

**CURRICULUM AND CULTURE:
REFLECTING ON RESISTANCE
IN AN ESL CLASSROOM**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis represents the my efforts to develop curriculum for an English as a Second Language class that enable students to participate in a meaningful and critical discourse with their new community.

The thesis was initiated by my need to confront the contradictions and conflict that exist at the intersection of my progressive teaching practices and my students' more traditional expectations for classroom interactions.

This required a closer look at the teaching practices employed in the students' home countries as well as at progressive teaching and its incorporation into ESL classrooms.

As a result of reflection upon my own experiences as a student and as a teacher, I followed previously unrealized paths as I sought to discover exactly what it means to practice truly progressive pedagogy - pedagogy that enables students to participate in critical discourse where socially and culturally defined constructions of self can be challenged.

I delved into a polyglot of theoretical discourses, including those of literacy, transformative pedagogy and sociocultural aspects of learning, with the intent of taking those theories back to my classroom where, in combination with reflection, they would be part of my praxis, or the ongoing dialogue between theory and practice.

In keeping with the nature of emancipatory action research, the thesis does not follow a traditional academic structure. Rather, it is a narrative which weaves together theory, reflection, and description. The narrative is not conclusive. Its purpose is to assist me in locating further paths to follow in my research.

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INTRODUCTION

If we are to think straight about education we must see straight as well. And seeing straight entails an unflinching look at the way things are, whether we like them or not. (James in Jackson, 1986, p.40)

This thesis is part of ongoing praxis, that is, a process of action plus reflection, to develop curriculum for my English as A Second Language (ESL) students that will be effective in teaching them not only the mechanics of English, but also the skills and the discourse which will enable them to participate more meaningfully in their new community. This thesis has arisen from perceived contradictions between the teaching practices that emerge at the intersection of the progressive and sociocultural pedagogies that I have tried to incorporate into my teaching, and the learning experiences of some of my ESL students, contradictions which have resulted in frustration and resistance on the parts of both my students and me. However, despite the difficulties inherent in these differences, further examination of my own teaching practices has convinced me that I can assist my students in acquiring some tools to participate in their new community, as well as understand more clearly the factors that guide my conduct in the classroom.

Some Background

Most of my ESL students are from countries in which the "banking" style of education (Freire, 1970, p.58), in which students are passive consumers of information, seems to predominate. In my classroom, I have been trying to use methods that I have loosely thought of as "progressive" and which require that students be more proactive, and interactive, to better facilitate their language learning as well as their participation in

Canadian society. However, it has often been clear that my students' understanding of the roles of teachers and students are profoundly different from my own and this is the source of mutual frustration and, sometimes, failure, whether perceived or real. Faced with strong student resistance and little personal understanding of the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of my practice, I have often questioned my teaching, feeling that I have been placing too heavy a burden on the students to adapt to practices about which I was not that clear. However, I am committed to the idea that if these students are to find their places as active members of Canadian society, they must not only have the language skills to facilitate participation, but they must be active interpreters of their location in that society.

The Need For Active Interpretation

Cummins and Cameron (1994) share these concerns in a discussion of the effects of the marginalization of ESL students in public schools by the 'back-to-basics' movement and its critique of progressive pedagogies. They state that the:

underlying objective of the back-to-basics discourse is to maintain a societal power structure that consigns culturally-diverse students and communities to the margins. The goal is to legitimate the knowledge and values of dominant groups within a core curriculum reinforced by a pedagogical orientation that excludes the possibility of critical interpretation of these "facts" by means of research and dialogue. (p.33)

Cummins and Cameron assert that rather than alienating ESL students by returning to, or in actual fact, holding on to a core curriculum presented in a linear and cumulative fashion to passive students who are evaluated by standardized tests, Canadian schools should provide "(i)nstruction that is *meaningful, interactive, experiential, and critical*" (p.32, the authors' italics). This kind of active learning would give students the opportunity to engage in a process of knowledge generation and self-definition, to "gain

the power to resist external definitions of who they are and to deconstruct the sociopolitical purposes of such external definitions" (p.32). This would not only better prepare students "to participate actively and critically within a democracy" (p.33) but also, in recognition of the more immediate concerns of many students, within our economy. Cummins and Cameron cite a Government of Canada (1991) report that says, "(t)he employment market of the future requires individuals who know how to get access to information, critically interpret the information and, work collaboratively with colleagues from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and use the information for creative problem-solving"(p.33). Education that enables students to participate in the economic and sociopolitical life of Canada will foster critical consciousness that could effectively alter the status quo. As Berthoff (1990) writes, "Education does not substitute for political action, but it is indispensable to it because of the role it plays in the development of critical consciousness."(p.121)

Language instruction that is *meaningful, interactive, experiential, and critical* would go a long way in assisting these students adjust to their new community. John-Steiner (1985) writes that "(i)n cases when young immigrants experience a great social and emotional distance between themselves and speakers of a target language, their learning is likely to be inhibited by a sense of passivity or alienation" (p.368). This is a perfect situation for maintaining the status quo. However, Kramsch (1993) writes that:

learning a language is learning to exercise both a social and a personal voice, it is both a process of socialization into a given speech community and the acquisition of literacy as a means of expressing personal meanings that may put in question those of the speech community. (p.233)

Kramsch is critical of the field of language teaching because, in her opinion, it does not have a history of being a place in which people have been encouraged to be critical. It

has attempted to avoid or at least minimize conflict, valuing instead consensus and negotiated understanding within a conservative ideology that is positivistic and pragmatic. A return to a back-to-basics approach to language teaching would continue that tradition.

Therefore, as a language teacher, and in many cases students' sole contact with the new community, I bear a responsibility to provide an educational experience that neither reinforces the isolation of students from their community nor perpetuates unequal relationships with the community. I also must provide a learning environment that enables students to situate themselves in the community, and not to be situated by the community. As Virginia Suave (1990) writes, "we have first to increase our understanding of those forces which act to produce and to maintain this situation and of those forces which act to change it" (p.60). This thesis is part of my attempt to understand these forces in order to act effectively upon them.

Searching For Answers When Unsure Of The Question

But we must not expect easy answers ... Nor must we be unnerved should we encounter pockets of fog along the way. (Jackson, 1986, p.52)

My pursuit of a clearer understanding of the contradictions within my teaching situation has led me down many paths where I have discovered recurring themes that seem particularly relevant to that situation. From my research I realized that I needed to better understand my own teaching practices, on not only a theoretical, but also a personal level. I also needed to clarify my understanding of the expectations of my students to find out if there was any basis for my understanding of the difficulties that I perceive them to be encountering. The more I read, discussed, reflected upon and wrote about my situation, the more confident I became that I was on the right path to

providing a more relevant place for my students and me. However, I also learned that I needed to let go of some of the practices upon which I have relied and to respect my students' situations, to enable them to meet their objectives and needs as students in my/our classroom without repressing my objectives and needs as a teacher.

I found the theories that grounded my frustrations, teaching practice and objectives in the sociocultural theories of learning of Lev Vygotsky and the 'pedagogy of knowing' of Paulo Freire, and their followers. From Vygotsky I better understood the implications for classroom practice of the social nature of learning and development. From Freire I better understood the implications of the "banking" concept of education, to which I and my students had been subjected, as well as the need for my students and I to develop methods of interpretation, or "praxis", which he defines as: "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970,p.36). And from the work of Michel Foucault I developed a deeper understanding of the underlying social forces which shape the construction of our selves as 'teacher' or 'student'.

It seemed that I needed to weave together the realities of an ESL classroom such as mine with the theories and/or practices of Foucault, Vygotsky and Freire, a task which I found at times confusing and difficult, but nevertheless rewarding. I found help in the work of Ann Berthoff (1990) who forged a link between Freire and Vygotsky in her discussion of the role of interpretation in learning. Robin C. Scarcella and Rebecca L. Oxford (1992) wrote about Vygotsky in the context of ESL teaching in their elaboration of a dynamic and collaborative approach to ESL teaching. Virginia Suave (1989/1990), in her discussion of the political alienation of immigrants who are not literate in English, suggested linking the work of Freire with Canadian ESL classes for adults. Ursula Franklin (1990) described how the prescriptive nature of modern technology has eliminated reciprocity and fostered a culture of conformity and

compliance, a culture that can be challenged by teaching practices. I hoped that if I could articulate for myself pedagogy and practice that incorporated the key elements of sociocultural learning and a "pedagogy of knowing", I would be facilitating my own and my students' interpretive and critical search for meaning (Britzman, 1991, p.14) while acknowledging and respecting the realities of my students experiences. I would be developing praxis.

The Teaching Situation

I teach in the English Studies (ES) program of an independent school that also has a secondary and a university transfer program. All of the students in the two former programs are students whose first language is not English. Most of the students are from Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China. This situation reflects the demographics of immigration to the Lower Mainland of British Columbia at this point in time. The rest of the students are from various other Asian, Southeast Asian, European and Latin American countries. Many of the students are very recent immigrants or in the process of becoming landed immigrants or citizens of Canada. The rest are international students who are perhaps here for only one year to learn English or hope to enter a Canadian university. Most of my classes are small, with usually no more than fifteen students. The school is academically oriented and assumes that most students have a high level of literacy in their own language and are going to pursue post secondary studies.

Some students live with relatives, others with 'homestay' parents, and others, for the first time in their lives, live alone. Many are here involuntarily, sent by their parents to begin their studies early in the immigration process, to receive an 'international' education, or, in some cases to avoid military service. Most of the beginner students

have arrived in Canada within one or two weeks of the first day of school. Many arrive a few days or even weeks late. Very few have had any significant experience with Canadian society before they enter classes. Many aren't sure for how long they'll be in Canada and many long to go 'home'.

I generally teach beginner reading and writing, as well as various classes at the intermediate and advanced level. During their first semester, students who are full-time are required to take, if their language ability is low enough to warrant it, four beginner courses. Therefore, fifty percent of their time in school is spent with me. I often teach students at more than one level as they move through the English Studies (ES) program. Because the school is small and the teaching staff close-knit, it is easy to track students' progress through regular formal and informal communication with the students and their teachers.

In the school, we use the term 'beginners' loosely. The students are 'false beginners'. The college assumes that the students, who are mostly between the ages of 15 and 20 years, have received at least a few years of English instruction in their own countries and have, at worst, a very basic grasp of English grammar. It is also assumed that very few of the students can actually speak more than a few words of English, possibly because they have only studied English grammar in written form and only as an academic subject to be mastered like any other subject, through memorization. Although there are some exceptions, most students do not seem to view their study of English with any emotional commitment, as anything more than another bothersome hurdle to be overcome. Such was my attitude to French when I was in high school.

A considerable part of my job, as I see it, is to elicit from my students what knowledge they do have, which is actually considerable, and to help them find their

voice to use and develop that knowledge so that they can leave the school each day and participate with increasing confidence in the new community. Though their spoken English is limited I must constantly remind myself that this doesn't mean they have little to say. In Kramersch's (1993) discussion of the need for an awareness of global context in language teaching, she reminds teachers that "the meanings that beginning learners express and convey are not simplistic just because the grammar in which they are expressed is limited" (p.245). In fact, just as children "let a single word do the work of the sentence until the discursive power of language can draw out and articulate the meaning" (Berthoff, 1990, p.21), students learning a new language have complex ideas to express and it is the teacher's responsibility to listen for the students' "poetic insights ... or ... unsuccessful attempts to express one culture in terms of another"

(Kramersch, 1993, p.245). I would like to harness those complexities as part of the learning and teaching process. And so, though the ES program is an academic one and I do teach to that, sometimes I see an equally important facet of my role as one of helping them ease through the adjustment period between their initiation to Canada and their futures here.

Did I say "ease"? That would be rather misleading. In the five years that I have been teaching in my present situation, I have never found the classes easy to teach. Rewarding, yes, but not easy. During those five years, and six years prior, teaching in Canada and Japan, I gained some insights, shared by many, anecdotally (conversations with peers) and in the research (see Chapter Five), about how students who have studied in Asia their whole academic lives, learn. It is very different from the way I teach. There is a large gap between my expectations of the teacher-student relationship, and my students', and from this gap emerges teacher and student resistance. I wish to better understand the differences in expectations and the resulting

resistance. I also wish to explore the implications of the pedagogic framework within which I have been attempting to teach.

The Teacher

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Criminology and a minor in Sociology from Simon Fraser University, where I also completed the Professional Development Program (PDP), the prerequisite teacher training program for certification by the Ministry of Education of British Columbia. I also have a certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) from a local community college. Both the PDP and TESL program focused on classroom management, assessment and lesson planning in order to prepare student teachers for the practical aspects of teaching. I also received a memorable dollop of training in 'listening' skills in the PDP, and I was taught that the teacher had to provide a constant stream of stimulating and challenging activities to foster communication, creativity and expression, and to maintain control. My understanding was that if I provided a classroom environment that was student-centered and if I encouraged students to express themselves freely and creatively, my students would thrive and I would be a good teacher. It was anathema to have students working silently and individually in rows. Released from the shackles of traditional teaching methods, students would respond positively and a new era of learning would be ushered in ...

What Is Wrong?

I digress, and perhaps exaggerate, and perhaps am wrong, misunderstanding what I have read and been taught. But, the point is not what I did or did not misunderstand. The point is that my students do not respond as expected to

classrooms that are student-centered and strive to foster expression and creativity. For students such as mine who have spent years being rewarded for memorizing and accepting unquestioningly the work of others, who are used to being treated as "empty vessels" (Freire, 1970; Berthoff, 1991), who are not used to expressing and developing their own stories, and are threatened by questions that do not have a 'right' or a 'wrong' answer, a student-centered classroom is an unknown, scary and confusing place. A teacher who does not understand and respect this fear and confusion is not doing her students or herself a service. A teacher who does not understand the socially determined internal restrictions within which the students are functioning will be frustrated when the students do not respond as anticipated. Such frustration can lead to a teacher doubting her own ability to be a teacher and her effectiveness as a caring human being. This kind of doubt can be debilitating for the teacher. As a result, the teacher may fall back on practices with which she is not comfortable but which serve the expectations of the students. However, while this may serve to provide a comfortable learning environment for the students in the short term, it does not serve to teach them the skills they will need in the long term.

The Teacher's Dilemma

Patti Lather (1992) asks, "How do our very efforts to liberate perpetuate the relations of dominance?" (p.95). I have often felt that by forcing my students to adopt a style of learning that is quite different from what they are used to, and what has worked for them, I am perpetuating the traditional student/teacher relationship which is a relation of dominance. By giving them more freedom and by being more interested in them as individuals; by evaluating their work on a day to day basis, not just from final exams; by valuing all their answers, not just the 'right' ones; by encouraging noise and

fun in the classroom; by being somehow more human; I am violating some code that dictates what my role as a teacher and my expectations for them as students should be.

So what do I do? Do I just give up and return to being a more 'traditional' teacher? On some days, when the chemistry is wrong or the room is too hot, and the students have dug in their heels and do not cooperate, I give up. I assign some pages in their grammar book, pages of what I think are endless mindless exercises, or I write "comprehension" questions on the board. I am always amazed at the relief and vitality that this brings to the students. This is the kind of work they know how to do, but I struggle to see any reward for the effort. After all, these are the kinds of exercises that they have been doing for months or years in their home country and the result has not been a high level of fluency in English. I think that kind of work is a cop-out, a brief procrastination before we tackle the harder tasks that must be faced.

My job as a teacher would be much easier if I thought that my role was that of a guide gently leading students through grammar texts of fill-in-the blank exercises and tests, or through comprehension questions that simply demand the location of the appropriate phrase in the text. However, I do not see my role as that of someone who pours knowledge into students' ears, to have the knowledge returned to me on a piece of paper, silently, and devoid of any contribution of their own. I do want to teach English, of course. But why? To learn English is to learn so much more than the permutation of 26 letters of the alphabet or information about Canadian culture, whatever that may be.

James Britton (1982) wrote that the three major purposes of language learning are:

- 1) that of establishing and maintaining relationships

2) learning in its accepted sense

3) process of organizing the subjective aspects of experience.

I want to help students build and maintain their relationship with their community, to be able to learn in any sense and to organize their experiences so they can take control of their lives and make decisions about the people they will be here in Canada. I want to teach them the interpretive tools that with which they can "address the conflicts and the paradoxes" (Kramsch, 1993, p.24) between their own culture and the "target culture" (ibid.) so they are no longer "passive recipients of cultural knowledge" (ibid.). My role is to help them discover "multiple layers of meaning and (have) the ability and power to manipulate" (Kramsch, 1993, p.30) those meanings.

To do this, I have had to take myself back to school, in a sense, to relearn the basics within a different discourse. I have learned that I can't rely on what I learned in university and have had to find a different discourse with which to explore my teaching situation. The reality is that teaching is complex, uncomfortable, contradictory, disordered. As Davis and Sumara (1997) write:

Educational theories and practices that are inattentive to the particularities of context and, more specifically, that are inattentive to the evolving *relations* among such particularities, are no longer adequate. ... (L)inear models of description and causality no longer help us much in our efforts to interpret our complex situations. Given the increased density of our populations, the more pronounced sociocultural diversity, the accelerated paces of change and movement, and the ability to more readily access and influence information through emerging technologies, those systems that we refer to as "community" and "culture" have become more complex. They are transforming themselves far more quickly than they once were. Correspondingly, "knowledge" and "teaching," as phenomena that are implicated in the communal, have themselves become more complex. (pp.120-1)

Trying To Make It Right

This thesis represents my efforts to learn more about teaching in the context of my own classroom. I do not seek to make general statements about ESL classrooms elsewhere. I am only interested here in the dynamics of my situation. To do this I have explored and reflected upon many different pedagogical theories and practices and written about the themes that were generated from that work. The work of understanding my location and my students' location in the classroom will never be completed but I am in good company in my acceptance of the open-ended nature of this kind of closer look at what is going on around us. Foucault (1980) wrote, when reflecting upon the breadth of the work he had completed:

I could claim that after all these were only trails to be followed, it mattered little where they led; indeed, it was important that they did not have a predetermined starting point and destination. They were merely lines laid down for you to pursue or to divert elsewhere, for me to extend upon or re-design as the case might be. They are, in the final analysis, just fragments, and it is up to you or me to see what we might make of them. (pp.78-9)

It is my hope that I will be able to continue to incorporate reflection into my daily teaching practice so that I can continue to try to understand each and every class of students that I encounter within the themes that I have generated here, and within the new themes that emerge from that reflection. My practice will be ever changing, as it adjusts itself to whichever group of students I am working with at any given time - a practice that recognizes the individuality and complexity and unpredictability of each student and each group of students.

A SEARCH FOR METHOD

(M)ethodology is the theory of knowledge and the interpretive framework that guides a particular research project. (Harding in Lather, 1992, p.87).

