



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 - rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

AVIS

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

A CASE STUDY
of a
LEARNING PRACTITIONER'S PROCESSES
in
AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROGRAM

Catholyn K. Jansen

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Education

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August, 1992

Catholyn K. Jansen 1992



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Ex. 10-1000-0000

Ex. 10-1000-0000

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-87247-0

Canada

ABSTRACT
A Case Study of a Learning Practitioner's Processes in an
English as a Second Language Acquisition Program

by

Catholyn K. Jansen

This thesis describes a reflective learning practitioner's professional processes in introducing a self-organized, more co-operative form of learning and teaching into a community classroom setting. The practitioner and a class of 12 adult, English as a second language, students were studied in depth over a period of seven weeks from May 4, to June 19, 1992. Participatory observation was the principal method of observation. The description of this case provides a working account of the three separate parts of the investigator's mind used to confront the somewhat schizophrenic nature of the participatory observer's role in research.

Students were drawn into learning conversations about their everyday lives and concerns about their daily progress. They were encouraged to integrate into the English culture by reading the newspaper, watching television, taking part in local events and speaking with their neighbours.

Learning a second language is a long drawn out process and can not be learned exclusively in the confined safety of a classroom setting. Successful students are self-directed and create their own opportunities for using the language. The need to use the language, for participating in the complex

culture they are trying to join, provides the driving force required for language acquisition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

1 INTRODUCTION

Evolution of the Thesis	1
A Review of the Literature	6

2 METHODS

Procedures	11
Selection	17

3. THE SETTING

The Location	19
Participants	21

4. RESULTS

Learning Conversations	30
Decision Making	33
Self Organization	34
Outings	37
Activities and Materials	38
New Vocabulary	40
Evaluation of Student Progress	41
Relationships	44
Student Drop-out	46

Class Size	48
5. INTERNALIZING THE LEARNER CONVERSATION	
Creating Learning Opportunities	49
The Dialogue	50
6. SLAYING THE LEARNING ROBOTS WITH POETRY	
Introduction to the Uni Verse	55
Instructions	58
Sensation	59
The Problem	61
Analysis	62
Uncertainty	63
Self-Definition	64
An Outlier Speaks	65
Resistance	66
Transformation	67
Freedom	69
Explanation of the Uni verse	70
7. CONCLUSIONS	
Self Organization	73
The Role of the Teacher	74
Evaluation of Student Progress	75

Learning Conversations	76
Materials and Activities	78
Learning Contract	79
The Role of Educational Technology	80
REFERENCES	83
APPENDIX A Uni Verses for ESL	
APPENDIX B Geraldo's probationary report	

FOREWORD

I sing
a song of elaborate praise
to my fellow learning practitioners
raise my voice
in grand opera style
a full high soprano
in regal garb
I greet you
in red velvet
a jester
salutes you
thanks you for meeting
a longing need
for learning
to cope
with this reality
alone it is much to bear
to Gary
I thank you
for your existence
applaud your accomplishments
and your valuable time
spent to understand
this character
I am
pleased to meet you
I doff my cap
add your feather
to the flock
welcome to the gathering
of witches and wise women
part of the gang
the conspiracy to overthrow
the petty powers
that like to lock up poets
for speaking the truth
Lord knows
it's not nice
the present interactions
between people are plastic

fake, phoney
unreal
like the movies
we are all actors at a party
oh hello, Jon
I thank you for the poem
you wrote
I shall be eternally grateful
for this one of five response
Stephen was close
he almost wrote
alas no time
so rushed and frantic
felled by an Achilles heel
hi Stephen
when I find tranquillity
I will send you some
from a southern isle
where "Y"
will be anchored
you could fly in
for a weekend
to fish for peace
I thank you
for first accepting
a poem for a paper
oh Richard
I'm so glad you are here
I always enjoyed our conversations
we never agree
I look forward to your comments
and thank you for the job
you gave me
oh look
what a group we are
learning practitioners all
whose job is to ensure
that the student has a learning experience
that will contribute
to her personal development
our task is to help diagnose
the learning disability
ability
what progress

has been made
is she to be bonafide
accepted as a master
of ed tech
hoping to bring a little laughter
to the field
can humour save us now
great raucous laughter
may bring us in the mood
to begin a learning conversation
and turn our group, 5 "P's"
into a self-directed learning entity
greater than the sum
of its parts
a new "M" is born
now together I tell you
each one assigned to a role
in a brand new enterprise
we could create
whatever we set
our collective minds to
I throw you the ball
pass it on
the technologist job
is after all
to analyze the problem
to find solutions
which work
together we could
save the universe
I welcome your contribution
to this endeavour
seek your evaluation
the envelope please
and the winner
is the wise woman
who willingly waits
at the point of departure
for response
your part of the conversation
for the cause
of good fellowship
and open relations
is welcome

we learn a new trick
then pass it on and on
till it catches fire
filling a great gaping need
for self-directed learning
I fill the inspiration gap
roll the ball
down the centre line
and strike you
strange
provoked
invoked by me
Gary, Jon, Richard and Stephen
I lay these thoughts
at your feet
in fulfilment of requirements
for a master's in educational technology
I judge myself successful
have increased my conscious awareness
through this degree ordeal
and learned to order my thoughts
in this uni verse
I thank you all

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Evolution of the Thesis

As in most cases of teacher-based research, 'Shirley T' became interested in a problem she observed in her ESL classes. Whenever she suggested group project work or any involvement with the outside English community, her students went into a panic and tried to switch out of her class into the beginner's class, where the emphasis was more on structure and grammar.

From this starting point the study constantly evolved in response to the continuously changing circumstances of the situation. In this case, the learning practitioner started the project with an interest in promoting more student autonomy. Through an examination of personal processes which acted toward increasing autonomy she ended up with a concern for improving professional performance.

Dealing with problems is a dynamic constantly evolving process. Complex problems sometimes defy definition in much the same way as quarks under study in a physics lab. As with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the

closer one gets to understanding specific aspects of a situation the more the point of view changes.

Part of the reality one learns to accept in any project is to live with constant uncertainty and making mistakes. Schön (1983) says mistakes should become a source of discovery rather than an occasion for self defense. When a practitioner becomes a researcher into her own practice, she becomes involved in a continuous process of self education.

Like all scientific and educational research the aims of this case study were to reveal some objective "truth" about an aspect of reality --introducing more autonomy and self organized learning into the English as a Second Language classroom. Given that "the truth" is virtually unattainable, the goal becomes to find a research method which will give as unbiased a reflection of reality as possible. Unfortunately, even the choice of subject or focus often reflects a bias. If I decide to study behaviour rather than brain or gonad size, I may get different results and draw different conclusions about human capabilities. If I limit myself to quantifiable behaviour I get a different impression than if I take a more poetic approach, or study an individual's idiosyncrasies.

Bogdan (1982) suggests that the qualitative researcher is more interested in perspectives rather than the truth per se. Brumfit (1985) states that the priority of research should fall not on the quest for an elusive objective truth but on the collection and description of methodological elements which may illuminate a teacher's own behaviour. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) also say

that a teacher's research should be geared to generating self-knowledge and personal development in such a way that their practice can be improved.

Godel's theorem demonstrates that no theory, model or understanding can be completely explained from within itself and requires that an adequate explanatory system contain at least one more dimension than the system it explains. Essentially, we must go beyond where we are to understand where we are.

In order to examine the researcher's personal processes without bias, this study uses, what is, according to Ogborn and Johnson (1983), the most "radical and valuable" (p. 16) feature of Pask's conversation theory which distinguishes individuals in two ways, such that an individual need not be only one person but can be two or more. Intelligence is then considered to be a conversation among participants, including two or more intrabody "p-individuals" (p. 16) arising out of one brain.

About "p-individuals", we can meaningfully say that they both know and understand. They represent distinct perspectives or points of view and are coherent mental organizations. In the course of the ongoing analysis of the data, three such intrabody p-individuals became visible in the author. It must be understood that they arose spontaneously in the later part of the observation period, first becoming manifest in the daily journal. They offer three distinct perspectives on how the problem, of introducing more student autonomy into a learning program, was handled.

In using this wider conception, the commonsense individual stops being the principal subject of the study. Rather than being something stored in a brain, knowledge about a subject is the mutual property of the participants in an exchange of personal meaning. When this conversational exchange is successful it results in a expansion of knowledge and increases the awareness of all the participants. Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) call this type of an exchange a learning conversation

This paper is a reflection of a kind of 'thought in the making' portraying the actions and interactions and recording the learning conversations between Shirley T (teacher), Ann R (researcher) and Jill P (Philosopher\poet). They are the three p-individuals, who originated from the author's mind to help introduce self-organized learning into her ESL classroom. The author of this paper, according to Pask's conversation theory, would be considered an 'm-individual' (p. 16) with the capacity to host one or more p-individuals. The p-individuals have become the tools which allow the investigator sufficient distance to observe, record and evaluate herself in action.

Rucker (1987) also suggests that knowledge arises out of a dialogue between people or between two parts of the same brain. Each of the three p-individuals represents one point of view on the events that occurred between May 4, and June 19, 1992. Through participation with them, in their learning processes, the reader should gain a deeper understanding of how one might approach his\her own self organized learning.

Instead of being limited as we are in objective research by looking at only externals, this stepping back and adding dimensions to our model allows us to delineate and see more clearly into the minds and hearts of our participants, Jill P, a philosophic poet, Shirley T, an enthusiastic teacher and Ann R, a dedicated researcher working on her master's degree in educational technology.

Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) suggest that modelling is deliberately constructed to replicate certain characteristics at the expense of others and produces a selective understanding. By including three possible models of the learning practitioner we are able to replicate more characteristics and demonstrate the inevitable conflict between the varying perspectives, which we could not do using only an objective point of view.

Wilson (1985) suggests that a model is the explicit interpretation of one's understanding of a situation. Jill P's Uni Verses represent her model. The conversational description of Ann R and Shirley T and the relationships between them is meant to be illustrative not prescriptive. Their interaction can also be seen as a kind of model of the conversation entities, from the same brain, might have, when they are confronted with a problem. This thesis, then, is a reflection of three separate models of the situation. Schön (1983) says that studies of the reflective practitioner in action are "critically important" (p. 69). By detailing one such practitioner's processes we hope both to encourage the

broader use of reflective processes and to link the art of practice in uncertainty and uniqueness to the scientist's art of research.

A Review of the Literature

Shirley T had initially been inspired by Peter Mitchell (1985) who suggested the teacher and researcher should be concerned with improving learning through the provision of experiences which build the individual's confidence in their ability to learn for themselves. Like Van Lier (1988) Ann R thought that active involvement in research and understanding classroom interaction was the most productive way to achieve improvement in learning a second language. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) provided them with an overview of the dual role of the teacher/researcher in school based research, as well as a discussion of the use of the qualitative method as the most appropriate in the field of education. However, about half way through the project, they were both influenced by a book called Learning Conversations by Harri-Augstein & Thomas (1991) --a radical self organized approach to personal and organizational growth. After reading Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) they agreed that the exchange of personal meaning in the form of learning conversations involved an important new step in using communication to learn a second language.

