journal entries,

Bailey et al. discussed learner anxiety, teacher's expectations, motivation, classroom

atmosphere, and some other themes found in the data analysis process.   They

showed that the apprenticeship of observation actually functions in teacher learning as

de facto guides for teachers (cf., S. Borg, 2003; Britzman, 2003).   Stated another way,

teachers' beliefs (re-)constructed from language learning experiences are likely to

function as *de facto* guides for teachers.

In addition, Bailey et al.'s study in question indicates that the use of autobiographies is effective for preservice teachers to clarify "the memories of instruction gained through their apprenticeship of observation' (p. 11).   In this dissertation project, therefore, I asked my participants at the beginning of the investigation (i.e., the pre-practicum phase) to write autobiographies in a collaborative journal and discuss them in bi-weekly meetings.   By so doing, the participants were expected to start exploring their beliefs about language learning and teaching effectively.

Another study relevant to my dissertation project is Katz (1996).   She investigated teachers' beliefs in relation to teachers' behaviors.   She defined teaching styles as the entity including both teachers' behaviors and beliefs (cf., Woods, 1996).   Her study was to describe four different classrooms.   More specifically, under investigation were four different approaches to teaching college writing classes for nonnative English speakers.   Four teachers (3 females and 1 male) teaching the college writing classes in the same program participated in the study.   Data was collected by two audio-recorded interviews, class observations (audio-recorded teaching), and her own journal writing.   Katz claimed that by carefully studying different teaching styles in different contexts, it is possible to clarify the complexity of the classroom interactions and further explain why teachers use specific instructional

techniques as part of their instructional plan.

Katz's study revealed that such various factors as teachers' beliefs or assumptions about prior language learning (i.e., learning English writing in this case) and expectations about students' behaviors play a crucial role in determining teaching styles. Namely, teachers' teaching styles are affected by students' reactions and their beliefs about language learning. In relation to this finding, Basturkmen et al. (2004), Crookes and Arakaki (1999), Johnson (1996), Nunan (1992b), Richards et al. (2001), and Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) add that contextual (i.e., social, institutional, physical, etc.) factors such as working conditions (e.g., heavy workloads), teachers' affect (e.g., enthusiasm), and teaching experiences also affect teaching beliefs and behaviors. As such, this dissertation project was designed to examine teachers' beliefs in relation to various context-specific factors so as to capture a holistic view of teacher learning and its processes.

As S. Borg (2003) points out, much research regarding teachers' thinking in teacher learning has been conducted "with native speaker teachers working with small groups of motivated adult learners studying in universities or private institutions" (p. 106). On the other hand, research on teachers' thinking in teacher learning with nonnative speakers, especially in Asian EFL contexts is very rare (Kurihara, 2006). As previously noted, one possible reason is the limited popularity of qualitative research (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). In fact, while collecting and reviewing previously published

literature in domestic (i.e., Japanese) and international refereed journals, I have noticed

that only a few qualitative studies on teachers' beliefs and development process were

conducted with Japanese EFL teachers (both pre- and inservice teachers) working in

Japan.   One of the few studies is Sato and Kleinsasser's (2004) study.

Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) reported on their year-long qualitative study involving

19 inservice EFL teachers in Japan (i.e., 15 native Japanese speakers and 4 native

English speakers).   They used multiple sources of data (i.e., interviews, observations,

and documents) to investigate teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions of EFL

teachers working together in a high school English department.   Research questions

formulated for the study were: (a) what are the beliefs, practices, and interactions of

EFL teachers who work together in a high school English department in Japan?; (b)

what are the relationships among EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions?;

and (c) how do these EFL teachers' (technical) culture (e.g., their beliefs, practices, and

interactions) reciprocally influence individual EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and

interactions? (p. 801).   Their study provided in-depth descriptions about a particular

high school culture, what they call technical culture, in Japan.   In the particular culture

investigated in their study, teachers' practices, beliefs, and interactions were, to a great

extent, influenced by the culture.   The study revealed that the participants (Japanese)

initially constructed their beliefs based on their prior language learning and teaching

experiences, and that the beliefs remained comparatively "constant regardless of age or

number of years teaching experiences" (p. 802).   Thus, it was speculated that similar

findings might be obtained in my dissertation project.   Because the culture was

different, however, I speculated that the participants of this study might show

discrepancies in terms of the nature and/or structure of the beliefs about language

learning and teaching.

In the high school culture investigated in Sato and Kleinsasser' study, the

Japanese participants learned from peer-observations, but the peer-observations did

not work well due to a seniority system in the Japanese culture.   That is, only

experienced teachers were allowed to critique novice teachers, but "critiquing of

experienced teachers was less prevalent" (p. 804).   Furthermore, due to the

examination-oriented learning and teaching in combination with such peer-observations,

most of the teachers' teaching practices were patternized in the school studied.   Thus,

the participants' stated beliefs were reported to be inconsistent with their actual teaching

practices (cf., Basturkmen et al., 2004).

Furthermore, Sato and Kleinsasser' study uncovered the Japanese teachers'

struggle: the Japanese teachers expressed their willingness to change their teaching,

but most of them did not know how to change.   In addition, the meaning of

collaboration was found among the participants not to share their voices of struggle to

change patternized practices, but to "talk about the progression of classes and some

sharing of materials" (p. 807).   Accordingly, it can be said that the Japanese inservice

teachers lack sufficient opportunities to develop as professionals (cf., Kurihara, 2006).

In addition, Sato and Kleinsasser's study also demonstrated that the meaning of

teacher development was perceived among the inservice teachers as "a private

undertaking" (p. 811).   These dismal findings reported by Sato and Kleinsasser's study

form a justification of conducting this dissertation project.   I speculated that this study

might enable the participants to realize the importance of collaborative endeavors in

teacher development.

Teachers' Beliefs: Multiple Meanings

Teachers' knowledge and beliefs are intricately intertwined; they are both

meaning-driven and thus, it is impossible to distinguish them clearly (M. Borg, 2001; S.

Borg, 2003; Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001;

Woods, 1996).   This point may be further exemplified by the definition of teachers'

knowledge proposed by James (2001): teachers' knowledge is defined as a set of

beliefs, understandings, and assumptions that evolve further through teachers' learning

experiences (cf., Britzman, 2003; Tann, 1993).

Although defining the term was not what this study was designed for, it was

necessary to present a tentative, operational definition at the beginning of the

investigation so as to clarify what I intended to explore through this study (see Creswell,

1994).   Based on the work of M. Borg (2001) and S. Borg (2003), the term *teachers'*

belief was defined with reference to the other literature (e.g., Nespor, 1987; Pajares,

1992; Richards et al., 2001) as follows.   The list below illustrates my understanding of

the term.

> (a) Beliefs are context-specific propositions consciously or unconsciously held
>
>   by a teacher in relation to the individual's teaching.
>
> (b) They are evaluative and emotive in nature, in that they are personally
>
>   accepted as true or preferable by an individual teacher.
>
> (c) They guide teacher's thinking, action, and further sense-making of learning
>
>   and/or teaching experiences.
>
> (d) They can always be reconstructed as a teacher interprets or reinterprets
>
>   one's learning and/or teaching experiences.

The list above shows major features that collectively represent an operational definition

of teachers' belief.   As can be seen, this operational definition embraces personalized,

socially-constructed experiential knowledge (e.g., Almarza, 1996), as well as teachers'

pedagogical beliefs (e.g., Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Golombek, 1998).   This list

obviously reflects my own conceptualization of teachers' beliefs.

It should be made clear that when relevant themes emerged in the present study,

a more concrete, context-specific definition of the term was presented (Creswell, 1994).

The participants of my study, for instance, clearly showed that they possessed two types

of beliefs about language learning and teaching: individually different beliefs and

commonly-held beliefs.   A new definition was, thus, presented in consideration of such

a research finding.   This should be considered legitimate because the very nature of

teachers' beliefs is intrinsically contextual (cf., S. Borg, 2003; Johnson, 1999) and most

importantly, my study was fundamentally inductive in approach (see Eisenhardt, 2002;

Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 2001).

Exploratory Activities to Gain Awareness of Teaching

In the area of ESL teacher development, a variety of activities have been

proposed for teachers to develop their teaching beliefs and practices and "gain a

renewed understanding of themselves as teachers, including awareness of their

teaching philosophy and behaviors" (Gebhard, in press).   (See Bailey et al., 2001;

Gebhard, 1992, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Richards & Farrell, 2005;

Richards & Nunan, 1990.)   The following list, adopted from Gebhard (2006), shows

some of the activities that teachers can use in order to explore their teaching beliefs and

practices.

- •Read journal articles and books about teaching and learning

- •Read teacher narratives

- •Attend professional conferences

- •Establish a mentoring relationship

- •Put together a teaching portfolio

•Learn another language

•Do action research

•Do self-observation

•Observe other teachers

•Talk with other teachers

•Keep a teacher journal

These exploratory activities have been advocated based on the aforementioned conceptualizations of teachers' thinking in teacher learning.   These activities have been utilized and further refined in concordance with the development of approaches to ESL teacher education.   In this section, I will discuss three essential activities widely used in ESL teacher development.   There are two reasons why I will discuss these three activities: (a) to provide an understanding of three prevalent ways teachers can use to consider their beliefs about teaching; and (b) to focus our attention on one particular way, that of journaling, which was used as the main exploratory approach in this study.

Observation

Gebhard (1992, 1996, 2006) argues that it is necessary for teachers to explore teaching so as to see patterns and rules that they consciously or unconsciously follow in their teaching (cf., Fanselow, 1977, 1987).   Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) assert that

"[t]he more we observe and develop our teaching, the freer we become to make our own informed teaching decisions" (p. 38).   They also point out that the more aware teachers become of their teaching practices, the more they can consider their beliefs about learning and teaching.

In the process of observing teaching to gain such awareness, teachers, as well as teacher-educators, are advised to consider fundamental principles which coincide with the previously discussed characteristics of current approaches to ESL teacher education.   These fundamental principles are: (a) to take a nonjudgmental stance; (b) to aim at descriptiveness; (c) to examine observer's role; and (d) to include the process of interpretive analysis

The first principle means that teachers can take a nonjudgmental stance to conduct observation (Gebhard, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   As previously discussed, a nonjudgmental stance not only broadens the scope of observing teachers but also enhances the chance for them and observed teachers to discover new aspects of teaching and classroom interactions.   The second principle means that rather than seeking prescriptiveness, teachers can aim at descriptiveness in observation.   In order to discover new aspects of teaching and classroom interactions, it is recommended that teachers start with describing what is going on in class and study the descriptions later. In relation to Labov's (1972) concept of the observer's paradox, the third principle suggests that teachers carefully examine observers' (or supervisors') role (cf., Bailey et

60

al., 2001; Gebhard, 1984).   In this regard, Freeman (1982) proposes three approaches

to teacher observation: supervisory approach, alternative approach, and non-directive

approach.   Gebhard (1984) also advocates five models: directive supervision,

alternative supervision, collaborative supervision, nondirective supervision, creative

supervision; he later adds self-help-explorative supervision to these models (Gebhard,

1990b).   Gebhard (1984, 1990b) shows that there are various types of observation or

supervision models and claims that the observer's (or supervisor's) role affects the

observed teachers' development process.   Both Freeman (1982) and Gebhard (1984,

1990b) indicate that observed (or supervised) teachers' needs can be taken into

consideration when a model or an approach is to be chosen.   Thus, especially when

observation is done for the purpose of cooperative/collaborative development, the

observer or supervisor is advised to take into account ones' role in terms of

prescriptiveness (see Edge, 1992; Wajnryb, 1992).

The fourth principle indicates that observation needs to include the process of

teacher's analysis and interpretation (cf., Fanselow, 1988; Gebhard, 1996, 2006;

Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   As the second principle shows, the teacher can describe

what is going on in or outside of class, but simply describing teaching in context is not

sufficient for professional development.   Observing teaching for developmental

purposes can incorporate such phases as analysis and interpretation of the observed

teaching behaviors and interactions.   Otherwise, the teacher may not be able to gain

awareness of teaching.   To put it differently, the teacher needs to inscribe as well as to describe what is being observed (cf., Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) so that they can go through the interpretive process of giving "meaning to the observed descriptions of teaching and classroom interaction" (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p. 36).

There are two types of observation that can lead to awareness of teaching beliefs and practices: self-observation and peer observation.   Let us begin with self-observation.   Gebhard (1996, 2006) states that teachers can use a cyclical process of self-observation to explore their teaching and build awareness.   Based on Gebhard (2006), I present the schematic representation of this cyclical process in Figure 2.

Teach and Collect
Samples of Teaching
Audio or videotape
teaching.

Analyze Interaction
Listen to/view tape and
analyze teaching to
look for patterns.

Teachers' exploration
outside this cyclical process
of self-observation is
encouraged to further gain
awareness of teaching.

Generate Changes
Make decisions on
changes in teaching
behaviors.

Reflection and
Interpretation
Reflect on teaching,
asking interpretative
questions.

Figure 2. A cyclical process of self-observation (adapted from Gebhard, 2006).

Firstly, the teacher starts collecting samples of teaching, using some devices such as an audio or video recorder; the teacher then analyzes the observed teaching and interactions on the tape, while taking notes, tallying, or coding with a category system (e.g., FOCUS developed by Fanselow, 1977, 1987).   After studying the observed behaviors and interactions, the teacher asks interpretative questions, e.g., "Why do I teach the way I do?" (Gebhard, 1996, p. 22; see also Gebhard, 2005b, 2006).   The teacher then decides on changes in teaching behaviors.   The teacher can plan a calculated change, plan to try the opposite, plan to adapt a random change, or plan not to change anything (Gebhard, 2006).   This final phase of the decision-making process brings the teacher back again to the first phase of the sample collection.

In Figure 2, I also mention that the teacher's exploration is recommended outside of the cyclical process of self-observation to further gain awareness, meaning that the teacher can refer to or read journal articles and books to consider theory and research in different fields or attempt to seek one's teaching self (Gebhard, 2006).   Such exercises enable the teacher to explore teaching beliefs and practices further, in that the teacher can examine one's observed teaching from different angles (Fanselow, 1988). What should also be noticed in the cyclical process of the teacher exploration through self-observation are: (a) exploratory (both descriptive and interpretative) questions are asked throughout the process to help the teacher raise awareness; and (b) depending upon what is focused in the observation process, the teacher can select the use of tools,

6 4

for instance, an audiotape or a category system.

Observing teaching ideally includes the process of seeing and describing teaching objectively with a non-prescriptive, non-selective stance (Fanselow, 1977, 1987).   As Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) point out, however, we are selective in nature. Fanselow (1988) mentions that what we see is not exactly what takes place; what we see is, in fact, what we value as important to see.   In addition, we tend to prescribe rather than describe what we see or listen to.   In this regard, the use of audiotapes, videotapes, tally sheets (e.g., Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Wallace, 1998), observation checklists (e.g., Gebhard, 1996, 2006), or observation instruments (e.g., FOCUS: Foci for Observing Communications Used in Settings) can help us capture what we are likely to miss when we try to describe teaching on the spot (cf., Day, 1990; Fanselow, 1987; Gebhard, 1996, 2006; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Spada, 1990).   Let us discuss what types of observation instruments are available.

FOCUS, a descriptive observation category system, was developed by John F. Fanselow (see Fanselow, 1977, 1987).   Because we can use a common descriptive language (i.e., categorical terms as opposed to evaluative, judgmental terms) to describe classroom interactions and teaching behaviors, the use of the category system allows teachers to be nonjudgmental (i.e., descriptive) (Bailey et al., 2001; Fanselow, 1987; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   The use of FOCUS to explore teaching can be found in the report of Gebhard and Ueda-Motonaga (1992).

According to their report, teacher's exploration generated change in communicative interactions among American college students in her Japanese language class. Akiko was a Japanese teacher that was teaching a Japanese language class to American university students. Because she was interested in exploring her teaching to discover patterns in her teaching behavior, she audio-taped short segments of her teaching along with class interactions. Subsequently, she transcribed and analyzed them to look for patterns, exploring her teaching beliefs and practices. Her observation and analysis with the use of FOCUS revealed certain patterns: (a) Akiko's teaching was mostly based on drills and hence somewhat routinized; (b) most class interactions (i.e., verbal interactions) were initiated by her questioning, and her students did not have sufficient opportunities to initiate verbal interactions; (c) her question types were mostly limited to display questions, meaning that she mostly asked questions to which she knew answers; and (d) her students were not given ample chance to use the target language (i.e., Japanese) in class for communication purposes. On the basis of these findings, Akiko decided to make a small change.

Akiko tried asking personal as well as general questions about her students' lives so that her students needed to use Japanese to explain or describe their lives. She also brought a map to her class to promote her students' verbal interactions with one another. Consequently, she discovered that when different types of questions were

asked, coupled with a topic interesting to the students and visual aids (e.g., a map), the

students used the target language more frequently, reacted to one another's comments,

and asked more questions.   All of these discoveries were possible because Akiko

could explore her teaching practice and beliefs in a systematic way with the use of

FOCUS.   Thus, Gebhard and Ueda-Motonaga (1992) indicate that teachers can gain

awareness of teaching and explore their beliefs about language learning and teaching

through the use of FOCUS.

In addition to FOCUS, there are other observation instruments that teachers can

use to explore their teaching beliefs and practices.   COLT (i.e., Communicative

Orientation of Language Teaching) and its use for studying six different instructional

programs can be found in the report of Spada (1990).   This report is about the

application of COLT to process- and product- oriented research.   By using COLT to

describe and code instructional activities, qualitative as well as quantitative differences

of instructions were observed among the six instructional programs.   The use of

SCORE (i.e., Seating Chart Observation REcords) in observation is discussed in the

report of Day (1996).   SCORE was used to describe and code students' as well as

teacher's movements during a lesson.   There are two other observation instruments

available for teachers: TALOS (i.e., Target Language Observation Scheme) developed

for recording language actions among teachers and students (cf., Malamah, 1987) and

FSIA (i.e., Flanders System of Interaction Analysis) developed for identifying the

contents of teachers' as well as students' talks (Flanders, 1974).   All these instruments

are useful for teachers not only to conduct observation systematically but also to

explore their teaching beliefs and practices efficiently, in that as previously indicated,

these instruments enable teachers to focus on specific aspects of teaching or classroom

interactions and identify beliefs about language learning and teaching for further

clarification (Fanselow, 1988).

Mastering even one specific observation scheme might be time-consuming for

busy teachers.   It is, however, a worthwhile effort in spending the time to do so.   Once

teachers get used to an observation scheme, they can observe their own teaching,

identify some hidden patterns in their teaching, and learn what and how they would like

to change in teaching behaviors, focusing their attention on the descriptive aspect of the

observation process (cf., Fanselow, 1987).   Most importantly, teachers can gain

awareness of teaching beliefs and practices in a systematic way.   Furthermore, as

Freeman (1998) implies, observation instruments are very helpful for teachers, for both

teacher development and research purposes.

In addition to self-observation, teachers can gain awareness of their teaching

beliefs and practices through peer observation.   The value of peer observation, as

Fanselow (1988) makes clear, is that teachers can see their own teaching in the

teaching of others.   By observing peer's teaching, teachers can engage in knowledge

(re-)construction processes; this further implies that teachers can (re-)construct their

teaching beliefs through peer observation.

When peer observation is to be done, observed teachers as well as observing teachers (or "visiting teachers" in Fanselow's term) are advised to consider whether their freedom is secured for their exploratory learning.   This is because as we have discussed, we tend to be evaluative or prescriptive when we observe, transcribe, and give comments on someone else's teaching.   Thus, especially the first three of the aforementioned four principles can be checked by both observed and observing teachers.   It should be mentioned here that as Gebhard (1996, 2006) and Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) indicate, the cyclical process of self-observation can also be applied to peer observation (cf., Bailey et al*.,* 2001).   To exemplify this, let us discuss an example of peer observation reported by Gebhard (2006).

Gebhard's (2006) report was about his own experience in observing and audio-taping his peer's teaching.   The observed teacher was interested in error treatment and wanted to gain more awareness of how she treated students' errors in class.   After the observation, they met to talk about the observed teaching, listening to the tape together.   They discovered that the observed teacher used rising intonation or questions to correct her students' errors.   For instance, she used sentences such as "Two sisters?" or "She died when you were three?" while emphasizing the word she was correcting.   Thus, most of the time, her students did not notice that their errors were corrected.   Accordingly, the observed teacher decided to treat errors in such a way that

her students could recognize.   She also studied about error treatment and

subsequently came up with alternative ways to treat errors.   It was reported that both

teachers could gain awareness of teaching.   Through this peer observation experience,

the observing teacher also had the chance to reflect on his own beliefs and techniques

for treating errors.   The observing teacher could see his teaching in his peer's teaching.

In other words, both the observed and observing teachers could benefit from their

experience of peer observation.

Action Research

Another way teachers can gain awareness of their teaching beliefs and practices

is by doing action research.   Kurt Lewin has been credited with the development and

the early conceptualization of action research (e.g., Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).

Action research is a method of inquiry originally designed for generating practical

theories to solve social issues and problems such as alcohol/drug abuse, discrimination,

and social conflict (cf., Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).   In

the TESOL field, action research is broadly defined as "a form of self-reflective inquiry

carried out by practitioners, aimed at solving problems, improving practice, or

enhancing understanding" (Nunan, 1989, p. 2; see also Richards & Farrell, 2005).   A

collaborative form of action research is also discussed, for instance, by Burns (1996,

1999), Carr and Kemmis (1986), Cohen et al. (2000), and Wallace (1998).

As Nunan (1990) argues, action research is not aimed at "obtaining generalizable scientific knowledge" (p. 63). Rather, it is aimed at obtaining context-specific knowledge that is suitable for evaluation purposes. Nunan also claims that action research is collaborative and self-evaluative and hence useful for teacher development. Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) add that for the purpose of teacher development, reflection and collaboration are crucial in action research. Furthermore, action research is not a linear-process of research inquiry. It entails a cyclical, nonlinear process (cf., Car & Kemmis, 1986; Gebhard, 2002; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982; Wallace, 1998). Figure 3 shows the schematic representation of the entire process of action research based on Gebhard (2002, 2005a).

Reflecting on the Observation
Sense-making is done about the process and product of action.

Setting (or Re-Setting) a Goal
Issues or problems are identified and posed.

Teachers' exploration outside this cyclical process of action research is encouraged to further gain awareness of teaching.

Observing the Action
Observed action is described and analyzed.

Planning an Action
Predictions are made; a plan for data collection and analysis is developed.

Acting on the Plan
Actual plan is deliberately implemented in practice.

Figure 3.   A cyclical process of action research (adapted from Gebhard, 2002, 2005a).

Action research has been widely used in the TESOL field for both research and teacher-development purposes.   Previously published research reports show that the use of action research may encourage teachers to engage in curriculum development and innovation (Nunan, 1990).   Action research combined with other educational practices help teachers link together theory and practice (Corey, 1949, 1953; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982; Murphey, 2000; Wallace, 1998).   The possibility of action research can extend to social change (i.e., educational reform) (Burns, 1996, 1999).   In addition, Stewart (2001) reports on the application of action research to allow language learners, as well as instructors, to explore methodologies.   In the application of action research to teacher development, however, there is one important point that teachers should consider: action research can limit teachers from gaining awareness (Gebhard, 2005a; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).

Since a prime focus is put on problem-solving, action research conducted merely for the purpose of problem-solving generates nothing more than practical knowledge (cf., Nunan, 1990).   Exploring teaching does include more than problem-posing and solving (Fanselow, 1987, 1988; Gebhard, 2002, 2005a; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Stewart, 2001; refer to Figure 3).   Gebhard (2005a) also asserts that even though action research is considered to be a cyclical, nonlinear process, this process is likely to become linear when teachers routinize their action and excessively focus their attention on problem-solving.   Teachers are thus encouraged to look outside the cyclical process

of problem-solving by: (a) exploring teaching simply to see what happens by trying the opposite of what they normally do (cf., Fanselow, 1987, 1997); (b) exploring to see what they actually do as opposed to what they think they do, and what they believe in relation to what they do (Gebhard, 2005b; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999); and (c) exploring the affective sides of teaching so as to clarify how they feel about their teaching (Oprandy, 1999).

Teaching Journals

Teaching journals provide yet another way for teachers to become aware of their teaching beliefs, and this particular way of processing teaching is especially pertinent to my research agenda. With this in mind, let us begin with defining "journal."

Both the word "journal" and the word "journey" come from the same Latin root, *diurna,* for "daily portion." Jotting one's thoughts on bits of paper, keeping a spiral notebook in a breast pocket, writing letters or e-mailing friends, or investing in disciplined daily writing are all ways of marking our daily journey. (Collay et al., 1998, p. 72)

Successful teacher learning and development necessarily entails the process of reflection and exploration by teachers themselves. Because "the act of writing begins a reflective, analytic process that helps the writer view teaching more clearly" (Bailey et al., 2001, p. 48), keeping a teaching journal has been regarded as an effective

exploratory activity to empower both pre- and inservice teachers in the TESOL field

(Nagamine, 2004; Richards et al., 2001).   By keeping a teaching journal, the teacher

can look for hidden variables, patterns, and routinized behaviors in teaching settings (cf.,

Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 1998; Bailey et al., 2001; Brock, Yu, & Wong, 1992; Gebhard,

1996, 2006; McDonough, 1994; Richards & Lockhart, 1996) and "gain insights into the

process of teacher development" (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2004, p. 178).   In addition,

journaling in combination with observation can also be incorporated into the previously

discussed action research not only as a recording tool of teachers' thoughts, ideas, and

practices but also as a tool to stimulate reflection.   (See Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard &

Oprandy, 1999; Richards et al., 2001.)   As such, Bailey (1990) and Bailey et al. (1998,

2001) emphasize that a primary benefit of keeping journals is teachers' personal

development and insights about teaching.

        According to Gebhard and Oprandy (1999), there are at least two types of

teaching journals: an *intrapersonal journal* and a *dialogue journal*.   Bailey et al. (2001)

further classify a dialogue journal into few alternative forms: a *collaborative teaching*

journal and an *interactive group journal.*   An intrapersonal journal, unlike other types of

journals, enables a teacher to be the writer and the audience at the same time and

hence, one does not need to worry about grammar, style, or content.   In other words,

the focus can be placed on obtaining a personal account of one's feelings and thoughts

(Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).

On the other hand, a dialogue journal (i.e., a collaborative teaching journal and an

interactive group journal) includes "outside audiences" (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p.

82) who offer feedback or responses to each journal entry.   Accordingly, such textual

interactions (or discourse practice) as sharing experiences, feelings, and thoughts with

the audiences come into play in the journaling process, which, in turn, enables teachers

to develop a collaborative or cooperative teacher-learning community.   (See Brinton &

Holten, 1989; Brock, Yu, & Wong, 1992; Cole, Raffier, Rogan, & Schleicher, 1998;

Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Holten & Brinton, 1995; Jones & Putney, 1991; Matsuda &

Matsuda, 2004; Schneider, 1991.)   Furthermore, collaborative journaling with

preservice teachers enables teacher-educators to monitor their development and

provide formative responses to support them and facilitate their learning process (e.g.,

Brinton, Holten, & Goodwin, 1993; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Porter, Goldstein,

Leatherman, & Conrad, 1990).

As for the use of a teaching journal in a teacher education program, Jarvis (1992)

reports relevant findings to my study.   That is, the use of a journal helps both pre- and

inservice teachers studying in a teacher education program to become reflective

professionals.   Her study indicates that by incorporating journaling (i.e., "learning

record" in her term) into coursework activities, preservice teachers can reflect on their

learning and teaching in the light of their coursework in education programs (cf.,

Johnston, 2000; Richards, 1998).   Golombek (2000) and Holly (1989) also report that

the practice of writing or journaling acts as a catalyst for theorizing, which, in turn, facilitates teacher learning.

McDonough (1994) claims that a teaching journal can function as an instrument of a real insider through which one can obtain a rich source of data.   Thus, preservice teachers can utilize such qualitative data for self-evaluation or qualitative content analysis of recurring themes.   McDonough's study implies that by means of the instrument of a real insider, preservice teachers can generate questions and hypotheses about their learning and teaching by themselves to explore their teaching beliefs and practices.   This implication is supported by Golombek (2000) and Holly (1989) who claim that observation, self-analysis, and self-direction through journaling enable teachers to build the voice and confidence needed to study themselves, their colleagues, and their profession.   Thus, when preservice teachers share journal entries with one another, and some appropriate guidelines are given to them in advance, we can expect them to grow into autonomous teachers.   In addition, a teaching journal can also function as a place where a teacher can celebrate discoveries and successes (Bailey, 1990; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999) as well as carefully look into "the affective aspects of being a teacher, including what annoys, disconcerts, frustrates, encourages, influences, motivates, and inspires" the teacher (Gebhard, 1999, p. 79).   Thus, we might be able to expect, as I did for my study, that preservice teachers build a community where they can share their experiences, feelings, and thoughts with one

another.

Numrich (1996) reports on the development of preservice teachers and the use of journaling to explore their beliefs about language learning – the prime research agenda in my study. In Numrich's study, the journals of twenty-six preservice teachers were examined. All of the participants were native speakers of English and enrolled in the M.A. program in TESOL. The participants were asked to keep diaries for a ten week practicum period. They wrote personal language learning history and analyses of journal entries. Relevant to my dissertation goals, Numrich's study provided much insight into preservice teachers' learning processes to teach and the processes of their coping with problems or difficulties they may encounter during their study in a teacher education program. The study also indicates that the journaling and associated sense-making process may generate change in their perceptions, behaviors, and actions, and that journaling can facilitate preservice teachers' learning if they read and analyze journal entries to seek "recurrent cultural themes" (p. 148; see also Bailey, 1990; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005).

Whether a teacher decides to keep a teaching journal alone or collaboratively with other teachers, there is a crucial point that one needs to take into consideration. That is, as I discussed in the previous subsections on observation and action research, the process of interpretive analysis should be integrated into the process of keeping a teaching journal (Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Analyzing and

studying journal entries is usually considered to be a research process of diary studies,

"first-person case studies --- a research genre defined by the data collection

procedures" (Bailey, 1991, p. 60).   It is, however, recommended for teachers to engage

themselves in the sense-making process based on journal entries for professional

growth (Bailey, 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   Gebhard and Oprandy (1999)

assert that it is beneficial for teachers to analyze journal entries carefully and think of as

many ways of interpreting the same written content as possible.   Gebhard and

Nagamine (2005) also demonstrate the importance of such exploratory exercises for

collaborative professional development (cf., Fanselow, 1988).

Based primarily on Bailey et al. (2001) and Gebhard (1999), the process of

keeping a teaching journal can be summarized as follows.   As can be seen, there are

five general stages (cf., Bailey & Ochsner, 1983).

> (1)   A teacher provides a personal account of one's language learning and
>
> teaching history.   In relation to Lortie's (1975) concept of *the*
>
> *apprenticeship of observation*, examining one's language learning
>
> experiences gives many insights into one's beliefs about language
>
> learning and teaching.   Usually, teachers do not know how their
>
> language learning experiences have influenced the way they teach (cf.,
>
> Holly, 1989).   This step is usually done in the form of autobiographies.
>
> (See Bailey et al., 1996; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Johnson, 1999.)