When I entered graduate school my knowledge of research was limited to two words, 'statistics' and 'ethnography'. I had struggled through an undergraduate statistics class and read about cargo cults and Malinowski. I knew that numbers couldn't represent that myriad of personalities and relationships that exist in any given classroom, and I wasn't in a position to head off to an 'exotic' country to closely peruse the classroom dynamics of a foreign classroom. As for many graduate students, part of my task was to find a research method that suited my situation and which held meaning for me, and this involved trying out different research methods.

For one graduate class, I carried out a pilot study to examine students' use and awareness of cognitive learning strategies. This involved interviewing the students and then transcribing and analyzing the conversations. This study failed to teach me much about my students, how they learn, who they are and what they think. I didn't feel that it was the course of research that I had hoped to pursue at graduate school.

In another course, I had to write up and evaluate three possible studies to explore the extent to which possession of metacognitive skills contributes to understanding of text. The three studies were population, single-case experimental and ethnographic studies. This project was more enlightening as I learned more about what I didn't want to do.

I eliminated the possibility of doing a population study for a number of reasons. Firstly, I decided that I would not be comfortable with a study that purported to

represent students and their knowledge as a set of numbers. Secondly, I distrust statistics because I feel that they can be manipulated to suit any agenda. Thirdly, in an ESL class (as perhaps in any class), there are too many variables that contribute to or impede learning than can be represented in a population study. Finally, population studies do not show causality and I am more interested in learning about what contributes to learning. So a population study was not an option for me.

I was also uncomfortable with the experimental design. Firstly, I felt that because the focus of the study would be on very few students, the rest of the class would be excluded. Secondly, the researcher manipulates behavior rather than seeking the reasons for the behavior. Thirdly, such studies focus too much on the acquisition of one skill, and, once again; they do not answer questions about the more natural processes involved when people learn.

That seemed to leave only an ethnographic study as an option. What I had learned was that in an ethnographic study, the researcher can utilize a number of different techniques to understand the subjects that are being observed. Therefore, while I wasn't sure of the dynamics, I knew that an ethnographic study which could be done in my own classroom seemed attractive because it would allow me to examine the intertextuality of learners and explore the causes of behavior rather than simply count or manipulate behavior.

Ethnographic research in education acknowledges the personal relationships that develop in a classroom between students and teachers and allows for a number of different ways of observing and understanding the events in a classroom. The researcher is not limited to measuring a predetermined set of variables. Every event is permitted to contribute to the final product. In addition, an ethnographic project does not attempt to be conclusive. It acknowledges that while carrying out the research, the

researcher may find new leads to follow at a later date or to be followed by another researcher. It acknowledges the ongoing process of discovery and learning that takes place in a classroom. As I learned more about ethnographic studies, I thought that I had found an avenue which, if followed, would lead to the kind of research which would be more satisfying.

As I began to follow those avenues, I was drawn to the quote by Mac and Ghail (1989) that "research activity should not be a static but rather a dialectical process" (in Woods and Hammersley, 1993, p. 149), a questioning of what one sees. Since I was always struggling with my classroom situation, my students and myself, a research project that allowed me to question and challenge seemed to be even more relevant to my day to day situation.

The following pages chart the points of interest along my own learning path that helped me further focus on a research orientation that would best describe what I wanted to do and what I could do in my own classroom, and fulfill the institutional need to label the methodology of my thesis. There exists a myriad of ethnographic research orientations that seemed to be represented differently depending upon which text I was reading. For me, following the historical development of ethnography seemed to be the most useful and interesting way to describe what I eventually deemed to be the appropriate research orientation, which is 'action research'. Action research is a form of research that is organized around questions of learning, understanding and/or interpretation of the complexly formed, ecologically organized relations of lived experience, and which attempts to alter perception and action (Carson & Sumara, 1997). In an educational setting, it is research that seeks to provide teachers and students with more 'intelligence' about their situation. Emancipatory action research is "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order

to improve the rationality of justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (Carr & Kemmis, in Tesch, 1990, p.49).

Emancipatory Action Research

In this section I will discuss how emancipatory action research has emerged from the postpositivist discussion of social science research in general; the contribution of feminist research to that discussion as an example of that emergence; specifics of emancipatory action research; and how it relates to my research.

Educational research is undergoing the same upheavals as other social sciences in "the postpositivist intellectual climate of our times" (Fiske & Shweder in Lather, 1992, p.90). Like other social sciences, such as anthropology and sociology, education is moving away from the idea that there is "one best way" (Lather, 1992, p.88) to do research. Such restriction has been imposed on the practice of educational research by the physical sciences model of research (Britton & Chornoy, 1991). Lather (1992) summarizes criticism of traditional educational research when she writes that it is "behaviorist in its psychology and positivist in its philosophy" (p.90). It is control-oriented and predictive. But as postpositivism unsettles traditional research methods, educational research is following the lead of other "uneasy social science(s)" (Lather, 1992, p.90) as their "more interactive, contextualized, humanly compelling research methods gain increasing legitimacy" (ibid., p.91). With the decrease in the validity of positivistic empirical approaches to the social sciences has come an increase in the popularity of approaches to research that take into account historical, social and institutional context and focus on the overriding importance of meaning making (Britton & Chornoy, 1991; Lather, 1992).

The subject of all this postpositivist intellectual criticism is positivism, and its influence on research practices in the social sciences. The positivist paradigm, which "leads us to regard the world as made up of observable, measurable facts" (Lather,1992,p.91) and is "an outgrowth of capitalist technocracy" (Tesch,1990,p.13) is prescriptive in nature and concerned with predictability and control. Quantitative research, the research we commonly associate with statistics, is supported by the positivist or scientific paradigm (Glesne & Peshkin,1992; Richardson,1994) Quantitative researchers are concerned with making predictions that can be generalized to other persons and places, and data is reduced to numerical relationships presented in a standardized, formal and disembodied fashion (Glesne & Peshkin,1992).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is supported by the interpretivist paradigm within which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever-changing. The world is made up of multiple realities that are indivisible into discrete variables. Qualitative researchers seek to understand how people construct the world around them, or how they have been socialized to see the world around them. Within this paradigm, truth is seen to be socially and historically conditioned, and is always suspected of serving political interests. Qualitative data cannot be expressed in numbers, but is instead crafted into narratives that make the data more tangible and accessible to its readers (Tesch,1990;Glesne & Peshkin,1992; Richardson,1994).

Though qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are positioned in opposition to each other, they do share some of the same methods. They "state a purpose, pose a problem or raise a question, define a research population, develop a time frame, collect and analyze data, ... present outcomes, ... rely on a theoretical framework and are concerned with rigor" (Glesne & Peshkin,1992,p.5). However, while

quantitative inquiry has a "prespecified intent, qualitative inquiry is evolutionary" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.6) and respects the complexity and unpredictability of human interactions.

The present shift in the social sciences away from positivist methods and methodologies is part of an evolutionary process. Quantitative research was and is the research of choice in the natural sciences. Quantitative research methods were adapted by social scientists to their research, most notably in the field of anthropology. However, as more and more anthropological-type work was done in researchers' own communities rather than in far-flung 'exotic' communities, questions about the power relationship between the researchers and the researched began to arise.

Traditionally, social scientists had tried to maintain a strict objectivity, situating themselves as outsiders simply observing and recording what they saw in front of them. However, this assumption was questioned as social scientists began to acknowledge that not only their observations, but their research methods were embedded in and could not be extracted from their own cultural and historical contexts, that social inquiry is inherently value laden.

Post-structuralists, like Foucault, wrote of how what is counted as knowledge is controlled and hierarchized by society, which then legitimates and institutionalizes that knowledge. He described how institutionalized discourses and representational practices are part of what he termed the "mechanics of power" that produce subjectivity which they simultaneously express (Lather, 1991). He showed, through his analysis of social institutions, such as schools and prisons, how positivism, and its inherent empiricism, has come to dominate Western society. Post-structuralists, as part of a wider challenge to the positivist paradigm, challenged structuralism's "basic thesis of

the universal and unconscious laws of human society" as being "part of the bureaucratic and technocratic systems they opposed" (Lather, 1992, p.90).

As a result, social scientists began to look at the implications of their own location in the research and how their work reinforced the status quo. The "subject/object relationship which was characteristic of traditional research designs - and which was seen as reflecting and repeating the hierarchic nature of social relationships - began to give way to a more interactive approach" (Saarinen, 1988, p.45). This represented a paradigm shift which opened up paradigmatic alternatives for the doing of social sciences. This paradigm shift affected how research was done, the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the ways in which the work was reported. The researcher was no longer considered to be an objective outsider. The researcher's own cultural and historical background, and interactions with the community being researched, were part of the research report. Such research techniques and sources of data include oral histories, interviews, narratives and reflection, and other sources of knowledge that had previously been discredited in favor of knowledge based on empiricism. Foucault (1980) refers to the acknowledgment and reactivation of these previously discredited kinds of knowledge which oppose the scientific hierarchization of knowledges as "genealogies" or "anti-sciences" (p.85).

A Challenge to the Positivist Paradigm

These closer looks at how we are socialized to see the world took place and continue to take place within a wide variety of research communities. For example, one such reexamination of the quantitative/qualitative paradigm within the social sciences came from the second wave of the feminist movement which focused on how the values that are central to Western civilization, and their representation in traditional

scientific methods in the social sciences, have failed to articulate the experiences of women, as either researchers or subjects (Saarinen, 1988; Lather, 1992). The discomfort over the power relationship between a research subject and a research object did not go far enough in uncovering stereotypes that existed in the field.

Belenky et al (1986) write that:

recent feminist writers have convincingly argued that there is a masculine bias at the heart of most academic disciplines, methodologies and theories. There is a commonly accepted stereotype of women's thinking as emotional, intuitive, and personalized which has contributed to the devaluation of women's minds and contributions, particularly in Western technologically oriented cultures, which value rationalism and objectivity. (p.6)

They also suggest that the fact that women tend to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors which suggest speaking and listening, or dialogue and interaction and closeness between subject and object, is at odds with the visual metaphors, used in the history of Western intellectual thought. Visual metaphors suggest a camera passively recording a static reality and promote the illusion that disengagement and objectification are central to the construction of knowledge. The visual analogies have led to a favored model for truth and the quest for mind. Therefore, subjective knowledge is associated with femininity and objective knowledge is associated with masculinity, resulting, in some academic circles, in objectivity being regarded as nothing more than "male experience elevated to the level of theory" (Lewis, 1993, p.136).

Therefore, rather than simply accepting a subject/object dichotomy between the researcher and researched, feminist researchers have articulated a new epistemologic paradigm that incorporates the social construction of gender into their work. They try to formulate new questions from the perspective of women's experiences though not to

the exclusion of other social forces. Feminist research does not categorically deny the existence of other powerful social forces, such as race, class, and sexual orientation, but treats these forces as part of a complex integrated whole. Feminist researchers look at the interaction of many social forces and how individual lives are constructed by them. As a result, feminist research is interpretive rather than predictive. It does not attempt to predict and control but to generate and refine more interactive, contextualized methods in the search for pattern and meaning. Feminist research is preoccupied with the politics of being known. It assumes ways of knowing are culture bound and that researcher values cannot be separated from, but rather permeate, inquiry (Saarinen, 1988; Lather, 1992).

From Dichotomies to Complexity

In their pursuit of methodologies that are interactive and interpretive, feminist researchers are part of a movement to articulate a new discourse that rejects the contentious dualisms that form the basis of Western philosophical thought and are part of our methodology discourse. Examples of such dualisms are: quantitative vs. qualitative; disclosure vs. prediction; advocacy vs. neutrality; objectivity vs. subjectivity; femininity vs. masculinity. Lather (1991) writes that:

the essence of the postmodern argument is that the dualisms which continue to dominate Western thought are inadequate for understanding a world of multiple causes and effects interacting in complex and non-linear ways, all of which are rooted in a limitless array of historical and cultural specificities. (p.21)

Therefore, to avoid being straitjacketed into any one methodology, feminist researchers use many different methodologies, a complex array of methods to collect, interpret and present data.

In addition to being interpretive and interactive, feminist research is openly ideological and has taken an advocacy approach to research and practice which is intended to empower those involved in change as well as understand the world (Lather,1992,pp.87/88). Feminist research is preoccupied with politics of knowing and being known. In this respect it shares its objectives with critical pedagogy which is also concerned with questions of power, equity and authority in the classroom. Critical pedagogues are concerned with how social injustices and inequities are constructed around class, gender and racial differences and then perpetuated through schooling. They go further in encouraging students to develop the skills to analyze and assess critically their location in society (Hoodfar,1992;Gore,1993).

Teachers as Researchers

So, emancipatory action research is a welcome alternative for teachers who "seek to change some aspect of society through the actual research process" (Glesne & Peshkin,1992,p.11). It is "initiated by the practitioner and is derived from a real problem in the classroom which needs to be confronted" (Nunan,1992,p.18). Like postmodernists, emancipatory action researchers are concerned with issues of control and power and the intersubjectivity between researcher and researched. However, the desire to change some aspect of society through the research process sets them apart. And, that change is internally instituted. It is not the result of an external edict based on a science that is predictive and controlling. It is based on reflection on the practitioner's own immediate situation. It is not intended to be generalized to other persons and places.

Unfortunately, in most educational systems, change is prescriptive, deterministic and categorical, the result of educational research that has been largely influenced by

behaviorism (Britton & Chorny, 1991; Lather, 1992). Research that is based on behaviorist methodology attempts to control the subjects' responses to external stimuli. Because it is external, the change does not include the input of the individual teachers. This fails to acknowledge that source of change in society which is individuals who "(c)ollectively and interactively create the nature and direction of change" (Britton & Chorny, 1991, p. 114). What is needed in addition to the scientific language of educational research is accounts of changing ideas and practices, in more personal terms, that are expressive of the life of a classroom (ibid.). Such accounts can only be provided by teachers and students. Therefore, "(t)eachers ... need scope to pursue individual intentions for their own learning and opportunity to explore and to discover new knowledge in theory and in practice, to relate it to what they already know, to invest the new with relevance" (ibid., p. 114).

The concept of teacher as researcher is breaking down the customary distinction between practitioners and researchers and there are many examples of individual teachers seeking answers to their own questions. Action research facilitates ongoing teacher learning, allowing the teacher (and the students if the research is a collaborative project) to break through the polarities, or dualisms, that exist in the classroom and establish new relationships. This kind of research emphasizes the personal context of teaching, and announces a new shape of consciousness in thinking. Teachers can make choices from among new ideas, try them out in the classroom, convert them into practice, and test and refine them. Teacher learning becomes a continual reforming of theory (Britton & Chorny, 1991).

Action research projects take the form of an ongoing cycle "in which the teacher reflects on, returns to, and extends the initial inquiry" (Nunan, 1992, p. 18). It is evolutionary. It is not primarily concerned with proving something, but rather with

exploring, with making discoveries that initiate new lines of thought. It contributes to thinking. "(T)he links we covet for scholarly research in education are with *thinking* rather than directly with action" (Britton & Chomy, 1991, p.116).

One of the most important features of this kind of research is reflection upon the everyday events in a classroom. "Single features of everyday life are isolated as themes for study. This is the method which uproots the ordinary pieces of experience for extra-ordinary reflection" (Shor, 1980, p.99).

Writing as a Research Tool

The primary form that my reflections took was that of writing, though I also had many opportunities to discuss my work with my thesis supervisor, fellow graduate students and professional peers. But writing was the tool that helped me to pull out the most important themes and questions about my practice.

Writing is a method of inquiry but it is also a way of knowing. It is a way to find out about yourself and your topic as well as being a method of discovery and analysis (Richardson, 1994). In more traditional research, writing was the method by which the research findings were presented. Writing was not considered to be the research method itself. This was in keeping with the positivist paradigm of quantitative research. This attitude towards writing reflected the belief that the world consists of objective truths that only have to be uncovered.

However, with postmodernism has come the acknowledgment that writing, like the construction of self, is a dynamic creative process. It is a form of interaction, even if it is only interaction with oneself on a piece of paper. The act of writing represents a dialogue with oneself, between the internal and external realms, that is an important part of the learning process. Writing mediates praxis, helping the researcher make the

links between theory, action and reflection (Laidlaw, 1996). Writing allows the writer to forge her own links between theories, experiences and feelings, and any other bits of information that she has gathered, to create her own knowledge. That knowledge, in turn, may end up in another person's work to be linked with that person's experiences, and so on. So knowledge, both personal and public, is always being created and recreated.

Writing helps us clarify meaning. As we look for the right words to express what we want to say, we search through what we know from reading the work of other people. As we discard words, phrases and sentences, we establish in our own minds what we don't want to say. As we write and rewrite, we get closer and closer to what we really do want to say. We are aided by our notebooks and journals in which we have recorded all those thoughts that would be otherwise fleeting. We have preserved what would otherwise be gone.

Postmodernism has also acknowledged that the person who is writing the report is situated within the research. Traditional ethnography situated the researcher as an objective observer, whose own self was excluded from the data. Writing as a research method allows the researcher to explore and interpret her own participation in the research.

Therefore, my primary data for this thesis has been my own writing and my students' writing. Over the past few years, I have spent many hours sitting at my desk in my classroom as my students work, watching and writing, jotting down observations, however trivial, as well as my own reactions to what I saw, whether those reactions were anger, joy, frustration, disappointment, elation, satisfaction. I have written up, in detail, specific incidents that evoked particularly strong reaction, and I have written in detail about specific students. I have attempted creative writing. For example, one

day, I spent many hours at home comparing my situation in the classroom to that of a kayak moving through a narrow channel in the tidal waters of coastal British Columbia, and then, over the flat still glassy surface, as I reflected on the blackness below. In a subsequent course on teaching creative writing, I tried to weave my experiences into fictional compilations that could be used to convey the impact of particular teaching moments. And, in a more traditional vein, I wrote précis of articles that I was reading.

Throughout all my writing, I have tried to look at my students in light of their and my social locations, though of course there are obvious limitations to my understanding. I have looked at them as teenagers, or as young men or women, girls or boys. I have looked at them as Taiwanese, Mexican or Vietnamese, thinking about what I knew about the countries from which they had come. I have looked at them as students who had no control over their classroom situation, and as "language learners ... in a position of uncommon subordination and powerlessness" (Kramsch, 1993, p.238). I have looked at them as young people with all the resources that they could possibly require for successful and happy futures. I looked at them in light of my own emotional state and all the reading I was doing in my graduate classes. I looked at them and I wrote.

I asked them to write too. I required them to keep journals in which they could write about topics of their own choosing. I also asked them to write about specific topics, to facilitate my data-gathering and as part of my praxis, my acting on the theories that I was studying and my own reflections on what was happening in the classroom.

