The production and critical analysis

of the provision of an electronic professional development course

for high school English language teachers

designed to be culturally and pedagogically empathetic

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Abstract

The access to appropriate professional development (PD) for English language (EL) teachers can be problematic; particularly in remote areas, where learning centres providing PD courses are inaccessible; and internationally, where culturally relevant PD is limited. An EL pedagogy PD course provided through the medium of information and communication technology (ICT) has the potential to offer EL teachers access to appropriate and relevant PD. An EL teaching PD course incorporating action research (AR) has the capability of allowing teachers to experiment with, reflect upon, and develop individual pedagogical notions and procedures from the presented course material. The AR process would allow for cultural diversity, hence enabling such a PD course to be culturally empathetic. This thesis investigates the provision of an online professional development course for English language teachers (www.epd4elt.com, login: visitor, password: visitor48) designed by the researcher to be highly accessible and inter-culturally relevant. The research employed a qualitative single, holistic case study approach. The actors within the research were: the researcher; the course participant (CP), a practicing EL teacher in an international school in Fiji; the CP's head of department (HOD); and the course material. The course material consisted of five EL teaching methodology related modules. Each module included an introduction to the EL teaching methodology; a lesson plan demonstrating elements within that methodology; video of the lesson in practice; two or three current journal articles discussing the methodology, invariably from various cultural positions; and a ten question, multiple choice, multiple answer quiz. The methodologies introduced within the course were: 1)

language corpora and the lexical approach, 2) grammar-based syllabi, a deductive, inductive or combined Approach, 3) task-based learning and pedagogical scaffolding, 4) multiple intelligences and language learning strategies, and 5) content-based instruction and a cross-curricula approach. Data was collected through a post-course questionnaire employing closed and open-ended questions, interviews with the course participant and the course participant's HOD utilising an open-ended questioning technique, and all online communication between the researcher and the CP or the CP's HOD. A thematic analysis was used to identify and inform research relevant themes, from which the CP's narrative was constructed. Documentation of all aspects of the research process, including experiences beyond the direct interaction with the CP, informed the researcher's narrative. Conclusions were drawn from the triangulation of the CP's narrative, the researcher's narrative and relevant literature. The online mode of delivery was shown to be appropriate and effective, although prerequisite ICT skills needed to be tested for, and in place, before beginning the course. This could be achieved by providing an ICT appropriate training course, and supplementary documentation, prior to course commencement. The implementation of AR within the course to provide cultural relevance and empathy was shown to be effective and valid.

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Abbreviations

CELTA	Cambridge English Language Teaching &
	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
CBI	Content-Based Instruction
CfBT	Centre of British Teachers
CPr	course provider
CPs	course participants
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
DL	distance learning
EL	English language
e-PD	electronic professional development
ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
HOD	head of department
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISS	International School, Suva
Moodle	Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment
NET	native-speaker English teachers (NET
PD	professional development
PLE	personal learning environments
PPP	presentation, practice and production
TESL/TEFL	teaching English as a second/foreign language

UAE   United Arab Emirates

UBD   University of Brunei Darussalam

UK   United Kingdom

The Prologue

And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche. (The Prologue, Chaucer 1343-1400)

The need for the English language (EL) as a tool for international communication, a worldwide lingua franca, is increasing globally. Government education departments, schools, colleges and universities throughout the developed and developing world are offering English as the primary second language within their curricula. The demand for teachers able to offer English is also on the rise. In many cases, teachers who teach English are not native English speakers and, in some cases, have limited EL skills. Over the past 25 years of EL teaching, teacher training and providing teacher professional development (PD), in seven different countries, I have had the pleasure to have worked with many EL teachers, with a variety of linguistic backgrounds and in diverse educational settings. These range from a primary school in Brunei Darussalam to universities in Australia, from a language school in Madeira, Portugal to an international school in Malaysia, from a tertiary college in United Arab Emirates (UAE) to a private high school in Barbados and a semi-private school for indigenous Australians in North Queensland. The vast majority of teachers that I have encountered value PD, believing that PD appropriate to their specific pedagogical environment is essential. Richards and Farrell (2005) have indicated that this desire for PD is prevalent among teachers and suggest that teachers are expected to be pro-active in the development of professionally related skills across the spectrum of education, from ICT to assessment, from pedagogic practices to theories. The teaching profession is vibrant and innovative, and educators invariably strive to be contemporary in their practice.

Many EL teachers internationally work in rural or semi-rural areas where teacher development courses and further or higher education institutions are not readily accessible. Through my international professional experience I have witnessed a great variation in teachers' access to PD. Sending teachers, heads of department or teacher trainers on short term teacher development and learning courses can be both expensive and logistically complicated. Educators attending such courses are not necessarily being provided with appropriate material for their pedagogical needs, however contemporary the methodology being introduced may be. Organising and running in-school PD requires educators to organise time for the extra loading that preparing PD courses requires, a factor that is not often afforded practising teachers on tight professional schedules. Employing peripatetic PD providers can be an effective system of providing in-school courses, but again, an outsider can only provide generic material in relation to the PD topic, with limited understanding of the specific socio-cultural needs of the educational environment entered. An electronic PD course which is supervised and supported via the internet has the potential to alleviate many of the intrinsic problems associated with attending a face-to-face PD course. An electronic PD course based on the action research (AR) paradigm has the potential to be pedagogically and culturally empathetic in meeting the specific contextual needs of the participants. Cultural empathy, within this research's context, refers to the ability of the course to provide teaching methodology and materials that, although emanating from one culture, is presented within the course for adaptability to another cultural context.

The increasing global accessibility of the internet, and the development of resources, has certainly enriched EL teachers' pedagogy and connectivity. Websites, such as

http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk, http://www.tefl.net, http://www.eslcafe.com, http://www.teachers.tv and http://www.tefl.com have increasingly enabled pedagogical interest groups to form and provide expert information and ideas. Through discussion groups and message boards within these sites, EL teachers have been able to join online teacher communities where they can share pedagogical knowledge, ideas, lesson plans, specific information on geographical areas, schools, and even information pertaining to personalities within the industry. This electronic connectivity has "benefited all those who have chosen, or are in a position, to use the medium, but most specifically, those in remote areas without access to physical communities" (Pledger & Mitchell, 2005. p.11). Universities and further education institutes have been quick to embrace the technology and are now providing a wide variety of electronic distance courses leading to professional and academic qualifications. However, in my experience, teachers do not necessarily have the time, finances or desire, to be involved in the rigours and demands of academic courses. Nevertheless, I have observed that teachers appreciate the practical help and advice that organised PD strives to provide.

If an international PD course is to be pedagogically culturally sensitive it can be produced in one of two ways. Either a needs analysis can be achieved prior to the course, the results forming the basis of the PD material to be provided, or the course can provide contemporary methodology and require participants to experiment and analyse the presented material within their own pedagogical situation. The first system's main drawback is the lack of background knowledge, in terms of a participant's pedagogical environment, the course writer can bring to the production of the course. Although working from a needs analysis, a great deal of research into the cultural and pedagogical

conditions of the participants would have to be accomplished, which may be time consuming and not practical or achievable. Specific socio-cultural PD course design would also require each course to be tailored to each specific PD group, which may prove to be inefficient and hence costly if courses were to be provided in multiple venues. The second system puts the onus on CPs to analyse the presented material in terms of his or her own pedagogical requirements. The supervisor would be introduced to the teacher's pedagogical situation through the ongoing relationship developed with the CPs, and would therefore be in a position to enter into dialogues in the capacity of an experienced mentor, albeit from another acknowledged cultural/pedagogical background. This system would appear to be the most advantageous for effective generic PD courses, as it is the participant who best understands his or her own pedagogical and cultural situation and it is the participant that makes informed judgements of how to develop personal professional skills.

For native speakers, teaching English as a second/foreign language (TESL/TEFL), whether in high schools, tertiary colleges or language schools, requires specific English as a second Language (ESL) training and qualifications. The most highly recognised of these, certainly in the United Kingdom (UK), Australia and New Zealand, is produced and administered by Cambridge University English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), with 2 levels of certification. The initial course, the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), is an intensive 160 hour, 4 week course providing basic English teaching skills combined with English linguistic content. This course is only available as a face-to-face course due to its high teaching practicum content and participant performance analysis. Passing this course is often the pre-

requisite to international ESL jobs and was the basic requirement, along with a teaching degree, to employment in primary and high schools in Brunei Darussalam, where I was employed by the Centre of British Teachers (CfBT). The second level of certification is the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA), which is a post-experience course requiring participants to have taught ESL full-time for at least 2 years. The course can be taken full-time (8-10 weeks), in-service (8-10 months) or via the internet as a distance learning (DL) online PD course of 10 months duration. Although the course is designed for teaching English to adults, the qualification is still recognised as appropriate for teaching at high school level as there is no equivalent children's teaching course. The Distance DELTA was designed and is run by the British Council and International House, London, and is proving to be very popular as participants are able to follow the course in-service in any worldwide location. Participants are supported by a local tutor who is responsible for lesson observations, tutorials, seminars and examination preparation. I acted as a local tutor for the Online DELTA for over 4 years and was impressed by the effectiveness of the internet as a tool for supporting and supervising a DL course. I feel strongly that, with material suitably adapted to their needs, a similar online system can be utilised to provide international EL teachers at high school level with a valuable distance learning professional development course in English language teaching.

Through my experiences of acting as a local tutor for the Online Distance DELTA, I believe the three main advantages of an internet supported electronic PD course are: 1) that anyone with an internet connection is able to access the course, 2) there is no need for a regulated PD timetable as material is constantly available, and 3) that convenient

communication avenues are created between CPs and course providers (CPr). Hence, a PD course presented electronically and supervised via the internet has the potential to alleviate many of the intrinsic problems associated with attending a face-to-face PL course and can be widely accessible.

My objective in this research, therefore, was to produce an electronic professional development course for both local and international high school English language teachers and critically analyse the provision of the course through the medium of information and communication technology. This age range was specified as I had taught at this levels extensively and that ESL teaching to younger children is a specialist area that I have little experience in. I intended the course to be culturally empathetic, that is, neither the CPr nor the course material purports to be the authority, culturally or pedagogically. Rather, the CPr and material is recognised and acknowledged as emanating from one cultural setting, and invites CPs to interact with both from a mutually respectful standpoint. Ideally, the CPr has extensive practical pedagogic experience in ESL and wishes to be respected for those professional experiences, and acts within the course as a mentor for CPs to access, discuss ideas, clarify concepts, describe the e-mechanics of course presentation and act as a motivator, if required. My intention was not to function as an assessor of course participant performance as I believed teachers are quite capable of self-assessment, and this would conflict with my role as a professional mentor.

Within this thesis I intend to describe and rationalise the production and electronic presentation of the PD course, analyse the implementation of the course through the involvement of a course participant, and discuss the function of AR, both as the paradigm

basis of the outcomes of the research and for course participant/course interaction. The course can be accessed by visiting the URL www.epd4elt.com and using the login 'visitor' and the password 'visitor48'.

My research meant that I would have two distinct roles within the case study, one as the producer and provider of the online professional development course and the other as the researcher involved with the direct acquisition of data from the course participants. Due to my duality of function within this case study there would be the requirement to assess the impact one role would have on the other. Duff (2008) discusses the need for researchers to be able to reflect on and describe their roles within the research and the subjectivity that this may incur. With the need for critical reflection in relation to the duality of my roles in the research I shall produce a narrative of my involvement in both roles, from which triangulation can be achieved in relation to the other actors involved within the research.

This research project has required the consideration of many factors and has raised many issues, and it is my belief, as the researcher, that for the reader to clearly understand these multiple facets a description of the long journey, a form of pilgrimage towards research topic enlightenment, needs initially to be provided as the 'researcher's tale'. As Van Manen (1990) points out "to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live in as human beings".

Chapter1

The Researcher's Tale

Ful wys is he that can himselven knowe (The Monkes Tale, Chaucer 1343-1400)

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is presented as a narrative so as to provide the background to the research and the researcher and to reflect upon the research process in detail. The many facets of the research process contribute significantly to the discussions emanating from the research process. This narrative also provides one of the three elements for the second level of methodological triangulation that this thesis incorporates.

1.2   Privileges; my background

I come from a privileged background, in multiple ways. As a white, European male from a middle-class family with English as my first language I am positioned within our society accordingly. However, the factors forming my constructed global awareness and understanding stem, within the biases of my cultural and socio-economic position, from the privilege of a relatively unbiased upbringing. As a child, I listened to stories describing exotic locations and fascinating peoples. My grandparents and two of their children (my uncle and aunt) had lived in Nyasaland (Malawi) for 12 years, my grandfather being a lecturer at Jeanes Training Centre, a teacher training college at a place called Domasi about 10 miles north of Zomba. During this time my mother

remained in the UK to complete her education and subsequent teacher training. I saw many pictures from an intriguing and evocative environment and listened to tales of expatriate, colonial privileges (grand-mother) and African social integration (aunt and uncle). My father had lived, among many places, in Malaya (Malaysia) and Hong Kong for extended periods. He spoke Cantonese, enough to impress the owners of our local Chinese restaurant, and corresponded for many years with a Malaysian citizen, after whom I appear to have been named. In his retirement, my father voluntarily assisted Vietnamese refugees in settling into their new environment, far from home, and assisted in their all too often traumatic integration into a new society and new lifestyle, far from the reality of their previous existence. This was a new existence, where doctors became cleaners; teachers, factory workers; and businessmen, shop assistants, and where families, used to expansive accommodation were housed in one bedroomed council-provided homes. I became close friends with, and developed an empathy for, the children of these enforced migrants, who were facing serious integration problems of their own, based on racism and the ignorance of the receiving culture, concepts of which I had little awareness.

As for religious beliefs, I was allowed to make an informed decision. I attended Sunday school and confirmation classes within the Church of England, through the encouragement of my mother, but also discussed agnostic and atheistic beliefs with my father, who also propounded the individual and societal values of Buddhism. Although brought up in a middle class environment, I was exposed to my father's political ideologies based on a very strong socialist standpoint. All these factors were prevalent in my initial decision to enter the teaching profession, including the desire to travel and

experience other cultures, and now in my approach to my present research.

Twenty five years after entering teaching I often reflect on the privileges that the teaching profession has provided me, particularly the fact that I have taught and lived in eight countries: UK, Barbados, Portugal, Brunei Darussalam, U.A.E., Japan, Malaysia and Australia. For me, the teaching profession has offered an introduction, and partial immersion, into a variety of cultures, religions and communities like few other professions can, a privilege that is not lost on me. Throughout my international teaching experience and interaction with fellow EL teachers, it was my perception that constructive PD was highly desirable. It was also apparent that the provision of PD was adversely affected by multiple factors, including the lack of accessible expertise, limited or no funds, time restrictions, work pressures, no institutional PD culture, lack of organisation and apathy. Academic and commercial courses are available, and I have participated in a few (Linguarama TESL Certificate, University of Cambridge ESOL examination's Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults and Diploma in English Language Teaching {primary/secondary}, MA in Applied Linguistics), but teachers often do not have the funds, the time or the inclination to pursue such courses. And these courses, by being prescriptive, are not necessarily appropriate for the needs of the participating teacher.

As a long-term expatriate I have had the privilege of living and working and had experience of partial acceptance in a variety of differing cultures. My over-riding impression from these experiences is that, whereas on the surface there may be religious and cultural differences, there exists a similarity in the needs, concerns, desires, humour, and social interaction of all. However, I am also aware of a misplaced ex-colonial

sentiment of superiority that can persist within expatriate populations, which often equates to a patronising attitude and a lack of respect for the host culture, along with criticism of the professional and political infrastructures and attitudes. At its extreme, this expatriate instigated disrespect manifests itself as derogative and offensive vocalised comment, often used in humour, designed to create a distancing between the host culture and the expatriate culture, and a positioning of superiority by the instigator. At the very least, this attitude is offensive, but, in essence, is racist. Local peoples are far from oblivious to this expatriate colonial positioning, and can react defensively when engaging professionally with an expatriate. However, if one approaches another from a position of self and mutual respect, I feel it is possible to develop positive inter-cultural relationships. In planning this research I have endeavoured to demonstrate a postcolonial positioning by presenting the e-PD4ELT course and the methods of course participant engagement, from a position of mutual respect, both culturally and professionally. I have also striven to present myself, in the duality of my roles within this research, similarly.

1.3   The background to my research

As I gained experience in teaching I increasingly became involved in providing teacher PD, in the schools in which I was teaching and in Australian and British (overseas) educational institutions. This was both linguistic and pedagogic. Over the 7 years prior to embarking on doctoral research I was involved in three specific PD modes: a) the production and presentation of short-term (4 weeks) PD courses for overseas EL teachers; b) the support, as a local tutor, of practising teachers on the DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults), an online distance postgraduate diploma course provided by Cambridge University (ESOL); and c) assisting in providing the 'ESL in the

Mainstream' course produced by the Council of Education Associations of South Australia. These PD involvements directly determined the focus of my research.

First, the 4 week PD courses for overseas teachers were provided for teachers, teacher trainers and education professional managers travelling from either Thailand or China. These participants were government funded and discussed feeling privileged to be able to attend. However, these courses were inherently expensive, an important factor that would heavily restrict the number of participants. Accordingly, attendees were, on their return home, expected to network and disseminate teaching ideas and concepts gleaned from our courses. The material presented on the courses was what we, as course designers, had determined was appropriate and was closely aligned to current methodology in EL teaching, from our culturally and pedagogically biased standpoint. The course material was based on what we currently used in our own ESL teaching and what we believed, through our own teacher training and development, to be the most effective ESL pedagogy. We considered the course material to be applicable to the generic needs of EL teachers worldwide. The feedback from CPs, through both formal post-course questionnaires and informal discussions, was always very positive, perhaps as an expression of respectful cultural norm, and participants considered the courses to be very informative and enjoyable. However, CPs often discussed the point that probably less than half of the course content provided was useable in their cultural and pedagogical environment. The restrictiveness of their curriculum, the pressure of an examination-driven curriculum, the culturally acceptable behaviour of a teacher, the linguistic cultural bias of the course material and what was perceived as customary pedagogical practice in the classroom were all reasons cited. We, as course designers, had not taken into account

the pedagogical culture of our CPs, which subsequently suggested to me that we were operating from a 'colonial' stance of pedagogical and cultural superiority. The notion among us, the CPrs, that these overseas teachers would have to change their ESL pedagogy to become effective and 'real' ESL teachers was rather too prevalent.

Second, as a local tutor on the DELTA course I became aware of the effectiveness of presenting material online and utilising the facets of online communication for interaction between all agents involved in the course. All material required for the DELTA was presented on a DVD, and all inter-personnel course interaction was achieved through the dedicated Online DELTA website. Although I felt the course itself was rather too prescriptive, I found the mode of presentation and its online participant inclusivity impressive, that is, the course was designed to include participants from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds. However, as a local tutor, I often had to encourage my students to utilise the on-line communication facilities as there appeared to be a reluctance to do so. Also, the electronic mode of course presentation required an assumed level of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) expertise.

The modular presentation of course material and the practical nature of the ESL in the Mainstream course also really impressed me. I particularly liked the fact that participants, mainstream subject teachers, were required to feed back on experimentation with introduced ideas and reflect on personal classroom experiences and case studies both within discussion sessions and written reports. I felt that to have these subject teachers become aware of the problems facing ESL students and develop personal pedagogical strategies, through in-class experimentation, was highly appropriate and effective PD. The outcomes of CPs' involvement in such a practical course were to: 1) created an

awareness of the difficulties that ESL students faced, and 2) develop pedagogical strategies to alleviate learning obstacles for ESL students.

My experiences in the provision of PD culminated in a desire to produce, and test, a relevant, practical PD course. The course that I envisioned would present course material electronically, would be accessible to both native and non-native English speakers, and would require participants to experiment with methodologies, allowing them to make informed decisions as to what aspects of the presented material were appropriate to their specific pedagogical needs. The course would also have online communication facilities where participants, wherever they may be, could discuss their thoughts, ideas and findings with other participants and with the CPr. Utilising knowledge gained through the provision of PD, my own diverse teaching experiences and the plethora of quality texts relating to ESL pedagogy, I believed I would be able to produce an effective electronic PD course for practising EL teachers. But how effective could an electronic course be? Could it be designed to overcome the inherent cultural biases of the prescriptive courses of which I had experience? And could the course be designed for cross-cultural usage?

1.4   The voyage through my research

The research questions I wished to answer were: 1) can a distance learning professional development course for native and non-native EL teachers be delivered effectively electronically? and, 2) can an English language teaching professional development course be designed to be culturally and pedagogically empathetic? After completion of my confirmation seminar and a literature review, in February 2007, James Cook University accepted my research topic and my research vessel was launched.

My first three major tasks were to: 1) create the e-PD4ELT course, 2) find willing participants to engage with the course, and 3) apply for ethics clearance. At this point, early in 2007, I decided to reduce the 10 modules, which I had originally planned upon, to 5, so as to limit the time spent on both producing the course and participants' engagement with the course. I envisaged that each module would require a classroom-based participant approximately 1 month to complete. I felt that 5-6 months of PD course engagement would provide me with sufficient empirical data to make informed conclusions and would not be too onerous for the participants. After careful deliberation, informed by a number of contemporary ESL pedagogy texts such as Richards and Rogers (2001), Harmer (2003) and Hedge (2001), and through my own teaching experiences, the final 5 topics I chose were: 1) Language Corpora and the Lexical Approach; 2) Grammar-Based Syllabi, a Deductive, Inductive or Combined approach; 3) Task-Based Learning and Pedagogical Scaffolding; 4) Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning Strategies; and 5) Content-Based Instruction and a Cross-Curricula Approach. From my personal teaching experience I deemed these topics to be especially useful to practising teachers. I initially envisaged each module would include a written and video introduction to the methodology or methodologies, a lesson plan showcasing the methodology, a video of the lesson being taught, 2 – 3 related international journal articles of a practical nature, and a quiz to help consolidate information provided within the module. At this time I began to consider carefully which system I could employ within the course to achieve course material/participant interaction and subsequent cultural and pedagogical informed decisions on methodological appropriacy. Through reading about various empirical experiences in PD, I encountered the Action Research

paradigm. I read more extensively about AR, particularly in an educational context, and decided that this would provide the process by which CPs could experiment with introduced pedagogical concepts, reflect on their findings and develop future strategies. The AR paradigm appeared to fit perfectly with how I envisaged CPs would interact with the material and be able to make informed decisions for their pedagogical future.

Originally, the course was to be named 'Electronic Professional Development for Non-Native English Speaking English Language Teachers' as I had planned that English language teachers with English as their second, or other, language would be the demographic on which I would focus my research. However, I changed this title after consultation with a group of academics from the School of Education at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD), whom I met whilst attending the 12th Annual Conference on Education: Changing Trends in Education in May 2007.

1.4.1   Brunei Darussalam

I was encouraged to attend the 12th Annual Conference, held at the UBD, by Pengiran Hajah B.N., Head of the Department of Language Education and Dr G.F.P, lecturer within the same department. I had initially emailed Dr G.F.P. to discuss the possibility of presenting my research topic and asking for guidance in an adjunct workshop at the conference and the possibility of UBD's collusion in my research. Her reply, although stating that there were to be no workshops or seminar sessions, included an invitation to attend the conference and the possibility of meeting herself and others who may be interested in my research, including representatives from the Ministry of Education.

Whilst attending the conference I was able to meet and introduce my research topic to Dr

G.F.P. and some of her colleagues within the Department of Languages Education. At the meeting I was criticised for the negative nuances inherent in the title of my course. The academics present remonstrated with me that the phrase 'non-native English speaking' suggested a deficiency in English, which was often not the case, especially when many English users who have alternative home languages were educated entirely in English and English was used extensively within the home, community and at work. After deliberation, I accepted the critique and decided to change the title of my course to 'Electronic Professional Development for English Language Teachers', a title which appears to demonstrate no language bias and is therefore inclusive.

Attendance at the conference was enlightening in many ways and I gained a great deal from the people I met, and the presentations I observed. The most pertinent to me were: (a) guidance towards creating an appropriate and politically acceptable title for my course; (b) introduction to the educational software package, Moodle; (c) the concept of developing an individual online learning environment for CPs; (d) an introduction to a minister from the department of education, who showed interest in my research and discussed the possibility of trialling the course with Bruneian English teachers in local schools; and (e) meeting other doctoral students from a variety of countries engaged in research in ESL, language teaching and applied linguistics.

Whilst in Brunei I was also able to meet with professional colleagues working for the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), the organisation that recruits and supports expatriate English language teachers for the Department of Education for the Government of Brunei Darussalam. I had previously taught ESL in a Bruneian state primary school, Sekolah Rendah Pintu Malim, for 3 years (1990 – 92) and had a great deal of respect for the

organisation. CfBT had also provided me with a scholarship for studying a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics in the UK (1995-96). M.D., the Brunei Darussalam CfBT Project Manager (and my DELTA tutor), and I had already been in contact as I had emailed him in regards to my research and a possible meeting whilst in Brunei attending the conference. He showed a great deal of interest in my research and offered his assistance, where applicable. He also discussed the possibility of my writing an article about the UBD conference for the CfBT news-letter, to which I agreed.

1.4.2 Back to Cairns (1)

On returning to Cairns I initiated a number of tasks including: 1) the application for ethics clearance for both my research and for the production of video material for inclusion in the course, 2) writing an article for inclusion in the CfBT Newsletter, 3) continued production, development and refinement of the material for the e-PD4ELT course, and 4) recruiting participants for the trialling of the course. I was relatively hopeful that the last task was achievable.

I also decided not to include a video introduction to modules as I felt that, without using a variety of presenters, the course would have the appearance of being both mono-cultural and mono-gender in its delivery. I also decided to write a paper on the topic of task-based learning that I felt could complement the module within my course. The paper, 'Making Movies, an integrated skills task for motivating ESL learners' described and discussed an experimental task-based teaching project on which I had recently embarked. This paper was accepted for publication by EA Journal and published in Vol 24, No 2 in 2008.

The next 8 months were taken up by my ethics application, the production and

presentation of e-PD4ELT on-line, writing the article for the CfBT newsletter, as well as the article for EA Journal. During this period I was also able to attend a weekend Moodle software application training course in Brisbane. The process of creating the e-PD4ELT website became relatively straight forward using the information gleaned from the weekend course and the Moodle guidebook (an is beyond the scope of this thesis). I wanted my presentation of the website to be simple and user friendly with the intention that the course would be easily accessible and navigable for those with limited ICT experience. To create this simplicity of use I tried to use a minimalist approach to the website design, by including only what was totally necessary and for each of these items to be clearly defined. I also wanted to make the site look attractive, a part of which was to create a banner that included images from my own teaching experiences (see below).

Figure 1   The e-PD4ELT online banner.

1.4.3   Creating the Video

The largest obstacle I then faced was the creation of the in-class videos showcasing the module lesson plans. I finally received ethics clearance in September of 2007 (No. H2798) but found recruiting a school willing to allow me to take a video camera into the school environment particularly difficult. All five state and private schools that I approached in Queensland were not willing to allow me video access to their ESL students. A teaching colleague, who was Head of Middle School Science and Mathematics at International School, Suva (ISS), Fiji, suggested that the school Principal

may be interested in my research and may be willing to allow me to video within the ESL department of the school. He also proposed that ISS would be interested in using the completed course for their EL teaching PD as there was a perceived need for PD in the ESL department. A particular advantage of using ISS for the videoing was that the requirements for ethics clearance should not pose such a problem as the school had constant contact with the students' parents and guardians. I contacted the Principal, explained my requirements and was welcomed to visit the school at any time. I organised a trip to Fiji as soon as possible and was made very welcome at ISS.

1.4.4   Fiji, visit 1

My first impression of the ESL department at ISS was disappointing. The rooms assigned to the department were small, dull and uninspiring, the equipment antiquated and limited, and the atmosphere subdued. Students appeared not to be engaging well with learning materials, which were often photocopies taken from Euro-centric ESL course books, and the students were, more often than not, using home languages. The teaching approach adopted by the head of department (HOD) appeared unsystematic and student/teacher engagement limited. Although I found the HOD very personable and knowledgeable in the field of ESL, I felt strongly that the subdued atmosphere in the department was attributable to a lack of enthusiasm and commitment to the position held. It became apparent that the students wanted to leave the department as soon as they were able, both in the short term, after each lesson, and the long term, that is, to integrate into the mainstream, a strong indication that they were dissatisfied with the provision of ESL within ISS.

I was also able to observe the other two ESL teachers in action, Rema and A.B.. Rema's primary role was working with individuals and small groups of ESL students who were studying in the mainstream curriculum but were withdrawn for intensive ESL support. In this role, Rema appeared effective and had developed observably positive relationships with her students. Through discussions I had with a variety of Rema's students, she was particularly appreciated for her patience and kindness. I also observed Rema teaching an ESL class of 8 – 9 students, where she appeared not to be so comfortable. It was my impression that Rema lacked confidence in her pedagogy and that the curriculum restrictions imposed on her lesson content inhibited her natural style of teaching. A.B., on the other hand, appeared to be a confident and linguistically knowledgeable teacher who was well-prepared and well-liked. Her teaching methodology appeared quite traditional, that is, a teacher-centred 'chalk and talk' type of lesson delivery, which seemed to appeal to her Korean students in particular.

As I, and my research topic, had been introduced by the Principal in a staff meeting, mainstream subject teachers were very willing to talk to me about their concerns regarding the provision of ESL teaching and support in the school. The 'stiRemaa' of being an ESL student, the lack of linguistic preparation, the inappropriate timing for ESL student entry into the mainstream curriculum and the lack of concrete support for ESL students once they were integrated into the mainstream were all issues raised. These comments were of interest and concern to me, although my primary reason for being at ISS was to recruit teachers to be videoed presenting the ESL lessons that I had prepared. This recruitment, fortunately, proved not to be a problem. There were 5 lessons to be videoed and I soon found five teachers, all with ESL teaching experience, willing to

participate. Two of three members of the ESL department, A.B, and M.L., were among those expressing a willingness to be videoed, with the other volunteers being subject teachers from the departments of English and Science, and a middle school class teacher. Two teachers were Caucasian, two Indo-Fijian and one Fijian. Once all relevant ethics requirements had been fulfilled, the videoing commenced and I was able to complete all five videos in 1 week, thanks to the professional competency and enthusiasm of all involved. An interesting aside here is that 3 of the 5 teachers asked me if they were required to follow the lesson plan exactly. They discussed ideas of how the lesson could be improved upon in relation to their students and this, as far as I was concerned, was perfectly acceptable and understandable, and was to be encouraged.

During the week at ISS I was also able to spend a couple of hours with the third ESL teacher, Rema, who had shown an interest in following the e-PD4ELT course once it was available. I was able to show her e-PD4ELT online, as it presented at the time, which was approximately 80% complete. I explained the elements found on the website, how the personal learning environment was accessed, and its functionality, and how to access the material, the quiz and the various modes of communication. I assumed a certain level of ICT competency and was given no cause for concern, although I did not specifically analyse Rema for her ICT proficiency. After my introduction to the e-PD4ELT course, Rema requested to follow the course, for which I was grateful.

Through a subsequent discussion I had with Rema, based on a generic pre-course questionnaire, I discovered that she had attended a 1 year part-time ESL teaching course whilst living in New Zealand. When discussing ESL pedagogical methodologies, Rema stated that she had heard of the majority of those introduced within the e-PD4ELT course

and would be able to explain them to other teachers. However, on further prompting, I discovered that her knowledge base was, in many cases, superficial, and that some concepts she purported to understand were not necessarily correctly comprehended. One concern I had at that time was that Rema appeared overly impressed with the e-PD4ELT course. I was worried that she would treat the material, and me, as an authority, in the traditional PD presented top-down fashion, as opposed to the presented material within the course being the 'authoritative figure' and using AR for interaction with this material so as to inform and develop her own pedagogy.

I also spent further time with the HOD, who discussed the concept of total immersion; that is, students being fully immersed in the second language curriculum environment and she cited the success of the French language total immersion programs in Canada. She stated that she strongly believed immersion was the best way for ESL students to learn the target language and hence ESL students at ISS were moved into the mainstream as soon as she decided they were able to survive. I disagreed. First, she was not using a specific or reliable language testing schemata and, therefore, was not able to reliably qualify the decision to move a student into the mainstream to the other stakeholders. Second, I believed ESL students needed time to adjust not only to the linguistic requirements of the main-school curriculum, but also to the pedagogical and social culture prevalent within the main school. A more ominous reason for the HOD's early immersion strategy was suggested by some mainstream teachers to the effect that the reduced timetable loading created by the removal of ESL students from the ESL department was a compelling factor. I respectfully expressed my thoughts and concerns to the Principal and Heads of senior and middle schools in a meeting before leaving ISS,

and was subsequently asked whether I would be interested in doing an evaluation, with recommendations, on a consultancy basis, of the provision of ESL at ISS in the near future. I agreed.

1.4.5   Back in Cairns (2)

The first task on returning to Cairns was to edit the video and create a DVD to provide the supporting video teaching material. The editing was achieved by using Ulead VideoStudio 11 plus. Concurrently, I was attempting to reconnect with my contacts in Russia and Brunei Darussalam to inform them that the course would be imminently available. I was concerned that I had my course completed and online, video available and as yet only one confirmed participant, Rema at ISS, Fiji.

Through emails and a telephone call I encouraged Rema to commence the course, even though she was the only participant, and she made a tentative start. I soon realised, through online communication, that Rema was not as confident with using the e-PD4ELT website as I had first believed, and both navigating the website and using the communication facilities was proving problematic. This was compounded by the short-term unreliability of internet provision at ISS and an inexplicable inability for me to send emails to, or receive emails from, Rema's school email account. I finally suggested, through emails to Ken using his private email account, that Rema and I use the messaging system within the e-PD4ELT website. I also asked Ken to provide Rema with further ICT support and training as I felt I could rely upon him to work through the processes with Rema. Once that communication system was in place, interaction between us was more regular and I was able to provide further support and encouragement. Initially, I had

decided upon regular, once weekly messages to encourage e-PD4ELT CPs, but later determined that this was perhaps too intrusive and that my role should be to provide support when specifically required, with an occasional message of encouragement. The amount of support and interaction provided to CPs was a dilemma which I found difficult to gauge, and which ultimately I believe I miscalculated.

Over the next 2 months I concentrated on confirming CPs and tried other avenues of recruitment. I emailed M.G. in Brunei, first, to provide the article I had completed, and second, to ask whether any CfBT teachers may like to participate on the ePD4ELT course. M.G. confirmed that an information sheet on my course would be published, along with my article, in the next CfBT newsletter. In search of potential CPs, I also advertised on Dave Sperling's ESL Café website, and contacted professional peers in international schools and colleges.

After two more months I decided that neither the Brunei or the Moscow connections were options. My online advertisement only produced expression of interest from an American English teacher (S.K.) in a Tokyo school.

1.4.6   Alice Springs, ACTA Conference, Pedagogies of Connection

In July 2008 I gave a paper at the ACTA inaugural conference in Alice Springs discussing my research topic and the implementation of AR within an electronic PD course. I had two main aims for presenting at this conference, other than the novel experience of presenting at a conference. First, I wished to engage in peer discussion to inform my research and second, to recruit further C.P.s, possibly within Australia, and particularly in rural or remote areas. The former aim was admirably achieved with valued

suggestions emanating from the post-presentation discussions. The latter aim was not.

By late 2008 I had only two CPs online, S.K. in Japan and Rema in Fiji, but only one fully interacting with the course. I had now to seriously consider the methodological approach to my research and was introduced to the concept of a single case study by my doctoral supervisor. Through expressing my concerns about my research with my peers at JCU, a fellow part-time lecturer, with whom I was sharing an office, discussed a close associate of his, a former professional colleague, who was the Principal of a state primary/secondary school in Port Vila, Vanuatu. He suggested that his colleague, J.S., was very approachable and provided me with a contact email address. I sent an email message explaining my research and inquired about the possibility of the school's involvement. I received a prompt reply asking for further information, which I duly provided, including the flyer advertising for CPs (CPs). Within a week J.S. replied, informing me that there were 12 teachers interested in following e-PD4ELT. I decided the best course of action was to take a second trip into the Pacific, visiting Vanuatu, to meet the new group of possible C.P.s, and Fiji, to fulfil the consultancy obligation for ISS and to visit Rema. And this needed to be achieved as soon as practically possible. Six weeks later I was on a plane, along with my research assistant, my 7 year old daughter; first stop, Port Vila, Vanuatu.