"The communicative approach" also advocates a student-centred rather than a teacher centred approach and favours the use of language in its context. However, as Nunan (1989) points out it is somewhat of a misnomer to speak about "the communicative approach" because there seems to be a family of approaches which claim to be 'communicative' and it is difficult to find any approach which claims not to be communicative.

In a recent study of ESL educators across Canada it was observed that most teachers spoke of using the communicative approach. However, for many teachers using a communicative approach only means finding the language structure they wish to emphasize in the context of an article or story and having the students read and complete comprehension exercises. For others it means some form of co-operative learning where various structures or functions of the language are practised through role playing and for yet others it means interaction through solving problems or playing games together. Nunan (1989) states that some practitioners consider it unnecessary to teach grammar and focus instead on using the language for the creation of meaning in the process of communicating; whereas he, like Littlewood, (1981) consider grammar an essential resource in using the language to communicate. The debate about whether to teach grammar in the ESL classroom seems to be a heated one, with people taking positions for, against and half way between as demonstrated in the opinions column of the 1992 summer edition bulletin of SPEAQ OUT.

Larsen-Freeman (1991) has developed a list of ten general characteristics of the learning process and language learners that might be helpful to ESL teachers.

Yalden (1987) says that the subject matter in the language classroom has changed from an emphasis on language forms to an emphasis on language use and development. She also contends that:

All the work in progress in investigating the process of second language development, as well as its product as communicative interaction, points to the need for new classroom strategies. (p.57)

Schön (1983) states that the basic theme of the normal teacher\student interaction is a game of control and evasion and also discusses the need to reshape the expectations of the client and the professionals.

Langer (1986) also suggests the need for changing traditional classroom practices.

Ann R and Shirley T both considered themselves extremely fortunate to be able to carry out this kind of research with a minimum of external controls. According to Schön(1983) many practitioners do not have enough control over their situation to be able to establish a reflective contract with their clients. Shirley T however, had no curriculum to worry about and no external examinations. The goal of the program was to respond to the learner's language needs and initiatives to try new methods were encouraged by her supervisor, Geraldo. Glaser (1990) suggests that instructional experimentation

is becoming increasingly important to the interactive growth of learning theory and its applications

As suggested by Evans (1968) a teacher is well placed to carry out a small inquiry into the effects of her own methods of teaching. Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) also outlined the need for teachers to become researchers as do Griffiths (1985), Mitchell (1985), and Hughes and Hitchcock (1989). Smyth (1992) in his excellent article about teacher's work and the politics of reflection suggests that the goal for reflective teachers is to transcend self blame and to link their consciousness about the day-to-day processes of their teaching with the wider political and social realities within which they operate.

Being able to locate oneself personally and professionally in history so as to understand the forces that have come to determine one's existence is the hall mark of a teacher who has been able to harness reflective process so as to begin to act on the world in a way that amounts to changing it. (p. 299)

Wenden (1987) warns that direct attempts to promote learner autonomy in the second language classroom are probably doomed to failure. The process of promoting more autonomy can not be approached using an explicit instructional model like that of Dick and Carey (1984). Langer (1986) goes so far as to suggest that the old industrial metaphor of diagnosing what the students still need to learn, providing skills directed at the missing skills and testing to see if the instruction has been effective, as a model for teaching militates against achievement of higher level learning goals. The development of student autonomy must be handled in a diplomatic indirect fashion. Boud

(1988) suggests: it is not primarily any technique or teaching methodology that is required but an attitude of acceptance and appreciation of the views, desires and frames of reference of learners. Perhaps the single central quality which fosters autonomy is the quality of the relationship between teachers and learners which develops through this acceptance (p. 39)

Rubin (1987) in her article on learning strategies says:

there is a growing interest in defining how learners can take charge of their own learning and in clarifying how teachers can help students become more autonomous. (p. 15)

In the American Psychologist, Robert Glaser (1990) also discusses the development of self regulatory strategies and suggests that increasing "executive control performance" has become an important dimension of improved learning. According to Glaser:

instructional programs in reading comprehension (Brown and Palincsar, 1984, 1989), writing, (Scardamalia, Bereiter and Steinbach, 1984) and mathematics (Schoenfeld, 1985) have been designed to foster the development of self-regulatory control skills.

Increasing attention is being focusing, across disciplines, on the role of learner as active participant in the learning process, Zimmerman(1989), Hannafin (1989), Dickinson (1987), Holec (1987). For learning to be a generative developmental process requires greater learner responsibility for assessing their own learning needs and seeking their own appropriate information.

Chapter Two

METHODS

Procedures

As noted in the introduction, this method is developed by using three separate participant perspectives, the teacher's role, (Shirley T), the researcher role, (Ann R) and the philosophic poet role, (Jill P).

Ann R's research question was how do we get adult students to become more self-organizing and autonomous in their learning of a second language. To explore this problem a seven week study of the practitioner's processes, while introducing a more collaborative approach into a classroom of adult Chinese students, was conducted. The case study method was used to examine this ongoing real life process because it allows for flexibility when the outcomes are uncertain and admits the possibility of changing the focus and responding appropriately as new evidence presents itself.

The case study according to Yin (1984) is the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. This case study serves a revelatory purpose to demonstrate some of the problems and difficulties a practitioner can expect when moving to a more collaborative approach.

We used participatory observation, to collect the data for the case study, which is characterized by Bodgan (1972), as a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher\teacher and the students. Although the class was audiotaped twice at the beginning and once at the end, the majority of the observations were summarized in a written journal form by Ann R, at the end of each of the thirty five three hour classes. Two weeks from the end of the session, Jill P started the analysis by distinguishing between Ann R and Shirley T and clarifying their respective roles.

In addition to classroom observation, as suggested by Griffiths (1985) and Cohen (1987), Shirley T asked the students to write their own diaries of the language learning experiences they had in each class. Students were encouraged to record any conscious strategy they used to help them read or understand and any problems or pitfalls they encountered.

Ann R noted at various points that Shirley T spoke of planning, monitoring, guessing vocabulary from context, skimming and scanning for information, making inferences, understanding causal relationships, and evaluating and reporting their experiences verbally as suggested by Chamot (1987).

Ann R conducted unstructured interviews after hours or at the coffee break to monitor the students' reactions and feelings about the class. These conversations took place with participants who were chosen on a casual basis because of their availability, their willingness to chat or because they stayed after class to ask a question. Ann always asked questions about how useful

they found the class of that day, which aspects they preferred and what other subjects they might wish to discuss.

Regular discussions about perceived problems were addressed with Jane, another teacher, and Geraldo, the supervisor of the program who provided both encouragement and support. His probationary report of Shirley T's performance is found in Appendix "B"

Tests were used at the beginning to evaluate students reading comprehension, writing, listening and speaking abilities

Rather than the 'communicative approach', this study uses the 'learning conversation,' (Harri-Augstein and Thomas 1991) approach as the principal method used to encourage 'the transformation' (Checkland, 1981) of the students. The transformation which takes place in this kind of ESL classroom occurs not only in the students who learn to assume more control over their own learning of the language both in and outside of the classroom, but also in the teacher who through reflection and consideration of her own practices constantly strives to improve her part of the conversation. These learning conversations are meant to lead to an increase of the shared knowledge of all the conversational participants. The teacher engaged in the three types of learning conversations suggested by Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) 1) process dialogues which are task focused, 2) support dialogue which deal with life relevance and 3) referent dialogues which deal with metacognition and learning to learn.

The instruction took a global, holistic rather than a linear approach. With the goals of autonomy and better integration always in mind the learning practitioner entered into meaningful conversation with the students. Shirley used a 'process dialogue' in discussions of the workings of the various aspects of the Canadian culture. The students chose their own topics of interest and came up with their own suggestions for how these interests might be pursued using the library, the newspaper, magazines and the National Film Board of Canada. The topic or the subject of the ensuing discussions generally concerned their life in Canada and how its' systems work. 'Support dialogues' were used to encourage eventual integration with the host culture and 'referent dialogues' addressed their progress and problems in using the language.

Using this method, the practitioner does not directly teach the students the language; rather, she helps them to learn it on their own. The emphasis is shifted from formal aspects of the language and focuses instead on getting the intermediate students to use previously learned language in conversations and the exchange of personal meaning. Students are encouraged to assume more control over their own learning, and the practitioner, by assuming a much less authoritarian role, assists and guides them in their efforts. Although this study began as an examination of how to introduce more autonomy into the ESL classroom, as suggested by Yin (1984) it is not unusual for a case study to shift its orientation and change its nature. The shift in this case was to an examination of the learning practitioner's processes in this undertaking and the

creation of a report designed to encourage other teachers to examine their processes with a view to moving toward a more reflective contract with their students.

Ann R worried a great deal about the credibility, reliability, validity and acceptance of her work. Merriam (1988) Yin (1984) Miles and Huberman(1984), and Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) suggested that such research should involve some kind of 'triangulation' so no one would have to take only the researcher's word for the interpretation of the data. Although it was impractical to get other researchers to examine the data and interpretations, two other experienced professionals in the ESL field were called upon to do so, on an ongoing basis. This study also employed student journals, taped sessions, teacher interviews, and the supervisor's report. A review of the results was carried out with both the other teacher and the supervisor of the program.

The use of the three 'p-individuals' who criticized and reflected on each others processes also served as a kind of internal triangulation and provided a valuable tool in considering how their respective processes could be improved.

Griffiths (1985) suggests that educational research techniques are presently moving away from statistical survey based methods, toward research frameworks which focus upon the details of every day life. This study takes the kind of approach that he recommends, and concentrates on the interactions between a teacher and the various others in her\his environment. The debate about qualitative and quantitative methods in education is perhaps not relevant

in this case. A concern with objectivity, reliability, and validity seem to be common to both these methods. While these concerns are certainly legitimate, especially in large scale projects, excessive insistence on them can too severely limit the scope and direction of a small scale research project aimed at improving professional practice. There appears to be a need for experimentation and evolving new methods which can be useful and made available to educators who wonder how to change the traditional interactions in the classroom and move to a more collaborative approach which involves students more directly in their own learning.

Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) also suggest that the traditional views of objectivity are incompatible with the pursuit of self-organization. Apparently this has many teachers and researchers baffled, as they are neither at ease with open-ended creative learning under the control of the learner, nor are they familiar with qualitative methods which allow this method to be investigated. This paper attempts to exhibit an original, creative, but thoroughly practical, approach to the problem of understanding this kind of intervention by using a narrative style which draws the reader/practitioner into the process so he can judge for himself those elements which might be useful in his own class. This new method of exploration can be advantageously used by teachers in examining their own processes and the complexity of the interactions between themselves and the various others in their environment.

Merriam (1988) says there is no one generally accepted, standard format for reporting the data from a case study and indeed, in some cases, it is the narrative structure used to present the data which defines the research as a case study. The purpose of using this kind of richly descriptive narrative is that it serves to transport the reader to the site of the learning practitioner's classroom, where he might not, otherwise, go.

At the end of each week the daily journals from the class were read and reviewed and compared with the students' journals to gain a broader perspective of the everyday events of the classroom and their effect on the students. The student journals were corrected for grammar and spelling mistakes and returned to be corrected for the next week. The offerings of the most astute students were photocopied to be used for illustrative purposes in the description of this project.