(2)   The teacher records events, details, and feelings about language-related

         experiences (both learning and teaching experiences) in the journal.   At

         the same time, on-going analysis (i.e., sense-making) of previous journal

         entries as well as descriptions of new events should be included (cf.,

         Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).   Bailey (1990) adds that

         while writing journal entries, careful reflection is needed to stimulate

         some additional insights for future entries.

(3)   The teacher revises the journal entries so as to clarify meaning in each

         journal entry.   This step is important especially when one tries to make

         the journal available to a public audience later (see Bailey et al., 2001).

(4)   The teacher reads and rereads the journal so as to look for patterns and

         salient events (Bailey, 1990) and add interpretations.   (See Fanselow,

         1988; Gebhard, 2005b; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999.)   If the journal is

         kept collaboratively, it is advised to discuss journal entries with other

         diary-keepers to stimulate further reflection and interpretation (e.g.,

         Yahya, 2000; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005).   If the journal is

         intrapersonal, outside readers (researchers) may analyze the journal

         entries at this stage (Bailey et al., 2001).

(5)   The teacher produces a write-up about the entire journaling process,

         reflecting on findings through the interpretive analysis of the journal

entries.　Bailey et al. (2001) recommend that the teacher add some ideas from the pedagogy literature available in the TESOL field.

The above journaling procedure shows how one can proceed with journaling, but what should be written or included in journal entries is not clear.　Thus, let us now discuss the content of journal entries.

In their study, Ho and Richards (1993) identified five predominant topics in teachers' journal entries: (a) teaching theories; (b) methods and approaches actually used in practice; (c) teaching evaluations; (d) their own strengths and weaknesses; and (e) the seeking of advice or explanations.　Similarly, McDonough (1994) found that five major themes emerged in four teachers' journal entries: (a) personal reflections on class dynamics; (b) feelings about students' behaviors (c) reflections on classroom implementations; (d) students' learning styles and strategies; and (e) some reflections on teaching methodologies.　Regarding McDonough's themes, Gebhard and Nagamine (2005) also reported on similar themes, integrating two different teachers' perspectives (i.e., a co-operating teacher and an intern).　Although teachers can choose such previously identified themes to write about in their journal entries, Gebhard (1999) suggests that they select any topics or issues.　That is, teachers can write as their writing manifests their stream of consciousness.

There should be some guidelines, however, especially for preservice teachers who do not have sufficient teaching experiences.　Inexperienced teachers, compared

8 1

to experienced teachers, have a specific tendency in terms of topics and issues they are likely to bring up in journal entries (cf., Numrich, 1996). Gebhard (1999) points out that topics and questions typically brought up in journal entries are different according to teachers' teaching experiences. Berliner (1986), Brinton and Holten (1989), Fuller (1969), Fuller and Brown (1975), Numrich (1996), and Richards and Ho (1998) all report similar findings. Inexperienced teachers, for instance, tend to focus on methodological issues in teaching and problem-solving issues. In addition, preservice teachers tend to bring up concerns about classroom atmosphere. This is not to say, however, that experienced teachers can always raise better topics and questions than inexperienced teachers; there are practically no better or worse topics or issues. What is important in keeping journals is whether or not teachers actually reflect on their teaching, events, ideas, thoughts, etc., in such a way that they explore beliefs and practices and develop awareness of teaching. This point may be exemplified in Ho and Richards' (1993) study on teaching journals.

According to Ho and Richards (1993), among their 483 coded topics identified in teachers' journal entries, only 4 percent (i.e., 20 topics) fell into the category of self-awareness. This implies that simply writing journal entries does not always mean that teachers reflect on their teaching so as to gain awareness of teaching (cf., Bailey et al., 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Richards & Ho, 1998). In order to make the journaling experience meaningful, teachers' sense-making process is vital. Otherwise,

teachers cannot gain awareness of teaching and hence, they are likely to fail in the examination of their beliefs about language learning and teaching (Nagamine, 2004).

Jarvis (1992) discusses the use of journals to help teachers become reflective professionals.   She claims that there are three types of reflection: solving problems, visualizing new teaching ideas, and legitimizing own practice.   All of these types of reflection are crucial when teachers read and analyze teaching journal entries.   She sees entries about keeping a journal itself as reflection and implies the possibility to include such metacomments in journal entries (cf., McDonough, 1994).   She also identifies such problematic entries as listing and general summaries.   Merely listing facts or summarizing facts does not stimulate teachers' reflection.   Thus, as Jarvis mentions, exemplification is one way to write entries reflectively because the use of an example or anecdote of one's own implies that the writer relates ideas to practice.

To enrich the content of journal entries for later analyses and interpretations, it is useful for teachers to set up reflection questions prior to journaling.   For example, Bailey et al. (2001, p. 54) suggest the following questions:

(1) What language learning experiences have you had and how successful have they been?   What are your criteria for judging success?

(2) If you were clearly representative of all language learners, what would someone learn about language learning from reading your autobiography?

(3) What can be learned about effective language teaching by reading your

autobiography?

As can be clearly seen, the example questions above are useful for preservice teachers at the initial stage of journaling, and I considered using some of the questions in my own study.

I also liked Yahya's (2000) use of reflection questions about teaching philosophy, teaching techniques, theories/research findings to which teachers relate their teaching methodology, and classroom implementations. Her reflection questions, adapted from those questions proposed by Richards and Lockhart (1995), include:

(1) What is your philosophy of teaching?

(2) What did you set out to teach?

(3) What techniques did you use?

(4) What theoretical underpinnings or research findings of SLA/SLL do you base your teaching methodology on?

(5) Is your philosophy of teaching reflected in your lesson?

In Yahya's study (2000), even though she listed a total of 15 reflection questions, she further suggested that her participants include their own questions and observations. Yahya's questions seem useful for teachers if they have some teaching experiences.

Gebhard (1999) also suggests the following questions:

(1) How can I make more effective use of students' time?

(2) How can I get students to take on more responsibility for their own learning?

(3) How can I identify the learning strategies students use?

(4) Can students master new strategies?

(5) What culture should I teach?   My own?   Or should I teach them to adapt to

any culture while using English?

What is obvious in the questions discussed so far is that these reflection questions do not have one absolute answer (see also Richards & Ho, 1998, for other reflection-question prototypes).   Answers may vary in accordance with individual teachers' cultural backgrounds, goals of teaching, and teaching and/or learning experiences; there are many ways of answering those reflection questions.   Thus, these questions are exploratory in nature with which teachers can explore their own understanding, ideas, thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, or experiences.

Regarding inexperienced or preservice teachers, Gebhard (1999) suggests that they write "about what exploration is and some of the issues related to exploration" (p. 89) because such writing activities certainly broaden their views and provoke their thoughts.   Furthermore, Ho and Richards (1993) and Richards and Ho (1998) imply that exploratory, reflection questions should be provided for teachers, and that the teachers should be given some instructions on what they should write as well as how they should write journal entries so as to enhance the level of reflectivity in the process of journaling.   In my study, however, I did not provide any prescribed instructions about how the participants should proceed with collaborative journaling.   Rather, I provided

minimal guidelines that they could refer to in the process of journaling.

Incorporating Collaborative Journaling into the Present Study

The following literature review deals with such pertinent themes as collaborative journaling, preservice teachers, Japanese EFL contexts, and some methodological issues.   This section is to legitimize the application of collaborative journaling to the present study.

Preservice Teachers and Collaborative Journaling

Regarding the use of a collaborative journal, Jones and Putney (1991) report some possible benefits for both pre- and inservice teachers.   Based on their experiences researching collaborative journals and interviewing ESL teachers, they claim that the primary function of collaborative journals is similar to the understanding and listening role of teachers in Community Language Learning.   That is, collaborative journaling creates a place where teachers and/or learners discuss some problems or difficulties, listening to one another sincerely and sympathetically.   They further imply that once actual problems or difficulties are addressed in collaborative journals, some appropriate action might be taken to solve them, cope with them, and change the status quo.   (See Brinton et al., 1993; Gebhard, 2005a; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Porter et al., 1990; Schneider, 1991.)

Brinton and Holten's (1989) study is also pertinent to this study. They report on a preliminary study on the use of collaborative journals for teachers studying in a teacher training program. Their study was conducted in a teaching practicum at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Collaborative journals were used to investigate the process of change in native- and nonnative-novice teachers' perceptions. Journal entries were exchanged between the native- and nonnative-novice teachers and the course supervisor for ten weeks and subsequently, all journal entries were examined and compared between native- and nonnative novice teachers.

Because Brinton and Holten's study was quantitative, there were such limitations as the lack of detailed accounts about the development process of the participants. It is, however, worthwhile to pay attention to some research findings here. Firstly, novice teachers' perceptional change was observed in journal entries during the practicum: the number of journal entries in the category of self-awareness, for instance, slightly increased in the middle of the practicum period. In addition, throughout the practicum, the novice teachers mainly wrote entries that fell into the categories of methods and activities, techniques, and lesson organization (cf., Gebhard, 1999; Ho & Richards, 1993; Numrich, 1996; Richards & Ho, 1998). Furthermore, the quantitative analysis of the journal entries revealed that although the novice teachers experienced observations and discussions of teaching, the observed pattern of their comments in the journal entries did not dramatically change during the practicum period. According to their

report, it might be generalized that novice teachers tend to focus on methods or techniques, and that even though they try to define themselves as teachers, they are likely to fail.

The same authors, Holten and Brinton (1995), report on the other diary study. This time, they employed a qualitative approach to the data analysis. Three novice teachers, enrolled in the TESOL program at UCLA, took part in the study. The participants were all M.A. students with fewer than two years of teaching experience. They were asked to keep a collaborative journal during the practicum. Since the data analysis was conducted qualitatively, the detailed accounts of the development process were available (cf., Brinton & Holten, 1989). Moreover, since the term of their study accommodated the participants' practicum period as did my study, some of their research findings were relevant to the present study.

Holten and Brinton discussed the growth process of Luke, who was placed in a high intermediate adult ESL. He went through the difficult process of defining his teacher persona. At the beginning of the practicum, he implied in his journal entry that he did not consider creative methods or material as important as defining his persona as a teacher. This starting point was crucial, in that he could explore who he was as a teacher, one of the important goals of the practicum. However, after comparing his idealized vision of the teacher with his mentor teacher and failing to realize his ideal teacher model, he got frustrated at the end of the practicum and wrote in his final journal

entry that he needed to learn some conventional techniques or methods to become a

creative, innovative teacher as he had initially idealized.

The other participant, Kay, who was placed in a beginning-level ESL class implied

in her journal entry that her focus was on acquiring specific techniques to improve her

teaching.   Thus, she was also concerned about techniques or methods as was Luke.

She analyzed and evaluated her lessons in terms of teaching styles and techniques in

comparison with her mentor teacher.   With some supervisor's helpful comments, then,

she could show some progress in defining her pedagogical objectives at the end of the

practicum.   It is interesting to see that she used very descriptive language to talk about

teaching in her early journal entries.   As she proceeded with the journaling and

discussions about teaching, she found a personal code of teaching.

Finally, the third participant, Sigrid, was situated in a beginning-level adult ESL

class.   She showed a similar growth pattern to the other two participants.   In early

journal entries, she expressed her concerns regarding classroom management skills.

She was not able to draw students' attention and change her language effectively.   The

authors argue that Sigrid was very similar to Kay in that Sigrid also tended to evaluate

her own teaching comparing it with that of her mentor teacher, and that Sigrid's growth

pattern was also similar to Luke because both of them struggled in the process of

defining themselves as teachers.

In sum, their qualitative analysis of the collaborative journal entries revealed that

the participants all returned to where they first started the practicum, but they did so with perspectives to see their teaching and themselves differently.   Qualitative studies on collaborative journaling such as Holten and Brinton (1995) clearly depicted the growth patterns of pre- and inservice teachers.   Using a collaborative journal as a data-collection method in combination with other data-collection methods (i.e., interviews, stimulus recall protocol, etc.) enriched the quality of research findings (cf., Bailey, 1990; Brinton & Holten, 1989; Staton, Shuy, Peyton, & Reed, 1988).   Such qualitative research formed a justification for this qualitative research project.

      Another study relevant to this study was Brock et al. (1992).   Their article discussed three teachers' journaling experience, the process of keeping a collaborative journal, what kinds of effects the collaborative journaling had on the participants' professional growth, and some issues and problems they all shared in journal entries and follow-up discussion sessions.   Of the three teachers, one was an expatriate teacher who had taught at City Polytechnic for a year; the other two were local teachers who had a few years of teaching experience at City Polytechnic.   As in the other previously discussed studies (e.g., Brinton & Holten, 1989), the perceptional change was observed in the participants' journal entries.

      According to Brock et al., it was found that collaborative journaling helped the participants raise their awareness, that the participants were able to encourage and support one another through the collaborative journaling, and that they all could

indirectly observe and learn from one another's teaching practice from a safe distance in the process of collaborative journaling (cf., Bailey et al., 2001). They reported that because of the textual interactions (i.e., reading, responding to, and reflecting on some other teachers' journal entries), the collaborative journal functioned as a means of discovering teachers' blind selves by seeing themselves from different perspectives.

Yet another interesting study that was related to my study is Cole et al. (1998). Cole et al. advocated the idea of Interactive Group Journal (IGJ), an alternative form of collaborative journals (cf., Bailey et al., 2001). Their research project was theoretically and methodologically well supported. The idea of IGJ was linked with social constructivism and some concepts of social interaction and learning (e.g., Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and van Lier's multiple zones of proximal development). IGJ was also linked with the heuristic approach to learning. By linking their project with such theoretical concepts, they clarified differences between interpersonal journals and intrapersonal journals, demonstrating the potentials of the applications of collaborative journaling for teacher/professional development.

The authors were all M.A. students in the TESOL program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. They kept a collaborative journal and reported on their own journaling experience. Their use of collaborative journaling was slightly different from the cases previously discussed in this section. They used a computer diskette to exchange journal entries among seven preservice teachers (i.e., graduate

students) with a hard copy for possible technological problems.   They also decided that

each participant had to write at least once a week, considering the time they had to

spend for their academic work in the graduate program.   They kept IGJ for two

semesters.   They reported that IGJ functioned to build a professional community where

the participants could share ideas or opinions and help them learn professional

discourse and rhetoric efficiently.   In addition, IGJ played an important role in assisting

the participants to grow professionally.   According to their report, all the participants

became independent and autonomous learners, and they could develop some

confidence in learning through the journaling process.   Since IGJ was a collaborative,

interpersonal journal, they claimed that the negotiation among writers before starting

IGJ would be crucial if the idea of IGJ is applied to other contexts.   Some possible

applications of IGJ, claimed the authors, include the on-line use of IGJ and an electronic

academic discussion group that enable participants to keep a journal and interact with

the other participants despite geographic distance.

     In the study reported by Cole et al., the authors themselves were the participants

of the study.   They collaboratively used IGJ as a resource for professional work (i.e.,

planning research projects and publishing academic papers based on IGJ).   In fact,

their study stimulated other practitioners, including myself, to conduct similar diary

studies in the past (e.g., Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2004).

     Matsuda and Matsuda (2004) reported on their online journal project among four

graduate teaching assistants (i.e., two American and two Japanese), including the

authors (i.e., the Japanese) as participants.   The participants were all enrolled in a

practicum course in teaching ESL writing.   A weekly one-hour group meeting was

included in the practicum as a required activity.   The online journal project was

conducted during the practicum, but it was independent of the course requirements.

That is, the project was self-initiated to promote each participant's reflection on teaching

practices and to relate previous teaching experience to the knowledge of ESL and

composition theory (cf., Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005).

　　　Following Kamhi-Stein's (2000) claim that the use of e-mail may become a

facilitative tool for teachers to exchange ideas, thoughts, and insights, the participants

used emails for the journal exchange even though they initially started exchanging

hard-copy versions of journal entries.   This email exchange enabled the participants to

write and respond to each other frequently so that they could effectively preserve crucial

events or themes for later analysis (i.e., interpretive analysis).   Matsuda and Matsuda

reported that the collaborative journal fostered preservice teachers' autonomy in

learning and meaningful collaboration between nonnative- and native preservice

teachers for mutual development; this finding is in line with my own journaling

experience (Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005).   They stressed the importance of

negotiation among participants and teacher-educators starting the similar project prior to

and during the process of collaborative journaling so that they can avoid or solve

unforeseen problems (e.g., participants' conflict in terms of expectation and/or

miscommunication) in the process of collaborative work.

One of the predominant features of collaborative journaling is its textual

interactions or discourse practice manifested in journaling processes, which can be

seen as a communicative event between and among writers.   Thus, as Staton et al.

(1988) assert, researchers and teachers should be aware of the social nature of textual

interactions and investigate the communicative event from multiple perspectives.   The

study of Staton et al. exemplifies this point.   They conducted a large-scale research

project on the use of collaborative journals in educational settings, reflecting multiple

perspectives to collect and analyze data.   Their main goal for conducting the research

project was to understand the collaborative dialogue journals within the framework of

the classroom community (that they saw a social system) and the individual

relationships among community members (i.e., each student and the teacher).

They discussed the results of the research project, carefully analyzing twenty-six

preservice teachers' collaborative journals obtained from a sixth-grade classroom.

Besides the analysis of the collaborative journal entries, they interviewed the

participants as well.   Using the multiple methods of data collection and analysis (i.e.,

ethnographical analysis and linguistic analysis), they skillfully uncovered not only

cognitive interactions observed in the journaling entries but also social interactions

depicted in the process of collaborative journaling.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided a literature review as it relates to the present study. Focusing mostly on the primary theme of teachers' thinking and teacher learning, I discussed some theoretical conceptualizations that I drew upon to conduct this study.

The first section dealt with current approaches to ESL teacher education. I categorized current trends in accordance with primary features and developed subsections to elaborate on each feature. By so doing, I made an attempt to explain why these characteristics are predominant in the field of ESL teacher education. The second section provided a literature review on teachers' thinking and teacher learning. Teachers' knowledge, teachers' beliefs, teachers' decision making, and previous investigations on these themes were discussed in detail. In addition, I presented an operational definition of the term *teachers' beliefs* in order to clarify what exactly I attempted to understand through the present study.

From the third to the fifth section, I narrowed the focus from three major exploratory activities to one specific exploratory activity, a teaching journal. The third section thus discussed the major exploratory activities previously advocated for pre- and inservice teachers to gain awareness of teaching and develop as professionals. These three activities were observation, action research, and teaching journals. Discussing each activity, I illustrated that recent conceptualizations of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and decision making have been integrated into the exploratory

activities and activity procedures observed in the TESOL field.   In the fourth section, I

discussed the applicability of collaborative journaling to the present study, examining

what it means for preservice teachers to keep a collaborative teaching journal.   This

final section was to provide a rationale for conducting the present study in a Japanese

EFL context.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses my background (as a researcher) as well as methodological issues.   I clarify what set of fundamental beliefs or metaphysics I drew upon in terms of research methodology.   In the first section of this chapter, I discuss a qualitative design, elucidating some rationales (i.e., my epistemological and ontological stance) underlying my decisions.   Because of the nature of qualitative research, the research design of this study was, to some extent, flexible and emergent.   In the second section, I discuss why this study employed a case-study approach.   In the third and the fourth sections, I describe the participants and the selection procedure.   In the fifth section, I explain the types of methods I used for data collection and how I utilized them.   In the sixth section, I discuss data-analysis and triangulation procedures and validity issues.   I also touch upon ethical issues in the last section.

Qualitative Research Design

According to Maxwell (1996), there are five major research purposes that are typically found in qualitative studies: (a) to understand meaning(s); (b) to understand a particular context; (c) to identify unanticipated phenomena and influences; (d) to understand processes; and (e) to develop causal explanations.   Following Maxwell's

descriptions of each purpose, I discuss my purposes to justify my selection of a

qualitative research design.

Firstly, the primary goal of the study was to know what it meant for the participants

to learn how to teach through collaborative journaling and what it possibly meant for the

participants to change (or not to change) during their enrollment in an EFL teacher

education program in Japan (not to mention, this was restricted to the term of the

investigation).   For this research purpose, I entered the participants' community and

had access to participants' (insiders') perspectives and interpretations.   Since "the

focus on meaning is central" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 17) to qualitative inquiry, a qualitative

research design was considered to be the optimum choice for my study.

Secondly, I regarded conducting research in context vital, especially for the

investigation of teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching.   This is

because teacher learning takes place in context.   Not taking into account contextual

factors would be detrimental, especially when the researcher tries to understand

particular events or behaviors, the influences of phenomenon on the participants, and

participants' interpretations.   Since contextualization is an important element of

qualitative research methodology, a qualitative research design was selected for this

study to investigate preservice EFL teachers' cognitive, as well as affective, aspects of

teacher learning deeply situated in context.

Thirdly, prior to this investigation, I did not have hypotheses or theories on which I

could base my research.   Because of the aforementioned dearth of research on EFL

teacher development and preservice EFL teachers' developmental processes, there

was no *a priori* theory on which I could deductively formulate hypotheses to test

(Eisenhardt, 2002).   In addition, I could not foresee the results of participants' (i.e.,

preservice EFL teachers') learning.   Thus, I speculated that a deductive,

hypothesis-testing research design would not work well in my research inquiry.

Accordingly, I decided to leave any contextual factors or variables intact and investigate

them as they naturally were.   In general, it is regarded as a crucial research process of

naturalistic inquiry (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) to identify and understand

unanticipated phenomena and influences in an intact, natural setting.   As such, I chose

a qualitative research design, which is inductive, exploratory (Maxwell, 1996), and

hypothesis- or theory-generating (Eisenhardt, 2002; Merriam, 2001) and natural (see

Erlandson et al., 1993).

Fourthly, this study focused on the processes rather than the products of

preservice EFL teachers' development.   That is, this study was intended to understand

the process in depth rather than to discover some cause-and-effect relationships among

artificially controlled variables (cf., Maxwell, 2002).   In addition, to understand the

processes of preservice EFL teachers' development in depth, contextualization was

indispensable.   Therefore, I assumed that a qualitative research design, which is

basically considered process-based, was more suitable than a product-based research

design as seen in traditional research paradigm (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Case-Study Approach

My study employed a case-study approach because of the nature of the research problem and questions (i.e., descriptive, particularistic, and heuristic). My definition of the term *case* was "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there [were] boundaries" (Merriam, 2001, p. 27). That is, a case in my study was a preservice EFL teacher learning to teach in an EFL teacher education program in Japan. Because teacher learning takes place in context, the phenomena, a preservice EFL teacher's learning, was also viewed as a "bounded system" (Merriam, 2001, p. 27). As we can see in other types of qualitative research, a qualitative case study requires the researcher to collect and analyze "multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 1998, p. 62) so that "holistic description and explanation" are available (Merriam, 2001, p. 29). Thus, I investigated a particular case, taking a holistic view of the bounded system (Merriam, 2001) on the basis of such multiple data sources as a questionnaire, observations, interviews, journals, and documents (cf., Creswell, 1998).

Participants and Selection Procedure

Participants in my study were four Japanese undergraduate students (two males and two females) enrolled in an EFL teacher education program at EMU. They were to

take a Teaching Practicum course offered in the EFL teacher education program.

Because this study was a small-scale study which incorporated a total of four cases, my

purpose was not "generalization in a statistical sense" (Merriam, 2001, p. 61) (cf.,

Maxwell, 2002).   Thus, rather than using probability sampling or random sampling, I

applied purposeful sampling to select the participants.   (See Creswell, 1998;

Eisenhardt, 2002; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 2001.)

By using purposeful sampling, I expected to increase the opportunity "to identify

emerging themes" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 82) embedded in context, to select

"information-rich cases" (Patton, 1990, p. 169), and to achieve typicality or

representativeness of the Japanese EFL setting and preservice teachers in an EFL

teacher education program.   My purposeful sampling included a criterion sampling

strategy for "quality assurance" (Creswell, 1998, p. 119).   I used two criteria to select

participants: (a) all participants were senior students who have completed English

Teaching Methods I & II; and (b) all participants have a plan to become English teachers

after the completion of an EFL teacher education program.

Regarding criterion (a), in order for EMU students to start their practicum, they are

supposed to have completed Teaching Methods I & II.   As for criterion (b), in EFL

teacher education programs in Japan, there are many students who do not plan to

become English teachers after graduation.   Such students complete their programs

only to obtain a teaching certificate and make their resumes look appealing.   In

addition, they do not take an employment examination annually held by a prefectural

board of education.   To avoid the possibility of including such students with low

motivation for professional teacher development, I used the criterion (b).   By so doing, I

speculated that I could avoid unmotivated students who might withdraw from the study

in the middle of the investigation.   In order to minimize such risks, I carefully examined

whether or not participants took an employment examination.

Researcher Role and Experience

My role in this study was primarily that of a participant-observer.   Depending on

the relationship between the researcher and participants, the researcher's role as an

observer can be classified into four types: complete observer, observer-participant,

participant-observer, and complete participant (Erlandson et al., 1993).   To an

observer-participant, the researcher's primary role is an information gatherer; the

researcher's participation is secondary to this role.   On the other hand, in the mode of

participant observation, the researcher mainly functions as a participant; this

researcher's role necessitates a close relationship with participants.   In my study, I

performed a role as a participant-observer, attempting to establish rapport with my

participants.

Participant observation is a way of entering a participants' community and directly

accessing "the meaning of social action through empathetic identification" (Schwandt,

2001, p. 186).   Although becoming a native of the community was not expected, I

played a role as "a marginal native or professional stranger" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 186)

as expected of a participant-observer.   Due to this complicated role that I played in the

research site, critics might point to the highly subjective nature of my data collection

procedure (Merriam, 2001).   I speculated, however, that the merit of participant

observation would surpass the highly subjective nature (cf., Gottschalk, 1998).   As

Beck and Kosnik (2006), Schram (2003), and Schwandt (2001) contend, people's

interpretations of phenomena are not always subjective.   We sum up or average our

interpretations, constantly comparing and contrasting them with reference to those of

other people.   Namely, it may be said that one's interpretation of phenomena is

basically intersubjective (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Schram, 2003; Schwandt, 2001).   As

such, those criticisms simply based on the dichotomy between subjectivity and

objectivity might be missing what lies at heart of qualitative inquiry in the postmodern

era (see Gottschalk, 1998).

    As Newkirk (1996) implies, what the term *naturalistic* means in a qualitative inquiry

is that a qualitative research design enables the researcher to establish a more

naturalistic environment or relationship with the participants than traditional research

designs.   I also considered participant-observation an epistemology (cf., Schram,

2003).   Since I tried to construct and reconstruct meanings collaboratively with the

participants, the mode of participant-observation was advantageous.   In fact, it enabled

me to gain insiders' (i.e., participants') perspectives and interpretations.

Furthermore, qualitative research, in general, necessarily entails the process of negotiation between a researcher and the participants in terms of ethics. In the negotiation process with the participants, for instance, I shared any biases and prejudices and reflected upon participants' interpretations and perspectives in the process of data analysis and (re)presentation at any point of the research.

Such negotiation processes were highly constructive and reciprocal in nature. I worked constructively with the participants to generate meanings in context, figuring out what was true in the particular research setting. Such a researcher's position "requires that we integrate our status of "participant-observer" with their status in a more purposeful manner so that they are active "participants" rather than accommodating "informants"" (Gottschalk, 1998, p. 220). Thus, I attempted to make my relationship with the participants power-free, using the strategy of "member checking" (Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam, 2001), in order to avoid any situations that research outcomes would become a one-sided (i.e., researchers' side) story (cf., Newkirk, 1996). In addition, because all the participants in my study were Japanese, I was aware of what I, as a native Japanese, needed to pay attention to. For example, since my role as a participant was known to my participants, they felt less tension and pressure than if my role was otherwise defined.

Drawing on ethnographic research, let me further justify my position as a

participant-observer.   A qualitative researcher's position, when the role of a

participant-observer is taken, becomes "one-down" (Agar, 1996, p. 119).   This

one-down position, according to Agar, means that everyone becomes the researcher's

teacher.   To achieve the primary goal of my study, I "need[ed] to be taught" by my

participants.   I entered the participants' community as a participant-observer ready to

learn from the participants, and to learn from them, I asked the participants to form a

collaborative-learning group at the beginning of the investigation (i.e., in the

pre-practicum phase).   My role of a participant-observer was, thus, clearly different

from the role of a hypothesis-tester who holds scientific control over the participants (cf.,

Agar, 1996).

    Finally, I would like to discuss my own perspectives and experiences because, as

Foltz and Griffin (1996) imply, the researcher's experiences and perspectives

necessarily affect the process of data analysis and interpretation, and hence the overall

outcomes of the research as well.   I am currently a full-time senior lecturer at

Prefectural University of Kumamoto, Japan.   During the investigation period, I was a

full-time lecturer teaching English courses to upper-secondary level students (i.e.,

high-school level) as well as university level students at Yatsushiro National College of

Technology, Kumamoto, Japan.   As a part-time lecturer, I also taught Speech I & II (i.e.,

elective courses for junior students enrolled in an EFL teacher education program) at

EMU (i.e., the primary research site for this study) during the time of the investigation.

Before these teaching experiences, I had taught English in both junior-high and high schools in Japan, as well as in an ESL program at an American university, for over three years.

These experiences as an ESL/EFL practitioner and teacher-educator enabled me to become familiar with the Japanese EFL contexts and pre- and inservice teachers' communities in Japan.   Having described my perspectives and experiences, I have to admit that I was biased when I planned, designed, and conducted this dissertation project.   Nonetheless, whether or not I was biased was not important.   As I demonstrated in this research, the important issue was to clarify "what kinds of biases exist[ed]" and appropriately operate and document such biases (Agar, 1996, p. 92).

As noted earlier, I view participant-observation as an epistemological method. The following quote from Agar (1996) supports my standpoint:

> [I]f you do document your learning with some procedure that publicly displays some of the experiences you had that led to the conclusion, and that potentially might have falsified that conclusion, you can at least show that your bias was supported by something somebody did or said.   (p. 99)

Using different types of methods for data collection and analysis, I attempted to raise the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.   In what follows, I provide the detailed explanations of these methods.

Methods of Data Collection

In this study, I collected "multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 1998, p. 62) through five methods including a questionnaire, observations, interviews, journals, and documents.   In Table 1, I show a schematic representation of the methods in accordance with the research phases.   I designed all these methods to be "interactive and holistic" (Merriam, 2001, p. 148).   The data sources were primarily the four preservice EFL teachers, and me, the participant-observer.   I collected most of the data in Japanese except the data obtained through my researcher's reflective journal kept in English.   I translated the data collected in Japanese into English for later analysis.

One prime reason why I used Japanese to collect data from the participants was that their (and my) native language is Japanese.   Since my study focused on teachers' beliefs, it was necessary for the participants to describe complex thoughts, ideas, perceptions, experiences, or events in a written form (i.e., journal entries) as well as an oral form (i.e., interviews).   Thus, I thought it difficult for the participants to use English, their foreign language.   As an English learner and teacher myself, I was aware of the anxiety regarding the use of a foreign language.   Such anxiety likely disturbs the flow of thoughts and ideas and prevent second or foreign language learners from articulating what they actually want to convey.   Thus, I considered the use of Japanese a means of avoiding such possible language-related problems (cf., Spradley, 1979).   It would have been possible for me to evaluate their language proficiency to see if the participants

were competent enough for writing and speaking tasks given to them prior to the

investigation.   Nonetheless, I did not think that it was an appropriate action, as a

qualitative researcher, to examine their language proficiency and select participants

based solely on the language test for the sake of this particular investigation.