1.4.7   Vanuatu

The Principal of the Port Vila school, J.S., a Caucasian, Australian male, picked me and my daughter up from our accommodation in Port Vila to take us to his school. On the way, J.S. explained that he was the only expatriate working in the school due to the

Board of Governors' decision to employ an expatriate school principal. He also discussed the school's finances, which had proven to be, for him, particularly restricting. His major concerns for the school, in fact, were financial. I was initially taken to the Principal's newly renovated villa within the school grounds. There I met his wife and two children and commented on the comfortable nature of their abode, with its fresh decorations and newly acquired furniture. His wife explained that her life in Port Vila was quite difficult, that she missed family and friends and that her 'life-line' was the internet, which she used extensively. J.S. also explained that it had taken intensive persuasion by him for the renovation of the villa, and that the board of governors had finally accepted his argument that if they wanted to continue to recruit expatriate principals, quality accommodation needed to be offered. This 'quality' included the provision of broadband ADSL internet connection.

I was taken on a tour of the school prior to being introduced to the staff at the weekly staff meeting. I was impressed. The school had a pleasant, vibrant atmosphere, students were polite and friendly, as were the staff, and all very welcoming. I, and my research topic, was introduced, and teachers interested in becoming CPs were asked to remain after the meeting. Nine teachers remained, and mentioned others who wanted to be included. We arranged a lunchtime discussion session where those interested would be introduced to the e-PD4ELT course material and website, and the requirements of course participation. Everything appeared ideal, until I was shown the computer room and the school's ICT facilities. The room showed signs of extended neglect, which was understandable as the computers were at least 10 years old and inadequate for anything other than use with simple software of a 10 year vintage, or more. Two machines, out of

the 8 that were useable, were capable of running the internet. However, the internet connection was provided through a dial-up modem and running at, I observed, 48 bits/sec. This meant that a page of text from the e-PD4ELT website, without images, would take 5 to 10 minutes to download, practically unusable. Later, I questioned J.S. about the lack of hardware in the computer lab and the poor quality of the internet service. He suggested that because the computers were so old there was no need for a high speed internet connection. He strongly believed there were more important priorities within the school.

The next day was a revelation in many ways. As I was patiently working on a school computer, downloading pages from the e-PD4ELT website to show the prospective CPs, J.S. called me to discuss the possibility of a financial donation by a local expatriate entrepreneur and philanthropist, P.C.. P.C. was offering A$50,000 for a project that would enhance education within the Port Vila school and that would involve the wider Port Vila teaching community. With my ICT experience and related research topic, J.S. asked me to present a case for an upgrading of the computer lab. I agreed, and was introduced to P.C. an hour later, in the computer room. Over the ensuing 60 minutes I demonstrated the paucity of the existing machines, discussed the value of updated hardware and software, the pedagogical uses and advantages of a high speed internet connection and finally the e-PD4ELT website. All of which impressed P.C., enough for him to agree to the funding of the project on the condition that I allowed the wider community of Port Vila teachers access to my website and that the school allowed wider community access to the computer lab, both of which were subsequently agreed upon.

Prior to preparing the presentation for the afternoon session with the prospective CPs, I

considered the limited course preparation I had provided Rema in Fiji, a fact I now believed needed to be addressed. I decided that my presentation should include CPs' hands-on experience and a cursive assessment of ICT skills. For Rema at ISS in Fiji, having peer support had been invaluable in increasing her confidence in using the website. Hence, I decided that if I could ascertain those teachers at the Port Vila school who were confident in using a computer and navigating the website, I could encourage them to provide peer support. My first task with the prospective CPs was to collect personal data, including email addresses. This was my initial indication that ICT had previously not been a personal priority, as only three teachers possessed email addresses. Over the next 2 hours it became apparent that these teachers a) valued PD highly and were very enthusiastic about following my course, b) were open to trialling differing methodologies, c) understood clearly the value of the AR paradigm and the ability to share ideas and discuss experimentation online, d) possessed a highly varied expertise in ICT but believed that a secondary benefit to following the e-PD4ELT course was personal development within ICT, e) were disgruntled with the present ICT. situation within the school, and f) would be, for me, a real pleasure to work with. Unfortunately, with the slow speed of the internet, it was impossible to show the e-PD4ELT site working properly. This was frustrating for all concerned, but I hoped that, once functioning as the website was designed to, CPs could soon work their way around the site, especially with peer support. It was, then, a privilege to be able to discuss with the CPs the imminent provision of an upgrade to the computer lab, including appropriate internet access. I ended the day feeling positively excited at the prospect of working with these teachers over the ensuing 6 months.

The final morning in the Port Vila school found me stationed in the school's computer room having previously offered my services to anyone who wished extra help and guidance in relation to the e-PD4ELT course or with ICT. As the morning progressed a number of teachers came to the computer room and we tried to access the website, but this was not achievable due to the poor internet connection. I left Port Vila with great optimism and excitement at the prospect of the continuing relationship with enthusiastic professionals who had been a real pleasure to meet and engage.

1.4.8 Fiji, Visit 2

I was provided with complete and comprehensive access to all aspects of the ESL department within ISS, Fiji. My daughter was enrolled in the primary school for 2 weeks while I engaged in the process of analysing the present system of ESL provision, and in the production of a document for the Head of ESL, Heads of Middle and Upper school, and the school Principal, discussing the improvement of ESL provision for ISS. The analysis produced a number of contentious issues within the ESL department; issues that I believed had a detrimental effect on the ESL students' social and academic development. I also produced a set of solutions to these issues, along with a number of suggestions to elevate the image and standing of the department within the school and achieve higher student satisfaction, performance and outcomes, both linguistic and social.

Protracted discussions with all agents involved in the provision of ESL at ISS were required, and achieved, subsequent to the presentation of my findings, at the end of the second week. The outcome of these discussions was a school management directive for the majority of my suggestions, primarily in relation to the curriculum and the physical

environment of the ESL department, to be implemented; to the chagrin of the Head of ESL. Before leaving ISS, I also spent a couple of hours working through various aspects of the e-PD4ELT course with Rema, and gained Ken's commitment to further support for Rema. My daughter and I left Fiji a few days later. I left with mixed feelings. I believed that the ESL department had many flaws and that the ESL students deserved far more than had previously been provided. I also believed that the ESL department would be transformed with a new curriculum, appropriate premises and a new testing/integration strategy. I also hoped that the ESL personnel would accept the introduced changes as they appeared to be more than capable ESL providers.

Within 2 weeks of the consultancy meeting, M.L., in objection to the new ESL departmental requirements that I had introduced, resigned her position, followed shortly after by A.B., leaving only Rema in the ESL department. As this was very close to the end of the academic year, the school had time to find replacements for the following academic year. Through email communication I was asked for advice on staffing, particularly who might be suitable to replace M.L. as head of department. I suggested that Ken would make an excellent Head of ESL, having a great deal of experience both in ESL and in mainstream science teaching. Ken accepted the offer. Fortunately, another very experienced ESL teacher had recently moved to Suva and had provided the school with a C.V.. This was promptly acted upon and this teacher also accepted a post in the ESL department for the following academic year.

During these staffing discussions, the Principal had also questioned me about the effectiveness of Rema within the ESL department. I suggested that Rema had shown to be a conscientious teacher and, I believed, was an asset to the ESL department. In my

assessment, Rema was a calm, supportive teacher who was able to connect well with students and provide encouragement and support effectively. As third in the ESL department, and a quiet character, she had never questioned the provision of ESL and would always meet the requirements of her professional superiors. Although she valued PD, and was keen to follow the e-PD4 ELT course, her priorities, she later discussed, had been her teaching and school commitments. The outcomes of my consultancy project had had a profound effect on Rema. After the initial flurry of activity in July, Rema had not engaged extensively with the e-PD4ELT course at all. She had suggested that work commitments had been time-consuming and that the course had been relegated in its priority. She also stated that M.L. had not offered any support or encouragement in any way and Rema felt that following the course had not been necessarily respected. During my consultancy presentation Rema had shown enthusiasm for the concepts discussed and asked relevant and pertinent questions. Subsequently, Rema had been put under some pressure from departmental superiors to follow their lead in resigning, but refused. Rema wanted to be a part of the new system and was urged, by the Principal, to remain at ISS. When the Principal discovered that R.M. had only sporadically been involved with the e-PD4 ELT course over the previous 4 months, she strongly encouraged Rema to make the course a greater priority. This Rema accepted, and the level of course involvement increased considerably. This could clearly be seen from the Moodle course statistics provided to the course administrator, which I have collated to produced the following graph.
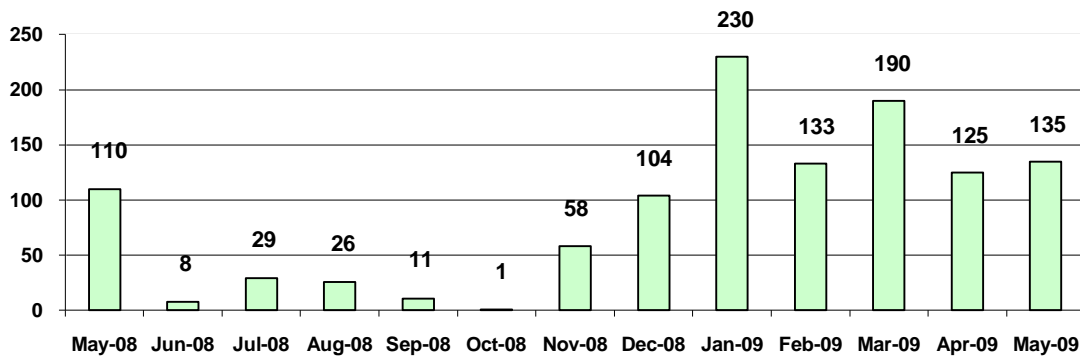
Figure 2   Graph depicting number of minutes Rema spent on the www.epd4elt.com website per month between May '08 and May '09.

1.4.9   Back in Cairns, (3)

Surprised at not hearing anything from Vanuatu, I tried emailing those CPs who had supplied email addresses, with no reply. I assumed that everything was on hold until the imminent revamping of the school's computer room. It was encouraging, however, to see that Rema was already engaging well with the course and that our communication had increased substantially.

With encouragement from a lecturer within the school of Education at JCU, I embarked on writing a paper for the Asian EFL Journal on the model for AR within an electronic PD course, utilising the blogging facility. The paper, entitled 'Electronic Professional Development, Action Research and Blogging, an Ideal Combination' described the e-PD4 ELT course and the implementation of AR as the paradigm enabling cultural empathy. This paper was written concurrently with supporting Rema. on-line.

As the time progressed I became more surprised and concerned that I had heard nothing from Vanuatu. I learned in January 2009 that J.S., the principal I had met, and who had organised my school visit, had resigned and that a new Principal had been recruited. I

decided to trace J.S. to discover what he knew of the situation. Soon after, I was able to speak with him directly by phone to learn that he had recently moved to Melbourne, Australia. He explained that when the credit crunch happened, and the world's financial crisis's effects hit Fiji, the philanthropist withdrew the offer of funds and the computer room was never upgraded. The school's CPs would not have been able to access the course within the school, and the cost of using a public internet provider would have been prohibitive. I was disheartened by this news, not because of my research, but that these teachers, who had displayed such enthusiasm for their professional enhancement, were denied an opportunity that they had embraced for no other incentive than self-improvement.

The final decision to approach my research methodology as a single case study with one course participant was consequently made. Rema would provide valuable data from which insightful conclusions could be drawn. The collection of this data, in the form of a postcourse interview, a lesson observation and a postcourse questionnaire was made eminently achievable when ISS invited me to return to Suva to assess the progress that the ESL department had made 6 months on from my consultancy work.

1.4.10   Fiji, visit 3

The evidence of the changes made to the provision of ESL at ISS was quite astounding. First, the department had moved and was now accommodated in three large rooms at the end of a single-storey building that also accommodated a manual arts room and the high school staffroom. The rooms were bright and clean and decorated extensively with students' work and a variety of posters relating to language learning. Outside the

classrooms was an attractive outdoor socialising area with benches and seating for the ESL students. The ESL office was now open and accessible, and lead off one of the classrooms. Ken, as the new head of ESL, had overseen the transition and had been ably assisted by Rema and VS, the recently appointed Indian ESL teacher. Together, I felt, they had created a stimulating and comfortable learning environment that was welcomed by students and staff alike. The atmosphere in the department was very different from that I had experienced the previous year. ESL students were engaging well with lesson material; the course books that had been introduced were popular with both teachers and students alike, and the stiRemaa of being an ESL student appeared to have lessened considerably. Most importantly, the ESL students appeared to want to be a part of the department, and there was a sense of combined 'ownership' of the ESL area. There was not the expedited exodus from the ESL department that I had witnessed previously, to the extent that mainstream and ex-ESL students would appear at break times to socialise with each other and with staff, both in the ESL rooms and at the outside area.

I observed Rema as being confident and comfortable in this newly developed environment, as was the recently recruited ESL teacher. There appeared to be a sense of pride in what the ESL staff had achieved, and a similar sense of ownership. I observed both teachers in action, and was impressed with what I witnessed. Rema presented a lesson that had been well planned and was appropriate for the level and age of the students. The lesson used a task-based approach, introduced in module 3 of the e-PD4ELT course. In this lesson, students were presented with a piece of poetry discussing public and private transportation in Fiji, both aurally and as a written text. Students were initially required to listen without the printed text and then again with the text. They then

had to analyse the text, both for its grammatical structuring, its genre conventions and for comprehension of its content. This was achieved by Rema through scaffolded discussions, note taking, answering a set of pre-written concept checking questions and through the categorisation of lexis and grammar into a pre-prepared table. Students were finally asked to produce a poem or short prose around the same topic, to be displayed within the classroom. To achieve this, students were provided with magazines and newspapers and asked to cut out words and pictures to create a visually interesting text for classroom display. Students were able to achieve this task in groups or individually, whichever they chose. In my assessment, Rema had produced a lesson that was complete, well organised, well resourced, stimulating and linguistically rich. My only real criticisms were that the final section, where the students were searching through magazines for appropriate text and pictures, was time-consuming, and could possibly have been achieved more productively outside of the lesson, as homework, and brought back to the classroom for task completion. Also, Rema lost an opportunity to engage in one to one discussions with students that the completing of the final task had allowed. I was able to compare this lesson to the lessons that I had observed in my first visit to ISS, and believed that overall, Rema's pedagogy exhibited a much greater confidence and variety. The lesson also showed that Rema had successfully incorporated concepts and methodologies that had been introduced within the e-PD4ELT course and that she was a confident agent for effective learning and task engagement within her classroom. This contrasted greatly with my observations from the previous year where I felt Rema's pedagogy was dictated by the presented material, often comprising photocopied worksheets from course books, and where her classroom role was as a reference for

students to access linguistic information about English, a provider of worksheet answers and a classroom organiser/manager. The lesson I now witnessed demonstrated a clear understanding of the task-based lesson methodology and an ability to implement an appropriate lesson within the methodology, displaying apt pedagogical and linguistic justification.

Discussions I had with Rema, emanating from the post-course questionnaire, described the motivational influence that the new-look ESL department had had on her e-PD4ELT course involvement and how Ken had been an important factor in this. Rema discussed that Ken had mentored her, particularly with developing her IT skills, which had given her far more confidence in using the e-PD4ELT website. She had also been encouraged to experiment with ESL teaching methodologies and given encouragement to pursue experimentation and empirical research within the classroom. Certainly, the professional and physical environment of the ESL department that I now witnessed appeared far more conducive to the inclusion of a variety of methodological approaches. VS, the new ESL teacher, also fitted extremely well into this positive teaching environment and it was clear that Ken, VS and Rema all displayed professional and cultural respect of each other, resulting in a confident and creative ESL pedagogy.

I was able to provide the school with a positive report on the state of ESL at ISS, 6 months on from my initial report, which discussed many of the aspects from my observations presented above. The achievements of the ESL department at ISS, within a relatively short period of time, were personally very rewarding as I witnessed many of my visions come to fruition.

1.4.11   Finally, back in Cairns

This particular voyage was nearly over and all that remained was to write up the log. On reflection, I realised that I had become an integral agent within my own research and that this fact would need to be acknowledged and addressed. I now understood that restricting my empirical data analysis to a single case study course participant narrative would not be providing the full story. The fullness of my research could only be achieved if the case study, the implementation of the e-PD4ELT course, was to be told in conjunction with my own narrative, and that only from this could valid and reliable conclusions be drawn. After reading a number of contemporary journal articles and relevant chapters from a variety of methodological tomes, I decided that triangulation between my case study's narrative, my own narrative and the existing relevant contemporary literature would provide qualitative validity to my research.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

And out of olde bookes, in good faith, cometh all this new science that men lear(n) (The Assembly of Fowles, Chaucer 1343-1400)

2.1   Introduction

There are many factors to be considered in the creation of an electronic PD course for international EL teachers, and the subsequent critical assessment of its provision, and its cultural empathy. In the following literature review I will begin by discussing the concepts of colonialism and post-colonialism and examining links between pedagogy and culture. I will continue by examining colonial and post-colonial pedagogic settings and discuss how the ePD4ELT course operates post-colonially. I then discuss the process of adopting new methodologies into personal pedagogy, and in relation to a curriculum. Next, I provide an overview of reports of English language teacher professional development through various modes of distance learning and discuss the technologies used to provide distance learning professional development, particularly utilising ICT. Next, an examination of the importance of motivation in relation to distance learning and professional development . This is followed by a discussion of the utilisation of the action research paradigm in professional development and its ability to create a culturally empathetic course, with the presentation of a model of action research designed specifically for the e-PD4ELT course. This is followed by an analysis of the use of videoed teacher observations in professional development, a concise summary of current

methodologies that are to be presented within the course, and finally a discussion of factors to be considered in the development of an effective electronic PD course.

2.2 Colonialism and Post-colonialism

The underlying tenet of this research is that the case to be studied, that is, the provision of the e-PD4ELT course, and the research methodology, is based on inter-cultural respect within a post-colonial environment. It is important, therefore, to clarify what post-colonialism means, specifically in relation to colonialism and education. Colonialism is defined by Loomba (1998, p. 2) as "the conquest and control of other people's land and goods" and by Dei (2006, p. 2) as "imposition and domination" by an outside cultural force. The movement to a post-colonial era has been described by Tikly (1999, p. 605) as "a global 'condition' or shift in the cultural, political and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism". Bay and Koo (2004) differentiate colonial societies from post-colonial societies "according to formal changes of sovereignty" (p. 217) but point out that just because a culture has been historically powerful, or because its cultural aspirations are towards fiscal wealth, military might, corporate capitalism and religious ascendancy does not mean in any way that it is superior to any other culture.

The cultural elements of post-colonialism, according to Tikly (1999. p. 616), considered "the emergence of the borderless world where national cultures are transformed by global communications and cultural hybridisation". Dei (2006) suggests that colonialism still continues in the form of neo-colonialism particularly in media, education, family and the workplace, and comments that globalisation is just another form of imperialism. Tikly

(1999) continued by discussing education within post-colonial environments and suggested that governments in former colonised countries are working hard to move away from imposed curricula of the colonial past and to develop culturally and historically appropriate curricula.

2.3.1 Colonialism, Post-colonialism and language education.

Bay and Koo, in discussing post-colonial Hong Kong, have differentiated colonial from post-colonial according to the official change of sovereignty (2004). Bay and Koo elucidate on the language of education whereby the British colonial authorities, prior to the hand-over of the territory to China, promoted the use of Chinese as the medium of education. This linguistic emphasis was "strongly opposed" (p. 233) by Hong Kong parents, who preferred a concentration on English to allow for entry into post-secondary education and enhanced employment prospects. Post-colonial Hong Kong's authorities severely reduced the number of schools permitted to teach in the medium of English, but promoted a system of employing native-speaker English teachers (NET) to teach English as a subject in schools that had been required to convert to Chinese medium education. By 2003/04, according to Bay and Koo, 800 native English speaking teachers were employed in Hong Kong state schools. However, the scheme was criticised for not following international trends by upgrading the skills of local teachers and because the cultural baggage brought by the NETs was "very visible" (p. 226), with evidence of "problems of integration with local cultures".

Kanu (2005) described research conducted in Pakistan of an on-going school improvement project with qualified local teachers involved in a Master of Education

course provided by a cohort of international teacher educators from universities in Canada, Pakistan and UK. The research wished to assess, from a post-structural/post-colonial viewpoint, the cross-cultural transfer of pedagogical knowledge.

Kanu (2005) discussed the concept that international universities were "transferring educational ideas and practices to the developing countries, often without taking into consideration factors such as the political climate, traditional beliefs, and cultural values" (p. 494) even though a variety of scholars had "highlighted the importance of expatriate educators taking cognisance of cultural realities before implementing curriculum and pedagogical proposals" (p. 494). Kanu (2005) also has cited experiences described by teacher educators in Papua New Guinea who propound the need for cultural analysis to be undertaken in countries "receiving cross-cultural knowledge transfer" (p. 495) because "though the incoming theories and models may be eminently suitable for their country of origin, they are questionable, sometimes even outright failures, in developing countries" (p. 495).

In discussing language education in the Pacific region, Lotherington (1998, p. 65) pointed out "Twentieth century demands for more equitable education resulted in curricula imported from countries such as Australia and New Zealand, complete with foreign teachers, materials, examinations and a Trojan horse of attendant cultural assumptions". Lotherington continued "Post-colonial educational policies in South Pacific island nations continue to oscillate between the security of instituted colonial models and the pressing need to shelter and nourish Pacific cultures and languages", but explained that English was still widely used in education when he stated "Throughout the South Pacific, education is provided principally in a colonial language: English in the majority of

countries" (p. 66).

2.4 Culture, teaching and learning: the cultural diversity of pedagogy

Teaching and learning occurs in a variety of contexts throughout the world; from a mud-floored, straw-walled classroom that I witnessed on a remote Pacific island, to the high-tech classroom in an English primary school where my sister teaches, from the concrete-slabbed classroom, open to the elements on two sides, where I taught in Barbados, to the one-laptop, one-student environment I worked within in the UAE. Teachers operating in these pedagogic environments are functioning within the local culture and are subject to the beliefs, rules, regulations and expectations of that culture. Education policies and school curricula are derived from a cultural understanding of the perceived needs of that society, combined with an understanding of educational practices, both nationally and internationally. The practising teacher, whether local or expatriate, functions within the socio-cultural expectations of a member of that profession, and is expected to conform to those expectations. The way that I am socially perceived, as a teacher in Australia, is very different from the perception in Portugal, Japan or Malaysia. Culture, therefore, fundamentally positions the pedagogue in society.

Ho (cited in Watkins & Biggs, 2001) observed that the relationship between student and teacher, particularly in the Confucian-influenced culture, is based on an authoritarian system where individualism is discouraged. Western pedagogy has moved towards a student-centred, humanistic approach with positive outcomes for higher intrinsic motivation. However, Ho noted that many Asian teachers believe that traditional pedagogy need not be replaced by the western model:

- Chinese teachers are able to achieve good results in both student

- achievement and behaviour with their authoritarian approach and this

- raises doubts about the universality of humanistic approaches to

- education as advocated in the West, at the same time making Western

- theories appear irrelevant in the training of Asian teachers. (p. 99)

Cultural influences on English language pedagogy are just as diverse. Hedge (2000) has introduced the concept of social and cultural attitudes to English language teaching and learning when she points out that "the educational system in which teachers work will be influenced by cultural notions of authority which affect the potential roles of teachers and learners" (p. 25) and has discussed the system of course repetition, prevalent in many education systems internationally, whereby students only progress after examination success. Hedge has suggested that the examination structure is usually a "heavily constraining system" (p. 25) that often impacts negatively on ESL pedagogy, and that the 'retaking' system can produce a very wide range of age and level of linguistic proficiency within one classroom. I worked within a comparable system whilst teaching in a primary school in Brunei Darussalam. In a year 5 class I had students ranging from 10 to 16 years old, with the older students particularly, and understandably, demotivated. Also on display was a wide range of English linguistic ability, from those who regularly used English outside school, to those who had very little use for, or interest in, using English. In discussing EL pedagogy in the Bruneien context, Martin and Abdullah (2002) explained that "cultures of learning cannot really be separated from 'cultures of teaching', or indeed, from the whole classroom culture, as well as from the links between the home and the school environments" (p. 30).

In discussing English language teaching in Japan, Gorsuch (1998) has presented information about 'Yakudoku', the non-oral approach to EL teaching prevalent in Japanese high schools. Yakudoku instruction, according to Gorsuch, focuses on linguistic form, with most attention on the Japanese translation of English texts and little on the text itself and with grammar instruction being the secondary focus. Matsuura, Chiba and Hilderbrandt (2001) discussed Japanese English language students and teachers' attitudes to the teaching and learning of English through analysis of empirical research conducted with over 300 students and 82 teachers in Japan. Matsuura, Chiba and Hilderbrandt (2001) made the point that in 1999, the Japanese Ministry of Education, recognising that English is an important means of international communication, instigated a curriculum shift towards a more communicative syllabus, and away from the institutionalised traditional grammar/translation one. However, teacher PD was not included within this shift, resulting in pedagogical practices which "remain quite diverse, with unpredictable and unreliable outcomes" (p. 68). One aspect of the research showed that Japanese English teachers believed that using Japanese within English lessons was both helpful and necessary and that close control regarding linguistic errors was needed. Other relevant results emanating from this research were a) both students and teachers tended to think that the teacher's authority is respected in the Japanese classroom, b) 67% of students and 47.6% of teachers believed that using a bilingual dictionary for translation was necessary for reading comprehension, c) 88% of students expected their teachers to correct their grammar mistakes, d) both group and pair work was deemed necessary by the vast majority of teachers and students, e) more students than teachers preferred aspects from a more traditional system of language teaching, and f) far more students

than teachers believed that correct pronunciation was very important.

I recently participated in, and assessed, an introduction to Japanese language class run by a Japanese teacher who was a qualified teacher from Japan. The lesson's aim was to introduce participants to the variety of honorific greetings used in Japanese. At the end of the lesson I calculated that only approximately 20% of the lesson had been conducted in Japanese, the rest had been in English. Of that 20%, I had had the opportunity to practise the target language in a repetition drill for around 30% of that time and at no point had there been a simulation of a situation where the target language could be utilised. In effect, I had used Japanese for about 4 minutes in a 1 hour lesson. Of the 80% of the lesson conducted in English the vast majority of the time was spent in analysis of structure and in explanation of appropriate use. Teacher speaking time constituted at least 75% of the lesson. After the lesson, I interviewed the teacher concerned and was informed that this style of presentation was quite normal for language teaching in Japan and that when English is taught the lesson is invariably conducted with a similar ratio of first language to second language. This experience ably demonstrates the results of the research discussed by Matsuura et al. (2001).

In East Asia, language teaching methodology has traditionally been teacher-centred and based on a grammar/translation syllabus (Matsuura, Chiba & Hilderbrandt 2001) with associated course books which rely heavily on rote learning and written examination assessment (Zhenhui, 2001). This methodology has created a pedagogical culture in which unquestionable information derived from the teacher and investigation or interpretation by the student is discouraged. The Chinese classroom is described as "under a high degree of teacher control and having passive students" (Mok et al., 2001, p.

161). In such a culture, the student becomes a linguistic information recipient required only to reiterate and not synthesise the language. This pedagogy produces a classroom culture of reticence and introversion where learners are often unable to use the target language as a tool for communication yet have a comprehensive knowledge of syntax and grammar (Mok et al., 2001). For many English language students, success in an academic examination in English grammar and translation has not provided the candidate with the skills to utilise the language as a tool for communication. This traditional approach also seems to create certain behavioural patterns such as reticence and introversion in students and is demonstrated when students are engaged in school-based EL communicative activities.

Class size is also a major factor in the preparation of language teaching lessons and a PD course would need to take the variety of class sizes into careful consideration. In my experience, the average size of an ESL class in a language school, such as the British Council, International House or The Australian Colleges of English, is approximately 13 students. In Brunei, primary ESL classes ranged approximately between 16 and 40, with secondary English classes being slightly less than this maximum. In the Higher Colleges of English, in the UAE, class size rarely exceeded 20 students. These numbers meant that communicative activities, in pairs or groups, were manageable and teacher monitoring, assessment and support could be effectively implemented and individualised. Cortazzi and Lixian (2001) report primary and middle school class sizes in China as often being between 50 and 60 and sometimes over 70, and say that university language classes often exceed 100 students. At a rural school they witnessed 64 7-year-olds in one class, 56 8-year-olds in another and 72 11-years-olds in another. Cortazzi and Lixian also found that

the decision to create large classes is often made by the teachers to reduce the number of lessons taught per week and to allow teachers to specialise in one or two subjects and in order to have more time for lesson planning and marking.

Students' assessment of what makes a good teacher was the topic of empirical research conducted by Cortazzi and Lixian in 1996. The results in the table below indicate how students' expectations of teachers vary between cultures.

Table 1   What makes a good teacher?

A 'Good' Teacher	Means China (n=129)	Means Britain (n=205)	Means Japan (n=93)	Means Turkey (n=165)	Means Malaysia (n=101)
Has deep knowledge	4.535	3.548	4.484	4.494	4.337
Is patient	4.307	4.571	3.696	4.344	4.020
Is a good moral example	4.181	3.808	3.802	4.337	4.257
Is friendly	4.372	4.177	4.333	4.472	4.141
Explains clearly	4.271	4.730	4.516	4.475	4.564
Organises a variety of classroom activities	3.884	4.200	3.946	4.242	3.554
Answer students' questions	3.884	4.200	3.946	4.242	3.554

The above scores are means calculated from a 5-point scale where 1 represents "strong disagreement" and 5 "strong agreement". Although Cortazzi and Lixian (2001) provide a comprehensive analysis, it is interesting here to make a limited number of relevant observations. There is a clear distinction between British students, who do not expect their teachers to possess such an in-depth subject knowledge, and the other students. British students also appear to have a lower expectation of the need for teachers to set a moral example. There is also a distinction between Japanese, Chinese and Malaysian students who do not have such a high expectation for their teachers to organise a variety of classroom activities, suggesting that they are willing to accept the same mode of lesson delivery.

From the limited number of examples provided above it is clear to see that teaching and learning internationally is diverse both in terms of teacher/student interaction, the use of pedagogical methodologies and the perceptions of students. Hence, for an international PD course to function successfully, it must non-judgementally allow for the cultural diversity of pedagogy.

2.3.2 e-PD4ELT in a post-colonial environment: striving for cultural empathy.

The e-PD4ELT course has been designed to provide professional development within various cultural settings in a post-colonial environment using action research to achieve cultural empathy. It is my intention to provide a PD course that is not prescriptive from a cultural perspective and allows for inter-cultural interaction with course material within a

post-colonial tenet based upon mutual respect. In creating, providing and supporting the e-PD4ELT course the researcher positions himself as a subject-specific authority purely through extensive professional experience, and with accepted cultural limitations. The researcher, in supporting the CP, is acting as a professional mentor who is able to provide opinions based on professional experiences, and enters into cross-cultural dialogues with CPs in an effort to provide experiential, non-judgemental, advice.

2.3.1   Colonial and Post-Colonial Fiji

Over 300 islands spanning an area of 18,274 sq. km constitute the nation of Fiji, of which approximately 100 are inhabited. According to Index Mundi (www.indexmundi.com) the total population of Fiji is approximately 1,000,000 with around 57% being Fijian, 37% Indo-Fijian, 4% European and 2% from other Pacific islands. Both Fijian and English are classed as official languages, with Hindustani also widely used. Literacy rates, for those over 15, sit at 93.7%. After 96 years of colonial rule, Fiji gained independence from Great Britain in 1970. Prior to independence, Fijian society was described by Lal (1992) as a "finely balanced three-legged stool on which each of the ethnic groups – Fijian, Indo-Fijian and Europeans – accepted its designated place and made its separate and unique contribution to the islands' prosperity" (xvi). Lal continued by explaining that generally in colonial Fiji the Fijians owned the land, the Indo-Fijians provided cheap labour and the Europeans offered capital and technical expertise. However, these were not homogeneous groups of equal status and the disadvantaged from any group strived to "escape their situation at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy" (xvi) within an inflexible colonial governmental structure that would not accept dissent. Lal has described a post-colonial Fiji that has lost the opportunity to develop a united multi-cultural culture and

has become, instead, a largely culturally segregated society through the implementation of an independence constitution that has encouraged "everything in Fijian life coming to be viewed from the perspective of racial needs and interests" (xvi). This constitutional segregation has produced a Fijian, Indo-Fijian and international school education system.

2.3.2   Colonial and Post-Colonial Vanuatu

The Republic of Vanuatu is made up of over 80 islands covering an area of 12,189 sq km, of which approximately 65 are inhabited. According to Index Mundi (www.indexmundi.com) the population is approximately 220,000 with 98.5% being Ni-Vanuatu. There are more than 100 local languages used by 72% of the population, whilst pidgin is used by 23%, English 2% and French 1.4%. Literacy rates sit at 74%. According to Miles (1998) colonialism and contact with Europeans resulted in a near annihilation of the Ni-Vanuatu population, from a pre-contact level of approximately 600,000 to around 40,000 people by the late 1920s. Both France and Great Britain ruled jointly, if not co-operatively, the islands from 1906 until independence in 1980, leaving an educational legacy of a dual-language education system. According to Miles, the 1989 census showed that 76.8% of the aged 6 and over school population was studying in English while 29% were studying in French. Since 1990, through curriculum design help from New Zealand, curricular unification at secondary school level has been achieved meaning that "Francophone and Anglophone students study the same subjects at the same time and, in principle, in the same way" (p. 131). In Vanuatu, as indicated by Lotherington (1998, p. 70), "English is not used in the community as it is in Fiji, so the language must be learned in the classroom. In policy, English is spoken in the classroom; in practice, however, teachers often rely on vernacular communication".

2.4 The adoption of new methodologies and approaches in language education

Contemporary research in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics as well as empirical studies conducted into language teaching and learning are extending our knowledge of effective ways to enhance ESL/EFL pedagogy. These theoretical advancements invariably require time to filter through to the practising teacher. Changing pedagogical practices can often take a very long time. Gardner (in Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004), in discussing educational change, has pointed out that the institution of education changes slowly, and that slow change need not be a negative trait inasmuch as the impacts of 'fads' in education can have a damaging effect on the system, and hence, the outcomes.

A good example of this time lapse is the Cambridge English Language Teaching to Adults course (CELTA), and the Trinity College, London, equivalent. Ferguson and Donno (2003) reported that in 1998 approximately 14,000 candidates enrolled on courses presented by 130 institutions worldwide, making it one of the most internationally recognised initial English language teaching qualifications available. Up until 1998, the syllabus for the course was based on a behaviourist pedagogical paradigm, popularised in mainstream education in the 1960s. The basic premise of the pedagogy was the presentation, practice and production (PPP) of minimal language chunks. PPP methodology was steeped in the behaviourist concept of sequential skills hierarchically presented within a syllabus (Twomey-Fosnot, 1996) that promoted proficiency through the formation of habits (Ellis, 1997; Richards & Rogers, 2005) and hence the learning of discrete linguistic seRemaents, grammatical or lexical. According to Ferguson and Donno

(2003) the introduction of a new syllabus in 1998 has seen a pedagogic shift towards a more constructivist paradigm, and a "post-method age" (p. 29) creating a more student-centred, task-based, inductive approach to EL teaching and learning. The timeframe for pedagogic change indicated here suggests that there are far more pressures for maintaining educational *status quo* than for initiating change.

Chang and Beaumont (in Beaumont & O'Brien, 2000) discuss the amount of time required for new methodology to become a part of a language learning curriculum depending entirely on governments', institutions' and schools' willingness to embrace the current ideology. Change is often met with resistance and caution. This is due to a combination of financial constraints, lack of knowledge and foresight and plain reluctance at management or ministerial level. These factors can result in a stagnating system that inhibits the teacher at grass roots level. As Chang and Beaumont noted:

> In many parts of the world, ELT is developing against a background of institutional and classroom constraints that inhibit change, creating a basic concern about the feasibility of individual teacher development within such context. (p. 84)

As an example of classroom constraints that inhibit change, I shall refer to the primary education system in Brunei Darussalam in which I taught from 1990 to 1993. The ESL syllabus was 'structural' and used course books that Martin and Abdullah (2002) describe as consisting of more than 150 linguistic items and with an emphasis on accurate linguistic production, predominantly in the written form. The syllabus restricted a teacher's ability to involve students in a more communicative approach to learning

English. As expatriate employees of CfBT, teachers were expected to upgrade pedagogical skills through regularly held PD sessions and courses organised and run by the CfBT Education Trust. As Richards and Farrell (2005) indicated:

> The pressure for teachers to update their knowledge in areas such as curriculum trends, second language acquisition research, composition theory and practice, technology, or assessment is intense and it is the school and the classroom that provides a major source for further professional development. (p. 2)

CfBT teachers were encouraged to network newly acquired information to local teachers receptive to new ideas. In my experience, the response to this networking of ideas among local teachers was embraced enthusiastically demonstrated by high attendance at PD sessions that I provided in my school. Having said this, there was a distinct reluctance to put new theory into practice, as the initiative for PD had not been provided by school management or the government and teachers were weary of initiating change at a grass-roots level. Martin and Abdullah (2002) examined the obstacles to the development of English language pedagogy in Brunei Darussalam and explained that "policy decisions are made at one level but these decisions are implemented at another level" (p. 26) and suggested that "What is probably necessary in English language classrooms in Brunei is for a fundamental shift in the traditional culture of teaching and learning" and went on to point out that "it is recognised that any such shift will need to take into account the country's Malay Islamic monarchical structure" (p. 30).