Recurring themes, issues or perceived problems were addressed with the other professionals in the field.

Selection

The selection of students for this class was based on a first-come first-served basis. They put their names on a waiting list at the Chinese Community Centre and were advised of their admissions when the course began. On the

first day of class the students were streamed roughly by ability, using a quick oral test. Those who could not speak at all went to another teacher's class.

Chapter 3

THE SETTING

The Location

The sessions were conducted by the Community Education Services Division of the Commission des écoles Catholiques de Montréal. They received their funding from the provincial government. The classes were held in the prayer room of a church in Brossard, a suburban community of Montreal. No technical equipment was available for use in this class. There was no access to videotape, audiotape, overhead projector or other aids except a felt pen board, which was difficult to erase. There was a xerox machine in the secretary's office, available for photocopies. The secretaries spoke only French. Shirley T saw it as an opportunity to practice her French but Ann R felt it was unfortunate the students did not have the opportunity to learn in a more English environment. Although Shirley T did not seem to mind, Ann R felt the setting was entirely uncondusive for learning English. She had several encounters with visitors to the church, who resented both the Chinese, and the English, being taught in their French church.

The cleaning lady, Marie, also spoke predominately French, although she proudly demonstrated that she could speak English, "Hello Shirley T," Marie would sing every day upon Shirley T's arrival. "Comment ca va " Marie was bald. She said she wore a wig when she went out; but, of course, working was

not going out. On Mondays, when the church was particularly dirty, she would complain miserably. "Il est venu des cochons. C'était, des negres." Her prejudice was not limited to blacks, the Jews and the Chinese also fell under her sharp tongue. She told Ann R on a particularly dirty day, that "she always thought the Chinese where clean and tidy. Not like the negroes. But you know, she said, They stand to piss like cows. They think my toilets aren't clean. You tell them to keep them clean. I wash them every day and still I get complaints about piss on the seat."

When Shirley T arrived one morning, Marie had nothing to sing about and Shirley T found a nasty message she had left for the students in French. A very embarrassing situation, she told the class and only half translated what Marie had written.

The problem of racism was discussed in the class on various occasions. Wu said they could not get jobs, in Canada, because they were Asian. Almost all of them felt they had been discriminated against in some way.

Shirley T's class was upstairs, in the prayer room and Harold's and Jane's were in the basement. Several students commented how lucky they were to have the best room. The other rooms were dingy and had a peculiar smell. The prayer room was bright and airy but the walls were covered with pictures of Mary and Jesus and lots of text in French.

At the beginning, the students set up the tables in a U-shape with Shirley T at the magic board at the front, the students from Hong Kong on her left and

those from Taiwan on her right, demonstrating their own prejudices about each other. At various points students revealed their feelings about each other in private. "They don't like you," said one man from Hong Kong, "if you're richer than they. Nor do they like you, if you're poorer."

Participants

Besides Jill P, Ann R and Shirley T, the other participants in this study were Chinese adults, average age 35-45. The students were about half from Hong Kong, and half from Taiwan. They had all immigrated within the last five years. All, except one couple, had children of school age. All of them had also studied English before, mostly in a formal setting with an emphasis on grammar and passing an exam.. They all did well on the Public Service Written Proficiency test administered the first day. Only two people made more than 6 out of 50 mistakes. A short oral test asking basic personal information and a personal comprehension estimate revealed wider differences in their speaking from poor to good. Their self evaluated comprehension abilities ranged from sixty to ninety-five percent. They all felt they needed practice in speaking.

Four students had participated in the previous session with the same teacher. Lee, Wing, Mr. Tong and Mr. Dee. The new ones were Su and her husband, Ho, as well as Ting, Fu, Jim, Amy, Chang and Wu. The following descriptions are a reflection of how some students were forthcoming and willing

to exchange personal meaning, whereas others volunteered very little of themselves.

Chang

Chang only missed one class for the whole seven weeks. He gets the attendance award. Chang was already pretty much of a self starter before he came to the class. He had dropped out of university when his father died, bankrupt and "with his own two hands" had built himself to owner of a company. He was here with his son, Benny, a 18 year old boy who went to Dawson college.

Chang had deliberately chosen the house where he lived because it was in a non-Chinese neighbourhood. He made it a point to be friendly with his neighbours to have the occasion to speak the language. Although his neighbours were French Canadians, they spoke English, their second language, together. Chang regularly did a summary of an article from the Saturday Gazette. Although he did not keep his journal regularly, he kept it more than most. He wrote highly of Shirley T in his first entry and never changed his mind. Despite denials, he seemed highly superstitious. He was also very ambivalent about his stay in Quebec. "I'm now only a stranger to this place," he wrote in his journal, "everything must be started again." If Quebec separates, he says he

"will move my family as soon as possible to another region " He was looking for an opportunity to start a business, to meet the condition established by the Canadian government, but felt that the investment climate was unfavourable at the moment. His wife still working, as a teacher in Hong Kong, did not like the meteorological climate in Montreal.

Ting

Ting was Shirley T's favourite student, the most successful. Shirley T felt she must have done something right when Ting said at the end, on tape, that she had developed more confidence, not just in speaking English but in the rest of her life as well. Ting did not seem ambivalent, she liked this class from the beginning. Liking the class seemed to be synonymous with liking the teacher. Ting was the only student who regularly wrote in her journal. She said she liked Shirley T's methods of teaching, especially talking about what each of them had done the day before. Ting was an active participant in the group, being aware of the dynamics between students and with the teacher. She felt some responsibility for keeping the conversation in the class going, "I'm trying to promote the atmosphere in the class," she wrote in her journal

She wrote that her parents did not agree with her immigration, and though she had been here for four years, they still called her every two weeks to persuade her to go home. Her husband was also unable to find work here,

so he too still works in Taiwan and sees her only once every few months. She had two children in french immersion classes, but no one to speak English to regularly.

Su and Ho

There was some tension between Ting and Su. Su was a very competitive woman who liked things done her way. She said she would never start up a business using Canadian employees, because they were lazy and unreliable. She wanted to do it all herself. She had invested some money and lost and she told of Chinese friends who had lost millions of dollars investing in Canada. She wanted to be sure it did not happen to her again.

There was also some tension between her and her husband, Ho. Before he was called away to his grandmother's funeral, he was the most prodigious speaker in the group. Su ran a close second and took over when he left, as number one. Su was short, and was the only student who always dressed formally with make-up, dresses, and heels.

Lee

Lee gets the progress award. Lee started taking English classes in January. She was the poorest English speaker in the class when she started.

She was always very hesitant to speak and often covered her mouth with her hand in embarrassment. When Shirley T spoke to her Lee never raised her head to look directly. In the first several sessions, she rarely said a word and then only when put on the spot with a direct question.

She reported she had always been poor in English and did not get good marks at school. The development of her English persona took its time. But when she finally emerged in this class, she emerged as a competent woman whose efforts had kept her family together and had contributed 80% to the success of her husband's business in Taiwan.

She was learning English so she would be able to converse with her children, who were now 20 and 22, and with business associates and English speaking relatives who seemed to visit occasionally. She had great aspirations for her children and was determined they would not be put upon by their parents as she and her husband had been. Although she worried afterward, that she was 'airing family linen', she told the class that she and her husband had been obligated to support her husband's entire family for the past twenty five years.

"My children will be free," she had added, as a point of honour

Wu

Wu suggested he only had one interest, and that was making money. He also liked watching soccer and playing tennis. He had worked his way up in a Hong Kong bank for the past twenty five years, and wanted to start up some kind of business in Canada. He was, however, very hesitant to spend his money because he felt there was little opportunity for him to make more here. He would welcome the chance to go back to Hong Kong; however, he was highly anxious about what would happen there, in 1997, when the Chinese took over. He felt he was just killing time here, following his mother around shopping, and doing odd jobs around the house. He had a dry, sardonic wit. His wife had started a small woman's clothing shop in China town to meet their citizenship requirements but he did not take it seriously as a business enterprise.

The discussions about family, friends and relationships that the women, in the class, wanted to discuss did not hold much fascination for him. In his house he was boss and he solved the problems that arose between his mother and his wife by taking all family decisions. For him attending an English class was a social occasion. Most often he came because Chang picked him up in his new Oldsmobile. He was not willing to make much effort to learn apart from this class but the social pressure got him to summarize two newspaper articles. He never wrote in his journal and rarely did the homework. He spoke only when someone asked him a direct question.

Jim and Amy

Jim and Amy were another husband and wife team. They were the only ones in the group who had no children. They were both quite quiet and timid. They were starting to show small signs of improvement when they went off to take a course at McGill which they dropped after two weeks. Amy was proud that she, at least, had made some effort to integrate into the society. She went to an English speaking church in Chinatown, once a week. Jim admitted he did nothing in the English speaking community. He did not read, he did not watch television, and he did not listen to the radio or speak with friends or neighbours in English. On their last day, they agreed they should set aside a regular time each day to practice English together, however without the structure and discipline of the class they did not keep it up.

Wing

Wing had been in the class since November and now suddenly in the middle she stopped coming. Meaningful conversation, for her was not meaningful learning. "I don't like when we're just chatting," she said, at the break one day. She wanted more hand outs and exercises. She did not really like reading the newspaper. Despite her complaints, Wing was talking more and was not as shy about expressing her opinion. She clearly wanted more

structure Shirley T perhaps should have spent more time, in a one-to-one support dialogue, convincing Wing of the value of talking about everyday things, making decisions, talking with other students and participating in activities together

Mr. Tong

Mr. Tong was a busy business man from Taiwan who owned three small businesses. He wanted to improve his English but he did not like to be told he made mistakes, and did not want to work at it. He attended class only sporadically and never did the homework.

Mr. Dee

Mr. Dee was not very communicative and Ann R did not know much about him from her notes. His wife was in the class downstairs and he often went to Toronto for weeks at a time. He smoked contraband cigarettes.

Fu

Fu dropped out after the second week because she had company for a week and figured she would never catch up.

Geraldo was Shirley T's supervisor from the CECM who organized the class.

Harold, one of the other teacher, would make it a point to come up and check on Shirley T. He knew they had "wild" conversations in her class and went on outings every week. He was pleased the day he came and discovered she had only four students. "I've had no attendance problem," he said, keeping his fingers crossed. Ann R noted that Harold came to proselytize, "seeing with one eye, like the Buddha," he said, was the goal of this life. The students all knew of his interest in Buddhism and when one of them asked, he gladly left his own class behind and came to Shirley T's class to give his lecture. He also regularly intervened in Jane, the third teacher's class.

Jane, the other teacher, had lots of experience and suggestions for activities to try. Harold stuck to her like glue. Oddly enough, it was Harold that really set Jill P off on her crusade to convert practitioners. In Ann R's first problem session with Harold and Lucy, Harold had said bold as brass, with no reflection or hesitation, "I don't have problems. In my class, I am the King." (!)