Regarding the use of Japanese, I would also like to touch upon some cultural

issues.   The use of language is, by nature, culture specific.   As Geertz (1973)

demonstrates, language shapes social behaviors, which can be interpreted differently in

accordance with culturally defined realities.   Spradley (1979) adds that even if some

cultural realities are expressed explicitly through language, a large part may be tacit or

hidden from an outsider's view.   Therefore, it was crucial for me to look into individual

participant's behaviors through which cultural realities found expression (Geertz, 1973).

Moreover, I thoroughly contemplated cultural influences in the use of language when I

translated, interpreted, analyzed, and further reconstructed and represented the

gathered data (cf., Gottschalk, 1998).   Accordingly, as part of the data triangulation, I

consulted the participants to check the accuracy of my translation, interpretation, and

overall research findings (i.e., member checking).

One of the goals of this dissertation project was "to provide a description and an

interpretive-explanatory account" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p. 576) of what the participants

were doing to understand their professional development processes.   The experiences

or realities that I reconstructed were not mine; they were the experiences or realities of

all the participants (cf., Geertz, 1973).   Therefore, throughout the investigation process,

I carefully examined and incorporated the process of persistent negotiation of meanings

with the participants.

I applied the idea of *holistic* and *emic* view in ethnography.   It was not sufficient to

simply observe what the participants did in their culture because the goal of this study

was to (re-)create "a whole picture of the particular culture, cultural situation, or cultural

event under study" (Hornberger, 1994, p. 688).   Thus, I observed, for example, what

the participants did before and after a bi-weekly meeting at the research site.   I

interviewed them informally so as to make my interpretations and analyses as holistic

as possible.   Moreover, taking into account the importance of an *emic* view, I described,

interpreted, and (re-)constructed the participant's reality (or experience) in the culture

"as its members [understood] it and participate[d] in it" (Hornberger, 1994, p. 689).

Agar (1996) claims that it is impossible to clearly distinguish the *emic* and *etic*

views.   No matter how hard we try to understand culture-specific phenomena from the

participant's *emic* perspective, it is virtually impossible for us as qualitative researchers

(and as human beings) to eliminate *etic* perspectives.   That is, researcher's subjectivity

in the process of sense-making is unavoidable.   Both participants' (i.e., *emic*) and

researcher's (i.e., *etic*) views affect the process of sense-making (cf., Watson-Gegeo,

1988).   Accordingly, the heart of the matter lies in the researcher's awareness of the

intersubjective nature of the knowledge construction process (Beck & Kosnik, 2006;

Schram, 2003).   By persistently negotiating meanings with the participants and

monitoring my *etic* perspective and subjectivity throughout the investigation, I attempted

to make the reconstruction and representation of the participants' experiences or

realities as trustworthy as possible.   I hope this attitude raised the credibility and

trustworthiness of this research project.

Questionnaire

At the beginning of the study (see Table 1), I asked the participants to fill out an

informal questionnaire so that I could develop short profiles of the participants.   Using

such a questionnaire, I was able to know briefly about the participants.   In addition to

the other data sources, I also utilized the participants' brief profiles as I proceeded with

the further investigation (Bishop, 1999).   For instance, in open-ended, unstructured

interviews, as well as in semi-structured interviews, I looked at the questionnaires and

sometimes asked the participants to elaborate or explain what they had written in their

questionnaires.   The format of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Observations

Participant Observation: Bi-Weekly Meetings

Based on the aforementioned conceptualization of participant observation and my

role as a participant-observer, I collected data in group discussions of bi-weekly

meetings.   Every bi-weekly meeting took the form of group discussion.   During the

group discussion, I took fieldnotes, describing contexts and participants' interactions.   I

paid particular attention to nonverbal behaviors as well as verbal behaviors, avoiding

evaluative and summarizing wording in the process of description.   Rather than

abstract generalizations, I aimed at concrete details (Emerson et al., 1995).   In addition

to the fieldnotes, with participants' permission, I tape-recorded all group discussions in

bi-weekly meetings for later data analysis.

Table 1
Data-Collection Methods in Each Research Phase

Research Phase	Pre-Practicum	Mid-Practicum	Post-Practicum
Activity	Bi-Weekly Meeting	Bi-Weekly Meeting Practicum	Bi-Weekly Meeting
Data-Collection Methods	Questionnaire PO Journals Interviews Documents	PO CO Journals Interviews Documents	PO Journals Interviews Documents

Note.   PO signifies participant observation; CO signifies class observation.

Class Observation: Teaching Practicum

The term of the investigation included the period of a 4-week teaching practicum.

Right before the teaching practicum, the participants were placed in either a junior-high

or high school depending on their preference.   As soon as their practicum sites were

determined, I obtained permission in a written form from the principal of each school

(i.e., the practicum site) so that I could observe each participant's teaching and

interacting with other colleagues.   Although the practicum was implemented for four

weeks, the participants were allowed to teach about three or four class-sessions.   Thus,

I carried out this class observation only once when each participant was assigned to

teach in the final week of the practicum.   I neither video-taped nor tape-recorded their

teaching, for I was only allowed to observe the class and take fieldnotes.   As such, I did

not consider the class observation to be a core data-collection method.   Rather, I used

the data obtained through observation as supplementary data for data triangulation.

Interviews

   I employed two types of interviews: unstructured interviewing and semi-structured

interviewing.   I alternated the mode of interviews (i.e., an unstructured mode and

semi-structured mode) in accordance with the process of data collection and analysis

(cf., Merriam, 2001).   I held all interviews with an individual participant and

tape-recorded with the participant's permission (see Appendix E).   I did not conduct

any group interviews.   Instead, as seen in the studies of Matsuda and Matsuda (2004)

and Yahya (2000), I held group discussions in bi-weekly meetings.   With the

participants' permission, I audio-taped all group discussions.

Unstructured Interviews

According to Merriam (2001), an unstructured interview is usually used "with participant observation in the early stages of a case study" (p. 75). "[O]ne of the goals of the unstructured interview is . . . [to learn] enough about a situation to formulate questions for subsequent interviews" (Merriam, 2001, p. 75). As such, considering the design of the present study, I conducted an unstructured interview to explore participants' beliefs and experiences regarding language learning and teaching.

I asked unstructured questions during an interview, and they were essentially open-ended and thus exploratory in nature. A type of questions that I considered open-ended was, for example, "Tell me what has been going on with you since we last talked?" (Levin, 2003, p. 23). This type of open-ended question was effective, especially to elicit "fresh insights and new information" (Merriam, 2001, p. 75; see also Spradley, 1979). Prior to the investigation, some question examples were prepared in reference with Spradley's (1979) work (see Table 2).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Based on the on-going data analysis of the initial informal questionnaire, unstructured interviews, and journal entries, I also held semi-structured interviews to obtain "some standardized information" (Merriam, 2001, p. 75). For instance, when such relevant themes as Teaching English Communication emerged in collaborative

journal entries or discussions in the bi-weekly meetings, I asked an individual participant

to describe what their understanding of Teaching English Communication was or how

they would teach "English communication" in real teaching situations.   In addition, I

employed both modes (unstructured and semi-structured) of interviews and altered the

mode in accordance with the process of data collection and analysis because by

altering the mode of interviews, I was able to explore, elaborate on, and further

negotiate the meanings with the participants efficiently and effectively (cf., Merriam,

2001; Shin, 2001).

As previously indicated, I created some questions prior to the investigation in

reference with Spradley's (1979) work.   Spradley proposes five types of descriptive

questions: (a) grand-tour questions; (b) mini-tour questions; (c) example questions; (d)

experience questions; and (e) native-language questions (Spradley, 1979, p. 85; see

also Agar, 1996, p. 139).   Since I gave interview questions to the participants in

Japanese, the question type (e) is not exemplified in Table 2.   Thus, in Table 2, I show

the remaining four question types along with the scenario.

Table 2

Example Interview Questions

Question Type	Scenario
Grand-Tour Question	A preservice teacher, a participant, comes to the research site to have an interview session with me. I ask the participant, "tell me how you have been doing at school."
Mini-Tour Question	The participant describes how she has been doing at school and implies that she really likes what she learned in her teaching methodology course. I ask her, "You sound like your methodology course was interesting to you. Tell me more about the methodology course you took the other day."
Example Question	She describes the methodology course in some detail and uses the phrase *communicative English teaching*. Then, I might ask her, "Could you give me an example of communicative English teaching?"
Experience Question	Subsequently, I might ask her, "Have you experienced any communicative English teaching as a learner before? If so, please tell me."

Group Discussions

I conducted group discussions when we had bi-weekly meetings (see Appendix F).

The main purpose of conducting a group discussion was to share journal entries, reflect

on them, and explore our teaching beliefs and practices described in the journal entries.

Another purpose was to discuss, through the journaling process, our overall

experiences, perceived problems, and concerns that the participants encountered.   I

also let the participants share their learning and teaching experiences during their

practicum as well.   While participating in the discussion as a participant-observer, I

described contexts and interactions (both verbal and nonverbal interactions) in order to

record in my intrapersonal journal (i.e., researcher's reflective journal).   With

participants' permission, as noted earlier, I audio-taped all group discussions for later

data analysis.

Journals

Collaborative Journal

We exchanged collaborative journal entries (see Appendix G) over the Internet in

the form of a Microsoft Word file attached to an email (cf., Cole et al., 1998; Matsuda &

Matsuda, 2004).   We decided to exchange journal entries over the Internet because we

could communicate more frequently.   In addition, during the term of the investigation, I

lived two hours away from the primary research site (i.e., Eastern Miyazaki University).

Thus, it was helpful for me as a researcher and participant-observer to make use of a

computer-mediated communication tool, especially during the participants' practicum

when they were placed in individually different junior- or high-schools.

I saved a back-up copy of the soft-copy version of the journal.   Every time the

participants and I held a bi-weekly meeting, I printed out the file and brought a

hard-copy version to the meeting.   In addition, in case of an emergency in which a

participant lost a file (whether hard or soft copy), I developed a web-storage space on

the Internet where I could always store an up-dated version of the file.   The participants

could download the file from the web-storage anytime and anywhere (cf., Cole et al.,

1998).

Based on some guidelines given to the participants (see Appendix B), I

encouraged the participants to write whatever came to their mind and reflect on their

own journal entries as well as the other participants' entries throughout the term of the

investigation.   I used the data that I obtained through collaborative journaling as a core

qualitative data source, which was compared and contrasted with the other types of

qualitative data for triangulation.

Researcher's Reflective Journal

Merriam (2001) claims that once the data collection starts, qualitative researchers

should begin to analyze and code the data.   Qualitative research is the process of

researchers' on-going sense-making process.   As such, I recorded my own reflection

as a qualitative researcher throughout the investigation (see Appendix H).   Erlandson

et al. (1993) mention that "the reflective journal supports not only the credibility but also

the transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study" (p. 143).   Thus, I kept

an on-going reflective journal, separately from the collaborative journal, to make sense

of codes that I discovered in journal entries, fieldnotes, and interview transcripts.   I also

used my own reflective journal to keep track of my thoughts and speculations.   I wrote

about my overall research experience in order to add another level of understanding to

my dissertation project.   In this sense, this particular journal was different from the

collaborative journal that I kept with the participants.

The following is a listing of the issues (in the form of a question) that I raised and

reflected upon in my reflective journal.

- •How can I respond to individual participant's journal entry in order for me to

  explore his/her beliefs about language learning and teaching?

- •How can we discuss each journal entry in a group discussion to explore our

  beliefs about language learning and teaching?

- •How can I let the participants take more initiative in a group discussion?

- •How can I let the participant(s) talk more in the group discussion?

- •What was this participant thinking (or feeling) when he/she said (or wrote) "…"?

- •What was I thinking (or feeling) when I said (or wrote) "…"?

- •Why did (didn't) this participant write about his teaching (or learning) at the

  practicum site?

- •Why did (didn't) I comment on this participant's question (statement)?

•Why did (didn't) this participant respond to that participant?

•Why didn't this participant write anything at all about this particular topic?

•Why did (didn't) this participant teach this way even though she/he mentioned

"…" before?

In addition to these issues, I wrote about any biases that I had and how I handled

such biases while attempting to collect, analyze, and interpret my data.   I also wrote

about problems I encountered in the process of the investigation, how I worked at

resolving the problems, and the times that I had realizations and awareness.   In so

doing, I made an attempt to monitor my subjectivity and reflect on my general research

experience (Emerson et al., 1995; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 2001).

Documents

During the term of the investigation, I gathered participants' academic writing

through their coursework in the EFL teacher education program, any e-mail

correspondence from each participant responding to questions I posed (i.e., besides the

collaborative journal entries), and some syllabi of the teacher education courses.   I

used these sources to obtain additional insights about each participant and later

triangulated them with the other qualitative data sources (cf., Levin, 2003; Merriam,

2001).   Before I collected and used these data, I asked any persons involved in the

study, as well as the participants, for their permission.

Methods of Data Analysis

Coding: Reducing, Simplifying, and Complicating Data

Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and

overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed.

Data that have been analyzed while being collected are both parsimonious

and illuminating.   (Merriam, 2001, p. 162)

I carried out data analysis during and after the data collection.   In order to make

the data analysis process efficient, I skillfully managed all data.   One strategy that I

used was coding.   Coding signifies the strategy to assign some forms of designations

to "various aspects of [one's] data" (Merriam, 2001, p. 164).   Coffey and Atkinson

(1996) contend that coding is a process to condense data into analyzable units

"assigning tags or labels" (p. 26).   Coding is also an important process to review

collected data, in that the researcher differentiates and combines the retrieved data and

researcher's reflections upon the information (Miles & Huberman, 1994).   Since codes

are linkages that connect ideas or concepts with particular pieces of data, they can be

considered "heuristic devices" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 27).   Coding usually

includes two levels: identifying and interpreting (Merriam, 2001).   That is, as Merriam

(2001) argues, coding is analysis.   Thus, I used coding not only as a device for

reducing or simplifying data but also for complicating data in such a way that I

conceptualized the data, raised questions, provided tentative answers about

"relationships among and within the data, and discovering the data" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 31).

In the present study, I followed Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Erlandson et al. (1993), and Merriam's (2001) guidelines and procedures. In other words, I constructed categories to code data, carefully comparing and contrasting the data to capture "some recurring pattern" in the study (Merriam, 2001, p. 179; see also Bailey, 1990). Since this study dealt with four cases, coding was done within a single case and across cases. I considered cross-case coding or analysis especially crucial in my study because it enabled me to go beyond a categorical or taxonomic study of the data "toward the development of theory" (Merriam, 2001, p. 187). The general procedure of coding that I used in this study can be summarized as follows:

(1) I developed a case-study data base (Yin, 1994) for each individual case. The data base consisted of observation fieldnotes, interview transcripts, a researcher's reflective journal, collaborative journal entries, and collected documents.

(2) I read through, for instance, the interview transcripts and wrote down notes, comments, observations, queries in the margins within a case. I created a running list of all groupings. I repeated the same task for all cases.

(3) I looked into the marginal notes and comments and thought of the way to group those notes and comments within each case. As I did this, I

constantly referred to the research questions and theoretical concepts of

the study as well.   I repeated the same task for all cases.

(4) After constructing categories within each case, I developed "one master list

of concepts" (Merriam, 2001, p. 181) derived from all cases.   This master

list was utilized to look for and look into "recurring regularities or patterns"

(Merriam, 2001, p. 181) across cases.   At this stage, I used a time-ordered

matrix in the master list to organize and display codes chronologically (i.e.,

pre-practicum, mid-practicum, and post-practicum phases) (cf., Miles &

Huberman, 1994).

(5) Based on the master list, I made inferences, developed models, or general

emerging theories (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Merriam, 2001) to obtain "a

more conceptual overview of the landscape" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.

261).   That is, I used "codings and categories to think with and not to

remain anchored in the data (notes, transcripts, etc.) alone" (Coffey &

Atkinson, 1996, p. 49; see also Denzin, 2002).

After within- and cross-case analyses were done with the procedure above, I drew

conclusions.   At this point, I constructed and contextualized the data for the research

write-up (cf., Denzin, 2002).

Constructing and Contextualizing Coded Data

Constructing, according to Denzin (2002), signifies to put all segmented data together.   Contextualizing means to locate the data "in the personal biographies and social environments of the persons being studied" (p. 359).   While constructing the data, I paid particular attention to relationships among segmented data.   I also paid attention to how the structures and segments of the data "cohere[d] into a totality" (Denzin, 2002, p. 358; see also Maxwell, 1996).   Furthermore, when I contextualized the data, I made sure the data or phenomena being studied reflected participants' authentic voice, their language (i.e., Japanese), and their emotions.

When I drew conclusions, I took into account trustworthiness in terms of validity issues as well as ethical issues.   These issues will be elaborated in the following.

Validity Issues

Validity of the study played an important role in illustrating the realities that the participants and I (re-)constructed during the term of the investigation (cf., Maxwell, 1996, 2002; Merriam, 2001).   Because I view reliability as "a particular type of threat to validity" (Maxwell, 2002, p. 48), I did not develop a separate subsection here to discuss reliability.   Instead, I integrated the issue of reliability into the discussion of validity. Following Maxwell's (2002) categorization of validity, let me discuss descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and theoretical validity of the present study.

Descriptive Validity

This type of validity is concerned with the factual accuracy of accounts. During the investigation, I described what I saw, heard, and experienced through participant observations, class observations, and interviews. I aimed at thick description throughout the investigation. Because I was the research instrument in the study, I might have mis-heard, mis-transcribed, or mis-remembered participants' words (Maxwell, 2002). Thus, in the process of data collection, I avoided such possible threats to descriptive validity. For instance, I asked the participants to listen to tapes on which interviews were recorded and to check my transcriptions for accuracy. I also paid particular attention to participants' nonverbal behaviors and described them in my fieldnotes. Furthermore, I showed my descriptions to the participants to check whether or not my descriptive accounts were accurate. By doing so, I tried to raise the accuracy of the descriptive accounts of what I saw, heard, and experienced. Namely, I used the strategy of "member checking" (Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam, 2001) to avoid threats to descriptive validity.

As a possible threat to descriptive validity, it was also important to consider whether or not I was able to describe what I wanted to describe in relation to research questions (cf., Erlandson et al., 1993; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 2001). As previously mentioned, I assumed that purposeful sampling was of benefit to the present study in order to answer my research questions validly, and that this sampling procedure would

enable me to select "information-rich cases" (Patton, 1990, p. 169).   Moreover, I

employed the deliberate selection of participants in order to achieve typicality or

representativeness of the Japanese EFL setting and preservice teachers in an EFL

teacher education program (Maxwell, 1996, p. 71).

Interpretive Validity

Interpretive validity refers to the accuracy of the researcher's interpretive accounts

and the reliability of sense-making process.   As such, I incorporated two stages of

verification of meaning into my study: triangulation and member checking (cf.,

Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam, 2001).   Not only in the data analysis but also in the

data collection, I tried to understand phenomena, making every effort to make sense out

of what I saw, heard, and experienced.   Meanings that I constructed or interpreted

were verified by the participants to check the trustworthiness of my accounts.   To

obtain participants' meanings and interpretations, for instance, I consulted the

participants to verify my interpretive accounts written in my reflective journals.   To

include multiple perspectives in the data analysis and interpretation, I used multiple

methods of data collection and hence various data sources for data triangulation.

Theoretical Validity

Theoretical validity is concerned with the researcher's "theoretical understanding" (Maxwell, 2002). In other words, it refers to the validity of the researcher's explanations, concepts, codings (categories), and any abstract aspects of the theory-building phase of the research. I tried to avoid possible threats to theoretical validity, for instance, by constructing categories or codes that intrinsically reflected my interpretation with the participants. That is, I used the strategy of member checking to make sure my categorizations or codes were appropriate. Also, I asked the participants to label concepts or codes through negotiation. Since it was crucial for sound provisional theory-building to construct categories and codes appropriately, I carefully triangulated the data, taking into account participants' perspectives as much as possible to draw conclusions. My own reflective journals, informal e-mail correspondence, and additional documents were all used to strengthen the data triangulation and member checking processes.

Ethical Issues

I asked all the participants to carefully read and understand the content of an informed consent form before they actually took part in the study (see Appendices C and D). In addition, I let all the participants know, as well as periodically reminded them, even after the study began, why I was at the research site (cf., Schram, 2003).

As can be seen in the informed consent form, the participants were given rights to avoid participating in or withdraw from the study any time. During the study, I disclosed my documents to the participants (e.g., fieldnotes or interview transcriptions) to show what I was doing. From time to time, I made sure to review the content of the documents with the participants. I also prepared sufficient opportunities for them to discuss my relationships with them as well as any obtained data during the investigation.

With permission, I included information or data in my database. I used any information that I obtained in an unobtrusive manner (e.g., informal conversation outside the research site or informal e-mail correspondence) as well as through the planned methods of data collection only after I obtained permission from any person involved in this study. Because this study utilized collaborative journaling as a core data-collection method, I tried to keep participants' confidentiality. The participants actually provided some private information in journal entries. Thus, I ensured in collaboration with the participants that any information would be kept secret. I also told the participants that I would always ask them for permission before including any private information in my database.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I discussed methodological considerations. The first section dealt with the qualitative research design, the second section with the case-study approach.

Some rationales (i.e., my epistemological as well as ontological stance) underlying the choice of design and approach were explained in detail.   The third and the fourth sections described the participants, the selection procedure, and the researcher's role and experience.   The application of purposeful sampling to the present study was also explained.   In addition, I justified my role as a participant-observer, discussing the intersubjective nature of knowledge in the postmodern era.

In the fifth section, five methods of data collection were explained.   These five methods included a questionnaire, observations, interviews, journals, and documents. In data analysis, I triangulated the data obtained through these data-collection methods to increase the trustworthiness of the study.   In the sixth section, I described the methods of data analysis.   Using a coding technique to reduce, simplify, and complicate the data, I drew conclusions in such a way that I was able to include participants' perspectives in the process of within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. In addition, I discussed validity issues in terms of descriptive validity, interpretive validity, and theoretical validity.   I also discussed ethical issues as well.   This study employed collaborative journaling as a core data-collection method.   Thus, the necessity of protecting confidentiality cannot be overemphasized.   As a qualitative researcher, therefore, I ensured, in collaboration with the participants, that any information would be kept secret.   I also told the participants that I would always ask them for permission before including any private information in my database.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the major research findings of this study. I chronologically

describe salient, recurring themes, which represent "information-rich cases" (Patton,

1990, p. 169), in each research phase (i.e., pre-practicum phase, mid-practicum phase,

and post-practicum phase). There are four meta-themes that emerged in this study:

(a) Pedagogical, Methodological Interests and Concerns; (b) Courses Taken in the

Teacher Education Program; (c) Anxieties about Becoming English Teachers in Japan;

and (d) Impact of Practicum Experiences. Under each meta-theme, I describe and

document research findings, further classifying them into sub-themes. As will be seen,

each theme shows the uniqueness of an individual participant's case: the uniqueness of

the participant's learning to teach in an EFL teacher education program at a university in

Japan.

Let me now briefly introduce each of the four participants. I use pseudonyms to

describe all participants and institutions. Nobuhito, a 24-year-old male participant, had

a plan to become a high-school English teacher. Before participating in the study, he

had a 5-year teaching experience as a cram-school instructor and a tutor in Japan. He

had no experience studying abroad. Masakazu, a 25-year-old male participant, had a

plan to become a high school English teacher. He had experience studying abroad to

New Zealand for one year as well as tutoring some students for two years.   Megumi, a

22-year-old female participant, had a plan to become a junior-high school English

teacher.   She had no experiences of teaching or studying abroad.   Sachi, 21-year-old

female participant, had a plan to become a junior-high school English teacher.   She

was born in Japan, but she moved with her family to Singapore after she graduated from

elementary school.   Until she graduated from a high school and entered EMU, she

spent six years in Singapore.   She had experience teaching as a part-time instructor at

a cram school in Japan.   Before participating in this study, she had been to Canada for

one month to study English.

Pedagogical, Methodological Interests and Concerns

We formed a collaborative-learning group six months before the participants'

practicum (November, 2006).   In the very first bi-weekly meeting, we discussed the

nature of the research project and decided how often we would write in a collaborative

journal.   We decided that each participant would write at least twice a week.   We also

discussed the nature of bi-weekly meetings and what we would discuss in group

discussions in the meetings (see Appendix B).   All the participants already knew one

another because at the time of the investigation, the number of senior students trying to

complete the teacher education program was relatively small: approximately 30

students in total.   The four participants had taken the same required courses offered in

the program at the same time.   Accordingly, the collaborative-learning group formed by the participants had a relatively friendly atmosphere.   In addition, through our informal as well as formal conversation, I could sense the participants' high motivation to grow as professionals from the start.

At the very beginning of the pre-practicum phase, the participants decided to describe their past learning experiences in the collaborative journal.   Thus, we exchanged journal entries in order to discuss and/or elaborate on an individual participant's learning experience from various points of view.   In so doing, we brought up some issues and topics to bi-weekly meetings to further explore and reflect upon what we had written in the journal.   We all actively exchanged opinions, ideas, or even incomplete thoughts, asking thought-provoking questions to one another.

Seeking Instructional Know-How

One salient, recurrent theme observed in the pre-practicum phase was Seeking Instructional Know-How.   This theme emerged while we were discussing past learning experiences.   Until the end of the mid-practicum phase, particularly during the pre-practicum phase, the participants showed great interests in and anxieties and/or concerns about teaching methodologies.   In other words, all the participants attempted to seek instructional know-how while exchanging journal entries among them.

Megumi, when she wrote her learning experience, expressed that she felt lucky to

have learned phonics in a cram school.   Masakazu, stimulated by Megumi's journal entry, wrote, "I heard a little bit about phonics, and I know what it looks like."   Having written so, he was not so sure his understanding was right.   He wanted to "know more about phonics."   Masakazu was a very prudent person, and his prudence was always seen in his utterances in bi-weekly meetings or writings in the collaborative journal. Masakazu's understanding of phonics was that it is "a learning strategy by which the relationships among pronunciation, spellings, and rules are mastered so that the learners can read English properly."

He wanted to make sure his understanding was right by soliciting more information about phonics from the other participants.   His journal entry read:

If I'm wrong, please correct me.   I have questions.   (1) I looked at some websites and found that phonics requires a lot of supplemental materials.   How do you think we should use supplemental materials?   (2) How much of the class time should be spent for phonics-based instructions?   Is a 15-minute instruction at the beginning of every class enough?   Or, a whole class time should be intensively used for phonics-based instructions?   What is the most effective way of giving the students phonics-based instructions?   Please tell me your reasons, too.   (3)   I heard that the younger the learners are, the more effectively phonics works.   Does this mean phonics isn't effective for high-school students?   I would like to become a high-school teacher, so I would like to hear your opinions.

Masakazu had a strong interest in phonics and how it should be used in class.   He was trying to check the effectiveness of phonics-based instructions.   But, why did he become interested in phonics?

According to Masakazu, he viewed the acquisition of pronunciation as an inevitable step for the development of speaking skills.   He believed that all types of English teaching in Japan should directly or indirectly lead the students to the development of speaking skills in English.   "Unless they become able to speak English, there's no reason for us to teach English!"   In a slightly excited manner with much gesticulation, he often expressed this idea in bi-weekly meetings.   Every time Masakazu mentioned the importance of focusing primarily on speaking skills in English learning and teaching, the other participants agreed on his point as well.

From Masakazu's perspective, the more accurate the learners' English pronunciation becomes, the more confident they become when they speak English.   If the students have confidence in their pronunciation, Masakazu thought, it might be possible for the students to actively speak up and express their opinions and thoughts in English in class.   Thus, to figure out how to help the students build confidence in speaking English, Masakazu wanted to learn an effective way of using class time and strategies or techniques to teach English pronunciation.

Based on his firm belief that pronunciation plays a crucial role in building students' confidence, Masakazu had been working on his graduation thesis to find some clues for

effective English pronunciation teaching as well.   He added to his journal entry:

> I'm now working on a graduation thesis on shadowing-based pronunciation
>
> teaching.   I read some articles on the topic, and I learned that most of the
>
> Japanese high-school students don't have any confidence in English speaking
>
> skills.   By introducing phonics to help the students learn the pronunciation of
>
> every single English alphabet, do you think it's possible for us to help the students
>
> build confidence in speaking?

Megumi, in response to Masakazu, elaborated on her learning experience in a

cram school *Jyuku* where she studied such subjects as English, Japanese, and

mathematics.   Megumi was a very gentle person.   She always showed affirmative

comments and feedback to the other participants.   She was very responsive, too.

According to Megumi, she was an elementary school student when she was studying in

the cram school.   In her journal entry, she described in detail the way phonics-based

instructions were given in English classes and how much she liked them.   Her teacher

used "a poster-like sheet" which had the letters of the alphabet accompanied by

drawings; for instance, an *A* was printed along with a drawing of an alligator, a *B* with a

drawing of a book.   Pointing at the sheet, the teacher pronounced each letter and a

corresponding word describing each drawing, and the students repeated.   In the

journal entry, Megumi expressed her gratitude to the teacher for giving phonics-based

instructions before she entered a junior-high school.

When I was required to memorize English vocabulary at a junior-high school, I could easily do so because of phonics that I learned when I was an elementary school student.

Responding to Masakazu's journal entry, Megumi shared her idea that phonics is effective for high-school students, although she thought "the younger is the better." She further wrote, "Every time rules were understood, we felt that our pronunciation would change."   Through her own learning experience, she knew that phonics could be used as a confidence-builder.

Regarding the appropriate class time that should be spent for phonics-based instructions, Megumi explained:

As for the time used for the instructions, we studied 5 alphabets (i.e., letters) each time, spending first 5-6 minutes of the class time.   There were only five students in my class [in the cram school], so we could move on faster to cover different sounds.   After we completed all sounds of the alphabets (i.e., letters), we played games, etc.   I remember that we repeated some sounds [of letters and words] over and over again.   I think this repetition was also very effective.

To Megumi, it is quite important for English teachers to have the students work on the same tasks repetitively so that "learned rules can be automatically and unconsciously processed."   In other words, she appeared to hold the belief that an English teacher's instructional strategy to repeat the same tasks facilitates the students'

mastery of English pronunciation, which further helps the students build their confidence in speaking English.

In the same journal entry, Megumi touched upon the instructional technique that her teacher used to teach English vowel sounds. "What impressed me in her [cram school teacher's] instruction was a magic *e*." A magic *e* signifies that when we have a letter *e* at the end of each word (e.g., cut*e*, cak*e*), the vowel sound preceding the magic *e* is pronounced as an original alphabetical sound (e.g., [u], [ei]). Masakazu praised Megumi for her clear explanations of such teaching techniques and instructional ideas. In a bi-weekly meeting, the other participants also showed great interests in Megumi's explanations and discussed in-depth practical know-how for nearly an hour.

Reflecting upon the journal entries and the group discussion on phonics-based instructions, Masakazu later expressed his impression, writing in his journal entry, "If we can teach such things [e.g., a magic *e*], we can really motivate the students to study English!" The other participants Nobuhito and Sachi, as well as Masakazu, stated that such instructional techniques or strategies should be acquired and applied in all English classes by the teachers.