2.5 Native speakers of English and Teachers from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds as English language teachers

There is a dichotomy of thought about the effectiveness of non-native English speakers as EL teachers. Some feel that only a native speaker is able to understand the complexities and nuances of the language and model accurate pronunciation patterns. Many non-native English speakers, no matter how well qualified, are excluded from English teaching positions purely on their non-native status with many schools and institutions specifically advertise for "native English competence" (Canagarajah, 1999; Suarez, 2000; Medgyes, 1999). Others suggest that through the process of learning a second language, non-native English speaking teachers have an empathy with their students. Philipson (1996) has suggested that non-native English speakers are in a unique position to understand their students' requirements, particularly if they are from the same linguistic background as their students. Maum (2002) indicates that these teachers have developed a heightened discernment by comparing English and the mother-tongue. He has asserted that "This sensitivity gives them the ability to anticipate their students' linguistic problems" (p. 1).

Brady (2005) expands on this theme by explaining that non-native speakers have:

> a greater empathy for difficulties of learning English, a better descriptive knowledge of English, a better awareness of cross-cultural issues, and most importantly, providing role models for students of "somebody like them" who has learned to successfully communicate in English as their second language. (p. 1)

Internationally, English is becoming an essential medium of communication in business, technology, research, diplomatic interaction and travel (Bayyurt, 2006). Consequently,

there is a need for the provision of English language learning and teaching. The number of native English language teachers will never match this requirement, nor does it have to when non-native English speakers are being trained and are perfectly capable of fulfilling this need. Logically, there are far more non-native English speakers worldwide than native English speaking EL teachers (Liu, 1999). Of these, a minority acquire or continue their training in English speaking countries and return to their home country once finished. According to Liu, there is often a gap between what was presented on the course and what is required within their home education system and "many find themselves less than adequately prepared" (pp. 197-8).

2.6   The provision and effectiveness of distance learning courses for teacher training and professional development.

The amount of literature available discussing the effectiveness of DL PD courses for teachers is limited. Nevertheless, Pomuti and Howard (in Beaumont & O'Brien, 2000) have discussed an experiment conducted in Namibia between two British universities and the Namibian National Institute for Educational Development. The requirement was for a distance PD course for unqualified and under-qualified practicing teachers intended to achieve "lifelong learning through participatory forms of inquiry" (p. 67). The inquiry program utilised within the program was based on a cycle of enquiry (see Figure 3).
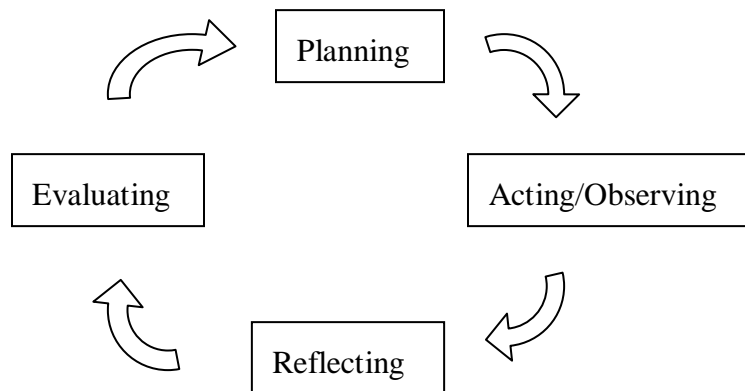
Figure 3   Pomuti and Howard's Cycle of enquiry

From "Collaborative Research in Second Language Education," by M. Beaumont and T. O'Brien, 2000, p. 67.

The Namibian course modules were designed to be activity based and required participants to engage in cycles of inquiry into daily practice, to collaborate and discuss outcomes with other participants and CPrs, and to form support groups amongst their peers. The article does not discuss a qualitative or quantitative evaluation of the course but presents participant's feedback, which is extremely positive.

Woods, O'Brien, Millrood and Andrews (in Beaumont & O'Brien, 2000) discussed research conducted in Russia into local English teachers and their introduction to a more communicative approach to English teaching by the British Council, known as the Tambov Project. The main focus of the research was to create a model of the psychological process teachers needed to undergo in order to change an imbedded style of pedagogy. The psychological processing model employed was:

Unfreezing ⟶ **Imbedding** ⟶ **Refreezing**

Figure 4   Woods, O'Brien, Millrood and Andrews' psychological processing model.
From "Collaborative Research in Second Language Education," by M. Beaumont and T. O'Brien, 2000, p. 123.This model refers to the unfreezing, or unlearning, of existing beliefs and practices, the induction and imbedding of a new pedagogical practice and the refreezing, or durable integration, of newly acquired skills into everyday practice. Although I feel this conceptualised model is sound and one to which I referred in the design of my course, I would like to suggest that "refreezing" is not desirable and that a state of fluidity is required by teachers to be able to integrate, adapt to and adopt later contemporary approaches. A reconfiguration, a bringing together of prior and new pedagogical elements, allows the flexibility for enhancement at any time. A state of reconstruction is the result of the professional learning process encountered by teachers that leads to integration, adaptation and adoption of newly developed approaches.

Deconstruct ⟶ **Reconfigure** ⟶ **Reconstruct**

Figure 5   Revised psychological processing model

2.7   Distance Learning and ICT

Research into the effectiveness of DL through the medium of ICT, and participants' attitude to this system is relatively limited (Christensen, Anakwe, & Kessler, 2001). However, the growth rate of DL, and its subsequent success, and the minimal difference between the outcomes of these and traditionally taught courses is undeniable (Russell, 2001). The term 'distance learning' (DL) has been applied to pedagogical systems that do not conform to the norm of provider and recipient face-to-face in the same location at the

same time (Grimes, McFadden, & Colaric, 2006). DL is by no means a new phenomenon; in Australia DL has played a vital role in providing education to remote areas and has traditionally utilised the postal system and high frequency (HF) radio, particularly the School of the Air, Australia's DL school program. Television has also been used in the presentation of lectures (e.g., Open University, UK). Taylor (2001) discusses the five generations of DL, that is: 1) learning through the correspondence model, utilising print technology; 2) the multi-media model, with audio and video technologies; 3) the telelearning model, applying synchronous telecommunications technology; 4) the flexible learning model utilising the online delivery through the internet; and 5) the intelligent flexible learning model, where advances with the internet allow for a broadening of available technologies.

Hutchens (2006) has explained that technology-based DL courses can fall into two categories; synchronous or asynchronous. The former requires participants to be online concurrently so that provider/participant or participant/participant virtual communication can happen in real time, through the medium of video conferencing or by utilising voice and text chat rooms. The latter allows participants to gain access to materials and to others involved on the course at a personally convenient time. Inter-participant communication is usually conducted via email or discussion boards, but rarely concurrently. This provides for far more flexibility, but participants can feel isolated, which in turn can lead to poor performance and even possible withdrawal from the course.

2.8 Professional Development and ICT

Jung (2005) discussed the accessibility that ICT provides and postulated that "Information and communication technology (ICT) can provide more flexible and effective ways for PD for teachers, improve pre- and in-service teacher training, and connect teachers to the global teacher community" (p. 94). Jung also pointed out that there has been a huge upsurge in the provision of PD, support and resources for practising teachers, as well as online facilities for professional networking. Jung stated that "the use of the Internet would enhance continuous PD activities of teachers, connecting teachers to larger teaching communities and allowing for interaction with expert groups" (p. 98), and continues by providing specific examples such as the UK virtual teacher centre (http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk), Korea's EduNet (http://www.edunet4u.net/) and US Teachers' Network (http://www.teachnet.org). Within ESL there are a number of sites for connectivity between ESL teachers, which also provide materials for lesson planning and information regarding teaching methodologies and ESL related topics. Among these sites are the British Council/BBC's site http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/, Dave's ESL Café at http://www.eslcafe.com/ and the ESL resource centre at http://www.eslsite.com/. All of these are presented and hyperlinked within the e-PD4ELT website.

Over the past 10 years the internet has increasingly enabled interest groups to form and share information and ideas. Certainly, English language teachers have enjoyed the benefits provided by online teacher communities and have been able to share pedagogical knowledge, ideas, lesson plans, discussion groups, specific information on geographical areas, schools, and even personalities within the industry (Kebble, 2010). This has benefited all those who have chosen to use the medium, but most specifically those in

remote areas without access to physical communities (Pledger & Mitchell, 2005). Although every computer user has access to the relevant ESL/EFL sites that have emerged, and can utilise these for personal PD, actual electronic PD courses for non-native English speakers are non-existent.

According to McFadzean and McKenzie (2001), the two greatest benefits of an electronic professional development (e-PD) course are that they are accessible to anyone with an internet connection and that they do not require a specific timetable, that is, participants do not have to attend a particular location at a precise time or day. This makes an asynchronous e-PD course extremely flexible and participants can manipulate the presented material to suit individual timetables and professional time constraints. This is described by McFadzean and McKenzie (2001, p. 471) as "any time/any place learning".

But does e-learning suit everyone? This is a question postulated by Shepherd (1999), who has suggested that a course can be fashioned to incorporate a wide variety of e-learning styles, such as activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists, as well as left/right brain, auditory and visual learners. To design a website and course material for a broad e-learning appeal, an e-course, according to Shepherd (1999), should (a) be immediately appealing and accessible, (b) allow for reflection, (c) be logical and methodical, (d) be clearly of practical use,(e) present material both linearly and holistically, and (f) contain much visual and audio material.

Harlen and Doubler (in Vrasidas & Glass, 2004) discussed conclusions made from empirical research comparing a face-to-face and an online PD course for primary and middle school science teachers. These conclusions that can inform this research project

were that an online PD course incorporating asynchronous communications allows participants (a) time for reflection, (b) to be flexible in creating a program of study, (c) to feed back and read feedback from others, and (d) to produce clearly written publishable text (within the website). These factors, according to Harlen and Doubler (in Vrasidas & Glass, 2004) have enhanced the provision and acceptance of PD.

2.9   Distance learning, professional development and motivation

It is universally accepted that to be successful in acquiring new skills, motivation is essential. Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is described by Harmer (2003) as "caused by a number of outside factors, for example, the need to pass an exam, the hope of financial reward" (p. 51). Intrinsic motivation comes from within, a desire and enjoyment of personal development or the satisfactions gained from learning a new skill or language. Harmer (2003) also has argued that intrinsic motivation is "particularly important for encouraging success" (p. 51) even when the original reason for following a course may have been extrinsic. Wlodkowski (2003) has discussed the increasingly multi-cultural environment of PD and has pointed out that PD providers "must relate their content to participants of varying backgrounds" (p. 39). In examining the importance of developing intrinsic motivation in cross-cultural provision of PD, Wlodkowski has continued by suggesting that "the motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching respects different individual cultures"(p. 40) and that the following conditions are "essential for the developing of intrinsic motivation" (p. 40) for PD CPs. According to Wlodkowski, the conditions essential for intrinsic motivation are: (a) establishing inclusion, where mutual respect and connection is fostered between CPs and providers; (b) developing attitudes, where a positive disposition through personalisation

is created towards the course and course content; (c) enhancing meaning, where the learning experiences are challenging and thoughtful; and (d) engendering competence, where successful learning is achieved through valued learning experiences. Wlodkowski also has discussed the role of AR in PD as an "essential strategy for initiating successful transfer and change among educators" (p. 46).

2.10 Digital technologies and cultural imperialism

There is a strong argument that with the majority of ICT in the hands of wealthy western transnational ICT and media companies, the world will witness the emergence of a re-defined first-world cultural imperialism. This is compounded by the majority of software producers, whether profit oriented or not, being based in western societies (Rusciano, in Ebo, 2001), and that English (and Chinese) is the dominant language within cyberspace (Anderson, 2009). Ebo (2001) warns that "We may be witnessing another technology driven by western transnational media conglomerates and poised to control or suppress indigenous social and economic activities in weaker nations." (p. x) and terms this phenomenon as 'cyberimperialism'. Rusciano (in Ebo, 2001) explains that in a society reliant upon information technology and transfer, Knowledge is power, and that with the internet and world-wide-web, that power has the potential to be projected universally. However, Rusciano goes on to argue that cultural imperialism is not such an issue within the internet because any user can choose what is taken and what is rejected, i.e., the power to be selective is in the hands of the information receiver. Rusciano continues by suggesting that the nature of the internet and cyberspace provides greater control for less developed countries and that this new world information order provides a decentralised means to disseminate information about their own cultures. Rusciano also suggests that

multi-national companies, rather than imposing their cultural norms, are very willing to cater for local cultural variations, which opposes the belief that they are operating imperialistically.

2.11 The digital divide and the implications of technology access in remote areas.

The digital divide is a phrase that describes the disparity between those who have access to, and use of, information and communication technology, and those that do not. This has traditionally been thought of being a division along national and state lines, between developing and developed countries, but is increasingly thought of as based more on socio-economic and remoteness positioning (Van Dijk, 2006). Anderson (2009) points out that "The internet is still an alien construct to the majority of people in the world." (p. 108). According to Ebo (2001) the seven most wired countries in 1997 were Canada, USA, Australia, France, Britain, Germany and Japan, and in 2008, and Forbes.com states that within the top 15 wired countries are: Sweden, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Hong Kong, South Korea, USA, Isreal, Singapore, Australia, Japan, and U.K.; all economically well established developed countries. Anderson (2009) reports that according to OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) statistics, in 2001 90% of all internet users came from the 30 OECD countries, meaning that the other 10% of internet users came from the other 162 countries of the world.

One of these 162 countries, widely regarded as one of the fastest growing international economies, is India. Mathur and Ambani (2005) describe the state of ICT access and use

in India and suggest that approximately 3/1000 people, of a population in excess of one billion, posses a computer and that two-thirds of the population have received no benefit from the massive development of ICT in India. Further, they point out that although this means millions of Indian people are connected to the internet, there are still millions more who are not even connected to basic services.

The India scenario characterises the argument that the digital divide can be intra-national and along socio-economic lines. However, Avgerou (2009) points out that the inequalities of world development can also be at the nation level, and that current discourse often suggests that ICT is a fundamental requirement for economic development and the enhancement of social circumstances. Avgerou (2009) suggests, however, that the "concern that developing countries are deprived of the opportunities for economic growth and life improvement generally enjoyed by advanced economies because of the scarcity of ICT, particularly limited Internet connectivity." (p. 2) is dubious as there is much contemporary evidence showing that economic growth has been achieved without major investment in ICT. Van Djik (2006) also supports Avgerou's argument that there is a danger in believing that closing the gap, i.e. achieving ICT equity with 'the other side' will in fact "solve particular problems in the economy and society"(p. 222).

Van Dijk (2006) discusses the misuse of the metaphor 'digital divide' when discussing the simplistic semantics implied within the term by questioning whether there are, in fact, two clearly divided groups, whether the gap is un-traversable, whether the inequalities are

absolute and that it is a static condition. Van Djik continues by suggesting that definitions of what a computer actually is, or how 'internet connection' is defined, what computer literacy, or digital skills, actually means, or what 'internet use' constitutes all question the validity of the term 'digital divide'.

Finally, Ebo (2001) indicates that the internet can help nations and communities the chance to bridge the gap because the internet is, in fact, the cheapest form of ICT available which could "dismantle much of the global information elitism by narrowing the huge communications gap between the developing and the developed nations." (p. 3) This, according to Ebo (2001), would lead to global networked communities beyond notions of sovereignty and geographical positioning that would appeal to those operating at the grassroots level by allowing them to bypass government structures and interference.

Zhang and Hung (2007) discuss distance teacher training programs that were provided for teachers in rural areas of China through both the internet and other low-tech media formats, and how the system of delivery was received by the course participants. Their finding showed that the system of delivery was effective, particularly in that the ICT helped develop a sense of independent learning amongst teachers, and stated that "this technology shifts the responsibility of learning away from that of the teacher towards that of the individual learner." (p. 13)

However, Gulati (2008) points out that although the availability of ICT in urban areas of

most countries has increased dramatically, rural and remote areas still lack investment, infrastructure, and quality teachers and that introducing computers into education in developing countries "seems to have done little to widen educational access to the rural poor"(p. 9). Gulati's research concluded that although developments in ICT provision in remote and poor areas strives to provide for educational opportunities for all, the "lack of educational and technology infrastructures, lack of trained teachers, negative attitudes towards distance learning, have all resulted in furthering the gap between the rich and poor, rural and urban" (p. 12). Gulati suggests then, that although ICT has helped to open developing economies to world markets, the same technology has provided very little in terms of helping these same disadvantaged groups gain access to opportunities in education. Gulati discusses that "New communication technologies, particularly the Internet, appear to offer exciting possibilities for overcoming geographical access and cost barriers to learning", but qualifies this by stating that "it is hard to imagine that these technologies can have a positive influence on the education of children and adults who lack basic living resources and live with an underdeveloped educational infrastructure in an environment of political instability" (p. 1).

2.12 Computer-mediated communication and behaviour

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) describes the use of computers, and particularly, the internet and the WWW, for interpersonal interactions. How the Internet impacts on interpersonal interactions, and how traditional human interactions are transformed for use within the internet can be described as computer-mediated behaviour

(CMB) (Herring, 1999). CMC was initially criticised for being impersonal, ineffectual and emotionally cold (Cummings, Butler & Kraut 2002), however, Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic (2004) suggest that online participants can actually feel more relaxed and open as they are often involved in a shared interest or goal, are able to present themselves positively and, particularly with asynchronous communications, have time to compose messages and text more thoughtfully.

Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic (2004) explain that the social constructivist argument is that technology is subordinate in its entirety in relation to the unique perspectives required for culturally specific needs, but suggest that, in reality, the relationship between technology, culture and social interaction requires two-way involvement, particularly when taking into account economic and political landscapes. Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic summarise this position by stating that a society is shaped by the available technology, but equally society shapes technology to fulfil specific needs.

Cummings, Butler & Kraut (2002) suggest that when online communications are explicitly compared to face-to-face or telephone interaction, there are definite limitations which would impact on relationships developed between individuals and those involved in small social groups. However, they continue by suggesting that the relationships formed online still have value and that most users believe those relationships that are formed and developed online utilising social networking avenues such as emailing and discussion centres are of significance.

Zhang and Kenny (2010), in analysing the experiences of three international students enrolled on online master's programs, discuss that for online collaboration to be truly effective, the course provider must take a proactive role in providing suitable avenues for the collaborative learning to be achieves, especially as this form of learning encourages learner autonomy (Zhang & Hung. 2007) within a constructivist learning environment. From their research, Zhang and Kenny (2010) conclude that English language proficiency was a highly relevant cultural attribute and that the course provider needed to create communication activities that reduced the influence of colloquialisms and culturally biased materials.

Herring suggests that in fact CMC communications can be more effective and enjoyable in certain circumstances due to the permanency of the online text. If a communication is not understood immediately, the receiver is able to review the incomprehensible section and create appropriate meaning and points out that this is invariably not often achievable in an oral exchanges. Herring also proposes that online communications can offer more than what speech is able, even though often the communication is shorter, and states that CMC is " both dysfunctionally and advantageously incoherent". (p. 1).

2.13 Present online courses for ESL teacher training and professional development

An internet search for online ESL teacher training or development shows the limited availability of such courses. Even more poignant is the fact that non-native speakers are excluded from some such courses. As an experiment, I visited Worldwide Learn (http://form.worldwidelearn.com/tefl-international) which calls itself "the world's

premier online directory of education" (October 29, 2006). I requested ESL training and completed an online form as a non-native English speaking English language teacher living in Argentina with 10 years teaching experience, having near-native English language competence. I was excluded from any course due to my non-native English language status.

2.13.1   The Distance DELTA

In my experience the DELTA qualification is a highly regarded teacher development qualification administered by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations department. The DELTA is offered to experienced (minimum of 2 years full-time) and practising English language teachers worldwide.

The examination does not distinguish between native and non-native English speakers and, according to the University of Cambridge ESOL website, participants are required to have a standard of English which will enable them to teach at a range of levels. Participants are examined on a portfolio which includes teaching practice of 5 assessed lessons, peer observation of experienced teachers in the classroom, completion of a range of practically focused written assignments, an extended assignment of 4,000 to 4,500 words and a 3 hour written examination.

The Distance DELTA is jointly managed by the British Council and International House, London, and provides a course delivered via (a) face to face teaching on an introductory 4 day course, (b) the internet, (c) DVD, and (d) a local tutor. The course requires a suggested 10 hours a week over 8 months. Teachers that I studied with and have mentored generally discuss the course to be difficult and stressful, but very valuable.

However, I found the weakness of the course that it is highly prescriptive and at no point does it make any acknowledgement of a participant's cultural or pedagogical background.

2.14 The Action Research Paradigm

AR, within this research project, functions at two levels; as an integral part of the e-PD4ELT course process facilitating cross-cultural assimilation, and as the premise to enlighten socially constructed conclusions on which the outcomes of the research project inform further development of the e-PD4ELT course.

First, AR is employed within the e-PD4ELT course to achieve the course designer's goal of providing PD that is pedagogically and culturally empathetic. Requiring CPs to interact, through AR, with the pedagogical methodological information provided within the course allows for informed, constructed decisions on what is, and what is not, applicable for the participant's unique pedagogic and cultural situation. Parsons and Brown (2002) have described AR in teaching as a methodology that provides teachers with a tool for attaining valid and useful data which can be used to develop effective pedagogical practices. Burnaford, Fischer, and Hobson (2001) have stated that "investigations conceived, implemented, and evaluated by actual teachers in real classrooms among live school-children promise to better stand the tests of practicality and personal relevance" (p. 7). In relation to the research question 'is the e-PD4ELT course culturally pedagogically empathetic?' I wish to assess whether *personal relevance* applies effectively cross-culturally within the provision of the course. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) have referred to this process as "classroom action research" and have pointed out that "classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative

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interpretive modes of inquiry and data collection by teachers [often with help from academics] with a view to teachers making judgements about how to improve their own practices." (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 561). McTaggart (1996) also has discussed the adaption of AR within differing cultural settings and suggests that the AR paradigm does not need a specific definition, rather, the concept should be presented by the researcher and the participant allowed to "reshape", to "remake", to "reconstitute" AR in ways that make sense within the participants' culture while retaining the philosophical features familiar to the researcher.'

Second, conclusions drawn from this research are intended to inform the course developer on how to improve course content and provision. Conclusions are socially constructed through deep analysis of all recorded communications between the CPr and the CP. The conclusions, therefore, provide the impetus within the AR paradigm for appropriate advancement. However, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) have warned of the limitations of the methodology and have questioned the validity of conclusions reached from "the interpretive analysis of restricted data, that is, data which can make no claim to be generally representative" (p. 312). They cite Winter (1982) who has written:

> the action research/case study tradition does have a methodology for the creation of data, but not (as yet) for the interpretation of data. We are shown how the descriptive journal, the observer's field notes, and the open-ended interviews are utilised to create accounts of events which will confront the practitioner's current praRemaatic assumptions. (p. 312)

Winter (1982) has continued by questioning whether the collected data can be reliably

analysed from which generality can be assumed. The researcher feels, however, that, within this research, an interpretive analysis, through the process of thematic analysis, would produce conclusions from which generalisations can inform both whether the course is acting culturally empathetic, and how the e-PD4ELT course might be improved upon, both in its delivery and execution.

AR has been described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) as:

a form of collective, self-reflective inquiry that participants in social situations undertake to improve: (1) the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices; (2) the participants' understanding of these practices and the situations in which they carry out these practices (p. 5).

Cohen et al. (2007) have described AR as "a flexible, responsive methodology that offers rigour, authenticity and voice" (p. 312). Nunan and Bailey (2009) have stated that "action research as a method involves systematic procedures for collecting data and understanding their meaning in a local context" (p. 17) and have discussed that AR is becoming a tradition in language classroom research. The uniqueness of the process, according to Nunan and Bailey, is that teachers are researching within their own pedagogic environment, and have stated that "it is carried out principally by those who are best placed to change and, as a result, improve what goes on in the classroom" (p. 17). Harmer (2003) has offered the idea that AR is a "series of procedures teachers can engage in, either because they want to improve their teaching, or because they wish to evaluate the success and/or appropriacy of certain activities and procedures" (p. 345). The five-stage process offered by Harmer (2003) is: 1) the teacher identifies an in-class

problem or issue, 2) thinks of questions to ask or what information can be gained, 3) collects relevant data, 4) analyses data, and 5) determines future action.

2.14.1   AR and professional development for English language teachers

PD for teachers has traditionally been presented "top down" (Beaumont & Chang, 2000); that is, participants are presented with information from an authoritative figure through workshops or seminars. The specialist would expect newly acquired pedagogical methodology to be implemented by the teacher and the expert/teacher interaction is heavily weighted towards the expert's end. This top down approach does not allow teachers any flexibility to develop or experiment with new ideas. In addition, a top down approach does not permit teachers to feed back to management. AR can reverse this situation and enables teachers to decide what their actual needs are in relation to presented theory. Cherry and Bowden (1999) has described the process as a journey of discovery and has suggested that, like most voyages, all participants must accept both success and failure but overall keep an open mind and learn from both.

The results of a study conducted by Beaumont and O'Brian (2000) into the feasibility of PD through AR showed that Korean teachers of English previously had: a) perceived a gap between theory and practice, b) thought research findings were often inaccessible, and c) felt decision making was initiated from bureaucracy. After the introduction of an AR style of PD, participants stated that a spirit of enquiry had been created. They also felt that they had begun to have ownership of the process of professional change and hence, enhanced PD.

Saunders and Somekh (in Noffke & Somekh, 2009) discussed conclusions drawn from

the developing Pedagogies for E-learning Resources (PELRS) project, a research project investigating, through AR, the innovative uses of ICT in pedagogy, based at Manchester Metropolitan University. Teachers involved within the PELRS project became teacher-researchers and were supported by university researchers, and hence were given "permission within the traditional cultures of their schools" (p. 198) to experiment with and alter their routine pedagogical practices. Teacher-researchers used AR to investigate the introduction and application of ICT within the curriculum, from which Saunders and Somekh concluded: 1) research into technology and learning is inevitably an exploration of innovations that are social as well as technological; 2) radically new and different social practices in schools (and elsewhere) are necessary to unlock, as well as understand, the possibilities of ICT as a pedagogical innovation; and. 3) schools need external support to develop such practices, because school routines (timetables, structures, etc.) quickly default to the status quo.

Kember (2001) discussed the willingness of Hong Kong Chinese English language teachers to be involved in the adoption of AR as a tool for PD during the 1990s. The aim of the AR PD was to create a more student-centred pedagogical approach to English language teaching. The PD providers, mostly university lecturers in education, were sceptical of the success of an AR approach to PD because they felt that teachers accepted the authoritarianism of traditional information dissemination. The PD providers also thought that participating teachers expected to be taught everything that was needed to be known in a top-down fashion. However, teachers readily accepted the AR approach to PD. This was proven through a discernible increase in teacher participation in PD courses. Over 100 Action Research projects, funded by the University Grants Committee

of Hong Kong, were run over a period of 8 years from 1992 to 2000. This involvement showed a marked increase in PD participation over the previous decade. In relation to my course, I offer the above evidence to show that an AR approach to my PD course would be viable and acceptable to all teachers, whether native or non-native English speakers, and even if they had only ever experienced a top down approach to PD.

The process of AR as presented by Nunan (1989), when discussing the language learning environment, provided a seven step cycle, that is: initiation, preliminary investigation, hypothesis, intervention, evaluation, dissemination, and follow-up. Nunan has expanded on this notion and suggested that the process "fulfils a professional development function" (p. 19) and that the process can be described as research if generated data is of interest to other practitioners and if analysis and interpretation is provided. Nunan has warned that the dissemination of generated conclusions may lack validity, and that "extreme caution needs to be exercised in making strong claims about the research outcomes" (p. 19). It is my intention to base the AR process within the e-PD4ELT course on a step-by-step process adapted from the model provided by Nunan. CPs will be required to report upon these steps within their blog area that will form the basis of intra-course discussions between CPs and the CPr.

The e-PD4ELT course is designed to allow teachers to experiment with, and make conclusions about, the presented ESL methodologies and developing personal pedagogical practices. However, these personal pedagogical practices are not in isolation and are conducted within an institution of learning that has its pedagogic traditions. The course participant needs to take into account all factors when engaging in, and drawing conclusions from AR. Carr and Kemmis (in Noffke & Somekh, 2009), in discussing

whether educational AR is personal, professional or political, have commented that AR can only fundamentally be personal and that "one of its fruits is always the self-transformation of participants through their developing understanding achieved through enquiry, investigation or research."(p. 80). However, the 'personal' functions within both a political and a professional setting, where the political is "traditions of education" and the professional is "institutions for the conduct of education" (p.81). Carr and Kemmis (2009) have concluded that although action researchers may not discuss their political positioning when describing their research, the research cannot be apolitical and that research conclusions must always indicate a political and professional allegiance as well.

The multiple factors discussed above will inform the creation, presentation and development of the e-PD4ELT course, the subsequent critical assessment of the effectiveness of delivery and its ability to be culturally empathetic. The following chapter will describe the production and development of the course and the fundamental role that the action research paradigm plays in achieving cultural relevance and acceptance.

Chapter 3

The production of the e-PD4ELT course

3.1 Introduction

First, this chapter discusses the multiple factors that informed the production of the e-PD4ELT course; course content, course delivery and the tenet for course interaction. Initially, I shall discuss how AR is utilised for course content/participant interaction, providing a constructed model of AR to be used within the course. Second, I shall discuss the use of classroom video within the course, and the online communication systems employed within the course, including the use of Moodle as the software platform for online delivery. Third, I shall discuss the course content, the rationale for the included ESL pedagogical methodologies and the literature informing the inclusions, and provide examples from the course itself.

3.2   Positioning the e-PD4ELT course, within a global, post-colonial, socio-economic setting.

In designing the e-PD4ELT course, I have endeavoured to create a professional developmental environment that allows the two-way transfer of ESL pedagogical information electronically, via the communication tools found within the website. The e-PD4ELT course is based on the premise of social and professional equality and that as professionals, all agents involved with the course can learn from, inform and support

each other. The diagram therefore shows the e-PD4ELT course transcending both socio-cultural groups, with a two-way flow of information between teachers from differing socio-cultural settings.

Figure 8 represents the traditional flow of ESL teacher training and PD and positions the subject of the research, the e-PD4ELT course, within a cultural setting. The figure shows movement between two representative socio-economic groups but does not indicate geographical placement. Socio-economic group P is a socio-cultural setting of privilege, that is, a setting that is relatively politically democratic, economically stable, multi-cultural, where the rights of the individual are respected, and has an historic link to colonialism, either as a colonial power or as a direct benefactor. Australia is a representative of socio-economic group-P. Socio-economic group A does not have English as its first language, and other socio-economic factors are undefined. Fiji, where the majority of the researcher's empirical work was carried out, is an example of socio-economic group A.

The process of acquiring or learning a second language is described by a variety of second language acquisition theories and has been shown in this diagram to be positioned outside the socio-economic groups to indicate recognition of historic and international sources informing such theories. In turn, these theories inspire ESL pedagogical methodologies which have primarily been created within socio-cultural setting P and having English as a first language. To demonstrate this flow, one such theory, functionalism, described by Hedge (2000) as showing "the varying functional use of language forms by using functions rather than structures as their organizing principle" (p. 49), has informed such ESL pedagogies as the lexical approach. ESL pedagogical

methodologies form the basis of teacher training or PD courses which provide the pedagogical foundations for in-class ESL teaching.

The diagram shows four predominant examples of teachers who have received ESL teacher training, and possibly PD. Teacher 1 (T1) is a migrant, temporary or permanent, to socio-economic group P, does not have English as a first language, has received ESL training, and is presently teaching within the receiving cultural setting. Teacher 2 (T2) comes from socio-economic group P where ESL training was undertaken, and is presently teaching overseas within socio-economic group A. T2 could either be teaching in an international school or within the receiving culture's state system. Teacher 3 (T3) is teaching within the home culture A, either in the international or state school setting, and receiving initial ESL training locally and possibly further training from SE-P. Teacher 4 (T4) is also teaching within the home culture, being socio-economic setting P. Teacher 4 has also received ESL training within the home culture. As an ESL teacher, the researcher has professional experience both as T2 and T4. The e-PD4ELT course participant is described as T3.

The diagram shows a historic predominant flow of ESL training and PD information, from socio-cultural setting P to socio-cultural setting A. It is the researcher's experience that ESL training and PD courses are prescriptive and do not take into account the receiving culture's culture or pedagogy.

Socio-Cultural Setting (P)

English as 1st language
Privileged
Politically democratic
Economically stable
Multi-cultural

Socio-Cultural Setting (A)

English as a 2nd language

S1

T1

S2

ESL Teacher training and schools' ESL curriculum based on cultural pedagogy and historic (and contemporary) 2nd Language

2nd Language acquisition described by contemporary 2nd language acquisition theories (SLA)

ESL Pedagogical Methodologies

ESL Teacher Training & Professional Development Courses

T2

International Schools

S5

S3

T3

T4

S4

Key.

P = Privileged

A = Another

T = ESL Teachers

S = ESL Students

= Direction of SLA information

= Flow of ESL Training and PD

= Flow of teaching

= 2-way flow of information

Figure 6   Diagram representing the traditional flow of ESL teacher training, professional development and teaching, and where e-PD4ELT is positioned.

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The figure also shows ESL students, S1 to S5, in their various settings. S1 represents an ESL student studying English overseas, being taught by a non-native English speaker; S2 shows an ESL student being taught English by an overseas teacher in a public or private school in the home setting; S3 is similar to S2 but being taught by a teacher from the same cultural setting; S4 is an overseas student being taught by a teacher from the same setting, and S5 is being taught English by either a teacher from the home setting or from overseas (or both) in a international school based in the home setting.

International schools, particularly at secondary level, are somewhat unique in that their curriculum, or curricula, is invariably from overseas, either from a socio-economic group-P, such as the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) from UK, or an international curriculum, such as the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program or Diploma Program (MYP/IBDP). International schools employ either exclusively overseas teachers or a mix of overseas and home teachers. ESL programs in international schools can be based on the predominant curriculum, can be a school-specific designed curriculum, or often a mixture of both.

3.3   Developing an action research model appropriate for use in electronic professional development.

Parsons and Brown (2002) discussed the relevance of AR for teacher PD when they asserted; "Action research methodology provides teachers with the means of acquiring valid, useful data, which in turn can be used for the development of effective strategies of professional practice" (p. x). Hobson (in Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, 2001) stated that "investigations conceived, implemented, and evaluated by

actual teachers in real classrooms among live school-children promise to better stand the tests of practicality and personal relevance. This is research to be used by teachers, not merely played for purposes beyond the classroom." (p. 7)

When considering the e-PD4ELT course, I have offered the above evidence to demonstrate that an AR approach would be viable and acceptable to English language teachers, even if they have previously only ever experienced a top down approach to PD. AR allows teachers to interact with course material through specific experimentation within their own pedagogy, analyse the results, and extract what was applicable and relevant for their personal teaching situation and style. More information in regards to AR, and teaching and how AR can become a pedagogical practice, can be found in Parsons and Brown (2002), and Cherry and Bowden (1999). For further information on AR in particular relation to English language teaching can be found at the BBC/British Council site: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/transform/teachers/teacher-development-tools/action-research.