I ceased ordering text books for some classes and started relying on the students' written work, their queries, the side tracks we took. I tried new stories and new themes. I sought honest appraisals from my students of what the classroom

experience was like for them. I tried to be more tolerant of their behavior that irritated me. I tried to remember what it was like for me as a teenager, as a student, as a girl/woman, as a stranger in a new country, as someone scared and as someone mad. It has not been easy. I have often felt adrift, wronged, wrong.

Uncovering Themes

What I uncovered as I wrote were the "generative themes" (Freire, 1970) that have contributed to this thesis. These are the themes that run through much of what has interested me in my research and which seemed to be relevant to all the work I was doing, inside and outside the classroom.

Each of the next chapters discusses one of these themes. However, while this thesis has a beginning and a final page, it does not assume that there is closure to the issues that I am exploring. I have not sought to predict or to generalize from what I have seen, but to interpret the ever-changing dynamics of my classroom so that I can make changes to my classroom practice that I hope will aid me in providing my students with a classroom environment in which they/we can comfortably work together to ease their transition into their new Canadian community. This is not and never will be a smooth and easy process. Part of this process has been learning to live with confusion (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), to acknowledge the unpredictability of the classroom situation, to work within a learning environment that can not and should not be one that I control. It is part of what should become an ongoing reflective process in my classroom, a process that will never cease to uncover layers of meaning and chart changing locations.

LITERACY AND A PEDAGOGY OF KNOWING

At the end of every semester I say good-bye to the beginner reading and writing class with whom I have spent three hours a day for thirteen weeks. Some students receive Fs, those whose faces I rarely see, their preference being for the mall or the pool hall, despite staff members' best efforts to keep them in school. Failing grades are also for those who prefer to sleep through classes.

More difficult to assess (a process with which I am uncomfortable anyway) are those students who are successful. Many students receive top marks as their 'reward' for the usual good behavior, such as coming to class regularly and on time, doing their homework, and passing tests. But perhaps what I value most in my students, and reward the most highly, is the students' participation in the struggle to overcome the apparently vast gulf in learning and teaching styles that seems to exist between the students and me. The high marks are for trusting me and trying to be the students that I wish them to be. This sounds selfish. It is selfish if one assumes that teaching and learning in a student-centered 'progressive' class to students accustomed to a traditional teacher-centered class is easy. It's not. High marks are for hanging in there, patiently putting up with my attempts to be the more 'traditional' kind of teacher to whom they are more accustomed at the same time as I pull them gently towards my way of being in a classroom. I am constantly adapting my practice, delving into student journals and essays, and academic journals and the media for more information about the relationships between students and teachers in other countries to have a better understanding of their expectations of me. Sometimes I do conform to their expectations for the classroom because the stress of trying to bring them around to my

way is too much. And I am not always certain of what my way is. I do not think students should be penalized for being unsure, for losing their footing sometimes when, in all honesty, it happens to me all the time. But I try to make it a positive learning experience for everyone, constantly rewarding and encouraging, cajoling, in the hope that they will focus on the progress they are making, even when it isn't all that obvious.

As I said, I am very uncomfortable giving marks and I am very uncomfortable judging my students on their academic performance because so much of what goes on in the classroom has so little to do with academic performance, so little to do with just learning to read and write, with literacy in English. Being a beginner in my classroom is about much more than just learning a new code.

Literacy - Learning Beyond The 'Code'

As I mentioned in the introduction, my students often enter my classroom with many years of English study already behind them. Yet, most of them can barely squeak out their names and ages upon introduction. When I first ask them to write, many of them freeze. They know their alphabet and can even do difficult grammar exercises in their workbooks, but they cannot speak, write an original sentence, or read a simple text full of simple words without a dictionary. It seems that the 'literacy' that they have achieved, of grammar exercises and electronic dictionary screens and paragraphs memorized in previous English classes, will not go far in fulfilling their education and employment needs, much less their spiritual needs in a new community.

So, as a teacher, I need a better understanding of 'literacy' in order to better understand what I can do to help my students make the leap from a 'false' literacy of empty codes to one that provides for a better understanding of the community surrounding them and their place in it. Students need to be able to situate themselves

based on their own knowledge of who they are, where they come from and where they are going. We can label them 'ESL students', 'new Canadians', 'international students', 'visa students', and so on. We can teach them how to order food in a restaurant and how to ask which bus to take, but we cannot teach them their experience. We cannot teach them what it means to be in their situation in a particular time and place. We can only teach them the skills that will give them the confidence to find their own meaning, in their lives, in what they read and hear and see. I can also give my students the freedom to say what they feel and to not be afraid to give voice to all their concerns, no matter how difficult it is for me to accept what they have to say. I want to find ways to push my students forward from being passive learners to being confident active learners who question and analyze and resist and take hold of their experiences in their new community, who move beyond simply understanding the codes of the new language to creating their own meaning and understanding of the language.

What Does It Mean to Be Literate?

In the following pages, I will discuss literacy and the contribution made to my understanding of literacy by Michel Foucault, and the role played by 'regimes of truth' in creating the 'self'. I will discuss how Paulo Freire used literacy as transformative practice, a way for individuals to make meaning of their lives. I will then look at the internal/external dialogue that is a key to learning in the sociocultural theories of learning of Lev Vygotsky, and how this dialogue contributes to literacy.

Prior to working on this thesis I would have said that literacy is the ability to read and write. Period. My conceptual understanding of literacy would have fitted with what Berthoff (1990) describes as the encoding and decoding of graphic representations, or the mastery of a code "for purposes of communication with others" (Suave, 1990, p.53).

My understanding of literacy in a second language would perhaps have fitted this description of Communicative Competence: "Functional language proficiency; the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons belonging to the same (or different) speech community (communities), or between one person and a written or oral text" (Savignon, 1983, p. 303). To be communicatively competent would have seemed adequately encompassing of all the needs of an individual learning a second language, had I even thought about what it really meant.

As I gained more teaching experience and encountered more students with a wide variety of backgrounds, I became increasingly bewildered by the consistent in/competencies and the attitudes towards English that my students demonstrated. I voiced my bewilderment at what I thought was my students' lack of imagination or motivation, or their unwillingness to practice, or simply their refusal to take responsibility for their learning. I also shook my head at what I perceived to be my students' lack of information and ideas, despite years of schooling, not only in English but also in other subjects, such as reading and social studies, knowledge which should have been transferable between languages. It had become apparent that "communicative competence" was not enough, that the students had to have something meaningful to communicate, or rather, had to realize that they had something meaningful to communicate. As Suave (1990) writes, "literacy is closely related to power and human relationships ... and programs which teach literacy ... must be themselves opportunities for the experience of power" (p. 54). I wanted them to feel that control, that power of having something to say and having someone really listen to them. I realized that it was their passivity, their seeming inability to take part, that was hampering us and that was frustrating me. I knew that they were literate in their own languages but they

seemed to be unwilling to take what they knew and shape it into something new. They were only interested in parroting simple grammar exercises or memorizing vocabulary, devoid of context or any personal input. So I needed to have a closer look at what it means to be literate in a society, what it was that I actually expected I should be teaching them.

Literacy Is More Than Just ABC

To be literate in society means more than being able to encode messages into a graphic symbol or to decode graphic symbols. Berthoff (1990) suggests that a true concept of literacy takes into account social contexts and cultural frameworks, and therefore, has social significance or political consequences. She feels that the acceptance of decoding and interpretation as literacy skills is a positivist concept and representative of the 'banking' concept of education as described by Paulo Freire (1970). In her discussion of the work of I. A. Richards, whose definition of literacy also requires a social context, Berthoff writes that:

signal and message should not be confused. ... (W)hat is encoded and decoded is signal. ... (M)essages are generated by contexts and are dependent not only on the interpretation of the code but on the interpretation of what is said. (p.139)

Vygotsky also argued that writing is not just a simple extension or translation of spoken language into written symbols, but "language without sound; ... language in idea form; ... monologue language, a conversation with a white piece of paper" (in John-Steiner, 1985, p.348). It is the language with which one thinks.

Regimes of Truth

To be literate in a society means to be able to participate in what Foucault (1980) called its 'regimes of truth', which are the types of discourse which societies accept and make function as true. Britzman (1991) draws on Foucault and Popkewitz in defining discourse as "the conditions by which events are interpreted and one's self as an individual is located in a dynamic world" (p.17). She continues, "A discourse becomes powerful when it is institutionally sanctioned. Discourse positions the subject in a dual way: in relation to what and how something is said and in relation to a community that makes particular practices possible and others unavailable" (p.17). To have knowledge of and access to these discourses is to have power because power in turn produces these regimes of truth. However, Foucault (1983) rejected the negative overtones of the concept of power. He wrote that power is "not necessarily repressive since it incites, induces, seduces, makes easier or more difficult, enlarges or limits, makes more or less probable and so on" (in Gore, 1993, p.52). He viewed power, in context, exercised or practiced between opposing forces, as productive. For example, the relationship between teacher and students is not simply one of prohibition and punishment, but is part of a system of domination that is conditioned and conditioning, and is interwoven with many other kinds of relations, such as those of production, kinship, sexuality. However, the resistance of both the teacher and the students that takes place within the relationship, at the point where power is directly exercised, at the grassroots, or micro-, level in the classroom, can be integrated productively, into global strategies of resistance (Foucault, 1980).

But what does power have to do with truth, with knowledge? Power is connected to knowledge by what Foucault called "technologies of the self" - the techniques/practices of self discipline whereby people keep themselves and each other in check. Technologies of self are normalities that are internally constructed from "patterns found in culture which are proposed, suggested, and imposed on individuals by their culture, their society, and their social group" (Foucault in Gore, 1993, p.53). These patterns, or discourses, are 'regimes of truth' - or knowledge - which are produced and sustained by systems of power. Literacy provides access to the 'regimes of truth'. Foucault offered the discourses of the human sciences that have dominated Western society from the eighteenth century as examples of discourses that dictate what counts as knowledge and truth and what does not. These discourses authorize "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true" (Foucault in Gore, 1993, p.52).

However, these discourses are not fixed, binary and contradictory in nature. They can be unstable, complex and complementary, and unpredictable. Once the discursive strands are identified they can be co-opted. They can be resisted. By understanding how the regimes of truth shape, limit and objectify individuals, resistance at the local level contributes to global strategies of resistance. Thus, resistance can be a force through which power can be exercised or practiced (Foucault in Gore, 1993).

Care of the Self

Foucault showed us how "reading and writing have functioned historically as central among the practices by means of which a self constituted itself a subject" (deCastell, 1996, p.28). For example, he claimed that in modern Western society the construction of the individual self is based on the confessional mode of fifth-century

Christianity, a mode which was intended to purify the individual and was therefore based on one's thoughts and not on one's actions, as had been the case with the second-century Graeco-Romans (deCastell,1996,p.29). Both modes relied on individuals reading and writing about themselves. The early Christians recorded their confessions, their hidden thoughts, in diaries. The early Greeks recorded their lives in hypomnēmata, or notebooks. While the former dwelt on revealing their hidden thoughts, sins, as a method of purification, the latter were concerned with the constitution of the individual through the recording and recollection of what was said and done, rather than the unsaid and the hidden. But both were 'making meaning' through the use of literacy practices.

Foucault's discussion of the specific practices of the early Greeks and Christians brings the broader societal realm in which regimes of truth and technologies of the self function, to the micro level, to the level which he expressed as "care of the self ... the ethical self-styling through self-disentanglement and self-invention" (Gore,199,p.128/9). Foucault was concerned with the ethical choices individuals made based on a moral code that went relatively unchanged through the historical periods mentioned above. He was concerned with "micro workings of ethical behavior ... to identify(ing) the "micro-practices" through which power and knowledge circulate" (Foucault in Gore,1993,p.129). Reading and writing about oneself, literacy 'technologies', are micropractices through which people constitute themselves as subjects and they are complex and unstable. As deCastell (1996) writes, "(T)extual practices concerned with the emergence, the nature, and the cultivation of subjectivity differ under different circumstances and conditions, for different purposes, and with different effects"(p.29). And it is in the realm of micro-practices that teachers such as myself are able to examine their own practices, their students' practices and the

multiplicity of discourses that dictate the strategies that we all use in constructing our/selves. We can examine how we internalize the regimes of truth. When the individual understands how subjectivities are constructed within particular regimes of truth (McLaren,1995,p.54), the resulting power can be transformational. It can ensure that care of the self is liberating rather than subjugating.

If we accept Foucault's hypothesis that resistance as a relation of power at the micro-level is productive, we need to make decisions about how to ensure that our practices cultivate that power, rather than repress it. As a teacher I want to know how I can make power transformational. How can technologies of the self be used to ensure that one does not simply become conformist, that we are not simply 'normalized'?

Language as a Tool of Reflection

Foucault (1980) writes that investigation of his theories "can only be carried out step by step on the basis of reflection on given situations" (p.145). By reflecting upon the regimes of truth operating at the micro level, such as Gore does in her analysis of the "discursive strands" that sustain critical pedagogy, it is possible to identify the "discursive strands" through which our own "subjectivities are constructed within particular regimes of truth" (McLaren,1995,p.54), how cultural regulation positions individuals and determines consciousness, and how individuals are "drawn into *collective* patterns of expectation and behavior" (Davis & Sumara,1997,p.114). Language provides the tools through which this identification and analysis can take place because language gives us the ability to hold an image in our mind by allowing us to name the world. As Berthoff (1990) suggests:

The hypostatic power of language to fix and stabilize frees us from the prison of the moment. ... By naming the world, we hold images in mind; we remember; we

can return to our experience and reflect on it. In reflecting, we can change, we can transform, we can envisage. (p.21)

Access to written language provides a means of exploring and comparing meaning that was not previously available. It also provides the means to construct new subjectivities and new meanings that can then be communicated (Berthoff, 1990; McLaren, 1995).

Literacy provides access to the regimes of truth and to the means by which the individual can re/construct subjectivity, can make meaning. This makes access to language, to literacy, an inherently political act.

Transformative Literacy

If we accept that literacy is empowering because it provides language tools with which to access the systems that produce and sustain the apparatus of truth, what are the implications for teaching practices? How do we create curriculum that teaches more than just the code and mimics human interactions from which concepts are formulated? How do we incorporate Foucault's theories into a usable pedagogy?

I turned for help to the work of pedagogues Paulo Freire and Anne Berthoff, and psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Berthoff, who draws heavily on the work of I.A. Richards, Freire and Vygotsky, wrote that simply decoding and interpreting are not sufficient to qualify as literacy. Berthoff (1990) writes:

There is no authentic literacy if it does not serve the making of meaning. ... If we hold that literacy essentially means construing and constructing letters, without regard for meaning, we will be unable to understand why becoming literate, in this sense, has no necessary consequences. If *meaning* is reduced to meaning graphic codes, without accounting for social contexts and cultural frameworks, then we shouldn't be surprised when this so-called literacy turns out to have no social significance or political consequences. (p.140)

At the heart of a literacy that has social significance or political consequences is access to language which can "affirm and challenge ... how we understand our social conditions (and) produce critiques that have the potential to construct new realities" (Britzman, 1991, p. 12). Therefore, teachers need to trade in their tests of reading comprehension and their lists of topics for writing, and develop curriculum which is more critical and analytical. Teachers need to create curriculum at the micro-level which is transformative. Teachers need to stop using pedagogies of exhortation and replace them with pedagogies of knowing in which students can reflect upon their social and political location, and be in control of the process of their own re/creation, their own transformation.

The process of re/creation requires reflection. Through reflection individuals can come to understand the participation of 'regimes of truth' in the formation of the self. However, reflection must take place in an interactive dialogic practice, through interaction with others and with the self. As individuals interact with others, they reflect internally upon what they learn externally, thereby making their own meaning. For literacy to be transformative students need to make meaning of their lives. This requires the skills of reading and writing but it also requires the opportunity to reflect, and to make meaning through dialogue, a social and interactive practice.

A Pedagogy Of Knowing

Reflection is a key component in the transformative literacy, the pedagogy of knowing, of Paulo Freire (1970). "A pedagogy of knowing converts learners to agents who are actively aware of what they are doing" (Berthoff, 1990, p. 118). Freire's work is based on his criticism of the "banking" or "prescriptive" style of education for the part it plays in preventing the oppressed from rising out of their situation. Freire criticized the

banking style of education for being "rooted in the notion that all students need to do is consume information fed to them by a (teacher) and be able to memorize and store it" (hooks,1994,p.14). In the "banking" style of education, students are passive receivers, meek receptacles of knowledge that is "deposited" (Freire,1970,p.60) in them, devoid of context. Instead, Freire felt that education should be a communication-embodying, "problem-posing" system wherein teachers and students are mutually involved in a dialogue that generates words and themes. This provides participants with the tools to name the world, to make meaning, a process which becomes transformative or liberatory.

A significant feature of the work of Freire is he not only informed us of his approach to literacy but also provided a model from which teachers could develop their own curriculum. Freire provided the 'praxis'. His own work with Brazilian peasants modeled his combination of theory and action at work. One of his objectives in literacy education was to teach the students the skills that they required to look critically at their own situation and to transform their dependence upon their oppressors into independence. Like Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963), he began by using his students' own simple but essential objects as "key words". These objects were used to teach literacy skills and to initiate dialogue, a form of reflection, which served to uncover the themes that were of importance to the students, the generative themes. Continued dialogue and reflection on these themes served to promote conscientization, or critical consciousness, and to demythologize perceived realities about their situations. Students could begin to view themselves not as objects but as creators of their own knowledge upon which further curriculum could be built. His work demonstrated the importance of education in promoting conscientization.

Conscientization

Conscientization is "consciousness of consciousness as consciousness" (Freire, 1970, p. 66) or "the discovery of the mind in action" (Berthoff, 1990, p. 25). In the context of the individual in society, conscientization is "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 19). Although education itself is not necessarily political action, education is indispensable to political action because of the transforming power of language which provides the means of making meaning. Freire demonstrated how Brazilian peasants learned to read and write through the gathering of lists of generative words from which they developed the themes, or the threads, running through their lives. The students were making meaning as they learned the graphic codes of their language.

Teaching critical consciousness to students who are already 'literate', or have mastered the codes, means to teach them to look and look again at the "topography of their own lives" (Berthoff, 1990, p. 123). By having them return again and again to their "representative anecdotes" (Burke in Berthoff, 1990, p. 124), they learn "to think about their thinking and to interpret their interpretations" (Berthoff, 1990, p. 124) and language provides the means to that end. "(B)y interpreting our interpretations ... we make the meanings which will serve as the means for making further meaning" (ibid., p. 59).

The process of making meaning is characterized by reciprocal social interactions. In the problem-posing education proposed by Freire both the teacher and the student learn through dialogue with one another. It demands communication between teacher and student wherein the dichotomy between teacher and student

disappears. The teacher and the student become co-investigators through dialogue. Dialogue is "indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality" (Freire,1970,p.71). "Only dialogue ... is ... capable of generating critical thinking. ... Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (ibid.,p.81).