Being exposed to methodological discussions in the collaborative journal and bi-weekly meetings, Masakazu began wondering how he could implement phonics-based instructions into high-school curricula in which "grammar and reading are emphasized under the influence of entrance examinations." Thus, he asked

Megumi a few more questions about the size of the class in his journal entry.   His first

question was "Do you think phonics is not applicable to big classes?"   Megumi

mentioned in her journal entry that she did not think phonics would be effective for big

classes because "it might be hard to provide individualized instructions."   In her opinion,

unless teachers individualize phonics-based instructions appropriately, the students

might "form a bad pronunciation habit," which may, in turn, cause the students to

develop foreign accents "in the case of high-school."   In a bi-weekly meeting, all the

participants stated that in order to make any instructional techniques or strategies

effective, the number of students should be minimized because individualization is a

crucial determinant for successful English learning and teaching.

Because Masakazu was intrigued by the effectiveness of phonics, he wanted to

learn pedagogical, instructional know-how further for integrating phonics-based

instructions into his teaching in the future.   In collaboration with the other participants,

he was looking for some practical tips upon which he would be able to depend in the

future.   Nonetheless, what made him worry about his actual teaching practice was the

class size currently observed in Japanese high schools.   He knew that the smaller the

class size is, the more effectively English teachers can teach.   At the same time,

however, he also knew that not all classes are as small as he would ideally prefer.

Another question asked by Masakazu in his journal entry exemplifies his dilemma:

The average class size in high-school is usually 30-40.   If phonics is applicable to

such big classes, do you think we can provide phonics-based instructions in the

form of team-teaching with an ALT [Assistant Language Teacher]?

Because Masakazu thought it might be impossible to teach a small class all the time in

ordinary Japanese high-school settings, he tried to figure out another way of providing

individualized instructions, such as team-teaching with an ALT, a native-speaker

instructor who assists a Japanese teacher in English classes.   Not being able to come

up with the idea of instructing phonics with an ALT, Megumi only remarked on the

motivation that the students might gain through the team-teaching with an ALT.   In her

journal entry, Megumi, once again, described her belief that "the earlier phonics is

introduced, the better the outcomes will be."

Fears of Showing Ignorance or the Lack of Knowledge

As the thread of discussions on teaching methodologies continued in the

collaborative journal, the active participation of the participants gradually decreased.

Sachi and Nobuhito, for instance, did not actually jump in and write their journal entries

about phonics-based instructions.   In a bi-weekly meeting, as previously noted, both

Sachi and Nobuhito mentioned that they had been strongly interested in those journal

entries exchanged between Masakazu and Megumi as well as the topic itself.   When

asked by the other participants why they did not write journal entries on phonics-based

instructions, Sachi and Nobuhito gave them the runaround in a group discussion of the

bi-weekly meeting.

At one time during the group discussion, for example, Sachi said, "I actually read the journal entries and thought it's very interesting . . ."   With a long pause, she became speechless, bending slightly forward.   It was an awkward moment.   It was strange because Sachi and Nobuhito had actively exchanged journal entries till Masakazu and Megumi focused their attention on phonics-based instructions.   Immediately after the bi-weekly meeting, Sachi contacted me by email and asked me how she could study teaching methodologies, describing her uneasiness at not being able to write about phonics.   After exchanging a few email messages with Sachi, I talked with her on the phone.   While talking with her, I noticed that she had panicked widely about her "ignorance about phonics."

Sachi had a vigorous and vital personality.   In bi-weekly meetings, for instance, she always showed a smile, and her simile created a comfortable environment for all the participants to work in the collaborative-learning group.   Unlike Sachi, Nobuhito was always sedate.   He was quiet and reserved, and he only expressed himself when he had something very important to say.   As Sachi did, Nobuhito confessed in an interview that he "hesitated to write" due to the lack of knowledge about phonics.   In spite of the fact that both Sachi and Nobuhito were preservice teachers studying in an EFL teacher education program, they believed that it was very shameful to show the lack of knowledge about pedagogical, instructional techniques or strategies.

Sachi and Nobuhito brought up their anxieties and concerns to a bi-weekly

meeting in order to discuss why they did not write about phonics-based instructions in

the collaborative journal.   Sachi and Nobuhito shared their feelings and thoughts with

Masakazu and Megumi, which further motivated all the participants to share their honest

feelings, ideas, and thoughts.   Sachi and Nobuhito's confession possibly stimulated

Masakazu and Megumi to become open-minded in their attitudes.   When they started

expressing honest feelings, it turned out that all the participants actually held more or

less the same type of fear of showing the lack of knowledge about teaching

methodologies and the English language (i.e., subject matter).

In the pre-practicum phase, therefore, there was one commonality observed in all

the participants.   That is, they all appeared to hold a belief that acquiring knowledge

about pedagogical, instructional techniques or strategies, as well as knowledge about

the English language, had priority over gaining actual teaching experience.

Masakazu's statement in an interview exemplifies this finding:

> Please correct me, if I'm wrong.   I think English teachers should be
>
> knowledgeable about the English language and how it should be taught.   It's
>
> difficult.   I know that.   But, at least, we should try to become knowledgeable.
>
> [So,] I want to study more.   I want to know more about the English language and
>
> how it should be taught.   I really want my students to trust me [in terms of
>
> knowledge and skills].

Obviously, how much they knew about teaching methodologies and the English language affected his/her self-image as a good English teacher, which might cause them to feel the fears of showing one's ignorance or the knowledge paucity regarding teaching methodologies or even of the English language.

Learning Materials and Students' Affect

In the pre-practicum phase, yet another thread of discussions on pedagogical and instructional issues was observed in the collaborative journal. The theme Learning Materials and Students' Affect illustrates an observed phenomenon that the participants had a tendency to think that they would impose what they believed to be effective or preferable on their future students' learning. This theme also shows that even before experiencing their practicum, the participants possibly had firm beliefs about what they should do and what they should not do in terms of their teaching practices. As will be seen, such beliefs might be deeply rooted in their past learning experiences.

In her journal entry, Sachi wrote about her concerns regarding the use of an electronic dictionary. She believed that the use of an electronic dictionary should be restricted both in and outside of class, and that "the teachers should tell the students not to use it in class" as well. She described the main reason that a machine like electronic dictionaries are not the same as dictionaries "made of paper." According to Sachi, dictionaries "made of paper" are likely to develop students' "psychological

attachment" to the learning material (e.g., a dictionary) in the process of learning English.

In her journal entry, she touched upon her past learning experience:

Since my high school, I have been using *Lighthouse* [i.e., the name of a well-known English-Japanese dictionary]. I always use a highlight pen to mark unknown words, and I look at example sentences and usages. Every time I find marked words in the dictionary, I gain a sense of accomplishment. I become very happy. Is it strange? An electronic dictionary does not make me feel so. To me, this psychological attachment is a very big issue.

Sachi, for the reason implied above, asserted that in order to have the students study English and enjoy it, the teacher should instruct the students to use a dictionary "made of paper." By doing so, she claimed that "the students can be motivated" further to study English because of the effect of the "psychological attachment."

In Sachi's view, especially when the students learn English vocabulary, the "psychological attachment" to such a learning tool as a dictionary plays an important role in determining pleasant outcomes. Sachi, for example, felt attached to her paper-based dictionary every time she marked unknown words and later found those words in the same dictionary. To Sachi, such simple tasks generated "a sense of accomplishment." It should be noted that "a sense of accomplishment" in her terms may have little to do with whether or not she actually memorized previously marked

(unknown) words. She probably felt "a sense of accomplishment" merely because she found the highlighted word(s) that she "had encountered before." Thus, she stressed the importance of enjoying "meeting with unknown words" in vocabulary learning.

In a bi-weekly meeting, she asked the other participants a question, "Don't you feel a sense of accomplishment when you notice that your dictionary has been worn out?" In addition, she proudly mentioned in her journal entry that her paper-based dictionary *Lighthouse* was really "worn out" after prolonged use, claiming that she would not have been able to experience it with an electronic dictionary. Thus, Sachi believed, on the basis of her own experience, that English teachers should be sensitive to students' affect in relation to learning materials, especially in terms of students' motivation.

Sachi's journal entry on the "psychological attachment" to a dictionary "made of paper" triggered a discussion on the use of English-English dictionaries. Masakazu wrote in his journal entry that the use of an English-English dictionary should be encouraged by the teachers for three reasons: (a) it may enhance the students' understanding of English-specific expressions, (b) it may help the students obtain information about the cultural aspect of English, and (c) it may help the students form a good habit of trying to understand English through authentic English. Nonetheless, Masakazu, based on his learning experience, noticed that it would take a long time until the students are able to make best use of an English-English dictionary. He described

his learning experience in high school:

When I was a high-school student, every student was required to purchase an

English-English dictionary.   So, of course, I bought one copy.   But, while I was in

high-school, I did not use it at all.   For three years!   I couldn't even open it

because I was too intimidated [to read all English in the English-English dictionary].

I always kept it closed.

Masakazu started using an English-English dictionary when he became a junior at

EMU.   What prompted him to do so was his study-abroad experience in New Zealand.

"While in New Zealand, I had to understand English as English."   Surrounded by

English-speaking people in an ESL context, he was forced to quickly understand

English, think in English, and express opinions and ideas in English.   In other words,

there was a necessity to use English and process incoming English-mediated

information quickly in his daily life.   Because of such experience, he seemed to believe

that it is important not to translate English into Japanese every time one reads or hears

English.   To Masakazu, the use of an English-English dictionary is a solution for

surviving in an ESL context.

Masakazu's experience described in the journal prompted Nobuhito to raise a

question: "When should we introduce English-English dictionaries?"   To this question,

only Megumi answered.   In Megumi's opinion, it would be impossible for both

junior-and high-school students to use English-English dictionaries because she had

had a great difficulty in using an English-English dictionary even after entering the

university.   Through the discussions on English-English dictionaries, all the participants

appeared to reach the conclusion that an English teacher needs to create an in-class

environment where English is a tool of communication among the teacher and students,

in that as Masakazu pointed out, "Japanese schools are different from English-spoken

countries [in terms of the necessity of using English]."

Teaching English to Develop Communicative Competence

In the pre-practicum phase, the participants reported in a bi-weekly meeting that

through the coursework in the teacher education program at EMU, they had learned

about communicative competence as well as how English teachers can approach it.

When the participants began to discuss the way teachers can teach English to help the

students develop communicative competence, I first assumed that all the participants

shared, to some extent, the same conceptualization of "teaching English

communication" (in the participants' terms).   As will be seen, however, my assumption

turned out to be wrong.

The theme Teaching English to Develop Communicative Competence depicts that

although the same content was taught to the participants in the teacher education

program, technical terms or concepts were differently understood or conceptualized

among the participants due to their beliefs about language learning and teaching.   To

exemplify this finding, let us begin with Nobuhito's journal entry written in the

pre-practicum phase.

When the participants were asked to write about their past learning experiences in

the collaborative journal, Nobuhito wrote that he "really hated studying English in both

junior-high and high schools."   He lambasted his English teachers for ineffective

teaching procedures and stated that their teaching was "highly patternized and boring."

He also claimed that English teachers should teach the students how to communicate in

English.   It was this journal entry that triggered the discussions on teaching English for

developing communicative competence.   Nobuhito further elaborated his argument in

a journal entry:

Even if the students can understand spoken and written English and write good

English, it's not enough.   I want my students to become able to speak English.   I

think what teaching English communication means to us is to help the students

become able to speak English.

As can be seen, Nobuhito thought that the development of speaking skills should be the

only focus of "teaching English communication," that is, English teaching for the

development of students' communicative competence.   He touched upon the nature of

English learning in Japanese high schools influenced by entrance examinations:

I think the entrance examination system is nonsense.   If you can get high scores

in reading sections, you can pass.   In Japanese high schools, test preparation is

the focus.   But, you can study such things in cram schools . . . Regarding

communication in English, English teachers should teach the students so that the

students will be able to speak English well.

Similarly, Masakazu, referring to his learning experience in high school, described

that he came to dislike learning English due to the nature of the English learning for

entrance examinations.

I couldn't catch up with all English classes.   I couldn't memorize English

vocabulary.   These problems lasted for three years!   The reason was that all

English classes were designed to prepare the students to take entrance

examinations.   In a short period of time, we were given overwhelming pieces of

information to memorize.   I totally lost enthusiasm to study English.   I stopped

studying English.   I was at a loss . . . I didn't feel that I had been learning

something meaningful.   I just hated the memorization-oriented work.

Masakazu, however, stressed that he actually liked the English language.   He just

disliked the learning style required in his high school for entrance examinations.

Masakazu loved interacting with an ALT.   Every time an ALT came to his school to

teach, he was delighted.   "It was the only time that I had fun using English!"   Through

such experience in high school, Masakazu started thinking that speaking skills should

be a prime focus of English teaching rather than focusing on the memorization-oriented

learning for entrance examinations.   Masakazu's reasoning about the priority of

speaking skills was similar to Nobuhito, although Nobuhito did not express his interest in using English or interacting with an ALT while he was in high school.

After exchanging opinions about what should be the focus of English teaching, Nobuhito, in his journal entry, shared his thought with the other participants:

I'm not sure if English teachers can really teach English communication to the students.   I don't know how to teach English communication.   How should we teach English communication?   How?

The phrase "English communication" in such an excerpt of Nobuhito's journal entry referred to "speaking skills."

Reading through the participants' journal entries and observing their discussions in bi-weekly meetings, I became intrigued by the participants' use of the phrase "teaching English communication."   As a participant-observer, I asked the following questions in my journal entry to find out the participants' conceptualizations of "teaching English communication":

a) What does "teaching English communication" mean to you?

b) Do you think it's possible to teach "English communication"?

c) If so, how would you approach it?   And why?

The participants' journal entries indicated that "teaching English communication" was generally understood as the teaching to help the students develop communicative competence in English.   In addition, it was understood among the participants that the

development of communicative competence should be a main goal of English learning

and teaching.

Nevertheless, the participants' understanding of communicative competence

differed slightly, which further differentiated the individual conceptualizations of

"teaching English communication."   As a result, the participants' ideas about what

should be the focus in "teaching English communication" were individually different due

evidently to their beliefs about language learning and teaching (see Figures 4, 5, 6, and

7).

Communicative competence includes different linguistic skills and communication skills that include the ability to differentiate linguistic forms depending on time, place, and occasion.

→ In teaching English communication, developing speaking skills should be a prime focus.

↑ Influences of examination-oriented English learning and study-abroad experience in New Zealand.

Figure 4.   Masakazu's conceptualization of teaching English communication.

```
┌─────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ I cannot define │              │ In teaching English          │
│ communicative   │─────────────▶│ communication, developing    │
│ competence.     │              │ speaking skills should       │
└─────────────────┘              │ be the only focus.           │
                                 └──────────────────────────────┘
                                                ▲
                                                │
                          ╱─────────────────────────────────────╲
                         ╱  My teachers in junior-high and high   ╲
                        │   schools failed to help me develop      │
                        │   speaking skills.   My own teaching     │
                        │   tends to be examination-oriented,      │
                         ╲  and I would like to change it.        ╱
                          ╲─────────────────────────────────────╱
```
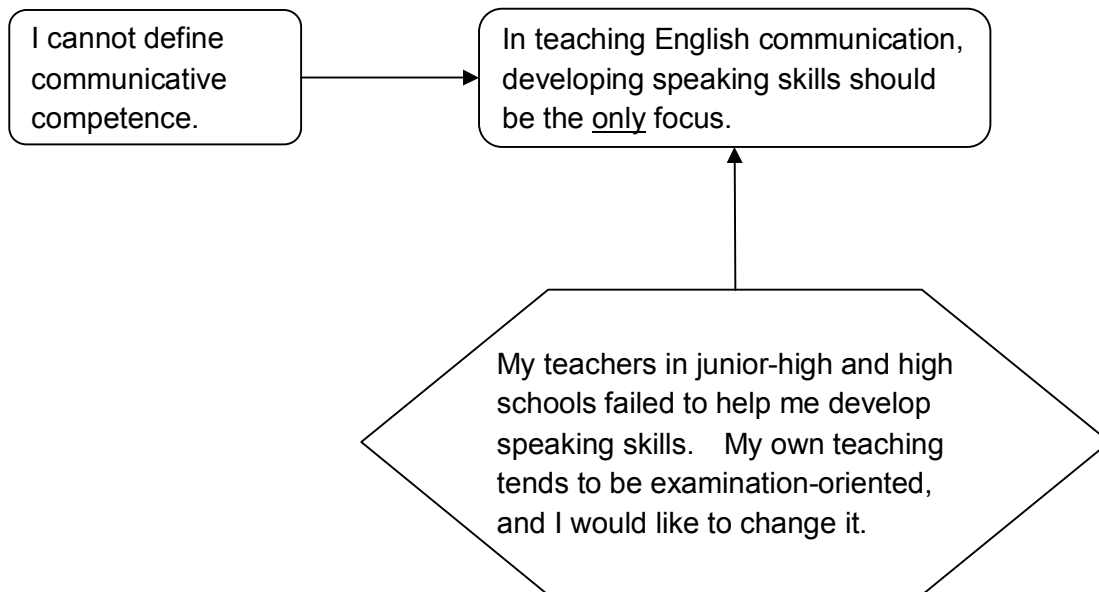
Figure 5.   Nobuhito's conceptualization of teaching English communication.

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┌─────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Communicative   │              │ In teaching English          │
│ competence is the│             │ communication, a prime focus │
│ ability to orally│────────────▶│ should be put on getting rid │
│ express ideas    │             │ of students' anxieties to    │
│ and opinions     │             │ speak up.                    │
│ with others.     │             └──────────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────┘                             ▲
                                                │
                          ╱─────────────────────────────────────╲
                         ╱  Influence of living in Singapore for  ╲
                        │   six years.   Japanese students tend    │
                        │   to slander someone behind one's        │
                         ╲  back.                                 ╱
                          ╲─────────────────────────────────────╱
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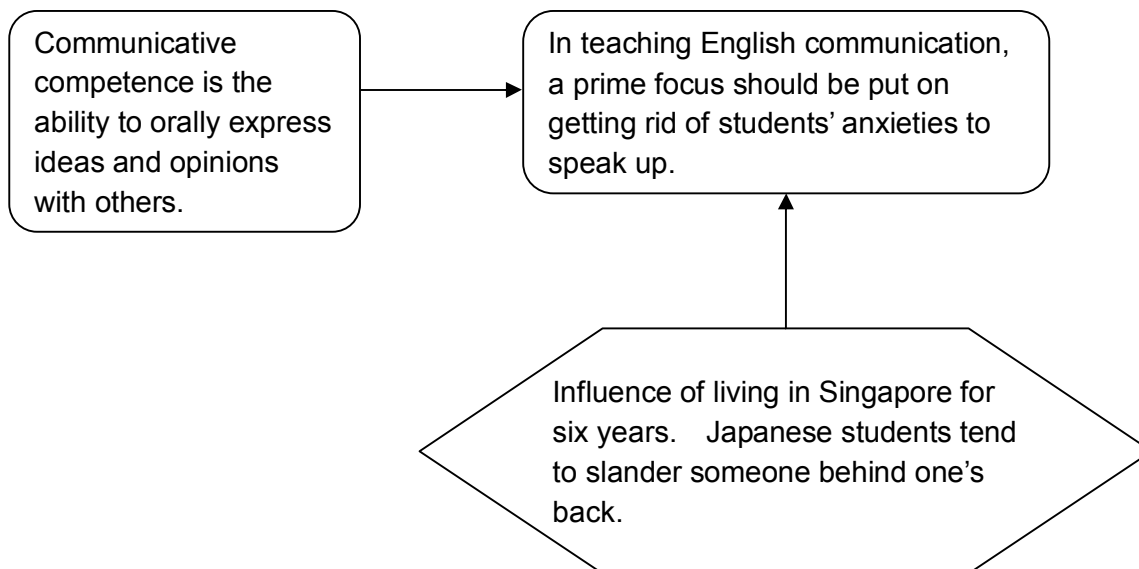
Figure 6.   Sachi's conceptualization of teaching English communication.
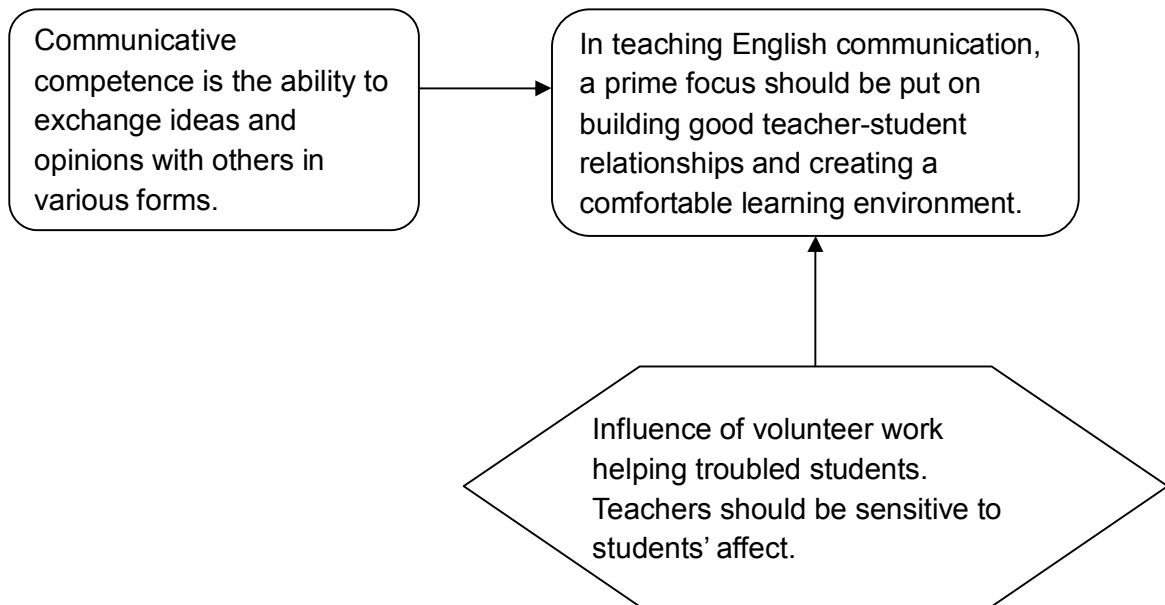
Figure 7.   Megumi's conceptualization of teaching English communication.

"Teaching English communication has two components: basics and applications,"

described Masakazu.   In Masakazu's view, basics include vocabulary, grammar,

sounds, etc; applications include the way of utilizing four linguistic skills (listening,

speaking, reading, and writing) and communication skills which should be used based

on the appropriate analysis of time, place, and occasion.   English teachers need to

teach both basics and applications.   Masakazu also compared communication to

sports games.   According to Masakazu, communication takes different forms

depending upon time, place, and occasion.   It includes not only spoken communication

but also written communication.   Such "different forms of communication are like sports

games."   The students are required to use English in such a way that they can fully

function as communicators; players in sports games are required to do "what they are supposed to do depending upon time, place, and occasion."   To help the students prepare for their sports games, the teacher should teach them "both basics and applications."

Masakazu also used a metaphor "muscle training" when he further explained what he meant by learning and teaching of "basics" in his journal entry:

'Teaching English communication' should be fun and exciting.   But, only learning and teaching basics is no fun.   I see communication as sports games, the students as players.   To prepare them to perform well in a game, the teacher should direct them to acquire both basics and applications.   Players need muscle training to perform well in a game.   Teaching basics is like muscle training.   I hope that the students [players] win communication [a game], that is, they make themselves understood in English and build confidence further . . .

In addition, Masakazu added to his journal entry that he was "expecting to see his students win [a game, meaning 'communication'] and feel a sense of achievement." Although he was aware of the different forms of communication in English, Masakazu put much emphasis on the development of speaking skills as did Nobuhito.   Like Nobuhito, Masakazu possibly believed that the English teachers should instruct the students so that they become able to speak English.   "That is why an English teacher exists," said Masakazu.

Masakazu also claimed that in order to help the students develop their

communicative competence in English, "teachers need to apply the

Grammar-Translation Method along with communicative approaches" because

'teaching basics' could be effectively done through the traditional Grammar-Translation

Method.   In fact, this idea of mixing traditional teaching methodologies with

communicative approaches was commonly observed among the other participants'

ideas except for Nobuhito who had not yet come up with such a concrete idea.   For

example, when Megumi explained the importance of repetitive exercises on English

pronunciation, she stated that even highly-decontextualized pronunciation exercises

(e.g., a paired phoneme exercise [b] vs. [p]) cannot be avoided, particularly in the early

stage of learning.   Nobuhito, on the other hand, mentioned in his journal entry:

> I haven't even thought about what it means to teach English communication and
>
> how English teachers should approach it.   But, I think teaching English
>
> communication means to help the students become able to speak English.   It
>
> might be possible to teach English communication, but I'm not sure exactly how
>
> English teachers should approach it.   I'm not sure if it's possible to integrate
>
> communicative approaches into examination-oriented English classes, either.

Even though Nobuhito would like to help the students develop speaking skills in

his future English classes, he had been struggling to figure out how he could approach it.

"I currently teach high-school students in a cram school," Nobuhito continued in his

journal entry. "I don't want to tell you this, but my teaching became

examination-oriented." Nobuhito had wanted to make his teaching more

communication-oriented even in a cram school which he had once assumed

test-preparation should be done. Nobuhito could not make it. He failed to make his

teaching communication-oriented because he "didn't know how to integrate

communicative approaches into examination-oriented classes." Such experiences

appeared to foster Nobuhito to believe that "English teachers should put the only focus

on speaking skills."

Sachi, in her journal entry, mentioned, "I think teaching English communication

means to help the students talk freely and passionately [in English]." The most

important thing, in her opinion, is to "get rid of students' anxieties to speak up."

Accordingly, English teachers should tell the students how fun it is to communicate in

English first and then how to say things (e.g., how to greet people or how to introduce

other people) next. It is important to create "a learner-friendly environment" in class.

Sachi emphasized that students' affect is the most important factor in teaching English

communication.

Furthermore, she also pointed out in her journal entry that Japanese students tend

to "slander someone behind one's back":

It is crucial for the teacher to get rid of students' anxieties to speak up. I don't

want my students to think, "He's trying to look cool in class!," "He's trying to

pronounce English too good!," or "His English's terrible!"   Don't you think a lot of

junior-high or high-school students are afraid of being told like that [behind one's

back]?   One of the English teachers' roles is, in my opinion, to tell the students to

understand that there is nothing to be shamed.   We need to tell the students it's

fun to communicate [in English], showing some good examples.

Sachi spent six years in Singapore after she had graduated from an elementary

school in Japan.   Thus, her perspective to see the Japanese was shaped by the

experience of living abroad in Singapore.   She mentioned in an interview that the

experience shaped her perspective to see the English language, too.   "I was

surrounded by English.   English was a public language there."   Sachi liked to study

English even before living in Singapore, but the English-spoken environment made her

"love English."   As Masakazu did, she often compared such an English-spoken

environment with English classes in Japan.   Sachi appeared to hold a belief that it

should be the English teacher's role "to create a comfortable environment for all

students to use English."

Megumi claimed that "it is necessary for the English teacher to help the students

have "something to say [in English]."   Similar to Sachi's idea, Megumi also pointed out

that teaching English communication is possible only when the teacher and students

have good relationships.   Creating a comfortable learning environment is thus an

inevitable step for teaching English communication.   Megumi and Sachi's ideas

appeared to be very similar in the sense that they would judge the success or failure of teaching English communication based on whether or not English teachers could establish good teacher-student relationships and/or create a comfortable learning environment.   Megumi, in an interview, stated:

Communication, either in English or Japanese, is impossible if there is no trust among the teacher and students.   Classes, schools, students' lives are all connected.   Closely linked . . . Interactions and communication in a classroom is part of the human link.

As a student-volunteer, Megumi had been interacting with troubled students or teenagers who committed crimes.   She had been providing individual counseling sessions and helping them rehabilitate into society.   By interacting with such students, she learned that it is the teacher-student relationship that opens a student's heart and makes communication possible.   To Megumi, communication takes many forms, and all forms can be the focus in English teaching.   Megumi also added that "the relationship should be established among the students" in order for the teacher to successfully teach English to develop students' communicative competence.

To Nobuhito, discussing what it means to teach English communication, as well as the associated questions which I asked, enriched his understanding of what underlies teachers' actual English teaching.   In an interview, he said, "I didn't know how complicated it is to teach English communication.   I haven't even thought about it

before." Nobuhito often mentioned in bi-weekly meetings and interviews that he needed to further study teaching methodologies and the English language to become a good English teacher. His frequent use of the auxiliary verb "should," as in "how English teachers *should* approach it," clearly indicates that like the other participants, Nobuhito was seeking some prescribed pedagogical, instructional techniques or strategies. In an interview, Nobuhito confessed:

> Unlike the other people [participants], I don't have enough knowledge [about the English language and teaching methodologies]. I hate it. I want to feel secure when I think about becoming an English teacher. I sometimes wonder why I want to become an English teacher.

As previously described, all the participants were interested in methodological issues and, at the same time, held great anxieties and concerns about the lack of knowledge in terms of teaching methodologies and the English language. Throughout the pre-practicum phase, this tendency was observed more or less in all the participants. Their perception of and anxieties about how much knowledge they possessed, especially in the pre-practicum phase, affected their thinking and hence, the processes of (re-)constructing their beliefs about English learning and teaching. It is notable that, as seen in Nobuhito's interview excerpts, such anxieties about the lack of knowledge gradually made all the participants doubt their capability to teach and their overall aptitudes to become professional English teachers.

Courses Taken in the Teacher Education Program

When discussing helpful courses in the pre-practicum phase, all the participants showed different perspectives to see their coursework.   To put it differently, they evaluated their coursework based on different criteria.   The following themes illustrate that the participants' perspectives to see their coursework were shaped by their beliefs about language learning and teaching.   In addition, the following themes imply that the participants constantly (re-)construct their beliefs about language learning and teaching throughout their coursework.

Teaching Styles, Enthusiasm, and Knowledge

When the participants began discussing which course(s) was helpful in terms of teacher development, I expected that they would choose the teaching methodology courses because I had witnessed their interests in and concerns about methodological issues.   To my surprise, all the participants excluded the teaching methodology courses (e.g., English Teaching Methods I & II and Educational Methodology).   In fact, they did not touch upon any methodology courses at all.

Nobuhito, referring to English Phonetics and Seminar on International Relations, recorded the following in his journal entry:

To me, helpful courses were English Phonetics and Seminar on International

Relations.   In these courses, professors teach in a learner-centered manner.

For instance, the professor in Seminar on International Relations aims at

developing our abilities to solve problems that the students find by themselves.

[When I was taking the course,] I had to figure out how to solve problems, and the

professor only gave me hints.

He saw his professor as a facilitator, not as a traditional professor who only lectures in

the classroom.   He emphasized that it is important to enhance learner autonomy in

education.   In an interview, he stated that "[most of the] teachers in Japan are lacking

the understanding of learner autonomy."

Nobuhito was not the only participant who selected helpful courses based on the

professors' teaching styles observed in the courses.   In fact, all the participants, except

for Megumi, selected helpful courses on the basis of professors' teaching styles.   For

instance, Masakazu criticized the nature of traditional teaching styles seen in the

teacher education program at EMU, claiming that "almost all the courses offered in the

teacher education program are lecture-based."   Stated another way, as Nobuhito

described, most of the courses were taught without a focus on "learner autonomy."