3.4 The Implementation of Action Research within the e-PD4ELT Course

A variety of concepts describing the implementation of AR are available in the literature. The concept presented by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which shows an ongoing cyclical approach to AR through a repeated sequence of 'plan, action, observe, reflect', initially appeared to be the most appropriate model to utilise for the e-PD4ELT course. However, although AR within the course is based on Kemmis and McTaggart's model, I felt the need for a revised approach that would respect the time constraints of practising teachers involved in PD and the functional requirements

involved for utilising a blog. Specifically for e-PD4ELT, a practical and more time efficient five stage model for AR has been developed (below).

| Information

(Blog entry 1) | → | Research
Plan
(Blog entry 2) | → | Implementation | → | Reflection

(Blog entry 3) | → | The Future

(Blog entry 4) |

Figure 7   Action Research for e-PD4ELT

The elements within this model are described below:

3.4.1   Information Appraisal: (blog entry No.1).

As previously mentioned, the course provides CPs with a variety of forms of information relating to the introduced ESL methodology within each module. The CPs are able to synthesise this information and consider whether this methodology is presently being used, if it could be improved upon and, if it is not a part of the teacher's pedagogical repertoire, how it can be introduced and adapted to the CP's personal teaching situation. To contextualise this process I shall refer to an example from my own teaching experience of making movies as a task-based project, as described fully in Kebble (2008). After the appraisal of the material presented in module 3, the CP may wish to discuss, within blog entry No.1, the fact that the current course book follows a formulaic approach to content delivery and that some students appear demotivated. The CP may discuss the possibility of using a task-based approach to remotivate students, but is concerned that a move away from the syllabus would be construed as unadvantageous by the head of the department, and that some students would have problems understanding the learning process and hence become disruptive. A personal written appraisal of this summary can then be posted within the CP's personal learning environments (PLE) blog as module entry No.1. All blogs are

accessible to all CPs and CPs are encouraged to read and comment on other CPs' blogs. Comments and further discussions can be accommodated within a discussion board facility specific to that module.

3.4.2   Research Plan: (blog entry No.2).

CPs are required to decide on an area of research and create a plan of action. CPs are required to formulate a question based on a concept for AR. The examples provided within the course are: (a) Will making and publishing a list of the learning strengths of my students help them to recognise their, and their peer's learning strengths?, (b) How do my students react to doing a mini-project instead of working from a course book?, (c) How effective is scaffolding?, and (d) What happens if I do not provide appropriate guidance within a task-based lesson? CPs are asked to consider how their question can be appropriately researched and to decide whether to conduct the research through the production of a lesson plan or through some form of empirical data collection. Again, the example provided within the course's guidelines is: 'this could be as simple as counting the number of kids who use a certain word/phrase in a given period of time or how successful the students were at understanding a concept through a simple testing process ('put up your hands if you know the answer to this…')'. CPs are also informed that although intuition is a very useful pedagogical tool, quantification can be problematic. As such, comments based on CP's intuitive assessment through experience of teaching and knowledge is both relevant and useful and requires statistical substantiation, if possible. If my practical example, introduced above, is discussed further, the CP may decide to experiment with a task-based approach and plan a series of lessons designed to encourage students to achieve a specific task; in my case, making a movie. In the planning phase the CP incorporates the syllabus' grammatical, lexical and topical focus for the week and, in doing so,

placates the concerns of the departmental head. For the research plan of this phase, the course participant decides to investigate whether: (a) students have enjoyed fulfilling the task, as an indication of motivation; and, b) have understood the linguistic value of the task-based process, that is, that their linguistic achievements correspond with the curriculum or course book. The CP asks the micro-research project question "do students find a task-based approach enjoyable and do they understand the pedagogical rationale?" To quantify the research outcomes the CP produces a short post-task questionnaire to assess the students' level of interaction within, and enjoyment of, the set task. The research question and subsequent research/lesson plan is recorded as blog entry No.2.

3.4.3   Implementation.

CPs teach the prepared lesson or conduct the relevant research. Beaumont and O'Brien, (2000), Parsons, and Brown, K.S. (2002) and Hansen, A., Twiselton, S., and Elton-Chalcraft, S. (2008) have provided extensive and invaluable practical information on how to conduct in-class research and CPs are provided with hyperlinks to the referenced articles.

3.4.4   Reflection: (blog entry No.3).

Having collected empirical data, CPs are required to reflect on whether the question has been definitively answered and what can be learnt from the results of the conducted research. CPs are encouraged to discuss what can be gleaned from the empirical data collected or from an analysis of the outcomes of the lesson. They are reminded that intuitive impressions are an important facet of the research and can supplement and enhance conclusions drawn from collected data and that it is important to include both in a discussion. CPs are encouraged to make a conclusion

based on their initial questions. The example given to e-PD4ELT CPs to emphasise the combination of empirical data and intuitive impression within the course information is:

> my students found doing a group project on sea mammals very exciting and motivating. The feedback from the questionnaire showed that, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'really disliked' to 'really liked", 85% of the class fell in the 'liked' and 'really liked' categories. However, through close in-class monitoring, it was observed that the L1 [language one] as used quite extensively and some students spent rather too much time off-task.

CPs are encouraged not to be reticent about discussing all aspects of their findings, even when certain elements of the research were not as successful as envisaged. CPs are told that there is much to be learnt from all empirical outcomes, particularly as what may have been perceived as unsuccessful may, in fact, have its own success. Baumfield, Hall and Wall (2008, p.117) expanded on this concept when they pointed out "It is important to be working in an environment where problem-posing as well as problem solving is valued and in which encouragement to experiment also recognises that not everything will necessarily succeed".

3.4.5   The Future: (blog entry No.4).

CPs are asked to discuss and make decisions on how they intend to develop, improve and integrate the tested concept or methodology within their pedagogy. What is your next step? How do you believe you can improve the learning process and the outcomes? If we continue from the example in (3) we may decide our students need to undergo a training program of how to work in groups and how to answer tasks. It may be that the organisation of the individuals in the groups needs to be changed, or that

each member needs to be given a specific task. In relation to my practical example, I was able to conclude that, in future, task-based projects could be implemented to encourage motivation but that I should enter into a pre-task dialogue with students to explain and discuss the intrinsic linguistic value found within task involvement.

3.5 Using videoed teacher observations for professional development

Most teachers that I have worked with accept the great value of in-class peer observations. Much can be learnt from observing a teaching colleague practising their art. However, there are a few drawbacks. Live peer observation can provide all facets of teacher performance and in-class interaction, but it is instantaneous and not repeatable. An observer can also change the dynamics of the classroom, create a false environment and put pressure on the performing teacher (Harmer, 2003). By contrast, video of a lesson in progress can provide a medium that is highly malleable. The recorded image can be slowed, repeated, replayed in its entirety or by section, can be viewed from a teaching or learning perspective, analysed microscopically, or generally, and be analysed by individuals or by groups (Brophy, 2004; Hollingsworth, 2004).

Video technology has been used to enhance and develop pedagogical skills, particularly in teacher training, for more than 20 years. Micro-teaching was, and still is, a technique often used for trainee teachers to assess their own and their peers' performances in small student groups. Video snippets of Los Angeles primary teachers performing were reported by Fizer (2004) as not being as useful as in-class direct peer observations, however, 81% of the teachers in Fizer's study said that these videoed peer observations were beneficial and that such observations enhanced their

overall PD. In the production of a DL course, then, any video material needs to be as life-like as possible, given the restrictions of the technology.

Little research appears to have been conducted on the effectiveness of video technology in PD, although the general consensus amongst educators is that there are numerous beneficial training and assessment applications (Hollingsworth, 2005). Hollingsworth videoed 638 Grade 8 mathematics lessons from seven countries to create a video-based teacher PD course presented on CD ROM (Hollingsworth, 2004). Each CD contained video, indexes, lesson plans, relevant textbook pages and worksheets, and time-linked transcripts in both English and the native language of the teacher. CPs' feedback was very positive as they felt the use of video was "extremely useful" and "provided a valuable insight into the classrooms of other teachers in other countries and their strategies and learning environments" (p. 150).

3.6   Inter-participant communication for an effective E-PD course.

DL courses supervised via the internet create particular problems that need to be addressed to ensure participants maintain enthusiasm and motivation. Course design must ensure that a feeling of isolation is alleviated by creating a community of learners, by facilitating social and professional interaction between participants, and by encouraging a culture of collaboration (Hutchens, Jones, Crone-Todd, & Eyre, 2006).

To assuage the inevitable feeling of isolation, the Distance DELTA course encourages the use of discussion boards within its website. However, I observed a reluctance in teachers to use the facility. In fact, participants needed to be pressured into making postings by course managers, who emailed individuals about their lack of use of the resource. I feel this is a problem of discomfiture as postings are, by their very nature,

accessible to anyone. Certainly, my DELTA students did not like the thought that they may be posting a question that may have been construed as too basic within their virtual learning community. The students also showed a lack of confidence in answering another's query and needed encouragement in valuing their responses.

To create an effective and supportive e-learning environment, participants must be encouraged to take ownership of the learning experience provided by an on-line PD course (McFadzean & McKenzie, 2001). This ownership can be enhanced through discussion, collaboration and decision making to create an ethos of course congruency and reciprocal support.

To create this ethos, the following strategies could be implemented within the course and website: (a) a message board where participants are encouraged to post questions and personal solutions, discuss literature and personal or cultural interpretations, and discuss successes and failures of technique implementation; (b) chat rooms, both text and voice, where the above can be discussed in a more immediate environment as well as a forum for less formal issues; (c) networking and collaborative exercises where participants are required to answer certain tasks through negotiation and discussion; (d) email addresses for participants to communicate privately; and (e) an e-journal for participants to form a reflective dialogue with the CPr.

3.7 Definitions of the terms 'methodologies', 'approaches' and 'techniques' in English language teaching.

The many language teaching methodologies, approaches and techniques that have emerged over the past 50 years have profoundly affected the way English is and has been taught. First, I would like to provide language acquisition pedagogical definitions for methodology, approach and technique. A methodology is the system

used to put an approach into pedagogical practice and from which to develop a language teaching syllabus. An approach is a description of the interconnection of the many facets of language and of how people acquire and use language. This information prescribes the condition that will best suit second language acquisition. A technique is a single activity for teaching a specific language point (Harmer, 2003) and can be specifically method-like or approach-like in its presentation.

Methodology has been described by Richards and Rogers (2001) as "a theoretically consistent set of teaching procedures (approaches) that define best practice in language teaching" and "Approaches and methods can be studied not as prescriptions for how to teach but as a source of well-used practices (techniques), which teachers can adapt or implement based on their own needs" (pp. 15-16).

For example, the Grammar-Translation Methodology, which was the predominant European and foreign language teaching methodology from the 1840s to the 1940s (Richards & Rogers, 2001), and appears to still be widely used in East Asian English language curricula, approaches language from the perspective that accurate translation is required for comprehension, predominantly written text. The Approach is therefore systematic and requires learners to be able to accurately manipulate discrete grammar points and understand lexical items. Techniques for teaching are rote learning of verb conjugations and lexis, grammar exercises requiring accurate verb conjugation and syntax manipulation and an understanding of the metalanguage of the grammar.

The course I produced, which is described below, introduced course participants to various English language pedagogical approaches, methodologies and systems are currently utilised, to varying degrees, worldwide and of which I have found particularly effective in my teaching.

3.8 The Electronic Professional Development for English Language Teachers (e-PD4ELT) Course, module by module.

Below is the module by module rationale for ESL pedagogical methodology inclusion. These rationales form the basis of the introductions to the modules but have been adapted, extended and modified to enable participants to access the concepts more readily.

3.8.1 Module One: Language Corpora and the Lexical Approach.

Traditionally, grammar and syntax were considered to be the building block of language and hence language learning syllabi have been grammar based. In the 1970s second language acquisition researchers, such as Corder, Hakuta, Keller, and Peters (in Richards & Rogers, 2001) questioned whether the traditional grammar focus of language learning courses was neglecting such fundamental principles of linguistic communication as the possibility of communicating effectively through an utterance formed without grammar words, and whether collocations and language chunking were an integral part of language. Through the development of utilised linguistic corpora (e.g., Bank of English, British National Corpus: http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx) it was possible to determine the most widely used lexical items and collocations on which to build an English language-learning syllabus. In the early 1990s linguistic academics such as David Willis, who went on to produce the *COBUILD English Course*, and Michael Lewis, who wrote *The Lexical Approach* (1993), propounded the concept that lexis, word collocations, and lexical chunks played a fundamental role in the structure of language (Harmer, 2001). More recently Richards and Rogers (2001) stated that:

A lexical approach in language teaching reflects a belief in the centrality of the

lexicon to language structure, second language learning and language use and in particular to multiword lexical units, or chunks, that are learned and used as single items. (p. 132)

The production of syllabi that focus on a lexical approach has been greatly assisted by computer based language corpora such as COBUILD Bank of English corpus, the Cambridge English corpus and the British or American National Corpus. These corpora contain hundreds of millions of words and can provide data on frequency of a single word, collocation and word group usage. An elementary syllabus could be produced introducing a given number of the most commonly used words. Frequency of use of collocations, phrases and multi-word groups can provide the syllabus writer with appropriate lexis to introduce to language learners.

Chen (2004) discussed the practical application of using the lexical approach in the classroom and introduced a variety of corpora that have been useful resources. The paper suggests language corpora can enhance the quality of vocabulary teaching and learning in second or foreign language classrooms and concludes that advances in technology allows for rapid lexical information gathering that can enhance learning motivation. Meehan (2003) discusses a move away from the traditional course books' "grammar-centric notions" (para. 1) to a more balanced and practical pedagogy that will promote "a greater awareness of lexis" and that a "greater emphasis will be placed on providing language learners with the range of tools needed to build up their own effective lexical store and communicative repertoire" (para. 6).

3.8.2   Module Two: Grammar-Based Syllabi, a Deductive, Inductive or Combined Approach.

English language syllabi produced for primary and high schools are often based on a

sequential grammar methodology that is taught deductively, that is, a grammar point is presented, the rules are given, and students practice the grammar point through written and/or oral exercises. However, there has been a strong body of support, backed by empirical research, for using a student-centred, inductive approach to the learning of grammar. An inductive approach presents authentic language parcels requiring the learner to discover underlying principles and patterns, and hence, rules. Nunan (cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002) reported that, through using an inductive approach to learning grammar, students commented on "their newly awakened self-confidence and self-reliance in their language learning" and said they "could see the value of putting themselves in the position of information gatherers" (p. 141). Nunan also found that this approach could be just as effective for the acquisition of grammar and lexical items. Hedge (2000) discussed second language acquisition theories, such as the input hypothesis and the notion of intake, in relation to teaching grammar. This posits the concept that second language learners obtain information about their second language from their linguistic environment. This environment, in language teaching, can often be restricted to, and stimulated by, the classroom. From this environmentally attained linguistic information, language acquisition can occur through a number of processes. These processes are:

1.   Noticing (Carroll, 2006; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; van Lier, 1996) where a learner's attention is tuned in to a specific feature.

2.   Reasoning and hypothesising, where a learner, particularly an adult, makes inferences leading to an hypothesis.

3.   Reasoning deductively, where the learner attempts to apply rules already learnt.

4.   Analysing contrastively, translating or transferring, by making comparisons, directly translating or transferring grammatical knowledge, between first language and second language the learner can often come to a clearer understanding. However, this may also have the opposite effect when first language rules are very different to second language.

5.   Structuring and re-structuring, where the learner applies rules and is successful or not, in which case new structures need to be trialled, and

6.   Automatising, through regular and consistent successful use of an item, the learner needs not think about it before use.

It could be argued that if the deductive teaching system is overlaid on the process shown above there is not a match, suggesting that a deductive approach does not concur with second language acquisition theory. But if the same is done with an inductive approach, there appears to be a compatibility. This suggests that an inductive approach would be more effective. Certainly, the first three processes above can be achieved through an inductive approach, but a short-cut to automatising could occur if a deductive approach was adopted for processes 4 and 5. There appears to be a pedagogical dichotomy between the two methodologies, although both methodologies have value and, through good planning, can complement each other. Widodo (2006) has discussed the practicality of teaching grammar through a combined approach.

3.8.3   Module Three: Task-Based Learning and Pedagogical Scaffolding.

Task-based learning and teaching is a methodology which utilises specific and meaningful tasks as the principal unit of lesson or curriculum planning (Richardson &

Rogers, 2005). The focus is on the linguistic requirements needed on all levels to accomplish either a task needing to be performed or a problem needing to be solved (Harmer, 2003). This can be achieved in both the negotiation and production phase. The premise is that the meaningful communication that occurs between all those involved in answering the task is processed and internalised by the language learner more effectively. Belgar and Hunt have expounded that "learners analytical abilities will be equal to the task of coming to accurate conclusions about grammatical and lexical usage" (in Richards & Renandya, 2005, p.96). This methodology is based on the constructivist paradigm of the psychology of language learning, is largely student-centred and operates on two levels; the learning of specific language required by the student to achieve the planned task and the learning of language required in negotiating with both peers and facilitators.

Tasked-based learning incorporates pedagogical scaffolding, which requires the teacher to plan task support and guidance needed to achieve the required linguistic outcomes. Harmer (2001) has added that the focus is on the linguistic requirements needed on all levels to accomplish either a task needing to be performed or a problem needing to be solved. There are three principal phases in task-based learning: (a) the pre-task negotiation phase; (b) the task production/completion phase; and (c) the post-task, feedback phase. Language requirements for each phase can often be very different, but all are directly related to the presented task and communication within each phase is relevant and significant. The premise is that meaningful communication occurs between all those involved in answering the task and the language used is processed and internalised by the language learner more effectively. Also, Belgar and Hunt (cited in Richards & Renandya, 2005, p. 96) stated that "learners' analytical abilities will be equal to the task of coming to accurate conclusions about grammatical

and lexical usage".

Practical applications of task-based teaching in the Asia context is discussed by Nunan (2006), and Kebble (2008) presents a procedural report of a successful task-based activity of making a movie. Further examples of a "task" are finding solutions to puzzles, using maps for directions, using the telephone to acquire information, writing letters or giving/following specific instructions to achieve a goal such as assembling a toy (Richards & Rogers, 2005). As Nunan has remarked: "the communicative task [is] a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right" (in Richards & Rogers, 2005, p. 224).

3.8.4 Module Four: Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning Strategies.

Language teachers are quite aware that learning strengths vary from student to student and that language activity interaction can occur at differing levels of interest and cognition. It is clear that some people learn new skills better through oral and written explanations of language systems whereas others learners prefer rules auRemaented by visual clues, diagrams and pictures. Some learners are successful through working with peers, in pairs and in groups, while others find working independently on word games, worksheets and writing more stimulating. Howard Gardener (1983, 1993) argued against 'intelligence' as a single measurable entity, as in I.Q. testing, and offered the concept of multiple intelligences.

Table 2   Learner type and appropriate pedagogy

Learner type	Is good at	Learns best by	Activities
Verbal /Linguistic	Reading, writing and stories	Saying, hearing and seeing words	Memory games, debates trivia quizzes, story telling, note-taking.
Logical / mathematical	Solving puzzles, exploring patterns, reasoning and logic	Asking questions, categorising and working with patterns	Puzzles, problem solving, classification and categorization.
Visual / Spatial	Drawing, building, arts and crafts	Visualising, using the mind's eye	Flashcards, colours pictures, drawing, video, project work, movies.
Musical /rythmic	Singing, listening to music and playing instruments	Using rhythm, with music on	Using songs, jazz chants drilling, playing music.
Bodily / Kinaesthetic	Moving around, touching things and body language	Moving, touching and doing	TPR activities, action songs, running dictations, miming, realia, field trips.
Inter-personal	Mixing with others, leading groups, understanding others and mediating	Co-operating, working in groups and sharing	Mingle activities, group work, debates, project work, discussions.
Intra-personal	Working alone and pursuing own interests	Working alone	Working individually on personalised projects, journal keeping, homework.

Adapted from . http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/intelligences.shtml:

Gardner originally offered seven categories: verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, musical/rhythmic, bodily/kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal and, 10 years later, added an eighth, naturalistic. Recognition of Gardener's eight intelligences in students' learning can enhance the provision of language teaching materials to encompass and stimulate each learning style. Along with a recognition of

multiple intelligences amongst students, the teacher can also ascertain the ways in which students approach their learning, that is, how students organise themselves and their work and what study procedures they follow. Through this analysis the teacher can introduce and provide strategies to enhance the learning process. From a learning point of view, then, there are two main factors to consider; a) how do I learn best (multiple intelligence), and b) what can I do to enhance the learning process (learning strategies). Kinoshita (2003) has suggested that language teachers should seriously consider integrating 'language learning strategy instruction' into their pedagogy to promote student efficiency in efforts to learn another language and help teachers to become more focused. Schmidt (2004) has presented a practical insight into how multiple intelligence can be aligned to life stages, from childhood to old age, and the creation of teaching materials to cater for various needs of the learners within those stages.

3.8.5   Module Five: Content-Based Instruction and a Cross-Curricula Approach.

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in ELT refers to the teaching of an academic subject, subject matter or topic through the medium of English. Broadly speaking, CBI in ELT has two distinct outcomes: 1) development of English language skills, and 2) development of the subject knowledge base. Although these outcomes are concurrent, they do not need to have the same weighting. In some cases, a subject is taught in English because the language of the subject has traditionally or extensively been in English (e.g. Computer Science, Physics, Mathematics) and English enhances the comprehension and accessibility of the subject-specific matter, material and lexis. In other cases, subject content provides the motivation for student attention, where English becomes the conduit for linguistic interaction with the subject matter and with

teachers and peers. According to Stoller (cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002) research into CBI has shown that material in a content-based course is easier to remember, leads to deeper psychological linguistic processing, increases motivation and interest, and develops an increased proficiency in both the topic and the second language. Stoller also has pointed out that CBI in ELT does not need to be exclusively topic-oriented as the teacher can teach aspects of English language, such as grammar and lexis, concurrently. School based teachers may find the concept of teaching English through other curriculum subjects appealing and practicable. English language teachers would be required to collaborate with other subject teachers to discover topics, lexis and supporting language that could be introduced concurrently in the first language and English.

In my experience, academic English language teachers often comment on the fact that their students seem to learn English at a faster rate once immersed in their academic courses in schools, colleges or universities. Of course, there are many factors contributing to this phenomenon but certainly the linguistic requirements needed for acceptable academic performance and the intrinsic interest in such a diversity of input is a powerful motivational force. A content based approach to language learning tries to emulate this effect by facilitating language development through the teaching of subject matter. Richards and Rodgers (2001) have stated that the core principle of a content based approach is that:

> people learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself [and] when the information they are acquiring is perceived as interesting, useful, and leading to a desired goal. (p. 209).

Larsen-Freeman (2000) described a content based geography lesson for Year 6 ESL students based on the introduction, understanding and use of a world globe. The lesson included brain-storming, topic related lexical input, a cloze reading exercise, discussion of the present passive (a grammatical construction that the students actually required in oral descriptions), and finally, the use of longitudinal and latitudinal coordinate positioning. This example shows the diversity of input and the related English language pedagogical value.

Chien (2003) described the teaching of a Life Course (science, social studies, art and music) in English in a Taiwanese primary school and the highly positive feedback received from the students as well as the very positive linguistic outcomes. However, she also discussed five challenges that she faced in the implementation of the course and conversion from Mandarin to English: (a) lack of English language material within the school for the course; (b) a reluctance by other teachers to be involved in the process of providing the course in English due to their lack of English skills; (c) the limited amount of time to cover the syllabus due to the additional time needed for course comprehension in English; (d) assessments and tests for the course were written in Mandarin; and (e) the extra amount of time needed to prepare cross-curricula topics, both in the negotiations with teachers and the preparation of materials. From these examples it can be seen that a cross-curricula approach has many advantages but needs careful consideration as it involves the cooperation of teaching peers who may not share the same enthusiasm.

Shang (2006) has discussed utilising content-based instruction with literature teaching and has suggested that CBI encouraged the exploration of themes better than other methods and has concluded that CBI "helps to expand their linguistic and cognitive

skills" and "can promote simultaneous learning of academic content, cultures, English language skills and critical thinking abilities" (p. 1).

3.9   Example of materials presented within the course

The following section provides an example of the kind of materials that appear within the e-PD4ELT website. Materials from Module 1 are presented, along with a rationale for their inclusion.

3.9.1 Module Introduction – Module 1 – The Lexical Approach

Each module has an introduction that summarises the methodology in question and provides hyperlinks to suitable websites with further information and materials that may help the participant. Following is the introduction for module 1. This introductory text is based upon the discussion of topic from section 3.6.1 but expands and defines notions and provides hyperlinks to related materials. The introduction also tries to blend theory with practical examples in an accessible way.

Introduction: Traditionally, grammar and syntax were considered to be the building blocks of language and hence language learning syllabi were almost entirely grammar centred. This pedagogical tenet was founded on a belief that the written form of a language was the basis for academic language learning. There was little weight put on language for oral communication, perhaps because when language education originally became a part of a school's syllabus; a) there was little personal interaction between people of different languages, b) ancient or religious languages, such as Latin and Arabic, were taught, primarily for text comprehension, and c) school and national examinations were exclusively paper-based. With the advent of international business, globalisation and the affordability of foreign travel there has been a far greater need

for people to communicate orally and by written communications through information and communication technology (ICT) and hence the need has arisen for a change in language education towards providing a tool for dynamic communication. As such, the failure of the traditional discrete grammar point syllabus approach to provide students with communicative language skills has been questioned worldwide. There has therefore been a discussed need for a change in the linguistic pedagogical focus to meet the communicative needs of our multi-cultural, multi-national world.

In the 1970s, second language acquisition researchers, such as P. Corder, K. Hakuta, R. Keller and A. Peters (Richards & Rogers, 2001) questioned whether the traditional grammar focus of language learning courses and syllabi were neglecting the fundamental principles of linguistic communication. They suggested that effective communication could occur through an utterance formed using content words, e.g. nouns, without the use of grammar words, and that collocations and language chunking are an integral part of communicative language. In the early 1990s linguistic academics such as David Willis, who went on to produce the COBUILD English Course, and Michael Lewis, who wrote The Lexical Approach (1993), proposed the concept that lexis, word collocations and lexical chunks played a fundamental role in the structure of language (Harmer, 2001).

The concept that language is more successfully learnt through the provision and use of vocabulary structures and collocations was revolutionary. At the time, many experienced language teachers and teacher trainers were uncomfortable with the notion and argued against the fundamental change in approach. However, over the ensuing 10 years, and with the observed success of the lexical pedagogical methodology, the lexical approach has found wide support. This has been shown by

syllabi and course books being written with anything from a total lexical approach to those with an equal balance of lexical and grammatical input.

For an example of a lexical approach in comparison to a grammar approach lets look at the phrase, or lexical chunk,

'Have you been to …..'.

Traditional grammar syllabi would break down the grammatical structure of the phrase and students would be taught:

Auxiliary verb 'have' + noun/pronoun + past participle of be 'been' + preposition + noun.

Students would often practice this structure through drilling and repetition. For example, the teacher would give a string of unrelated place names and students would provide the correct utterance. Students would be deemed successful if they could answer the question

 'How do we form the present perfect tense?'

If we approach this exercise lexically we could start by using a globe or a map and name towns, cities, countries or areas. The teacher could provide pictures of these places to enhance the cartography. The initial pedagogical linguistic concentration would be on naming places and their correct pronunciation. When students were able to identify places from the map and pictures the teacher could introduce the question 'have you been to ….' as a lexical phrase, with an appropriate answer. At this stage the teacher need not worry about teaching how the phrase is grammatically formed, just concentrate on practicing its natural use. Students would be deemed successful if

they could use the phrase appropriately in context.

Language Corpora

The production of syllabi that focus on a lexical approach has been greatly assisted by computer based language corpora such as COBUILD Bank of English corpus (http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx), the Cambridge English corpus (http://www.cambridge.org/elt/corpus/), the British (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/) or American (http://americannationalcorpus.org/) National Corpus. These corpora contain hundreds of millions of words and phrases and can provide data on frequency of single word, collocation and word group usage. All inclusions are from natural English language that is used in day-to-day communication. This linguistic information has been collected and collated from millions of sources such as TV and radio programs and announcers, conversations recorded in public settings such as on public transport and in social settings; and formal addresses such as speeches, lectures, presentations and debates. Statistical data on the frequency of use of collocations, phrases and multi-word groups can provide a teacher or syllabus writer with appropriate lexis to introduce to students. The language teacher can use these corpora in lesson preparation as the corpora have accessible internet websites such as http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx. Below is website page from this site. The teacher can use this in two ways, firstly, by finding a word or phrase imbedded in a sentence and secondly, to find multiple collocations (and their frequency). This service is only for demonstration purposes but can be very useful to a teacher as it is.

Corpus Concordance Sampler

The Collins WordbanksOnline English corpus is composed of 56 million words of contemporary written and spoken text. To get a flavour of the type of linguistic data that a corpus like this can provide, you can type in some simple queries here and get a display of concordance lines from the corpus. The query syntax allows you to specify word combinations, wildcards, part-of-speech tags, and so on. Below an example of a search from Collins Corpus Search with my notes in red.

Type in your query: [   ]

British   books,   ephemera,   radio,   newspapers,   magazines   (36m   words)
American   books,   ephemera   and   radio   (10m   words)
British transcribed speech (10m words)

If the word 'fish' is typed into the corpus concordance sampler and 'show concs' is pressed a long list of 100 character long text fragments will be presented. The following were taken from the list and chosen as suitable to show some different uses of the word 'fish'.

- was sold to fish markets and restaurants in Tokyo

- A traditional and very French fish restaurant

- The boat can be very slow and a lot more fish are caught

- It was probably the first time this fish had ever been hooked, said Stephen.

- It is one of the most sought-after fish in the lake

- Eat more fish. Fish is low in fat, and fish oils seem to protect your health

- Does a fish enjoy swimming? I adore it, maybe because I

- then mix with fish and parsley. Shape into 20 balls and coat with

- the transfer kitty has been reserved for bigger fish.

- Two little moon-shaped lines like pink fish bones were indented over her windpipe.

- What sort of tropical fish are those?

N.B. The teacher may need to do some editing to create more understandable sentences

The collocation sampler will provide examples of the inputted word with single word collocations. The list below shows some examples:

Small fish / fish meat / catch (caught) a fish / big fish / fish and chips / fresh fish / shellfish / fish scales / shoals of fish / gutting a fish / fish spawning / fish fillets / river, sea, pond, tropical fish / fish shop / anglers are fishing / landed a fish / fish feeding frenzy / fish tank / plenty of fish / kettle of fish

The teacher is able to expand on this by using an online phrasal dictionary such as The Phrase Finder (http://www.phrases.org.uk). Continuing with the word 'fish' the following idioms were presented by The Phrase Finder (hyperlinked):

A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle

Drink like a fish

Fish or cut bait

[Kettle of fish, fine kettle of fish, a pretty kettle of fish](#)

[Like a fish out of water](#)

[Big fish in a small pond](#)

[Neither fish nor flesh, nor good red herring](#)

The meanings and the origins for these phrases can also be found at the above website.

All text in blue and underlined is hyperlinked to explanations of that text. All text in red are notes from the course provider to the course participant

3.7.2 Lesson Plan for Module 1.

The lesson plan for each module provides an example of the theory presented in the introduction in action. As there is only one lesson plan, the development of the methodology in practice has obvious limitations. However, the lesson plan attempts to encapsulate the essence of the methodology in a useable lesson format that can be taken into the classroom as is, or adapted as the teacher sees fit. The accompanying video is visual evidence of one adaptation of the lesson plan, in action.

This lesson takes a single lexical item 'fish' and explores the teaching possibilities that emanate from this one item. The lesson plan initially looks at a scientific approach and

Lexical Lesson Plan: This lesson was created for a year 7 class through collaboration with the school's science department who were engaged in a science project in L1 on fish.

Please cut and paste whatever you want from this document.   NB Ss = Ss

1. Warm-up:

- As a whole class activity or in groups, create a mind map centred on the word 'fish'.

- Provide groups of around 4 Ss with A4 sheets

- of paper with the mind-map diagram on.

- Ask Ss to provide as many words related to 'fish' as they can.

- Draw the diagram on the board and record their responses.

- Discuss 'fish' lexis
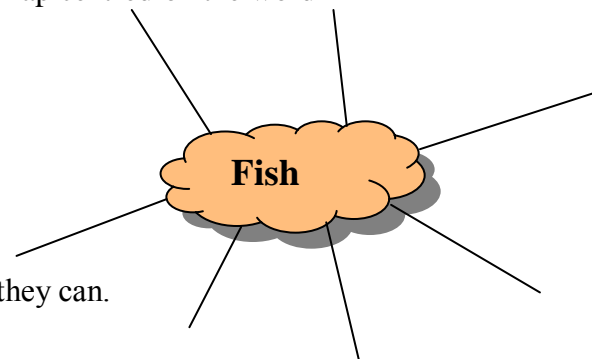
2. Lexis and information in context.

True or False

- In the same groups provide the following information sentences and ask Ss to decide if they are true or false.

- Encourage the use of dictionaries to for comprehension.

INTERNAL ANATOMY OF A BONY FISH
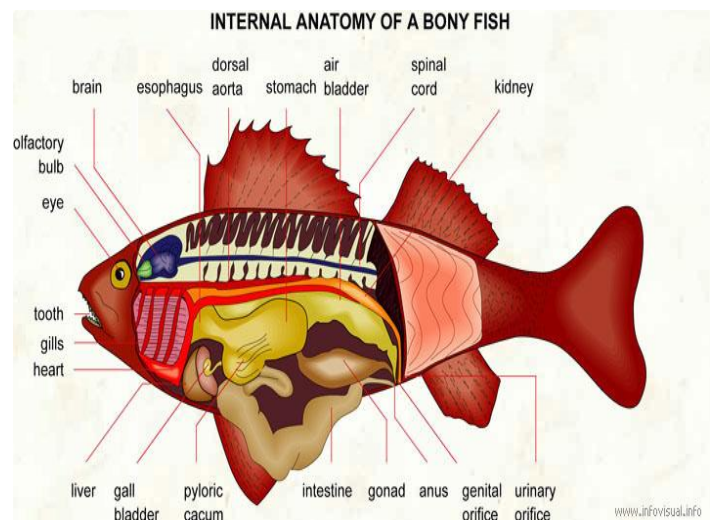
1) All fish have a backbone (T)

2) All fish are warm-blooded. (F = cold-blooded)

3) There are three classes of fish: jawless, cartilaginous, and bony. (T)

 4) Fish have been around for 5 million years. (F = 500 million years)

5) There are about 5,000 different species of fish alive today. (F = 25,000)

6) Fish have an organ called a swim bladder which gives them buoyancy (T)

3. Running Dictation

- In the same groups, one student is nominated as the 'writer' and the others are numbered.

- In numerical order Ss come to the teacher and ask for the next segment of the poem below. The poem has been divided into appropriate chunks but this can be changed if so wish. The teacher reads each segment to each of the Ss. It is a good idea to number the segments and tell the Ss to ask for the segment number, to save confusion.

- Once all groups have collected the segments from the teacher, and recorded them on their paper, they have 5 minutes to read through together and make any changes.

- The teacher provides the correct poem either written on the board or as a copy for each student.

- The teacher reads the poem to the class, discusses lexical items and uses comprehension check questions e.g.

1) what sports is the word 'lap' used in? Ans: 100m/200m/400m running, motor racing, swimming (in a pool)

2) For a 'lap', where do you finish? Ans: at the beginning (usually).

3a) What rules do Ss in the school have to follow?

3b) What rules do fish have to follow?

4) Is homework a 'pain'? What things are a pain for you? (i.e. pain in the neck)

A Fish I Wish

By Karstyn B. Butler

Oh how I wish(1) I was a fish(2) to swim in the deep blue sea (3)

I would swim up and down(4) and all around(5) in laps of two or three(6)

There would be no rules to follow (7) all fun down here (8)

On land rules are trouble (9) a real pain, I fear (10)

A sea full of wonder (11) yes that's the life for me (12)

Oh how I wish to be a fish (13) and one day soon I'll be!(14)

4. Listening, text completion and concept comprehension

- Tell Ss they are going to listen to a poem, ask them to close their eyes and listen very carefully as they will need to remember as much as they can.

- Read the poem quite slowly, 2 times

- After listening to the poem provide Ss with a gap-filled text and ask them to try to remember as much as they can, by themselves.

- Once finished, put Ss into pairs to discuss their completed text.

- Read the text a third time, with emphasis on the correct missing words.

- Discuss lexis and the concepts of over-fishing and the removal of shark fins for soup from live animals, who are thrown back into the sea to drown.