At the heart of this process is literacy and the transforming power of language (Berthoff,1990,p.121). "Freire's pedagogy of knowing is based on the principle that all human beings read the world; we all make sense of our experience, construing and constructing and representing it by means of *language* and his pedagogy takes advantage of the fact that imagination is 'the prime agent of all human perception', that the forming power of mind is God-given and species-specific" (Berthoff,1990,p.120, my italics).

What's Wrong with Prescription?

The 'banking' style of education which fosters regimes of truth is served by prescription and is antithesis to a pedagogy of knowing. Freire (1980) writes "Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness" (p.31), or the 'regime of truth'. Traditionally, educational research has supported change that is externally imposed, rather than change that originates in the classrooms. It has been imposed by institutions whose interests are served by maintaining particular 'regimes of truth'. One such regime of truth is that of our growth-oriented consumer culture that is supported by capitalist technology.

Ursula Franklin's (1990) discussion of prescriptive technologies in her series of lectures titled 'The Real World of Technology', is interesting because although she

does not acknowledge the work of Freire, her discussion of the social implications of the mindset behind the use of mechanical technology that has so thoroughly permeated the lives of people in developed countries demonstrates how people conform to a 'prescription' that they come to believe is 'true'. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire described the role that prescription plays in normalizing oppression. However, the physical context of Brazilian peasants must seem at times a bit distant for some readers. Franklin's discussion of mechanical technology in modern societies is perhaps more accessible, more real, to citizens of the developed world. Her work is also reminiscent of Foucault, and Habermas, the latter of whom argued:

that science and technology have become a form of ideology, a distortion of reality, which serves vested interests and prevailing institutions. In other words, science has become itself a social institution which no longer serves the interests of men but instead makes men its servants, enslaving their critical faculties, perpetuating the existing state of affairs. (Gould & Truitt, 1973, p.8)

Franklin argues that technology is a system, or a set of practices, that is not pre-ordained but is a social invention. Technology is a way of doing something. She distinguishes between prescriptive and holistic technologies and describes the social consequences of our faith in and practice of prescriptive technologies. Holistic technologies, which are usually associated with the work of artisans, are those in which the doer has total control over the process of creating a product. Holistic technologies have fallen into disfavor in our production-oriented society because of their unpredictability. For example, as the artisan works, the product may be altered slightly as she makes decisions about how to change the process or the product.

Prescriptive technologies, on the other hand, are those in which each step of the process of creating a product is carried out by a separate worker, who is not making decisions about the process but following carefully prescribed instructions on the

process. The products of prescriptive technologies are very predictable and this serves production interests.

According to Franklin, the social implications of prescriptive technologies are significant. Prescriptive technologies have created a culture of compliance by eliminating "the occasions for decision-making and judgement in general and especially for the making of *principled* decisions"(p.25, the author's italics). Prescriptive technologies are "designs for compliance" (p.23) because the external control and internal compliance that are the outcomes of prescriptive technologies have come to be regarded as normal and have spread beyond the field of mechanical technology into government and social services, including education. As a society, we only see the efficiency of such technologies and do not question the social costs of such models. We are enmeshed in a regime of truth and participate in a discourse that does not enable us to question it.

A Lack of Reciprocity

The limitations of the discourse within which we function is demonstrated by the realities of 'communication technologies', which Franklin suggests should be called 'non-communication technologies' because most modern communication technologies do not facilitate reciprocity. Message-transmission technologies that make possible radio, television, film and video "have created a host of pseudorealities based on images that are constructed, staged, selected, and instantaneously transmitted" (p.42). These "pseudorealities" are presented and eventually received as truth. In fact, Franklin compares the authority of the media today with that of the teachings of religion prior to the Reformation. This form of communication rules out reciprocity, or genuine communication between people. This serves to maintain the "pseudorealities" via

"pseudocommunities" of listeners and viewers that are joined only by their shared experience of having seen or heard what they then regard to be the same event. However, in order to promote change what is needed is an understanding and appreciation of how these images are created and structured.

This lack of reciprocity has altered human and political relations because it has limited the participation of most people in decision-making about their political, social and economic environment. Over time, this lack of participation has come to be normal and acceptable. The limited opportunities for participation in decision-making have allowed prescriptive technologies to function the same way as the confessional mode of discourse described by Foucault, in that they limit the "relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself" (Foucault in Gore, 199, p. 128). The moral code within which individuals make choices does not change, but individual decision-making or self-styling is determined by prevailing discourses, the practices of which "can identify people and give them their own definition" (Franklin, 1990, p. 31). Just as Foucault used the examples of the early Graeco-Romans and Christians to show how different technologies of the self affect the relationship between individuals and society, Franklin (1990) uses early Chinese bronze-making practices to the same purpose. She describes how the change from holistic to prescriptive technologies has affected Chinese social and political thought and behavior. She suggests that the solution to our culture of compliance can be compared to seeds growing up through soil well prepared by earthworms. These earthworms, individuals, need to return to a culture of reciprocity and human contact in which individuals talk about more than simply mundane topics such as the weather, but about issues of justice and fairness and equality, a culture within which experience is valued as much as knowledge. She also stresses that this discourse should center on

language as an expression of values and priorities, and on the actions of individuals and collectives.

What Does This Mean To ESL Teachers?

And so what does all this mean to me as an ESL teacher? Foucault discussed how regimes of truth function to normalize the behavior of members of society, but how power in the form of resistance at the micro level can be part of a global strategy of resistance to this normalization. He suggested reflection as a strategy to investigate power relations and the struggle around them. Freire identified how a banking style of education is prescriptive and plays a part in maintaining the regimes of truth, in normalization, in his example, to keep the oppressed from changing their situation. He and Berthoff showed how literacy can be transformative through reflection and dialogue. Franklin identified how prescription, in the form of the mindset of mechanical technologies, functions as a regime of truth in developed countries to create a culture of compliance. She believes that to combat the culture of compliance and prevent the world becoming "an unlivable techno dump" (1990,p.130) will require a return to a discourse based on human experience and communication, rather than human isolation and ignorance. Though each of these theorists are from different academic fields, their work contains common elements which I would like to incorporate into a pedagogy of knowing, of meaning making, in my classroom. Before I attempt to discuss the ramifications that this has for my classroom practice, or what this means to ESL teachers, I will discuss the work of Lev Vygotsky, who was concerned with the actual workings of the mind, with how people learn, with the mind in action.

Sociocultural Theories of Language

The dialogic nature and transformative goals of Freire's problem-posing education and other progressive pedagogies share, or are derived from, certain elements of the sociocultural theories of learning and development of Lev Vygotsky and his followers.

Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist who maintained that learning is a dialogic and dialectic practice between the internal and external. The external, the social context, feeds the internal, where reflection and transformation take place. Exterior dialogues, or outer speech, become internalized as they are transformed into inner speech. As inner speech is internalized, it contributes to an awareness of thought processes, or a sense of mind (Belenky et al,1986). In other words, Vygotsky believed that learning could not take place out of context; that is, what is learned (knowledge) cannot be separated from how it is learned (cognition) and that all learning is contextually situated (Brown, Collins & Duguid,1989; Berthoff,1990; Scarcella & Oxford,1992). Together, this dialectic of thought and language, is a unified representation of meaning (Berthoff,1990).

Vygotsky's beliefs challenged the reigning developmental theories of his day that posited that learning resulted from a certain level of mental development, or that learning and mental development coincided. Vygotsky argued that learning, being social in nature, triggers developmental processes, not vice versa. He also maintained that development was not linear, but a "complex dialectical process" (John-Steiner & Souberman,1978,p.121) that was "historically shaped and culturally transmitted" (ibid.,p.122).

Vygotsky regarded speech, or language, which is a sign system, as a psychological tool and he was interested in what part it plays in mediating human action. He felt that "it is meaningless to assert that individuals 'have' a sign, or have mastered it, without addressing the ways in which they do or do not use it to mediate their own actions or those of others" (in Wertsch, 1991, p.25). In other words, it is not enough to simply recognize a letter or a word, to know the code. What is important is how the 'sign' is used. Perhaps, like the Graeco-Romans of Foucault's investigation, Vygotsky was interested in how people used language and texts to 'govern' themselves or to constitute their 'selves'. Like Berthoff he was interested in how people make meaning with these tools.

Vygotsky's understanding of the dialogic nature of learning is represented by his notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky in Cole et al, 1978, p.86). This reflects his belief that "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (ibid., p.88). He demonstrated the dynamics of the ZPD in the context of language learning in children. He maintained that children, prior to being able to communicate, perceive a "unit of meaning" which they then communicate within a social context, using what language they have available to them. Interaction with a more skillful person, such as a parent or a teacher, or even a peer, provides new language that they then convert to internal speech upon which they then reflect to create meaning. In other words, the interpsychological, or external, becomes intrapsychological, or internal, and the internal plane of consciousness is formed when aspects of patterns of activity

performed on an external plane come to be executed on an internal plane (Wertsch, 1985). These interpersonal uses of language are linked to the development of the cognitive intrapersonal functions of speech (John-Steiner, 1985, p. 353).

Therefore, in Vygotsky's model, the parent or teacher or peer who provides the dialogue required to develop language does not simply provide language skills of speaking and listening but also models the discursive format, the process of knowing, from which the learner can make meaning. For example, the more experienced participant can model asking questions, of herself or the learner, in order to work through a problem, or to generate and explore new ideas. Dialogue models "that constant movement from the particular to the general and back again which for Vygotsky is the defining characteristic of concept formation" (Berthoff, 1990, pp. 23/45).

'Dialogue' in written form plays an equally important role in concept formation because it contributes to a "deeper, more conscious awareness" (John-Steiner, 1985, p. 351) of language and thought processes. Language is the key to dialogue and to the movement between the internal and the external. Writing requires students to unite the diverse processes that constitute language. Children who are learning to write combine the speech skills that they unconsciously learn early in life with the skills and information that they are acquiring with more conscious intention and realization in middle childhood, such as in school and on the playground. As they learn to write, they are recording what they already know in combination with what they are learning. In the process, they become adept at formulating new concepts, and more aware of their own speech, which they acquired naturally and with little conscious attention (John-Steiner, 1985).

Vygotsky and Second Language Learning

Vygotsky's discussion of the contribution of literacy in the first language to the learning of a second language in a school setting demonstrates how learners mediate their actions through the use of psychological tools. Vygotsky felt that students who were aware of their own use of linguistic processes, in other words, were literate, in their first language would learn a second language more quickly. His analysis has been used by John-Steiner (1985) to account for the results of studies that showed that older children learn a second language more quickly than younger children. The older children are able to formulate abstract concepts and are aware of their own use of linguistic processes. They then make conscious use of that knowledge in learning the new language.

John-Steiner also looked at studies of how literate adult learners of second languages learn. These studies showed that successful adult learners rely on written materials more than younger learners not only because the adults' learning is less likely to take place in the context of shared activities, such as on a playground, but also because written materials allow students to draw more heavily on their knowledge of their own language. John-Steiner suggests that these results support Vygotsky's analysis of the central role of literacy in the interaction of first- and second-language development. The process of interaction that takes place between the first and second languages also results in a deepened knowledge of the first language and mastery of the two-"contributes to a more conscious understanding and use of linguistic phenomena in general" (John-Steiner, 1985, p.368).

In this chapter I have summarized the work of a diverse group of intellectuals because they each had something to say which rang true for me. Foucault showed how what we accept as truth, as the "one best way", is nothing more than a socially constructed truth that originates from social forces and not from individuals. Freire showed how the teaching of literacy within a critical pedagogy that is dialogic and reflective can transform lives as students uncover the regimes of truth that control their lives. Franklin provided a convincing discussion of the culture of compliance that is the result of our reliance on prescriptive mechanical technological modes of production. Vygotsky showed how the constant dialogue, the 'conversation', between the internal and external contributes to concept formation, and how consciousness of the mind in action contributes to learning. What each body of work has in common is that it discusses, in one context or another, how important it is that individuals participate in ongoing dialogues, with self and with others, and how ongoing dialogue can contribute to a better understanding and connection with one's self to combat the pressures of compliance and normalization at work in society. They also stress the importance of language in the process of constructing a self and the importance of understanding literacy as more than just an acquisition of a code. As I.E. Richards says, "(L)anguage is an instrument for controlling our becoming" (in Berthoff, 1990, p.14)

These theories and practices have all served to guide my praxis over the past few years, and will continue to guide it in the years to come. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the importance of praxis to individual practitioners interested in instituting change at the micro-level, and the contribution of reflection in constituting the self.

PRAXIS

"No theory is worth its salt if we can't determine what difference it would make to our own practice" (Richards in Berthoff, 1990, p. 138).

The tool through which teachers can bridge the dichotomy between the theory that they learn in university and their own 'personal practical knowledge' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988) gained in the classroom, and which is the key to emancipatory action research, is praxis. And one key to praxis, as practiced by Freire and others who are concerned with social reconstruction practices, is reflection (Gore, 1992).

Freire (1970) wrote about his work with Brazilian peasants to demonstrate praxis in action. He told of how his students, illiterate peasants, reflected upon their oppression and its causes and from this came the engagement, or conscientization, necessary in their struggle for liberation (p.33). This set Freire's work apart from that of some other noted critical pedagogues because he not only provided theory but also demonstrated how this theory could be practiced, and, in so doing, provided teachers with a method which can be used to render literacy transformative.

Conscientization is a result of a process of reflection. Reflection upon the world in combination with action upon the world constitutes 'praxis'. As Freire (1970) suggests, "(P)raxis, ... the reflection and action which truly transforms reality, is the source of knowledge and creation" (p.91). It is a dialogue between theory that is relevant to the world and practice that is nurtured by actions in the world, or rather, philosophy that becomes practical (Lather, 1991). It is a self-creative activity that requires the practitioner to not only reflect upon the dialogic relationship among knowledge, lived experience and theory, but also to act on it, thereby creating, on an

ongoing basis, a personal discourse of theory. Through praxis, educators have the capacity to intervene in the world (Britzman, 1991) and to "interpret the *conditions* that circumscribe identities and actions" (Davis & Sumara, 1997, p. 111, authors' italics).

The role of reflection is not limited to literacy education. It has been incorporated into different, and sometimes overlapping, discourses, such as the feminist pedagogy of Jennifer Gore (1992) and Patti Lather (1991); the engaged pedagogy of bell hooks (1994); the curriculum design of Clandinin & Connelly (1988); the critical autobiographical work of Madeleine Grumet (1981/87); educational research (Schulz, 1997); context and culture in language teaching (Kramsch, 1993); and the critical pedagogy of Ira Shor (1980). It is to reflective teaching that I looked to better understand how reflection can be used in my classroom to ensure that my practices are transformative.

Gore (1993) suggests that reflective teaching is:

teaching which attends, mindfully, to the social and political context of schooling as well as to technical and practical aspects, and which also assesses classroom actions on the basis of their abilities to contribute toward greater equity and social justice, and more humane conditions in schooling and society. (p. 149)

In other words, teachers must continually attend to the politics of what they do in their classrooms (Lather, 1991) and reflection and dialogue should serve to continuously question practices, not to reinforce them. Reflection aids the individual in seeking out the hidden curriculum that is inherent in their and others' actions and to ensure that they are not simply replacing one hidden curriculum with another. Teachers need to constantly examine their own beliefs and assumptions. Grumet (1981) writes that teachers must engage in critical reflection to avoid reinforcing the status quo because

"(p)rogressive education collapses into the most insidious form of co-optation unless accompanied by deep suspicion of our most cherished and most comfortable ideologies" (p.122).

In order to be attentive to their own involvement in reinforcing the status quo, teachers also need to be attentive to the discourses which are impacting on their own lives, and shaping their own interpretations of the world. Gore (1993) suggests that reflection offers the opportunity for teachers to "confront the technologies through which we make ourselves into subjects (and) through which we participate in our own subjectification" (p.155). This is analogous to what Foucault referred to as "care of the self" and what bell hooks (1994) calls "well-being" (p.15). hooks (1994) writes that "(p)rogressive, holistic education ... emphasizes well-being (which) means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (p.15). Teachers, like other members of society who lack or are denied the opportunities for reciprocal communication, need to learn and to be given the opportunity to practice reflection, in a sense to take stock of their situation, in dialogue with others or with their own writing practices, in order to study the confusion and disempowering forces that impact on their lives.

This need to practice reflection and initiate reciprocal communication is no less important for language teachers who face the complex process of "representing an institution that imposes its own educational values and initiating learners to the value of the foreign culture, while helping them not to be bound by either one" (Kramsch, 1993, p.257).

One result of the process of reflection and the aiding of reflective practices in others is that the teacher is always in a state of change and a process of becoming.

Change makes some people uncomfortable and this is perhaps one reason why many teachers, and others, avoid practices that initiate change. However, people living and working in rapidly changing communities such as the Lower Mainland need practices which help them understand and adapt to change through the encouragement rather than the suppression of dialogue.

Interaction

Dialogue is not only a conversation with another person. It is any form of interaction, including reflection. Reflection is interaction with one's own experience of reality. It counters the scientific method of knowledge gathering which has separated knowledge from personal experience. The knowledge that comes from reflection is knowledge that is gained from personal experience, and the experiences of others, learned through listening and sharing. It can be a conversation between peers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p.176); a reader's reading of a "writerly" (Olsen, 1990) text; a feminist teacher and scholar expressing her rage in print (Lewis, 1993); a teacher's dialogue with her practices (Clandinin and Connelly, 1988) or with herself (hooks, 1994); a student writing a master's thesis. To Connelly & Clandinin (1988) reflection is "a dynamic interaction among persons, things, and processes" (p.7) which can take place even in a quiet classroom where:

interactive tensions (are) at work: students' minds at work on the text, or possibly at play in imagination ... the teacher responding to journals and thinking ... the underlying awareness that students have of each other and that they all have of the teacher. (p.7)

Interaction contributes to the character of the classroom, and the knowledge that emerges from the classroom comes in part from the opportunities for interaction in the classroom (Davis & Sumara, 1997).

Part of what I have done in constructing this thesis, which is part of the ongoing process of praxis, of weaving together reflection and action to transform my own practice, is to try to provide myself and my students with numerous opportunities for reflection, with the aim of providing pedagogy that facilitates the students' awareness of their location in the classroom and outside of it, as well as providing instruction that is meaningful, interactive, experiential, and critical. This thesis is part of the process of finding out what it means to provide that kind of instruction and how to do it within the specific confines of my classroom. Part of my dilemma is that while I am trying to provide curriculum that contains all the elements that I have discussed in the previous pages, curriculum that is interactive, problem-posing, dialogic, reflective, transformative and contextual, I also do not want to be disrespectful of my students and the classroom context within which they are comfortable.

