

The Development of Student Teacher Identities through Undergraduate Action Research Projects: An Emirati Case Study

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Abstract

In recent decades, reflective practice has taken a more central role in the construction of teachers' knowledge and practice (Elliot, 1991; Roberts, 1998). Within reflective practice, action research has developed as an approach within which teachers can systematically question, challenge and improve their teaching and recently been introduced into teacher education programmes with the rationale of encouraging student teachers to critically engage with curriculum and practice (Mills, 2003). Recent years have additionally seen interest in how teachers' knowledge is sociodiscursively constructed with a concomitant focus on the link between teacher identity and practice (e.g. Danielewicz, 2001; Miller Marsh, 2003; Norton 2000). However, few studies have attempted to explore the influence action research may have on the construction of student teacher practice and identity (Trent, 2010). This study explores the role of an undergraduate action research project in terms of the extent of its influence on the development of student practice in English Language classes and the trajectory of their emergent teacher identities. Informed by new theoretical directions in ethnography (Denzin, 1997), data was collected using naturally occurring texts integral to the student teachers' studies, including weekly lesson observations, post-observation feedback discussions and three focus group discussions over the course of the research project. Analysis indicates that the undergraduate action research project differentially affects students' practice and emergent identities, but that this relationship may be tangential and students' agency may be overshadowed by methodological preoccupations and constraints of institutions. Both global and local discursive formations combine and interact to influence this process which occurs in a theoretical 'interzone' a third space, sociodiscursively constructed between institutions.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This introduction tells the story of how I came to be a teacher of English, a teacher of teachers of English and of how this study came to be.

After working in theatre for several years I took a three-month course in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and then taught English in Egypt for two years. I then returned to Britain to embark upon a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

The next three and a half years involved working as a primary generalist in an international school in Cairo and in an inner-city secondary school in England where I taught English Language support, mainstream English, and Special Educational Needs (SEN) reading. At this stage although I was being paid as a teacher I never felt that I really knew what I was doing. It seemed that there was some key knowledge that I was missing - a clear and unambivalent package which would guide my teaching and help me address day-to-day problems.

Frustrated with life in a secondary school, I moved to work as an English teacher with the British Council, Hong Kong. It was here that I found a theory which could guide my practice: the 'pinnacle' of language teaching methodologies: communicative language teaching (CLT). Over a period of several years I discovered that CLT allowed me to develop principles for - it seemed - any practical eventuality in the classroom. CLT emphasises learning to communicate through interaction in the target language and use of authentic texts. It encourages learners to focus on the explicit management of their learning, use of personal experiences to contribute to classroom learning and links classroom learning with activities outside the classroom (Nunan, 1991).

I remember that I was filled with the confidence that I knew what I was doing was effective. I had come to accept a rationalistic approach to teaching and moved into training other teachers (I use the word 'training' here in the sense of inculcating into a set group of classroom strategies), giving short in-service courses and worked regularly on the RSA Certificate courses (CELTA and CELTYL) and for some time, I lived with this certainty. I had come to accept a rationalistic approach to teaching and the presupposition upon which it rests that there is, or can be a scientifically based classroom practice.

When I began a Master's degree I read Schön's work on reflective practice (e.g. Schön 1983, 1987) At that time, I felt that the idea of reflective practice and its more structured counterpart, action research, lacked a certain rigour, a criticism that has been made elsewhere (e.g. Wilson, 1991). Looking back, I think I objected to its acceptance of the validity of teacher subjectivity as a starting point for professional thinking. Schön was hinting that the technical rationality I had sought in my approach to teaching 'was a misleading epistemology of practical professional knowledge' (Laursen, 1996, p. 52).

This dilemma became more apparent when I came to work in my present position, teaching two courses in the final year of a Bachelor of Education programme in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The first (Reflective Practice and Research Methodologies) explicitly focuses on students carrying out an action research project. The second (Teaching Practice) involves supervising the students' practical experience in schools.

These two courses with their respective elements of research and practice raised questions that linked with ideas emerging from my doctoral studies concerning the social situatedness and construction of knowledge and teacher identity. I became interested in exploring whether action research aided students' construction of their teacher identities in Emirati schools. I wished to

examine how the students reconciled the demands of teaching a prescribed curriculum with the college's commitment to exploratory practice and reflection. Further impetus came from discussions with colleagues who had questioned the rationale of promoting critical reflection and wished to remove the action research element from the programme. They argued that we should focus on developing the students' practical classroom strategies through transmission of selected ideas divorced from their theoretical anchorages. The subtext seemed to be that our students weren't ready for reflective practice and that we were foisting esoteric occidental fads upon them when a basic repertoire of skills was needed (see Richardson, (2004) for an example of this position and Clarke and Otaky (2006) for a rebuttal. I wanted to produce arguments to defend inclusion of the action research component.

Teaching these courses has taught me a great deal about the mutually constitutive relationship between theory and practice and I believe that students should be encouraged to develop a critical stance through engaging in reflective practice and action research. This study is a record of my attempts to understand how this developmental process is actualised in a particular setting and how it may contribute to the construction of students' identities as teachers.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

I now discuss developments in reflective practice and action research in teacher education. Secondly, I discuss the construction of teacher identity and, finally, I show how notions of teacher reflection and teacher identity may inform each other.

2.1 Reflective Practice in Teacher Education

To understand reflective practice in teacher education, it is necessary to discuss its emergence in teacher education theory over recent decades (Roberts, 1998). Van Huizen et al (2005) discuss three paradigms which provide theoretical bases for teacher education: the competency-based model, the personal orientation to teaching, and the reflective enquiry model.