Henry the Hammerhead Shark

By Paul Kebble

Henry was so cute
With eyes
on opposite sides
Of his head

Henry liked to go fishing
He snapped
they were trapped
Between his teeth

Henry had a good friend
A cod
Called Rod
But now he's gone

Henry didn't like people
One slash
A big gash
And then no fins

Henry was getting sad
The sea
now empty
of marine life

People carried on fishing
until Henry
was just a memory
to you and me
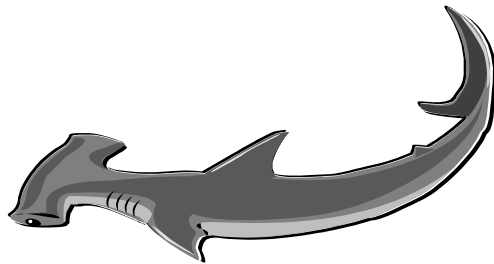
Gap-fill text

Henry was quite _____

With eyes

on _____ sides

Of his head

Henry liked to go fishing

He _____

they were _____

Between his teeth

Henry had a good friend

A _____

Called Rod

But now he's gone

Henry didn't like people

One _____

A big _____

And then no fins

Henry was getting sad

The sea

now empty

of _____ life

People _____ on fishing

until Henry

was just a _____

to you and me
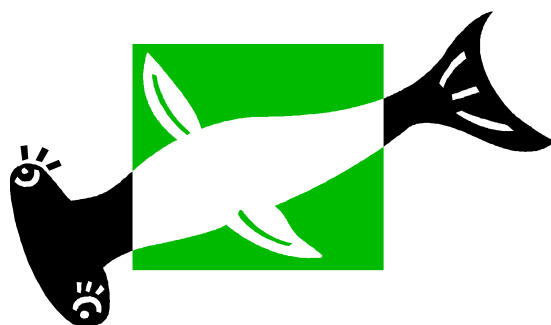
5. Idiom meanings

- Divide the class into groups of 3 and give each group a worksheet.

- Ask Ss to read, discuss and make notes of their perceived meanings of the idioms.

1) <u>A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle</u>

2) Drinks like a fish

3) Fish (verb) or cut bait

4) Like a fish out of water

5) <u>Big fish in a small pond</u>

- Ask Ss to match the idioms with sentences below (presently in order):

1) My uncle never helps around the house, my Auntie does everything!

2) My friend's big brother is always in the bar, drinking beer!

3) 'If you can't do that job properly, go and do something that you can do!!' said Joe's mother.

4) My sister went to play soccer with a new team last night, but the other players were so good she felt uncomfortable!

5) The new headmaster used to be the head of a huge school, now he's here in our little school!

- Use these sentences and idioms to make dialogues.

E.g.

A) My uncle never helps around the house!

B) Yeah, I bet your Aunie thinks '<u>A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle</u>'!

Homework

Poetry writing on the 'fish' theme

- Encourage Ss to write a poem related to fish. Try to include some of the lexis from this lesson.

3.9.3 Module 1 Quiz

The quiz is a multiple choice, multiple answer quiz. It is not designed as an assessment tool, rather, as a consolidation exercise. Questions relate to the introduction and the associated online papers. Course participants are provided with a link to the quiz and a word document that includes all questions and answers. The latter allows participants to prepare for the quiz.

Quiz for Module 1 The Lexical Approach

All questions are generated from the module introduction and article readings.

Please choose <u>one or more</u> answers for all questions

1) A Corpus...

a) is the singular form of corpora

b) is an electronic authentic language database

c) can provide better quality examples of lexis than a traditional dictionary

d) is a collection of written language

2) A concordance is…

a) not useful for the teacher

b) the on-line lexical searching tool for a corpus

c) a very fast aeroplane

d) available for every online corpus

3) Which of the following activities does the data-driven technique involve?

a) exploring and noticing the target language in context

b) content decision making

c) exploring, choosing and determining lexis in context

d) listening to the teacher's definitions

4) Young learners and beginners…..

a) become de-motivated if involved in a general searching task within a corpus

b) enjoy searching through the corpus for new words, if carefully directed

c) can use concordances with no problem

d) need a simple concordance worksheet to direct them to lexis

5) Traditional syllabi are grammar-based because…

a) language teaching was originally focused on reading and writing

b) grammar and syntax were considered as the building blocks of language

c) it is easier to create and grade grammar examinations

d) grammar is needed for understanding vocabulary

6) The lexical approach to language teaching…

a) was immediately embraces by most syllabus and course book writers

b) has proven to be effective over the past 15 years

c) was first introduced to the world of language teaching in the 1970s

d) is now widely accepted as fundamental to language teaching and learning

7) Traditional grammar oriented syllabi and course books…

a) are best used for young language learners

b) distort the real use of language

c) are based on the notion that improved communicative skills are to be achieved

   through exposure to increasingly complex grammar structures

d) do not allow for the clear understanding of lexis in context

8) According to Thornbury (in Meehan)…

a) written models do not match the frequency and distribution of grammar as it is used

   in speaking

b) in everyday usage, present tense outnumbers past tenses by around four to one

c) in everyday usage, simple forms outnumber the continuous forms by twelve to one

d) past perfect rarely features

9) Lexical exponents believe that the language native speakers use…

a) is made up of many individual utterances strung together

b) is not original

c) is built up in readymade, prefabricated lexical chunks

4) has no grammatical form

10) According to Meehan…

a) the nature of classroom culture and practice will be called upon to adapt to a lexical

   approach

b) teachers and students schooled in grammar-centric traditions need to be guided away from an excessive dependence on grammar structures and rules

c) teachers need to be encourage to reappraise their expectations and understanding of language learning and teaching

4) Teachers should completely disregard the teaching of grammar

3.10   Course management systems & Moodle

Course management systems (CMS) are software packages that have been designed to provide and manage online educational courses. A CMS provides course developers with the tools to create and manage learning resources and the online learning environment. These resources are malleable and allows for the creation, presentation and testing of learning materials, and the organisation, integration and communications of course provider/s and course participant/s. CMSs can be categorised into two groups, proprietary and open source. Proprietary products, such as Blackboard and WebCT, are available for purchase, or under licence, and are invariably installed in schools, colleges and universities. An open-source product, such as Moodle, is freely available and is maintained and supported by the community of users. The advantages of open-source products for small educational entities are the limited overall cost and the access to an online innovative community that is able to modify and support local and specific needs (Simonson, 2007).

For this research and for the online delivery of the e-PD4ELT course, the open-source LMS, Moodle, was used. Moodle is described by Brandl (2005) as a course management system for online learning, with the acronym Moodle standing for 'Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Martin Dougiamas, the

original designer, based the design on socio-constructivist pedagogy which provided appropriate online tools that supported an enquiry/discovery-based approach to online learning (Brandl, 2005).

Moodle uses a template-based system that allows the developer to add content to the provided topic blocks, and to place these blocks within the three column page lay-out. These blocks are interchangeable and include such topics as: a calendar, people involved with the course, an array of activities including the various forms of synchronous and asynchronous communications, testing and quizzes, and resources.

3.11 Structure of the e-PD4ELT course in Moodle

The following section presents the online epd4elt course structure and explanations using pages from the site presented as figures taken from screenshots of the actual site.

Visitors to the URL www.epd4elt.com are presented with the course's front page (fig. 7). This page, through the design of Moodle, presents in three columns with a variety of blocks in place. The left-hand column provides an overview of what the site is, a current calendar and a block showing who is online within the site at present .
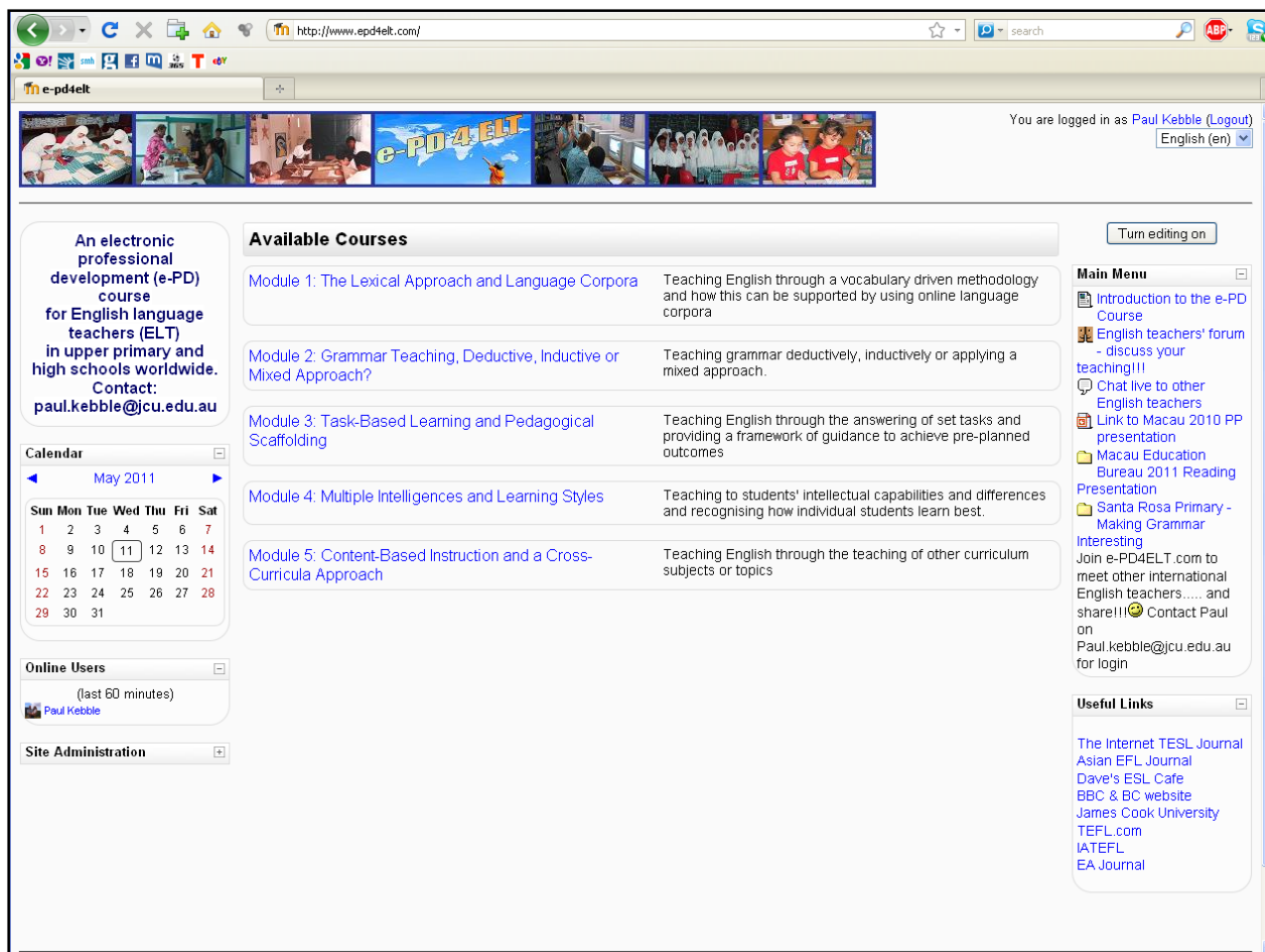
Figure 8 e-PD4ELT.com front page.

The central column provides a hyperlinked list of the modules available, with brief descriptions of the topic of the module. These modules are only accessible to those who have a login, or have been provided access. The third column provides a menu of actions, these include: the introduction to the course, the open forum for general discussions around English teaching, a synchronous chat area, open access to teaching materials and topic presentations for teachers to use, a comment about how to gain access to the site, and a list of links to other ESL related sites and journals.

For those with access, clicking on one of the module hyperlinks in the central column will lead to the module's menu (fig. 7).
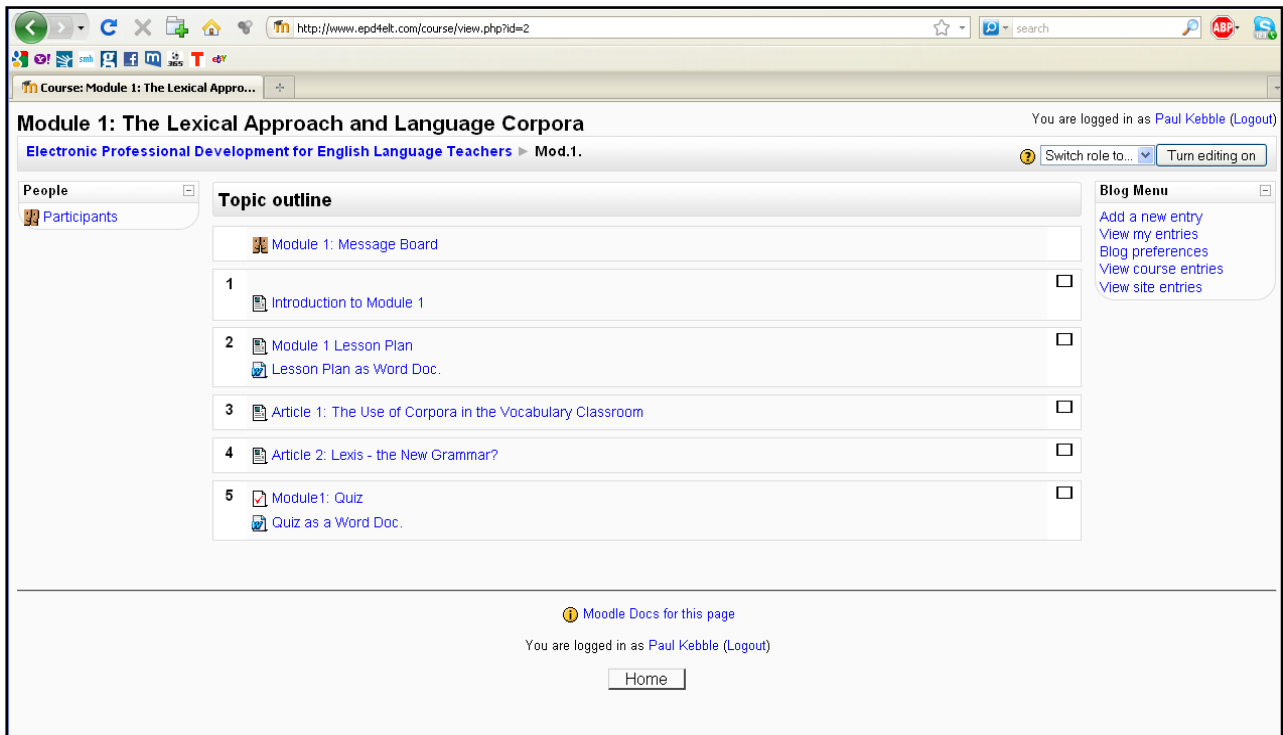
Figure 9 e-PD4ELT.com module menu.

The left-hand column on the menu shows the participants, with contact hyperlinks, of those concurrently engaged in the module. The central column provides the hyperlinked menu of documents and links for the course: a module-related message board, the module introduction (fig. 9), the lesson plans both as a webpage (fig. 10) and a word document, 2 hyperlinks to online articles, and links to the online quiz (fig. 11) and a document file with the multiple choice questions presented. The right-hand column provides participants with the links to the blog area for the module.

The module introduction (fig. 9) provides a general introduction to the module and includes further hyperlinks to relevant websites.

Students would often practice this structure through drilling and repetition. For example, the teacher would give a string of unrelated place names and students would provide the correct utterance. Students would be deemed successful if they could answer the question

'How do we form the present perfect tense?'

If we approach this exercise lexically we could start by using a globe or a map and name towns, cities, countries or areas. The teacher could provide pictures of these places to enhance the cartography. The initial pedagogical linguistic concentration would be on naming places and their correct pronunciation. When students were able to identify places from the map and pictures the teacher could introduce the question 'have you been to ....' as a lexical phrase, with an appropriate answer. At this stage the teacher need not worry about teaching how the phrase is grammatically formed, just concentrate on practicing its natural use. Students would be deemed successful if they could use the phrase appropriately in context.

Language Corpora

The production of syllabi that focus on a lexical approach has been greatly assisted by computer based language corpora such as COBUILD Bank of English corpus (http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx), the Cambridge English corpus (http://www.cambridge.org/elt/corpus/), the British (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/) or American (http://americannationalcorpus.org/) National Corpus. These corpora contain hundreds of millions of words and phrases and can provide data on frequency of single word, collocation and word group usage. All inclusions are from natural English language that is used in day-to-day communication. This linguistic information has been collected and collated from millions of sources such as TV and radio programs and announcers, conversations recorded in public settings such as on public transport and in social settings; and formal addresses such as speeches, lectures, presentations and debates. Statistical data on the frequency of use of collocations, phrases and multi-word groups can provide a teacher or syllabus writer with appropriate lexis to introduce to students. The language teacher can use these corpora in lesson preparation as the corpora have accessible internet websites such as http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx. Below is website page from this site. The teacher can use this in two ways, firstly, by finding a word or phrase imbedded in a sentence and secondly, to find multiple collocations (and their frequency). This service is only for demonstration purposes but can be very useful to a teacher as it is.

Corpus Concordance Sampler

The Collins WordbanksOnline English corpus is composed of 56 million words of contemporary written and spoken text. To get a flavour of the type of linguistic data that a corpus like this can provide, you can type in some simple queries here and get a display of concordance lines from the corpus. The query syntax allows you to specify word combinations, wildcards, part-of-speech tags, and so on. Below an example of a search from Collins Corpus Search with my notes in red.

Type in your query: [   ]

Which sub-corpora should be searched? Tick all three of these boxes

Figure 10 e-PD4ELT.com module introduction.

The lesson plan link (fig. 10) provides for both webpage and Microsoft word document texts. The word doc. Text is provided to allow participants to manipulate the text easily, if they so wish.
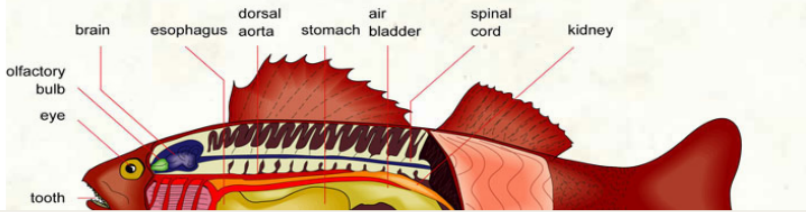
Figure 11 e-PD4ELT.com module 1 lesson plan.

Next, hyperlinks are provided to related web-based articles that are open-source. Finally, there are two links to the module quiz. The first link is to the Moodle generated multiple choice, multiple answer quiz which is set for participants to take only once. However, a second link provides the quiz as a Microsoft word document for participants to access and prepare for the Moodle quiz.

Figure 11 shows the instruction page for the quiz, where participants are informed about the quiz's structure and restrictions, while fig.12 shows the actual quiz.

Figure 12 E-PD4ELT.com quiz information
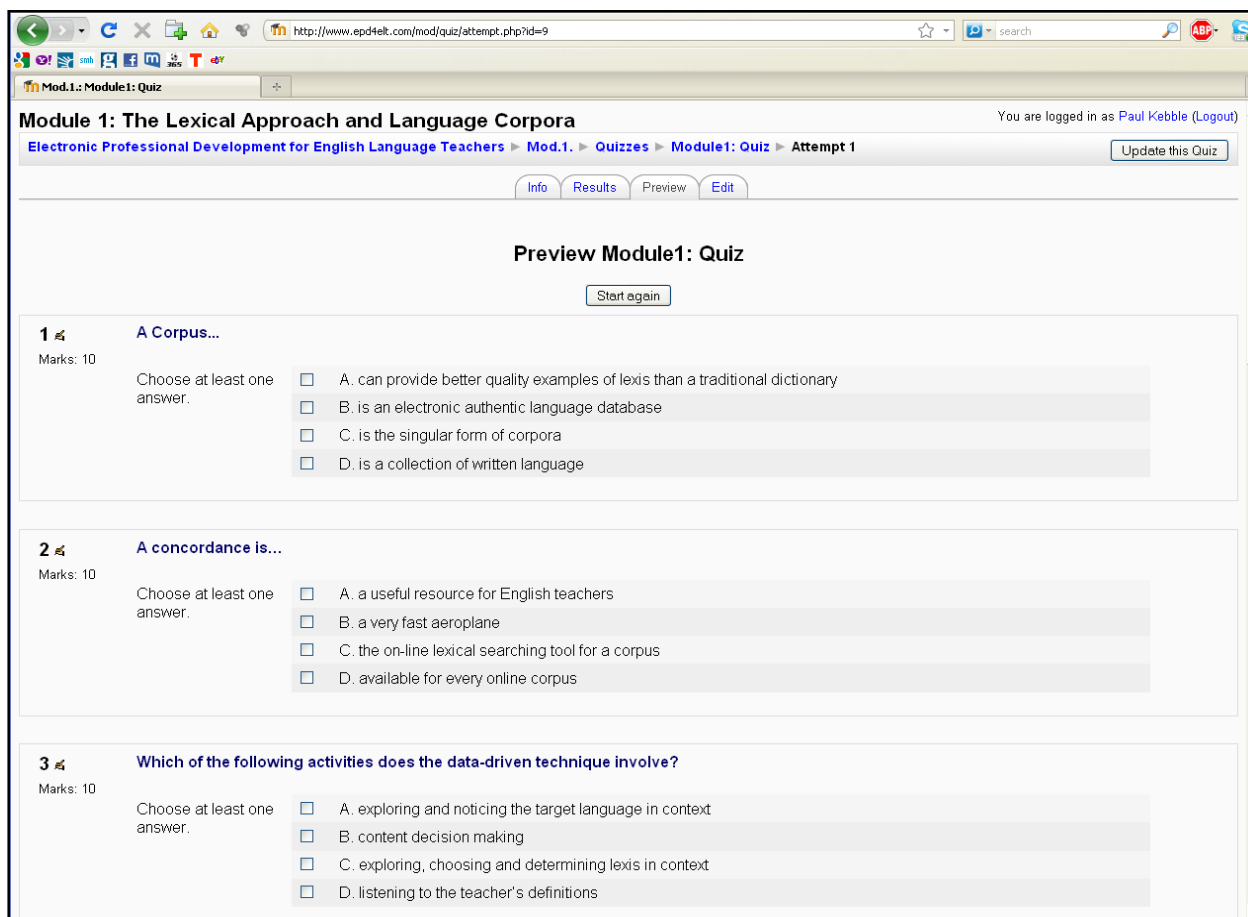
Figure 13 E-PD4ELT.com quiz.

The final hyperlink on the module page is found in the right-hand column and provides the link to the module's blog area (fig. 13). Course participants have access to all participants' blog entries, which can be viewed from this area, and can provide their own blog entries.
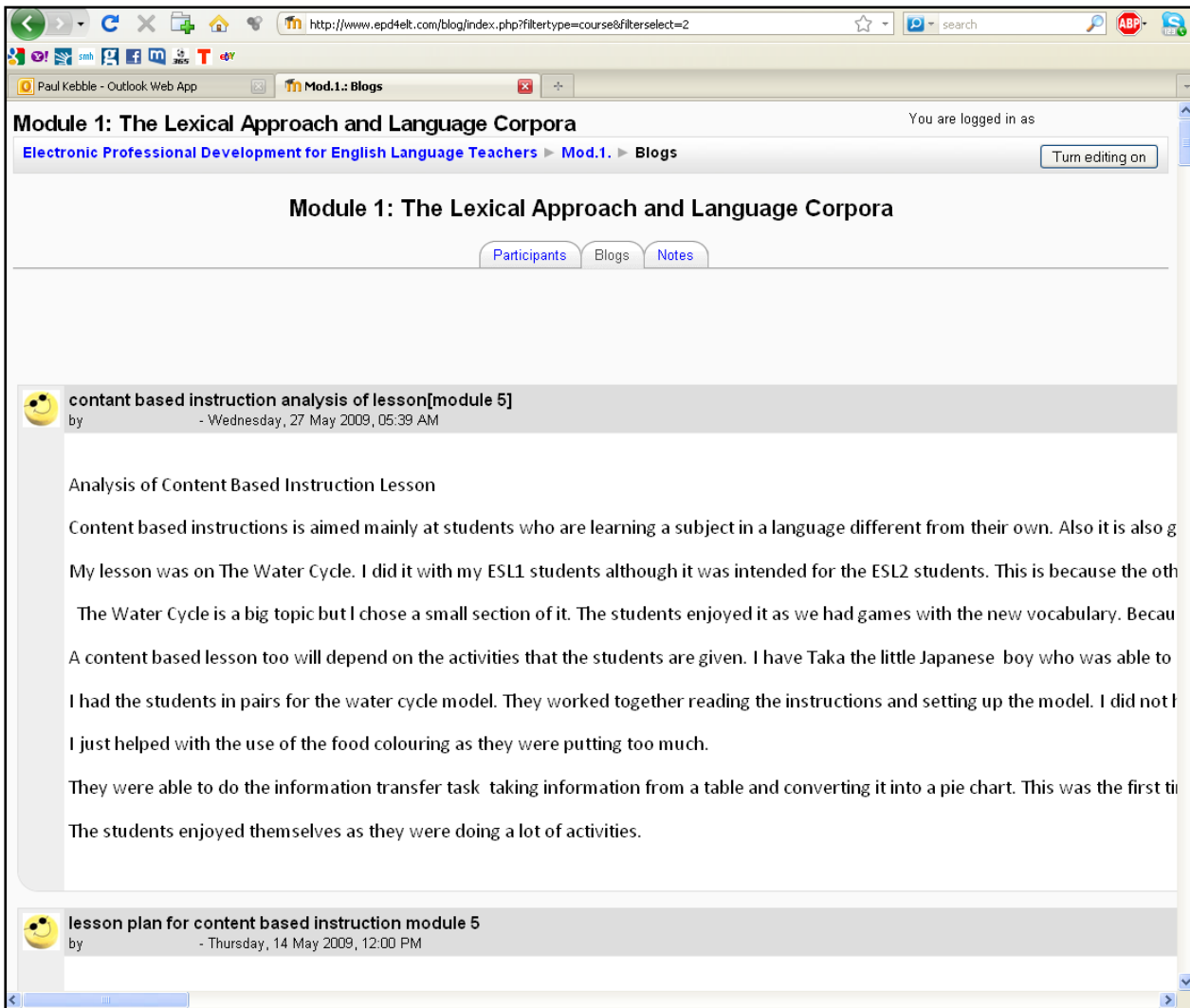
Figure 14 e-PD4ELT.com blog area.

3.12 Promoting an eclectic approach to language teaching

The four main agents involved in language learning are the teacher, the learner, the topic and the method. Each agent can vary greatly so is difficult to define which combination works best for second language acquisition. For the teacher there is the spectrum of methods and approaches from which to choose; experience should dictate which method is most appropriate for which topic. On the other hand, some teachers may find a method that matches their pedagogical philosophy or personality and adopt it as their principal methodology (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rogers, 2001). The learner may respond to different methods in different ways according to their age, intelligence, ethnicity and language learning experience. One learner may be

comfortable with a pre-experienced methodology while another may find the exposure to a variety of methods motivational. A certain language topic may evoke an appropriate method-like technique or the teacher may want to experiment with a combination of techniques for different stages of language presentation. Brown (2002) has summed up this multifarious situation thus:

> The complexity of the second language acquisition process warrants a multiple treatment, multiphase approach to a language course, a single method covers far too narrow a band of possibilities to suffice for a whole curriculum. (in Richard & Renandya, 2005, p. 15)

As experienced language teachers, my peers and I enjoy experimenting with a variety of approaches or methodology-based techniques and encourage less experienced teachers to do likewise. The e-PD4ELT course encourages this experimentation through the implementation of the AR paradigm, and allows outcomes of the research to be discussed and successes networked utilising the presented online communication systems.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

The lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne, Th' assay so hard, so sharpe the conquering. (Chaucer 1343-1400)

## 4.1   Research ontology, epistemology and methodology
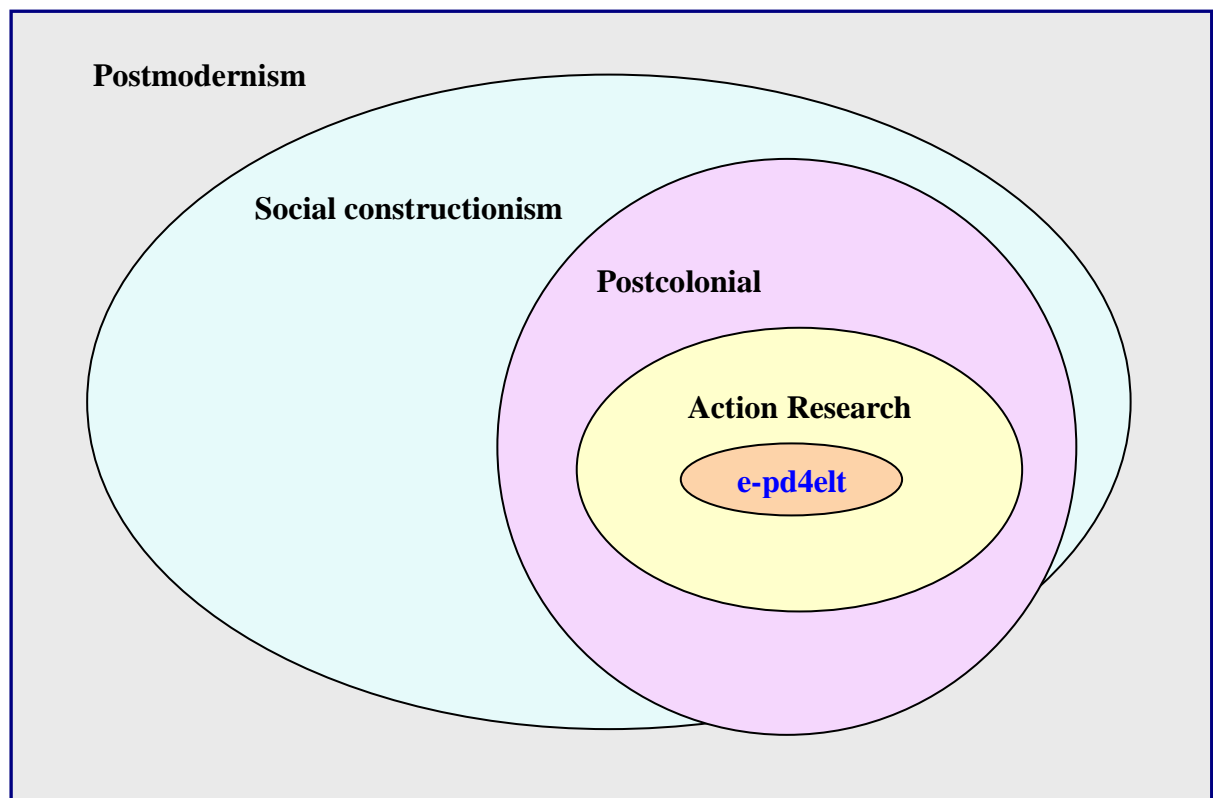
Figure 15 The research's ontological, epistemological and methodological tenets.

Figure 7 describes how the researcher views the placement of the research project, the e-PD4ELT course, within ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations.

4.1.1 Post-modernism

The research is based upon the post-modern tenet that there is not one specific truth, that diversity is respected and honoured and "by accepting the diversity and plurality of the world, no one element is privileged or more powerful than another." (Merriam et al. 2002, p. 375). Whatever is described within the study, including conclusions, are based on the researcher's own interpretations, which emanate from a personal cultural, experiential and socio-political standpoint. The nature of the way this research has been conducted is aligned to the description provided by Grbich (2004, p. 18) who said "any borders (disciplinary, research approaches, country and culture) are constructions that can be crossed, incorporated or reconstructed" and that the "search for reality 'out there' is qualified by a recognition that the tools, language and process of discovery, are socially and culturally constructed".

It is my belief that second language acquisition and learning cannot be described as being based upon a definitive phenomenon and therefore, within second language pedagogy, there is no 'correct' or 'one' way to teach a second language. I feel the factors to be considered within ESL pedagogy are: a) the variety of cognitive theories of learning, b) the variety of language acquisition and learning theories, c) the cultural backgrounds of the agents involved in the process, d) the teaching culture and style of the pedagogue, e) the learning style and intelligence 'strengths' of the learner, f) the environment in which the process is taking place, and g) the individual's motivation for learning English. All factors contribute to how quickly and effectively the learner acquires English. ESL teaching and learning differs from the underlying tenets of mainstream subject teaching, which, in many cases, can be described as following the trends of modernity in that educational concepts and information presented within a curriculum are often culturally standardised, presented as facts, and subsequently

tested as such (Usher & Edwards, 1994). Usher and Edwards have expounded on this concept when stating that "education theory is founded on the discourse of modernity and its self-understandings have been forged by that discourse's basic and implicit understandings", and that "the very rationale of the educational process is founded on modernity's self-motivating, self-directing, rational subject capable of exercising individual agency" (p. 2). ESL teaching/learning is therefore unique as a curriculum subject when the learning process is the acquisition of linguistic skills appropriate for accessing the receiving cultural-linguistic education process and social integration within the receiving culture, be that at a school or at nation level.

4.1.2   Social Constructionism

Social constructionism, within this research, is based within post-modernist beliefs and is concerned with the analysis of the subject of the research, the e-PD4ELT course, by the individuals directly involved. I believe that the description of social constructionism provided by Willig (2001) best describes the intentioned research tenet when stating that "Social constructionism draws attention to the fact that human experience, including perception, is mediated historically, culturally and linguistically", (p. 7). Individuals involved in the research are viewed as "social beings constructed by the systems or networks they inhabit, but these compromise many socialising contexts with different meanings and practices" (Grbich, 2004, p. 21). I consider that each individual involved with the research project will create their own thoughts, ideas and opinions relating to the research, which is "derived from looking at the world from one perspective or other, and is in the service of some interests rather than others" (Burr, 2003, p. 6). These thoughts, ideas and opinions are to be accepted and respected within the research as such. Burr has continued by suggesting that "as a culture or society we construct our own version of reality

between us" (p. 6). The culturally constructed versions of reality presented and described within this research form the basis of the subsequent analysis and provide the validity for the conclusions drawn. I, as the researcher, also believe that a qualitative analysis of the described constructed versions of reality would provide the most appropriate mode of investigation, and agree with Burr that "the insistence of social constructionism upon the importance of the social meaning of accounts and discourses often leads logically to the use of qualitative methods as the research tools of choice" (p. 24).

4.3   The qualitative paradigm and methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 8) have affirmed that "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry". This definition aligns closely with how the research process undertaken is perceived by me as the researcher. Merriam (2002) has stated that "the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (p. 3), while Lankshear and Knobel (2004, p. 69) have asserted that qualitative research relies heavily on "gathering information about events, processes, programmes, issues, activities, and the like as they occur within real-life contexts". This research was achieved through the analysis of socially constructed narratives from the individual actors within the research project derived from their personal interactions with the e-PD4ELT course, and within their 'world'. Duff (2008) has expanded on this notion by stating that qualitative research "provides access to rich data about others' experience that can facilitate understandings of one's own as well as other' contexts and lives" (p. 52) while Cohen et al. (2007) have

pointed out that in qualitative research "there is no one single way or correct way to present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by the issues or *fitness for purpose*" (p. 461). I believe that a case study approach within the qualitative paradigm provides the appropriate tool for the 'fitness of purpose' within this specific research project.

4.4   A single, heuristic (holistic) case study

Cohen et al. (2007) have discussed the fact that "case studies are set in temporal, geographical, organizational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case" (p. 253). Merriam (1998) has explained that the term heuristic means "that case studies illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study" and "can explain why an innovation worked or failed to work" (p. 31).

Yin has expanded on this notion by explaining that a single case study is appropriate for the analysis of a "unique" (p. 47) case and that conclusions emanating from a single case study can inform the global nature of that unique program. A single, holistic case study approach to the research was therefore adopted as the research topic, or in this case, the implementation of the e-PD4ELT course, was clearly defined, as were those who would be interacting within the case. Nunan and Bailey have explained that "a case study is often characterised as being an in-depth analysis of one particular exemplar of the thing we wish to understand' (2009. p. 8) and go on to point out that "case studies involve the researcher's long-term, or longitudinal, involvement in the research context, as well as detailed data collection about the person or entity being investigated" (pp. 8-9). The empirical section of this research was conducted over a period of 1 year and focused on the interaction between the e-

PD4ELT course, the course participant and the course supervisor (the researcher). I was therefore an integral part of the research process and was able to collect much detailed data through the various communication modes available, as well as online interaction, in the form of emails. Although Stake (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 450) has suggested "Qualitative case study is characterized by researchers spending extended time on site, personally in contact with the activities and operations of the case, reflecting and revising descriptions and meanings of what is going on", the researcher was on-(web)site throughout the period, in constant contact, electronically, with the course participant, and physically on site for three extended periods of time over the year. Stake also has pointed out that a "case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry" (p. 444); the product of the inquiry, in this case, informs the e-PD4ELT course producer (the researcher) within the AR paradigm, enabling the further development and refinement of the e-PD4ELT course. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 253) have discussed the fact that "case studies can establish cause and effect, indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that the context is a powerful determinant of both cause and effects". Within this research the observations of the cause-effect relationship need to be analysed from both directions; that is, what causal influences effect outcomes and what effects were symptomatic of what causes. In real terms, I wished to establish whether the e-PD4ELT course was effectively culturally empathetic, and what causality factors were influential. Additionally, what were the effective changes required to the electronic provision of the course to further enhance participant interaction. The in-depth analysis utilised within a single, holistic case study approach provided me with the appropriate research tool to achieve appropriate outcomes for my AR requirements, enabling the further development and refinement of the course.