It is not proving to be easy but as hooks (1994) writes:

(a)ny classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if (teachers) refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks. (p.21)

The teacher risks failure but the commitment to social justice and empowerment must override the anxiety caused by experimenting with a different kind of pedagogy.

Teachers must somehow overcome this anxiety and not retreat to their previous practices.

Reflective Practice

So I have had to practice what I am hoping to preach, going back and reflecting on some of the experiences that have shaped who I am in the classroom. I have had to "look and look again" using various 'technologies of the self' in the practice of the 'care of the self' to identify the 'regimes of truth' that have shaped who I am as a teacher.

Beginning in a graduate qualitative research course in which we were required to keep 'commonplace books' to facilitate ongoing dialogue with ourselves and our instructors, and through later course work and prior to writing this thesis, I tried being reflective, thinking and writing about what I was experiencing in my classroom in terms of the theories about which I was thinking and writing as a graduate student.

A commonplace book is a book in which an author can keep any bit of general information that is of interest. The author can record a passage from a text, personal thoughts, facts, experiences, quotations from conversations, drawings, and anything else that might be of use in the composition of the author's own theory and knowledge and sense of self (Blair, 1992; Sumara, 1996). My commonplace book, a rather ordinary notebook, was almost always with me. I would pull it out during lulls in class time and hurriedly record what I was seeing and to try to see it differently. When I was angry at the students or at myself, or simply having a bad day, I would write a few pages in the book to vent that anger, going back over it the next day to add my thoughts about why I had acted the way I had. I would do the same when something positive happened. When driving to work or sitting on the bus, I would pull the book out at stop lights and quickly jot down thoughts that came to me on the journey. The idea to compare my teaching to my experience as a kayaker came one weekend when I took my notebook

on the water and used the relationship between a kayak and the constantly shifting waters beneath it as a metaphor for my location in the classroom, paddling one way across the surface while being pulled another way by invisible undercurrents. When I sat down with my professional peers to discuss how we were doing I would write down what I learned from our talk. I talked with fellow teachers and graduate students who had had educational experiences similar to mine and those whose experiences had been quite different, including teachers who had been educated in the same countries as some of the students, such as Korea and China. To date I have three of these notebooks as well as pages and pages of material produced on my computer at home, where I also wrote about whatever pedagogical incident came to mind.

I wrote a lot and I learned a lot, about my 'self' not only as a teacher but also as a student. The confusion that I was feeling about my identity as a teacher was set within the complex and competing "chronologies of becoming" that Deborah Britzman (1991) identified in her study of the contradictory realities of student teachers doing their teaching practicums in secondary schools. Britzman identifies four chronologies that each represent "different and competing relations to power, knowledge, dependency, and negotiation, and (authorize) frames of reference that effectuate discursive practices in teaching" (p.56). The first chronology is that of a student before entering university, the second a student in university and teacher education, the third a student teacher and the fourth a newly arrived teacher. I have taken the liberty of adding on the chronologies that follow as a teacher adds year upon year, and experience upon experience to her teaching portfolio, as well as the personal chronologies that run simultaneously to the professional. Britzman suggests that these chronologies contribute to a "site of socialization" that is "a contested terrain" and an individual who is a "site of struggle" (p.56). Britzman adopts a definition of

socialization, a view of becoming (a teacher), that is dialogic, a "complexity of negotiation and dependency" (p.56), challenging the functionalist idea that student teachers simply internalize the subculture of the group in which they find themselves. Instead, the discourse of the group competes with the other discourses of an individual's multiple identities. My identity as a teacher struggles with my identity as a student, as well as with my other identities, professional and personal.

I went back through my own 'chronology'. I returned to my high school, university, student teaching and teaching days and wrote and thought about what I had experienced, about the positive and negative incidents that have stuck in my mind for the past ten to twenty years and tried to clarify why I have the expectations that I do have as a teacher, to discover where those expectations have come from and how they have worked for or against me. I took the time to write about particular moments that had fixed themselves in my memory for years and about which I had never really thought. I asked why these particular moments had stayed with me and I recorded everything that I could remember about the time and circumstances. Then I tried to understand them in light of what I had learned since. It was an interesting task that yielded some answers and many more questions while providing insights into what sometimes troubles me in my classroom.

It was perplexing, in light of my perception that my progressive practices conflict with my students' conservative practices, to realize that my own educational experiences in a more 'conservative' or 'traditional', setting, were the ones which I had enjoyed and had taught me to think, analyze, critique and express myself. Yet it is the conservative model of education that my students have experienced that conflicts with my teaching style which in turn appears to conflict with my own experience. It seems to me that our expectations should not clash, as I have very traditional expectations for

classroom behavior. I am generally unsympathetic towards tardiness, I expect to be listened to when I'm speaking and I expect students to do homework. The difference lies in the learning process itself. I have tried not to be prescriptive. I do not have a bevy of facts that I wish my students to learn. I have a lot of knowledge but not all of my knowledge is necessarily of relevance to them. I am a resource that they can draw on and I try to structure my classes so that all I have to offer is available to them but I require their input to determine how much of a contribution I should make. I give them a structure and stimulus but I try to draw out, on an individual basis, their knowledge, their ideas, their understanding of the world that we share. I try not to prescribe or to preach, though at times it is very difficult to stifle my own strong opinions, my own beliefs about what is right and wrong. That would be to abuse the authority that I undeniably have, to use it to teach students who they should be, rather than encourage them to explore themselves.

This is not to say that learning experiences that took place within a less traditional model were not sometimes successful. However, the most difficult situations for me were the ones that purported to be 'progressive'. On the surface they were less structured and more concerned with issues of personal integrity and creativity, but they did not acknowledge the authority and the power of the teacher over the students. The teachers seemed unwilling to acknowledge that this power existed and could be and was wielded. For example, classes that expected the students to delve into and expose more personal issues were the ones that violated the integrity of students who did not want to participate at that level. The expectation was that students would only benefit from and would welcome with relief such participation, and some students did, but non-participation was not an option for those who were not in synch with the objectives and philosophies of individual teachers. For me, such experiences were

excruciating. There was no opportunity for reciprocity or to air grievances. Even today, at the conclusion of the semester, graduate students are given an assessment form to complete, safe in anonymity from reprisals. But what does it accomplish if the frustration of the previous thirteen weeks has been bottled up or shared only with equally irate students for the duration of the course?

So I tried to locate my present struggle in my own experience, as a student and as a teacher, though I have found it difficult to clearly identify any common thread that runs through a naturally complex array of experiences. My beliefs about teaching appear to clash with my students' preferred style of "learning", and yet I use my authority to have things my way at the same time as I remember how painful it was to have another person's way imposed on me. However, I have realized that it wasn't simply that I objected to the way I was being taught so much as I was not given the opportunity to question it. My most valuable learning experiences have taken place in settings which gave students a voice if they wished to express it but also gave them the option to keep quiet. They were also experiences that gave students the responsibility to learn, with the instructor there to provide guidance, to provide the fruits of her experience and knowledge, but not to prescribe.

I also learned that although my students want their teacher to take the reins of the class to a much greater degree than I am comfortable, they respond positively to being given a voice in the classroom. At this point, I am unable to resolve the problem of different expectations for student and teacher behavior but I have realized that the students generally respond positively to being encouraged to contribute. They seem to want to have a dialogue with someone who is sincerely listening to them and respects their input, however high the language barrier.

During the early part of my graduate work, I conducted and recorded round table discussions with groups of four or five students from different countries, encouraging them to talk about their experiences as students in their 'home' countries. It was a difficult task because of the limited English skills of the students. However, I was able to garner information from the students that clarified what I had previously heard or read about schools in Asia. They talked of their relationships with their teachers. Some of them, mostly girls it seemed, had had good relationships with teachers. Yet, many of the boys had clearly been abused. Some of the students had been hit by teachers. In fact, one student said his jaw had been broken by a teacher. They also talked of large classes and mountains of homework. I have to admit that I heard little that I judged to be positive and much that I judged negative.

However, the most valuable learning experience that I garnered from these meetings was quite different from what I had expected. Two young Taiwanese boys who took part in the first discussion asked if they could participate in the next, ostensibly to practice their English. However, it was during one of these subsequent discussions that we stumbled onto the upheaval that was taking place within their friendship. Later, I sat down privately with them and a third boy, who was involved, and we waded through the problem, one boy in tears, another angry at the first for breaking a confidence and the third helplessly trying to mend the damage that was fracturing this close-knit trio. In the end, the problem was resolved and the boys seemed to settle back into their old friendship but I also found that my relationship with them had changed. We seemed to have become friends. In class they were happier and participated more. In journals, they revealed more of their lives? They told me jokes and they told me when they weren't happy with me. By the end of the semester, I felt that much had been accomplished, much that, on the surface, had little to do with

learning English. The boys were much more comfortable voicing their thoughts and actively sought out opportunities to do so, however inappropriate some of their opportunities were. They no longer seemed to be constrained by their roles as student. Rather, they seemed to grasp at opportunities to tell a teacher how they felt about things. Since I don't speak Chinese these conversations had to take place in English, thereby facilitating their engagement in learning their new language. It was the opportunity to be themselves that engaged their interest rather than the manner in which they were being taught.

How have I incorporated my observations into my own teaching? I have tried to give my students as much opportunity as possible to express themselves while developing their skills, such as writing. In all my classes, students keep journals in which I respond to what they write. This isn't necessarily new but most of my students have never kept a journal before. If I tell them they can write about anything they want, confusion and discomfort reign. With encouragement some students will proceed cautiously, perhaps safely copying a paragraph from a previous class, or writing their biography. If a student is really stuck I devise a topic through asking questions until we find something about which they have something to say. Some students jump in immediately, writing stories, writing about their families, what they do on the weekends. Sometimes when I am reading their journals I sense a problem, perhaps dissatisfaction with a homestay situation, homesickness, or illness, and I write questions addressing what I have read. Sometimes students respond to my questions and sometimes they ignore them. I have gone entire semesters commenting on what a student has written and asking questions, and have had every word I've written, as far as I can tell, completely ignored. I have invited criticism and have received damning assessments of my teaching, my physical appearance, other students, Canada, and so on. Such

criticisms and tirades, are sometimes hard to respect but I remember when I have had no outlet for my frustration and anger and so I read the journals again and again, reflecting, trying to place myself in the student's place, trying to work through my own reaction to what I am reading, searching for ways to work out the differences so that all parties are satisfied. I try to respond to them honestly and explain my behavior. It has never backfired on me. I don't know how it could. I have to respect their opinions just as I expect them to respect mine. It gives me valuable insights into how they are feeling, what they are thinking, feelings and thoughts that sometimes cannot be expressed face to face because of the potential for embarrassment, or tears, or because their spoken English doesn't allow them to express themselves well enough. It gives them and me a chance to sort through what they are experiencing. When I comment on what they have said, they might leave it at that, unwilling to say more. Or they may respond to my response, perhaps telling me they have worked through a problem or their anger. But the door is always open for more, either in their writing or in person.

Final exams in writing classes are always difficult because first, they demand topics about which students can write and second, during the semester writing is a long drawn out process of writing, rewriting, editing and revising which must now be compressed into a two- or three- hour time slot. The institutional requirements of exams conflict with the realities of the subject. Therefore, I always assign a selection of topics that are modifications of topics about which they have already written and which were derived from their own work, not assigned by me. I also ask them to assist me in preparing for the next semester's class by writing a frank assessment of the class. For this, full marks are automatically granted no matter how little or how much or what is written. By this time in the semester, the relationship I have with each student is

cemented and the students who trust me, successful and not so successful alike, are very frank. Like the journals, I invite their criticisms and therefore, I have to consider them carefully though sometimes it is hard. I am often surprised by what they observe as they comment on how I have perhaps not treated another student fairly, or become angry when it was inappropriate, or how I have bored them. There are always positive comments but it seems difficult to dwell on those. But no matter how wrong or right I think they are, how fair or unfair, I think of the opportunities I didn't have to do the same and I try to welcome and honor their input for it is this kind of dialogue that contributes to learning, both theirs and mine, and is part of the ongoing dialogue which I would like to become second nature to them.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore what role praxis - reflection plus action - has played in my classroom and can play in the future. Praxis gives teachers opportunity to combine theory with their own experiences to develop their own personal theories of teaching, particular to their own teaching situation. One key to praxis is reflection, which is a form of interaction or dialogue, with others or with oneself, in spoken or written form. Teachers who are interested in providing transformative pedagogy can use reflection as a tool to explore their own role in maintaining the status quo. However, reflection also plays a part in the care of the self. Through reflection, teachers can identify the forces that impact on their lives and interpret their own beliefs and assumptions.

In this chapter, I briefly discussed the results of my own reflections on my experiences as a student and a teacher. They are certainly not conclusive but they were not intended to be. In fact, they encouraged me to question the premise upon which the thesis is based. However, they have provided a number of paths to follow,

some of which have been included in this thesis and some which have not. My own reflections on my practice encouraged me to give my students much more of a voice in the classroom because it seems to engage them in their learning. However, I have also had to realize and respect that some students do not want to participate to the same extent as others and that that reluctance must also be respected. Different practices suit different students. Just as I cannot be entirely conclusive about what practices worked for me, I cannot make universal statements about what works for all of my students but my understanding of praxis gives me a method with which I can tie together the theory that I have learned in the classroom with my own practices.

However, what part does reflection play in progressive pedagogy? hooks (1994) links progressive, holistic education with reflection in her statement about teachers being actively committed to a process of self-actualization. Having realized that some of most positive learning experiences occurred in settings that were more conservative, what can I say about my own pedagogy? I thought that my pedagogy was 'progressive'. However, I had little idea of what that really meant.

Perhaps my teaching isn't as progressive as I think it is. What is the difference between my teaching and that of my high school History teacher who spent two years reading his notes to us and testing us on our memorization of dates and names? Why do I remember and value experiences from a school which was so 'traditional' that it required students to stand when the teacher came into the room? What is progressive pedagogy to ESL curriculum that is not content based? I didn't really know what this label meant and yet I seemed to encounter it repeatedly, in texts, at conferences, in policy statements, in conversation. It seemed to be a nebulous word, jargon, bandied about to criticize anything that wasn't new. Before I could understand how it

contradicted my students' experiences, I had to find out what it meant to teach progressively.

PROGRESSIVE PEDAGOGY

Progressive pedagogies, as practiced in schools, are "alternative approaches which reflect (educators') rejection of competitive and individualistic models of academic success" (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 218). A characteristic of progressive pedagogy in general is that students are more active in their own learning. "(S)tudents create their own texts and media, work collectively and cooperatively, practice peer and group evaluation, instruct themselves and each other and exchange self-discipline for hand-raising" (Shor, 1980 in Gore, 1993, p. 105). Progressive pedagogies replace the banking style of education in which students are merely depositories of information which is to be memorized and reproduced (Freire, 1974). Teachers are encouraged to make their classroom environment and practices anxiety-free and to allow their students to work creatively, interactively and collaboratively. Many recent ESL student and teacher texts reflect the progressive approach to pedagogy (Amato, 1988; Kramsch, 1993; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Raimes, 1983; Smoke & Maidstone, 1995).

One of the key elements of progressive pedagogies is cooperation, as opposed to competition. Cooperation is thought to be crucial to learning. Oxford and Scarcella (1992) list some of the benefits of cooperation as being "higher self-esteem, increased confidence and enjoyment, more respect for the teacher, the school, and the subject; greater and more rapid achievement; use of higher-level cognitive strategies; decreased prejudice; increased altruism and mutual concern" (Oxford & Scarcella, 1992, p. 60). Competition, though it can be beneficial, "often results in anxiety, inadequacy, guilt, hostility, withdrawal, and fear of failure" (ibid.). Cooperation is thought to be of added importance to ESL practices because communication depends

on cooperation. The added advantages of cooperation in the ESL classroom are "stronger motivation; increased satisfaction for teachers and students; more language practice; more feedback about language errors; and greater use of varied language function" (Oxford & Scarcella, 1992, p.60).

However, the increased use of cooperative teaching in language learning can be problematic because "cooperation is not always second nature to language learners, especially in the ESL setting. ESL teachers need to help learners see how to use cooperation" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p.60). Judith Langer (1988), commenting on Vygotskian notions of collaborative learning and peer response groups, says that "practical efforts have ignored a basic premise of the theory, that collaboration is a socially learned way of learning that may be readily available to some students and not to others" (p.350).

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) draw on Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to describe how students' language use improves with the assistance of a more-skilled peer or a teacher. Vygotsky's work did not ignore second language acquisition but his theories have only been applied quite recently to adult second language acquisition. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) have drawn on a proposal by Tharp and Gallimore (1988) for a language learner's progression through the ZPD, from Stage One in which assistance is provided by more capable others, such as teachers or peers, to Stage Three in which speech is internalized and produced automatically. In the ZPD, a more competent language learner slowly passes responsibility of the dialogue to the student, whereupon the new language undergoes creative construction, or "the subconscious process by which language learners gradually organize the language they hear, according to the rules they construct to understand and generate sentences" (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, in Oxford &

Scarcella,1992,p.19). Thus, the learners "creatively construct their new language" (Oxford and Scarcella,1992,p.19).

Communication as Acculturation

Communication is assumed to be the purpose of language learning and communication is ideally a reciprocal interactive process. Cummins and Cameron (1994) stress that effective instruction for ESL students should be "genuinely interactive insofar as it provides ample opportunities and incentives to use written and oral language actively for communicative purposes" (p.32). They suggest these opportunities could include "many forms of collaborative learning, drama, and project-oriented instruction that integrate reading and writing with critical dialogue among students and between students and teacher" (p.32). In fact, as Wertsch (1991) stresses, "reciprocal teaching encourages children to switch from a univocal orientation toward written text to a dialogic orientation" (p.142).

Sociocultural theories of language view communication as a process of acculturation. Through language children are socialized into the dominant culture. The use of language is:

a tool of immense power ... (which) ensures that linguistically created meanings are shared meanings, social meanings. Words that already have meaning for mature members of a cultural group come to have those same meanings for the young of the group in the process of interaction. Collaboration with another person, either an adult or a more competent peer, in the zone of proximal development thus leads to development in culturally appropriate ways. (Tudge,1990,p.157)

Therefore, teaching of language in best done in context.