2.1.1 The Model-based Approach to Teacher Education

Models of teacher education are much contested (Grenfell, 1996), however, the competency-based model of teacher education has tended to dominate education systems across the world (Grushka et al, 2005, Van Huizen et al, 2005). Also termed the model-based approach (Roberts, 1998) or the technical-rationality model (Schön, 1997), it is characterised by students demonstrating discrete behavioral competencies and acquisition of predetermined knowledge. Students are taught pedagogical theories which they put into practice (Korthagen and Kessels, 1999). The model assumes that adherence to public standards of teaching will ensure effective teacher performance and so improve children's academic achievement. (Van Huizen et al, 2005). Additionally, it assumes a static knowledge base which can be broken into achievable and observable statements built upon a notion of teaching expertise which can be defined and delivered through transmission (Kelly,

2006) Drawing on the apprenticeship model, this approach utilises strategies such as micro-teaching, which involve practice of examples of teaching behaviour in micro-settings for transfer to broader professional settings (Roberts, 1998). One advantage is this model's ability to meet 'bureaucratic and political demands for objective, testable standards of training and institutional accountability' (ibid, p.15).

Notwithstanding this model's political rationale, it has drawn criticism on other grounds. Firstly, the reliance on imitation of exemplary practice mitigates against innovation or improvement of practice, drawing upon an epistemology of teacher knowledge as static and unproblematic (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Through reducing teaching to a finite number of describable and observable behaviours, teachers' become technicians who implement strategies and decisions made by others (Zeichner, 1999). The body of knowledge into which students are initiated is a given, with their role in the learning process being acceptance of pre-determined knowledge despite "its failure to strongly influence the practices of graduates of teacher education programmes' (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p.5).

Secondly, the model assumes a static society in which a reified body of knowledge is constructed, and is unsuitable for any society within which social change is a feature, particularly so in the UAE where social, cultural and economic change has been rapid (Farsoun, 2000), having grown from disparate desert tribes to a nation constructing itself as a force within 'new globalism' (Kazim, 2000, p.456). Whether this mode of learning rests upon an erroneous epistemological assumption or an ideological attempt to present a quantifiable body of knowledge as a *fait accompli*, it is analogous to the transmission method of teaching in schools (Williams, 1999).

Thirdly, despite this alignment with scientific positivism, Houston (1987) is critical of the approach from the perspective of scientific evidence, claiming there is 'almost no basic research ... to prove or disprove its effectiveness' (p.89). While Parker (1997) views it as expressing a positivist ontology emphasising scientific discovery and efficiency in achieving given ends, where rational teaching involves

application of the methods of science – systematic quantitative methods involving observation ... collection of data, classification, analysis, generalization, concern to generate predictions and achieve control – in the efficient realization of education's prespecified ends.

(p.10)

The assumption indicates that educational aims are understood prior to the undertaking of educational practice and not open for negotiation.

A further criticism concerns reductionism. For example, Grenfell (1996) views the term 'competence' to be oversimplified, 'a reification of dynamic processes' (p.292), that there is a need to reintegrate 'the range of stresses, tensions and conflicts inherent in developing professional competence' (ibid), and acknowledging these complexities will allow the term 'the full reality it pretends to capture' (Bourdieu, 1989b, p.38 in Grenfell) where the reduction of complex processes to a selection of prescribed behaviours paints a partial picture of the complex processes of teacher education. Consideration of the practicality of deciding which facets of teacher behaviour apply in any teaching context raises issues such as the generalisability of objectives, implying 'an argument for context invariance which is hard to sustain' (Leung & Teasdale, 1999, p.69), an argument buttressed by poststructuralist ideas that knowledge is local and constructed within particular sociocultural settings and problematises grand narrative claims as hegemonic strategies (Alvesson, 2002; Giroux, 2002)

Another criticism of the approach draws upon a second feature of poststructuralist analysis - its emphasis upon the link between knowledge and power (e.g. Foucault, 1977), 'where the impossibility of separating power from knowledge is assumed and knowledge loses a sense of innocence and neutrality' (Alvesson, 2002, p.48). This raises questions concerning power relations between producers and consumers of teacher knowledge, and issues such as which knowledge is selected for teacher education programmes, how is it chosen, by whom and whose interests are served.

Despite the above, Van Huizen et al (2005) consider that standards of teaching as a framework for teacher education, which are explicit about objectives and criteria for assessment contribute to the credibility and accountability of public education.

2.1.2 The Socio-cultural approach to Teacher Education

Underpinning criticisms of the model-based approach is an understanding of the constructive role of the social context of learning upon teacher education. Kelly (2006) considers the model-based approach to be derived from a cognitive view of learning which emphasises individual acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding which occurs in one place, prior to transfer to another setting, highlighting four assumptions:

- teachers' knowledge resides in teachers' minds
- transfer of skills and knowledge across contexts is unproblematic
- social relations in which learning to teach occurs are of limited importance
- sociohistorical understanding which students bring to teaching contribute negligibly to knowledge construction

These assumptions are challenged by an understanding of knowledge which highlights its construction within an emergent sociocultural context rather than as an individual cognitive attribute. Eraut (2000) suggests two arguments against the cognitivist position. Firstly, he uses distributed cognition to describe how individual knowledge can be viewed as a necessary but insufficient element in understanding complex situations. A student, in order to act meaningfully in a classroom, needs several sources of expertise – school or college mentors, peers, writers and theorists who contribute to their knowledge of the situation. The second argument highlights the sociohistorical basis of learning, including the influence of place, activity, and social relations embedded within, which interact with personal historical influences. Wenger (1998) emphasises social processes that contribute to knowledge construction and distribution through ‘conceptual artifacts such as models and theories, and physical artifacts such as books and computers’ (Kelly, 2006, p.507). Teacher learning within this complex of social and material relations is described as a trajectory from the periphery towards the centre of a community of practice, facilitated through social relationships and practical working activities, encapsulating particular kinds of contextualised knowledge (Wenger, 1998, Lave and Wenger, 1991).