Chapter Four

RESULTS

Learning Conversation

Self-organized learning is the conversational construction, reconstruction and exchange of personally significant, relevant and viable meanings, with awareness and controlled purposiveness. Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991)

Shirley T certainly had the class talking about personally significant and viable meanings. The students told stories about events from their everyday lives: their impressions of Canadians as lazy and inefficient, their disagreement with the government's new tax, the children's successful music test, the cost of dentists and cars. There was the story about a long suffering grandmother who finally died, another of a girl who passed away at the age of fifteen because no one loved or cared for her, one about the aunt who warned against hiring twin Filipino women because they could escape from their bodies at night and fly off to create mischief. "What kind of mischief," Ann R wanted to ask but Shirley T did not push the point.

Shirley T always brought her own experience to any subject the students introduced. In response to a story about saving a whale, she told of the ducks she watched grow up on the river, only to be hunted down in the fall. Jim brought in an article about a rapist in Brossard and Shirley T told of the man, her sister had been seeing, who scaled walls to kill and then rape his victims. She shared the story of her motor vehicle accident, her first run-in with the

police, the antics of her cats and the neighbour's dog. Ann R sometimes worried about the impression Shirley gave of Canada. What kind of place was this country they had not quite adopted?

Everyone brought pictures and talked about mothers, fathers, husbands and friends. Slowly, those who came to all the classes, got to know each other exchanging meaningful conversations, how to clean a swimming pool, what to do with an ailing parent, why the generation gap, why the breakup of the family, who are the lost generation of boys in Quebec, how to donate organs to those in need, why homosexuals want to marry. Chang was the most exuberant in expressing his gratitude to all his classmates for this chance to talk.

Rowntree (1985) says that we cannot facilitate the student's personal growth and autonomy without "co-munication" --without opening ourselves and sharing perceptions, experience, and point of view. About one third of every class was spent talking about what they did after class. Shirley T always asked lots of questions. She also encouraged the students to ask each other questions. If a student had taken her car to the garage, Shirley T would ask how long it took, if she always went to the same garage, if she had trouble getting good service. What was wrong with the car? Often these questions would get the others telling about problems they had with service men or getting 'ripped off' at the mufflerman.

Although she made a point of repeating that ordinary conversation was the most natural way of learning the language, some students still found

discussions to be a waste of time --not real learning. Dickinson (1987) suggests that learning is unlikely to be efficient if the learner is prevented from learning in the ways she prefers.

It was not that the conversations were not interesting. Shirley T found them all fascinating. Su said the class was the highlight of her day and Ting said they always had fun. Whenever Geraldo, her supervisor, came, he was also drawn right into the conversations. On Shirley T's report he writes that discussions of special events and other interesting topics, made for enormous oral practice and for a very lively and interesting class to attend. Whenever he came to her class he joined in and told stories from his own life and experience. One day he told a story about a man who had a baby.

Ann R was able, using Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) terminology, to distinguish three types of dialogues which Shirley T used throughout the session. The "process dialogue" for discussing the many and various elements of the Canadian culture. "Support dialogue" which involved creating a relaxed and accepting atmosphere as a prelude to integrating into the host culture and a "referent dialogue" (p. 130) which encouraged students to evaluate their own personal progress and problems.

Decision Making

Besides sharing experience, as suggested by Dickinson (1987), decisions to be taken in class were transferred to the learners. Shirley T transferred as much as possible on to the shoulders of the learners: determining learning goals, making decisions about materials, deciding how materials would be used, what tasks, what groupings, what outings they would take, and evaluation, determining what progress they had made.

Not all the students felt this was appropriate. In fact, about half way through, Mr. Dee responded in anger and irritation when Shirley T tried again to get them to revise and update their study plans. "We've been talking about this since the beginning," he said, "why don't you just get on with it." Ting was the one who defused this situation. "That's one opinion," she had said and Shirley T had changed the subject. She was not able to turn this into a learning opportunity. Mr. Dee never came back.

It was often difficult to get these students to say how, or even what they would like to do. No one wanted to offend anyone and all were reticent to express an opinion. By the beginning of the fourth week the consensus was still that "teacher knows best."

Ann R wondered if this was a cultural phenomenon, if perhaps there was something particular to Chinese educational systems which made them hold so strongly to this myth. Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) suggest that 'personal

myths,' prevent the progress of learning, because individuals respond like robots, without reflecting on the effects of what they do

Jill P figured her job was to come up with a way to 'kill' the learning robots. She was convinced that the problem was not restricted to the Chinese culture, but thought that everyone had learning robots that prevented personal progress. The trick was to get students and teachers to identify their myths.

Self Organization

Most of the people in this case were far from self organized in their learning and many of them did not see 'learning conversation' as useful. Finding and watching an English movie was beyond many of them. So was reading one newspaper article per week. Many of the students did not take suggested homework seriously, nor did they keep track of their learning process in a journal as suggested. Without an authoritarian teacher and the threat of failure over their heads, many of them did not make much of an effort to learn. Many students live under a 'personal myth' that if they master all the grammar rules, they will, eventually, by osmosis become fluent without ever listening or speaking.

Ting's journal (with mistakes corrected) perhaps describes the problem most eloquently and confirms Ann R's suspicions that these students believed

learning a language means studying grammar rules and completing exercises not having learning conversations.

I remember the first day, Shirley told us this would be a conversation class. Most of the Chinese learn grammar their whole life, but they still can't speak, can't communicate, can't understand. For their whole life they just live around in the Chinese community, as though they still lived overseas. They eat Chinese food, read Chinese newspaper and make friends with Chinese people. They refuse to adjust to the new country, the new life, and the new culture.

For old-aged people, I can say nothing; but for the younger generation, I feel sorry for them. Some new immigrants expect circumstances will improve if they only sit and wait.

Some of them start to learn the language, but they think learning a language starts with grammar, so they only look for places to learn grammar. Fortunately and unfortunately, they've learned lots of grammar. Since they were in junior high school until they graduated from senior high --that is the lucky part.

On the other hand, because they just know grammar, when a teacher wants them to start to speak, they think it is a waste of time. They insist to learn grammar, because only grammar can let them feel safe.

We know grammar is a part of the basics of English, but opening your mouth to speak, even forcing yourself, is the only way to learn a language.

Ting's description is of Chinese people afflicted with 'learning robots' that prevent their learning progress. Shirley T had hoped to persuade the learners to use more effective strategies, but she was not always successful. The best student in Shirley T's previous class demoted himself to the lower level, so he could study two word verbs and other complex grammatical points. "I still make lots of mistakes," he confided to Ann R toward the end of this session, bowing in a slightly subservient way. Shirley T had told him that he no longer needed an English class and that he should join a interest class with mainly native

speakers. He did not feel ready for that. Perhaps at 62, he was stuck in his "learning trough". (p. 103) Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991)

Geraldo said this problem was common with many Chinese students and had seen the same problem with other advanced classes as well. "They like learning the rules," he said, "they do not really want to communicate with English speaking people."

For some, English class was an occasion to get out of the house to mingle with other Asian people. Amy, whose first language was Cantonese told of learning Mandarin in the last English class she took so she could converse with a fellow student who could not speak Cantonese.

Harri-Augstein and Thomas(1991) speak of five kinds of personal meaning: rote, coherent, explanatory, constructive and creative. (p. 65) This study suggests that many of these students were stuck on rote learning and may in fact not really want to speak English or integrate into the wider Montreal community. Many of them made no attempts outside of the classroom to learn to speak English. Ting suggested in an unstructured interview that many of the students were in an existential crisis, undecided if they would really stay in Canada, or go back home to Hong Kong or Taiwan. Many of them had husbands or, less frequently, wives still working back home. Most of them had a foot in both camps and lacked a commitment either to this language or to this culture.

Outings

There was often lots of discussion about what outing they would take each week. They had agreed in the first week that Fridays would be reserved for going out into the community. Since no one wanted to take an actual decision, many options were weighed. They finally went to the Museum, The Old Port, the outdoor markets, the indoor markets and various restaurants. In their last outing they went to Shirley T's house, which was quite an adventure for they got lost. Many students did not like going on these outings. They could not see the point in unstructured talk or talking to each other in a relaxed fashion. Even though they were told repeatedly that they controlled their own activities and had no outside requirements to comply with, no one said, 'let's stay in class and change things'; instead, they did not show up or dropped out completely.

Ann feels a little more structure here might have helped. Shirley however, felt she should not impose her suggestions for outings and should allowed students to choose for themselves. When students were left to their own devices, they often chose activities which did not involve interaction with the host culture. Ann felt they should only go on outings which require them to speak or listen to someone other than the teacher and that this guideline should be well spelled out. Shirley was afraid they might not go out at all if too much was required.

Activities and Materials

No amount of materials and packages can facilitate communication (sic) unless the student has full access to 'human interaction' media allowing him to consult and debate with teachers, fellow students and people from the outside. Rowntree (1975)

Shirley T carried a big black bag which she bought at the church bazaar. Occasionally, in class, she would pretend to be doing magic tricks with the bag. She was particularly conscious of always having a sufficiently large array of exercises and activities to run little risk of being surprised with nothing to do. If the students had nothing to discuss she would present them with the choices that Ann had planned.

At the beginning, Shirley T had introduced the class to English materials and resources available in the community --listening labs in libraries, books, brochures, films, television, radio. Ann had planned to have them choose and order a film from the National Film Board each week, but in the end, getting the videocassette player in the church was a problem. Nevertheless, choosing subjects from the catalogue was a productive exercise. Native issues, women's issues, minorities, and family violence all emerged as interests. From all reports, the students rarely used the resources available to them, except occasionally, the library.

Shirley T introduced them to the newspaper, starting with the basics, the price, the sections, the index, the want ads. None of the students read the paper prior to attending this class. She told them the newspaper was full of

articles of interest but they should be selective Shirley T advised them to skim through to look for only one article they could summarize for the rest of the class. Both Fu and Ting said they were happy to learn to read an English newspaper. "Before I was always frustrated. Fu wrote, But this time Shirley T taught us how to read."

Ting said "I feel proud of the progress I've made "

Shirley T recommended interacting with the article, as though it were a person, asking questions and getting the answers from the text.

They did not all agree with Shirley T's methods. Lee, Wu and Wing all mentioned they would like more materials and exercises. However, when they were given exercises for homework, no one completed the work on time and some said it was boring. Discussion of current events also seemed irrelevant to some. Not everyone favoured taking their turn in leading the group in the use of such teacher modelled strategies as summarizing, clarifying and predicting, questioning and giving their own opinion. Wing said many students thought reading the paper was too hard, but were afraid to say because they thought everyone else wanted to read the paper. Su and Ting, however, suggested reading the paper every day. Ann Landers was the most frequently-read and enjoyed column. It also provoked lots of discussion and debate.

Shirley T used the structured exercises or activities planned by Ann, but only when the conversations lagged. This was rare since there was an increasing amount of animated interaction, as students got to know the teacher.

and each other. As it turned out, the most important and readily available resource, as also noted by Rivers (1987), was the background experience and knowledge of each student.

New Vocabulary

Shirley T constantly checked to be sure they understood when she told them stories. New vocabulary came up only in context, when she used a word she thought they might not understand. She would repeat it and write it on the board. She would also explain and elaborate on its meaning, give opposites, and similar words.