4.5 The research case and the actors within

The research case, the unit of analysis, or the bounded system is "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (Merriam, 2002, p. 27). The case in this research is the application of the e-PD4ELT course and is bounded by data collection from the course participant, the course participant's head of department and the researcher. Merriam also has suggested that the researcher needs to be able to delineate the limits of data collection to be able to define the research case study.

Grbich (2004) has discussed the 'voices' of the participants within research and has pointed out that actors essentially "fall into two broad groups: those with whom the researcher interacts in the gaining of knowledge regarding a particular search area, and the researcher him/herself who is integral to the research process in the construction of text" (p. 80). In the case of this research, the "research area" is the e-PD4ELT course; "those with whom the researcher interacts" are Rema, the e-PD4ELT course participant, Ken, Rema's head of department, and me as the researcher.

4.5.1 The participants within the case study

My roles through the duration of the research project has been as a) the e-PD4ELT course writer and producer, b) the recruiter of subject/s to participate on the course, c) a mentor for CPs, d) consultant for the development of ESL at the CPt's school, and e) the researcher. Merriam (2002) has pointed out that the researcher is the principal vehicle for data collection and analysis, and has discussed the personal involvement and relationship the researcher must have for successful research. Duff has considered it very helpful within the written report of a case study for "the researcher to clarify their role in the research process and their history with the participants" (2008, p.

130). The researcher is a qualified teacher with 24 years of teaching, teacher training and PD experience. The researcher possesses an initial teaching degree for the 9-16 year age range with mathematics and physical education as major subjects, a post-graduate diploma in teaching ESL and a Master's degree in applied linguistics. Over 24 years within the teaching profession, the researcher has taught in the UK, Barbados, Portugal, Brunei Darussalam, Australia, UAE, and Malaysia. In addition to teaching, the researcher has acted as director of studies, or campus manager, for three language colleges in Australia; was responsible for the provision of PD within the British Council, Penang, Malaysia; acted as a tutor for the online DELTA course run by the British Council and International House (London) for 5 years; has tutored and lectured within the school of education at James Cook University and has taught on a variety of 4 week face-to-face PD courses in Australia for overseas English language teachers.

According to Merriam (1998), the researcher should posses a genuine interest and passion for the topic, combined with a depth of understanding within the field of research that could only come from experience. The researcher's experiences and perceptions of: (a) living and teaching overseas in a variety of cultures; (b) the prescriptive nature of much PD in ESL; (c) the continuing belief of many western cultures that their ESL pedagogy is superior and to be strived for; (d) the accessibility of, and interpersonal communicability provided by, the internet; and a strong desire to provide a shared, international, cross-cultural PD and communication platform online, for ESL teachers are hereby presented as demonstrating both a passion for the research topic and an in-depth understanding of the field of research.

The recruitment of an e-PD4ELT course participant was more problematic than

initially anticipated. The researcher initially expected multiple subjects to be enrolled on the e-PD course, but, due to a number of factors previously discussed within this thesis, was limited to only one participant. Duff (2008) has discussed the problems associated with the recruitment of research participants and states "focal participants may simply emerge or present themselves to the researcher by referral or through existing social networks" (p. 116), which is exactly the process through which a research participant was recruited for this study. Having a teaching colleague and good friend who was privy to the research topic, and working at an international school, provided the researcher with an appropriate network from which a course participant emerged.

Rema, the e-PD4ELT course participant, is a practicing ESL teacher at an international school in Fiji. Rema is a Fijian female of approximately 42 years of age. She is married to an Indo-Fijian and has two school age children. Rema has three languages: Fijian is her mother-tongue; English, her language of education and Fiji Hindi, her husband's mother tongue. All three languages are spoken at home, but English is prevalent. Rema speaks English fluently, with a reasonably strong, but totally comprehensible Fijian accent. She qualified as a teacher from the University of Southern Pacific in Fiji 15 years previously and taught in a primary school in Levuka, her home town. She was a very popular teacher and the young Levuka inhabitants who this researcher met remember her fondly as a friendly, kind and helpful teacher. Rema moved to New Zealand, due to her husband's work commitments, for 2 years and while there followed a 1-year part-time ESL teaching course offered by a local public tertiary college. On returning to Fiji, the family moved to Suva, the capital, and Rema secured a position at the international school where she presently teaches. When the researcher met Rema, she was a member of the school's three-strong ESL

department. The head of the department was a Caucasian Fijian married to an Indo-Fijian and the other ESL teacher was Indo-Fijian Rema's role in the department was primarily as an ESL withdrawal teacher working with an individual or with small groups of ESL students who had already been placed in the main curriculum but needed regular ESL support.

The research participant's final head of department (HOD), Ken, is a Caucasian Australian male, in his mid-thirties, married to a Papua New Guinean national and has an adopted Fijian daughter. Ken has a science degree, a post-graduate diploma in teaching and an ESL teaching certificate (CELTA). He had taught in the Australian state system for 3 years before taking up a post in an international school in Papua New Guinea, where he lived and taught for 7 years. On returning to Australia, Ken took up an ESL teaching position at International House (I.H.), Cairns, where he taught for 3 to 4 years. Ken and the researcher worked together at I.H. for 2 years, where the researcher held the position of campus manager, from which they developed mutual professional respect and became good friends. Ken took up a post at the International School in Fiji as a middle school teacher with responsibility for science and maths. Through the ongoing friendship between Ken and the researcher, the researcher became involved with the Fijian International School, initially as the destination for the creation of the video for the e-PD4ELT course and subsequently developing the research relationship with Rema, the course participant. As a direct result of the researcher's consultancy work at the international school, Fiji, the position of head of ESL became vacant and the researcher, as consultant, had no reservations in recommending Ken for the position. Ken therefore became head of ESL 6 months into Rema's involvement with the e-PD4ELT course, although had prior knowledge of the course, the research topic and the researcher, and had

previously offered Rema support prior to being engaged as the ESL HOD. As HOD, Ken was able to provide Rema more support and encouragement for e-PD4ELT course involvement. Subsequent to, and within one month of, the completion of Rema's involvement with the course, Ken was interviewed by the researcher to gain an informed and directly related third person's view.

4.6   Data collection and instruments:

Cohen et al. (2007) have suggested that there is "no single prescription for which data collection instruments to use; rather the issue here is of the 'fitness for purpose'." (p. 181) while Lankshear and Knobel (2004) have stated that "what counts as data depends heavily on the questions or hypothesis driving a study, as determined by the researcher" (p. 172). As the e-PD4ELT course would be running over an extended period of time, and as the researcher would be actively involved in the support of the subject, a range of data collecting systems were to be utilised. The researcher believed that the data collection methods were both appropriate for the purpose for which they were intended and that their construction could be related closely to the research questions. The data collection methods were: 1) e-PD4ELT course related email communications between the CP and the researcher, 2) intra-website communications from the messaging system provided within the e-PD4ELT website between the course participant and the researcher, 3) intra-website communications from the chat-line provided within the e-PD4ELT website between the course participant and the researcher, 4) post-course questionnaire for completion by the course participant, 5) post-course interview between the course participant and the researcher, and 6) post course interview between the researcher and the course participant's HOD.

4.6.1 Interviews

Cohen et al. (2007) have stated "Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (p. 349). As interviews would play a major role in the data collection process within this research, the researcher intended the dialogue between the interlocutor and the course participant to be based upon shared experiences emanating from the mentor-mentee relationship fostered within the e-PD4ELT course. However, the researcher understood the limitations of interviews, as Lanksheer and Knobel have warned (2004. p. 178) "interviews are decontextualised in that the interview itself is the focus of activity, rather than everyday life as it happens on a moment-by-moment basis". Merriam (1998) has discussed data collection through interviewing by explaining that the process is necessary when the researcher is not in a position to be able to observe behaviour and has continued by stating "it is also necessary when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate" (p. 88). Both factors pertain in that the researcher and subject were based in different countries, and that the course under scrutiny continued for a prolonged period of time, in this case, 1 year. Also, as the PD course requires CPs to employ reflection, as a part of the AR process, the researcher believed that the interview design and process could be created as an extension to the principle of reflective practice.

A semi-structured interview technique was employed to allow and encourage the respondent to develop and expand on themes introduced. A list of pre-prepared questions was produced prior to the interview, and followed Lankshear and Knobel's (2004) principals of what constituted 'good' questions, that is, "unambiguous, one-question, non-leading, culturally sensitive and ethically informed questions" (p. 202).

The researcher also believed that a semi-structured approach would allow the interlocutor to encourage prolonged interviewee monologue when topics relating directly to the research questions were raised, allowing for deeper and richer insights. The interview questions were designed to inform the researcher in relation to the course participant's pedagogy and interaction with the research case, with special reference to the fundamental research questions. Interviews were conducted on the school premises in Fiji, and lasted 53 minutes with the CP and 29 minutes with the CP's HOD. The following five categories created the basis for the interview enquiry:

A)   The effectiveness of the electronic system of course provision.

B)   The pedagogical and cultural sensitivity of the course.

C)   Developing further insight of the CP's pedagogy.

D)   e-PD4ELT course participant involvement.

E)   Improving the e-PD4ELT course.

The planned set of questions, along with their categorisations, are as follows:

1)   How long have you been involved with the course? D

2)   What did you find difficult about the course at the beginning? A

3)   Tell me more about the problems you encountered at the start. A

4)   Tell me your thoughts on the website; how did you find navigating the site? A

5)   What did you find useful or helpful on the site? A

6)   Is there anything you feel could have made the experience better or easier? E

7) Tell me your initial thoughts when you first saw the website? D

8) Let's talk about the material in the course, tell me the process you went through when you started a unit. D

9) How did you organise your studies? D

10) Tell me about the introduction, readings, quiz, lesson plans. D

11) How did you plan your research or lesson? D

12) What process did you follow when analysing your research or lesson? D

13) How and when did you use your blog? D

14) What element of the course material did you find most useful? D/E

15) What are your thoughts about the material presented on the course? D/E

16) Let's talk about the course in general, what did you find useful? D/E

17) What was not useful? D/E

18) How do you think the course has affected your teaching? B/E

19) What would you use in future from the course? B/E

20) What did you like about the course? A/B/E

21) What did you dislike about the course? A/B/E

22) Please tell me your feelings having finished the course. A/B/E

23) If you were to compare your teaching now to 12 months ago, what has

changed? B/C/E

24) Do you feel you have gained anything from following the course? B/C/E

25) How would you describe teaching styles in Fiji? C

26) How would you describe the culture of education in the school you taught in? C

27) How do you think this course would be received in more remote areas in Fiji? B/C

28) How receptive would local teachers be to this type of course? B/C

29) What problems would you envisage that teachers in remote areas in Fiji might have with following this course? B/C

30) What could I have done to make the whole process more interesting or easier? E

31) Did you find the process of action research useful? B - closed

32) What advice can you give me to make the experience better or more positive? E

33) Within the course I was trying to avoid saying "This is how you teach" – did you feel the course was telling you how you should be teaching? B - closed

34) The course presents material relating to methodologies of teaching, did you feel you were required to change what you were presently doing? B - closed

35) Did you feel the course respected your culture and your pedagogy? B – closed

The planned questions for the CP's department supervisor were also designed to fulfil a similar role within the research and were as follows:

1)   How would you describe CP's teaching style? C

2)   What involvement have you had with CP in relation to the course? A/D

3)   Please tell me how you perceived CP's involvement with the course. D

4)   The course took CP a little over 12 months to complete, why do you think this is so? D

5)   How did CP control time-management? D

6)   What help did CP seek from you? A/E

7)   What encouragement did you give CP? A/D/E

8)   How do you feel Rema has adopted new ideas introduced within the course into her teaching? B/C/E

9)   How do you perceive CP's teaching has changed? A/C

10)   Can you describe CP's teaching style 12 months ago? C

11)   What strengths and weaknesses did you perceive? C

12)   How would you describe the effect the course has had on CP's pedagogy? A/B/C

4.6.2   Questionnaire

In designing the questionnaire the researcher utilised information provided in Cohen et al. (2007). The researcher, in creating a questionnaire, wished to provide a further

instrument for data collection and believed that a questionnaire would provide data that would complement, and help validate, data from the post-course interview. The researcher chose to use a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. Closed questioning techniques used were: dichotomous, multiple choice, and rating scales and were used to generate participant-specific responses for focussed information gathering. Open-ended questions were used to "invite an honest, personal comment from respondents in addition to ticking numbers and boxes" and because "it is the open-ended responses that might contain the 'gems' of information that otherwise might not be caught in the questionnaire (p. 330). The researcher also wished to create visually a document that looked "attractive and interesting rather than complicated, unclear, forbidding and boring" and insured that it was uncluttered and provided "plenty of space for questions and answers" (p. 338).

The researcher was also made aware of the ethical issues involved with questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2007) in terms of time required for its completion, and asking what may be construed as culturally or professionally sensitive questions. The respondent was informed at the beginning of the questionnaire that anything she may provide would be appropriate and valuable and that both positive and negative remarks were extremely important to the research and the future development of the e-PD4ELT course.

In the planning of the questionnaire the researcher worked from an initial list of "topics/constructs/concepts/issues to be addressed and data required in order to meet the objectives of the research" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 318). From this list the researcher decided which areas of research data would be best served by which style of question (closed or open-ended) and proceeded to write appropriate questions. All

rating scale questions used a Likert scale of either 1-5 or 1-10 and used a "semantic differential" (p. 326) for each scaling question as "they afford the researcher the freedom to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality". (p. 327). The researcher also produced questions of re-iteration so as to substantiate, and hence validate, other respondent's replies related to the same issue. Due to the nature of the research and that only one respondent who had completed the e-PD4ELT course was able to complete the questionnaire, it was impossible to pilot the questionnaire.

All questions were again based on the five categories creating the basis for the interview enquiry. The questions used, along with research-related rationale shown in italics, are as follows:

1) How would you rate your ICT skills on a scale of 1 (no skills) to 10 (proficient)?

Closed, rating scale (semantic differential): personal assessment of ICT skills. C/D

2) Was using the e-PD4ELT website: Difficult 1-------2-------3-------4-------5 Easy?

Closed, rating scale (semantic differential): D

3) Do you think the website looks attractive? Yes   No, Why or why not?

Closed, dichotomous. D/E

4) Please indicate what elements of your e-PD4ELT website personal learning environment you used, and how much.

Closed, rating scale (semantic differential): A/D

Table 3.   Elements of e-PD4ELT course used.

Elements of e-PD4ELT	Use? Y or N	How Much: rarely = 1 frequently = 5
Chat room		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
General forum		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Module forums		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Blog		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Calender		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Introduction information		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Messaging		1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Links		1-----2-----3-----4-----5

5)   What elements of the website did you find useful, and why?

Open-ended. A/D/E

6)   What elements of the website did you not find useful, and why?

Open-ended. A/D/E

7)   Have you investigated Moodle, the software used to create the website, using the link at the bottom of the front page?

Closed, dichotomous. D/E

8)   Section B: The e-PD4ELT Course Material

Please rate the following module elements 'Interesting/Valuable/Appropriate' on a scale of : 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("extremely") for each section of the module provided information:

Please also write a short comment about each of these sections.

- Introduction

- Articles

- Lesson plans

- Lesson video

- Quiz

Closed, rating scale (semantic differential): A/D/E

Is there anything that you would like to have more of?

Open-ended. A/E

9)   What areas of the input material would you like to see improved?

Open-ended. E

10)   Section C: Your teaching and the e-PD4ELT course: How has the e-PD4ELT course affected your teaching?

Open-ended. A/B/C

11)   Please answer 'yes' or 'no' for the following:

Table 4   Table for question 11.

Does the course ……	Yes or No
enable you to trial teaching strategies from presented methodologies?	
enable you to experiment with different teaching strategies?	
encourage you to make decisions regarding the development of your teaching?	
tell you how to teach?	
expect you to adopt all the teaching strategies presented within the course?	
ask you to make decisions regrading the improvement of your teaching?	
expect you to change how you teach?	
assume that you need to change your style of teaching?	
encourage you to consider your teaching environment?	
make allowances for cultural diversity?	
discuss cultural aspects of teaching?	
suggest that the pedagogical culture of presented material was the correct model?	
allow you to adapt the presented material to your teaching situation?	

Closed, dichotomous. B/E

12)   Please answer 'yes' or 'no' for the following…

Table 5.　　Table for question 12.

Is the course……	Yes or No
interesting?	
authoritative?	
culturally sensitive?	
inclusive?	
demanding?	
useful?	
stimulating?	
respectful?	
patronising?	
culturally appropriate?	

Closed, dichotomous. B/E

13)　　Please discuss your feeling, thoughts and involvement with the course.

Open-ended. A/B/C/D/E

4.6.3　　Online communications

Lankshear and Knobel (2004) have discussed collecting data from online sources and have pointed out that it "is still an emerging methodological field of study" (p. 233). They have pointed out that the traditional concept of physical location within which the research is conducted becomes "defined by the reach and type of (inter)relations and relationships to be had within an online space" (p. 233). The online space in this research is the E-PD4ELT course website, in which there are four lines of communication built into the delivery of the course. Two are exclusive, that is, communication between the two parties involved; and two are inclusive, that is, where

all CPs have access to the presented text. The exclusive forms of communication are asynchronous one-to-one messaging and synchronous chat-lines. The two inclusive forms of communication are blogs and message boards. The fifth form of on-line communication between course participant and the researcher, again exclusive, is through the use of existing email addresses. All electronic communications between the course participant and the researcher were collected and included within the data analysis. Cohen et al. (2007) have cautioned that any data retrieved from internet sources is textual and so "intonation, inflection, hesitancies, non-verbal clues, extra-linguistic and paralinguistic factors are ruled out" (p. 242). The researcher understands the limitations of textual data and subsequent analysis.

4.7   Data analysis – Choosing Thematic Analysis

The researcher experimented with various data analytical tools before deciding on which would be most appropriate for the bank of data collected. The researcher experimented with open coding as unstructured observations to "see what there is to be seen" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 222); categorical analysis by using colour coding to data to "identify semantic and other kinds of relationships between data items, and to then identify logical relationships between categories" (p. 271); and a sociolinguistic analysis of 'I' statements to "understand personal identity constitution" (p. 281). The process of experimentation allowed the researcher not only to decide what method would be most appropriate, but also to make a detailed examination of the data from a variety of perspectives. Having decided upon a categorical analysis, the researcher was introduced to Bruan and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis which is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). Boyatzis (1998) has described a theme as "a pattern found in the information

that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon." (p. 4). The researcher also chose to use thematic analysis to provide a more "detailed and nuanced account" (p. 79) of the themes that related directly to the specific research questions and "it minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail." (p. 79). The researcher was attracted to the method of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke as the system of analysis was highly structured and provided six clear steps that the analyst was to follow, and which the researcher believed was best suited to the analysis of the data collected. The steps are: 1) Familiarisation of data, 2) Generation of initial codes, 3) Searching for themes, 4) Reviewing themes, 5) Defining and naming themes, and 6) Producing the report, or, in this case, the course participant's narrative.

In analysing the recorded data the researcher followed the step-by step guide offered by Braun and Clarke (2006) and was mindful of their comment that the analysis "involves the searching *across* a data set – be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning" (p. 86) and that the "analysis is not a *linear* process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead, it is more recursive, where movement is back and forth, as needed, throughout the phases." (p. 86).

The six steps, as they were applied to this research, are discussed below.

4.7.1   Familiarisation of data

Braun and Clarke (2006) have advised that it is essential that the researcher becomes immersed in the data by actively reading and re-reading the content to discover emerging meanings and patterns. Familiarisation of data was achieved in a number of ways. First, the researcher checked through the transcription of the verbal data from

the interviews, for accuracy. Second, the researcher collated all data, now in the written form, and labelled all data by providing each utterance with a letter/number label, as follows:

- F1.01 to F1.294 = Post-course interview with course participant
- F2.01 to F2.53 = Post-course interview with course participant's supervisor
- F3.01 to F3.71 = Intra-course emails
- F4.01 to F4.60 = Intra-course message board
- F5.01 to F5.51 = Post-course questionnaire
- F6.01 to F6.70 = Intra-course blog

Third, the researcher worked through an electronic version of the collated and labelled data highlighting areas of research interest and making a separate list of topical ideas generated from this initial analysis.

4.7.2   Generation of initial codes

At this point the researcher uploaded all data into the visual data analysis software package, Atlas.ti (version 5). This software program was used for its ease of text manipulation, for the searching of codes and the grouping of text, and the selection of quotes from within these texts. The researcher systematically read through the data giving "full and equal attention to each data item" (Braun & Clarke. 2006, p. 89). The researcher, using the five topics from which the interviews and questionnaire were based; that is: Is the electronic system of course provision effective? Is the course pedagogically and culturally sensitive? Developing further insight of the CP's pedagogy, e-PD4ELT participant involvement, and improving the e-PD4ELT course, to develop codes from the data. The list of 17 codes are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6.   **Codes and themes**

Codes	Theme
Action Research process within e-PD4ELT	6
e-PD4ELT Course-specific discussion	4
e-PD4ELT course, Culture and pedagogy	1
e-PD4ELT in remote areas	3
e-PD4ELT interaction and support	4
extrinsic motivation	4
ICT Problems	2
ICT skills and pedagogy	2
ICT Support - online	5
ICT Support in-school	5
Improving e-PD4ELT	3
off-topic	7
Positive course influence on pedagogical outcomes	1
Positive statements about the e-PD4ELT course	3
Result of consultancy	4
Teaching style and experiences	1
Time Management	4

4.7.3   Searching for themes

Using the table above, and with reference to the initial research questions, the researcher began "sorting the different codes into potential themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The initial list of themes produced were:

1)   e-PD4ELT, culture and pedagogy

2) e-PD4ELT and ICT

3) e-PD4ELT – development and utilisation

4) e-PD4ELT and participant involvement

5) e-PD4ELT and participant support

6) e-PD4ELT and AR in practice

7) Miscellaneous.

The researcher assigned themes to the codes within the table (Table 6) and collated the relevant coded data into the given themes.

4.7.4 Reviewing themes

The researcher read through all data, now collated into initial themes, searching for (a) relevant quotes epitomising the theme, (b) data that did not "appear to form a coherent pattern" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91) or was not appropriate for that theme, and (c) to "consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). Through the process of re-reading with reference to the "candidate themes", the researcher was also able to identify and collate data that informed more than one theme. Using a hard copy of the coded data and a highlighting pen, the researcher indicated which sets of codes applied to which candidate themes, using the numeric representation shown above. Highlighted numbers over the body of the text were used for primary thematic referencing, and secondary textual referencing was indicated in the margins. In this way, the researcher was able to refer quickly to both primary and secondary themes whilst analysing the appropriateness of the themes.

4.7.5   Defining and naming themes

Data within the candidate themes were effectively defining the themes, and the researcher felt that the data within these candidate themes provided an appropriate "coherent and internally consistent account" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92) when related to the research questions. The researcher decided to amalgamate certain candidate themes, and exclude others, to produce an initial set of themes from which to build the course participant's narrative. However, the researcher undertook the next stage with the understanding that these themes were still open to manipulation and modification if it was felt that the full story was not being presented. The final set of themes, cemented through the writing of the report, are:

1)   Culture, pedagogy and the e-PD4ELT course

2)   e-PD4ELT and ICT

3)   e-PD4ELT course involvement and interaction.

4)   e-PD4ELT and participant motivation, support and encouragement.

5)   e-PD4ELT and AR

6)   e-PD4ELT – Post-course reflection and future development

4.7.6.   Producing the report (narratives)

The course participant's report (narrative) was written utilising the thematically indicated hard copy of the coded texts, along with the original set of coded data. The researcher found that both sets of data representation were necessary as coded data needed to be contextualised within the original data for clear comprehension. The candidate themes were manipulated for better cohesion throughout the production phase and were finally cemented on the conclusion of the production of the narrative.

4.8   Narratives

Darlaston-Jones (2007) and Robson (2002) have discussed the 'rules' of qualitative research and state that any research must be conducted systematically, sceptically and ethically. Darlaston-Jones has elaborated on the concept of being sceptical by stating that it means "allowing scrutiny of our ideas, observations and conclusions by peers and includes the role of the researcher not just the data in that scrutiny". The researcher considers that appropriate scrutiny can be achieved within the presentation of this research from providing the reader with a fully informed account of the research process in the form of narratives. Carter (1993, p. 9) has explained that "It is the narrator who has access to the relevant literatures, who frames the study, who provides the interpretations, and who modulates the teachers' voice", whilst Grbich (2004), in discussing the presentation of narratives, has stated that narratives "have been one approach that has been used to bring the voices of researcher and researched closer together" (p. 83). Grbich has continued "the greater the richness of the detail which is displayed, the less likelihood that a simple interpretation by the author will be accepted by the reader"(p. 85). The researcher believes that to extract the most from the research, rich narratives need to be presented and that the most accessible system of presentation within this research project, taking into account the many facets that arose through the research process, is a presentation of narratives from the two primary actors, the researcher and the course participant.

The constituents of a narrative are a sequence of events involving people, in some form of state of mind, as actors. Bruner (1990) explains, these constituents, however, have no real meaning or life by themselves, and that any real meaning is given by "their place in the overall configuration of the sequence as a whole – its plot." (p. 43).

The description of the plot, and its constituents, is woven together to form the narrative, which, in essence, is only one version of the reality. And that reality is as fluid as the number of narratives that describe it. To create a narrative, the creator must engage in narrative thinking that is sequential, action-oriented and detail-driven (Bruner, 1991) to create a version of reality "whose acceptability is governed by convention and narrative necessity rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness." (p. 4). However, the researcher suggests that, through the interweaving of multiple narratives, a comparative discussion of realities can inform the empirical nature of this research project.

Bruner (1990) discusses the presentation of self through autobiography, or narratives, and suggests that the notion of self through a retrospective narrative is an interpretive construct that achieves a reality that is shaped "by a society, an economy, and a language, all of which have historic 'realities' which, although open to revision, have created a scaffold that supports our practices as human agents" (p. 117). The researcher has a high profile within this research project, and as such enters into the production of narratives that are autobiographical in nature. These autobiographical narratives have been constructed through life experiences and the interactions with the various actors involved in the research. However, Bruner (1991) points out that an autobiographical narrative is an account of "what one thinks one did in what setting in what ways for what felt reasons" (P. 119) and that in the production of an autobiography the producer is required to locate the narrative through a constructed and shared social history. The narratives informing this thesis have emanated from the constructed and shared social history of the actors involved with and around the provision of the e-PD4ELT course.

4.8.1 Rationale for the researcher's narrative

Duff (2008) has explained that increasingly in many case studies, researchers are providing accounts of "the involvement of the researcher in the study, the perspectives and biases (or subjectivities) of the researcher, and the reflections of the researcher on the research experience" (p. 195). The rationale of the researcher's narrative derives from my perceived need to elucidate upon the duality of my function within this case study. The two roles that I undertake within the research are: 1) the e-PD4ELT course participant's mentor, and interlocutor for data collection; where I am involved in the communication interaction with the other case study actors that informs the course participant's narrative, promoting their cultural and personal bias and, 2) the e-PD4ELT course producer and the case-study researcher; where I have been involved with the research project, from inception to conclusion, and need to inform the case study of experiences, independent of the course participant's experiences, to provide a full portrayal of all variables. Cohen et al. (2007) have pointed out that "a biography and a case study may be most suitably written as descriptive narrative, often chronologically, with issues raised throughout" (p. 462). In this case, the 'biography' is limited to the chronological description of research engagement and is presented as the researcher's narrative.

Carter (1993, p. 6) has discussed narratives in education research and elucidates that "the special attractiveness of story in contemporary research on teaching and teacher education is grounded in the notion that story represents a way of knowing and thinking that is particularly suited to explicating the issues with which we deal". As I was an integral part of the research process right from the outset, as the writer and producer of the PD course, and the provider and mentor for the course participant, my roles needed to be closely scrutinised. However, through the research process I

engaged in far more than the production, provision and participant support of the e-PD4ELT course, which has far-reaching inferences on the subsequent discussion, and hence the conclusions to be made from the research. I, as the researcher, strongly believe that a full representation of my experiences is required to be able to answer the research questions as effectively and completely as possible, within the limitations of the research. Lanksheer and Noble (2004) have strengthened the argument for the researcher's narrative when stating that "making use of multiple sources of evidence to support a claim strengthens the 'believability' of the claim" and "it identifies evidence enabling the researcher to include a selection of possible interpretations of the phenomenon under study, or to include a diverse range of participant perspectives" (p. 365). In providing a personal narrative, and not including this narrative within the milieu of the course participant's narrative, I am endeavouring to avoid "Using one account to undercut another, while remaining blind to the sense of each account in the context in which it arises" (Silverman, 2006, p. 292). I therefore have provided a separate narrative to the course participant's narrative in a bid to also provide the course participant with her own unique platform from which her narrative can be presented, independent of, and complementary to, the researcher's narrative.

4.8.2   Rationale for the course participant's narrative

I have chosen to recount the course participant's experiences with the e-PD4ELT course as a third-person narrative. This narrative was created for three specific reasons: 1) to be able to provide a voice to the course participant and hence provide equity to the presentation of information generated from the research process, 2) to balance the presentation of the perspective from researcher's narrative, and 3) to allow the subsequent discussion to be held within a mutually respectful setting. The course participant's narrative was written in a mixture of third person, when the

researcher was controlling the text, and first person, when quoting directly from data supplied by either the course participant or the course participant's head of department. I have quoted the source exactly; however, spelling and punctuation were corrected, and extraneous utterances excluded.

Lanksheer and Knobel (2004), in discussing the validation of a constructed narrative, have suggested the procedure of checking with the research participant that what the researcher "thinks they have said is what in fact they intended to say" (p. 183). To this end, the final draft of the course participant's narrative was sent via email for her approval, which was duly received, with revisions. These revisions became a part of the course participant's narrative.

4.9 The Researcher as a Participant in the Research

My research requires me to participate within the research process, through the preparation and presentation of the online PD course, as the course participant's mentor during the course, and as the collector of data through online and face to face interactions. This extensive involvement needs to be acknowledged and analysed in relation to the related theories on positioning to inform the research process and any subsequent discussions and conclusions.

4.9.1 Positioning Theory

How a person constructs their social cognitive position, and is positioned, through intrapersonal understanding and reflection and interpersonal interactions, by others, can be described through Positioning Theory. Positioning Theory has developed from Vygotsky's concept that a 'person' is defined, through language, interpersonally, in an "intimate interaction with others in the construction of a flow of public and social

cognition" (Harrè, 2004). Vygotsky (1978) discusses how an individual's cultural cognitive development emerges at two levels: initially socially (interpsychological) and then on an individual level (intrapsychological). (p. 57). Any positioning comes with rights, responsibilities and duties that are culturally and experientially assigned to that position by the individual actors involved. According to Harrè (2004) Positioning Theory takes into account the fluid nature, formation, influence and ways of change of local systems of rights, duties and shared assumptions of individuals involved in any relationship. Harrè et.al. (2009) state that positioning occurs in any interaction and that it is a discursive process and that "People undertake positioning acts, and as such they are or claim to be positioned in certain ways, which endows them with the right and/or the duty to assign or ascribe positions" (2009, p. 10)

Positioning is determined through discursive interaction and is reliant on language. Tan & Moghaddam (1995) discuss that "positioning can be understood as the process by which speakers discursively construct personal stories" (p. 387) and that a mutually acceptable negotiated positions must be based upon "the particular ideals, dimensions and storylines that people in different societies are likely to find relevant in positioning themselves and others, and the meanings they attach to these constructs." (p. 398)

In the retelling of social encounters, the actors involved rely upon personal linguistic constructs, or narratives, of those encounters. Tan and Moghaddam (1995) assert that "every episode of human interaction is shaped by one or more story lines" (p. 388). Harré, et al (2009) expand on this notion by stating "If we take the view that life unfolds as a narrative, with multiple, contemporaneous interlinking story-lines, the

significance of the actions that people carry out, including speech acts, is partly determined by the then-and-there positions of the actors." (p. 8). As such, any recount narrative is therefore a construct of the retrospective analysis of the event, or events, including inferred references to the positioning of the actors. And any reflective discussion between those actors becomes a mutual construct formed from both positional perspectives. Positioning and Positioning Theory must therefore be taken into account in this thesis as the research methodology relies heavily upon the constructions and comparison of narratives: one from the researcher's own viewpoint and the other from the interaction between the researcher and the actors, Rema and Ken.

4.9.2 Reactivity and the Hawthorne effect

Reactivity can be defined as how the researcher and the research subject react towards each other throughout the research process, and particularly, whether the subject involved in the research alters their behaviour due to being the subject of the research. The Hawthorn Effect is a well documented instance of Reactivity whereby employees involved in a research project at an electric company changed their behaviour because they were the subject of the research (Adair, 1984). However, according to Paterson (1994) reactivity is not considered to be a constraint in qualitative research, just an element that needs to be taken into consideration. Peshkin (1998) suggested that a researcher must be willing and able to reflect upon values, attitudes, behaviour, past experiences in order to identify personal subjectivity in the research process and the interpretation of collected data. This research thesis, therefore presents a detailed account of the researcher's past experiences and values, as well as describing attitudes and behaviour throughout the empirical process.

Through research into the nature and structure of interaction, Wiseman (1987) identified five themes that encompass human interaction within the qualitative research process, which appear to be particularly relevant within this thesis. The five themes are: 1) emotional valence, or level of trust that is developed between actors in the relationship, 2) distribution of power, described by positioning theory, 3) the importance of the interaction, 4) the goal of the interaction, and 5) the effect of normative or cultural criteria, that is, how each person should behave towards each other, and the cultural norms that should be followed.

4.10 Triangulation

Cohen et al. (2007) have defined triangulation as "two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (p. 141) while Stake (2005) has suggested "Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (p. 454). Within this research project the researcher intends to use triangulation at two levels. First, within the data analysis, where six forms of data are combined for the process of thematic analysis. Data have been collected and analysed from interaction between three agents; the researcher, the course participant and the course participant's HOD. Lankshear and Knobel have pointed out that "the higher the level of similarity between what an informant tells us and what someone who knows the circumstances of the informant tells us, the stronger the researcher's grounds are for believing the data are trustworthy" (2004. p. 184).
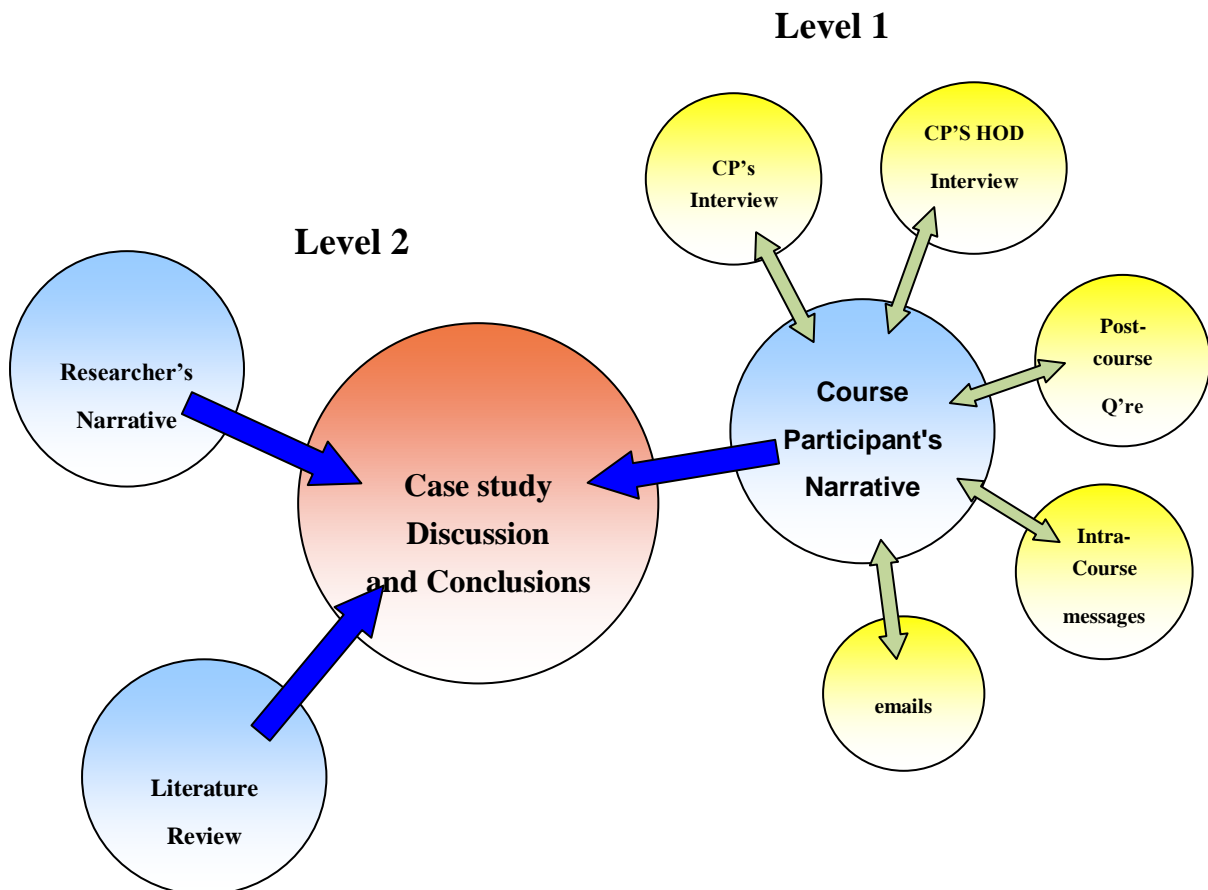
Figure 16   Two levels of triangulation

In the case of this research, the similarity of information provided in communications between the researcher, the course participant and the participant's HOD is of vital importance for the triangulation of empirical data.