This theorisation has implications for teacher education:

- the importance of integrating formal classroom learning with informal learning occurring within authentic contexts, e.g. schools
- that learning is hidden from view, that knowledge is tacitly held leads to the idea that implicit and explicit learning cannot be separated - knowledge is constructed through teachers’ active engagement with practice, their tacit knowledge and other perspectives contributed by other social actors and resources (Kelly, 2006)
- learning has a sociohistorical basis, where learners’ histories and future trajectories affect content and degree of learning - apposite when

- students have years of formal education which builds strong, yet unrecognised assumptions about teaching
- teacher biographies and identities have a significant role in how teachers construe teacher roles and are implicated in how knowledge and skills are learnt (Wenger, 1998)
 - a range of social relationships should be encouraged that contribute differing understandings so students engage in day-to-day work of schools to uncover and challenge 'shared expectations of the kind of things which can be said, thought or done during their engagement in particular social practices' (Kelly, 2006, p.510) building knowledge that is contextually informed yet open to change
 - collaborative reflective practice and teacher research be valued and viewed as central to teacher education and professional development (Elliot, 1991)

This reconceptualisation of teacher knowledge (Francis, 2005) as a form of local knowledge influenced by teachers' individual dispositions, interpersonal, curricular, institutional and cultural contexts has accelerated 'the emergence of the reflective paradigm' (Lee & Tan, 2004, p.21).

2.1.3 Concepts of Reflection in Teacher Education

Although the influence of reflective practice within teacher education has grown, the term 'masks a multitude of different philosophies and practices' (Francis & Ingram-Starrs, 2005, p.542). Dewey's (1933) definition involves 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the future conclusion to which it tends' (Lee, 2005), emphasising an interior, psychological view of reflection that has been challenged by later thinkers (e.g. Mezirow, 1990) as overlooking social contexts in which learning occurs.

Schön (1983) provides a notion of how reflection can be practically utilised, identifying three aspects, 'reflection-in-action', 'reflection-on-action' occurring before or after teaching, and 'knowledge-in-action', the embodiment of teachers' knowledge in practice, or tacit knowledge (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Although criticized for its individual focus (ibid. p.19), Schön's pragmatic stance expanded 'to consider the various ways in which the school, community, and the larger social context enable or obstruct ... learning' (ibid. p.22). Despite this, Schön's ideas are still pre-eminent within teacher education (Trappes-Lomax & McGrath, 1999).

Reflective practice is often reified as a cycle (Clarke & Hunt, 2005) and it is not surprising that there is an array of competing conceptualisations. Levin and Camp's (2002) construction (figure 2.1) can be viewed as one of the more detailed forms, which - despite the oversimplification such reifications may entail - is used with both teachers and students in the research context.

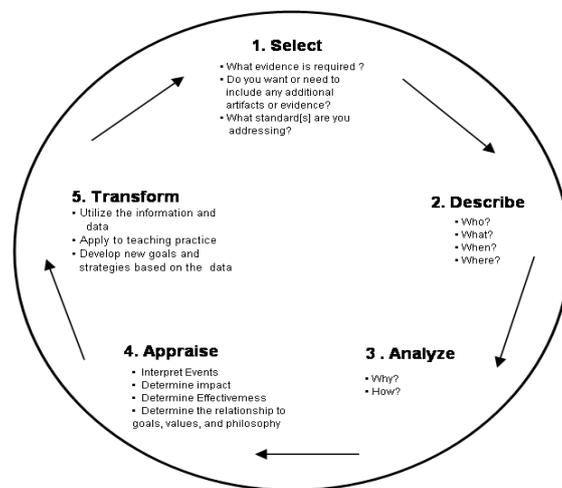


Fig. 2.1 Levin and Camp's Reflective Cycle

Many conceptualisations of reflection identify three levels which, despite variations in terminology, are identifiable across the literature (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Brown & Jones, 2001). The first level, descriptive reflection, relates to technical issues of teaching, and is 'concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of means to achieve certain ends' (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p.35).

The second level, dialogic reflection, involves examination of means and ends, recognising that 'meanings are not absolute, but are embedded in, and negotiated through, language' (ibid). The third, critical reflection, locates 'analysis of personal action within wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts' (ibid). This level is often considered the highest form of reflection, and may comprise of three aspects: firstly, 'challenging the established definition of a problem' (Mezirow, 1990, p.12); secondly, consideration of 'ethical and moral criteria ... making judgments whether professional activity is equitable, just and respectful (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p.35); thirdly, acknowledging the role of language and social context when learning to be a teacher (Mezirow, 1990). This position is concerned with 'the quest to break free of the ideological distortions intrinsic to the language itself' (Brown & Jones, 2001, p.34).

This recognition of contextual factors that may occur at higher levels of reflection brings into focus the interactive influence in teacher education of social context and the personal on 'teachers' values, beliefs, and emotions' (Francis & Ingram-Stars, 2005, p.542), going beyond notions of technique or method as being of primary importance. Despite this emphasis on importance of context in reflective practice, Lee and Tam (2004) warn that 'evidence from reflective practice programmes does not measure up to the rhetoric of the advocacy literature' (p.32) and contextual background to reflection is rarely considered.