Student Responsibility

In encouraging students to work more cooperatively and collaboratively, progressive pedagogies place much more of the responsibility for learning on the student. The students are front and center in their own learning process and the teacher takes on the role of facilitator. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) write:

Others may help along the way, but in the long run, the learner's enthusiasm and desire to learn shape the quality of both the process and product of language learning. ... The student's language learning task is made easier by the *assistance* (emphasis added, Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p.vii) of the teacher, who serves as a guide and companion as well as a motivator, counselor and analyst of needs. (vii)

The students are considered central to their own learning process, actively negotiating the instruction, which is dynamic and interactional, as teachers shape their teaching to the developing needs of their students. The teacher takes on a "helper" rather than "knower" role and provides the conditions for the process by initiating, observing, analyzing, trying to understand, guiding, and evaluating the process (Penner, 1995). John-Steiner (1985) notes that the "few studies that do exist in (the area of strategies used in second-language learning) highlight the importance of the second-language learner's active participation in his or her learning, both in immersion situations and in classroom settings" (p.352).

This approach is not intended to absolve teachers of responsibility for the students' learning. Teachers are responsible for providing a positive learning environment and for bringing to bear all their professionalism. However, it does suggest fundamental differences between the expectations of the students and their

teacher. Scarcella and Oxford understate the case somewhat when they say that there "may be some conflict between the teacher's view of learning and the learners" (p.6)

Larsen-Freeman (1986) discusses this reallocation of responsibility in her comments on the work of cognitive psychologists and transformational-generative linguists, who feel that language is the result of rule formation. They think that learners must use their own thinking processes to discover the rules; although just having knowledge of the language forms, meanings, and functions is not sufficient. Learners must be able to use their knowledge in communication, or interaction, which is the process through which meaning becomes clear. In this approach, meaning is considered to be as important as form.

Dialogue in Reading and Writing

Perhaps recent trends in the teaching and learning of reading and writing best reflect the interactive approach to learning. For one thing, the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing is no longer being ignored and the two subjects are not necessarily separated anymore. The amount of reading in the ESL writing classroom and the ways ESL writing teachers approach reading are now changing, and the knowledge about the relationships among the elements of writer, text, and reader, is being reviewed, researched and revised. The major change in these relationships has been one of perspective: from the linear transmission models of reading, in which text information was said to be transferred directly from the text to the passive receptive reader, to an interactive model in which the reader and the writer participate in the making of meaning.

However, it is difficult for students to understand the 'reader' to be anyone other than their teacher. As Raimes (1983) writes:

Traditionally, the teacher has been not so much the reader as the judge of students' writing. Teachers correct errors in grammar and spelling, they make evaluative comments like "Very good" or "Could be improved," and they rewrite the students' muddled sentences. Students have therefore seen writing as something where what they say is less important than the fact that the grammar and syntax follow the rules. (p.17)

It has also not been regarded as an interactive process even though interaction with other people is the most useful part of the writing process (Willis, 1993).

A recent publication called *A Canadian Writer's Workbook* (Smoke & Maidstone, 1995), which is described as "An Interactive Writing Text for ESL Students", reflects the interactive nature of recent approaches to teaching writing. In this book, reading and writing are seen as interrelated and the actual writing as a 'process' that requires students to not only write numerous drafts but also take part in a variety of prewriting activities with other students to generate ideas, giving and receiving feedback, and conferencing with the teacher. The teaching of grammar is treated as supplementary and for remedial purposes only. The emphasis is on revision wherein "teachers should encourage their students to experiment with different revision techniques to discover which ones work best for them (because each) writer is unique, and each writer's process is unique as well" (p.xxvi) and editing assignments which "involve students working on their own writing ... alone or in pairs ... (to) become more self-sufficient writers" (.xxvi). It does seem contradictory to ask students to interact with others at nearly every step of the writing process in order to become self-sufficient. However, when students work with others, they mimic the interaction that is part of the process of reflecting. This interaction, or movement between the internal and the external, is the process through which they generate ideas, or knowledge. They

become practiced at generating their own feedback. They return to their writing and try to view their work as an outsider.

The process approach concentrates on the process of writing rather than the written product. Raimes (1985) says:

Student writers in particular need to realize that what they first put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product but just a beginning, a setting out of the first ideas, a draft. They should not expect that the words they put on paper will be perfect right away. (p.10)

In fact, errors in these classrooms are considered a creative aspect of second language development, indicators of the learner's proficiency. "Errors ... serve as windows on the language acquisition process and ... should be seen as growth points" (Smith in Squire, 1991, p.358). Scarcella & Oxford (1992) write, "that the most effective language classroom is one that supports the learner's efforts to use language creatively" (p.21) giving students "a chance to be *adventurous* with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks" (Raimes, 1983, p.3). "Our principal job as teachers of composition is not to search for errors - that, after all, is what our students should be doing before they hand in their papers to us" (Raimes, 1983, p.22). "What students really need, more than anything else, is to develop the ability to read their own writing and to examine it critically, to learn how to improve it, to learn how to express their meaning fluently, logically, and accurately. They need to be able to find and correct their own mistakes" (ibid., p.149).

In order to achieve this, teachers who use the process approach give their students lots of time to explore a topic and lots of individual assistance and feedback. "The students do not write on a given topic in a restricted time and hand in the composition for the teacher to 'correct' ... Teachers who use the process approach give

their students ... *feedback* on the content of what they write in their drafts"

(Flaimes, 1983, p.10).

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) use the weaving of a tapestry as a metaphor for language learning. The tapestry is created and controlled by the learner with input from many sources, including the teacher, and the resulting tapestry, the degree of communicative competence, is unpredictable and dependent upon the learner. Ira Shor (1980), writing about his adult literacy classes, seems to agree about the unpredictable nature of progressive classes. He states that "each class cannot be standardized ... The structure of each class is shaped from the inside ... teacher and students. ... Each semester's work is most authentically described at its conclusion ..." (p.96). A teacher who creates a classroom environment that is respectful and enabling of student input will be unable to predict the outcome. That is left up to the students, who also will be unable to predict the outcome but will have greater control of it. For the students the outcome should be meaningful for learning to have taken place.

Meaning

What is 'meaning'? I once had to teach a grade 11 Social Studies class to students who had recently immigrated to Canada. It was in teaching this class that I realized what an uneven field these students were playing on. In that class, I, without thinking about it, understood the 'meaning' to be the content of the text books and the students' understanding of the content. However, even when the students could reproduce the information from the text, there was a vast empty space where the 'meaning' should have been. The students were able to do little more than memorize the innumerable new words on the pages of the text and regurgitate them as facts. Simply understanding the 'facts' and attempting to fill the enormous information gaps in

the cumulative ministry-prescribed curriculum took all our time. We never got any further in exploring 'meaning'.

Cummins and Cameron (1994) suggest that instruction for ESL students must focus "on content that is real, meaningful and relevant to students' lives ... " (p.32).

Canadian content is relevant to students' lives but is it "meaningful"? Life amongst the rain forests and mountains of Canada's west coast is relevant to students' lives, but is it "meaningful"? Folk tales from the students' own countries? Studies of racism?

Michael Jordan? Chinese New Year? What does it mean for content to be meaningful?

The struggle to find content that is meaningful in an ESL class where the medium is the content, not the message, has perplexed me. As the textbooks and my professional training suggest, in writing classes I used to assign topics and produced 'realia' about which students could write. In reading classes, I provided folk tales from the students' home countries, or when that didn't work, stories about Canada, or stories about the Michaels Jackson and Jordan, or other teenage icons. However, over the past few years I have altered my teaching. I rarely assign topics because I am incorporating into my teaching my understanding that, like many young children learning to write, ESL students' "knowledge and imaginative powers are far ahead of their ability to write" (Willis,1993,p.3). Part of my struggle is to find methods to assist students in putting those powers to use in learning to write (Squire,1991). In my Beginner class, I almost exclusively use stories written by the students. To kick-start their writing I might give some vocabulary that will appear in an upcoming story and ask that they use some of the vocabulary in their writing. I ask them to work in groups to generate ideas. This helps to overcome the oft-heard plaint "I no idea" (sic). I use students' errors, anonymously, to demonstrate how to correct problems. Prior to this change there seemed to be an emptiness to students' responses to my assigned

writing topics. Often I couldn't blame my students for being uninterested in the topics I assigned but it was difficult to find topics that appealed to everyone without being too general. Reading about these topics often bored me. I now resist the influence of my training and the teacher and student texts in that I do not assign topics. Instead, I try to squeeze topics from the students though many of them have never before had to go inside themselves for an idea, a thought, a desire about which to write, whose ideas don't seem to have been acknowledged. Ron Scapp, in an interview with bell hooks (1994) says, "Focusing on experience allows students to claim a knowledge base from which they can speak" (p.148). I try to bring the intrapersonal to the interpersonal. I try to help the students use that movement between the intrapsychological and the interpsychological, between the internal and external plane, to start writing, to experience the "allatoceness" (Berthoff, 1990, p.30) as they write, bringing together all they know and all they are experiencing that is new, into an idea that they can put on paper, struggling for the words in their new language, struggling to create their tapestry, their own meaning.

In this chapter I discussed the key characteristics of progressive pedagogies. Progressive pedagogies reject competition between students in favor of collaboration and cooperation, and require students to be more active in their learning. The teacher takes on a role of enabler, taking her cues from individual students' development.

Cooperation and collaboration facilitate the learning of language, which is a reciprocal and interactive process, as well as a process of acculturation. Interaction, the constant movement between the interpersonal and the intrapersonal, whether in spoken or written form, results in the construction of language and meaning. Language learning is facilitated by interactive activities in the subject areas of writing and reading.

The outcomes of this process are compared to tapestries which are woven by individual learners and which are unpredictable because they emerge from the learners' experiences.

However, cooperative learning is not second nature for many students. It is socially learned. It is a process of acculturation. The proponents of progressive pedagogies seem to assume that students come to progressive classrooms ready and able to work cooperatively and collaboratively, and to take responsibility for their own learning. This has not been the case in my ESL classes where students have come from educational systems that are reflective of their larger social systems and that do not encourage cooperation and collaboration, but rather competition. They do not encourage individual interpretation and creativity but expect rigid adherence to institutionally sanctioned interpretations. How could I expect my students to switch to an interactive style of learning after they had spent all their student years in systems that had quite different expectations for student and teacher participation?

THE STUDENTS

(These quotes have been taken from essays written by students in one of my writing classes. I have not corrected any of the errors.)

In Japan, teachers' attitudes are like gods, so no one can point out their mistakes. Therefore, if teachers say ravens are white, the ravens must be white ... Also, teachers don't greet students' questions well ... Japanese teachers don't care about student's personalities. They care about only students' records and judge students, by the records, whether the students are good or not" - Akeo, 18 years old

"In my native country, Hong Kong, ... (t)he main job of the students is to listen carefully in the class. ... Furthermore, group discussions are not very common in schools in Hong Kong. Students do not have many chances to express their own opinions and train their thinking ability. They do not like to answer the questions voluntarily and therefore gradually depend on their teachers to tell them the correct answers." - Alice, 19 years old

"In Hong Kong, ... (t)eacher and student, who like the parent and child, have the traditional thinking. They do not want their students or children thinking another way, since they just have teaching the right answer and students do not discuss with each other in the class." - Eddy, 18 years old.

"I remember when I was in Taiwan, I had to memorize some rules in my textbooks. For example, in my English class, my teacher asked me to memorize some unknown words, and told me which sentences were important. Consequently, if I remembered these words, I would get high marks in the test. In surface, maybe this kind of method was success, as I got high marks. Actually, this kind of education was failure, because after the test, no one could guarantee that I could remember these words for a long time." - Johnny, 18 years old

"Koreans spend a lot of money for children's education which is unbelievable and causes terrible problems. For instance, most mothers give some presents or money to teachers to get more attention for their children. ... Students in Korea can never say anything against teachers. ... (T)eachers show all about curricula and students don't have to create their ideas, opinions or own sentences." - Lydia, recent immigrant, mother of two elementary school children

"In Hong Kong, ... (w)e only had to write once about the topic and did not need to rēwrite." - Alice, 19 years old

"Now I understand that individual in the North American society is important. Writers should not point at what their readers "should" do, but give a lot of evidence or proofs to state or persuade the readers. This is an interesting different between Chinese and English writing ways, because writers in Taiwan doesn't this point too much." - Earl, 18 years old.

"I am sure that young student immigrants have hard times as well. We, especially Asians, have completely different school systems and teach methods so that students might easily get confused. For example, until high school in Korea, students don't write compositions or essays." - Lydia

"I remembered when I had been in this course, I had felt very afraid in that time. Maybe I couldn't accustom to this education style. Therefore, when teacher had been calling me to answer some questions, I felt my face and ears to become red. Now, the course is almost finished, and I think I can accustom this education system here. Consequently, I find some main ideas, which is different between Taiwanese and Canadian education, in the course now." - Johnny

"Although Hong Kong is ruled by England, the teaching mode is still influenced by Chinese tradition which is conservative and traditional. Most students don't like to take with teacher although they have questions or problems because the teachers are so serious. It is just like the relationship between parents and children in chinese society. Children always don't like to share their worry with parents due to the lack of mutual understanding. Therefore, there is a gap between teachers and students." - Marshall, 20 years old

" ... their view of the world ... reflects their situation in the world"
(Freire,1970,p.85)

" ... How are we to respond to the cultural "other" who is already in our midst ... "
(Carson,1990,p.838)

I am interested in what happens at the intersection of my students' ways of learning and my way of teaching because "(i)t is the *relations* among (things), not the things themselves, that are productive and, as such, of interest" (Davis &

Sumara, 1997, p. 118). However, it is necessary to understand the "things" themselves, in this case my students and me, before examining the "relations" between them.

In previous chapters, I discussed briefly my understanding of how my experiences as a student and teacher have affected my presence in the classroom. I also explored 'progressive pedagogy' to determine its relevance to my teaching. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at my students' experiences before attempting to discuss the implications of the intersection of the two.

According to sociocultural theories of learning, learners learn language and concept formation at the micro level from interaction with self, parents, teachers and peers. However, cultural, historical, and institutional factors determine the dynamics of the relationship. The mediation strategies used at the micro level are determined by sociocultural forces at the macro level. According to Carrell and Eisterhold (in Reid, 1992) the previously acquired background knowledge structures that each individual brings to their learning, *schemata*, are culturally specific. Therefore, writers, texts, and readers are deeply influenced by their sociocultural contexts (ibid.).

As structure-determined beings, teachers and students "are only capable of responding in the ways our structures permit. The result of a curricular intervention is ... determined ... by the learner's own complex histories and situations" (Davis et al, 1996, p. 160/1). The way in which learners attempt to learn a new language is determined by sociocultural factors. John-Steiner (1985) writes that "(t)he diverse ways in which learners approach the complex task of comprehending and processing a target language reflects, in part, culturally and educationally specific experiences" (p. 361). As an example, Wertsch (1991) draws attention to a study that showed how the verbal mediational strategies used by western children are privileged over the visual

mediational strategies used by Australian aboriginal children. (With this example he was also drawing attention to the ethnocentric bias that underlies the ideas of Vygotsky and contemporary investigators into the relationship between speech and thinking.)

This thesis was initiated by my suspicion that my own teaching practices, acquired through education, and personal and professional experience, reflect a sociocultural context that conflicts with those of my students. I needed to delve into the sociocultural forces from which the mediation or learning strategies my students are employing originate, just as I reflected on my own practice. It isn't always necessary to look to the past to discover what cognitive strategies students employ, but to understand my own responses to the classroom, I have looked to my past as well as my present and so I look to the past of my students to see what they are bringing to the classroom. If I wish to provide curriculum which is transformative and which challenges prescriptive pedagogies, I need to understand the difficulties that students face within a different educational setting. I need to look at their cultural patterns of socialization to understand the reasons why they respond or do not respond to my teaching (Kramšch, 1993). I need to investigate the dynamics of the forces at work in the classroom to understand the final product, and because, as Freire (1970) wrote, "One cannot expect positive results from an educational ... program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people" (p.84).

Wertsch (1985) writes that "... in order to understand the individual it is necessary to understand the social relations in which the individual exists" (pp.25/6). "In order to communicate effectively, educators ... must understand the structural conditions in which the thought and language of the people are dialectically framed" (Freire, 1970, pp.85-86). Jackson (1986) writes, "(t)eachers need to know a lot about the students they teach in order to teach them properly" (p.20) and Grumet (1988)

says, "we need to find out how to teach those who are and are not like us ... It is pointless to design a tolerant curriculum without examining the relationships that create and sustain it" (p.163). Freire (1970) writes that, "(t)he starting point for organizing the program content of education ... must be the present, existential, concrete situation" (p.85). Therefore, it is important to try to understand the expectations that the students bring with them to my ESL classroom.

The Students' Expectations

When students come to an ESL class they bring with them their own culturally shaped scripts for appropriate classroom behavior. These scripts determine the nature of the relationships between affective factors, voluntary participation and achievement, and these relationships vary in different cultural contexts (Johnson,1992). The result can be negative. For example, social interaction plays an important role in cognition but a student who is culturally restrained from participating, experiences difficulty in a classroom that is oriented towards lots of student participation.

Most of my students have spent many years in prescriptive educational systems that measure achievement by the ability to memorize facts, and in which students are expected to accept the written word without question. Like many of the students who come to Lower Mainland schools, my students are from Asian countries where quite different relationships exist between students, teachers and texts. For example:

(i)n places like Hong Kong, classroom learning for many students is much more rote learning, copy off the board, memorize and give back on formal examinations. There is never much discussion, opinions are not called for generally and you certainly do not contradict the teacher who is an authority figure and has the "right" answers. A distance is maintained between teachers and pupil. (Magder,1983,p.61).

These attitudes towards learning come from pedagogical practices that have long histories in countries of origin. Therefore, while I often feel that I am guilty of stereotyping my Asian students, there is some support in the literature for my interpretation. The following discussion will not focus on one area of language or language learning, or any one country, because attitudes towards learning are not specific to one area of study and they tend to be common to the Asian countries that have a historical connection to China, where I will begin.

A recent masters' thesis, written by a student from mainland China, explores the difficulties that students taught to read in China have adjusting to a western model by comparing the teaching of reading in China with that in western countries. Hanci Ping (1994) clearly presents the historical, political and linguistic background to the Intensive Reading method that is used throughout China. Ping suggests that the Chinese bottom-up models of reading conflict with the western top-down models of reading. In the former, "the study of individual words, the use of grammar and the study of syntactic forms and style is the focus of learning how to read" (p.96). Reading quickly is considered a poor habit. Students are trained to "read cautiously, meticulously (and with a) low tolerance for ambiguity" (pp.25-26). Intensive reading rather than extensive reading is emphasized and skills are not taught. Rather, the "development of skills is left mainly to students themselves" (p.30). For some ESL readers, all reading is 'close'. Unlike native English speakers, "whose global approach to reading may see more forest than trees, and who therefore may need the skills of close reading, ESL readers tend to see every tree" (Reid,1992,p.39).