Sachi, in an interview, mentioned that she preferred the professor's teaching style that

allowed the students to actively participate in class, engage in learner-centered

activities, and feel "the sense of creating the course together."

Sachi chose English Phonetics as a helpful course.   It was the only course she

named in the collaborative journal.   "I did not want to register for the course because I

heard that it was not easy." Not knowing what type of teaching style the professor would employ, she had expected to see a traditional teaching style as observed in other courses. The teaching style she had expected was a lecture style, but as Nobuhito and Masakazu also reported, the class – English Phonetics – was different. "It was totally different! I was surprised when I went to class for the first time." The class was not a passive, lecture-oriented class. The students were required to develop teaching plans and actually instruct English pronunciation to their classmates taking the course. That is, there was a teaching-demonstration requirement. When Sachi found out that the course was learner-centered, she decided to take it. "I was hoping to have a class where I can practice teaching before my practicum."

Masakazu selected Seminar on English Phonetics, English Phonetics, and Human Rights Education and described them as helpful courses. In Masakazu's view, these courses had similar characteristics: they were group-work oriented, interactive, and learner-centered. Masakazu mentioned in his journal entry that he learned the importance of teacher's enthusiasm and the depth of knowledge in a specialized area.

In Seminar on English Phonetics, I learned how effective it was to work in a small group. We always studied in a small group, even in the summer or spring break. We supported one another, taught one another, etc. . . . All the students were highly motivated to learn.

Masakazu selected the course, considering not only the professor's teaching style and

the students' learning style but also the students' motivation and the way the professor

attempted to maintain the students' motivation. "It was the professor who helped us

maintain our motivation till the end of the course." The professor's in-depth knowledge

manifested in his explanations of many difficult concepts in phonetics and phonology

also motivated Masakazu to work hard. "Every time I went to class, I was motivated to

study more."

"I really respected the professor who taught Human Rights Education," Masakazu

continued. In Human Rights Education, "the professor was really enthusiastic" when

he talked about what Masakazu had considered taboo: issues of bullying in school,

historical discrimination against outcast people in Japan (called the *Buraku* issue), etc.

"Who would talk about such issues seriously?" The professor's aims in the course

were to have the students discuss the causes of various social as well as educational

issues in terms of human rights, and to ponder what ordinary people and educators can

do about them. The course was, in fact, lecture-based. According to Masakazu,

however, what impressed him was the professor's enthusiasm. Through the course in

question, he learned a lot about what is necessary for education and educators. In a

bi-weekly meeting, he said to the other participants, "I haven't seen any courses in

which so many students were crying! [in the final lecture]"

Educational courses such as Human Rights Education are offered at EMU as

required courses to all students enrolled in the teacher education program. Such

courses are designed to help the students become aware of the educational aspects of English teaching in Japan, that is, the social expectation that English is supposed to be taught in such a way that the students can be educated.   The participants all agreed on this point, confirming that they became aware of the importance of the educational aspects of English teaching expected in Japan.   In addition, through exchanging opinions and thoughts in the collaborative journal, the participants gradually increased their awareness of and sensitivity to their educator selves.

Improvement in Language Proficiency

A few participants also showed a different criterion when they chose helpful courses offered in the teacher education program.   The theme Language Proficiency Improvement provides us with yet another perspective to see the participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Masakazu, when he discussed Seminar on English Phonetics, touched upon the improvement of his English proficiency in spite of the fact that the seminar course was about English phonetics: the course was not an English-language course.   "Our English has improved a lot through the seminar sessions."   In an interview, he explained that English had been used as a tool of communication among the professor and students.   Using English, the students were required to discuss the content of English-written textbooks or research articles on English phonetics.   Furthermore, the

162

professor asked the students to use English when they gave oral presentations.

By using English as a tool of communication, Masakazu was encouraged to study English for communication purposes, focusing primarily on the development of speaking skills.   He did not see the improvement of English as the most important factor when he selected helpful courses, but he thought it important to touch upon it.   Yet, the experience of using English as a tool of communication between the professor and students evidently affected Masakazu's reasoning that the development of speaking skills should be promoted as a prime focus in all English classes.

Megumi, when discussed helpful courses in her journal entry, pointed out, "English is the subject that the teacher and students deal with language."   Unlike the other participants, she chose Seminar on English Literature as a helpful course and focused her descriptions about her learning experiences of language.   As previously described, Megumi, did not select helpful courses based mainly on teaching styles.   She saw the psychological as well as social distance between the professor and students as a more important factor in determining which courses to choose.   To Megumi, language should be taught in an environment where a good teacher-student relationship is established. In the process of establishing such a relationship, "trust" should be gained among the teacher and students.   "All teachers and students need to be aware of the importance of language and its role in gaining trust," wrote Megumi in her journal entry.   She believed that "the sensitivity to language plays a critical role in establishing a good

relationship among people."   The seminar taught her how fascinating it is to study

language (not only English, but other languages as well).

　　We read English literature [written in English] in the course.   After reading more

than 10 literary works, we talked about the underlying historical events, authors'

lives, and main themes.   By discussing the way of living and thinking observed in

the literary works, I could intellectually grow.   We also used some

English-language textbooks to learn English expressions.   We used *Tenseijingo*

[a Japanese newspaper section about current topics] to improve our Japanese as

well; we practiced expressing our opinions and learning the other students'

opinions in Japanese.

　　From Megumi's perspective, "language can change the way people live."   She

stressed that she viewed English learning and teaching as a means of sharpening the

sense of language.   In this regard, the seminar was helpful.   While taking the seminar

course, she started to see all languages as a means of expressing one's "feelings."

Reflecting on her learning experience in Seminar on English Literature, she further

wrote, "I encountered various expressions that became my treasures that positively

changed the way I live."

Thinking of One's Future Teaching

The theme Thinking of One's Future Teaching shows that the participants tended to evaluate their coursework in consideration of possible applications to their future teaching.   Stated another way, the participants tried to seek what they could apply to their future teaching while taking their coursework in the teacher education program. As will be illustrated, the participants did so based on their beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Megumi, reflecting upon what she had learned from Seminar on English Literature, described what she would like to do in English classes in the future.   "I would like to share the language that includes people's feelings with my students."   She would not like her teaching to only provide explanations of English grammar or the meanings of English vocabulary, but she would like to help the students appreciate and understand the link between the language and their lives.   "I would like my students to discover the power of language through my English classes."   To "discover the power of language," according to Megumi, it is important to follow three steps: reading carefully, writing carefully, and reading aloud a lot.   She always followed these three steps in learning Japanese as well as English, and she was satisfied with the outcomes.   "When I become an English teacher, I will consider these three steps crucial in my teaching."

Thinking of her future teaching, Megumi also pointed out the importance of the psychological as well as social distance among the professor and students she had

perceived in Seminar on English Literature.   In her opinion, the psychological and

social distance was another aspect that she would like to actualize in her future class.

"The closer the distance is, the more trust the teacher can gain from the students."   In

the course in question, she perceived the distance to be proximate among the professor

and students.   "With the professor and friends, I often went on a trip, sightseeing and

eating out together," said Megumi.   When asked if the main reason was the class size,

she answered with confidence in an interview, "It's not the class size *per se* that made

me feel the proximity."   Rather, her professor established a learning community where

she could respect the other students, learn from them, and trust one another.   "The

professor was respectable.   He was not at all directive or authoritative."   Megumi also

shared her impression of the professor in a bi-weekly meeting and mentioned that she

would like to become a teacher like him.

Nobuhito also connected the discussions about helpful courses to his future

teaching.   "I learned something that I want to apply when I become an English

teacher," wrote Nobuhito in his journal entry.   Apparently, he was determined to apply a

learner-centered teaching style to his future teaching because he believed that "the

students might be motivated by learner-centered instructions to think and solve

problems on their own."

"Besides Seminar on International Relations," he continued in his journal entry:

English Phonetics was very helpful.   It was not a passive class.   We had to

166

demonstrate teaching [pronunciation teaching].   All the students were required to

discuss some topics and learn from such tasks.   By demonstrating teaching, I

learned what I should be careful about [when I stand in front of the students and

teach them].   I think such a teaching-demonstration requirement is very helpful.

Nobuhito thought about applying this teaching-demonstration idea to his future English

class.   From his perspective, all students should teach one another because he

believed that "teaching generates discovery."   By teaching one another, the students

can intellectually grow through their discoveries.

In his journal entry, Nobuhito, albeit briefly, provided concrete descriptions as well.

For instance, he stated that English teachers should be familiar with "American and

British cultures and traditions."   In his view, however, if they "merely transmit" their

knowledge to the students, "it becomes useless."   Based on this belief, Nobuhito

suggested that English teachers should have the students do research on American or

British cultures on their own, or in pairs, and present their findings to the class.   In

doing so, the students can simultaneously teach, support, and learn from one another.

Anxieties about Becoming English Teachers in Japan

The participants, especially Sachi and Nobuhito, expressed their anxieties and

concerns regarding the lack of knowledge about teaching methodologies (i.e.,

instructional techniques or strategies) and the English language (i.e., subject matter).

As the participants discussed various issues in the collaborative journal and group discussions of the bi-weekly meetings, they began wondering if they could really become educators and if they really possessed vocational aptitudes required for educators in Japan.   In other words, their attention gradually shifted from interests in vocational methodologies to concerns regarding vocational aptitudes required for Japanese English teachers.

In the pre-practicum phase, particularly right before the practicum (i.e., approximately a month before the practicum), all the participants showed anxieties about becoming English teachers in Japan.   More specifically, they showed anxieties about becoming educators.   Such anxieties were clearly observed in interviews, individual correspondences, bi-weekly meetings, and their collaborative journal entries. Their anxieties about becoming educators deserve attention for two reasons.   Firstly, their anxieties were closely related to their beliefs about language learning and teaching. Secondly, as will be seen, the observed phenomenon that the participants went through the emotional depression derived from such anxieties might be culture-specific.   It seemed that the social or ideological environment surrounding the studied context caused the participants' concerns about their educator selves.   Thus, the theme Anxieties about Becoming English Teachers illustrates a critical aspect of the participants' development, particularly their professional identity formation (i.e., the formation of their selves as persons, language instructors, and educators).

Vocational Aptitudes Required for Educators

What triggered the thread of discussions on anxieties about becoming English teachers in Japan was the national news that schoolchildren were killed by their classmates, parents, neighbors, and serial murderers.   At the time of the investigation, there was even news reporting some incidents that a few schoolchildren killed their parents.   Some critics blamed Japanese educators for not being able to help or protect schoolchildren against crimes; other critics blamed educators, as well as the educational system, for having developed an unsafe, unethical society.

In her journal entry, Sachi touched upon the national news:

What's going on in current Japan?   So many schoolchildren were killed.   In Hiroshima, in Tochigi [prefectures], everywhere in Japan . . . If my own kids were killed like that, I would commit suicide.   I wouldn't feel like living . . . Because the media broadcast so many incidents, the society has become completely paralyzed. I really see a social change for the worse.   Do we need to teach our students not to kill people?   If we teach students that killing people is a bad thing, then such crimes would disappear?

Sachi pointed out in her journal entry that the Japanese society has changed due to the weakening of human relations and the spread of nuclear families.

In response to Sachi's journal entry, Megumi shared her idea that "education is to create a sound foundation for building good human relationships."   Megumi also

claimed that the current society in Japan lacks "love for everything" because of materialism and extravagance, and that all educators need to have "love for people." To Sachi and Megumi, it is love for students which all educators need to have as an aptitude.   Sachi clearly noted in her journal entry that English teachers need to have love for children, and that English teachers need to educate the students through teaching the subject of English.

    After reading the other participants' journal entries, Masakazu expressed his frustration of being stuck in the middle of seeking his educator self.   In his journal entry, Masakazu wrote:

> I don't know what to say [about the current news] . . . I know something is wrong. While reading the other participants' journal entries, I thought about what we can do.   Very hard.   I'm at a loss, though.   What can we do about it?   As an educator . . . Do we really have to teach our students not to kill people?   Do we really have to start doing that?   Is our society that bad?

Masakazu was obviously confused and lost confidence in his aptitude to become an educator.   He mentioned in his journal entry that he believed "education is hope," but because of this belief, he was forced to wonder what he could do as an educator.   He even wondered if he should become an English teacher in Japan.   He had confidence in his English.   He was also confident in making every effort to seek out and find effective techniques or strategies to teach English.   In his view, having the relatively

high language proficiency and making a continuous endeavor to improve teaching skills were enough to become a good English teacher.   He had never thought about his educator's role; he had never faced his educator self in the past.

Educational courses that the participants had taken and their exposure to national news as well as educational critics appeared to have affected the participants' identity formation.   Masakazu, at the beginning of the pre-practicum phase, stated that he decided to become an English teacher simply because he liked the English language. Masakazu had firmly believed that being good at English and being able to teach English effectively is the only requirement for English teachers.   Nonetheless, he realized that his belief contradicted what the other participants (i.e., Sachi and Megumi) had written in the collaborative journal.

In an interview, Masakazu stated:

I was moved by Sachi's words when she wrote [in a journal entry] that love for children and love for people . . . that's needed for educators.   But, to teach English, I hadn't thought that such love would be needed.

Apparently, Masakazu could not think that he possessed a vocational aptitude to be an educator.   When Masakazu expressed that he lacked a vocational aptitude in his journal entry, Nobuhito responded:

Let me express my idea.   We shouldn't argue whether or not we have vocational aptitudes.   I think we all have vocational aptitudes.   The most important thing is

how we can change our aptitudes.   All of us will become teachers when we have

children because we all have to educate our children!   What may change our

aptitudes include experiences and what we gain from our experiences.

Masakazu raised an objection against Nobuhito's idea, stating that he did not feel that

he possessed a vocational aptitude at all.   Furthermore, Masakazu also argued that all

parents are not educators.   Masakazu's parents did not teach; rather, his parents

"guided" him when he needed.   Such a thread of discussions in the collaborative

journal and the discussions during the bi-weekly meetings led all the participants to think

about their educator selves, try to identify their educator selves, and consequently doubt

their vocational aptitudes for becoming educators.

It is worthwhile mentioning that while exchanging journal entries regarding

educational aptitudes, all the participants reported that they totally lost confidence in

their vocational aptitude.   Even Nobuhito, who once stated that all people have

aptitudes to be educators, lost his confidence.   In an interview, Nobuhito stated:

I'm confused . . . How can we educate the students in English classes?   Is it

possible to educate the students through teaching English?   I wonder if I can

educate the students in English classes.   How?   I like children.   I like schools.

I like education.   But, I don't know . . . if I can educate my students in English

classes.   Should I become an English teacher?

Similar remarks, which indicated the emotional depression derived from anxieties, were

observed in individual interviews and correspondences of the other participants (i.e.,

email and phone).   Accordingly, such issues as becoming an educator and vocational

aptitudes for becoming educators possibly occupied the participants' minds, in fact, until

the end of the mid-practicum phase, that is, after their actual teaching experiences at

the practicum sites.

The participants knew that English should be taught in Japan in such a way that

the students are educated.   They somewhat learned that it is the social expectation in

Japan.   The MEXT in Japan implies so in the Course of Study.   Nevertheless, all the

participants wondered how they were supposed to approach educating the students

through teaching English.   Since they could not find a clue anywhere (in textbooks,

courses, etc.) as to possible approaches, they had great anxieties about becoming

English teachers in Japan.   Surprisingly, despite their common belief, the social

expectation, and the ideological environment surrounding the context studied, no

courses in the teacher education program touched directly upon the educational

aspects of learning and teaching English.   In other words, at the time of the

investigation, there were no courses offered in the teacher education program at EMU

to help them learn how they could approach educating the students through teaching

English.

Thus, the participants had to go through the emotional depression derived from

the anxieties about vocational aptitudes to become educators.   In the process,

however, all the participants gradually began to see themselves as would-be educators, not merely as language instructors, struggling in seeking their educator selves and possible approaches to educating the students through the subject of English.

Approximately a week before the practicum, Masakazu wrote the following in his journal entry:

I have struggled a lot since we began keeping the collaborative journal.   I have been exposed to various issues.   And I tried to think about various issues: I tried to write about them.   The more I tried, the more I felt that I was not supposed to become an English teacher, an educator.   But without such an opportunity [of keeping the collaborative journal], I couldn't have faced myself.   I wouldn't like to sweep my true self under the rug.   I think I became positive about my ignorance.

Masakazu was not the only person who went through and recovered from emotional depression derived from the anxieties about vocational aptitudes.   Sachi, for instance, expressed her feeling in her journal entry:

I was pleased to know your [the participants'] anxieties [in the journal] about vocational aptitudes.   I really thank your courage to write and share your voice. I was afraid of becoming an obstruction in students' learning.   I want to guide my students, too [as the other participants had written in the journal]; but, what we do and what we say to the students might interrupt their learning.   What we say might offend the students.   I might make my students hate English.   Through

writing in the collaborative journal and discussing many issues, I realized that

although I have to struggle more in the future, I felt that I would be able to cope

with it.   And, I know I have to.   Maybe, it is the right time to experience ups and

downs.   Let's face the struggle!

The other participants, Nobuhito and Megumi, also mentioned in a bi-weekly meeting

that although they had anxieties, they would keep trying to cope with them.   By keeping

the collaborative journal and sharing their anxieties with one another, all the participants

maintained their motivation, as well as positive attitudes, towards the goal of becoming

English teachers in Japan.   As Masakazu confessed in an interview, "sharing anxieties

helped" them a lot.   Such a research finding, in turn, indicates that they successfully

created a learning community where they could support and collaboratively grow as

professionals in their learning group.

Idealized Visions of English Learning and Teaching

At different times during the investigation, all the participants showed vague

visions of ideal English learning and teaching in bi-weekly meetings, interviews, and the

collaborative journal.   In the process of recovering from the emotional depression

derived from the anxieties about becoming English teachers, all the participants began

to provide more concrete visions of ideal English learning and teaching.   Particularly

right before their practicum, they actively exchanged one another's idealized visions of

English learning and teaching.   The theme Idealized Visions of English Learning and Teaching depicts the status of the participants' beliefs when they were about to begin their teaching practicum.   More specifically, this theme illustrates what they believed to be preferable or desirable regarding English learning and teaching right before their practicum.

Sachi confessed in her journal entry that she decided to become an English teacher because her father used to be a teacher (he had already retired) and she would be able to go back to school and experience school life again.   While experiencing the emotional depression, she began wondering what type of teacher she would like to become, what type of students she would like to teach, and what type of English class she would like to provide to the students.   According to Sachi, when she was experiencing the emotional depression, she seriously pondered ideal English learning and teaching for the first time in her life.

I want to teach students who listen to me and obey me.   I know it's selfish . . . It's OK for them to get loud and wild during the intermissions between classes.   But, I want them to be quiet in my class and focus their attention to my instructions. Maybe, I'm writing this because I know my teaching is boring . . . and I don't want them to behave badly in my class . . . I'm teaching in a cram school, and I think my teaching is not good.   I want to teach English in such a way that I can attract the students.   I want to make my English class fascinating to my students.

Having written so, Sachi described her vision of an idealized English teacher.   "My

ideal English teacher understands students' feelings and shows consideration for

others."   Her ideal English teacher also "attracts" students' attention and "stimulates

students' curiosity."   Sachi considered a sense of humor vital, too.   Thus, her vision of

ideal English learning and teaching, when discussed in the bi-weekly meetings,

included such keywords as *the stimulation of curiosity*, *students' affect*, *consideration for*

others, and *a sense of humor* (see Table 3).

Table 3

Observed Keywords: Idealized English Learning and Teaching

Participant	Keyword
Sachi	the stimulation of curiosity, students' affect, consideration for others, a sense of humor, learning community
Masakazu	a sense of achievement, active participation, guide, coach, speaking skills, communication (in either English or Japanese)
Megumi	students' affect, motivation, interests, acceptance, appreciation, and whole personality development
Nobuhito	autonomous attitudes, gaining trust, communication (in either English or Japanese), preservice teacher relationships, connecting the understanding of the students to English teaching, and disciplining the students

In an interview, Sachi added:

I would like to learn how to motivate students to learn. So, I've been working on

the topic [motivation] in my graduation thesis. I've been having a hard time

researching and writing, but I think it'll help me a lot.

Masakazu, unlike Sachi, stated that he wanted to teach students who were loud

and wild even in class. "I want a lot of students who don't care about entrance

examinations! I want them to have dreams, and I want them to be attention seekers."

Masakazu appeared to hold a belief that such students would speak up and enjoy using

English without much help from the teacher.   As for an ideal English teacher, he

described his idea of such in the collaborative journal:

I would like to become a coach or a leader for my students.   In my understanding,

coach originally means to carry people in a cart to their destinations.   Correct me,

if I'm wrong . . . Anyway, I would like to take my students to their destinations.

Their destinations vary, and I know that.   But, English teachers should know at

least how to get there [students' destinations].

When asked to elaborate on an English teachers' role as a guide, Masakazu mentioned

the following in an interview:

For example . . . An English teacher should tell the students. . . Like . . . This way

is a shortcut, but risky.   Or, that way is a roundabout, but the scenery is great and

pleasant.   Or . . . That way is kind of hard to go through, but you can gain a sense

of achievement.   There are various ways; they change, too.   There isn't one

absolute way that the students should take.   So, the English teacher has to show

as many ways as possible and communicate with the students and walk

alongside.

The terms such as "a way" or "ways," in Masakazu's view, represent learning strategies

which the students can apply.   When discussed in a bi-weekly meeting, Masakazu's

descriptions of ideal English learning and teaching included such keywords as *a sense*

of achievement, *students' active participation*, *teacher's guide*, *coach*, and

communication (see Table 3).

Megumi, in her journal entry, stated that her ideal students have something that they can get absorbed in.   The "something" is not necessarily the English language or English class.   According to her idea, it is the English teacher's role to connect "something" to English learning.   Megumi explained:

I want to teach students who listen to me carefully and try to learn something from

my class.   My ideal students have interests in as many things as possible.   They

should have something that they can get absorbed in.   As an English teacher, I

would like to connect their interests to English learning.

The "something" can be the students' interests in movies, literature, sports, etc.

Megumi seemed to believe that an English teacher needs to have the students express

what they are interested in and connect the interests to the content of classroom

instructions.

Regarding an ideal English teacher, Megumi wrote that she decided to become an

English teacher because she really liked children.   At one time, she even mentioned

that the subject could be something else; the subject happened to be English.   Megumi

liked to educate children in such a way that they can develop whole personalities.

Nevertheless, Megumi had not thought about the way English teachers educate the

students through teaching English.   In an interview, she mentioned:

Any teacher should face students' lives fully and lead their lives to the

development of whole personalities.   So, I want to face their lives fully, accept

and appreciate their lives, and guide them.   Can English teachers do so?   I think

we can do that.   But, I hadn't thought about it before . . . before interacting with

other people [the other participants].   I will have to think about it.

When discussed in a bi-weekly meeting, her descriptions of ideal English learning and

teaching included such keywords as *students' affect*, *motivation*, *interests*, *acceptance*,

appreciation, and *whole personality development* (see Table 3).

Obviously stimulated by Megumi's journal entry, Nobuhito confessed that he

wanted to become an educator, not a language instructor.   "To me, the subject

happened to be English, too."   In his journal entry, Nobuhito also wrote that he first tried

to become a PE teacher.   "I was really interested in physical education.   I actually

hated English in schools."   The reason why he "hated English" was the influence of

entrance examination.   To my surprise, he had entered a different college before

coming to EMU to obtain a teaching certificate in physical education.   But soon after he

had entered the college, he realized that PE was not the subject that he really wanted to

teach.   "I was looking for some other subjects that I might be able to teach."

According to Nobuhito, the subject that he finally decided to teach happened to be

English.   Thus, like Megumi, he had not thought about the educational aspects of

teaching English in Japan.   Both Nobuhito and Megumi, although their motivation to

become English teachers was education-oriented, reported that they had never

pondered their aptitudes as expected in Japan for becoming educators until they

discussed and contemplated various issues in the collaborative-learning group.

Nobuhito thought he would be able to teach English simply because his "English

teachers in the past were not good."   The English teachers only emphasized the

importance of entrance examinations and thus, he got the impression that he could

teach better than they did.   While completing his coursework at EMU, however, he

realized how hard it is to teach English.   Especially when he learned that English

teachers in Japan are expected to help the students develop communicative

competence, he came to feel that it is hard to teach communicative English.

Nobuhito wrote in his journal entry:

My ideal students ask questions a lot.   I would like them to have autonomous

attitudes.   I would like them to show autonomous endeavor.   I want them to talk

to me first.   It's easy for me to start communicating with them and establishing a

good teacher-student relationship.   By communicating with the students, I would

like to teach English effectively.   I think an English teacher can teach effectively if

the teacher knows what the students are thinking and what interests they have.

To Nobuhito, an ideal English teacher gains trust from the students through

communicating with one another.   An ideal English teacher understands the students

and uses the understanding of the students in teaching English.   When discussed in a

bi-weekly meeting, his descriptions of ideal English learning and teaching included such

keywords as *autonomous attitudes*, *gaining trust*, *communication* (in either English or

Japanese), *student-teacher relationships*, *connecting the understanding of the students*

to English teaching, and *disciplining the students* (see Table 3).

Masakazu claimed that disciplining the students is not an important factor.   He

seemed to believe that the more freedom the students have, the more effectively the

teacher can teach English.   Megumi also reported that English teachers need not

discipline the students to make English teaching effective.   In contrast to Masakazu

and Megumi's beliefs, Nobuhito apparently believed that disciplining the students must

be done in order for the teacher to make English teaching effective.   Similar to

Nobuhito, Sachi also mentioned that it is the disciplining role of the teacher that

determines the quality of English learning and teaching in class.   With these beliefs,

the participants went to their practicum sites.   Masakazu and Nobuhito were placed in

high schools; they were actually placed in the same high school.   Megumi and Sachi

were placed in different junior-high schools.   Their practicum lasted for four weeks.

To reiterate, right before their practicum, the participants clearly showed their

realization and understanding that English teaching was as an educational act.

Nonetheless, they could not articulate how they would approach it.   Through their

collaborative journaling experience, they came to strongly reaffirm that they were to

become not only language instructors but also educators.

Impact of Practicum Experiences

Reflections upon Teaching Practices

Relationships with Supervisors

University students who go to their practicum are usually assigned to senior

teachers working full time at practicum sites (i.e., junior-high or high schools).   A senior

teacher, who is expected to play a supervisory role at a practicum site, observe

student-teachers' teaching and interactions with the students and advise the

student-teachers how to improve their aptitudes and skills.   Some supervisors are

authoritative or directive; other supervisors are more liberal in their approaches.   Thus,

it is quite natural to assume that the relationship with a supervisor plays a critical role in

determining the success and/or failure of the practicum.   Nobuhito, Megumi, and Sachi

did not report any trouble interacting with their supervisors during and after their

practicum experiences.   However, Masakazu, who was placed in a high school, had

some trouble with his supervisor.   In a post-practicum interview, Masakazu said, "I

didn't enjoy my teaching during the practicum.   I seriously thought about quitting it."

He exhibited a visible aversion when he described his experience with a supervisor.

Because I could feel his anger, I gradually became sympathetic to Masakazu while

interviewing him.   I felt it quite surprising and shocking.   When I visited his school to

observe his teaching, I had a chance to interview him at his practicum site.   Masakazu,

however, did not tell me that he had been having such a hard time.   He might have

refrained from doing so, knowing that such a behavior at school would be rude to his supervisor.

Masakazu's collaborative journal entries revealed his strong enthusiasm to tell the students how fun it is to study English.   He wanted to have his students use English in class and enjoy it.   He liked energetic, loud students.   Thus, he expected to make his English classes interactive and communicative.   As previously mentioned, he believed that the development of speaking skills should be a primary focus of English classes. Nevertheless, there was a huge gap between the ideal and the reality of English learning and teaching.   According to Masakazu, his supervisor did not allow him to teach at his disposal.   Masakazu's utterance in an interview is pivotal:

[I taught] Fifty-minute classes, right?   I was told not to waste even a minute by my supervisor.   She [the supervisor] told me to make the students quiet.   She told me to make them just listen to my lecture.   That's what I was told to do!   I wasn't angry at that time.   I didn't know what to say . . . I was disappointed, I guess. She pushed me to copy her teaching style, too.   I couldn't do anything that I had planned to do.   When I did something different from her teaching, I was scolded. Can you believe it!?   She nagged me to learn from her even in a teacher's room. I couldn't stand it!

Masakazu tried persuading his supervisor to allow his trial-and-error approach to learning to teach.   Observed by his supervisor, he even taught a few classes, ignoring

1 8 5

his supervisor's advice. "Whatever I did differently," said Masakazu, "got under her skin." To avoid listening to his supervisor nagging about Masakazu in a teacher's room, he sometimes stayed in a classroom till his supervisor went back home, particularly at the beginning of the practicum. "It's not that I disliked my supervisor. She was actually a good person," Masakazu added. "I just didn't like the way she supervised me."

By staying in a classroom for a long time to avoid the contact with his supervisor in the teacher's room, Masakazu realized that he became able to interact with the students more than the other teachers. Every day, he tried to make the best use of the time he spent in a classroom after school. He talked with the students, played games with them, or answered their questions regarding English classes. "I was worried too much about my aptitude to be an educator [before the practicum]. I was worried because I didn't have confidence in my educator self." Masakazu, by interacting with the students after school, gradually gained confidence in his educator self. "When I became close to my students, I began feeling that I would be able to become an educator." He noticed that the more he talked to the students and understood who they were, the more he could attract attention from the students when he taught English classes.

Masakazu's actual teaching, however, still had some problems due to the nature of English learning and teaching at the practicum site. In an interview, he further

remarked on his struggle:

> Most of the English teachers were teaching English in order that all students
> would be able to go to good universities.   I was shocked by their lectures about
> many grammar points, frequent vocabulary quizzes, time-consuming translation
> tasks given to the students . . . I observed their classes . . . The students were all
> quiet.   No communicative activities.   None!   Then, I wondered, 'Am I supposed
> to do such things, too?'   'Should I teach test-taking skills and help the students in
> the same way?'   I felt a huge gap between my teaching belief and their teaching
> beliefs.   I felt that their value system was totally different from mine.   She [his
> supervisor] even taught me what color of chalk I should use, how I should write on
> the board, what kind of lecture I should provide . . . I felt that's enough . . .

It appeared that Masakazu did not like to teach English with a focus on entrance
examinations.   It was, according to him, such a distasteful task to imitate his
supervisor's teaching.   At the beginning of his practicum, he somewhat imitated his
supervisor's teaching.   Toward the end of his practicum, he frequently ignored his
supervisor's advice.   "There was no reason to be me if I kept teaching the same way as
she did."   Masakazu gradually began teaching the way he had initially planned,
incorporating communicative activities and exercises.   He ignored his supervisor's
advice.   "Yes, I was scolded a lot.   But, I didn't care.   I tried not to care."

In teaching differently from his supervisor, Masakazu learned one important thing

187

from his students.   Because of the different teaching styles, the students began asking

Masakazu for more logical, clear explanations about grammar points and the content of

English-written readings.   He recalled this experience in an interview:

[Before going to the practicum,] I had sort of believed that . . . To tell the students

how fun it is to use English, I thought, any teacher's explanations are useless.