Another aspect of reflection reveals a liberal and a critical strand. The former considers teachers as independent and autonomous who, through reflection, can gain knowledge to improve practice through reference to technical and dialogic reflection. The latter considers that teacher educators and students construct together an understanding of effective practice that takes account of the socio-political context and attends to questions of justice, voice and representation. However, questions remain concerning whether the liberal

strand can be considered to be anything more than 'thinking about one's practice' (Parker, 1997, p.30), a position which Troudi (2006) considers 'domesticated and pedagogically neutral' (p.281). The criticism is that reflection has been silenced, colonised by a technical-rationalist perspective and unable to effectively initiate change deeper than at personal and technical levels, which for Parker (1997) ignores its *raison d'être*. Despite this schism between liberal and critical positions, it appears common for the term to be used interchangeably.

2.1.4 The Contested Position of Reflection in Teacher Education

Reflection is 'very much de rigueur within teacher education programmes across a wide range of educational settings' (Clarke & Otaky, 2006, p.111), with an acceptance that 'effective teaching necessarily involves a combination of experience, thought and action' (ibid). Despite this recognition, it has faced practical criticisms from two directions.

Firstly, questions have been raised as to whether reflection is 'something that all students could/should learn' (Francis & Ingram-Starrs, 2005, p.541), while Lee and Tam (2004) mention 'the concept of readiness for reflection' (p.32), discussing studies that show variances in students' ability to reflect. Similarly, Grushka et al (2005), are critical of students' reflective ability claiming that 'in practice many ... metacognitive rambles are token observations focused on minor technical aspects of their teaching' (p.239), implying that reflection may be partially a product of experience, and not appropriate for all students, an argument also presented cogently by McIntyre (1993, 1995). Williams (1999), citing Day & Pennington (1993), considers that reflection is a variable that 'may change as teachers' knowledge and experience bases extend' (p.17).

Secondly, institutional policies that prescribe reflection as mandatory practice appear to encourage empowerment within an unequal power relationship, forcing students to engage in 'strategic compliance' (ibid), effectively reducing reflection to techniques students demonstrate to achieve certification. The use of an action research component in my institution's B.Ed. programme has been accused of such a practice by education professionals within the community.

2.1.5 Reflection in Teacher Education in the United Arab Emirates

Richardson's (2004) critique focuses on reflection in Arab-Islamic settings, specifically within my institution and programme. Seeing reflection as a part of 'the constructivist paradigm' (p. 430), and essentially "Western", she claims 'it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Arab-Islamic beliefs and values of the society do not readily lend themselves to the transfer of western teacher education concepts and models' (p.435), criticising the institution for imposing an inappropriate model that fails to recognise 'cultural values represent powerful constraints on individual behaviour which could limit the success of reflective practices for trainee teachers' (ibid). Richardson is criticized by Clarke and Otaky (2006) from two standpoints. Firstly, as an example of cultural reductionism that reifies and falsely dichotomises Western and Arabic-Islamic cultures, rather than more usefully considering each culture 'as a never-finished site of competing historical and social discourses, rather than as a received set of beliefs and values' (p.120). Secondly, that reflective practice is solely a "Western" trait, inappropriate for Arab-Islamic cultures, could be construed as cultural imperialism, whereas an alternative construal might be that reflection is a tool and 'an educational discourse available for student appropriation' (ibid).

Reflection within Emirati students' work is at the nexus of several issues in contemporary Emirati education, as we witness attempts to develop an

appropriate yet critical discourse of teacher education within the UAE, framed by rapid economic and cultural change, and altering global relationships since the ‘recent polarisation of Muslim and non-Muslim’ (Findlow, 2006, p.19).

2.1.6 Institutional Representations of Reflection

Notions of critical reflection are prevalent in official documents within the institution. At system level, Graduate Outcomes provide goals for all graduates, the second of which is ‘critical thinking, problem solving and inter-disciplinary exploration’ (Rutland & Davidson, n/d, p.7). A detailed definition for graduates of Bachelor degrees is then presented (fig.2.2).

- Identify and address ill-defined problems and generate possible solutions independently
- Apply critical analysis to a range of self identified problems and make recommendations for solving them
- Apply recognized research methods to a self-generated problem or question, and produce a set of recommendations for addressing the problem or question
- Formulate hypotheses and apply associated testing methods.
- Determine the extent and limitations of applying concepts and principles from one discipline to another discipline.

Fig. 2.2- Achievement Indicators for Bachelor Degrees (Rutland & Davidson)

The second iteration, above, is placed within a clear problem solving, practical framework and can be considered as being of the liberal tradition that describes ‘a way of bringing more rigorous analysis to problem solving’ (Pennycook, 2001, p.4), rather than the explicitly politicized modernist-emancipatory position or the postmodern-problematizing position (ibid).

Within the programme, critical reflection is one of five competencies of the Teaching Practice courses (fig 2.3) and detailed below.

1. Take responsibility for their own personal/professional development
2. Use the Plan-Do-Review Model to set targets, carry out their plans and then evaluate and review their plans.
3. Take action to keep up to date with research and developments in the EFL/ESL field
4. Reflect on their teaching style.
5. Discuss & reflect with peers and mentors a range of issues/questions. For example:
 - a. How far does the L1 have an important role to play in English lessons?
 - b. What ways are there of increasing children's use of English?