Wu once complained they had too much new vocabulary. Shirley T said they did not have to worry about memorizing them all and explained that they had to encounter a word about sixteen times before it would sink in. Shirley T would try to repeat words she used in other contexts and found it gratifying to see a few students making an effort to use these new words and expressions in class. To make them aware of their own meta-cognitive strategies, they often discussed which strategies they found most effective. To learn new expressions and words given in class, Su said she went home after class and looked up all words in the English dictionary. Ting said she tried to use the words in class and Chang said he would repeat the words over and over in his head.

Corrections of students was directly primarily at errors and clarification of meaning rather than form

Evaluation of Student's Process

The evaluation of one's own learning is one of the major means by which self-initiated learning also becomes responsible learning. It is when the individual has to take responsibility for deciding what criteria are important to him, what goals must be achieved, and the extent to which he has achieved those goals, that he truly learns to take responsibility for himself and his directions (Rogers 1983)

To keep Ann R happy, Shirley T had agreed to administer a series of Public Service Proficiency tests to assess the students' written and comprehension skills at the beginning. Ann had planned to administer these same tests to see if the students had improved as a result of the class. However, in the end, Shirley considered this most inappropriate.

Langer and Applebee (1987) almost despair at accomplishing the thinking/learning goal within the currently prevalent systems which destroy innovative methods with evaluations that abort new learning developments. Given traditional notions of instruction and evaluation they feel it may be impossible to implement a successful new learning program. Since there are virtually no appropriate external measures to evaluate personal growth and autonomy, Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) suggest that the evidence of learning is determined internally and lies in the learner's experience of changes

in how they think, feel and perceive. According to Beaven (1977) moving to a collaborative self and peer evaluation method is essential to the goal of learning and thinking. She suggests that self evaluation promotes self-reliance, independence, autonomy and creativity.

At the end of the third day, Shirley T asked them to evaluate their own comprehension skills. Someone had asked her about her opinion of Quebec separation. "How much did you understand?" she asked after she answered. From then on, the evaluation was ongoing. Shirley T became convinced a referent dialogue where students compare their problems, their strengths and weaknesses is all the evaluation required for this kind of class. She was, however, always quick to point out any changes she noticed in a student's progress. "It seems much easier for you to do the summary" or "I see you're talking much more "

In the end, Chang gave himself a "B" in comparison with Ting, who gave herself an "A". It was true that Chang had been less involved than Ting, even though his attendance was slightly better. He admitted he had kept his journal very irregularly, and he did not always prepare his summary from the paper. He recognized his best effort was speaking with his neighbours and was proud of the relationships he had developed. Ann R felt this recognition represented interesting progress on his part.

Su did not give herself a grade but conceded she was second, behind Ting and maybe even third, behind Chang. Chang and Ting both suggested she

had a wide vocabulary, and she replied that she mispronounced or used it badly. Shirley T suggested practice makes perfect. She made a comparison with her own experience learning French and said that she too had started with lots of unusable vocabulary that she had memorized in high school and eventually, as her need to speak increased, she was able to use it all in ordinary conversation with friends and neighbours.

Lee was content to recognize her progress upward from the bottom of the class languishing in silence, to among the top contributors to the conversation. Learning a language often requires much more than just learning grammar and vocabulary. Maslow's idea of self-actualization takes on an almost literal meaning for second language students who must learn to understand the emergence of their new persona speaking a new language. This happened to Lee. Learning to reveal hidden parts of ourselves is an ongoing process and a vital part in progressively learning a language. Any mark imposed by a teacher using traditional testing methods could easily destroy the small bit of pride she had built up.

Ting had clearly improved in her ability to interact in English and was delighted with her progress. In a referent dialogue, evaluating her progress, she also talked about how the course had given her more self confidence, not just in her ability to speak English but in other areas of her life, as well. Here again, what objective mark could a teacher give that would reflect her success?

Ann reported that by the last class both Ting and Chang were clearly imitating the model Shirley T had provided by asking questions, taking an interest, recounting stories and calling on their own experience.

Relationships

Geraldo in his assessment of Shirley T said, I always found her to be warm and understanding to her students. This made for a very trustful relationship and a good ambience for learning.

Probably the most important factor in a student's success was the relationship between the student and teacher. Ann R notes that the students who were most willing to exchange personal meaning with Shirley T and the other classmates were the ones who stayed on to the end of the session. "I liked you from the beginning," Ting confided the last day, over lunch. Chang too was impressed from the beginning and convinced that he had something to learn from this teacher. In his journal he wrote:

Our class teacher is madame Shirley T, a nice Netherlands lady, who speaks English well and is also author of a book. She seems to be full of educated knowledge. I appreciate her very much. I hope I can learn more from her.

Relationships were not just limited to student\teacher but also included student\student. Chang reported how much he appreciated his classmates and the opportunity to talk together. On the other hand, Ann R recorded tension,

jealousy and competition between Ting and Su. Su, for instance, wanted to know exactly how many articles Ting had read in the paper so she could be sure to keep up. Ting did not take this competition too seriously. In a private discussion with Ann R, Ting said about Su, "She doesn't just want to keep up with me, she wants to get ahead." Problems between Su and her husband also emerged one day when Shirley T asked them about the changing role of women in their culture. Ho said his wife's idea of equality meant ordering him around. Su responded that she did not like it when people shouted and Chang suggested Ho should say no more, least he regret his speech

Because of her inexperience, Shirley T was not always ready to turn a conflict situation into a learning opportunity, and had more of a tendency to change the topic than confront the problem.

Those who stayed in the class clearly developed a rapport with the teacher. Taking a genuine interest in their lives, keeping track of what they told her, asking questions which built on information they give her, and listening to what they had to say, were all important in conducting the learning conversations.

Geraldo suggested that the open communication between Shirley T and her students allowed for better lesson planning and a stronger student\teacher relationship.

Student Dropout

"When language classes fail to meet student expectations, students can lose confidence in the instructional approach and their ultimate achievement can be limited." Horwitz (1987)

Shirley T was very unsettled when students started dropping out. Fu was the first and Mr Dee was the second. In a support dialogue she asked the students why they thought the others had dropped out. Shirley T became somewhat obsessed by this question, when only Wu, Chang, Ting, Su and Lee were left. Shirley T worried aloud about arriving to find no one there. "Imagine, she said, "all the way from Laval." Chang and Ting clearly felt some responsibility for not letting Shirley T down. Chang in his June 12th notes writes about forcing Wu to join them in their visit to Shirley T's house. "to give happiness and confidence of teaching to Shirley T."

Ann R also spoke to Jane, the other teacher, when she was trying to account for the student drop out rate. "Yes," Jane said, "my students are also dropping out like flies." In her other class in Montreal, she also had only two students left. Harold, of course, reported no problems and a continued full complement of students. This was never verified. Geraldo said at this time of year, people were more inclined to stay home and enjoy the good weather. He suggested that the problem of dropout in adult education classes is common and of ongoing concern. Merriam (1988) also cites the problem of student dropout in adult education as a typical concern to researchers.

Su said each student had his own reasons for dropping out. Ho, her husband's grandmother died and he had to go to Taiwan. Mr. Tong also had business in Taiwan. Mr. Dee went to Toronto often and Jim and Amy went to a course at McGill. Fu quit because she had company for two weeks and then it was too late to catch up with the rest of the class. And maybe Su quit because of tensions between her and Ting. Su had told Ann R how these classes were the highlight of her day and how she looked forward to coming so her drop-out at the beginning of the second last week remained somewhat of a mystery. Ting said it was because Su did not like being corrected, and was irritated when Shirley T said she would probably never speak, perfectly, like a native.

Although Wing said she wanted to spend more time with her children, she was the only one who made it clear she felt she was wasting her time "just chatting" in class. She had requested more structured activities and hand outs but Shirley T had only repeated that maybe she could bring an interesting article to discuss or give them a book report.

The teacher and student are both autonomous contributors to a joint enterprise, according to Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991). Ann R wondered if the teacher should be held accountable when the students fail or drop out and if it would affect Shirley T's job prospects for the next year.

Ting said the others were not very motivated. They do not really want to learn English. They are used to studying for exams and getting marks. Chang said the others did not want conversation. They wanted more grammar and

structure Ann R wondered if there was a way Shirley T could convince her students that what they wanted was not, after all, what they needed.

Although Shirley T had encouraged them to take control over the content and direction of the class, no one asked for a change before they left, except Wing. They all knew Shirley T was not 'strict' and they often did not do the homework. Although they all agreed that keeping a journal was a good idea, only Ting's journal was regularly kept.

Class Size

This conversational learning process works best with a smaller group, around five or six is optimal. With a group this size, the teacher can continue modelling the language, developing the required relationships and still give cued response when major errors are made by the students. Given the choice, the students preferred working with the practitioner, rather than working on their own, in small groups, where many actually worried about repeating and learning each other's mistakes.

In the final two weeks when the attendance had dropped to four, everyone had a greater opportunity to speak and the atmosphere was even more relaxed than before. In a small class, involvement is almost mandatory and it is much more difficult just to sit back and relax. Unfortunately, the minimum class size for government sponsorship is fifteen.

Chapter Five

INTERNALIZING THE LEARNING CONVERSATION

Creating Learning Opportunities

Shirley T's worst fear when she took this job was the drive to work through traffic. Shirley T had absolutely no tolerance for driving in stop and go traffic. Her nerves wore thin quickly and she feared to do something crazy like ram into the car ahead. In a learning conversation with Ann R, Shirley T managed to turn it into a learning opportunity. Everyday on her way to and from work she would listen to Radio Canada, to practice her French listening skills. She still had trouble with the television news and French movies. Every morning she listened to the weather, the news, the traffic report, entertainment, gardening and literature. By the end of the year she noticed improvement in understanding the television news. She told Ann R she was pleased to have broken through her own 'learning trough'. Harri-Augstein and Thomas(1991) suggest that:

"The ultimate psychological encounter is the learner's conversations with him-or herself...It facilitates a Gödel-type awareness and understanding of personal processes, which can lead to an enhancement of skill, competence and creativity." (p. 168)

The Dialogue

Ann R is convinced Shirley T should have used more hand outs to explain the methods at the beginning and required students to undertake a learning contract as suggested by Harri-Augstein and Thomas(1991).

Shirley T suggests there was no explanation of the method that would be comprehensible to ESL students. They are limited in their ability to understand too much complexity and are afraid of working on their own. She felt that telling them to assume more responsibility for their own learning or requiring them to interact with the community would not be useful and in all likelihood would scare them off, as it had when she had tried that approach in a pervious session. She felt it was much simpler just to explain what they were doing as they went along and to encourage as much communication as possible.

Ann R thinks they need the security of a concrete plan. They need to undertake something concrete. Shirley T thinks the plan should be loose enough to incorporate the spontaneous interests of the class. She considers it important to allow the conversation to develop a life of its own once it gets rolling.

Ann R says that each student needs to make a written commitment to undertake some specific learning objective, but, Shirley T thinks they would be less threatening having ordinary conversations about everyday life.

Ann R thinks Shirley T lacked a certain awareness and controlled purposiveness in her approach. She thought maybe Shirley would appear to be somewhat haphazard and unplanned and perhaps unsuitable for students who have always had order and control. Ann R was happy with order. She likes a step by step process to serve as a guide. She referred to Checkland's (1981) soft systems approach. A system's approach, somehow gave her confidence that she would not overlook some important clue in her analysis of the situation.