Nonsense.   So, I wanted my students to feel it [the joy of using English] in class.

But, maybe, because they had gotten familiar with my supervisor's explanations

about grammar points, they asked me for clearer and easy-to-understand

explanations.

Prior to this experience, Masakazu had described his belief in a journal entry that

"language is something that people feel, not something that people think."   Thus, he

tended to avoid providing detailed explanations of English grammar or vocabulary.

Instead, he attempted to focus his attention on the actual use of English as a

communication tool.   Masakazu, however, seemed to realize that an English teacher

needs to have skills to provide clear and logical explanations to the students.

It should be noted here that Masakazu, although he had such a hard time with his

supervisor, maintained a high motivation to become an English teacher after the

practicum because he "became interested in the educational relationships with the

students" and the effects of establishing such relationships on his teaching practices.

The other participants, including Nobuhito who was placed in the same high school as

was Masakazu, did not report any trouble in interacting with their supervisors.

Unspoken Rules of English Teaching

Unlike Masakazu, Nobuhito was allowed to teach as he wished by his supervisor. When the participants shared their practicum experiences in the post-practicum phase, Nobuhito mentioned in a bi-weekly meeting:

I failed the first class.   It was obvious . . . I didn't know what I was doing.   My instructions were not clear at all.   The students in class sensed my nervousness. The class didn't go well . . . So, I tried to imitate my supervisor's teaching.   I wanted to know a model of teaching that I could follow.

Indeed, Nobuhito struggled a lot at the beginning of his practicum.   In the mid-practicum phase, he personally contacted me by phone, seeking some teaching procedures to follow.   He frequently called me to ask for some advice.   I told him that it might not be a good idea to imitate someone else's teaching, and that he could explore his own teaching style(s) through trial and error.

Although Nobuhito was insisting that he really needed some prescribed teaching procedures, he gradually took hold of his own teaching style because of his constructive relationship with the supervisor.   His supervisor listened to Nobuhito's opinions and concerns and encouraged Nobuhito to do whatever he would like to do.   Thus, Nobuhito could make up his mind to teach the way he had intended.   It should be

189

stated that like Nobuhito, the other participants showed more or less the same tendency

to look for a teaching model or prescribed way of teaching at the beginning of their

practicum.

When I observed his teaching at the high school, Nobuhito began his class with a

short vocabulary quiz given to the students.　According to Nobuhito, it was a

departmental policy imposed on all English teachers working at the high school.　After

the vocabulary quiz, Nobuhito, believing that the development of speaking skills should

be the only focus of English classes, had a few students summarize an English-written

text orally right after the vocabulary quiz.　Called upon by Nobuhito, a few students

presented their oral summaries in English.　Following the oral summary, he moved on

to a new English-written text by checking the meanings and pronunciation of new words

and idioms.　Nobuhito pronounced each word and idiom, asking some students what it

means in Japanese.　Since the students had been required to check the pronunciation

and meanings of new words and idioms prior to the class, they rarely made mistakes in

answering Nobuhito's questions.　Then, he played a CD of the new English written-text.

The CD was a native-speaker's recording of the English text.　The students listened to

the CD quietly.　Nobuhito asked the students to read the text aloud in pairs.　Most of

the students read the text in a loud voice.　He then told all the students to read the text

together twice.　Subsequently, he asked the students several questions in English

about the content of the text.　Called on by Nobuhito, several students answered the

questions in English, looking at the text.   Finally, Nobuhito called on some students to provide oral summaries of the text that they had just read in class.   Then, the class was dismissed.

Nobuhito was placed in the same high school where Masakazu was implementing his practicum.   Unlike Nobuhito, Masakazu had a hard time, working with his supervisor.   As I discussed earlier, his supervisor told Masakazu to imitate her teaching and follow every piece of advice.   Masakazu, however, attempted to teach the way he had initially planned on his own.   His attempt of teaching differently from his supervisor became obvious toward the end of the practicum.   When I observed his teaching in the mid-practicum phase, Masakazu was right in the middle of changing his imitated style of teaching to his originally intended teaching style.

Masakazu began his class with a short vocabulary quiz.   Like Nobuhito's case, it was a departmental policy imposed on all English teachers to start English classes with a vocabulary quiz.   He then moved on to new words and idioms included in a newly introduced English-written text.   Masakazu pronounced each word and idiom, asking some questions about what it means in Japanese.   The students were asked to prepare for the class, checking the pronunciation and meanings of all new words and idioms.   Subsequently, unlike Nobuhito, Masakazu provided a 10-minute grammar lecture to the students.   He extracted major grammar points from the English text and explained them with reference to the usage and structures, providing some example

sentences.   While explaining grammar points in Japanese, he intentionally avoided the excessive use of technical terms.   Masakazu then moved on to the content of the English text.   He did not ask questions to the students about the text, but he provided an oral summary of the text to the students.   Following his oral summary, Masakazu told the students to read the text aloud in pairs.   When the pair-reading was done, Masakazu translated some key sentences into Japanese, sometimes asking several students to present their translations.   Subsequently, he played a CD (native-speaker's recording) of the English text and asked the students to choose keywords while listening to the text.   He called upon some students to provide oral summaries in English. Finally, using the keywords, the students summarized the English text orally to the class. Then, the class was dismissed.

Both Nobuhito and Masakazu experienced their practicum at the same high school.   Their supervisors took antithetical approaches.   To reiterate, Nobuhito's supervisor allowed Nobuhito to experiment with various types of teaching, while Masakazu's supervisor was authoritative in her approach.   In both Nobuhito and Masakazu's classes, there was the same departmental policy imposed on them to begin English classes with vocabulary quizzes.   Their teaching procedures, however, had similarities.   This fact, in turn, implies that there is a tacit understanding that Nobuhito and Masakazu shared in terms of English teaching.   Nobuhito's remark in a bi-weekly meeting is pivotal:

When I began observing some English teachers' teaching at school [at the

beginning of the practicum], I noticed a certain pattern that they followed.   I didn't

ask my supervisor whether or not I should follow the pattern.   But, it's an

unspoken rule, I think.   I developed my lesson plan, thinking about what I was

expected to do at that school.

In the bi-weekly meeting, Masakazu also touched upon "an unspoken rule," implying

that school-level, as well as department-level "unspoken rule[s]" existed in the school.

In both Nobuhito and Masakazu's perspectives, such rules were understood among the

teachers to unify the content and progress of classwork.   Referring back to his

experience, Nobuhito mentioned in a post-practicum phase interview:

We had studied what kind of lesson plan is good or bad at EMU [through the

coursework].   I mean, acceptable or not . . . I think those good lesson plans have

already included the unspoken rules shared among the English teachers at the

high school.   So, I didn't see it [referring to "the high school"] as strange.   I didn't

like it, though.

For the allotted time for English teaching at high school, that is, fifty minutes, both

Nobuhito and Masakazu had to take into consideration unspoken rules (both

school-level and department-level) when they prepared their lesson plans.

How, then, did these two participants try to teach as they had intended?   "I

included an oral summary exercise in every English class, although they were not

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commonly practiced at the high school," said Masakazu in a bi-weekly meeting.

Likewise, Nobuhito also reported in the bi-weekly meeting that he included an oral

summary exercise for the same reason.   Due to the restrictions (i.e., school-level as

well as department-level unspoken rules), however, both of them were not satisfied with

their English teaching during the practicum.   Particularly, Nobuhito, who believed that

the development of speaking skills should be the only focus of English teaching,

expressed his dissatisfaction in a bi-weekly meeting.

> After my practicum, I began thinking that all activities [done in English class]
>
> cannot incorporate speaking exercises for the students.   I don't know.   But . . . I
>
> didn't give all directions to the students in English.   So, I will brush up my English,
>
> and I need to use English more in class.

Masakazu, on the other hand, used English almost every time he gave directions to the

students except for the 10-minute grammar lecture, but he claimed that it might be

necessary to eliminate all unspoken rules, admitting the fact that he could not put a

primary focus on the development of speaking skills in English teaching as he had

intended before the practicum experience.

Conflicts between Teaching Beliefs and Practices

"English-only classes [classes taught only in English] were my ideal.   So, I tried to

use English all the time during my class," said Sachi in an interview.   At her practicum

site, a junior-high school, she was assigned to teach beginning-level students.   Most of

the students started studying English after they had entered the junior-high school.

From the beginning of her practicum, she tried to use English when she gave directions

and explanations to the students in class.   As she did so, however, she could not get

rid of her concern about the students' comprehension.   "Especially, when I had to

explain something difficult or complicated to the students, I could not help using

Japanese," described Sachi in her journal entry.   In fact, her struggle with the

classroom English continued until the end of her practicum.

When I observed Sachi's teaching, she began her class, having a short English

conversation with the students.   She asked general questions in English, and some

students answered them in English.   "Did you watch the World Cup Soccer games?"

"Yes!   That was exciting!"   After the short conversation with some students, she

handed out a piece of paper on which lyrics of an English song was printed.   "Let's sing

a song!"   She moved on to play a CD and sang a song together.   Every student

joyfully sang the song in a loud voice.   Sachi obviously tried to create a comfortable

learning environment.   She then gave directions regarding an interview game.   The

directions were given in Japanese.   Using a grammar point (i.e., the past tense), the

students made three to four interview questions and interviewed the other students.

After the interview game, she checked the students' comprehension of an English text,

a short dialogue, using Japanese.   Extracting a new grammar point (i.e., the past

progressive) from the text, she introduced a new activity, providing directions in Japanese.   In the new activity, the students, in pairs, made an English skit, using the past progressive.   When this activity was done, the class was dismissed.

Referring back to her teaching experience, Sachi mentioned the following in an interview:

To make my class communicative, I had thought that it is important to get rid of students' anxieties to speak up.   I had thought a learner-friendly environment was the key.   But, as I taught, I became more and more concerned about the students' comprehension of my spoken English.   Quite often, I even thought that by trying to use English all the time, I might have become the person that was raising students' anxieties to speak up.

Sachi had a good command of English because of her experience of living abroad in Singapore and her continuous effort in improving her speaking skills at EMU.   Thus, the main cause of her concern might not be her spoken English.   It must have been something else.

Prior to her practicum, she expressed her belief that it was crucial for English teachers to pay particular attention to students' affect.   Among others, she stressed the importance of getting rid of students' anxieties to speak up when teaching English for the development of communicative competence.   As seen in her teaching observed during the practicum, she incorporated short English conversations, games, and songs

in order to lower the students' anxiety level. Regarding the classroom English, however, the more she used the classroom English, the more she became concerned about the students' affect. Sachi could not find tangible solutions to the conflict between her belief and teaching practice. Because of her belief, she possibly became overly sensitive to the students' affect, which, in turn, interfered in her teaching behavior. As a result, she seemed to become excessively anxious about giving directions or explanations in English.

In the post-practicum phase, she further touched upon her anxiety caused by a similar conflict between her teaching belief and practice in a collaborative journal entry:

I realized that I did not have a sense of humor to let the students smile and come out of their shells. I had thought that all teachers, particularly language teachers, need to have a sense of humor. To establish a comfortable learning community, I should have prepared more funny stories or interesting stories to share with my students.

Sachi appeared to hold a belief that "all teachers, particularly language teachers, need to have a sense of humor," but she realized that she might not actually possess a sense of humor. Through her practicum experience, she learned that what she believed to be true or preferable would not always match the reality of her own self and competence as well as for actual teaching contexts.

Facing Educator Selves in the Reality

In the pre-practicum phase, Megumi, who was placed in a junior-high school, had written in her journal entry how excited she was to begin her practicum.   At one time, she explained that she decided to become a teacher because she liked to educate the students and help them develop whole personalities.   She appeared to believe in education, the power of language, and most importantly, what she could to do for the students based on her student-volunteer experience.   In addition, she might have a belief that all students should be viewed as innocent.   Thus, she thought that the teacher does not need to discipline them in and outside of class.   In Megumi's view, when the students feel constricted, any teaching becomes ineffective.

When we had a bi-weekly meeting in the post-practicum phase, Megumi began to talk about her experience with tears in her eyes.   "I saw the dark side of education," gulping down her tears, she continued:

[Before the practicum] I had expected to see innocent, pure students at school.   I had hoped to see many students who were really motivated to learn.   I had expected that I would be welcomed, accepted, appreciated as a new teacher [student-teacher].   But, the students were wild and boisterous.   The school was in a bad condition . . . On the very first day, I became intimidated . . . I became scared of the loud voice of many teachers scolding and shouting at the students in corridors, classrooms, everywhere . . . I soon recognized that at that school, the

students did not trust and respect their teachers.

Megumi was shocked.   She even saw a student shouting, "That teacher should die!"
She wondered if she could teach English to such students.   She also wondered if she
could educate such students.   "I thought I had nothing to do for them.   If possible, I
wanted to run away from school."   In fact, she did not run away.   She made up her
mind to complete her practicum, believing that there would be something she could do
for the students.

When I observed her teaching, Megumi started her class, showing three picture
cards to the students.   The grammar point focused in the class was the present
progressive.   Thus, on each picture, a boy' or girl's action was drawn.   Showing the
picture cards one by one, Megumi asked the students what a boy or a girl was doing in
the picture.   "What is he doing?"   "What is she doing?"   All the students were quiet.
They just listened to Megumi quietly.   Megumi called on a few students to answer her
questions, but they refrained from answering.   They only said, "I don't know."   Megumi
gave away answers to the students, and she asked the whole class to repeat the
answers.   Some students repeated what Megumi said.   Most of the students seemed
apathetic about what was going on in class.   Megumi then gave a mini-lecture on the
grammar point.   She briefly explained the structure and usage of the present
progressive.   She wrote three example sentences that included the present
progressive.   Megumi told the students to read the sentences together in a loud voice.

Some students read the sentences very loudly in a somewhat jesting manner; the rest

muttered sulkily.   She took out different cards on which some English verbs were

printed.   The students were told to make a sentence of the present progressive, using

the verb on the card.   Megumi told the students to work in pairs.   She walked around

the classroom, showing cards one by one to paired-students.   She timed

paired-students' response and had the students compete with one another.   Gradually,

all the students became excited and actively participated in the activity.   After this

paired activity, Megumi moved on to an English text, a short dialogue, and began

explaining the content in Japanese.   Megumi did choral reading with the students twice.

Then, the class was dismissed.

When all the participants discussed their practicum experiences in a bi-weekly

meeting, Megumi complained that she could not do any textbook-oriented exercises.

In general, textbook-oriented exercises require the students to work individually and

quietly.   According to Megumi, the students at her school did not show much interest in

English.   There were only a few students in each class who had an interest in studying

English.   They were all "frustratingly-reserved due to the surrounding air at school."

Because the students at Megumi's school were likely to get out of hand, she had to give

up textbook-oriented exercises.   Instead, she used many cards and games to attract

students' attention and motivate the students to actively participate in class.   Toward

the end of her practicum, such attempts in her English classes made Megumi feel her

limitations. "The students were too noisy and wild. For the first time in my life, I realized that I had to hold control over the students." The following statement by Megumi in a bi-weekly meeting is pivotal:

> They constantly compared teachers, classes . . . If they didn't like the teacher, they fooled around in his/her class. The teachers were suffering from emotional conflicts . . . I couldn't stand it. Very disappointing. I was forced to see the dark side of school education. The students were laughing when the teacher was explaining how bad it is to bully other students. Can you believe it? I had believed that it was important to educate the students, looking for their strong points. But, in fact, I couldn't find any strong points while interacting with the students . . . I learned the importance of having an air of dignity. I learned how important it is to hold control over the students, particularly when I tried to incorporate various types of activities and exercises in my English classes.

Perceived Changes in Participants' Beliefs

In the post-practicum phase, all the participants reported that they perceived some changes in their beliefs about language learning and teaching. This is not to say, however, that their practicum experiences transformed all of their beliefs. As will be seen, there were some beliefs in which the participants did not perceive radical changes during the investigation period. Highlighting perceived changes in the participants'

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beliefs observed in this study, I would like to shed some light on the participants'

transformative development processes as professionals, particularly the transformative

nature of their beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Commonly-Held Beliefs

In the pre-practicum phase, all the participants showed the common belief that

acquiring knowledge about teaching methodologies held priority over gaining actual

experiences as professionals.   This belief was evaluative and emotive in nature, and it

appeared to have guided the participants in the course of their development, particularly

until the end of the mid-practicum phase.   The participants' justifications for this belief

were derived primarily from their anxieties about their knowledge paucity or ignorance

regarding teaching methodologies and/or the English language (i.e., subject matter).

After their practicum and toward the end of the post-practicum phase, the

participants showed reconstructed versions of the commonly-held belief.   The

participants' versions of the reconstructed belief were individually different as they

began to see more important issues than acquiring knowledge about teaching

methodologies.   Sachi and Masakazu, for instance, began to see "establishing a good

teacher-student relationship" as more important than acquiring knowledge about

teaching methodologies.   Sachi wrote in a journal entry:

Teacher-student relationships are the key for the success and failure of English

teaching.   If it's established, any type of teaching will be accepted by the students.

Teaching methodologies are not as important as the teacher student relationships.

Sachi also pointed out that "enriching humanity" would be crucial for her success as an

English teacher.   As for Megumi, "thinking about the way of developing" herself as an

English teacher, not as an educator *per se*, became her first priority.   Because she

noticed the importance of "having an air of dignity" through her practicum experience,

she began to believe that it would be critical to become more aware of

"language-instructor's self."   The acquisition of knowledge about teaching

methodologies and the English language might be included in the process of developing

her "language-instructor's self," but Megumi viewed developing her

"language-instructor's self" as more important.   Regarding Nobuhito's case, he stated

that it would be important to have "service mind-set" in English teaching.   In the

post-practicum phase, Nobuhito began to see that acquiring knowledge about teaching

methodologies is less important than possessing and showing "a spirit of service" to the

students.   Thus, the participants reported the various forms of reconstructed belief in

terms of the acquisition of teaching methodologies in the post-practicum phase.

Furthermore, as previously documented, all the participants reported that they began to

see the lack of knowledge or ignorance as a positive aspect of teacher learning.

Sachi's statement in an interview at the end of this investigation might strengthen this

finding:

I felt very lucky to get to know such nice people [the participants] who were brave

enough to share with me their struggle in figuring out how to become good English

teachers. They taught me how important it is to really "struggle" and find

answers on our own. Because of such people [the participants], I began to

believe that I will be able to become a good English teacher, and that I will struggle

to develop further.

Another common belief observed among the participants was about the act of

imposing what they believed preferable or effective on students' learning. It was a

context-specific proposition consciously held among the participants in relation to the

individual teaching. In the post-practicum phase, the participants showed more flexible,

learner-centered belief compared to their belief observed in the pre-practicum phase.

In the pre-practicum phase, Masakazu, for instance, stated the following in a journal

entry:

> [Through the practicum experience,] I realized how hard it was to change the
>
> students' preferred learning styles in class. I believed that language should be
>
> used and felt. I believed that there would be no necessity for the teacher to
>
> clearly explain about language [in terms of grammar or structure].

Thus, he believed "teachers' explanations are useless." Masakazu, however, showed

his reconstructed belief in the post-practicum phase that it would be crucial to balance

"linguistic ambiguity and clear, logical explanations" in actual teaching practices. It

seemed that his teaching experience during the practicum became an opportunity to modify his teacher-centered perspective to see English teaching.

In addition, in the post-practicum phase, Sachi, who stated the importance of prohibiting the use of an electronic dictionary in the pre-practicum phase, wrote the following in a journal entry:

I thought every teacher has to give some rules to the students in order to clarify what is good and bad or what is acceptable or not.   But, isn't it contradictory?   If I strictly do such things, the students would be intimidated.   In English classes, too, I don't think I should say such things.   I don't want to be an obstacle in my students' learning.

In the pre-practicum phase, all the participants wrote about, analyzed, and discussed their past learning experiences, as well as other various issues, from both teachers' and students' perspectives.   In fact, however, all the participants reported that they became able to see language learning and teaching from students' perspectives only after they went through their practicum.   Indeed, toward the end of the post-practicum phase, the participants' perspectives which manifested themselves in the collaborative journal and group discussions in the bi-weekly meetings gradually changed to accommodate both the teachers' and students' perspectives.

Yet another common belief observed among the participants was about the necessity of imitating someone else's teaching to become a good English teacher.

This belief was highly emotive in nature because it appeared to have relationships with the participants' fears or anxieties about the lack of knowledge about teaching methodologies and/or the English language that were observed primarily in the pre-practicum phase. With the exception of Masakazu, who reconstructed this belief sooner than the other participants did, this commonly-held belief occupied the participants' mind until sometime in the mid-practicum phase. In the post-practicum phase, all the participants mentioned that it would not be necessary to imitate other teachers' methodologies in order to become better English teachers, exemplifying their points based on their practicum experiences. Nobuhito, for example, reported in an interview:

> It was not clear what I had to do or what I wanted to do in class. Suddenly, I was asked to teach a class by my supervisor. I didn't have enough time to prepare for the class. Besides, I didn't have confidence in my teaching. [So,] I tried to remember the supervisor's teaching procedures as much as I could. What he did in class . . . Step by step . . . I then imitated his teaching. I knew it, but, I failed!
>
> Later on, I realized the fact that I didn't ask him why he did [what he did in class].

Megumi also made a similar point in an interview by saying "imitating some other teachers' teaching without asking for specific reasons is dangerous!" All the participants, except for Masakazu, experienced some failures in the first few classes by trying to imitate their supervisors' or some other teachers' teaching practices.

There were other beliefs about language learning and teaching that were commonly held among the participants. These beliefs are presented in Table 4. During the time of the investigation, the participants did not report any perceived changes in these commonly-held beliefs. Possible explanations for this finding may be that the participants did not experience sufficient incidents that contradicted or challenged their commonly-held beliefs during their practicum, or that the participants' role(s) expected in their teaching contexts (i.e., a particular culture) possibly restricted change. I will discuss this point in the next chapter.

Table 4

Unaltered Commonly-Held Beliefs

Category	Description
Pedagogical, Instructional Methodologies	Individualization is the key. The smaller the class size is, the more effectively English teachers can teach. It is more effective to mix traditional teaching methodologies with communicative approaches than applying one specific approach to English teaching. It is important to enhance learner autonomy.
Goals of English Teaching in Japan	To help the students develop communicative competence in English, particularly speaking skills. To educate the students through teaching the subject of English.
Aptitudes to Become English Teachers in Japan	Awareness of the act of educating the students in teaching practices. Capabilities of educating the students through teaching the subject of English

Individuals' Different Beliefs

Masakazu, in the pre-practicum phase, stated that he did not want to teach

English in such a way that he could help the students enter good colleges or universities.

He believed that a primary focus of English learning and teaching should be put on the

development of speaking skills.   This belief seemed to be rooted in his study-abroad experience to New Zealand as well as his dissatisfaction towards the Japanese entrance examination system.   In his idealized vision, preferable students would not care about entrance examinations and enjoy using and studying English for communication purposes in and outside of class.   As he went through actual teaching practices in the practicum, he realized that he had to face, rather than ignoring, an insoluble dilemma existing in a real teaching context.   There were department-level as well as school-level restrictions that forced Masakazu to think about the link between his teaching and entrance examinations.   In the post-practicum phase, Masakazu reported that his belief had changed.   His remark in an interview is pivotal:

> [Prior to the practicum,] I did not think that I could teach English, maintaining a good balance between test-preparation and communication-based content.   I just didn't want to think about it.   I would like to teach, aiming at what I believed to be the main goal.   The reality in the high school was . . . totally different.   With a lot of restrictions at hand, I began seeking some possible ways to incorporate things that I wanted to do into what I was required to do at school.

In Masakazu's case, he began to believe that it was possible "to maintain a good balance between" the test-taking instructions and his idealized English learning and teaching in his actual teaching practices.   Apparently, he was determined to fight the dilemma regarding entrance examinations.

In the pre-practicum phase, Megumi claimed that "English teachers need not discipline the students to make English teaching effective." In her opinion, disciplining the students might generate some negative effects on students' behaviors in English classes. Instead of overtly disciplining the students, she wanted to share with them "the language that includes people's feelings," believing that "language can change the way people live." After her practicum in the junior-high school, however, Megumi expressed her belief that it would be necessary for English teachers to discipline the students to make English learning and teaching effective. She stated in an interview in the post-practicum phase:

> [In the practicum site,] I didn't like to see teachers scolding the students or nagging about the students' behaviors in and outside of the classrooms. I thought that before going to my practicum, such interactions between the teacher and students would affect teacher-student interactions in an English class. I thought I wouldn't be able to do such things [disciplining the students in and outside of the classrooms]. But, I began thinking it is necessary to discipline the students. It might be the base for effective English teaching in a classroom.

As previously indicated, all the participants perceived that English teaching is the act of educating the students. Because they did not clearly understand how they could approach it, however, what they believed to be the foundation for effective English learning and teaching varied. At Megumi's practicum site, the students were extremely

boisterous.   She perceived the outright hostility towards the teachers in the students'

language and behavior at school.   Thus, Megumi came to terms with the necessity of

disciplining the students in order to make her teaching effective.

Nobuhito, on the other hand, began to believe that it would not be necessary to

overtly discipline students in order to make English teaching effective.   In the

pre-practicum phase, he had believed that disciplining the students was an important

aspect of teaching.   Unlike Megumi, Nobuhito was placed in a high school where

students were more mature and manageable.   In addition, Nobuhito, in the

pre-practicum phase, had stressed the importance of enhancing learner autonomy in

English learning and teaching.   "To enhance learner autonomy," Nobuhito described

his thought in a bi-weekly meeting:

> . . . teachers' disciplinary action may become an obstacle.   They [the students at
>
> the practicum site] did what I expected them to do.   I really liked them.   Maybe,
>
> it's not necessary to discipline the students.   English teachers should focus their
>
> attention on helping them to improve their communicative competence.   We need
>
> to focus on the improvement of their English proficiency.

Sachi, who was placed in a junior-high school, agreed with Nobuhito.   At Sachi's

practicum site, the students were quite manageable, although they were not as mature

as high-school students.   In the pre-practicum phase, Sachi had stated that "it is the

disciplining role of the teacher that determines the quality of English learning and

teaching in class." After her practicum, however, she began to see her own growth as more important than disciplining the students. Her journal entry is pivotal here:

I really enjoyed my practicum. I enjoyed interacting with my students and colleagues. I feel like going back to the practicum site again! Through my practicum, I began to think that I should not be held by the idea of disciplining the students in order to teach English successfully. My students taught me a lesson, though. They taught me the importance of enriching my humanity. I need to become a full-fledged human being.

Through their practicum experiences, the participants changed their individually different beliefs, taking into account such context-specific factors as unspoken rules or the characteristics of the students. Throughout the research phases (i.e., pre-practicum phase, mid-practicum phase, and post-practicum phase), the participants constantly prioritized context-specific factors which they perceived notable in obtained information and/or observed phenomena regarding English learning and teaching. In other words, context-specific factors affected their beliefs about language learning and teaching, their belief structure, and (re-)construction processes. This is not to say, however, that the participants perceived drastic changes in all individually different beliefs during the investigation. Table 5 shows the individually different beliefs that the participants did not perceive any changes during the time of the investigation.

Table 5

Unaltered Individually Different Beliefs

Participant	Description
Masakazu	The more accurate pronunciation becomes, the more confident the students gain in speaking English.
	It is important to stress the use of English as a tool of communication.
	It is crucial to provide group-work oriented, interactive, and learner-centered classes.
	A goal of English teaching is to help the students feel a sense of achievement.
	The more freedom the students have, the more effectively the teacher can teach English.
Megumi	As for English pronunciation, the younger the students are, the better the outcomes will be.
	It is important for English teachers to have the students work on the same tasks repetitively (particularly, pronunciation learning).
	It is necessary for the English teacher to connect the students' interests to English learning.
	A prime focus should be put on building good teacher-student relationships and creating a comfortable learning environment.
	Language can change the way people live.
	English teachers should face students' lives fully and lead their lives to the development of whole personalities.
Sachi	The psychological attachment plays an important role in determining pleasant outcomes.
	It is crucial to get rid of students' anxieties to speak up in class.
	It is important to create "a learner-friendly environment" in class.
	It is important to stimulate the students' curiosity and help the students understand the necessity to have consideration for others.
	It is love for students that all educators need to have as an aptitude.
Nobuhito	A goal of English teaching is to help the students develop speaking skills (this should be the only focus).
	It is important to enhance learner autonomy.
	All students should teach one another because he believed that "teaching generates discovery."
	It is important to establish a good teacher-student relationship.
	It is possible to teach English effectively if the teacher knows what the students are thinking and what interests they have.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I chronologically presented the salient, recurring themes, describing and documenting the major research findings observed in each research phase (i.e., pre-practicum phase, mid-practicum phase, and post-practicum phase). The selected salient, recurring themes included the following meta-themes: (a) Pedagogical, Methodological Interests and Concerns; (b) Courses Taken in the Teacher Education Program; (c) Anxieties about Becoming English Teachers in Japan; and (d) Impact of Practicum Experiences.   By further classifying each meta-theme into sub-themes, I highlighted major research findings of the study.

The participants of this study showed two types of beliefs about language learning and teaching.   The perceived changes in such beliefs were also found.   They (re-)constructed their beliefs by constantly prioritizing various context-specific factors before, during, and after their practicum experiences.   The overall research findings implied the transformative nature of the preservice teachers' beliefs and the uniqueness of the studied case(s) (i.e., the preservice teachers' learning in an EFL teacher education program at a Japanese university).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter is organized around two major themes underlying this study –

namely, the participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching and their

development processes through collaborative journaling.   In accordance with the nine

research questions, this chapter clarifies what this study has to say about the meanings

of the observed phenomena.   I refer back to the relevant research findings of the study,

where necessary, to present evidence to support my claims and interpretations.   I also

discuss the research findings in reference to relevant literature to gain further insights

into the research findings.

The research findings presented in the last chapter depict the participants'

transformative development processes that entail the reconstructable nature of beliefs

about language learning and teaching, and it should be obvious that the participants'

beliefs about language learning and teaching are complex and multifaceted.   As I

analyzed my data, their beliefs seemed elusive because of various context-specific

factors influencing the (re-)construction of their beliefs.   Furthermore, the observed

development of the participants was nonlinear and multilayered.

Preservice EFL Teachers' Beliefs

Influencing Context-Specific Factors

The participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching varied due primarily to individual differences in the context-specific factors which they prioritized in their development processes as professionals.   As documented in the last chapter, this study uncovered seven major context-specific factors: (a) perceptions about the knowledge status regarding teaching methodologies and/or the English language; (b) past learning and teaching experiences; (c) professors' teaching styles, knowledge, and enthusiasm observed during the coursework; (d) perceptions about educators' aptitudes; (e) awareness of educator selves; (f) idealized visions of English learning and teaching; and (g) conflicts between ideal and real in actual teaching contexts.   These seven factors were intricately intertwined.