What does taking a student-centred approach really mean? Use classroom observation, information about children, pedagogical knowledge and research as sources for active, critical reflection.

Fig. 2.3 - Teaching Practice Competencies – Critical Reflection (Rutland & Davidson)

The second and fourth, above, can be considered examples of classroom-based problem solving at the level of technical reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995). The fifth leaves open the possibility of critical reflection within the 'range of issues', and the examples given could be developed to consider 'whether any activity is equitable, just and respectful of persons ... (locating) ... any action within wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts' (ibid p.35). It is possible to construe critical reflection in the sixth example, but the surrounding terms seem to point to a more classroom-based understanding.

The focus on criticality in institutional discourse, therefore, seems to reveal a confused, tokenistic attitude, an attempt to appropriate contemporary discourse on reflection, without the attendant conceptual framework. This may be due to 'ill defined ... terms... used rather loosely to embrace a wide range of concepts and strategies' (ibid). Additionally, if we accept that 'a critically reflective approach demands **an ideology of teacher education different from that traditionally employed**, which usually involves models of "best practice", ... (and) ... emphasis on competencies' (ibid, p.38, emphasis added), then the notion of itemizing critical reflection – a contextual, contingent skill - seems contradictory, likely to reduce reflection to little more than a item to be ticked off. Students may perceive reflection as being institutional in origin, rather than as a resource which may empower them in their professional lives.

2.1.7 Action Research

In recent decades, action research has moved towards the mainstream of educational research as interest in the role that participation in action research has in teachers' professional development has increased (Trent, 2010). As it has gained credibility, it has developed multiple meanings through its use in a wide range of educational settings (Noffke, 1994). The relatively recent development of action research as a means of knowledge production can be traced to initiatives such as Stenhouse's work during the late 1960s which emphasised a shift towards 'the role of the teacher as a researcher in his (sic) own teaching situation' (Stenhouse, 1975, p.143). Conceptualisations of action research continue to develop (McIntyre, 2005), as I discuss below. However, firstly I consider several theoretical bases.

One central aspect of action research theory entails teachers taking a research stance involving 'a sensitive and self-critical subjective perspective' (Stenhouse, 1975, p.157) linked with a systematic research strategy (Stenhouse, 1981). The importance of a systematic approach is also stressed by McIntyre (1997) who uses the term '*practical theorising*' to describe 'the critical examination, development and experimental use of ideas from many sources, including ... practice of experienced teachers and ... diverse theoretical and research-based literature' (McIntyre, 1995, pp. 366-7). A second issue, therefore, concerns the embedding of action research within a clear theoretical landscape which allows for transferability to other practitioner researchers. In later work, McIntyre (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006) implies that student teacher use of action research may be problematic as, of necessity it requires a strong theoretical basis and student teachers are less likely to have the range of experience upon which working teachers are able to reflect. An effective approach to action research, therefore, requires both a systematic approach and commitment to theory.

A third and key consideration concerns the process of how teachers select aspects of their practice that are suitable as the focus for an action research project. In this respect, Whitehead (1989) provides a useful theoretical account. He states that the impetus for action research emerges from a teacher's position in 'a living contradiction' (p.43), that is, the space between their values and practice, where a teacher is contained within 'two mutually exclusive opposites, the experience of holding educational values and the experience of their negation' (p.44). Whitehead additionally emphasises the necessity of those engaged in action research projects of accepting the validity of their subjectivity, the centrality of 'I' to the endeavour, which he states is 'crucial to the reconstruction of educational theory' (ibid).

A further question concerns whether action research should be viewed as a collaborative or individual endeavour, although both positions build on sociohistorical strands within action research tradition which have emerged and overlapped depending on time and place. The collaborative strand stems from the Deweyan movement of progressive education, typically emphasising its role in affecting broader efforts of social change with the aim of improving social justice, exemplified more recently by Carr and Kemmis (1986). It highlights how colleagues working collaboratively and democratically can improve the social conditions of learning. Fox (2003), however, views the collaborative model as going beyond involvement of colleagues to a reconfiguration of the relationship between researcher and participants that has ethical and political ramifications, and that 'research should be constitutive of difference' (p.90) involving the rejection of the three dualisms of researcher and researched, theory and practice, and research and experience.

Sometimes positioned dichotomously to the collaborative strand is an understanding of action research as individual effort, occurring in classrooms where teachers attempt to improve particular aspects of practice. Action

research is, additionally, used in 'formal courses as a means to integrate curriculum development and teacher development' (Roberts, 2002, p.42). Such reifications of action research are – as Noffke (1994) warns – unavoidable simplifications which risk blinding us to the true complexity of peoples' actual research practices. While this proliferation of practices and definitions may be problematic, for example Cohen and Mannion (1997) bemoan how 'a comprehensive definition of the term ... is difficult because usage varies with time, place and setting' (p.186), others view the situated focus of action research as one of its strengths, its contextualised nature contributing to generation of practitioner constructed knowledge (e.g. McGee, 2008).

The lack of agreement over the rigour of action research may stem from the term itself. Consisting of two nouns which can be construed as having almost oppositional meanings, they create a dualism which structures our understanding of the term through the privileging of one term above the other (Brown & Jones, 2001). Cohen and Mannion's (1997) demand that action research be held accountable to positivistic standards of validity can be seen as prioritising the term 'research' above 'action' and, as such, an act of epistemological domination (Alvesson, 2002).