She wrote a few "root definitions." From Shirley T's world view, this was a system for the exchange of personal meaning through conversation in English, an English story-telling session. Shirley T saw her role, in getting them to tell their own stories, as a necessary prelude to gaining their trust enough so she could encourage them to take more control over their future learning. In fact, she felt seven weeks was barely enough to begin the process. In a previous session she had tried to get them to engage in group projects as a way to give them some responsibility for their own learning. The group however had panicked and in the end she had changed the activity. Even a trip to the library on their own was too much and talking to an English speaking person outside of class was somehow terrifying.

Ann R poked again at the discrepancy between Shirley T's view of what the students needed and what they wanted. Most students wanted more structure and grammar. "Just chatting" was not real learning.

Ann R went back to Checkland's systematic procedure to identify the rest of the situation. The Customers had been defined. Shirley T was the Actor.

Shirley T said she did not see her role as the actor. She was not a transformer. She could only help the students to transform themselves. In the 'Transformation process' the customers should emerge with a better notion of what they can do to manage their own learning of English.

At a reunion lunch, three weeks after the session was completed, Ting said she continued to do her homework. She read the paper every day and she watched the CBC News every evening. Chang also continued to socialize with his neighbour and was reading the paper more. Jim and Amy said they were not planning to take another course until the fall. Lee, who had been with Shirley T the longest, was also unlikely to do anything to organize her own learning until the fall. Geraldo confirmed that it was not uncommon for students to do nothing to manage their own learning during the summer months. Often they would return in the fall having lost most of what they had learned in the previous spring. Ann R wondered if there was anything they could do to improve the student's success rate.

Shirley T's system was owned by disagreeing proprietors. The CECM gets paid by the Quebec government for every person signed up. Mrs. Ching, on the other hand, provides a service to the Chinese community. Mrs. Ching would get complaints from Shirley T's students which she would pass on to Geraldo. From the students' feedback, she too had concluded there should be

more structure and grammar in Shirley T's class. Geraldo, however, agreed with Shirley T's methods, much to her relief.

Shirley T thought there were no environmental constraints. As far as she was concerned she was free to experiment as much as she wanted in this class. They could go wherever the students decided, and could do as they wished. Ann R said students needed more direction to make these decisions.

"You mean constraints." Shirley T said

"No. I mean some people can not handle the ambiguity of not knowing what to expect next. They think you don't know where you're going. That why they drop out. They need something concrete to hang onto --a plan."

"Well maybe they should make their own."

"Precisely my point."

"Yes well that's what I tried to get them to do."

While the two women were thus debating, Jill P knocked on the door

"Hi," Ann R said, looking up expectantly. She always felt ambivalent toward Jill P, who was so tough and unequivocal that she made Shirley T squirm. Shirley T would rather be any place but in the same room with Jill P. Ann R could handle her better and today she figured Jill P might take her side in the argument.

With this potential ally, Ann R now came out insisting that next time a learning contract be prepared by the student and presented to the class in the first week. Shirley T continued saying that seven weeks was not long enough to

win their trust and get them engaged in their own projects. She says the students are pretty scared and need lots of supportive help.

Ann R pointed out that Shirley T had lost many opportunities to support the students through their transition to a new method, and had sometimes evaded issues rather than using them as learning opportunities.

Shirley T said it was better to change the subject rather than suggest that student go to a marriage counsellor or seek other professional advice.

Much to Ann R's chagrin Jill P agreed with Shirley T. Since Jill had met Harold, she had become convinced that almost all professional educators needed help. Schön (1983) discusses how the public has lost faith in professionals and the need for developing more reflective contract between clients and professionals. Jill P offered her poems as a place to start this process. Ann R had seen Jill P's poems before. "Why?" she asked, "is this series of poems aimed at the educational professional, when the problem at hand is the students' robots."

"And where do you think the students got their robots?" Jill P asked.

"From the likes of Harold." Shirley T laughed, for once nodding in agreement with Jill P

Chapter Six

SLAYING THE LEARNING ROBOTS WITH POETRY

Introduction to the Uni Verse

When Jill P left, Ann R was left alone to make sense of what Jill P had written. Jill P had given her fifteen pages of poetry, single space, with no punctuation, no capitalization, and no titles. They were arranged chronologically according to the date they were written. Luckily Ann R had lots of experience dealing with Jill's poetry.

That poetry is a more elegant and effective means of communicating, a complicated and constantly changing message, than mere didactic prose had been discussed in *A Poetic Theory of the Moving Image* (Jansen 1990a). The Uni-Verse, had been the subject of continuous study in the two years that Ann had been taking her master's degree in educational technology. It had been subjected to formal experimentation and proven successful in stimulating higher order thinking and the expression of emotion in *A Test of the Uni verse* (Jansen and Nicolai 1990). *A Formative Evaluation of the Uni Verse* (Jansen 1990b) established its utility as a conversation tool, and *a Justification of the Universe* (Jansen 1990c) recommended its development as a tool to provoke thought, feeling and written expression

As she shuffled through the papers, it occurred to Ann R, that this thesis was like some kind of finale to a well orchestrated study that had taken place

since she began her degree. Her thesis did not stand on its own. She had already built up substantial support for it. It was well defended. She felt a certain smug security until she looked back at Jill's regurgitation. It was all somewhat strange. How was she to make order of this chaos?

Jill had said this series was written to slay the learning robots. Ann still was not sure what was required to eradicate them. Harri-Augstein and Thomas(1991) suggest that our 'myths' are made out of misconceptions we have picked up about the universe and our attempts to explain the way it functions. Our greatest limits are imposed by our own minds. Seeking to escape ambiguity we seize onto and stick to explanations which are inadequate and prevent us from increasing our awareness of this complex environment. Jill's uni verse attempts to point this out.

Poetic language helps to create a subjective view of the world where we can explore our feelings about our place in the universe. Talbot (1990) suggests that since poetic writing is often a reshaping of real experiences, it may also give us new insights into helping us to clarify them.

Jill P's poems are meant to increase our awareness of the need for changing the role of the educational practitioner. Ann R named the verses and put them in an order which was meant to lead the reader through a thinking process as follows: Instructions, Sensations, The Problem, Analysis, Uncertainty, Self-Definition, An Outlier Speaks, Resistance, Transformation, and Freedom

The Uni Verse was intended to make people focus on the essence of a phenomenon, experience or event. Depending on the needs of the potential user, a response can be made word for word, line by line, idea by idea or by general themes allowing for change in the form, adding rhyme, alliteration, or meter

This uni verse is a conversational tool to encourage the move from an authoritarian model of education to a individually organized approach. Its' ultimate purpose is to provoke conversation about the role of the educational technologist in this change. The uni verse is meant to be seen as the first overture into the conversation. The reader makes the second move and writes a response, reproducing his own image beside the poem on the page using only words, as tools of technology. The uni verse should ideally be used in a group with everyone adding their verse to the Uni verse which can then be used for further discussion and debate. That this poetry will be useful in provoking this kind of expression remains to be proven in a future study. Users are challenged, in any case, to carry on with the conversation and report back their reaction.

Instructions

creating a self portrait
my image is like van gogh
orange beard tinged
with his blue madness
his deep desire suppressed
to serve some use
to fill the function
save the uni verse
and you there
my reader
hello
i shake hands
introduce you to this verse
line up with me
on the page
your image
immediate reaction
to each phrase
a release
of a link
in the choking chain
a refrain
a dance in the rain
lighten up the reins
see the true colours
gleaming forth
a sunbeam shines
in the open
not hidden
under a pack of lies
and phoney faces
no more makeup
bowing and scraping
to please
now is the time for truth
the day of reckoning
evaluate where you are
where you want to go
what will you do
next
self-organized learning
is the latest technique

to gather control
of the course of your life
write your own uni verse
your version of requirements
to feeling fine
right down the line
dead centre
the truth for a change
mistakes are allowed
false starts too
hesitation is not a sin
in the system
we create
this interaction
learning conversation
response begets response
you may be surprised
when it works

Sensations

truth changes constantly
clothes make a man
a king becomes a queen
humans are awful automata
programmed to finely function
in the slotted system
see The Wall
Educational Technology
should seek solutions
erase the effect
of the macho machine
that makes us march
controlled by the fORCe
of the market
gone slack for lack
of confidence
a straight jacket form
produces more straight jackets
a call arises for new form
to expand the thought
of Everyman\Woman Technologist
the espoused goal of all education

actualization of the self
so often forgotten
consumer confidence crumbles
in constitutional debate
children squabble about who gets the pie
arguments arise
where the knife should lie
wheeling and dealing
from the bottom of the deck
the Canadian compromise crashes
the banks never lose
self direction is left for the rest
seizing control of the sails
we change the course
set sail for the sea
where we will float
in ambiguity
pondering the problem
responding to the unexpected
instead of the same old pattern
programmed through schooling
to respect authority
obey orders
and live for work
perfect for pretty powerful people
not for poor pathetic paupers
who black the boots
that cruelly kick them
to fit the role
they wait for the dole
or a demeaning job
where the boss robs them
of their dignity
and pays them a pittance
to keep up the dance
snake in the grass
wishes to strike back
but clutching her crumbly crust
she creeps and crawls
cringes in place
waiting for the final solution
revolution
evolution
devolution

The Problem

if i'm to be a technologist
i should find a solution
to this disease
this learning handicap
this cloying clot
mechanical machine
devoid of human thought
never off long enough
to reflect on reality
overload
too hard to cope
too easy to dope
yourself on work
that has no meaning
so many motions
for nothing
the pretty pictures change constantly
meaningful information is conveyed
through conversation
a two way street
ships pass in the night
send a message
through radio waves
"Y" are you there
I hear you loud and clear
before losing your voice
what do you want
say again and again
the method must be explained
it must all be clearer
shock therapy
disconnects the robots
a simple English program
recreates the culture
a Canadian celebration
promotes health and wellbeing
changes the plight of the people
with increased self awareness
how do you think
what do you think about
tracing your footprints in the sand

lets you see their size and shape
conversing with this verse
lets you convey
your own information pattern
your own definition
your own fact-space

Analysis

what analysis do I do
of this product\process
I see the egg within
the hen that laid the embryo
that is growing outward
at the speed of light
into infinity
did I succeed or fail
as a learning practitioner
did I manipulate ideas
and processes that develop
the human race
whose funny face
must I put on
this detailed matter
what structure will it take
after the fact
intuition must be free to respond
to each new situation
without external control
to roll with the punches
the plodding plan is perforated
responding appropriately to the unexpected
is everyman\woman's challenge

Uncertainty

if i could grasp
the truth
once and for all
certainty would be mine
and i would surely die
from the crushing weight
of reality
will the real woman stand up
no i say
i can only cringe
in the corner
ethereal
unsubstantial
formless and shapeless
i cling to the door
slither out
to climb the wall
and sit on it undecided
hovering over the proceedings
a holy ghost
I could wither you