At different times throughout the investigation, these seven factors affected the (re-)construction processes of the participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching, which, to a great extent, shaped the participants' development processes in the EFL teacher education program.   As a result, the participants' beliefs appeared to be elusive.   The participants of this study, for instance, showed that they apparently (re-)constructed their beliefs about English learning and teaching based on their learning and teaching experiences as well as their experiences of being taught by professors in the coursework of the education program.   It is also noteworthy that a

common thread observed throughout the (re-)construction processes of beliefs was the participants' awareness of educator selves.   Such research findings regarding the context and its relation to participants' perception are in line with Packer and Winne (1995) who claim that contextuality observed in teachers' thinking is determined by what constitutes the context and what teachers can recognize or perceive within the context.

Professional Identity Formation

It can be said that, as far as this study is concerned, the most influential context-specific factor in the processes of (re-)construction of beliefs was the participants' awareness of selves.   Going through the emotional depression derived from the anxieties and concerns about their aptitudes for becoming educators, the participants appeared to have (re-)constructed their self-image and have identified who they were as persons as well as who they were as professionals.   In other words, through their dialogues, discourse, and interactions manifested in the collaborative journal and group discussions during the bi-weekly meetings, the participants gradually established their professional identity (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Cooper & Olson, 1996).   This finding is in line with Bar-Tal (1990) who reports on the pervasive influence of an individual's identity or self-awareness on one's belief structure (cf., Kansanen, Tirri, Meri, Krokfors, Husu, & Jyrhämä, 2000, p. 158).   Sakui and Gaies (2002) mention that such awareness-raising activities as sharing and interpreting

2 1 7

narratives, teachers are likely to confront their professional identity, and that the issues

of professional identity are closely related to teachers' use of knowledge and overall

development processes as professionals.   Connelly and Clandinin (1999) argue that

teachers are inclined to focus on such identity questions as "Who am I in my story of

teaching?" (p. 3) in order to understand their teaching practices.   This phenomenon

reported by Connelly and Clandinin was also observed in the participants of my

research project, especially in the mid- and post-practicum phases.   In addition,

Danielewicz (2001) discusses the crucial role of discourse in teacher's professional

identity formation as follows:

> Discourse, which is manifested through language, consists of a system of beliefs,
>
> attitudes, and values that exist within particular social and cultural practices.
>
> Engaging in these language practices (such as conversing, analyzing, writing
>
> reports) shapes an individual's identity.   Discourses are powerfully constructive of
>
> identities because they are inherently ideological.   (p. 11)

Drawing upon Vygotskian sociocultural theory, Johnson and Golombek (2003)

claim that teacher learning can be "a socially mediated activity" through such cultural

artifacts as physical tools or symbolic tools (pp. 730-731), and that teachers'

development or cognitive development depends on the specific social activities in which

they engage.   Thus, in my dissertation project, the collaborative journal was a physical

tool, while the language (and discourse) within the collaborative journal (and group

discussion during the bi-weekly meeting) was a symbolic tool.   With the use of such

tools, the participants mediated "their thinking" about language learning and teaching

(Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 731), which, in turn, boosted the dialogic processes of

transformation of self (Valsineer & Van der Veer, 2002).   Johnson and Golombek

further elaborate on this idea as follows:

> Individuals use these tools to act indirectly, or mediate, their relationships with
>
> themselves and others, which may change these relations.   For example, . . .
>
> teachers might use a tool such as a reflective journal to understand a problem in
>
> the classroom, thereby changing their understanding of the problem and their
>
> relationships with students.   (p. 731)

It is noteworthy that the participants showed different self-realizations or

"individual identity" in the pre-practicum phase, they gradually developed the similar

self-realization or "collective identity" as educators toward the post-practicum phase

(Danielewicz, 2001, p. 11).   In the case of Megumi, however, because she noticed the

importance of "having an air of dignity" through her practicum experience, she possibly

began to believe that it would be very important to become more aware of

"language-instructor's self."   Such research findings showed that the participants'

professional identity formation was not a simple, linear psychological process.   Rather,

it was a dialogic, nonlinear process (Valsineer & Van der Veer, 2002).   The following

excerpt from an interview with Masakazu further exemplifies this point:

Researcher: What do you mean by "different"?   How different?   Can you tell

me more?

Masakazu: I think you feel the differences.   Sachi and Megumi like

education, right?   They like children.   I can't just imagine

myself interacting with children and having fun.   I am not sure if I

like children that much . . . I'm not sure if I can educate children.

Researcher: I see . . . You think you can't educate children?

Masakazu: Yes.   Ah . . . Maybe I can.   I'm not sure.   Do you really think I

should become a teacher?   I started feeling sorry for the other

people [the other participants] and children in my future class.

In the pre-practicum phase, Masakazu mentioned that possessing the advanced-level

English proficiency and effective teaching skills of subject matter would be enough to

become a good English teacher.   Toward the post-practicum phase, Masakazu showed

more or less the same self-realization as educators, primarily by comparing and

contrasting himself with the other participants within the discourse observed in the

collaborative journal and group-discussions of the bi-weekly meetings.   As can be seen,

the participants' professional identity formation observed in this study was discursive by

nature and was deeply situated in context.

Based on the research findings, it might be said that the issue(s) of professional

identity formation should receive particular attention by EFL teacher-educators in Japan

(cf., Alsup, 2005; Sakui & Gaies, 2002).   A teacher-educator's prime role is to instruct, train, and educate prospective (and inservice) teachers.   Teacher education needs to enhance preservice teachers' identity development (Allen, 2005; Alsup, 2005) because "education must strive to open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self" (Wenger, 2005, p. 263).   In this regard, Wenger's perspective to see learning as "a mutual developmental process between communities and individuals" (Wenger, 2005, p. 263) should be considered valid.   Wenger (2005) argues that learning should include a process of individual, as well as collective, professional identity transformation (cf., Pennington, 2002, October).   In the TESOL field, however, Pennington (2002, October) asserts that most of the teacher education programs are not developed on the basis of the conceptualization of "*teacher-as-professional,*" and that we can rarely find "an explicit articulation of any notion of teacher identity."

Individual as well as Group-Level (Re-)Construction of Beliefs

This study revealed that the (re-)construction of the participants' beliefs was done at individual and group levels.   Apparently, the participants had two types of beliefs about language learning and teaching: commonly-held beliefs and individually different beliefs.   Under the influences of context-specific factors situated in English learning and teaching settings, all the participants perceived some changes in both types of beliefs, particularly after their teaching practicum.   There were also unaltered

2 2 1

commonly-held, as well as individually different beliefs.   Taken all together, it might be

possible to delineate a picture of the participants' beliefs and their structures.   Figure 8

shows a schematic representation of the participants' beliefs and their structure

observed in this study.

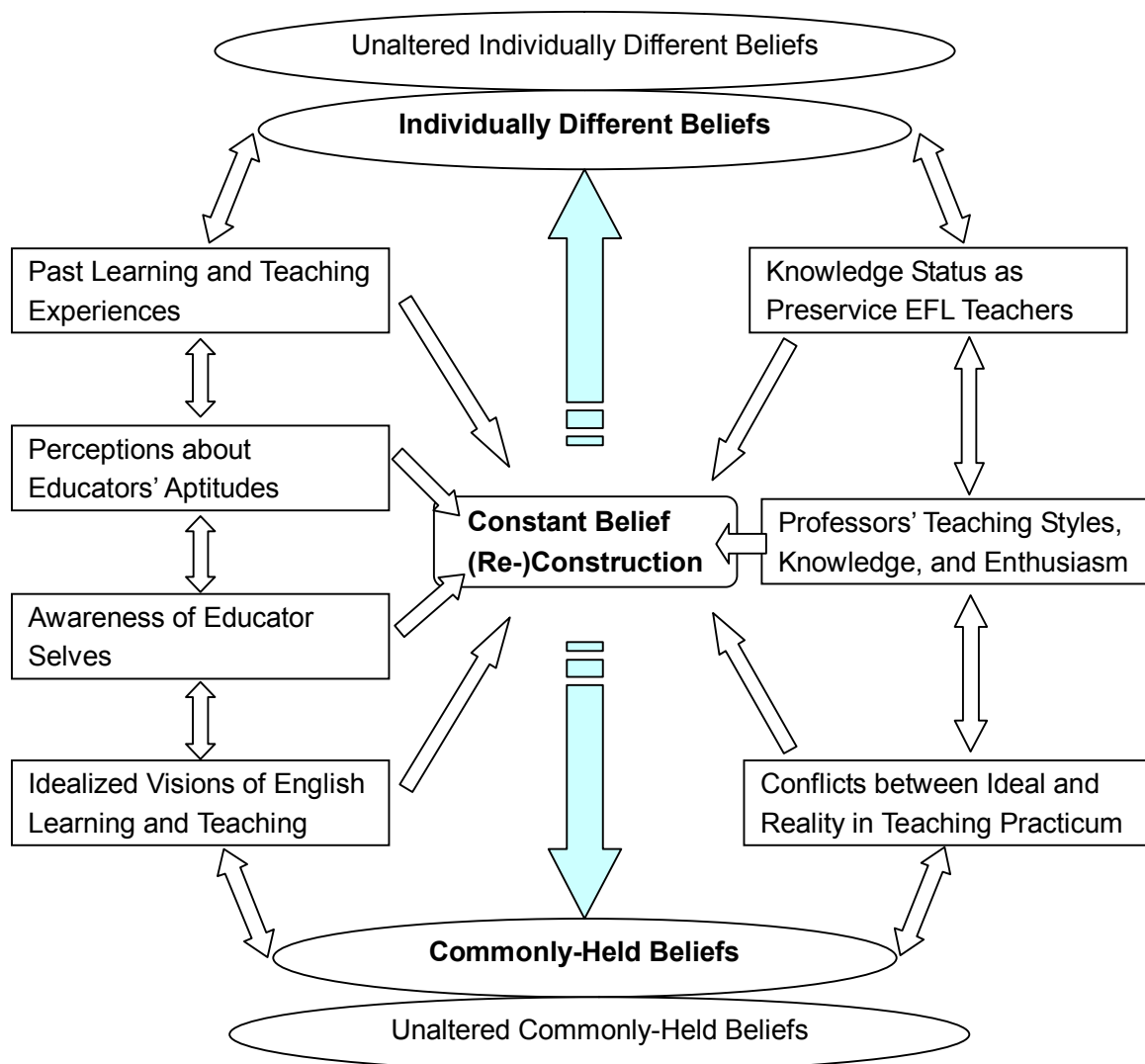*Figure 8.* A schematic representation of participants' beliefs and their structure.

Though speculative, unaltered individually different beliefs are more likely to

change after the investigation than commonly-held beliefs are as the participants further

go through actual teaching practices, that is, the gaps or conflicts between ideal and

real in teaching contexts (cf., Beijaard et al., 2000). Masakazu, for instance, expressed

his belief that the more freedom the students have, the more effectively the teacher can teach English. In the post-practicum phase, he did not report any perceived changes regarding this belief. Nevertheless, if he had been placed in a school where the teachers need to have control over the students in and outside of class, he might have changed the belief as Megumi did.

In addition, in Nobuhito's case, he stated that all students should teach one another because he believed that "teaching generates discovery." Nobuhito did not perceive any changes regarding this belief in the post-practicum phase. It is, however, likely that this belief will change over time due to the other departmental- and/or school-level policies which he needs to take into account in different teaching contexts. Even if there are no departmental- and/or school-level restrictions, as Mastrini-McAteer (1997) reports, actual teaching practices may be affected by the materials used in class, which may, in turn, necessitates further individual-level modifications of beliefs about language learning and teaching.

This study identified the following unaltered commonly-held beliefs among the participants: (a) it is important to provide individualized instructions; (b) the smaller the class size is, the more effectively the teachers can teach; (c) it is better to mix traditional teaching methodologies with communicative approaches than applying one specific approach to English teaching; (d) it is important to enhance learner autonomy; (e) the goals of English teaching includes helping the students develop communicative

competence, particularly speaking skills; (f) the goals of English teaching includes

educating the students through teaching the subject of English; (g) it is crucial to

become aware of the act of educating the students in teaching practices; and (h) it is

crucial to have capabilities of educating the students through teaching the subject of

English.   As previously noted, these commonly-held beliefs were perceived to be

unaltered by the participants during the time of the investigation probably because the

participants did not experience sufficient incidents that contradicted or challenged their

beliefs during their practicum, or the participants' role(s) expected in their teaching

contexts (i.e., a particular culture) possibly restricted change.   Hence, these unaltered

commonly-held beliefs might also change over time due to some other factors

undetected in this study.   Nonetheless, in light of the fact that EFL teachers in Japan

are socially expected to educate the students through teaching English, their commonly

shared beliefs (f), (g), and (h) are not likely to change throughout their career as long as

they work in Japanese EFL contexts.

Reconceptualizing Teachers' Beliefs: A New Definition

In Chapter II, I presented a tentative operational definition of the term *teachers'*

beliefs, listing predominant characteristics as follows.

(a) Beliefs are context-specific propositions consciously or unconsciously held

by a teacher in relation to the individual's teaching.

2 2 5

(b) They are evaluative and emotive in nature, in that they are personally

accepted as true or preferable by an individual teacher.

(c) They guide teacher's thinking, action, and further sense-making of learning

and/or teaching experiences.

(d) They can always be reconstructed as a teacher interprets or reinterprets

one's learning and/or teaching experiences.

As can be seen, this operational definition only covers the predominant characteristics

of individual teacher's beliefs.   In light of the fact that this study uncovered the

existence of commonly-held beliefs about language learning and teaching, however,

this operational definition of teachers' beliefs can be modified to cover the beliefs shared

by a group of teachers in a specific culture (cf., Bar-Tal, 1990).

In this study, some of the participants' commonly-held beliefs changed during the

term of the investigation, which indicates the possibility that teachers can (re-)construct

their commonly-held beliefs about language learning and teaching.   In addition, the

existence of the unaltered commonly-held beliefs found in this study implies that

teachers may hold persistent beliefs shared within their culture due possibly to some

socio-cultural factors and ideological environment (Mantero, 2004).   In the participants'

culture, for instance, it was expected that they would educate the students by teaching

English.   The participants seemed to have learned this social expectation through the

exposure to some educational courses offered in the EFL teacher education program

and/or culture-specific discourse that they engaged in the collaborative journaling and group discussions during the bi-weekly meetings.   Although they did not know exactly what educating the students through teaching English means, all the participants noticed what they, as English teachers in Japan, were expected to do in English classes. Accordingly, they shared the beliefs that important vocational qualifications include the awareness of the act of educating the students in teaching practices and the capabilities of educating the students through teaching the subject of English.

Therefore, the operational definition can be modified as follows.

(a) Beliefs are context-specific propositions consciously or unconsciously held by a teacher or shared by a group of teachers in relation to teaching practices.

(b) They are evaluative and emotive in nature, in that they are personally accepted as true or preferable by an individual teacher or a group of teachers in a particular culture.

(c) They guide individual teacher's or a group of teachers' thinking, action, and further sense-making of learning and/or teaching experiences in a particular culture.

(d) They can always be reconstructed as a teacher or a group of teachers interprets or reinterprets one's learning and/or teaching experiences.

(e) They are not likely to transform if a teacher or a group of teachers is aware

of their role(s) expected in a particular culture, especially the culture is

ideologically colored.

The new definition of teachers' beliefs presented here is by no means conclusive and

hence calls for further speculation and investigation.

Preservice EFL Teachers' Development Processes

Nonlinear and Multilayered Development Process

By tracking down the participants' development processes with a focus on their

beliefs about language learning and teaching, it became clear that the participants

followed a unique pattern of development in collaborative journaling under the influence

of various context-specific factors.   Figure 9 illustrates the pattern of development

observed in this study.

```
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│ Awareness of Self / │     │ Conceptualization │     │ Causes of Fears │
│ Identity Formation │     │ of English Learning │     │ or Anxieties │
│                 │     │ and Teaching │     │                 │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
```

Pre-Practicum Phase

| Language Instructor | | Lack of Knowledge about Teaching Methodologies |

| From Language Instructor to Educator | Abstract or More Idealized Level | Lack of Awareness as Educator |

Mid-Practicum Phase

| | | Lack of Knowledge about Teaching Methodologies |

| From Language Instructor to Educator | Concrete or Less Idealized Level | Lack of Awareness as Educator |

| | | Conflicts between Ideal and Real |

Post-Practicum Phase

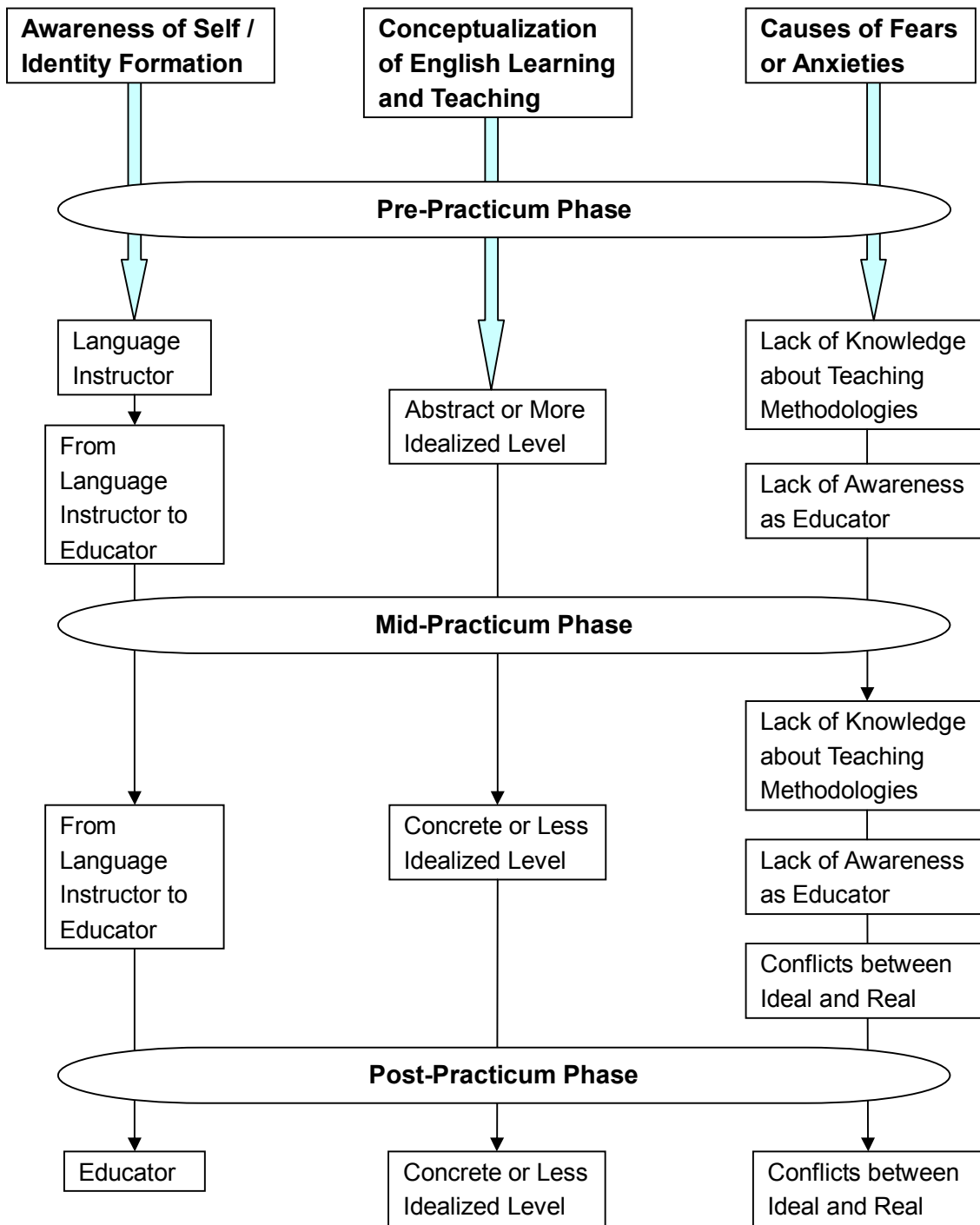| Educator | Concrete or Less Idealized Level | Conflicts between Ideal and Real |

Figure 9.   A pattern of participants' development.

In the pre-practicum phase, the participants showed interests in pedagogical, instructional methodologies.   At the same time, they expressed great anxieties regarding the lack of knowledge about teaching methodologies (cf., Gebhard, 1999). Since their anxieties or concerns about teaching methodologies were so influential in the pre-practicum phase that they believed acquiring knowledge held priority over gaining actual teaching experiences.   Thus, it can be said that the pre-practicum phase was the time in which the participants primarily focused their attention on the acquisition of knowledge and skills.   This finding is in line with Berliner (1986), Fuller (1969), Fuller and Brown (1975), Holten and Brinton (1995), Numrich (1996), and Richards and Ho (1998).

The participants' reasoning observed in the collaborative journal and group discussions of the bi-weekly meetings appeared to have been lacking students' perspectives to see English learning and teaching.   As seen in Sachi's case, the participants tended to impose what they believed to be effective or preferable on future students' learning.   Toward the end of the mid-practicum phase, the participants' attention gradually shifted to include both students' as well as teachers' perspectives in a more realistic manner.   Consequently, in the post-practicum phase, they began considering various issues regarding English learning and teaching, maintaining the balance between students' and teacher's standpoints.

On a parallel with the shift regarding their focus of attention, their awareness of

self showed a unique development pattern.   As seen in Figure 9, it appears that the

participants' awareness gradually changed from language instructors' selves to

educator selves toward the post-practicum phase (except for the case of Megumi).   As

the participants considered such realistic issues as some critics about educators in

Japan or national news about schoolchildren in the collaborative journal and bi-weekly

meetings, they faced their educator selves.   In so doing, the participants possibly

wondered if they actually possessed aptitudes for becoming educators.   As seen in

Masakazu and Nobuhito's interactions, there were some conflicting opinions in terms of

how each participant perceived one's vocational aptitude.   As documented in the last

chapter, although the participants went through more or less the same difficult situations

derived from the emotional depression, they apparently managed to overcome them

because of their critical, collaborative friendship (cf., Collay et al., 1998; Farrell, 2001).

It can also be said that the participants successfully developed "an effective community

of practice . . . where it [was] safe to speak the truth and ask hard questions" (Wenger,

McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 37).   Wenger et al. (2002) further remark on this issue

as follows:

> Effective communities are not necessarily without conflict.   In fact, the stronger a
>
> community, the better it is able to handle dissension and make it productive.   In
>
> good communities strong bonds withstand disagreement, and members can even
>
> use conflict as a way to deepen their relationships and their learning.   (p. 37)

It might be this characteristic of their learning community or "community of practice" (Wenger, 2005; Wenger et al., 2002) that enabled the participants to share ideas, expose their ignorance, and explore teachers' persona (Mantero, 2004).

It is also worthwhile mentioning that not only in the pre-practicum phase, but also in the mid-practicum phase, the participants showed the inclination to seek practical know-how or prescribed way of teaching so that they would be able to depend on while teaching actual classes (cf., Gebhard, 1999). As documented in the previous chapter, Nobuhito, for instance, frequently contacted me and attempted to obtain some information about reliable strategies or techniques that he would be able to rely upon during his practicum. In the post-practicum phase, the participants, including Nobuhito, came to terms with the pointlessness of imitating someone else's teaching or thoughtlessly applying instructional procedures to their actual teaching. Thus, toward the end of the investigation, the participants appeared to have learned that the more important task is to examine what underlies actual teaching practices than simply imitating other teachers' teaching.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for ESL/EFL Teacher-Educators

Based upon the renewed insights into preservice EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching and their development processes, I propose the following implications for ESL/EFL teacher-educators.

(a)   ESL/EFL teacher-educators can provide various socially mediated activities to preservice teachers in order that they are exposed to, and actively engaged in discourse before, during, and after their practicum.

(b)   ESL/EFL teacher-educators can provide ample opportunities and supportive environment to preservice teachers so that they can express and share their anxieties or concerns not only about language learning and teaching, but also about context-specific and ideological factors.

(c)   ESL/EFL teacher-educators can identify what context-specific and ideological factors preservice teachers tend to prioritize and examine how they prioritize them in an attempt to understand preservice teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching and the processes of (re-)construction of their beliefs.

(d)   ESL/EFL teacher-educators can pay particular attention to their

professional identity formation in an attempt to guide preservice teachers

to explore their beliefs about language learning and teaching.

(e)   ESL/EFL teacher-educators can become aware of preservice teachers'

group-level as well as individual-level belief (re-)construction in an

attempt to understand and examine the development processes of

preservice teachers.

In what follows, I further discuss each implication in more detail.

A Social Constructivist Approach to Teacher Learning

Socially mediated activities, such as the collaborative journaling in combination

with group discussions incorporated into the present study, might be beneficial for

preservice teachers.   To make socially mediated activities effective, preservice

teachers need to be constantly exposed to, and actively engaged in discourse where

they can articulate, reflect upon, and (re-)interpret their beliefs about language learning

and teaching through negotiation and interaction with others.   It is the social aspect of

learning that enables preservice teachers to (re-)construct their teaching beliefs and

professional identities (Wenger, 2005).   I would also like to stress the importance of

conducting such activities before, during, and after the practicum (cf., Gebhard, in

press).   As seen in the present study, a social constructivist approach may enrich or

deepen preservice teachers' learning during their practicum.

As previously noted, in light of the social constructivist view of knowledge, Beck

and Kosnik (2006), Schram (2003), and Schwandt (2001) argue that people's

interpretations of phenomena are not always subjective.   Our interpretation of

phenomena is basically intersubjective (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Schram, 2003; Schwandt,

2001).   Such an intersubjective nature of knowledge further implies that the constant

testing and modifying of previously constructed knowledge (i.e., firm beliefs) should be

done "in light of new experience" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 30).   In general, there are two

strands of social constructivist thought: a strong version and a weak version of social

constructivism.   A strong version denies any ontology which is an explicit description of

a shared conceptualization regarding the nature of the reality.   A weak version, on the

other hand, accepts other ontologies and encompasses various types of

conceptualizations in terms of the nature of the reality.   It should be noted here that I

use the term *social constructivism* here in concordance with the weak version (cf., Beck

& Kosnik, 2006; Schwandt, 2001).

A social constructivist approach to teacher learning entails the process of

negotiation among preservice teachers (cf., Ellis, 2006; Hawkins, 2004).   A social

constructivist approach to teacher learning necessitates teacher-educators to develop

awareness-raising activities in which the process of negotiation among preservice

teachers can be promoted (Johnson & Golombek, 2003).   In the negotiation process

with others, preservice teachers can share biases and prejudices about English learning

and teaching, reflect upon their interpretations and perspectives, and possibly generate some change in their teaching practices.   Such negotiation processes are constructive and reciprocal in nature (Au, 1990; Clark & Peterson, 1986).   Preservice teachers are thus required to work constructively with others (including teacher-educators) to generate meanings in context, determining what is true or preferable in a particular English learning or teaching setting.   In so doing, they can discover who they are as persons and who they are as professionals (e.g., Franzak, 2002).

Supportive Environment and Collaborative Learning

All educational settings, but particularly language teaching contexts, demand preservice teachers to accommodate themselves to discipline-specific culture and language (Hawkins, 2004; Oprandy, 1999, p. 123).   For the accommodation to be successful, Oprandy (1999) asserts that preservice teachers need to explore their personal connection to teaching in depth prior to their actual teaching experience.   As the present study revealed, however, preservice teachers' learning to teach may accompany various types of anxieties, concerns, and fears derived from context-specific factors and ideological environment.   In addition, in the process of discovering their professional identity, preservice teachers might confront their inner emotional conflict or struggle (cf., Wenger, 2005).   The participants in my study experienced a variety of situations where they had to confront various levels of stress:

reactions to teaching and the practicum ranged from ordinary stress to emotional turmoil. Hence, teacher-educators need to provide ample opportunities and supportive environment where preservice teachers can discuss, share, and reflect upon the affective side of their learning in a comfortable manner.

In the present study, because I conducted personal interviews and corresponded with the participants by email and phone, I managed to hear what they had to say when they had great difficulty articulating their feelings and thoughts in the collaborative journaling and group discussions. For instance, when Nobuhito and Sachi stopped writing their responses to the other participants in the collaborative journal, I learned that they had great anxieties and fears to show their ignorance or lack of knowledge about teaching methodologies. After discovering the possible cause of their anxieties and fears, I waited until either of them brought up their feelings in the collaborative journal and group discussions of the bi-weekly meetings, implying that it is natural to go through such difficulties in the process of teacher learning. Thus, ample opportunities and supportive environment need to be provided to preservice teachers to secure their learning processes in terms of their affect. ESL/EFL teacher-educators are thus advised to remove any barriers (Wenger et al., 2002) in teacher learning as well as to value and encourage preservice teachers' participation in their learning processes.

Identifying Context-Specific and Ideological Factors

Contextuality in preservice teachers' thinking is determined by what preservice teachers can recognize or perceive within the context as well as what constitutes the context is (Packer & Winne, 1995).   In the present study, the participants constantly prioritized context-specific factors in the processes of (re-)construction of their beliefs about language learning and teaching.   The participants were also influenced by the ideological environment in which English teachers were expected to educate the students through teaching English.   In light of the participants' perception or recognition of the context and hence, "the reality from the perspective" of the participants in context, it might be argued that context in teacher learning may be subjective by nature (Kansanen et al., 2000, p. 42).

In consideration of such an idiosyncratic nature of context, it may be necessary for teacher-educators to identify context-specific and ideological factors that preservice teachers tend to prioritize and examine how they prioritize them in the processes of (re-)constructing their beliefs about language learning and teaching.   One way to achieve such tasks is to enter the preservice teachers' community and get involved in discourse where interpretative and discursive practices are observed.   In this regard, Kansanen et al. (2000) remark on the necessity of paying particular attention to "commonly-experienced social and institutional settings" as well as individually-experienced settings (p. 42):

[E]ven if individual teachers are each differently positioned, they also act within

commonly-experienced social and institutional settings.   These settings have a

long history and have relatively stable social effects that are rooted in their

contemporary practices.   Consequently, while there are changes and emerging

challenges, there are also continuities that structure the practice.   (pp. 42-43)

By participating in and observing preservice teachers' interpretative and discursive

practices, teacher-educators can gain some insights into the continuities as well as

particularities of the context and how preservice teachers perceive or recognize

context-specific and ideological factors (cf., Mantero, 2004).   In order to understand

and examine preservice teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching,

therefore, teacher-educators are recommended to play a participant-observer's role in

various discursive practices to grasp the reality from preservice teachers' perspectives.

This may help teacher-educators to understand preservice teachers' beliefs about

language learning and teaching and the (re-)construction processes of their beliefs.

Preservice Teachers' Professional Identity Formation

In the context investigated in this study, the participants' perception of their

educator selves was a pervasive theme throughout their collaborative learning.   Due

possibly to the culture-specific contextual and ideological factors in the Japanese EFL

teacher education program at EMU, the participants struggled a lot in discovering and

determining their educator selves.   In spite of this fact, there were no courses offered in

the EFL teacher education program in which they could explore and concretize the idea

of educating the students through teaching English.   The participants reported that they

were not given sufficient opportunities to learn possible approaches as well.   Thus, as

far as this study is concerned, teacher-educators in Japan need to provide ample

opportunities to preservice EFL teachers in such a way that they can explore, delve into,

and articulate the idea of educating the students through teaching English.   It is not

necessary for teacher-educators to provide prescribed teaching techniques, strategies,

or procedures; but, it might be vital to introduce possible approaches or descriptive sets

of alternatives so that they can appropriately conceptualize English teachers' role in

Japanese EFL contexts.   Otherwise, preservice EFL teachers may be likely to get lost

in the process of learning to teach due to the gaps between their idealized visions of

English teaching and what is actually expected of them in the EFL settings in Japan

(Allen, 2005).