Stronach and McClure (1997) consider that understandings of action research should emerge from the space between both words, through focusing on the gap instead of the words themselves, suggesting that action research involves 'engagement with boundaries' (p.116). Syed (2004), similarly, sees action research as boundary practice, attempting to 'bridge the gap' between teachers and researchers, schools and universities, highlighted in Krashen's (1982) description of the relationship as 'when **we** [researchers] provide a theory, we provide **them** [teachers] with the underlying rationale for methodology in general" (p.261, emphasis added). This discrepancy of power constructed through generation and application of knowledge ensures the role of the

teacher is constrained to a technical level of 'instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique' (Stronach & McClure, 1997, p.21), positioning teachers' role as the implementation of prespecified goals. Through emphasising the space between the words and institutions, however, action research allows teachers to theorise practice, creating a space where thought and action can be integrated.

This notion of action research as the opening of conceptual spaces between boundaries may go beyond that of schools and universities to include

other oppositional dilemmas ... between theory and practice; between the personal and the professional; between the organizational cultures of the school and the academy; between 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives; between the sacred languages of science, scholarship or research and the mundane dialects of practice and everyday experience

(Stronach and McClure, 1997, pp116 – 117)

Action research is an epistemological and ideological project, an attempt to reconnect ideas and learning communities, to bridge boundaries and dichotomies constructed as a part of the positivist project (Scheurich, 1997), to construct an opening for new thoughts 'where particular assumptions and preferred ways of seeing the world can be critiqued' (Brown & Jones, 2001, p. 99).

2.1.8 Ideological Conceptions of Action Research

Action research can be construed as a concretisation of the reflective cycle discussed in figure 2.1, as it involves a more formalised approach to topic selection, description, analysis and transformation. Despite this rigour, consistent ideas of what constitutes action research and which processes it should consist of are not only difficult to trace but, to some extent, beside the point. One salient aspect of action research is concern with 'diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context' (Cohen

and Mannion, 1997, p.186), so practitioners who carry out action research should also have ownership of the action research process (McGee, 2008) since they are in the position of understanding situational constraints and implementing research within the educational organization (Nixon, 1981). Engagement with particularity of specific contexts places action research at odds with concern for generalisable conclusions of the positivist approach to educational research, instead it seeks to build knowledge which is of use to practitioners, according to their perceived needs, and which improves their practice. Action research is constructed by the voice of a particular practitioner in a particular context and can be considered as having multiple manifestations that are informed by various theoretical positions.

Consideration of ownership of the action research process highlights a second characteristic with which it is concerned – namely, a broadly progressive and emancipatory political agenda that emphasises democratic participation (Cohen and Mannion, 1997). Beneath this position, however, there are disagreements concerning the form such commitments should take. For example, as a more concrete form of reflective practice, it should not be surprising that some commentators view action research as having both liberal and critical strands (e.g. Mills, 2003; Troudi, 2006). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) also identify both strands, but view the teacher's role as encompassing both, as decision maker, curriculum developer and activist, including 'explicitly to interrogate and alter the arrangements of schooling that perpetuate systemic inequalities' (p.17).

The liberal, or 'practical action research' (Mills, 2003, p.7) strand can be characterised by a focus on individual, classroom-based pedagogical issues and individual teacher development which Troudi (2006) terms the 'ELT version of action research' (p.277) exemplified by Nunan (1993) and Wallace (1998). In this strand, the consideration of dilemmas is generally limited to those which

present themselves to the teacher, are within teachers' locus of control, and/or pertain to professional development. Parker (1997) is critical of this technical-rationalist position for being only concerned with educational means (how learning is achieved) whereas educational goals seem beyond its scope and that this view can be construed as a bureaucratic attempt to limit teachers' professional autonomy. Such criticisms are broadened by Troudi (2006) who sees the liberal strand of action research, the norm in ELT, as being insufficiently engaged with inequitable power formations in which ELT is implicated. He argues that issues beyond the classroom, such as language rights, language policies, students' rights and medium of instruction policies, need to be engaged with, for ELT's role in reproducing societal and global ideologies and unequal structures has been well documented (e.g. Phillipson, 1992, Pennycook, 2001).

The critical strand is concerned with societal change and improvement of the social conditions within which people live and how pedagogical change may facilitate such broader changes. This stance has been informed by a range of traditions and movements, from the practitioner research of Schön and before that Dewey, through the critical theory of Habermas and Friereian critical pedagogy (e.g. Freire, 1972), the emancipatory work of Giroux (e.g. 2005) and the feminist movement (Brown & Jones, 2001). While the ideological impetus for action research may vary the traditions that inform it share some common assumptions including

a commitment to the authority of reason; rejection of a means-end conception of rationality and of a technical-rationalist view of human worth; a commitment to personal autonomy and its rational components of honesty and sincerity; emancipatory concerns, liberal and democratic politics, an idea of genuine knowledge as essentially purposeful rather than inert; a transcendental justification

(Parker, 1997, p.32)

This model of action research can be understood within a modernist perspective and realist ontology with rationalism having a central role, through

which the emancipatory ideals of equity and justice may be achieved, and can be considered analogous to the critical level of reflective practice discussed above (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

2.1.9 Towards a poststructural account of reflective practice

I now discuss philosophical criticisms of reflective practice and action research as conceptualised above, and propose an alternative informed by poststructuralism.