Self-Definition

what is it\am i
a master in educational technology
what can I do
approach a problem
find a solution
in a systematic way
to arrive where
i knew intuitively
but was afraid to go
research methods allay the fears
serve as justification
provide acceptable proof
i can be trusted
to tell the whole truth
and nothing but the truth
now i am a master
how can I ply this trade
go out and cry
learning technologist for hire
i can diagnose your problem
help find the learning blocks
oust the robots
which prevent progress
mine is for math
a real machine
i turn
when i see numbers on a page
yet embrace the word
another kind of symbol
sometimes the mean machine
devours my words
and buries them deep within
when all is lost
the courage to persist
does not exist
and i while away
the time of day
flitting from flower to flower
awareness is a mixed blessing
to contend with
the raw reality

of mask removed
is hard to face
in the race
last place
is also a space
not easy to take
i drop off
and drift downstream

An Outlier Speaks

with amazement i watch
my intelligence at work
trying to solve
my learning problem
my phobia
of science, system and order
to box us in
to categorize and define
to reject
we that don't fit
the definition
the outlier defies
the norm
unaccepted into the fraternity
she flies off
in her own way
sails flapping
waves clapping
six p-individuals to play with
to manipulate like so many puppets
i am the man in control
at the helm
of this boat
i go
turn away from society
family friends neighbours
left behind
i take another course
get by
unbounded by the ties
that bind us in place
in fancy dress and lace

we celebrate departure
for joy in the sun
totally not responsible
i float outside
no pressure
i've got my cards printed up
learning technologist
dissolver of learning problems
router of robots
i stay on track
towards the ultimate goal
personal progression
expanded awareness
sensation
feeling
thinking
intuition
tells us all
we need to use our senses
to appreciate the environment
and all that strikes us
odd

Resistance

to pass a test for thinking
takes a break from paternity
I stick out my tongue
throw a red hot raspberry
to all the merry fraternity
make a test for dissidence
where virtue and value are recognized
with more than a golden star
my contribution
a detailed description
a complex integrated process
involving people procedures
aspects of learning
I devise implement
evaluate and manage my own problems

mount the campaign for autonomous learning
mastering self
I follow principles procedures ideas
get myself organized for analysing problems
applying the techniques
an educational technologist
engineers learning
to release the bounds of conformity
and fearful following of rules
we break open the way
for self-organization and personal growth
and find resistance

Transformation

I thumb my nose
at you all
like some crazy hag
I go cackling off
into a corner to hide
the hand that did it
my back to you
in black cloak and hat
my black panther
has eyes that gleam
at you
see the transformation
reform the deformed
purple and pink silk
is the milk
that feeds the spirit
who dances off
holding her head
in hands
in worry
at you
the nation

her feet in molten lead
she struggles to come out
fly from the chrysalis
into freedom bliss
back to the basics
consumer conscious
war on consumption
the fuel that feeds
the ailing economy
too fat to move
the third wave
beaches the whale
washes away the excess
long live the poet
who sings a song
dances in jubilation
for self organization
the freedom of the people
from bulging big business
too much government
applause for independent enterprise
rebellion
reform the deformed
awake the uninformed
give them purple and pink silk
to caress their thin skin
under the bullet-proof vest
they should not need
the spirit breaks out
and braids the strands
the evidence collected
life is too bizarre
in conclusion
the old hag stares at you
thumbs her nose
cackles off like crazy
breaks all the rules
decorum changes to chaos
she swings in both directions
in tune with the ethos
where mortal man is doomed
to mere manhood
no vacancy for gods
is the sign

at her gate
the humble maiden
unlocks the latch
a rabid bat
comes to dine
at her patch
and smells a rat
welcome to the garden
be careful of the spiders
they spin webs
to trap their prey
sting and suck them dry
with a sudden cry
she runs off
as though she forgot
the baby in his bath
the hag steps out in the sun
doffs her hat
and bows to you
welcome indeed
the kettle is on
how do you like the heat
have the best seat
relax, put up your feet
it won't be long

Freedom

She-she from the cage
escapes in stealth
the sleek black panther
sneaks through the silent street
disappears down the hill
from a great distance
She-she is seen on her way

urgent to get on
she leaps over walls
with soft nimble feet
claws retracted
still as a statue
She-she stares at the mountain
she must attain
to catch her breath
She-she stretches every limb
a big black cat
majestic she sits
cool as the loon
lit by the moon
who swims on the lake below
She-she pauses to consider
the terrain she has to roam
fugitive from the Biodome
She-she broke from the eyes
of weird women
and wild men
with fearsome faces
in rude reaction
she would turn and growl
to let them know
She-she didn't scare
she hadn't eaten for days
not one could see her now
a hungry cat
on the mountain top
in the distance
an eagle made her wish for wings
to swoop and dive in the clouds
to coast and glide
with ease
She-she took off on the run
down in the valley below
she lay in wait
for the lonely loon

Explanation of the Uni Verse

Smyth (1992) suggests that the goal for reflective teachers is to transcend self blame and to link their consciousness about day-to-day processes of their teaching with the wider political and social realities within which it occurs. In this thesis, Jill's Uni Verse is the tool that can be used to make this link and reveals the doubts and fears one is likely to encounter in the process. Poetry differs from logic in that it is not subject to the control of the rational conscious powers of the mind. Poetry is not in fact necessarily connected to consciousness or will and can sometimes be seen as partly the expression of the unconscious mind. The verses in this paper take a clearly micro-political view and are meant, in spite of their subjective origins, to serve as conversation starters about changing mechanistic approaches to learning so prevalent in the educational system at all levels. The use of images, humour, metaphors, ambiguity and uncertainty are perhaps all required to shake us out of our habitual ways of thinking and reacting to the universe

For those who prefer a more didactic method to achieving a similar result I would recommend Smyth's (1992) guide for reflective teachers.

What do my practices say about my assumptions, values, and beliefs about teaching?

Where did these ideas come from?

What social practices are expressed in these ideas?

What causes me to maintain my theories?

What views of power do they embody?

Whose interests seem to be served by my practices?

What acts to constrain my views of what is possible in teaching?

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSIONS

Self-Organization

Learning a second language is a long drawn out process and to be successful students must take some measure of control and create their own opportunities for using the language. Unfortunately there are no easy answers, no simple solutions, no one neat plan that will work in every case. Shirley is convinced from her experience that taking a direct approach to introducing self-organized learning into a classroom by telling students that they now have responsibility for their own learning (or something equivalent), would undoubtedly scare students such as those studied here and cause them to drop out before the program begins. In the collaborative approach to teaching advocated here, the teacher must be able to improvise and adapt to the needs of every new situation. She must also develop a deep understanding of how her world works so she can convey her opinions and provide an accurate reflection of the universe which the new immigrant confronts. Learning to use a new language is much more than learning how to put words together. It involves, as well, learning to cope with complex aspects of the host culture and to make opportunities to speak the second language in that context.

The Role of the Teacher

It was found that it is not enough just to arrange a series of activities and material in structural or functional order, and present them to the students.

There is a whole tacit subconscious dimension involved in the student\teacher relationship as well as in learning to use a language which the collaborative approach recognizes. The reflective teacher must find a way to direct her own learning and to teach by example and precept rather than didactic means.

Gaining control over her own learning processes is a prerequisite for a teacher before she can serve as guide and friend in another's quest for autonomy. The role of the ESL practitioner should be to help the learner situate himself in the new environment and to allow students a forum for speaking English together and addressing the problems they experience in their new country. For many the classroom and the teacher are the first line of attack in gaining entry into their new community. Being part of a English class gives students an identity which legitimizes their hesitant speech and makes entry into strange places just a little easier.

On the basis of the experiences described, Ann recommends that all teachers adapt a more collaborative, co-reflective, humanizing approach to learning. She suggests ongoing reflective practice and keeping accurate track of the interactions in the classroom as a way to eventually improve the quality of learning in our classrooms. Like Smyth (1992) she thinks all teachers should be claiming their rightful place in the decision making process in the classroom.

Teachers must be educated to understand the need for a new kind of contract between student and teacher, as catalyst to student reflection of their own processes, instead of dispenser of wisdom or imposer of curriculum.

. Jill too recommends that both teacher and student learn to locate themselves personally and professionally in history so as to understand the forces that have come to determine their existence. Only then can they harness their reflective processes so as to act on the world in a way that amounts to changing it.

Evaluation of Student's Progress

Adopting a collaborative, rather than an evaluative stance, was one of the most difficult things for the teachers in Langer's (1986) study to achieve. In her conclusions she also spoke of the need for a complete reassessment of the role of the teacher\student relationship in the whole pattern of the traditional classroom interaction.

Ongoing self and peer evaluation as opposed to a conventional judgemental teacher evaluation is required in a collaborative learning program and is part of the whole process of changing the role between teacher and student. One can not give learners control over their own learning while retaining the power to measure and evaluate performance. In a system where

the teacher has the power to pass or fail a student, the goal inevitably becomes conforming to the teachers needs and wants instead of determining one's own needs. As well the development of elaborate externally imposed plans and requirements for study runs directly counter to a learner centred approach which allows the learner the luxury of finding his own way through indecision and changing his focus to fit the facts he confronts. The development of the student's cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies must be included in a collaborative program to enhance the student's ability to participate in an educated evaluation of his own learning. Evaluation in the form of 'referent dialogues' about progress and problems should occur on a regular and ongoing basis.

Learning Conversations

The emphasis on activities and materials which many practitioners presently favour should not be allowed to detract or interfere with the 'co-communication' (Rowntree, 1975) between members of the group and the teacher. Co-communication lies at the very heart of the collaborative method. It is not enough for the educator to get his books and films organized for presentation. To ensure each student's personal development, the commitment required, is far greater than standing at the front teaching grammar rules and

completing language exercise. Co-munication requires an educator's emotional involvement in his own personal growth. Only teachers committed to their own development can help others become committed to developing themselves, for only then can they understand and respond to the fears and insecurities which the students must be guided through. The move from an authoritarian to a more equalitarian classroom is not accomplished over night and involves the teacher in a process of personal change which must be prepared for. The educator needs to help students learn to trust both the educator and each other. The practitioner must also become aware of personal learning robots or expectations which may be preventing self development and subsequently the ability to help students gain greater autonomy.

Jill's Uni Verses are meant to be used as a starting point of a learning conversation to explore what might be involved in this kind of change. The poetry encourages the professional to converse with some of the subconscious tacit dimensions of him/ herself that are not always readily accessible to the conscious mind. The uni verse has been developed, as a process oriented strategy to encourage the writing of poetry, which expresses personal meaning. In accordance with a desire to 'co-municate', the uni verse takes the first step in a dialogue about contentious issues and expresses a view point to which the teacher/learner can react, take a stand for, against, or half way in between. In Jill's model of the universe, she describes the environmental conditions in which the learning practitioner works and exposes a world where the education

system is churning out robots trained to conform and follow the rules. John Smyth (1992) also emphasizes the need for reflective teachers to challenge the dominant factory metaphor of the way schools are conceived, organized and enacted.