     This implication may hold true for preservice ESL teachers as well.   In English

teaching in ESL contexts, such currently discussed issues as native-speakerism and the

nonnative English-speaking professionals' movement (Braine, 2004; Holliday, 2005;

Llurda, 2004) or English teachers' morals and values imposed on classroom

implementations (B. Johnson, 2003) are all pertinent for English teachers' professional

identity (i.e., who they believe they are as professionals).   These issues are closely

linked to current ideological or political conditions in which ESL teachers are expected to teach English as an international language.   Thus, depending upon the context that preservice ESL teachers work after the completion of teacher education programs, teacher-educators need to pay particular attention to and appropriately guide them for their sound professional identity formation (cf., Sakui & Gaies, 2002).

How can teacher-educators guide preservice teachers for sound professional identity formation?   Allen (2005) mentions that self-image is constructed by individuals as well as by society (cf., Soreide, 2007).   "It is society that determines what we do and who we are, the role that we play and the masks we wear" (p. 5).   Carson (2005) also argues that professional identities are (re-)constructed "both inter-subjectively and intra-subjectively" (p. 6).   Thus, in teacher education programs, preservice teachers' professional identities need to be (re-)constructed so that their professional identities are also realigned with "their social identity of "teacher"" (Allen, 2005, p. 6).   In addition, as Zembylas (2004) reports, professional identity and its transformation are at bottom affective.   Accordingly, teacher-educators are advised to make an attempt to understand preservice teachers' identities through an exploration of emotion.   All these suggestions are based on the premise that there are multiple professional identities, which can be identified and (re-)constructed through situated learning in various communities of practice (Wenger, 2005).   Therefore, such crucial aspects of situated learning as "participation" and "reification" should be understood by teacher-educators

in relation to the issues of power, agency, and language within the framework of communities of practice (Barton & Tusting, 2005).

Regarding the aspect of participation, teacher-educators need to enhance preservice teachers' active involvement in meaning-making processes.   As this study indicates, when collaborative journaling is done, for instance, the activity should be emergent in design so that every preservice teacher can become an agent.   All preservice teachers need to be guided so that they can feel the "social-ness" of the activity (Tusting, 2005, p. 38).   Namely, focusing upon the connection among preservice teachers, teacher-educators need to promote preservice teachers' "mutual recognition" (Tusting, 2005, p. 38) from which their identity or community membership arises.   Besides the aspect of participation, teacher-educators need to pay particular attention to the process of reification.   Let me take collaborative journaling as an example.   According to Tusting (2005), it can be said that the collaborative journal (reification) is not involved in a process of negotiation of meaning unless all journal keepers read, reflect upon, and respond to journal entries (participation). Teacher-educators need to be aware of the interplay of these two aspects (i.e., participation and reification) in order to make any activities meaningful (Tusting, 2005, p. 39).   Barton and Tusting (2005) also imply that teacher-educators need to study spoken as well as written textual interactions from diverse perspectives (e.g., social semiotics and critical discourse analysis) in order to understand "the elements of social

events" (p. 46). By investigating social aspects of situated learning, teacher-educators may be able to see the transformative processes of preservice teachers' community of practice, which may, in turn, enable them to guide preservice teachers for sound professional identity formation.

Preservice Teachers' Beliefs and Development Processes

Based upon this research project, it can be concluded that preservice teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching are composed of individually different beliefs and the beliefs that they share within a particular teacher learning context. Individually different beliefs, as well as commonly-held beliefs, are affected by various context-specific factors and are likely to transform as preservice teachers perceive, recognize, and prioritize different context-specific factors at different times in their learning processes. There may also be some beliefs, particularly preservice teachers' commonly-held beliefs, which do not change due to preservice teachers' awareness of social expectation(s) regarding their professional role in a particular context. In this study, for example, the participants were aware that they were expected to educate the students by teaching English, although they could not articulate how they were supposed to do so. This intricate, elusive nature of preservice teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching, together with individual- as well as group-level (re-)construction of such beliefs, indicates the nonlinear, multilayered development

processes (Richards et al., 2001).

Therefore, it is suggested that to understand and examine the development processes of preservice teachers, teacher-educators learn what context-specific and ideological factors preservice teachers tend to prioritize in a specific context. This, in turn, enables the teacher-educators to become aware of how preservice teachers (re-)construct their beliefs about language learning and teaching at group-level as well as at the individual-level. The more teacher-educators become aware of multidimensional belief (re-)construction in consideration of context, the more they can gain insights into the development processes of preservice teachers. This implication is in line with Richards et al. (2001) who claim that both professional contexts and personal factors trigger the notion of teacher change.

Implications for Further Studies

The limitation of the study may be attributed to the number of participants (i.e., four cases) and the term of the investigation (i.e., nine months). The participants were restricted to only Japanese preservice teachers in an EFL teacher education program at a comparatively small university in Japan. Furthermore, although my research methodology (i.e., the multiple modes of inquiry and triangulation) might have minimized this possibility, it is likely that my role as a journal-keeper, facilitator and observer affected the objectivity in my observations and interpretations. Therefore, even though

it was not a goal of this study, generalizability might be called into question (cf., Stake, 1998).   It should be stressed, however, that particularization, as opposed to generalization, was the prime goal of this study.   The remark of Davis (1995) is relevant here:

> One of the common criticisms of qualitative studies is that they are not generalizable.   On the one hand, a strength of qualitative studies is that they allow for an understanding of what is specific to a particular group, that is, what can not possibly be generalized within and across populations.   (p. 441)

In this regard, the particularization of the studied cases attempted in this dissertation should be perceived as a strength.

Based on the present study, the following implications can be proposed for further studies on the same or similar research agenda.

(a)   This study revealed that the (re-)construction of the preservice EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching was done at individual- as well as group-levels.   Thus, I modified the operational definition of teachers' beliefs and presented a new definition.   Accordingly, I suggest that researchers develop research questions on the basis of the new operational definition and reexamine its adequacy and feasibility.

(b)   Preservice teachers may use metaphors to describe their thoughts or conceptualizations about some aspects of language learning and teaching,

especially when they have concrete ideas or relatively firm beliefs. In this study, for example, Masakazu used metaphors when he was asked to elaborate on his conceptualization about teaching English to develop students' communicative competence. Such research findings suggest that future research focus on teachers' beliefs manifested in metaphors. By focusing primarily on the use of metaphors and investigating their content and function(s), researchers may be able to examine teachers' beliefs from different angles. de Guerrero and Villamil (2000), for example, indicate that metaphor analysis is effective especially for exploring teachers' perceived roles in various teaching contexts.

(c) Preservice teachers may go through some emotional depression derived from anxieties regarding their awareness of themselves and the lack of knowledge about teaching methodologies and/or the English language. This study, for instance, revealed that all the participants went through and coped with such emotional depression by interacting and negotiating with the other participants in their collaborative-learning process. Such research findings imply at least two research possibilities. Firstly, future research can focus on preservice teachers' anxieties in learning to teach. Secondly, future research can focus on the processes of preservice teachers' coping with the anxieties in either individual or collaborative development processes

to further provide detailed accounts of the coping processes of the anxieties. On possible approach to such research may include qualitative analyses of participants' "counseling roles" and/or discourse practices and their effects on participants' anxieties in a particular community (cf., Tusting, 2005).

(d) This study uncovered that a common thread observed throughout the (re-)construction processes of beliefs was the participants' awareness of educator selves.   Accordingly, as previously discussed, it might be the professional identity formation that EFL teacher-educators need to pay particular attention to in EFL teacher education programs in Japan. Therefore, I suggest that future research focus on preservice teachers' awareness of selves (i.e., who they believe they are as professionals) and its relationships with their development processes in other ESL/EFL contexts.

As can be seen, I often used the term *focus* in the implications listed above.   Not to be mistaken, the term *focus* does not mean that researchers need to eliminate a holistic, *emic* view for their research attempt.   Rather, I would like to suggest that qualitative approaches be used for their focused research in order for researchers to have "a view of the total scope of behavior in its natural setting and a view of the functioning of individual elements within the whole system" (Williamson, 1988).

Finally, as Nunan (1996) discusses, I would like to suggest that future researchers in the area of ESL/EFL teacher development conduct collaborative research which

promotes preservice teachers' reflection and teaching and enables them to develop as

professionals.   In this regard, I would like to further quote what I have been keeping in

mind as I designed and conducted this research project as a qualitative researcher.

The following quote, I personally believe, provides the most important perspective to

see our research practices in the TESOL field: "How we do research, like how we teach,

reflects our underlying assumptions about human nature and learning" (Calkins, 1985, p.

126).   With this quote in mind, being a teacher-educator myself, I will carry out further

investigations.   In doing so, I wish to explore, elucidate, and learn what it means to

develop as professionals.   Qualitative research, like teaching, always entails a cyclical,

iterative process of sense-making.   After all, the process never ends.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Initial Questionnaire Format

1. Name: _____

2. Gender: _____

3. Age: _____

4. Birth place: _____

5. Do you have any teaching experience?   Yes. / No.

6. If your answer is "Yes" above, how long?   _____

7. Are you currently teaching?   _____

8. Would you like to teach at a junior-high or a high school?

_____

9. Did you like English when you were in a junior-high or high school?   Yes. / No.

10. If your answer is "No" above, why?

   Please explain briefly below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B - Collaborative Journal Guidelines

<u>Part A: General Guideline</u>

Collaborative journaling is beneficial for preservice teachers because it can provide access to hidden affective variables that influence the way preservice teachers learn to teach. Preservice teachers can use a collaborative journal as a means of generating questions and hypotheses, or as a tool for effective reflection. A collaborative journal can be seen as a discussion forum to explore teaching beliefs and practices cooperatively with others.

The following is a general guideline to proceed with collaborative journaling.

1. Let's discuss how often we will write in the collaborative journal. I will explain how we will exchange journal entries with one another.

2. For the first few entries (or possibly more), it might be a good idea to decide what topic or theme we will focus on. Some topics or themes suggested for journal entries are: (a) your language learning experience; (b) your language teaching experience; and (c) your experience as a student-teacher in an EFL teacher education program. If you have any suggestions, please bring them up in your journal entry or to a bi-weekly meeting. (See Part B.)

3. After we have decided upon a topic to start with, let's spend 20 to 30 minutes to think about the topic and relate it to your actual experience, ideas, or thoughts. Then, start writing whatever comes to your mind. Please remember, you can raise questions to other participants. There is always someone who will respond to you.

4. When we exchange our journal entries, all of us are expected to read all journal entries before starting to write our next journal entries. Please make sure that

you have spent enough time reading the other participants' journal entries. Also, be sure to give enough thought as to whether or not you can respond to them in any way.   Please feel free to jot down your on-going thoughts or ideas as you read other participants' journal entries.

5.   We will hold bi-weekly meetings to discuss our journal entries and overall journaling experience.   In the meetings, we will take time to read all journal entries again and discuss whatever we think is important or necessary to talk about with other participants for teacher development.

Part B: Reflection-Questions to Guide Journal Entries

The following questions are developed to guide you when you think about a topic or theme about which to write.   In addition, when you read your own or other participants' journal entries, these questions might stimulate your reflection and thoughts.

Reflection-Question 1

What have you learned in the teacher education program today?   How can you relate what you learned to your teaching practice in the future?

Reflection-Question 2

Did you talk about any teaching-related topics with your instructor and/or friends?   What did you say?   What did others say?   What do you think as you reflect on the dialogue(s) now?

Reflection-Question 3

How do you describe yourself as an English teacher?   Is your perception of an English teacher similar to or different from the other participants' perceptions? How?   Why?

The purpose of this study is to understand the process of preservice EFL teachers' learning and how their beliefs about language learning and teaching are manifested in the process of collaborative journaling.   The main concern of this study is to describe the process of collaborative journaling and the issues that you may have encountered through the journaling process.   This study is expected to generate some benefits toward professional development for Japanese English teachers.   In this study, I will first conduct an informal questionnaire to know briefly about each participant. Then, I will ask all the participants to keep a collaborative journal together (including me) and attend bi-weekly meetings to discuss journal entries.   Some general guidelines for journaling will be provided in a bi-weekly meeting before we begin journaling.   While keeping the collaborative journal and participating in bi-weekly meetings, I would like to hear about your experiences of collaborative journaling and discuss journal entries individually.

The information obtained in this study will be used for my dissertation project. However, your name will not be disclosed in the dissertation.   Your participation in this study is voluntary.   You are free not to participate in or to withdraw from the study at any time.   Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying me.   Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed.   If you choose to participate, all the information will be kept in strict confidence and will have no bearing on the grades given to you or services you received from your school, Eastern Miyazaki University.

If you are willing to take part in this study, please sign the statement on this form and submit it to me.   If you would like to contact either me or the faculty co-investigator, please use the address given on this form.   Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Contact Information

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_____

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional
Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

                                              Phone: (724)-357-7730

_____

        I have read and understood the information on the form, and I consent to
volunteer to be a part of this study.   I understand that my responses are completely
confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.   I have received an
unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (please print): _____
Signature: _____
E-mail address: _____
Phone number or location where I can be reached:
_____

Appendix D - Informed Consent Form Translated into Japanese

研究参加同意書

　本研究の主たる目的は、英語教員を志望している学生の皆さんの成長（学習）過程について、見識を深めることです。皆さんの指導観・指導哲学が、共同日誌をつけていく過程で、どのように変化するのかを調査することも目的の１つです。言い換えれば、この研究は、皆さんが共同日誌をつける作業過程、及び日誌の中で議論していく内容を、詳細に亘って記述分析していく研究です。今回参加していただけるのであれば、日本で英語教員を志望する皆さんにとって、非常に有益な経験になることと思います。１人ではなかなか難しいとされる指導観・指導哲学を明確にしていくことができ、また共同で日誌をつけ、共同でディスカッションを行うことで、自己分析・自己理解といった、教育者として不可欠な活動に従事できるからです。

　研究の手順についての概略説明ですが、まず、簡単なアンケートに答えてもらいます。これは被験者の皆さんについての理解を深める手がかりとして用いるものです。それから、被験者全員（私自身も含めて）で共同日誌をスタートさせます。隔週（あるいは３週間に１度程度）毎に、ミーティングを実施します。このミーティングは、共同日誌の内容を気楽に皆で話し合うためのものです。お互いの指導観・指導哲学を明確化するきっかけとして位置づけてもらえばと思います。決してお互いの日誌の内容を非難したり、批判したりするためではなく、相互理解、自己理解を深めるための語らいの場です。共同日誌をつけるにあたって、マニュアル的なものは用いません。しかし、初めての人が多いでしょうから、ガイドラインを提示します。共同日誌をつけ、ミーティングで様々な角度から議論を交し合いながら、被験者の皆さん１人１人の様子を伺うために、またより深く指導観・指導哲学の成長過程を記述分析するために、個人的に意見などを聞かせてもらうこともあります。

　本研究で収集される情報は、私の博士論文研究以外に用いられることはありません。博士論文に用いられるとはいえ、皆さんの名前（本名）は公表されません。本研究への参加はあくまで任意です。従って、不参加とする行為も任意です。皆さんの意思決定が、大学での評価、あるいは成績等に影響することは一切ありません。また、参加することを決めた後も、なんらかの理由で中断せざるえない場合には、私に知らせていただき、途中で参加を中止することも可能です。その場合、収集された個人情報はすべて処分され、どのような形であれ研究に用いられることはありません。なお、収集されるすべての情報は、厳重に保管され、外部に漏れることのないよう管理されます。皆さんが所属する大学での皆さんの成績・評価が、収集される情報の影響を受けるということも一切ありません。

　参加を希望する方は、この書面に英語での署名をし、私まで提出願います。もし、私、あるいは私が所属する米国州立大学の主任教授（共同研究者）に連絡をしたい場合には、この同意書に記載されている連絡先を利用してください。

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May 7, 2006 (2:30 – 3:15 p.m.)
Place: A seminar room at EMU
Participant: Masakazu

Masakazu: Everybody else seems to have confidence in what they are doing.   I told you why I decided to become a teacher.   Didn't I?   I like English. Very much . . .

Researcher: Yes.   I know.   I remember you told me why you wanted to become an English teacher.   You'd like to teach English because you like it.   You like using English, speaking English . . .

Masakazu: Right.   But, is that enough?   I started thinking . . . I need to think why I really want to become a teacher . . . I feel I'm different from the other people [the other participants].

Researcher: What do you mean by "different"?   How different?   Can you tell me more?

Masakazu: I think you feel the differences.   Sachi and Megumi like education, right?   They like children.   I can't just imagine myself interacting with children and having fun.   I am not sure if I like children that much . . . I'm not sure if I can educate children.

Researcher: I see . . . You think you can't educate children?

Masakazu: Yes.   Ah . . . Maybe I can.   I'm not sure.   Do you really think I should become a teacher?   I started feeling sorry for the other people [the other participants] and children in my future class.

Researcher: Masakazu, to be honest, Sachi and Megumi contacted me the other day, saying that they lost confidence.   They individually contacted me by email.   They have anxieties.   As you do now.   Nobuhito, too, I think.   I think it's very natural for all student-teachers to feel anxieties. Anxieties about what they can do as English teachers, what they can do as educators, what they can do for students' parents . . . It's OK to feel that they are imperfect.   I am imperfect.   I'm still in the process of learning.

Masakazu: Is that so?   Did you feel the same way as I do when you . . . when you wanted to become an English teacher?

Researcher: Of course.   That's why I decided to study more and gain teaching experiences.   I believe that there is no end in learning to become an English teacher.   To become an educator.   I think being aware of one's imperfection is an important step to grow as professionals.

Masakazu, what aptitudes do you think an educator needs to have?

Masakazu: [long pause] I was moved by Sachi's words when she wrote [in a journal entry] that love for children and love for people . . . that's needed for educators. But, to teach English, I hadn't thought that such love would be needed.

Researcher: Don't you like children or people who study English very hard? Don't you like children who enjoy speaking English?

Masakazu: Yes. I want to help them. If I can . . . To help such people, I want to study more.

Researcher: Masakazu, what do you think an English teacher has to have as aptitudes, skills, knowledge . . . ?

Masakazu: Deep knowledge about the subject. English. And, we have to be able to speak English. Sensitivity to language . . . And . . .

Researcher: I see. What is . . . hmmm . . . Can you explain a little bit more about deep knowledge about English? About the subject, right?

Masakazu: English teachers, to me, are professionals. We will have to serve the students. It's a service. After becoming an English teacher, at any place, any time . . . I would like to provide a great service. So, I need to become knowledgeable about English grammar, vocabulary, any types of usages . . . pronunciation . . . almost everything. And, I should be able to skillfully teach them. So, by deep knowledge, I mean . . . the deep knowledge about the English language and teaching techniques. I think I'm talking too much . . . about stupid things . . .

Researcher: No! Not at all! I'm really pleased to hear what you think. Please tell me more.

Masakazu: OK. But . . . Please correct me, if I'm wrong. I think English teachers should be knowledgeable about the English language and how it should be taught. It's difficult. I know that. But, at least, we should try to become knowledgeable. [So,] I want to study more. I want to know more about the English language and how it should be taught. I really want my students to trust me [in terms of knowledge and skills].

November 20, 2005
Place: A seminar room at EMU

Sachi: I would like to know why you decided to become English teachers. Also, let me hear what you think is important for an English teacher.

Researcher: What is important for an English teacher to have?   Aptitudes?   Skills?

Sachi: Yes.   Both.

Researcher: I see.   OK.   What do you think, everybody?   Any volunteers?

Megumi: I'm a member of the Volunteer Club at EMU.   Student volunteers go to places where teenagers who committed crimes are gathered.   There, we talk to them and try to help them.   It's a volunteer work.   Through this volunteer work, I started thinking that I want to change the environment that surrounds teenagers.   I became interested in educating small kids.   I became interested in the human relationships.

Researcher: Wow . . . You're interested in educating the students.

Masakazu: As for me, education is not . . . Well, what I want my students to learn is the subject.   English.   I like English.   I would like my students to brush up their English.   Improving students' English is what I want to do.   I'm sure education is important.   But, I always think about the improvement of students' English first.   Education is not . . . Before participating in this project, I didn't get a chance to think about the educational aspect of English teaching.   So, I really appreciate it.   The reason why I wanted to become an English teacher is that I want to have the students like English.   [Reflecting on my high-school days,] English was not fun at all.   It was boring.   I remember at one time we were told to memorize parts of speech.   I was shocked.   I wondered why we had to memorize such things.   For three years in high school, I kept wondering why, why, and why . . . But, when an ALT came to my class, I had a great time.   So, because I like the English language and I know it is fun to use English, I decided to become an English teacher.   I wrote about the Canadian ALT, right?

Researcher: Yes.   Yes.

Masakazu: Because of that experience, I began thinking that English proficiency is required for an English teacher.   There might be some other things that an English teacher needs to have . . . But, at this point, I can't figure out exactly what they are . . .

Researcher: I see.   That's totally fine.   Anybody else?

Masakazu: Ah . . . How can we motivate the students?   If the students are not motivated enough, whatever the teacher tells . . . they don't learn anything.   The students should be motivated, but can we really motivate them?   How?   I think English teachers should have something . . . something that they can use or show to motivate the students.   So, I am collecting something useful from time to time. Instructional materials, stories to tell, teaching techniques, and so on.

Researcher: hmmm . . . I see.   Motivation is an important factor in language learning and teaching.   I understand why Masakazu is interested in how we can motivate the students.   What does motivation mean to you, by the way?

Megumi: Something that moves people?   Something that makes people to feel like doing something . . . I think teacher's personality can be motivation to the students.

Nobuhito: Teachers' experiences like studying abroad can motivate the students. Ah . . . I don't have such experiences, though.   But, my teacher [volley ball instructor] motivated me a lot when I was in high school.   He told us his experiences of practicing very hard and playing in tournaments. He was very good at instructing us.   He had his own way of instructing volley ball.

November 16, 2005

Sachi: Hello!   I am currently teaching in a cram school.   I teach first-graders of junior-high schools.   Two separate groups of the students.   One group includes a lot of students who are good at English, the other most of the students who are poor at English (or even hate studying English!).   In the former group [good students], my teaching goes smoothly.   I don't need to tell them what to do.   They work with textbooks when they have to.   But . . . In the latter group [poor students], there are 11 students, and they are very different in terms of their levels of English proficiency.   Very different! There are a few students who can be placed in the former group; there are some students who can't distinguish the alphabets b and d in writing; there are some students who can't even read English alphabets.   It is really hard for me to teach such students.   How can I teach them smoothly?   I wish the group of the students had been divided into much smaller classes.   I would like to give more individualized instructions!

So, I thought, "Where are the places that those poor students make errors?"   Reading through students' worksheets and textbooks, I found common types of errors among those students.   For example, every student made errors in the differences between be-verbs and action verbs. In cram schools, the pace of teaching is very fast, and instructors teach the students without checking what types of errors the students often make.   So, I decided to check their errors and move back to the place that the students commonly made errors.

Also, to improve their vocabulary and grammar, I decided to give quizzes twice a week based on their textbooks used in their schools.   Why? Because I wanted my students to realize that what they did in the cram school was relevant to their study at school!   I now know that any types of students can do well if the same thing is taught repeatedly.   Of course, it takes time.

Anyway, do you think what I did at the cram school was right?   Wasn't it my self-satisfaction?   I felt that I forced my students to cram things into their heads, and I don't like it.   What I did was possible because I am teaching in a cram school, but in actual schools, I don't think I would be able to do the same.   Within an allotted time, I would like to do something more productive.   But, I don't know how.   How can I have my students learn things more productive in a cram school like that?   I don't know how I can do that.   Through the working experience at the cram school, I hope I will be

able to find out how I can have my students learn more productive things . . .

November 19, 2005

Megumi: I watched a teaching demonstration video in the methodology course the other day.   In the video, I thought, "Oh, I see!"   The English teacher in the video had his students support one another.   I really like the idea of having the students help one another to deepen their understanding on their own.   Students who are perceived to be good at English might not be able to do well where students who are perceived to be poor at English.   Every student has strong points and weak points.   Thinking this way, I think that the students might appreciate collaborative learning in class.   It's not always that good students help poor students, but that all students give and take!   If we can have the students work this way, then the students are likely to feel a sense of achievement.   I would like to create such an in-class atmosphere with my students.   Even outside of the classroom!   I think if we have a good learning atmosphere in class, it will extend to the learning atmosphere outside of the class as well.   Don't you think so?

        I found a website of the teacher in the video.   I saw an impressing phrase on the website, and I took notes.   "Poor teachers teach, good teachers let the students learn, and best teachers inspire the students to learn."   The students' motivation of learning does not easily occur no matter how strict the teachers become.   So, I felt it is important for us to inspire the students and maintain their motivation.

        All persons are different.   It is quite natural.   Then, what a person is lacking can be filled with what another person has.   If we, English teachers, think this way, then we all can cover up students' differences in terms of English proficiency in class.   I know the reality is not that simple, but well, I wrote as these ideas came to my mind.   I will elaborate on these ideas as we go along.

November 20, 2005

Nobuhito: I watched the teaching-demonstration videos.   I was impressed!   I wish I had been taught by those teachers!

        Anyway, let me write about my opinion.   I know that students' differences of English proficiency really exist in all classes.   But, we all need to see the differences from a different angle.   I mean that such differences are not necessarily negative.   As Sachi pointed out, individualized instructions would work well to solve such problems.   Tutoring is, thus, effective compared to regular teaching in class because a teacher can pay attention to small things.   When I tutored a student, the student liked my teaching because my instruction was customized well.   To the student, my

tutoring sessions were fun.   That's what she told me.   I have been tutoring another student who is a first-grader of a junior-high school, and this student like my tutoring sessions, too.   (Well, in fact, there were times that I felt I failed to provide good explanations!)

Individualized instructions are just idealized situations, though.   I strongly believe that the subject of English should be an elective in both junior-high and high schools.   Don't you think it is a good idea to let the students choose their teachers as well?   If the students are to select their English teachers, the teachers need to make their teaching meaningful.   The teachers may feel the necessity of changing their classes to suit the students' needs and language-proficiency levels.   (I'm sure there are some problems in this claim . . .)

Or, if we are to consider students' differences of English proficiency a positive aspect of learning and teaching, I think one option is to have the students teach and learn from one another.

November 23, 2005

Researcher: Nobuhito brought up an interesting issue in his journal entry: the students should choose their English teachers in schools.   (Please correct me, Nobuhito, if my understanding is wrong.)   It may sound too radical; to me, however, it is very innovative.   Thank you, Nobuhito, for bringing that up.

Well, suppose the students were allowed to choose their English teachers in schools.   (It is, of course, subjunctive!)   What do you think would happen in schools?   Don't you think that especially junior-high school students would see "funny teachers" as "good teachers"?   What if such students misunderstood what "good teachers" are?   There might be some English teachers who are very strict, but actually "good teachers."   Take another example.   In high schools, because of entrance examinations, don't you think a lot of students would choose English teachers who are only good at teaching test-taking techniques?   What I am writing here is, of course, totally subjunctive; what I am writing here is to tell you there may be some possibilities of this and that . . . But, I would like all of you to think such possibilities may, in the long run, become disadvantages for some students who do not understand what "good teachers" are.

Now, let me ask you a question, once again.   In schools (not cram schools or tutoring), do you think we should let the students choose their English teachers?   And, why?   Let me hear what all of you think.   Please keep in mind to ask "what if?"

Appendix H - Sample Journal Entries: Researcher's Reflective Journal

November 28, 2005
    The participants started writing a lot in the collaborative journal.   Some expressed their anxieties about not knowing teaching methodologies.   The other expressed their anxieties about what they have been doing in a cram school or tutoring sessions.   How much advice can I give?
    In a bi-weekly meeting, I was impressed by their enthusiasm and active participation in the discussions on journal entries.   I was wondering if I could really have them talk spontaneously about journal entries, but I think there will be no problem. The thing is though how I can facilitate their learning.   That is, I have to figure out the way of directing them to reflect further upon their writing or utterances so that they can learn from what they are doing.

December 4, 2005
    Nobuhito was late for the bi-weekly meeting.   That was the second time.   We could not start the meeting until he showed up.   I felt very sorry for the other participants waiting for Nobuhito to arrive for thirty minutes or so.   I told Nobuhito to be punctual for future meetings.   But, would that make him nervous about coming to the meeting?   At this point, every participant is willing to write about, talk about, and share their stories with one another.   I don't want to ruin that.   I hope all the participants understand the nature of this research project.   We need collaboration.   We need a sense of "learning community."   This project is to help all of us grow and develop as professionals.

April 28, 2006
    Teacher-employment examinations are just around the corner.   I felt the tension or nervousness among the participants.   I told them in the meeting that I will be pleased to give any kinds of information about the teacher-employment examinations. I took the examinations long time ago when I was in college.   The participants seemed to be happy when I told them.   But, I do not want to make our community a study group for the exams.   That is not the main goal of the research project.   At the same time, however, since the exams are very important for the participants to become English teachers, I really feel the necessity to support them.   I have to figure out how I should support them, maintaining the quality and nature of the research project.

May 12, 2006
    I wrote in the collaborative journal that the teacher-employment examinations are just a process of becoming teachers.   Not the product of teacher learning.   I also told a few participants when I was asked how they can study for the exams.   I stressed the

importance of developing their teaching philosophies because I know that their teaching philosophies will be elicited in individual interviews in the exams.   I personally believe that such teaching philosophies should be based on their firm beliefs about language learning and teaching.   Thus, I would like them to explore their beliefs as much as they can.   I would like them to make the best use of the research project.   I hope they will realize that what they are doing in this research project is closely related to what will be assessed in the exams.   No matter how well they do in paper-based exams, they will fail if they perform poorly in interview exams.

May 26, 2006
       Most of the participants were allocated to their practicum sites.   I told them my email address in case they would like to contact me when they need to.   The collaborative journal will be kept on line, but I asked them to write individually just in case they do not have access to the Internet during their practicum.
       I am looking forward to visiting their practicum sites and observing their teaching. I hope I will be able to spend much time interviewing them on the spot.   I need to contact supervisors in schools to find out how long I will be able to stay.   Based on what I saw in their writing of the collaborative journal, I think most of the participants will enjoy their teaching.

June 23, 2006
       Nobuhito contacted me by phone.   He said his teaching didn't go well at the practicum site.   He described how he taught the class.   He explained what he did and how his students reacted in detail.   He also reported what his supervisor told him based on the evaluation.   Nobuhito asked me questions, seeking some solutions.   I answered a few questions, and I asked him to elaborate on what he described over the phone.   Then, I said, "It is difficult for me to give you advice over the phone like this because I do not know the students well."   But, I gave him some pieces of advice like keeping records of his teaching, describing how the students reacted, etc.   Like he actually did over the phone, if he keep recording and reflecting on his teaching, I am sure his teaching will improve.   By describing in-class interactions and reflecting upon it later on, he might be able to find out the way he can change in his teaching practice. It is just a beginning of his practicum.   There will be a chance for him to grow.   I hope my advice will help him a bit.