At the second level, the researcher wishes to utilise triangulation within the discussion section of this research, where the narratives of the two principle actors and information from the literature review are examined, and from which conclusions are made. As Yin (2009) has suggested, "Any findings or conclusions in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information" (p. 114).

4.11   Generalisability

Generalisability is whether a theory or conclusion generated through research might be transferable to, or useful in understanding, other similar situations (Cohen et al.,

2007). Nunan and Bailey's definition (2009, p. 64) has stated that generalisability can occur "if the findings can be extrapolated from the sample study to the broader population it represents". Duff (2008, p. 48) has stated that "generalisability aims to establish the relevance, significance and external validity of findings for situations or people beyond the immediate research project" and is "the part of the process of establishing the nature of inferences that can be made about the finding and their applicability to the larger population". The researcher wishes to ascertain whether the "study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study" (Yin, 2009, p. 43), that is, whether the conclusions drawn from the discussion and analysis of the course participant's and researcher's narrative and the literature can inform the future development and improvement of the course for a wider course-participant population. The limitation of a single case study with an individual course participant is its specificity. However, the researcher is able to gain valuable insights into the various facets of the case study and the provision of the e-PD4ELT course, and can provide validated data derived from this research that may enhance the future provision of the e-PD4ELT course, and other similar courses, both from the reported successes and problems emanating from the research.

4.12   Ethical considerations

Lankshear and Knobel (2004) have defined ethics within educational research as being "concerned with ensuring that the interests and well-being of people are not harmed as a result of the research being done" (p. 101), while Cohen et al. (2007) have discussed the balance between the research demands placed on the researcher to find the truth, and the rights and values of the subject within the research. Duff (2008) discusses the procedures of informed consent, whereby a full explanation of the study, the researcher, and the requirements of the subject are clearly explained and

information regarding the researcher's supervisor and ethics monitor is provided. Both Rema and Ken signed consent forms allowing information gained through the semi-structured interviews and ensuing discussions to be used within the research. Both were also aware that whatever textual elements taken from these interactions would be presented within the thesis de-identified. Both Rema and Ken were also aware that they could withdraw from the process and the research at any time   A further statement informs subjects that participation is voluntary and that the subject may withdraw at any point, without providing reasons or with no "negative consequences" (p. 147). The system described by Duff informed the researcher's ethics procedures and consent forms for the various elements of the research were designed and presented for approval by the JCU's ethics committee. Ethical considerations within this research fell into two categories: 1) the production of the e-PD4ELT course, and 2) the subject of the research. In the first case, the researcher planned to provide video of the in-course lesson plans in action. Ethical considerations and clearance needed to be realised from students, students' parents or guardians, and teachers who were to be videoed, and from the principal of the school, or schools, where this would be achieved. Ethics informed consent forms were designed, and accepted by the ethics committee, for this purpose. In the second case, an informed consent form was created, and accepted, for prospective CPs, including a statement that the subject could withdraw from the course at any time. Ethics approval was obtained, with provision of the ethics number H2798.

Chapter 5

The Course Participant's Tale

He that nought nassayeth, nought nacheveth. (Chaucer 1343-1400)

Within this narrative the course participant will be referred to as Rema, her HOD will be referred to as Ken, the researcher will be referred to as the CPr and the e-PD4ELT course will also be referred to as 'the course'.

5.1   Culture, pedagogy and the e-PD4ELT course

Ken's description of Rema's empathetic teaching style supported my own assessment when he declared "she is great, she is very personable, she is very caring and can give a lot of individual attention. Students really appreciate that, they really enjoy having the kind of help that Rema can give them, and a lot of students get along with Rema who otherwise don't get along with other teachers". Rema also discussed her successful teaching experience in a previous school where she was able to develop a strong relationship with parents, who really appreciated what she had achieved. On her return to the school after a 2 year absence, Rema took up a 2-month temporary position covering maternity leave. When the absent teacher returned, parents wanted Rema to remain in the school so, through negotiations with the principal, offered to pay her salary. She explained "when the teacher came back to teach class 5/6 it was time from me to go, but the parents didn't want me to go so they asked if I could stay and they were willing to pay me".

Rema discussed English language pedagogy in Fijian state schools and emphasised that language teaching is often grammar based, deductively taught, where "you put

the rules first and then they have to follow the rules". Rema also stressed that the curriculum is 'test' based and that test results are of utmost importance for deemed educational success, not only within the school, but amongst parents, who are extremely influenced by results. Rema explained that "the parents need immediate results, they want to see the paper and, from 12, the child has gone up to 6 in position". Rema also pointed out, from her perspective, that parents did not understand that points and position were not important (in language learning) and explained "they don't know that position is nothing, but the system, that is just from the time they were small it was like that".

Rema deliberated upon the positive cultural biases of the international journal articles provided within the course. Rema initially explained that "they were really interesting, I used mostly the articles". She expanded upon the notion by saying "the articles kind of reinforced what was in the (module) introduction". The articles were chosen as they were often written by international practising teachers and discussed their specific cultural and pedagogical in-class experiences. On answering whether the she felt these articles were useful and relevant, Rema asserted that "yes, there was a Japanese guy with the lexicon one, and an Indonesian one and a Taiwanese teacher". Rema pointed out that "that was good because we could identify with them. Like, we are all ESL, so the problems he'll be facing is the same thing as the problem I'll be facing, because we are all second language speakers".

Ken discussed his perceptions of Fijian cultural norms in relation to Rema's pedagogy and interaction with the course when he explained "she has always been a very caring teacher, which I think has something to do with her culture". Ken suggested that Fijian culture is particularly inclusive and nurturing towards the young, which shows

in Rema's interaction with her students. Ken also suggested that Fijian culture was highly respectful of others, which sometime meant a reluctance to ask questions, ask for help, question ideas and make personal complaints. This cultural tradition had, in Ken's perception, meant that Rema found it "difficult to question things she doesn't understand" or "has affected her in asking for help". On the other hand, Rema explained that she felt she was not always provided with acceptable or correct information to course related queries from Ken, and that she felt that for some course-related topics, Ken had limited knowledge. This 'lack of knowledge' led to a reduction in asking for advice or help. Rema, having read the first draft of this narrative, commented that "where he says I am afraid to ask for help, I do ask for help but not from him. Often when I ask him he does not give me the answer I am looking for. Sometimes his answers disagree with what I have learned and what is described in the module".

Ken also discussed cultural inclusion in Rema's lesson planning and described how the product of the students' involvement within the lesson, often pieces of writing displayed on the classroom walls, included information about Fijian cultural ways and icons. Ken explained that "there are a few examples displayed around the classroom of students' work, like Fijian material culture" and expanded on this theme by describing the presented work that provided information about Fijian traditional mats and carvings. Ken also described the topics of writing exercises emanating from the course module lesson planning that "involves both the Fijian culture that they have covered in the lesson" and "also a lot about the students' own cultures in that writing". Rema also explained that some material that she acquires for lesson preparation is, in her mind, not culturally suitable and says "sometimes we do get the material that is not really appropriate or I am not satisfied with it" but suggested that

methodologies introduced within the course allowed her to adapt the material to be used appropriately.

The e-PD4ELT course, according to Rema, was not culturally or pedagogically authoritarian, or prescriptive, and did not purport to describe how English should be taught. Rema explained that "I just saw it as another way of teaching, another learning experience, and that is why I offered to do the course". Rema also indicated that she believed the e-PD4ELT course:

> was not patronising, did not suggest that the pedagogical culture of the presented material was the correct model, did not expect her to change how she taught, did not expect her to adopt all the teaching strategies introduced within the course, made allowance for cultural diversity, discussed cultural pedagogy, and allowed her to adapt the presented material to her teaching situation.

She also declared that the course is "culturally sensitive, inclusive, respectful and culturally appropriate". Rema believed that doing the e-PD4ELT course had helped her to improve her teaching, which was evident when she discussed how the course had encouraged her to become more creative and to "look at different ways of teaching that would suit my students and try to cater for their different needs". Rema also suggested that, although she had covered some aspects of the course before, she has been able to "strengthen their usage". Rema concluded that she was very grateful to CPr for introducing her to the course and said that "I am glad I did take up this course as it strengthened everything I already knew and provided me with lots of other methods and strategies for teaching". Rema also discussed that she wished other teachers in Fiji could do the course as she believed "there is a need to change the

teaching of English in the schools in Fiji. If the teachers in the local schools did this course, and the curriculum officers for that matter, it would change their whole outlook on the teaching of English. I feel we are failing the students in local schools because we are not using the correct methods".

5.2   e-PD4ELT and ICT

Rema described herself as computer illiterate at the beginning of the course, but in reality she demonstrated basic computing skills such as using email, navigating simple internet and intranet websites, using a word-processor and saving work in files. Prior to starting the course Rema stated that she was "not very good in computers, I'm computer illiterate", whereas Ken said "She classes herself as computer illiterate, I disagree that she is incompetent, I'd say she is competent but lacks confidence". Ken also suggested that the language of computing was possibly confusing for Rema and stated "maybe it is the language that is confusing, you know, a server, and file and folder and these kind of things". By the end of the course, however, Rema awarded herself a score of 4 out of 10 for her computing skills.

At the beginning of the course Rema encountered a number of ICT problems, particularly in relation to communications with the CPr. Rema pointed out that "at the beginning we had problems communicating, most of the time the server was down so I couldn't get through". Rema was provided with a login and password for access to e-PD4ELT, that failed. To compound this, emails to the CPr were not being received, and hence the problem was not being resolved. At this point Rema asked Ken to telephone (Skype) the CPr to help resolve the problem of accessing the website, which was achieved. Once Rema was successful in accessing the website, the CPr suggested, through both an email and an intra-course message, that the asynchronous

messaging system within the course should be used for communications as it would bypass the problems with using independent emailing systems that appeared not to be working. Rema did not receive the email that explained this remedy, but through the website design, the message was presented next time Rema entered the e-PD4ELT website. She subsequently replied "just sent an email to say that I have not received your message. However I have just opened it [e-PD4ELT website] up and the message is there. Thank you". Although the issue of e-communications was resolved, the fact that the server was initially frequently down reduced Rema's ability to access the website. Further into the course the school resolved most of its internet connection problems and the service became far more reliable.

The next issue for Rema's utilisation of the website was how to use the blogging area. Rema had never used a blog before and was unclear on how to enter information into her blog area. She reflected that "sending things to you through the blog was difficult for me, especially the pictures, I found that difficult". The website provides instructions on what the course requirements are for blogging, and a limited guide on how to use the blog, but not how to upload images. Rema initially wrote course related text immediately into the blog area, but lost some data when the school's server went down. She explained "I had already done the work, and in the middle of it I had to look for something and when I got back to it, it was gone". Rema was advised by the CPr to initially write and save blog material using a word-processor, and then copy and paste this into the blog area, which she subsequently successfully achieved. However, when trying to upload images within a saved document, the blogging software was not sophisticated enough to accept imbedded imaged files, which needed to be uploaded separately. This concept was explained to Rema, in discussing the problem of uploading imbedded image files and finding a remedy to the situation,

she explained "I couldn't use the blog, because when it came out in the blog, the pictures were not there, only the writing, so that's why I sent it [to the CPr] as an attachment". The CPr uploaded these pictures to the blog, along with an explanation of how uploading images to the website was achieved, but Rema never again attempted to upload images throughout the duration of the course.

As Rema's interaction with the course progressed she became more confident in using the website and with ICT in general. In discussing the website within the post-course interview Rema stated that "in the beginning it was a bit hard for me but now I am so used to just going in". Rema also discussed the use of the internet in lesson planning and reported that she had used the internet extensively, and referred to websites hyperlinked within the e-PD4ELT website from which she had retrieved material for lesson planning.

Finally, when discussing her experiences with the website and with ICT, Rema stated that "it was difficult at first. It was my first time on the blog. I am a bit better now but my know-how is only limited to using the blog, using the site to get in touch with [the CPr], using the chat-line and accessing the modules". However, it was evident that Rema could now use the internet for searching and retrieving material for lesson planning and was able to encourage and support students in their use of ICT within her ESL lessons.

5.3   e-PD4ELT course involvement and interaction.

Rema's involvement with the course over the initial 6 months was limited, as is shown in Figure 2. Rema explained that she had a number of other (work related) things to do, such as report writing and involvement with her role as a pastoral teacher. She explained that as a pastoral teacher she had time-consuming obligations,

such as doing community service, which included painting the local hospital. Ken also suggested that the previous HOD, who was HOD over the first 6 months, had prioritised other aspects of Rema's teaching as being of more importance. Over the second 6 months Rema engaged well with the course, Ken suggesting that she demonstrated an enthusiasm for completing the course effectively and comprehensively, spending "several" hours a week on course related matters.

Rema indicated that she used the blog area, the module introductions and the journal articles the most. She rated the module introduction, the lesson plans, the module quizzes and the journal articles as being extremely interesting, while the video was interesting. Rema did not use the hyperlinks to online journals and other ESL-related links found on the website's home page, did not investigate the Moodle software system and never used the module message boards (see Figure 10).

Average Number of Visits

|	Message Board	Introduction	Lesson Plan	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Quiz Doc
Mean number of Visits	0	2.8	5	2.8	1.4	2	1
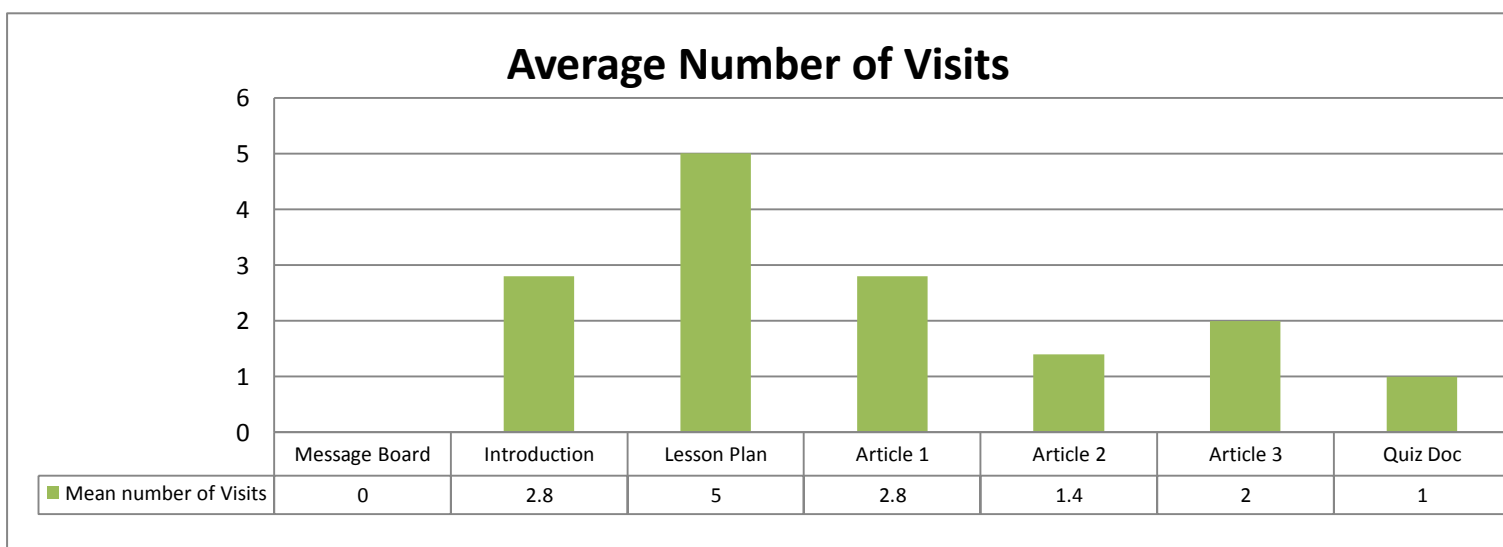
Figure 17 Average number of times each module element was accessed.

5.4   e-PD4ELT   and   participant   motivation,   support   and encouragement.

Motivation, support and encouragement for Rema's interaction with the course material and requirements were provided by Ken, the CPr and the school Principal

and with the course's electronic delivery system by Ken, the CPr and the school's IT department.

First, motivation, support and encouragement for Rema's interaction with the course material was continuously provided by the CPr throughout the duration of the course. This motivation and support was permanently available, but was offered only when either Rema initiated the communication, or when interaction with the course was evident, through either the results from the online quiz or when information was uploaded within Rema's blog area. Occasionally, the CPr would send a message asking how things were progressing if there was little or no evidence of course interaction. During Rema's involvement with the first module, she became concerned whether what she was providing within her blog was accessible, and if it was what was required. She asked "I have cut and pasted my entry into the blog page, can you [the CPr] check if you can read it. If not then I may not be doing something right" the answer received from the CPr was "I can read it perfectly, and it is exactly what I'm hoping to read – well done!" and went on to say "Your next job is to produce a lexical lesson plan. I hope everything is going well at school!". To which Rema replied "thanks [CPr), and thanks for the encouragement". Four weeks later the CPr, having seen that Rema had completed the online quiz, sent a message to Rema saying "How was your break, hope you had a pleasant holiday. The next step with this course is to produce a lesson plan or a mini investigation of some kind. Are you OK with this? I would be more than happy to phone you and discuss what you could do".

Ken's support of Rema, as HOD, was particularly that of encouragement to complete the course. This was achieved by providing assistance with the ICT requirements within the course, negotiating time and classes within the curriculum to allow Rema

to fulfil the AR elements of the course, and through day-to-day communications, where Rema would be asked how she's going with the course and what element of the course she was presently engaged in.

Another strong motivational force for Rema to finish the course was provided by the school Principal, who said to Rema at the beginning of 2009 "you should have finished it, you know". Ken elaborated on this point when explaining "at the end of last year, when she hadn't finished much of the coursework, the Principal had a discussion with her and then it was agreed that she would focus more strongly on the coursework this [2009] year".

With ICT and the course, Rema felt that she was able to approach either members of the school's IT support department or Ken for help. Rema discussed that she was able to call the "IT people" to come and check an ICT issue, but that she was very concerned that they were too busy to help her and that their time was limited. Rema explained that "the IT people were busy, so I would just run to them, ask them the question and then come back and do it". Rema also discussed Ken's involvement, who appeared more accessible and willing to spend time to explain specific ICT systems within the course.

Motivation provided by online communications with the CPr was also an issue for Rema who pointed out that regular online communications with the CPr, initiated by the CPr, allowed for the communication process to proceed, and hence, the motivation to continue with the course. However, if Rema had not received communication from the CPr she felt that she should not initiate communications in case the CP was busy. Rema explained "I know you [CPr] are busy so I didn't want to ask you anything. But when you are emailing me, and on the chat, I wanted to talk so much". Rema

continued "when you email it kind of keeps me 'oh, I have to do my…..', you know, it's not that I don't want to do it, it's just when I see your email, 'yes, I have to do it!'.

5.5   e-PD4ELT and Action Research

Rema discussed the AR paradigm in relation to her lesson planning, and said "it [AR] was useful because then you could tell now I can use this lesson plan in another lesson because after that you assessed it" and went on to explain that "I did it then I analysed, which is what I'm going to do in the next – I'll be thinking after each lesson you analyse it, that is a good way". Ken commented that he had definitely seen evidence of the AR process in Rema's work and that he had had some involvement in designing an "assessment criteria". Ken also commented on Rema's involvement in AR when he said that "I've seen parts of the [AR] cycle, I'm sure; definitely the awareness is there".

Rema used the AR paradigm to experiment with the module introduced ESL methodologies and reported on these investigations within her blogs, a synopsis of which follows:

Module 1: A lexical approach and language corpora
Rema provided positive feedback through engagement with the methodologies from this module. She experimented by producing a lesson plan based on a lexical group around the word 'flower' and introduced both a biologically descriptive lexical set for labelling and by using lexical imaging for poetry writing. Rema commented that " I felt the lesson was a successful one as the students knew more about flowers, know how to use the word flower in many different ways and have learnt to write poems that rhyme". Rema particularly liked the concept of using 'corpora' in her teaching. She also pointed out that the methodology is transferable to other curriculum areas

when she said "this lexical approach could be used in other subjects, for example, in business studies. The teacher could obtain information from various businesses in the community and use it as a concordance sheet which is given to the students to use".

Module 2: Grammar teaching; inductive, deductive or mixed approach

The concept of teaching grammar inductively was relatively new to Rema, she had heard of the method but had no experience of the methodology in practice. Rema discussed that traditional deductive grammar teaching, which fitted well with traditional testing systems, produced students who were competent at grammar point manipulation but were unable to effectively use the same grammar in productive fluency activities. She pointed out that "I have been teaching for twenty years and this is one thing I have come across, some students are very good in grammar, however, when they are asked to write a story they make a lot of grammar mistakes. They will score very high marks in close activities but when it comes to writing sentences, they fail badly". She described how the traditional deductive grammar teaching compared to inductive teaching when she explained "we spell out the rules and expect the students to memorise it and expect them to use it in speaking and writing. With this new methodology the students find out the rules themselves and then later on the teacher may spell it out for emphasis sake". Rema concluded that "inductive teaching to me is a better way of teaching, although in some cases it is good to have both in a lesson. I'd rather start off with the inductive teaching of grammar and for some reason they still cannot comprehend, then maybe do deductive teaching".

Module 3: Task-based learning and pedagogical scaffolding

Rema pointed out that the methodology, task-based learning, was being used in the mainstream curriculum and could easily be further utilised in ESL. However, she

raised issues of concern and discussed that "if the level is low then students will not be able to gain from this strategy. With these ESL students the level of English is low and mostly they converse in their own languages. They do not realise that it is the interaction and communication between them that is important too". She did maintain that the students understood the task requirements and were motivated to complete the task, but were using their first language extensively. Rema questioned whether a task-based approach with low-level ESL students is appropriate and whether students should be told that "it is an English lesson and that they have to pay attention to the language used, not only the message". Rema also discussed that for lower levels the introduction to the task needs to be very clear and that group dynamics is very important.

Rema's experimentation within this methodology was for groups of two to three students to produce a written and oral presentation of an animal, using the internet and library facilities for the research. Each member of the group had to contribute to both outputs. Rema commented on how the culturally mixed groups were using English, and sign language, to communicate and how the students appeared to gain confidence throughout the task-answering process. She described that "even the youngest Japanese boy had the confidence to share some knowledge on the animal they were researching".

Module 4: Multiple intelligences and learning styles
The lesson Rema produced within this module was adapted from a lesson plan retrieved from the internet that required students, in groups, to devise a new physical game, play the game, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the game from practical experience and produce a jingle to promote the game. Rema discussed that

the lesson was not as successful as she had anticipated. She described the students' interaction with the lesson by saying:

> There were only two groups and they came up with two different games. We went outside and played the games, the Japanese students were not really interested and just stood there while the others enjoyed themselves. These three (Japanese) students were very vocal when we were discussing the different games, so maybe they are not bodily kinaesthetic types (possibly not interested in playing physical games). After the game we came back in and they had to write a jingle about their sport. I had a hard time with this one, when I went around the groups nothing was happening.

Rema did point out that an awareness of individual student's intelligence strengths and producing lessons to cater for this diversity made for a more student-centred approach.

Module 5: Content-based instruction and a cross-curricular approach

Rema argued that "this school could benefit from this type of instruction, especially ESL students, but it depends on the teacher as there is a lot of hard work involved" and went on to state "I think that whatever the outcome of a content-based lesson depends on the teacher's planning and how he or she can differentiate the different learning styles of the students and set up activities to suit their style of learning". Rema raised various concerns including who would teach a content-based lesson, a subject teacher or an ESL teacher, at what level of ESL should students be for inclusion in such lessons and the need for appropriate timetabling so that subject teachers are available. Rema described the content-based lesson which she conducted, where students had to follow specific instructions to build a water-cycle model. She

commented that "I had the students in pairs for the water cycle model. They worked together reading the instructions and setting up the model" and "I did not help them at all, using the skills they had learnt they were able to follow the instructions of how to set up the water cycle model".

5.6   e-PD4ELT – Post-course reflection and future development

Rema felt that there were a number of issues that could be implemented to improve the course delivery and effectiveness. First, in using the website Rema discussed the problems that she had encountered in using the blogging area and suggested that some form of pre-course training should be provided. Aware of the problems associated with DL and the restrictions of available time prior to the commencement of the course, Rema suggested that the website have a structured training document that lead the user through ICT processes, step-by-step. In discussing the possibility of introducing some form of training document, she enquired "I don't know the set-up of the blog, couldn't you put something there, like I said, putting module 1 – 'this is where you enter this'". Rema also discussed the notion that not being able to use an element of the website, like the blog, caused her to "not want to work on it – like, if I'm finding it hard I'll just stop and then do something else". However, Rema also pointed out that she became more confident in using areas of the website that had initially proven difficult as she progressed through the course and said "towards the end I knew how to go around it so I was constantly doing my …you know". Associated with the concept of pre-course, or in-course training, Rema suggested that CPs could be tested prior to the course and their level of accomplishment within ICT could be assessed and appropriate training developed and provided.

Second, Rema felt that there should have been a video introduction to each of the

video lessons discussing what was to be presented, and what elements of the methodology was in evidence within the videoed lesson. Rema explained "maybe if you had an introduction in the beginning explaining what approach is being used and then when we watch it we could analyse it and say if the approach is effective or not". Rema also discussed that it would be more interesting if the videoed material had depicted a variety of cultural and pedagogical settings

Third, Rema felt that the CPr should have provided more regular online communication with CPs and advised the CPr to "just keep on getting in touch with us online". Rema suggested that when there was limited communication from the CPr it had a detrimental effect on motivation, and to alleviate this effect, regular contact was desirable. Rema agreed that the CPr should contact CPs on a weekly basis, showing them that the CPr is available for consultation. Rema also suggested that video conferencing would add greatly to the in-course interaction and discussed that implementation of video links for teachers undertaking the e-PD4ELT course in rural Fiji would be greatly enhanced if a video conferencing system could be initiated, where teachers would congregate at a central location on a regular basis to communicate with the CPr.

Fourth, Rema discussed that further lesson plans, and video of teachers discussing their experiences with the methodologies and their analyses of the experimentation within these methodologies would enhance the overall course experience. She had also decided that the personal production of lesson plans that could be collected, retrieved and developed was another important factor taken from involvement with the course.

During post-course reflections, Rema discussed, from a personal pedagogical

perspective, how, and why, the course could be implemented in state schools in Fiji. As an indication of the positivity Rema felt for the course, and what it could offer teachers in state schools in Fiji, she contacted a colleague in the Ministry of Education to organise a meeting between her, the minister, and some teachers, to allow CPr to demonstrate the course. Rema recounted the conversation she had with the minister as follows: "I want you to arrange for the teachers to just come and meet him [CPr], in one sitting, so he can tell you about it. The course is really good and they can enrol". Unfortunately, although showing interest in the concept, the minister was not in a position to make any decisions and declined a meeting, and replied, "I wish I could do it but I can't do it now because my hands are tied now".

Finally, Rema indicated that the course enabled her to trial and experiment with different methodologies and encouraged her to make decisions regarding the development of her teaching. She also revealed that the course was not demanding but was interesting, useful and stimulating. Rema also stated that she was happy to have followed the course, felt that she had grown a little wiser, had learnt a lot of things that she had not known before and that she was intending to implement elements from the course in the following semester. Ken embellished this by stating that "once she got into it [the course] she really seemed to enjoy it and gained a lot from it".

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusions

Truth *is the highest thing that man may keep.* (The Franklin's Tale, Chaucer 1343-1400)

6.1   Introduction

Increasingly over the last 15 years I have considered that the PD for ESL teachers that I have been extensively involved in, both as a recipient and provider, was prescriptive and restrictive and did not cater well to a participant's cultural or pedagogical individualism. Additionally, the practice of providing institutionalised face-to-face PD results in a limitation of PD access, although there is a perceived demand for such. Through being employed as a locally based tutor for an online TESL course I became aware of the connectivity that ICT presents. To design an ESL PD course that would be culturally and pedagogically inclusive and to provide the course through media within ICT would appear to be able to surmount the recognised restrictions. From this concept my research project was initiated. Within this text the researcher is referred to as the course producer, the CPr or the researcher, depending on the assumed current role within the text.

6.2   Summary of study

The research was initiated to evaluate whether an electronic PD course for English language teachers, designed and produced by the researcher, can be effectively provided and supported through ICT, and be culturally and pedagogically inclusive and empathetic. The e-PD4ELT course was designed to: present selected

contemporary ESL methodologies, both theoretically and practically; provide an electronic environment for CPr and CPs to interact; and create a personal learning environment for CPs to record course material interaction. Action research was utilised as the methodological paradigm for both the research project and intra-course participant/e-PD4ELT course interaction. The research undertaken was a case study analysis of the provision of the e-PD4ELT course. The actors within the case study were the e-PD4ELT course material, the researcher, the CPr, the CP and the CP's HOD. The empirical research contributing to the case study was conducted at an international school in Fiji where the e-PD4ELT course was made available to a practicing ESL teacher. The evidence collated from the empirical research was subjected to a rigorous thematic analysis, from which the CP's narrative was derived. Within this discussion, the CP's narrative, the researcher's narrative and a review of relevant literature will be analysed, from which conclusions will be drawn. However, any conclusions are based upon the accepted limitations of the research.

6.3   Discussion

6.3.1   The e-PD4ELT course functioning in a post-colonial environment

For the e-PD4ELT course to function empathetically inter-culturally it must be able to function successfully and respectfully within multiple cultural environments, including a post-colonial environment. The empirical research was conducted in Fiji, a former colony of Great Britain, whilst the researcher also instigated similar empirical research in Vanuatu, a former joint colony of Great Britain and France. Both venues are described as post-colonial and utilise school curricula designed by, or based upon imported curricula from, previous colonial powers and conducted in the

language medium of that country, either English or French (Lal, 1992; Miles, 1998). The major cultural-linguistic difference between these nations is that whilst in Fiji English is widely used as a lingua franca, in Vanuatu it is not. In both nations, therefore, there is a need for school children to study a foreign language to be able to access the national curriculum. In Fiji, this is English. Through my empirical research I have discovered that Fijian teachers operating in Fijian schools will have undergone teacher training in English either within the University of South Pacific, as the e-PD4ELT course participant Rema had, or overseas, with teacher training courses based upon the former colonial country's systems of professional teacher training (Lal, 1992). Any course of PD emanating from an overseas former colonial power may therefore be construed as authoritarian, purely based upon the receiver's cultural and experiential perceptions.

I, as the producer and provider of the e-PD4ELT course, endeavoured not to position the content and delivery as prescriptive or culturally authoritarian, but as a cross-cultural sharing of professional experience and knowledge. I, as the course producer, acknowledged that any course material produced would carry cultural baggage and, by this acknowledgement, promoted cultural/pedagogical material manipulation, that is, the course participant was free to use whatever teaching material was provided within the course, however they thought fit. Along with this acknowledged course material cultural bias, the course producer provided academic texts written from a variety of cultural backgrounds to further enhance the cross-cultural tenet of the provision of course material. Rema recognised that the course had been devised to allow for cross-cultural usage and commented positively that she found the course not to be culturally or pedagogically authoritarian, or prescriptive, and did not purport to describe how English should be taught. Rema believed that the course was not

culturally patronising, was respectful of the teacher, her pedagogy and her culture. These beliefs suggest that the course was recognised by Rema as functioning successfully and respectfully within her post-colonial environment and that I, as the course producer/provider, had not positioned myself, or the course material, from a prescriptive authoritarian (colonial) stance.

As a teacher and teacher trainer employed overseas, particularly within ex-colonial states such as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, I have witnessed a persisting detrimental colonial attitude by some expatriate professional colleagues. Confirmation of a continuing colonial attitude by expatriates, and how such an attitude can effect (online) PD, was demonstrated through my CP recruiting exploits in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The expatriate Principal, in deciding that the school's internet connectivity needs were not a priority and that school funds were required elsewhere negated the teachers under his jurisdiction's ability to access the e-PD4ELT course. Without appropriate access to the internet their participation in the PD opportunity that I was offering, and that they had demonstrated such enthusiasm for, was lost. The message that I gleaned from the Principal's decision, and which was intimated to me by the local teachers interested in following my course, is that the Principal's internet requirements superseded the pedagogic developmental needs and desires of local teachers and hence, the enhancement of the provision of quality education. Unfortunately, the appropriation of school funds to provide one expatriate with internet connectivity was concurrent with the withdrawal of the promised funding for the school's computer laboratory by another locally based expatriate, citing the financial turmoil caused by the world financial crisis (2007-2010). I can only assume that these two instances must frustrate local teachers who genuinely desire to engage in PD, and possibly a reduction in respect for expatriates who continue to demonstrate

a superior colonial attitude, particularly when the local teachers are operating comfortably within a post-colonial environment. However, the researcher respectfully suggests that a school's Board of Governors may also need to take some responsibility when they persist in recruiting expatriate principals, rather than local professionals. This is possibly a sign that they, too, are operating from a continuing colonial standpoint, that is, recruitment from the previous colonial 'masters' provides a perceived guarantee of professionalism. Bray and Koo (2004) have discussed the upgrading of skills of local teachers to fill a nation's professional requirements, an option that those in positions similar to the Board of Governors in Vanuatu may like to consider.

The International School in Fiji promotes post-colonial inter-cultural respect as an institutionalised philosophy. According to the Principal, the school's Board of Governors employ members of staff on merit, and positions of authority are open to anyone with the appropriate qualifications and experience. Parents' perceptions differ in that there is a demand for expatriate teachers, particularly from the home country, or the country from which the syllabus is based. As one walks around the school, posters are prominently displayed promoting, amongst other educational and welfare issues, inter-cultural respect and a celebration of cultural diversity. Students, teachers and managers are expected to operate within this culturally empathetic ethos. Expatriates constitute approximately 50% of the workforce, including the principal, head of senior school and the head of ESL. The Board of Governors is exclusively Fijian (Indo-Fijian and Fijian). Discussions by local teachers of expatriate colleagues was invariably positive, although lack of long-term commitment to the school through the transient nature of employing expatriates, and an over-emphasis on out-of-school social activities was occasionally cited as problematic. Expatriate teachers' analysis of

local teacher performance was also positive, citing inadequate professional training or development as the only real factors limiting some local teachers' pedagogy. Rarely in Fiji was I privy to expatriate negativity towards local teachers, or a cultural superiority that too often defines an expatriate colonial attitude within a post-colonial society. Rema appeared to operate comfortably within this post-colonial environment, never discussing superior attitudes demonstrated by expatriate peers or by the e-PD4ELT course. Quite the opposite, Rema commented that her professional peers, the e-PD4ELT course and the CPr did not display cultural bias or superiority and was inter-culturally inclusive and respectful.