Ping continues, "(I)n the West, learning is seen to involve active learners, thus reading is seen as a process of constructing meaning ... while in China, students are taught to read directly for objective meaning" (p.86). "Personalistic interpretations are

not encouraged" (Sampson, 1990, p. 132). This reading method is transferred to learning a new language, such as English, and any subject matter in the new language. This conflicts with some more recent approaches to reading in which texts are open to interpretation and are "writerly" rather than "readerly" (Barthes in Olsen, 1990, p. 184). "Readerly" texts allow readers to be passive consumers and to assume that there is a correct interpretation of text, whereas "writerly texts" require readers to participate in making meaning by making their own interpretation of text (Lather, 1991). A student who is not trained to make her own interpretation is perplexed by the requirement that she think about what the text means to her.

These conflicting approaches to reading are perhaps reflections of larger cultural expectations for social interaction. Hinds (1987) offers a typology that takes into account the suggestion that in some languages, such as English, the speaker/writer is primarily responsible for communicating clearly to the listener/reader, while in other languages, such as Japanese, the listener/reader is primarily responsible for effective communication. In English, the speaker/writer is responsible to make clear and well-organized statements and if a breakdown in communication occurs, the speaker/writer takes responsibility for the breakdown. However, in Japanese, and possibly Korean, it is the responsibility of the listener/reader to understand what the speaker/writer intends to say. Hinds quotes Yoshikawa (1978) who explains that the level of perceived homogeneity in Japan and the Japanese mistrust of verbal language have fostered a basic principle of communication in which "what is verbally expressed and what is actually intended are two different things" (p. 144). Hinds (1987) quotes Suzuki who says that the kind of prose that does not give clarifications or full explanations of the author's views, but which gives dark hints left behind nuances, "gets the highest praise from readers (who) anticipate with pleasure the opportunities

that such writing offers them to savor this kind of 'mystification' of language" (p.145). This can create obvious problems for students who are used to their listener/reader inferring meaning without that meaning actually having to be clearly communicated, and teachers who do not expect to rely on inference to understand their students' writing.

Hinds also says that while English-speaking writers produce many drafts before they come up with a final product, Japanese authors frequently produce only one draft which becomes their finished product. This is problematic for teachers who are trying to teach the 'process' approach to writing. They think their students are simply being lazy; whereas, the students think they are being good writers.

The different expectations of the roles and teacher and student, and how students best learn can be problematic. The Chinese focus on teacher, textbook and grammar, a focus which permeates the entire Chinese education system, contrasts with the Communicative Language Teaching focus which is on learner, practice and skill development (Penner, 1995). Learning is viewed as being memory-based. The teacher has the knowledge that is to be acquired and the students only have to commit it to memory (Maley, 1983).

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) write that "in many Asian cultures, including the Korean, Japanese, and Chinese, the students accept the teacher's point of view and never challenge it" (p.77). This contrasts starkly with the 'progressive' classroom in which the students are encouraged to explore their own experiences, make mistakes, take responsibility for their learning and generate their own meaning.

Classroom atmosphere plays an important role in learning and many language teachers encourage noisy group work in the target language. However, these kinds of activities can cause discomfort for some students. Harklau (1994) in a report on a

study of second language (L2) learners in mainstream classes in the United States, found that "Asian American immigrant students showed a preference for working independently in silence at their desks. Even when they were asked to work with other students, they were likely to be reserved and uncommunicative, allowing or forcing other students to take over their role in the group" (p.263). She also observed that L2 learners prefer "interaction with written materials" (p.252) over interaction with other students or the teacher. This kind of atmosphere would be a natural outcome of a classroom context such as that described by Kramsch (1993), in which "Japanese (teachers) ... use pedagogical methods typical of their native culture: teacher-centered classes, emphasis on the written language, discipline, academic hierarchy" (p.46). However, as John-Steiner (1985) points out, written materials are important in classroom situations because classrooms often lack contextual clues by which a conversation in another environment might be aided. Kramsch describes further the difficulty that some Asian students have with the natural approach to foreign language learning, which encourages the students to interact socially to practice grammatical forms. This contradiction between the real meaning of the exercises, to practice grammar, and the context, the "exchange of true personal meaning" (p.78) troubles Asian students because "(i)n their view, natural communication would require a negotiation of meaning that goes far beyond the meaning of the mere past tense (and) this type of small talk does not fit their expectations of what classroom learning should be like" (p.78). As a result, students will sometimes "regard the less directive teaching methods of the foreign teacher as a waste of time" (Maley, 1986, p.105).

I am often frustrated by my students' unwillingness to ask questions or take part in class discussions even though I am well aware that in some cultures it is inappropriate for students to speak up in class. A quote in Harklau (1994) by a

Chinese student from Taiwan perhaps best explains the resistance to talking in class. The student quoted the saying, "Being quiet is gold and vigorously debating is silver" by which he meant that "(b)eing quiet is considered polite, and intelligent because only the insecure ones need to prove themselves smart by talking loud. For that reason, the school (in Taiwan) wanted the students to keep quiet in the classroom" (p.251).

Students are also unwilling to appear to question their teachers. Penner (1995), writes, "Behavior attached to the concept of respect and saving face prevents students from questioning their teachers. Questions imply that teachers have failed in their duty to impart knowledge clearly" (p.7). To question the teacher would conflict with the Chinese' traditional reverence for and reliance upon the wisdom of its elders. This is also the model for Korea and arises in a discussion of the teaching of writing. Korean students are not taught academic rhetorical writing. Instead, students in elementary and secondary schools read the rhetorics of classical literature and are told to that they should emulate these styles in their own writing (Eggington, 1987). This lack of interest in teaching students rhetorical writing was confirmed by my colleague, Sun-Hye Kim, who was educated almost entirely in Korea. She said that only as of recently has rhetorical writing been taught in the universities.

Thus, students who come to my classroom are hampered not only by language difficulties but also by their lack of understanding of how to learn in a foreign environment, as well as my inability to teach language prescriptively.

Received Knowers

My students' attitudes towards learning remind me of those of students who were categorized as 'received knowers' by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule (1986) in their adaptation of epistemological categories of university students as they

move during their college years. Students who were described as 'received knowers' "equate receiving, retaining, and returning the words of authorities with learning - at least with the kind of learning they associate with school" (Belenky et al,1986,p.39). They also regard knowledge as "an object - some *third thing* - to be grasped, held stored, manipulated, and wielded, rather than being associated with (their) acting and existing in a biologically and phenomenologically constituted world" (Davis & Sumara,1997,p.109).

Belenky and her colleagues adapted these categories to women, but I was struck by the similarities between the women who were situated in this category, and my students, male and female alike. Received knowers "conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own" (Belenky, et al,p.15). My students' faith in the teacher as the source of knowledge parallels that of the received knowers. Like my students, who have been rewarded in school for their memorization and reproduction skills, the received knowers "perceive themselves as having the capacity to become richly endowed repositories of information" (ibid.,p.43). This creates discomfort for the students in an ESL classroom where the approach to learning requires that they be interactive, communicative and creative. Like the received knowers who are "recipients but not sources of knowledge, the students feel confused and incapable when the teacher requires that they do original work" (ibid.,p.40).

Students' reliance on the teacher as the source of knowledge is disrupted when the teacher does not conform to their expectations of teacher behavior - teachers who do not answer their questions directly, who answer with another question or a challenge

to find the answer themselves. Used to being told what questions and answers are worth knowing, "the received knowers are intolerant of ambiguity. ... They like predictability (and) clarity ... They have no notion ... of understanding as a process taking place over time and demanding the exercise of reason" (Belenky et al, 1986, p.42). Unfortunately, teachers who believe in and encourage the process of knowledge creation frustrate them. Part of my job is to prepare students for Canadian secondary school and university programs, where they will be expected to be more reflective and look at information analytically and critically. Received knowers, and my students, are clearly at a disadvantage because "(r)eliance on authority for a single view of the truth is clearly maladaptive for meeting the requirements of a complex, rapidly changing, pluralistic, egalitarian society and for meeting the requirements of educational institutions, which prepare students for such a world" (Belenky et al, 1986, p.43).

This enforced shift from receiver of knowledge to creator of knowledge is not easy. When a teacher does not behave like a 'teacher', there is a great risk that the student will be cast adrift, unable to cope. Such was the experience of women interviewed by Belenky et al who were forced by the educational requirements of university to shift out of the category of received knower. They noted that women from advantaged backgrounds who had always fulfilled middle- to upper middle-class expectations of getting a university education, perhaps only as something to fall back on, suddenly felt vulnerable and unconnected. Such women had "frequently been rewarded for ... quiet predictability, ... competent through perhaps unimaginative work, and ... obedience and conformity" (Belenky, et al, p.65). When "confronted with diversity and what seem(ed) to be the arbitrariness of truth and values" (p.65) these women felt unanchored. There is a risk that an ESL student, who is already facing the

challenges of dis/relocation, feels lost and alienated and will retreat from or resist the challenge, rather than find the strength or guidance to persevere.

Teachers, of course, play an important role in ensuring the students feel anchored, feel a part of the classroom environment, as new and different as the expectations are. Because received knowers believe that all knowledge originates outside of the self, they must look to others even for self-knowledge (Belenky et al, 1986). Some students are so under the influence of authority figures that they have never been required to be reflective about and define themselves. This is perhaps why some students falter when asked to write about their own experiences. Such a request can cause many of my students much anxiety, though with practice, usually in their journals, this task becomes easier.

This can work to advantage. Because students rely on authority figures for judgments about self, they are vulnerable to those assessments. However, an authority figure, such as a teacher, can decide to work constructing a positive image of self in the student. Many of my students tell me that their English is not good or they are not good students. Perhaps they have received low grades in English in their own country or they are just manifesting a general lack of confidence or simply being polite. Therefore, before challenging them with any work that might reinforce that lack of confidence, I try to alter their perceptions of themselves as poor learners of English. Every letter and word, written or spoken, is praised, accepted with thanks, flaunted, displayed to advantage. Of course in this regard they are probably not much different from students of the same age who have moved through the school system in Canada but my students need the added assurance that this new approach to learning can work for them.

In this chapter, I reviewed some of the literature that supported my suspicion that my students' expectations about learning are different from mine. I feel that it is important to acknowledge and attend to these different expectations, which are socioculturally determined. My students come from societies in which people have different relationships with authority figures and learning is a prescriptive activity. The work of authority figures is not open to question or interpretation. It is to be memorized and reproduced. The schemata for learning that these students bring to class are ineffective, at least initially, in a class in which the teacher is using curriculum that require students to be active and communicative learners.

These students' attitude towards the acquisition of knowledge is similar to those of women described as 'received knowers'. Received knowers view knowledge as something external rather than something that can emerge from within. Received knowers have been rewarded for obedience and conformity and stumble when required to deal with diversity and ambiguity. They have not learned how to tap into the wellspring of knowledge that they have acquired. They have not learned how to use the dialogue that takes place between the internal and external to create knowledge.

Despite my best efforts to cajole my students into participating unrestrainedly, I frequently encounter resistance to my efforts. Just as I did not always respond positively to the efforts of my teachers, as an adolescent and as an adult, my students do not always respond positively to my efforts. Resistance can take many forms, but the most common are refusal to respond to questions, complete assignments, attend class or participate. Resistance can be the result of any number of factors, including confusion, defiance, misunderstanding, unhappiness or boredom. My students have offered many different kinds of resistance, or behaviors that I have interpreted as resistance, sometimes subtle, sometimes overt. In response to their resistance, I have

also resisted. I have resisted conforming to their expectations of what a teacher is or should be. At times, I have felt that conforming to their expectations would make my job much easier, no matter how ineffective and boring it would render me as a language teacher. However, I think it is valuable to take a closer look at the reasons for resistance in the classroom and perhaps to view it, as Foucault suggested, in a more positive light.

RESISTANCE

Jacqueline Goodnow (1994) discusses the failure of social theories of cognition to account for the effects of resistance in the classroom. She writes that social theories of cognition accept that dialogue, even conflict, must take place for learning to take place. She uses the example of the theory of Social Genevans, the basic tenet of which is:

that the discrepancy or conflict that best sparks cognitive development takes a social form. That is, the discrepancy one responds to most strongly is a difference in opinion or perspective between one's own view and that of another. The critical process is ... "social conflict" (which) leads to cognitive advance ... if there is a dialogue between the two parties. (Also) social background can predispose an individual to particular views about how dialogue should proceed, particular interpretations of the attempts of others to enter into dialogue, and differences in the ability to make use of contrasting viewpoints or dialogue. (p.278)

So, rather than conflict being viewed as negative, it is viewed as a precursor to cognitive development, if both parties agree to take part in a dialogue. Her criticism of the Social Genevans' empirical work and discussion of social conflict is that it does not take into account "less amiable forms of control over areas of knowledge and skill, for people, denying knowledge, for instance, or actively resisting it" (p.278).

I would like to consider my students within this latter scenario. If my students are willing to take part in a dialogue, even if we don't agree on the nature of that dialogue, cognitive development is taking place. However, if the students resist participating at all, does cognitive development not take place? Goodnow criticizes Vygotskian-based accounts of cognitive development for not taking into account situations where resistance to learning "is often open and prolonged" (p.279), and other

sociological accounts that provide "too little place for the individuals who resist the information, the skill, or the worldview held out to them" (p.280). She sees a need "to add more information about what one resists, the source of resistance, and the occasions that prompt one to (resist)" (p.280)

The most common form of resistance is what appears to be the stubborn digging in of heels, the refusal to participate. I often meet this kind of resistance in my Beginner class. Most of the Beginners, "false beginners" in ESL jargon, have only come to Canada a few weeks, sometimes days, before they enter the classroom. They are young and nervous, usually quiet, obedient. They know, from their previous experience with school, that if they sit quietly, listen carefully, and do all their homework they will be doing what is required of them. They answer the first few questions about their name, their country of origin, their age, as best they can in English, sometimes with hurried whispers of assistance from other students. However, later, perhaps the next day, I ask them if they know the meaning of the word "partner". Electronic dictionaries, always at the ready, are consulted, heads nod. I ask them to find a partner. Find a partner? New friends look warily at each other, agreement is reached. They look at me, nodding that they have completed the task. Others sit motionless, waiting, cautious. I assign partners to the students who don't know anyone and then tell everyone to sit with their partners. Sit with their partner? Some start to slide their desks nearer their partner, ready to quickly slide back if they have misunderstood. I nod my head, smile a lot, walk towards them, but now what? I gently help them move their desks together but not so that the two desks sit side by side, but so that the students are facing each other. No longer is the teacher the center of attention. The center of attention is another student, one of the many with whom they will collaborate and cooperate over the next few months.

For most of my students this simple shifting of their focus away from the teacher and towards another student marks an enormous shift, not only in terms of school but of their whole lives. No longer are they expected to be quiet, passive and obedient, but noisy, active and ... disobedient? ... well, perhaps not disobedient. They are given license to make some of their own decisions in the classroom although they must also take responsibility for those decisions. This change in expectations can be very traumatic and the "resistance encountered is often due to the unwillingness, especially on the part of teenage learners, to distance themselves from their native culture and the educational discourse with which they are familiar. It requires a gradual move from ... discourse to metadiscourse and aesthetic reflection" (Kramsch, 1993, 231). It requires challenging one's own social identity (Goodnow, 1990).

One of a team of graduate students in an introductory women's studies class, wrote the following definition of resistance:

a word for the fear, dislike, hesitance most people have about turning their entire lives upside down and watching everything they have ever learned disintegrate into lies. "Empowerment" may be liberating, but it is also a lot of hard work and new responsibility to sort through one's life and rebuild according to one's own values and choices. (Lather, 1991, p. 76)

My students are being expected to turn "their lives upside down", in and out of the classroom, but in the process of 'empowering' them, I am imposing upon them practices that violate their experience and expectations, their social identity. However, I am unwilling to change, to revert to the practices that so constrain/ed and anger/ed me. In fact, I am seeking a practice that, on the surface, will make me appear to be even less like a 'teacher'. I don't want to return to those very practices with which they are quite comfortable.

The conflict lies in the differences in our "discourses of experience" (Britzman, 1991, p. 16). My students' " 'regime(s) of discourse', ... the authoritatively sanctioned and conventionally taken-for-granted ways of understanding, speaking, and acting" (Foucault in Britzman, *ibid.*) are different from mine. My students mostly come from educational systems in which the "banking" style of education predominates. The teacher stands at the front of the class reciting information. The students memorize the information and reproduce it on tests. They are passive. They are judged solely on the basis of their test results. I, on the other hand, having experienced the "banking" style of learning in my own school years, try very hard not to teach within that discourse, although because of institutional sanctions, I cannot escape the inherent authority in the role of teacher which "is sustained by school rules and regulations, curricular organization, and by administrative structure" (Britzman, 1991, p. 18).

However, that same authority permits me the power to be something different from what the students expect. That authority gives me the right to choose to de-emphasize my role as teacher, to re-locate myself, to reduce my own power and give some responsibility to others. Yet this seems somehow contradictory, and is the location for student resistance. Because I am trying to "be sensitive to the capacity of (my students) to interpret and intervene in their world" (Britzman, 1991, p. 19), I have to ask myself whether or not my students can act and interpret our classroom activities and relationship differently (*ibid.*).

Student Resistance in Other Classrooms

Discussion of student resistance to progressive practices can also be found in the work of critical and feminist pedagogues who are, for the most part, teaching and/or doing research in post-secondary institutions, in a variety of disciplines, including

teacher education. Though the subject matter and student bodies are different, some of their objectives are not dissimilar from my own. In endeavoring to have students think critically about the sources of power and knowledge in society, teachers encourage students to become subjects not objects. This object-subject switch "revolves around a turn away from authority-dependence, towards self-regulation" (Shor,1980,p.109) which means that students are no longer passive but active and interactive learners sharing responsibility for their own learning with the teacher. This is not an easy transition and the field of critical pedagogy itself has had to acknowledge some of the difficulties inherent in incorporating progressive practices into traditional classrooms, including "the complicated resistances students and teachers bear when they confront the imperatives of social change, social control, and radical agency" (Britzman,1991,p.62).

Shor (1980) has argued that when things go wrong in the classroom, the problem is not personal but social. In his discussion of students' resistance to democratic pedagogy that he practices in his community college classrooms, he points out that it is not a personal problem of the teacher and the students', but a social problem in which society has alienated teachers from students within an authoritarian framework. He writes that:

many (students) will not be able to notice or respond to an egalitarian mode in class. This will discourage teachers as well as those students ready for an empowering classroom. (Teachers) get easily hurt when students refuse to participate. Discouraged, they many simply blame the students and find themselves drifting back to the pedagogy of the talking teacher. (pp.34/35)

hooks (1994) discusses feminist professors who returned to traditional practices after experiencing what they perceived to be failure when progressive pedagogy did not work. She writes that they "should have expected that students who had a more

conventional education would be threatened and even resist teaching practices which insist that students participate in class and not be passive consumers" (pp.143/4). Gore (1993) introduces her book on feminist and critical pedagogies with her own example of student resistance in a teacher education program. Rather than dismiss a student's resistance to reflective journal keeping as his recalcitrance or her own failure to practice radical pedagogy properly, she delved into the "practices within institutions and disciplines through which intellectuals participate in the formation and functioning of the discourses of critical and feminist pedagogy" (p.2). Hoodfar (1992) also responded to student resistance in her university anthropology and sociology classrooms. She writes that her "teaching experience does not support the implicit assumption in much current critical pedagogy literature that students are necessarily willing agents who welcome unconventional classroom interactions ... Developing such an approach ... entails unlearning the learning methodology they have relied on throughout their schooling" (p.309).