My first point concerns an assumption inherent in the understanding of reflective practice above that places both pedagogical decisions and broader patterns of social life on a trajectory of progress, with action research as a form of systematic inquiry that contributes towards an answer or a final, stable state whose educational and social aims will be recognised as such. This form of reflective practice is an endeavour that assumes a master narrative of incremental improvement (Alvesson, 2002), a decontextualised best practice, an external reality distinct from and transcending human knowledge. Such a move can be viewed as a legitimizing attempt to close discussion by focusing on one understanding at the expense of other possibilities, the constructing of an arbitrary border, so as to claim a privileged knowledge as a given (Giroux, 2005). A poststructuralist understanding, however, is concerned with allowing borders to remain open and encouraging an 'unsettled condition of hybridity' (Stronach & MacLure, 1997).

Secondly, emancipation, equity and justice are said to be achieved through a democratic dialogue in which distorting factors such as bias, ideology, custom and habit are eliminated, so a rational consensus can be reached (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Parker (1997) views this attempt to free the subject from the delusion of bias as akin to psychoanalytic therapy, with the aim that the true

nature of reality and the forces of oppression can be apprehended. Inherent in this position is the assumption that language is a neutral tool; that meaning is undistorted, 'free of vagueness, variation or ambiguity' (Scott & Usher, cited in Brown and Jones, 2001) and independent of the context in which it is used. This separation is achieved through the construction of a dichotomy between the subject and the world so that each has a definable essence which can be unproblematically expressed through language. Such claims have been undermined by the postmodernist argument for the break in the link between the signifier and the signified (Alvesson, 2002), rather than language referring to the world, it refers to other aspects of itself in a continual process of deferral (Brown & Jones, 2001). Derrida's (1981) use of the term *différance* to hint at the idea of difference and deferral is useful, as it undermines the positivist assumption of an essentialist subject who can unproblematically refer to an essentialist object using autonomous language. The ideas of equity and justice, therefore, cannot be considered as having a meaning exterior to specific settings in which they are employed by specific groups of people. The critical use of these terms assumes a 'one size fits all' application without reference to their use in practice.

A third criticism of both stances of reflective practice concerns the extent to which dichotomous relationships are reversed, rather than disrupted. Stronach and MacLure (1997) dismiss the modernist 'imperative to resolve, or dissolve, boundary problems in the interest of coherence, wholeness, certainty or singleness of vision' (p.117), arguing for the opposite, a resistance to the settling of boundary issues and state that action research 'is itself a boundary dweller' (p.128). There is a tendency for reflective practice, in particular action research, to appeal for a reversal of dichotomous relations, rather than a disruption, to exchange the positions of power, rather than keep possibilities in play.

So, we arrive at a contradiction, an impasse, where the apparent emancipatory aims of reflective practice confront their own presuppositions, striking ideological and epistemological boundaries. The reliance on rationality as a validating force in the avoidance of claims of relativism, belies the poststructural understanding that rationality may have no grounding in reality, but can be better understood as a textual function, a 'form of rhetoric, selling the text's truth claims to an audience' (Parker, 1997, p.7). Reflective practice, therefore, may be viewed as an evolving philosophy which has rejected some aspects of realism but has retained others, a failed attempt to break with positivism and modernism (ibid) and reveals how, as Scheurich (1997) discusses, educational research may return to a realism that precedes it.

A fourth point concerns Couture's (1994) scepticism of the 'push towards "reflective practice" (p.128) in teacher education programmes which is influenced by post-colonialist ideas. He reads the use of reflective practice and action research by tertiary education departments as examples of epistemic violence involving 'the colonization of the Other' (Spivak, 1988, p. 284), whereby the manipulation of students' narratives and identities, the expectation that they must share innermost thoughts on their teaching, their understandings of the political, personal, and cultural ramifications of their practice, with representatives of authority (mentors and lecturers) in exchange for receiving licentiate status highlights the dual Foucauldian concern with relations of power and knowledge, and 'micro-technologies of surveillance' (Couture, 1994, p.129). Couture's analysis places reflective practice as a technique which involves students giving up their identity to colonisation by the university. This appears ironic, as one of the common justifications for reflective practice is that it empowers teacher practitioners to theorise practice and break free of their position of consumers of theories constructed by the academy.

A further critique of reflective practice is provided by Ball (1990) who discusses reflection from an alternative Foucauldian perspective. He emphasises the role of reflective practice in the managerial discourse of professional development which he states encourages teachers to view it 'as a part of the process of self-understanding and self-betterment' (ibid p.161) and so as a technology for construction of the self. In contrast to Parker's (1997) use of a therapeutic metaphor, Ball (1990) invokes the religious image of the confession. He claims reflective practice, when used in tandem with a system of organizational professional development, normalises some practices at the expense of others, so teachers judge themselves in relation to imposed practices, rather than to practices which they have developed themselves. This normalising judgment operates within a dichotomising hierarchy that privileges the term 'best practice', constructing teachers as subjects carrying out technical requirements through 'constraints of conformity' (p.163) a judgment which can then be extrapolated to whole schools, and differentiated into a further hierarchy, for example league tables that rank schools by comparing their relative success in terms of exam grades. Teachers who do not match the disciplining standard of best practice, therefore, may be designated as ineffective and 'susceptible to cure by the use of appropriate techniques of organization' (p.164). From this perspective, reflective practice has been co-opted into the service of a rationalist managerialism presented as ideologically neutral, but which can be construed as a political technology. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) mention how

political technologies advance by taking what is essentially a political problem, removing it from the realm of political discourse and recasting it in the neutral language of science. Once this has been established the problems have become the technical one of specialists ... the language of reform is ... an essential component of these political strategies ... where there is resistance or failure ... this [is] construed as further proof of the need to reinforce and extend the power of experts (p.196)

It seems that should reflective practice remain as a technical rationalist endeavour (whether under its liberal or critical guise), its potential for teacher

led change at either school or societal levels could be curtailed by realist agendas to which it still seems to cling.