6.3.2   Action Research and the e-PD4ELT course

This research project questions whether the e-PD4ELT course is culturally and pedagogically empathetic. Having consulted relevant literature (Beaumont & Chang, 2000; Carr & Kemmis, 2009; Cherry, 1999; Hobson, 2001; Kember, 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Nunan 1989; Parsons & Brown, 2002; Saunders & Somekh, 2009; Woods, et al, 2000) the researcher introduced AR within e-PD4ELT as the paradigm through which CPs could interact and experiment with course material, and extract what was deemed culturally and pedagogically appropriate. The researcher created a model for AR specifically designed for use within the blog site of the e-PD4ELT course (Kebble, 2010). Rema utilised the AR model for each of the five modules presented within the course. I observed that Rema had understood the AR system employed within the course, indicated by the contribution of relevant and appropriate texts within her blog. Ken also commented that he had observed Rema's involvement in the AR process. Rema stated that the AR process had helped her to gauge the effectiveness of lesson materials and plans, and the results of the assessment enabled her to refine lesson materials and plans for future use. Rema commented positively on

the use of AR in teaching and suggested that she would continue to utilise the AR paradigm within her pedagogy. Rema's comments, and the blogging of the AR process for each module, showed that Rema was able to design culturally acceptable materials within the introduced methodologies for her teaching situation, implement the material, comment on the implementation, and suggest improvements for future adaptations of the material, if deemed necessary. Rema's comments on material implementation were invariable positive, suggesting that the materials that she had designed and implemented were appropriate for her multi-cultural classroom. Discussions within the AR process allowed for reflection on the cultural acceptability of material and adaptations to the material, and hence methodology, for cultural acceptance. Rema's discussions through her blogging, and subsequent interviews, suggest that the AR process allows course participants to design and implement culturally empathetic materials within the pedagogic methodologies.

6.3.3 Is the e-PD4ELT course culturally and pedagogically empathetic?

Whilst attending the 12th Annual conference in Education in Brunei Darussalam in 2007, I was heavily criticised by two local academics for the title of my online PD course 'Electronic Professional Development for non-native English speaking English language teachers' for using the term 'non-native English speaking' within the title of the course. They considered the phrase to possess negative connotations, especially as many international educators had themselves been educated in English, and considered themselves as fluent as any native speaker. I accepted the criticism and changed the course title to 'Electronic Professional Development for English language teachers', being an inclusive term for all ESL teachers, whatever their mother-tongue may be. Mindful and respectful of an attitude towards English language competency

amongst international EL educators, and the labelling of such, I was interested to learn that Rema considered herself, and described herself, as being an English as a second language speaker, but did not consider the term 'ESL' to be derogative in any way. Rema had also been educated in English and was a fluent English speaker, but positioned herself as having English as a second language. Engaging orally/aurally with Rema, I described her as a near-native English speaker who produced clear and highly intelligible English, with a recognisable Fijian accent. Observing Rema teaching, and through discussions with Ken, there were no discernable linguistic difficulties within Rema's ESL pedagogy related to English linguistic competence. This ESL positioning provided Rema with a connection of understanding between her and the authors of the journal articles presented within the course, particularly those with an ESL background, and commented that the articles created in her a feeling of empathy. My intention of creating a culturally empathetic course was, according to Rema, partially achieved through the inclusion of peer-reviewed articles from practising English language teachers from both native and non-native English speaking backgrounds.

To reiterate, in collating and writing the content of the course I was aware that any inclusions personally produced would be influenced by my own cultural background. In the introduction to the course I acknowledges this, and invites CPs to interact with the material on the understanding that the content has accepted cultural bias. Within each module the course presents a methodology-related lesson plan which, as an ESL teacher, I would implement, or have implemented, within my own teaching, and produced from my personal cultural perspective. To provide a visual account of the lesson plans functioning in a practical pedagogical situation the I videoed a variety of teachers' interpretations of the lesson plans. The teachers to be videoed were from a

variety of cultural backgrounds: Australian, Indo-Fijian and Fijian. All teachers asked to what extent they could adapt the lesson plan to their teaching situation and style, an indication that the teachers wished to factor in all elements present within a lesson, including individual pedagogy and cultural understandings and bias. Rema discussed that the lesson plans were particularly helpful, proven by the multiple times the lesson plans were accessed through the e-PD4ELT website, and that the accompanying video was very interesting to watch. However, Rema also suggested that the in-class video DVD had limitations in that there were only video clips of one teacher presenting each lesson, and that video clips of a variety of teachers in a variety of settings would have provided for wider cultural and pedagogical evaluation. I am in full agreement with Rema but am aware of the organisational problems associated with ethical considerations and clearance for gaining access for in-class videoing. It was also my intention that with multiple CPs utilising the AR process within the e-PD4ELT course website, a bank of lesson plans would have been created and would have been available to all participants. One of the major limitations of this research project was that the course was operational for only one course participant, negating the intra-course participant concept which would have enabled the sharing of teaching materials, lesson plans and ideas.

CPs are encouraged to utilise and adapt any material within the course for their teaching. This can be achieved as a part of the AR process within the course, and be reported upon, or independently of the course. Both Rema and Ken discussed cultural adaptation of course material content and concluded that the course had provided tools for the adaptation of teaching materials for cultural inclusivity, that is, allowing students from diverse cultural backgrounds to be involved and included. Rema felt that the e-PD4ELT course also demonstrated cultural respect and that at no time did

the course position itself as culturally superior. Rema discussed how the course had helped her improve her teaching and had provided an instrument to help consolidate previously studied methodological practices, and add to them. The development of her ESL pedagogical practices was achieved through the practical application and experimentation of elements presented within, and taken from, the course, and adjusted to her specific culturally based pedagogy. Rema believed that the course had helped her to become more creative and align lesson materials and delivery to the culturally appropriate needs of her students. The evidence for this cultural inclusivity was visible as student-presented wall displays based on comparisons between their own cultures, which included Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Azerbaijan and Japan, and Fijian culture. In conclusion, Rema has both discussed and demonstrated effectively that the e-PD4ELT course is able to function culturally empathetically within the limitations of the empirical research. This would suggest that the e-PD4ELT course would be able to function empathetically in other cultural settings.

6.3.4   The effective provision of the e-PD4ELT course through ICT

The e-PD4ELT course utilises ICT for course delivery in the forms of a DVD for video material and an online website for the provision of course material, for the presentation of AR related text and for intra-course synchronous and asynchronous communications. My findings support the conclusions arrived at by Harlen and Doubler (in Vrasidas & Glass, 2004) that ICT allows time for reflection, flexibility in course design, to feed back and to read feedback from others, and to produce online publishable text, enhancing the provision and acceptance of the PD. The data shows that Rema accessed course materials multiple times, suggesting that she was able to read and reflect on the presented topics. Over the time of Rema's interaction with the online course, I was able to adapt, alter or add to the materials or the style of

presentation in relation to Rema's feedbakd or comments, or if I thought that a specific area could be enhanced. For example, the online quiz was designed to be used as a consolidator of provided information and not as a test. Initially I allowed for two test takes, but Rema's results from the first test were low and she commented that the test did not allow for her to think about the questions. As a resolution I was able to provide, within the course design, a Microsoft Word document with all questions and answers presented. I then reduced the number of takes to one. This adaptation is an example of the flexibility that an PD course presented through ICT intrinsically has. Feed back was a constant throughout the course's duration, whether this was achieved via emails or the chat line, allowing for discussions around all facets of the course and course material. E-PD4ELT provided avenues for online publishable text in two ways; either as discussion boards or the course participant's blog. Although the research limitation of having only one course participant meant that any material published was only viewed by either of the two publishers, the system in place suggests that publication of text was achievable and relevant to the course's design brief.

The production of the supporting DVD used HD video presented on a DVD for access through either a DVD player or a computer. No problems were discussed by any of the actors within the research, possible suggesting that the mode of presentation, discussed by Shepherd (1999), was appropriate, accessible, and appealing, allowed for reflection, was logical and methodical, was clearly of practical use, presented material both linearly and holistically, and contained much visual and audio material.

The e-PD4ELT website was created utilising the Moodle software platform and hosted through HostMonster.com, a private web-hosting company. Again, no problems were reported by any actors involved with the research, allowing me to

suggest that both Moodle and HostMonster.com were appropriate modes of online provision. Rema discussed problematic issues of using both synchronous and asynchronous communications within the e-PD4ELT website, although website access to these online facilities proved not to be the problem. Rema's initial intra-course e-communications dilemmas were related to the school's internet provision, which was malfunctioning. Once reliable internet access was established, Rema neither discussed nor demonstrated problems navigating the e-PD4ELT website, or using the various forms of communication, suggesting that the e-PD4ELT website might be functioning appropriately and intuitively.

Problems of online e-PD4ELT course connectivity and access were directly associated to the school's internet access over and above the hardware that a school might have. In Vanuatu, teachers were unable to connect to the course's website due to the poor internet service available in the school. I observed the download rate in the school in Vanuatu at 48 bit/sec, a rate that negates the ability to use the internet effectively, if at all. Although the two most recent computers in the Vanuatu school were approximately 10 years old, they would have been appropriate for limited use with the internet and could have been utilised to access the e-PD4ELT course effectively. In Fiji, access to the E-PD4ELT course was limited only when the school's internet server was malfunctioning.

I conclude from this data that the e-PD4ELT website is functioning well in its role in providing course material and intra-course communications, and succeeds as "any time/any place learning" (McFadzean & McKenzie, 2001, p. 471). The data shows that Rema was able to access the course whenever she wished, and did so over an extended period of time. She was able to use any of the computers at school, or her

home computer, to access the course. However, the teachers in Vanuatu were not viably able to access the course at school due to the very limited internet connectivity available. The teachers' use of independent internet providers was also limited to the costs of using those facilities. The only limitation for course connectivity within a school, then, is the strength and reliability of the receiving institution's internet access and the quality of the hardware available.

6.3.5 ICT skills required for e-PD4ELT course participation

Rema initially described herself as computer illiterate, which she obviously was not, but did demonstrate limited knowledge, skills and confidence when initially using the e-PD4ELT website, particularly within the communications areas. The e-PD4ELT website was designed with user-friendliness as a fundamental consideration. I have had minimal experience in website creation but the Moodle software platform enabled simple website creation by providing interchangeable features for a variety of educational and communication requirements. e-PD4ELT utilises modes for information presentation and dissemination, intra-course communications, hyperlink facilities and quizzes. All elements were presented within a simple online structure and accessed through an initial 'welcome' front page. CPs accessed password protected individual PLE, which can be customised to a limited extent. Rema chose not to alter her PLE. Rema displayed no particular problems with accessing all course materials or the quiz areas. However, Rema had initial problems in relation to the online communication systems due, not to Rema's lack of knowledge, but to the school's inability to access the internet through their internet provider and local server. Rema's main area of concern, due to lack of experience, was the blog, where she was required to display the results of the AR process for each module. I was able to explain online through emails and demonstrations within the blog area how this

was achieved. Rema was quick to understand the technique of how to add text to the blog area, however, Rema's only major difficulty with the blog was the inclusion of images, which required her to upload image files separately to a dedicated folder, and create a link to the image file from within the blog. Again, I was able to describe the process online to both Ken and Rema, and together they were able to learn the process and put it into effect.

At the conclusion of the course Rema awarded herself a score of 4 out of 10 for her ICT abilities. I believe that Rema's perceived lack of ITC skills did not impinge on her ability to interact with the course, and were shown to be appropriate for successful course interaction. However, if I, as CPr, had offered a prepared pre-course training session, in the case in Fiji, achievable face-to-face, I believe that the initial concerns with ICT discussed and displayed by Rema could have been partially alleviated. Rema also commented that initial training in ICT would have been beneficial.

Conversely, the 12 potential CPs in Vanuatu appeared to have a diverse level of expertise and a pre-course training session was, from the experiences gained in Fiji, to be instigated. From knowledge gained through working with Rema, I had planned the ICT training session to incorporate issues of intra-course communications and the uploading of image files for inclusion within the blog. However, the lack of an appropriate internet connection prevented a comprehensive and interactive training session to occur. Concurrently, I was also unable to make an informed assessment of the levels of ICT expertise within this group of potential CPs. I provided potential CPs with a training session utilising pre-downloaded pages from the e-PD4ELT website (each page taking between 5 and 10 minutes to download). This proved to be less than satisfactory, and ultimately to no avail.

Teachers in Vanuatu, and Rema in Fiji, believed a secondary benefit of following a course utilising ICT for course delivery and communications was the development of general ICT skills. All discussed the variety of ICT skills they possessed, which I perceived ranged from teachers displaying very little experience of using a computer at all, that is, little competence in using a mouse, accessing and navigating software or the internet, to teachers who could confidently use word-processing software and navigate through an operating system such as Windows XP. Of the 12 teachers in Vanuatu, only three had email accounts, another strong indication that these teachers had had limited prior ICT experience.

Rema explained that the course had helped her to develop ICT skills, which was indicated by awarding herself four out of ten for ICT competency on the post-course questionnaire, when she had described herself as computer illiterate at the beginning of the course. To sum up, I believe that the research has shown that effective interaction with the course can be achieved with limited ICT experience, that ICT skills can be enhanced through engaging with the course, that ICT support is necessary during the course involvement and that pre-course training requires an ICT component.

6.3.6 e-PD4ELT provision and the digital divide

The e-PD4ELT course was provided online to the course participants in both Vanuatu and Fiji. Both schools were in areas where internet connection of a reasonable standard was available. The Fiji school had more sophisticated and contemporary hardware than in Vanuatu, which was an administration decision made by the school, not fostered upon the school by its availability. Both nations are made up of many islands, with the schools being in each of the major administration centres of each

nation. Rema described many outlying areas of Fiji as being without fundamental services, including running water and electricity. When asked about providing an online course to teachers in remote areas she suggested that participants in professional development courses would be able to attend a regional centre where power and the internet would be provided, and that school's would allow teachers to attend such trips, even if it meant that they would be away from schools over night. The situation in Vanuatu would appear to be very similar. The concept of a digital divide between a developed and wealthy nation, like Australia, and developing nations, like Vanuatu and Fiji, would appear not to be sustainable and supports Van Dijk's (2006) argument that the term 'digital divide' is too simplistic. Certainly in Fiji, through what I witnessed, and from what I ascertained through my discussions with Rema, the inequalities are far from absolute. So, according to Rema, a teacher in a remote area of Fiji would be able to travel to a centre that provided ICT hardware and connectivity and access a course such as e-PD4ELT on a regular enough basis to be able to follow such a course. This would enable teachers in communities in remote areas to be able to bridge the gap, as suggested by Ebo (2001) and that interaction with a course such as e-PD4ELT would initiate grassroots pedagogic development. This would suggest that the provision of an online PD course for English teachers would be able to function in remote areas if: 1) access to ICT was within a reasonable distance, 2) school managers allowed for absence from school to access the ICT, and 3) teachers were willing to travel to another centre to access ICT.

6.3.7 Positioning Theory and the research participants

Harrè (2004) discusses both the assumed positions that individuals take within a relationship and the fluid nature of relationships and hence the positions. Within this

research it was clear that this process was at play throughout the period of interaction emanating from the empirical research and my involvement with the International school in Fiji. On the surface, it would appear quite simple, I was a doctoral researcher from an Australian university who was invited to conduct empirical research within the school. Through this involvement I was also asked to conduct a piece of constancy work that would have far reaching effects on the school's ESL provision. So, my negotiated position (Tan & Moghaddam,1995) would appear to be one of authority with the appropriate associated rights (Harrè et.al., 2009) through professional experience and academic credibility. Rema was a teacher at the school who had offered to undertake the course to improve her pedagogy and credibility as an ESL teacher. She had also been encouraged by the school's principal to engage and complete the course. This suggests that her role in the relationship was assigned duties (Harrè et.al., 2009) that would position her subordinately. Ken, who had accepted a head of department role as Rema's line manager, would also appear to be positioned in authority. However, this really did not describe the relationship well, and as Harré, et al (2009) described, the interactions and the resulting narratives of the interlinking story-lines meant that the positioning of the actors was not so well defined. For one, Rema was aware that she was my only course participant and that she was in a position to withdraw from the course at any time, having signed a ethics form that stated exactly that. She knew that without her involvement I would be in a very difficult position in relation to my own research. Second, her husband was a lawyer and well-known in the community, positioning her in her society accordingly. Third, she was critical of Ken when she described that he was unable to support her particularly well and had provided inaccurate advice or information. Forth, having remained with the school after her ESL colleagues had withdrawn due to the changes

that my consultancy work had suggested had been insisted upon. The school principal repaid this decision with a full-time elevated position within the ESL department. Although the school's principal had encouraged Rema to continue her involvement in the course, providing a stronger power relationship in favour of the researcher, it was Rema who demonstrated and discussed a strong desire to complete the course because she saw the value of entering into professional development. Rema clearly wanted to succeed, and also wished for documented proof of this success in the form of a certificate that described the course content and duration. And Rema was not beyond reproaching me, particularly if I had not replied to an email or request. Ultimately, our respective positioning did not have a major impact upon the assessment of the provision of the course and the conclusions made from this research.

In my estimation, the Hawthorn effect also did not impact heavily on the empirical research or the interactions between the researcher and course participant, and the researcher suggests that whatever effect there was did not have a constraining effect on the research (Peshkin, 1998). In fact, the relationship between Rema and me was not substantially different to the relationships I have developed in other positions where I have acted as a PD course presenter (DELTA, British Council).

In considering Wiseman's (1987) five themes, the level of trust that developed between Rema and me was a very positive aspect of the relationship, although the same trust was not necessarily extended to Ken. Rema displayed a confidence in our relationship, being able to discuss all aspects of the school and her position there, including not being satisfied with some of Ken's support and suggesting that he did not have the depth of knowledge that either of us did concerning some aspects of the

course. Wiseman's distribution of power has previously been described by positioning theory, however, the importance of the interactions between Rema and I, predominantly by email, and their success, requires concluding upon. After the initial difficulties with the internet provider were overcome, sporadic communications continued. Rema complained at one juncture that I had not replied quickly enough. I conclude that for considered support, emails need to be replied to promptly. The need for expeditious replies alleviates any concerns that either party might have in regards to any aspect of the course. And prompt replies demonstrate respect for the other party. The goal of the interaction throughout the duration of the course was to provide and receive support in the professional development process. This was achieved generally successfully, and Rema reported that the support she received from me was appropriate for the requirements of the course. The effect of normative or cultural criteria was more difficult to assess. I was conscious of behaving in a respectful and courteous manner as I was in Rema's cultural domain, and because she was kind enough to offer to participate in my research. I wanted to have some understanding of Rema's cultural background, and that of the Fiji, but did not want to appear intrusive. Through spending extensive amounts of time living in a variety of cultural settings, I was able to glean a fair amount through observations and through listening to interactions within the school. Rema appeared comfortable with me and appreciated my respectful ways. She was proud of her professional achievements so far, and explained in reasonable depth these achievements during conversations prior to, and during, the formal research interview process.

6.3.8   Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and e-PD4ELT course involvement

The motivation to follow, and complete, an extended PD course is affected by both

intrinsic and extrinsic influences (Harmer, 2003). Both effects were apparent in Rema's involvement with the course. The course was designed to be cross-culturally inclusive and mutually culturally and professionally respectful, which Wlodkowski (2003) has indicated is a fundamental requirement to foster intrinsic motivation.

Through the initial 6 months of the course Rema demonstrated modest intrinsic motivation to engage with the course due, she explained, to time-consuming extra-curricular activities. The researcher, and Ken, her replacement HOD, both felt that there were negative extrinsic motivational influences at play, primarily through the lack of support and encouragement from her previous HOD. The previous HOD's lack of interest in PD, both for herself and for her charges, was evidently displayed and appeared to inhibit Rema's course involvement. The change of administration of the ESL department provided Rema with the impetus to engage more dynamically with the course. Once the original head of the ESL department had been replaced by Ken, who fully embraced the concept of PD, and the school Principal had been informed of Rema's lack of progress, Rema engaged far more enthusiastically with the course. The motivation for completing the course became both extrinsic, as external pressures become a driving motivational force, and intrinsic, as Rema continued to respect the personal pedagogical benefits of completing the course, and enjoyed the experience of following the course. Rema was made quite aware, by the Principal, that her position at the International School would be enhanced by completing the course. She also discussed that the ESL department had become a more dynamic learning environment as a result of the consultancy work carried out by me, and the subsequent change of personnel. Rema recognised this dynamism and desired to be an integral part of the ESL department. She also understood that course completion, and the related development of her ESL pedagogy, would be welcomed

and respected by all those associated with the department. The second 6 months, therefore, saw a positive attitudinal change in Rema, who became highly motivated to engage with and complete the course. Rema demonstrated intrinsic motivation through a deeper interest in her involvement with the course material and the experimentation within methodologies, which was evident in communications with me, in the greatly increased online activity (see Figure. 2), and in the presentation of material and text within her blog.

Within this research project, extrinsic motivation was a highly influential factor when attempting to recruit CPs. I believe, through various related communications, that recruitment of potential CPs, both through the Russian connection and the CfBT Bruenien connection, was unsuccessful due to the length of the course and the lack of a formal qualification verified by a university on course completion. Through communications with those involved with both the above cases, and through later communications with a school manager in Taiwan, I was informed that potential CPs were expecting the course to be academically ratified by James Cook University, an impossible condition. Once the fact that the e-PD4ELT course had no formal academic ratification was known, little further communication was received in reference to potential CPs from Russia, Taiwan or Brunei. This suggests that extrinsic motivation is directly related to the perceived value of a qualification from a recognised higher education institution. The inability to recruit potential CPs and the motivational experiences of Rema allows me to conclude that extrinsic motivation, in the form of a recognised qualification or in-school requirements, is often a prerequisite to initiate involvement with an extended PD course. Once the course has been commenced, however, intrinsic motivation, through professionalism, appeared to play a major role in the quality of Rema's course involvement.

6.3.9 External support for e-PD4ELT course participant engagement and motivation

The primary sources of external support Rema received throughout the course were from the CPr, the school's IT department and Ken, Rema's second HOD. I, in the role of CPr, in an endeavour to achieve a supportive position and not an authoritative one, decided to limit e-communications with the course participant. I therefore communicated with the course participant when: 1) I was asked for help, 2) there was online evidence of course interaction, and 3) no apparent course interaction had occurred for a period of time exceeding 4 weeks. I used respectful and affable language in online communications regarding course participation, which Rema eluded to positively. These communications stimulated a decisive response and hence provided encouragement for Rema to proceed with the course with more confidence.

However, Rema stated that I, as the CPr, did not engage in enough regularised online interaction and suggested that weekly communications would have been more appropriate. Rema suggested that if the CPr had communicated with her on a weekly basis she would have been more motivated to progress with the course. Regularised communications would have provided Rema with access to intra-course support when there were problems, without the need for her to instigate the access, which, according to Ken, she may have been reluctant to do. In fact, Rema eluded to the fact that she would have preferred the CPr to adopt a more hands-on approach within the course to provide external motivation and a greater access to the expertise that the CPr possessed. To a certain extent, the void left by the CPr's limitation of direct communication was filled by Ken, who, according to Rema, was not necessarily able to provide what was required, and that more regular interaction with the Cpr would have negated the need to turn to Ken for support and advice. I now consider that the

initial intention of limiting direct contact to withdraw from a position of authority was erroneous and that regular interaction need not position one as an authoritarian figure. Rather, regular contact could have created an online environment of professional support and engagement that would have provided an impetus for motivation and a mutual exploration of course participatory requirements.

The principal and the heads of senior and middle school of the International School in Fiji displayed an ongoing enthusiasm for the provision of, and engagement in, PD when encouraging employees of the school's ESL department to follow the e-PD4ELT course. Of the three initial members of the ESL department, only Rema chose to follow the course, the others cited lack of time due to other professional commitments as the restrictive reason for not following the course. The school's management team, including the subsequent head of ESL, supported Rema's decision to follow the course and provided assistance, in terms of time allocation and manipulation of the timetable, to accommodate Rema's course involvement. Conversely, the principal of the school in Vanuatu, could be accused of elevating his own personal requirements above the professional needs and desires of the teachers under his jurisdiction. In principle, the headmaster displayed an enthusiasm for PD, and particularly, an ESL PD course, by agreeing to allow teachers access to the e-PD4ELT course. However, in practice, the upgrading of the internet provision to the school's computer laboratory was deemed prohibitively expensive. To conclude, teachers wishing to participate on the e-PD4ELT course, therefore, were only able to do so if the school's higher management encourages teacher involvement and provided the appropriate support to allow for electronic connectivity and timetabling.

Rema received support from the school's IT department in relation to accessing the e-

PD4ELT course's intra-course communication systems, as well as other non-defined ICT issues. Rema explained that although technicians within the IT department were accessible, she felt conscious of utilising their time for her course-related needs. I, in both my roles as researcher and consultant, found the Fiji school's IT department to be very accommodating and helpful. The department was obviously very busy, but appeared to be efficient and well managed. I believe that Rema's lack of confidence in ICT, and her lack of knowledge of specific IT-related semantics, alluded to by Ken, were major contributing factors to her reluctance to access help from the IT department. I also feel that the IT department would have been more accommodating than Rema felt, but, once again, an e-PD4ELT pre-course training session, incorporating IT terminology, would have alleviated some of Rema's concerns.

The fact that there was no IT department or technician at the school in Vanuatu, was a strong indication of the unimportance that the Principal had previously placed upon ICT within the school. The fact that I was invited by the principal to present the paucity of the school's ICT, and the pedagogical benefits of upgrading the IT department, to a potential benefactor indicated both a lack of ICT expertise within the school and a changing attitude to ICT by the Principal. If the promise of in-school ICT upgrading had come to fruition, or if the Principal had been willing to share his personal internet connection with the school, the teachers in Vanuatu would have had appropriate access to the e-PD4ELT course. The teachers in Vanuatu who had shown an interest in following the e-PD4ELT course displayed a wide, but limited, range of IT skills and knowledge. Due to a non-existent IT department, the researcher discussed with these teachers the possibility of ICT peer-support and mentoring, a concept they were willing to embrace.

6.3.11 e-PD4ELT as a grass-roots stimulus for ESL curriculum change

Rema is in a rather unique position in Fiji as she has 15 years of teaching experience within the Fijian state education system and 5 years in an international school setting running English medium international curricula. This extensive teaching experience, along with completing the e-PD4ELT course, has provided Rema with an oversight of comparative curricula and English language pedagogy. The pedagogical function of an ESL teacher in an international school setting is to provide students with the linguistic skills for integration within an English academic program, and social integration within the school population. The pedagogical outcomes require both second-language linguistic communicative accuracy and effectiveness. An ESL student graduates from an ESL course by showing a pre-determined level of competence in both communicative accuracy and effectiveness. Attainment of this linguistic level of competency, and beyond, is extensively tested for and can utilise both internationally recognised testing systems, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), provided by Cambridge University ESOL Examinations, or with individual school developed testing systems, such as that used at Rema's school in Fiji, introduced by the researcher in his role as an ESL consultant. Conversely, the English curriculum within most state education systems includes testing for deemed effective use of the discrete linguistic elements introduced within the testing timeframe. The effective use may, however, not be communicative, rather, syntactically manipulative and rule evaluative.

Rema felt that the present English language curriculum within Fijian state schools is not providing students with a tool for international communication successfully and is

wasting an opportunity to provide Fijian students with effective English linguistic communicative skills. Rema suggested the Fijian national curriculum, the predominant language teaching methodology and the attitudes of parents towards English teaching and learning needed to be refocused. She discussed the testing and examination oriented curriculum that predominates within the existing system, which is heavily waited toward teaching English primarily as an academic subject. Rema also suggested that the present system restricts teachers in presenting English as a tool for international communication and does little to allow students to utilise English for communicative practice. The present curriculum follows a rather traditional structure adopted from a colonial pedagogy prevalent in education from before independence. I have worked within a similar curriculum in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia and empathise with Rema when she discusses the restrictiveness of a syllabus that is based upon the presentation of discrete grammar or lexical items and is tested for the ability to learn and manipulate correctly these items in isolation. For example, the present perfect for discussing repeated past events may be the discrete grammar topic for the week, is presented in a top-down, deductive approach and requires students to manipulate syntax and verb conjugation correctly within teacher/course book presented sentences, an is subsequently tested as such at the end of the week. A student is graded upon her/his ability to apply the presented grammar point to a set number of unrelated texts. The scoring is accessible to teachers and parents/guardians alike and is encouraged by parents or guardians who understand their ward's success from the score provided. In the eyes of the stakeholders of the results, the system is clear and incontrovertible, and how it has traditionally been done. However, Rema suggested that the traditional system needs to be revisited and revised and that those involved with the process, that is, the teachers, the education officers and the

parents/guardians need to see the values of learning English for communicative purposes, and that to achieve this, old perceptions and understandings need to be challenged and redefined. Rema also suggested that this can be achieved by presenting the methodologies, and related rationale, that e-PD4ELT course contains to the stakeholders directly. I believe, through discussions with Rema, and through the experience of teaching in Brunei Darussalam, by showing the stakeholders that combining a curriculum based on discrete linguistic points with methodologies that promote communicative use of these discrete linguistic points, both requirements can be striven for successfully.

Rema was particularly keen for me to meet an education officer from the Fijian Ministry of Education to discuss the possibility of providing the e-PD4ELT course to Fijian English language teachers in countrywide state schools. I believe this suggests a cultural acceptance of the methodologies provided within the course, and the system of course provision, along with the more student-centred pedagogic approach that the course methodologies encourage. This belief implies that Rema believes the present English language curriculum, and the accepted pedagogical practices among Fiji state school English teachers, needs to be rethought and re-aligned with more contemporary international ESL pedagogical practices, methodologies and understandings.

6.3.12 Future development of the E-PD4ELT course

This study was conducted within the AR paradigm, and through deep analysis of the results from the research, and feedback from those involved with the course, the researcher wishes to develop, and further improve, the e-PD4ELT course. Rema, being the only participant to complete the course as it was intended, was in a strong

position to discuss course developmental issues and provided an insight into how the course can be enhanced, changed or improved. Rema first explained that the CPr needed to communicate regularly with CPs. Rema suggested communications initiated by the provider should be on a weekly basis, which would bolster a CP's enthusiasm and motivation, and would provide access to required course-related support. I accept this notion and believe that Rema's advice is both sound and a necessary inclusion.

Second, that the video material of teaching needs more variation. Rema elucidated that being able to watch video of lessons from the course conducted in differing settings, and with teachers discussing their lesson with an interviewer, would create far greater interest for the observer. I totally agree with this opinion, but I am also aware of the many difficulties, particularly in relation to ethics, associated with the production of in-class video material.

Third, that pre-course training in e-PD4ELT course related ICT needs to occur. This notion became quite evident as the research progressed and I now believe that well-designed pre-course training is essential both for accessing the elements of the website and for ICT skills required for interacting with the course, and that the course should cater for participants at all levels of ICT skills. Pre-course training could be provided face-to-face or though ICT in the form of a video that could be provided online or by DVD. In conjunction with pre-course training, Rema suggested that accessible and downloadable documentation on the processes involved with utilising the e-PD4ELT website be provided. Downloadable documentation could be provided in conjunction with, and supplement to, the pre-course training video.

Fifth, Rema felt that video introductions to the methodologies could be included in the

video material. Although when creating the course I decided against using videoed introductions as I wished not to position myself as an authoritarian figure, I now agree with Rema that video introductions would be effective. However, I would not want to present these introductions alone, but I believe in a need for variety of gender and ethnicity of presenters.

Lastly, Rema proposed video conferencing could be utilised for communications with the CPr, including the provision of synchronous online course-related support. I accept that video conferencing is quite achievable, and would enhance the delivery of the e-PD4ELT course, however, if large numbers of participants were accessing the course concurrently, there could be time management problems associated with regular participant/provider online video interaction.

My own vision for the future of the e-PD4ELT course is for it to become an open source of ESL PD material accessible to all interested pedagogues. In this vision, the e-PD4ELT website would provide continually updated course material, a bank of participant-driven accessible methodology-related teaching materials, and create a community of international ESL teachers and a hub of inter-cultural professional communication.

6.4   Implications

In my role as researcher, I acknowledge that the implications this research has generated, which are discussed below, often requires further research to justify the suppositions presented. However, the discussion is offered through the limitations of this research.

The provision of an in-school electronic PD course, particularly in remote areas

domestically or internationally, where sources of internet access are limited, is influenced greatly by the ICT convictions and decisions of a school's management. The availability of an online PD course is dictated by the availability of the internet access within the school. If the school's management believes that the provision of ICT facilities, including appropriate internet access, is of a low financial or pedagogical priority, access to in-school online PD is negated.

Evaluation of ICT skills, and subsequent appropriate training, needs to be provided prior to commencement on an electronic PD course. The CPr needs to assess the ICT skills required to access the PD course effectively, and design a suitable ICT training course, manual and/or video, or all three. The CPr needs to assess the CPs' ICT skills prior to course commencement and provide training for the relevant ICT skills, if required.

For an e-PD course to be effective, access to in-course support, both with ICT and course requirements, needs to be provided. This could be achieved within the participant's immediate environment, such as support provided by the IT department and from teaching peers within a school. If multiple CPs are following the course concurrently, peers could provide the necessary support through a mentoring system. However, the CPr needs to be regularly available and accessible to CPs, as they, as course producer and provider, have a deep understanding and extensive experience of both the mechanics and content of the course.

Advancement of ICT skills becomes a secondary benefit of following an electronic pedagogic PD course. CPs perceive the enhancement of ICT skills through attendance on an electronic PD course as positive, even though the lack of ICT experience may have had an initial inhibiting effect on course participation.

Intra-course communications between the CPr and CPs needs to be engaged upon regularly, and systematically. CPs require the CPr to initiate regular communications, as much as once a week, to create a atmosphere of support and encouragement. This supportive atmosphere fosters a positive attitude towards course involvement and the relationship between CPr and course participant. Systematic communication is not perceived by the course participant as positioning the CPr in an authoritarian or prescriptive role within the course.

A pedagogic PD course can provide the stimulus for grass-roots initiated curriculum change. Through following an ESL PD course teachers may perceive a deficit in the school's current ESL curriculum, or in the pedagogical expectations and restrictions of the curriculum. The teacher may approach the HOD or school's management with a strong argument, based on what was presented within the PD, for enhancing the provision of ESL teaching in the school. If the ethos within the school is such, changes that would auRemaent the ESL curriculum may be welcomed. If the changes were seen to be effective at the school level, they could be adopted in other schools.

Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is required for successful completion of an online PD course. Some teachers are unwilling to engage in prolonged PD without a tangible benefit, such as a formal qualification, employment assurance or promotion. School managers are in a position to provide the extrinsic motivation for PD involvement, if there are no achievable formally recognised qualifications. Once the extrinsic motivation for following an extended course is established, intrinsic motivation will drive teachers, as professionals, to engage intensely with the course and derive much from the experience.

6.5   Limitations of the research project

This thesis, along with any conclusions, is presented with the full understanding that the research has obvious limitations. Only one course participant following the e-PD4ELT course meant that the course was not able to function as it had been designed to do, that is, as an online environment where ESL teachers could communicate their ideas, concerns and results of investigations, and where a variety of pedagogic, cultural and social interactions could occur. The limitations of having only one course participant also negated the ability of the website to provide an avenue for peer support, an important element factored in to the design of the course. Multiple CPs would also have provided a far greater breadth of feedback. And multiple CPs, from a variety of cultural backgrounds, would have presented the researcher the opportunity to analyse data from diverse cultural sources. However, Rema provided valuable feedback from which I am able to develop the e-PD4ELT course further, which contributed to the action research paradigm that informs the development of the course.

6.6   Conclusions

I would like to conclude by returning to, and answering, the original questions posited within the research thesis title. However, the researcher proposes that to provide accurate, reliable and validated answers, deep analysis of all aspects of the research experience has been required.

First, is the e-PD4ELT course culturally and pedagogically empathetic and inclusive? I would like to answer this in the affirmative as the research has shown that the e-PD4ELT course has been described as being culturally and both pedagogically empathetic and inclusive. This has been recognised by the research as being achieved

through three systems: (a) the CPr, and hence the course material, originating from a culturally acknowledged milieu; (b) the inclusion of course material from a variety of cultural sources has promoted intra-course cross-cultural integration; and (c) by implementing AR as the course interactional paradigm, CPs are able to experiment with, report upon and draw conclusions from the introduced methodologies within the course and in relation to their specific cultural and pedagogical setting.

Second, can PD, such as the e-PD4ELT course, be provided effectively through ICT? The researcher concludes that this research has shown the answer to also be positive, if certain conditions are met, that is, with these conditions met, the provision of the e-PD4ELT course is effective. These conditions are: (a) that the course participant has, or can acquire through training, the pre-requisite ICT skills required to access the course effectively; and (b) that suitable ICT facilities are available, or made available, to CPs, including the provision of a reliable and appropriate internet service.

Finally, the researcher concludes that for an electronic PD course to be ultimately effective CPs require (a) extrinsic motivation, (b) supportive management, (c) appropriate connectivity, and (d) devoted online support.

O little booke, thou art so unconning, How darst thou put thy-self in prees for drede?

(The Flower and the Leaf, Chaucer 1343-1400)

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