The resistance is threatening to the teacher's willingness to experiment. If the teacher isn't really sure of the new methods, she may return to the old ways. Shor (1980) writes that "the liberatory enterprise demands a tolerance for anxiety and a disposition to experiment" (p.268) and this is a tolerance that few institutions, teachers and students have. Some students question whether a classroom in which discussion can sometimes be noisy and boisterous is 'serious' enough. In an interview with bell hooks (1994), Ron Scapp says, "I think many students confuse a lack of recognizable traditional formality with a lack of seriousness" (1994,p.143) and so resist the efforts of the teacher. Teachers who incorporate comedy into their classroom are in even greater danger of losing their students' respect. Yet progressive pedagogues advocate the use of comedy in the classroom to ease the progress of "self and social reconstruction"

(Shor,1980,p.116). Comedy "relaxes the fears attending desocialization (and) demystif(ies) the professional aura of the teacher. Through sharing humor with the class, the instructor comes down from the pedestal ... "(ibid.). However, by coming down from the pedestal, by deviating from convention, the teacher is risking the students questioning the teacher's authority and knowledge (Hoodfar,1992,p.311).

One particular practice that is commonly met with resistance, particularly among students who are in their late teens and older, is that of cooperating with and learning from other students. Many students are not conditioned to work with each other, to recognize each other's strengths and it can be very difficult to direct their attention away from the teacher. Suave (1991), an ESL teacher, writes:

The act of learning a language necessarily involves other people. The act of learning in a classroom involves other people. But in neither is there, of necessity, an understanding of the mutuality of the relationship between self and other. Many learners choose to keep a distance between themselves and most others. They are impatient with those they see as being slower than themselves, and are unwilling to "waste" valuable time helping the other. They believe in helping only themselves ... Such clearly delineated roles maintain the divisions between those who experience a measure of power and freedom in their lives and those who do not. (p.131)

hooks and Scapp (1994) see one of the responsibilities of the teacher as teaching students to listen to other students by exhibiting good listening skills herself. This aids the students in "easing their transition from an authority-model of education" (ibid.,p.84) to one that is more cooperative and collaborative.

Is the solution to this resistance to become the kind of teacher that the students wish me to be? Am I continuing to be "repressive and reactionary" (Delpit,1988,p.291) by insisting that students participate in the classroom in a way that fits my professional and personal experiences and beliefs, and not theirs? I think that I would be doing my students a great injustice if I provided the kind of educational experience that they

seem to expect, and what I have learned from experience has been further clarified and strengthened by this project. Instead, I actively resist appearing to be the kind of teacher that my students want me to be. For many reasons, I resist becoming the kind of teacher that stands at the front of the class and gives information for the students to remember and reproduce on exams.

Firstly, I don't know how to teach English prescriptively and I don't know how a language can be learned if the learners are not willing to try out the language, to speak, read, listen to and write it. I suppose I could learn. There are certainly enough resources available to pursue this path. However, my experiences have taught me that learning a language in that way does not work. My students are examples of this. They have studied English grammar for many years and are still unable to use it outside of fill-in-the-blank exercises. This is not to say that their knowledge of the basic skills, such as it is, is not of value. It is invaluable to me because I do not have to teach very much of it. My job is to provide the environment within which they can build on it and begin to use it.

Secondly, eventually, most of my students are going to be faced with a classroom situation in which their teacher is not going to be as informed of or as sympathetic to their inability to learn in any other than a prescriptive setting. Ideally, this happens in high school though it may be delayed until university. Eventually, they will be asked to produce a research paper, do some creative writing, read a story without searching for every word in a dictionary, or interpret a short story. Somewhere along the way, a teacher needs to take a stand, to endure the difficulties of the transition process with the students.

Finally, it is only fair that they are given the opportunity to experience a different way of learning. I know that eventually many of my students thrive in my classroom.

As I write this I am thinking of yet another student who, just last week, after five weeks of insisting that he couldn't participate, produced a poster about a field trip. It was the first piece of written work he had completed in five weeks. He had thwarted my attempts to help him by skipping class, losing work, turning away from me and so on. Though I was pleased to see his work, his reward came not from me. He seemed oblivious to my reaction, which is as it should be. His happiness came from putting his work on the wall with the others where it was read and admired by students from our class and from another class that came for a visit.

I do not believe that this student will necessarily become a confident and fully participating student but I hope that this taste of success will help him understand that he has the ability and knowledge to produce work, in English, that is of value.

I also give tests. I don't enjoy it but I do it because my students think that test results represent learning. Under the auspices of review, I elicit from my students what they think will be on an upcoming test, along with examples. At least one ninety-minute class is given over to this process. After class, I make up the test with the material that I have elicited from the students. This is what they have learned. This is what they remember and think is of importance. However, I am always amazed at the stress that students seem to undergo when they are completing the test. In their pasts, tests have been enormously important events upon which an entire school year hinges. They cannot shake the fear that they won't know the answers, even if they have assisted in the construction of the test just the day before.

Teacher's Authority

Given my attempts to downplay my role in the classroom, it would be hypocritical of me to deny my authority. It is an authority we learn from our experiences

not only in school, but everywhere in society. It is derived from the social institutions in which we spend the greater part of our lives - school, family, workplace - and with which we comply with varying degrees of dis/comfort. But perhaps the balm for our discomfort is understanding how societal institutions function to control our lives and how we, as individuals, respond to the authority that we are given. To understand my own resistance to my students' expectations of what I should be has required the difficult task of reflecting on my compliance with the institutional expectations.

And so, while students usually enjoy their first day of school, reading to their new friends as I begin to assess their level, some daring to chat with their new friends about topics not in their reader, it isn't necessarily smooth sailing from there. Over time, they are asked to do more and more work together with less direction from the teacher. They collaborate on stories, choose their own journal topics, revise and edit each other's writing, write their own comprehension questions, read each other's stories, display their work, participate in class discussions and contribute their opinions. They are still being judged, they and the system demand it, but the criteria are different. Everything they do is important, not just the test at the end. I evade their questions about where they stand in the class. When they refuse to work with other students, I am persistent, trying to find a comfortable but productive match for them. Making mistakes is encouraged.

Some students are receptive to the new discourse and adjust quickly although negotiating the boundaries can be difficult. Some have trouble handling all this 'freedom'. For some students, usually the older ones, who have already successfully negotiated a different discourse, the new expectations can be a rude and difficult shock

and this clash can cause tension and frustration, and a sense of failure, for both me and the student.

Being the teacher, the supposedly more mature responsible and knowledgeable person in the class, I have blamed myself. At first, I tended to blame the students because they weren't responding positively to what I had been taught were liberating, caring practices. My frustration was shared with other similarly trained teachers who encountered the same resistance in their classrooms. We knew that there was more to it than what was on the surface but we didn't really have time to pursue it. We shared what worked and threw out what didn't work. We exalted in our successes and chastised ourselves over our failures. We responded as caring human beings; confused, stressed, dealing with issues for which we were not professionally prepared. My ESL training had prepared me to teach motivated, confident, industrious ... robots. I learned practices and theories that supposedly always worked. Of course, part of becoming an experienced teacher is realizing that not everything they teach you in professional teaching programs works. But I had been taught lesson planning and classroom management, and listening skills, to alleviate problems of rambunctious, disruptive children. They were not the skills that are required to deal with silent, passive teenagers, who are alienated from all their cultural reference points, from their community's familiar discourses, trying on or resisting taking on a new social identity.

In this chapter, I discussed the nature of resistance in my classroom and I began with Goodnow's criticism of sociocultural theory. She summarized sociocultural theories of learning which posit that as long as learners are participating in a dialogue, even if that dialogue is one of conflict, learning is taking place. Her criticism is that

these theories do not acknowledge the classrooms in which students resist the teacher's efforts to engage them in dialogue.

This is suggestive of the situation that I face in my classroom. My students have different discourses of experience and are not comfortable with refocusing their attention away from the teacher and towards their peers. I suggested that the enormity of and their discomfort with this change, the refocusing of their attentions away from the teacher, is the source of their resistance, and is not the exclusive experience of ESL students from Asia, but has also been documented by critical and feminist pedagogues in post secondary institutions and in literacy classes.

Although teachers tend to blame themselves when students do not participate in these practices, critical pedagogues suggest that the students' unwillingness to participate is a social, not a personal problem, and that teachers must resist the effort to return to prescriptive practices.

But what gives me the right to require that my students participate in a style of learning that contradicts their experience? My own experience as a student and a teacher has shown me that I can use elements of both my students' and my own experience to construct my curriculum that is respectful of both approaches to learning.

This is not to say that I deny my students' experience entirely. In fact, I consciously try to incorporate elements of their learning styles into my teaching. For example, I do give the students time for close readings of stories. However, I do this only after I have asked them to approach a story with a minimum of explanation of new words and using their fellow students and me as resources. I do this because although vocabulary in stories in readers tends to be used repeatedly, I find my students referring again and again to their dictionaries to look up a word that has appeared numerous times before, not only in their reading but in their own writing. They do not

expect to know any of the words they will encounter because they are used to learning vocabulary from long lists. They are used to finding the definition in their dictionary, memorizing it and then reproducing the definition on a test. Once we have completed reading a story, discussed it, done some writing and answered some questions, I let them do their close readings.

CONCLUSION

I began this thesis with a brief sketch of my teaching situation and the questions and concerns that I had about my teaching practices. Before beginning I had hopes that by allowing myself the time to reflect upon my own situation, I would be able to untangle the complex weave that makes up the fabric of my classroom. I quickly realized that that would be impossible, because the complexity of the classroom represents the complex reality of human interaction and learning. The most I could claim to do was to locate, as Foucault (1980) wrote, "trails to be followed" (p.78). In fact, I had to walk back along some trails and get lost on others before I could go forward. But that became one of the strongest lessons that I learned. Learning is not a linear process. It is, instead, complex, and teachers and students alike all have to go backwards and forwards and around in circles in order to find their way in the classroom. In saying this, I find that I have broken my promise not to make general statements about ESL classrooms. I won't apologize, but I hope that teachers who have asked themselves questions similar to mine will find what I have learned at least a tiny bit useful and they will take the bits that interest them and meld them with their own experiences as they create their own knowledge and curriculum - just as I have done here.

I began by discussing the nature of emancipatory action research and its appropriateness to my research/teaching situation. I see a need not only to teach students the mechanics of a language, but also how to use it to participate meaningfully in their new community. Emancipatory action research is representative of recent trends in qualitative research which have freed researchers from the bonds of positivism as represented in quantitative and qualitative research based on positivist

principles. Emancipatory action research allows for the participation of practitioners as researchers of their immediate situation rather than as subjects of outside investigators. It also allows for different styles of reporting, including narration. This method is particularly relevant to teachers because they work in an ever-changing and unpredictable sociocultural environment that cannot be represented in a linear and unambiguous manner.

I then discussed the contributions of Foucault, Freire and Vygotsky to a pedagogy of knowing, a pedagogy which is meaningful and transformative. Foucault identified how the self is created by individuals within regimes of truth. These regimes of truth are the discourses which inform society of what is and what is not truth. The regimes of truth establish how individuals construct their selves within their particular society and culture. Foucault used the examples of the early Christians and Graeco-Romans to show how individuals constructed their selves within different discourses, or regimes of truth. My understanding of the work of Foucault provided the basis for my understanding of the need for reflection in conscientization, or identification of the "techniques and practices which actualize a particular regime of truth" (Gore, 1993, p.60). This enabled me to question the linear rationalist models of learning and learning to teach, to which I was exposed during my own time as a student and student teacher, and are contradicted by the realities of my teaching situation. This has also strengthened my belief that I should try to provide a learning situation in which my students can investigate their dis/location and social identity as they undergo extraordinary life changes.

Freire provided a model for a transformative pedagogy that requires students and teachers to abandon 'banking' styles of education which are prescriptive and conforming, in favor of 'problem-posing' styles of education that are based on the

generative themes of the students. This can assist students and teachers to uncover and further question 'regimes of truth', and the institutional practices which sustain them. The particular 'technology of the self' that Freire advocated for both teachers and students is praxis, or action plus reflection. Praxis is the basis of emancipatory action research, which is carried out by practitioners who seek to develop critical consciousness in order to transform societal structures and relationships. Such a holistic, transformative pedagogy based on generative themes requires collaboration, dialogue, interaction and reflection.

Vygotsky underscored the importance of collaboration, dialogue, interaction and reflection in cognitive development. Learning is a process whereby the intrapersonal experience reflects and is reflected through dialogue on the interpersonal plane between the student, her peers and her teacher. These dynamics are important in understanding not only the role of interaction in the students' learning, and the ongoing role of reflection in the teacher's learning, but also the complexity of cognition and learning.

I next explored the importance of 'praxis' to teachers who wish to discover more about their own location in the classroom and combine theory with action. The objective of praxis is conscientization, or consciousness of consciousness, which can be used to better understand one's political situation, but which also contributes to understanding one's own learning processes which in turn facilitates further learning. The key to praxis is reflection, or the constant looking back at one's actions to create one's own theory.

I continued on to discuss progressive pedagogy and ESL instruction in order to better understand the theoretical basis of my teaching. Collaboration, dialogue, interaction and reflection, as well as cooperation, are features of 'progressive'

pedagogies, which encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning with the assistance and guidance of the teacher. The students' focus is no longer the teacher but other students and the self. Recent ESL practices, though they are 'progressive', tend to ignore the sociopolitical ramifications of their students' situations, which I feel should be an important consideration to ESL teachers.

I then needed to explore the backgrounds of my students to better understand the conflicts at the intersection of our teaching and learning styles. Many of my students come from countries that have long histories of teacher-centered classrooms that do not appear to value the same classroom practices as those I am trying to incorporate into my teaching. One result of the meeting of these two different approaches to learning is resistance, on the part of the students and the teacher. The students' social identities are challenged by the profound changes they are experiencing and their resistance is an understandable response. My resistance is a result of my beliefs about learning that have been strengthened by my experiences as a student and a teacher, and by recent reflections on my present teaching situation.

This brought me to the theme of resistance. Resistance is a response to the demands of enormous changes in self-identity and therefore, an understandable response from my students. It is a result, not necessarily of an inherent problem in my classroom, but of differences in sociocultural expectations which determine which discourses are appropriate for different situations. The institutional discourse which has alienated students from teachers contradicts the discourse of progressive pedagogies which seek to create classroom environments in which students, and students and teachers, work cooperatively and collaboratively rather than in competition.

Which leaves me ... where? The starting point for my thesis was that my students' and my perceptions of the roles of students and teachers are different and this is the source of both student and teacher resistance in the classroom. I had thought that my progressive pedagogy clashed with my students' experiences with pedagogies that are more traditional. However, I wasn't quite sure what a progressive pedagogy was. I understood it to mean that students should work collaboratively and cooperatively, because interaction would nurture learning. But I didn't understand why this would be so. As I looked more thoroughly into the objectives of progressive pedagogies, I delved into the theories of a number of different academics whose work had, for some reason, struck a chord with me. The common thread that ran through the work of these academics was that learning, whether it be learning in the classroom or learning about self, requires ongoing reciprocal interaction.

I also reflected upon my own experiences as a teacher and student to try to identify what had worked and not worked in my own learning, and why. Again, I realized that it was the opportunity to participate in my own learning that had been and continued to be significant. When I was expected to sit quietly and absorb 'knowledge', I didn't learn. When I was expected to play a part, I did.

The need to participate also played a role in the kind of research I decided to do for this thesis. I chose a methodology that allowed me to be in the research and that acknowledged my experiences and narratives. It also provided me with a method that I can continue to use in the classroom, and in other facets of my life, long after this thesis is completed.

Of equal importance to this thesis was learning more about my students. I employed a number of different methods to try to learn more about their experiences as students, looking to their contributions and to the contributions of other teachers and

researchers. It strengthened my belief that our expectations for the roles of students and teachers are different and that our respective resistance to the others' practices is to be expected.

Once I had a clearer understanding of the classroom dynamics, I had to decide what I could do to ensure that the students' and my experiences were being respected. I sought, and continue to seek, a pedagogy that addresses everyone's expectations. I have compromised, but I have done so to facilitate learning. I haven't compromised so that my classroom is like the smooth glassy waters under my kayak on a still summer day. That would be to give up what I believe to be good teaching practices. I have compromised to the point where my classroom is like those narrow passages through which tidal waters move, bubbling up, creating whirlpools, one moment an exhilarating rush, the next a quiet eddy. It isn't always easy but you get to your destination more quickly and more fulfilled. I have accepted that resistance and conflict in the classroom are dynamic forces which can be used to positive ends if managed with understanding and care.

Acknowledging that conflict can be a positive element in the classroom contradicts much of what I learned about being a good teacher. My teacher training reflected a western liberal consciousness that stressed pluralism and consensus (McLaren, 1995). It shied away from conflict. It was prescriptive and conforming, preoccupied with planning lessons and managing students and delivering curriculum in which knowledge is treated as a "*third thing*" (Davis & Sumara, 1997, p. 109, authors' italics). However, the reality is that a classroom such as mine, made up of students who have, by and large, successfully negotiated systems of education that do not value many of the features of progressive pedagogies are places of confusion, contradictions

and conflict. It is a complex place where the students and teacher are creating a third culture (Kramsch,1990). This 'linguaculture' is emerging from the exchanges between everyone in the classroom. It is a culture which is being created and enacted through the dialogue between students, and between teacher and students, and in which students "can express their own meanings without being hostage to the meanings of either their own or the target speech communit(y)" (ibid.,p.14). It is a place where students are taking what they have of their own culture and language, combining it with what they understand of the new culture and language and creating a place of their own that is not between the two cultures but is a third culture. It is a culture that is shaped at the location where "structures of dominance and tactics of resistance interact" (Kramsch,1993,p.253) and it is a place of productivity and meaning.

An essential dynamic for shaping the third culture is interaction. I know that I must continue to foster in my students the skills of interaction, in its myriad of forms. I must continue to offer opportunities for reciprocal communicative practices, in every class. It is these and other literacy skills which will assist students in shaping their third culture in their own terms and in fashioning a place that is meaningful and productive.

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