Materials and Activities

The learner's own background and experience proved to be the most important resource to be exploited in the ESL classroom. Aside from that the most successful materials were those which related most directly to the immigrant's new environment. This report confirms the findings of a previous study of the use of National Film Board films in Canadian ESL programs, done by the author, for the NFB in October 1991, which suggested that better ESL programs will include a reflection of a variety of Canada's cultural elements including literature, poetry, cinema, music, sports, art, dance, theatre, cooking, shopping, banking, history, geography and government. The students should be exposed, on all sides, to the language and culture they are trying to join. Students should ideally be encouraged to pursue their own information about one of the cultural avenues listed above. For support, they probably should work in groups of two or three to summarize the information about their chosen interest and to present it to the rest of the class. If students are too shy to go into the community to find their own information, teachers could bring a wide

variety of cultural activities into the class, including regular outside guests and speakers, to habituate the students to outsiders, until they feel ready to try it on their own. If teachers are limited in the resources they can access, the local newspaper and community brochures and other media as suggested by Penfield (1987) provide an inexpensive rich resource. For those with access to VHS equipment, The National Film Board also provides videos on most Canadian cultural topics in accordance with their mandate to show Canada to Canadians. Appendix A shows an example of a Uni Verse Shirley might use in a future class which encourages students to play with the language to be used in conjunction with ZEA --a silent NFB film.

Learning Contract

In a future program Ann would also introduce the idea of a learning contract as per Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991). A lot of explanation and help would be given to complete the exercise. Learning conversation emphasizing the exchange of personal meaning would be required in the process of filling the form and as well in meeting the learning challenge described

The Role of Educational technology

Hopefully, the depiction of these three characters has made it clear that each of these perspectives is "real". We can no longer afford to take a uni-dimensional view in tackling an educational problem. To ignore the 'active' and the 'creative parts' of the human character, and to look and listen only to the organized viewpoint, is to miss two thirds of the picture.

Educational technology must take its responsibility to develop tools which deal with these complex dimensions of human reality and human learning. Instead of conducting the usual task analysis and breaking the language into bit-size learning tasks which can be learned by rote and repetition, educational technology should be looking for ways to humanize the learning process and to make it more accessible to everyone. Learning should be more than meeting the expectations of the teacher and filling the proper requirements and forms to pass the grade. Learning is a generative activity when it is not hindered by learning robots or abortive methods of evaluation.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (1977) defines educational technology as follows:

"educational technology is a complex, integrated process involving people, procedures, ideas, devices and organization for analysing problems, and devising, implementing, evaluating, and managing the solutions to the problems involved in all aspects of human learning.

The guidance of people and the development of their thinking and learning processes should be a central part of an educational technologist's

responsibility and can be done without any complex hardware using only words and diagrams as tools.

Jill P is convinced that the Canadian population is presently being manipulated by people like 'Harold', in government and educational institutions, and that mass media and big business use the most expensive technologies developed to influence consumers to buy things they do not need. She thinks that people desperately need the help of educational technologists to organize their own learning and control their own processes.

Shirley T thinks the exchange of personal meaning through learning conversations can be very useful in helping to counteract the robotic effect created by the society's powerful institutions.

Ann R would argue, in this context, that the powers of educational technology are initially rhetorical powers, powers of persuasion, of instilling belief and desire for action. The learners can be stimulated by the technologist into communication about their needs and desires for change and together they can work out a personal plan of action. She also thinks it is important to recognize as Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) do, that self-organized learning can not be achieved directly through ex cathedra or magisterial instruction. New methods must be tried, even, as we see here, when their success is limited to the enrichment of the lives of only a few students and teachers.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- AECT Task Force, (1977). Educational technology: Definitions and Glossary of terms. Washington, D. C.: Association for Educational Communications and Technology
- Beaven, M. (1977) Individualized goal setting, self evaluation and peer evaluation. In Charles Cooper and Lee O'Dell (eds) Evaluating writing: Describing, measuring and judging. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English
- Bogdan, R. (1972). Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Bogdan, R. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods, London: Allyson & Bacon Inc
- Boud, D. (1988). Developing student autonomy in learning, New York: Kogan Page. London\Nichols Publishing
- Brumfit, C., Lunt, H., Trim, J. (1985). Second language learning: research problems and perspectives, Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
- Chamot, A. U.(1987). The Learning Strategies of ESL students, eds.Wenden A., & Rubin J. Learner strategies in language learning, Prentice Hall International.

- Checkland, P. (1981) Systems thinking, systems practice,
Chichester John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, A. D. (1987). Studying Learner strategies: How we get
the information, eds Wenden A., & Rubin J. Learner strategies in
language learning, Prentice Hall International
- Dick, W. and Carey, L. (1984) The Systematic design of
instruction, London: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Dickinson, L. (1987). Self-instruction in language learning
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Evans, K.M. (1968). Planning small-scale research, National
Foundation of Educational Research in England and Wales
- Glaser, R. (1990). The Reemergence of Learning Theory within
Instructional Research, American Psychologist 45, 1.
- Griffiths, G. (1985). Doubts, dilemmas and Diary Keeping. Some
Reflections on teacher based research, ed. Burgess, R. G. Issues
in educational research: Qualitative methods, London and
Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.
- Hannafin, Michael J. (1989). Interaction strategies and
emerging instructional technologies: Psychological perspectives,
CJEC 18, 3.
- Harri-Augstein, A., Thomas, L. (1991). Learning Conversations,
London: Routledge.

- Hitchcock, G and Hughes, D., (1989) Research and the teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to school based research. London, New York: Ruthleigh
- Holec H (1987) The Learner as Manager: Managing Learning or Managing to Learn, eds Wenden A., & Rubin J., Learner strategies in Language Learning, Prentice Hall International
- Horwitz, E. K., (1987). Surveying Student Beliefs about language Learning, eds. Wenden A., & Rubin J., Learner strategies in Language Learning, Prentice Hall International
- Jansen, C. K (1990a) A Poetic theory of the moving image
Concordia University, Unpublished manuscript.
- Jansen, C. K , Nicolai, M (1990). A Test of the UniVerse.
Concordia University ,Unpublished manuscript.
- Jansen, C. K (1990b) A Formative Evaluation of the UniVerse.
Concordia University, Unpublished manuscript.
- Jansen, C. K. (1990c) A Justification of the UniVerse.
Concordia University Unpublished manuscript.
- Langer, J., Applebee A. (1987). How writing shapes thinking.
Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English
- Langer, J. (1986). Children reading and writing, Structures and Strategies, Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing.

- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1991) Second Language Acquisition
Research: Staking Out the Territory. Tesol Quarterly, 25, 2, pp
315-350.
- Littlewood, W. (1981) Communicative language teaching,
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Merriam, S.B. (1988). Case Study Research in Education. A
Qualitative Approach, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Francisco.
- Miles M. B., Huberman M. A. (1984) Qualitative data analysis
a sourcebook of new methods, Beverley Hills Sage Publications
- Mitchell, P.(1985). A teacher's View of Educational research
ed. Shipman, M., Educational research: Principles, Policies,
Practices, London and Philadelphia: The Falmer Press
- Nunan, D (1989). Designing tasks for the communicative
classroom Cambridge. Cambridge University Press
- Ogborn, J. M., Johnson, L. (1984). Conversation Theory, Kybernetics, 13, pp. 7-
16.
- Penfield, J. (1987). The Media: catalysts for communicative
language learning, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
- Rivers, W. M. (1987). Interactive Language Teaching,
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rogers, C. R.(1983). Freedom to learn in the 80s, Columbus,
Ohio: Charles E Merrill

- Rowntree, D (1975). Two Styles of Communication and their implication for learning. in eds. Baggeley et al, Aspects of Educational technology VIII, Bath: Pitman Publishing Press.
- Rubin J. (1987). Learner strategies: Theoretical assumptions, Research History and Typology, eds. Wenden A., & Rubin J. Learner strategies in Language Learning, Prentice Hall International
- Rucker, R (1987). Mind tools, the five levels of mathematical reality, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Schon, A D (1983) The reflective practitioner, New York: Basic Books, Inc, Publishers.
- Smyth, J. (1992) Teachers' work and the politics of reflection, American Educational Research Journal, 29, 2, p. 267-300.
- Stenhouse, L. (1975) An Introduction to curriculum Research and Development, London: Heinemann
- Talbot, Bill. (1990). Writing for Learning in School: Is it possible? Language Arts, 67 1, January
- Van Lier, L. (1988). The Classroom and the language learner, Longman Group
- Wenden A L (1987). Incorporating Learner Training in the classroom, eds. Wenden A., & Rubin J., Learner strategies in Language Learning, Prentice Hall International

- Wilson, B. (1985). Systems: Concepts, Methodologies, and Applications, Chichester John Wiley
- Wittrock,
- Yalden, J. (1987). Principles of course design for language teaching, Cambridge Cambridge University Press
- Yin, R. (1984). Case study research, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Zimmerman B. J., Schunk D. H (1989). Self-regulated learning and academic achievement, Theory, Research and Practice, New York: Springer-Verlag.

APPENDIX A

ZEA

what is this
object that I see
a person, place or thing
what is the subject
flashing red and green
what might it be
bubbling and boiling
some strange sphere
reminds me of space
the decay of the race
golden glow low blow
run sun fun
why is orange arranged deranged
round mound found ground
look at the dead red lead
bubble trouble double rubble
watch the green screen queen scream
what danger does this stranger bring
what song does he sing
out of the blue
he slew the few
maybe the dawn is gone
the night is white
tight with fright
the yellow fellow is black with flack
this is a pink earth
sinking in mirth
a question of space in this place
maybe all will dissolve evolve revolve
zea seeds sown
corn porn torn forlorn
white puffs tufts roughs
play lay say
what is the link
weaving the words
we weather together
the storm form
this is the terse uni verse curse
welcome dum hum rum
to the space race to face
the play say the day hurrah
words dance prance on the page

I laugh half daft and craft
a flute salute to suit
maybe a new canadian
can solve the problem
find the emblem
the door core more
popcorn flops drops hops pops
for peace
release

INTRODUCTIONS

meeting people
is the hardest thing
in a new culture
hello, hello
are you there
where do you live
what do you love
what do you hate
what has gone wrong
in your life
who do you know
how can you join the game
let's assemble our toys
a car
a house
a garage
a boat
a plane
a train
down on all fours
we could pretend to be
a lion
a fox
a bear
allow me
to introduce myself
my name
my place of residence
my family friends
my work
in English
we could play with words

arrange them in order
let's have some fun
take the stage
and tell us
what kind of creature
you are
I am a black panther
smooth and sleek
my eyes gleam green
in the dark
and I pace frantically
in this small space
a single face
in a thin volume
of thought

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION FORM

Identification of the Teacher on Probation

Surname : JANSEN

First name : KATE

EVALUATION BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

1. PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES

Objectives of the course of studies : The objectives were set by the teacher to meet the students needs. The objectives set by Kate were reasonable to cover within the limited time of the course.

Teaching strategies : Her teaching strategies were very acceptable for such a particular high level of students. Having the students engage in interesting and exciting discussions facilitated the learning process.

Measure and evaluation : Informal testing and student feedback gave Kate sufficient information about her students progress and her progression in covering her set objectives.

Other : _____

Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

Satisfactory

Satisfactory

Satisfactory

2. PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Student - teacher relations : During my observations in Kate's class, I always found her to be warm and understanding towards her students. This made for a very trustful relationship and a good ambience for learning.

Relations with other teachers :

Kate liked to share materials, teaching strategies and student problems with other teachers. She was always open to suggestions.

Satisfactory

Satisfactory