2.2 Teacher Identities

It is necessary, firstly, to consider 'why identities'? How have teacher identities come to be of interest? Identity is a key term in social theory, and what an individual is and how individuality is achieved is an aspect of a 'timeless philosophical debate between structure and agency, between determination and freedom' (Clarke, 2005, p.20). Recently, identity has come to the forefront of theorising in many fields of social thought including both English Language Teaching (e.g. Block, 2007; Norton, 2000) and teacher education (Simon-Maeda, 2004; Trent, 2010). However, as Block (2007) states 'identity is a complex and multilayered construct' (p.27), which Sfard and Prusak (2005) view as an essential aspect of the sociocultural turn in human sciences.

While the debate surrounding teacher identities appears to have a contemporary sheen, however, questions concerning how teachers become teachers, what kind of people become teachers, and how some are perceived to be more effective teachers than others have always been of interest, even as recent technicist influences have prompted a move away from concerns regarding the whole person as teacher and towards performance competencies (Francis & Skelton, 2008). The confluence of the professional and the personal in teachers' lives has long been recognised in, for example, the claim of teaching being a vocation, as though there is something inherent in a person's personality that leads to teaching. The personal orientation of teaching paradigm of teacher education highlighted the central role of the individual's persona in teaching, but has been criticised for overemphasising the personal, at the expense of institutional, public influences on the teacher and the interpersonal and sociocultural environment within which teaching is situated. Nevertheless, 'this recognition of the interconnections of teachers' professional

and personal lives has led to an interest in teacher biographies ... and the related concept of the teacher's identity' (Van Huizen, Van Oers, and Wubbels, 2005, p.269).

Van Huizen et al (ibid) ascribe the growth in interest in identity that has emerged in social sciences to 'the development of theories and methodologies that focused on conceptions of subjectivities and difference' (ibid, p.2). With the scepticism towards grand narratives and totalising theories that accompanied the rise of poststructural ideas, there has been an effort to develop more localised understandings of phenomena, including identity 'grounded in the concrete discursive locations of self construction, in the various places in everyday life where subjectivity is addressed and its meaning assembled and designed' (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 69). The 'realities' of lived experience and recognition of legitimacy of varied subjectivities have opened up the topic of teacher identities to exploration through research. An additional perspective claims that 'the notion of identity is a perfect candidate for the role of "the missing link" in the researchers' story of the complex dialectic between learning and its sociocultural context' (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15). Despite affirmation of the centrality of identity in contemporary social theory, however, Sfard and Prusak contend that recent work involving identity as a pivotal idea (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) appear to treat the term as self evident, with definitions not being offered.

2.2.1 The Socio-discursive Construction of Teacher Identities

In this study, identity is used to refer to 'how a person understands his or her relation to the world, how that relationship is constructed through time and place, and how the person understands possibilities for the future' (Norton, 2000, p.5). Of particular importance in Norton's statement are the references to 'the world', 'time and place' and 'the future', which emphasise the role of

both wider sociohistorical contextual forces and more local social influences on identity construction. Emphasising a more discursive aspect, Sfard and Prusak (2005), whilst recognising the sociohistorical position of identity, foreground identity as communicative activity, as a narrative we tell which *'makes us able to cope with new situations in terms of our past experience and gives us tools to plan for the future'* (p.16).

Despite the acknowledgement of the social in the construction of the identity, poststructural theories emphasise that identity is constructed within discourse, that language has a central role, and identity is constitutive of and constituted through language (Norton, 2000). It is through language that the social and the individual are jointly constructed and so the social and discursive come together in a 'place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested ... (which) ... is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed' (Weedon, 1997, p.21).

It is difficult to discuss poststructural accounts of identity formation without considering the term discourse, as the two ideas are inextricably linked, with discourse acting as a resource for identity construction (Block, 2007).

The term discourse has many possible meanings. Juzwik (2006), for example, identifies four possible understandings of the term, identifying firstly 'the everyday, moment-by-moment unfolding of classroom discourse in relation to learning and instruction'. She then mentions the 'systemic functional linguistic understandings of discourse as language above the level of the sentence', (p.15) a linguistic definition concerning structure of written or oral texts. A third use of the term emphasises the 'Foucauldian or other critical sense of the term ... which focus more explicitly on relations among language, social structures and power' (ibid). The fourth instance considers discourses as

'durable, structuring cultural collectives into which persons are affiliated through a variety of discursive and extra-discursive means' (ibid). Finally, discourse has been described by du Gay (1996), as 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic' (p.43). Thus, in this reading of the term, discourse is a language and process of knowledge production. This idea has been expanded, so that the term can be considered as plural and to contain non-linguistic aspects, 'ways of being ... which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes' (Gee, 1996, p.127). Discourse, therefore, goes beyond language to include the social and semiotic and can be viewed as an activity and plural. Discourses operate within discursive fields which organise social structures and processes and which individuals may draw upon as resources in the process of identity construction (Weedon, 1997). But, whilst I employ an understanding of discourse which includes social processes and practices, others have emphasised the separation of discourse and social action. Varghese et al (2005), for example, maintain that the process of becoming a teacher entails both 'identity-in-discourse' and 'identity-in-practice' in which the former highlights the constructive role of language and the latter underlines identity formation as being 'operationalised through concrete practices' (Trent, 2010, p.154).

Identity construction within discourses is, however, not an unproblematic process of merely selecting from a range of available choices. Within any particular social structure the range of discursive options is limited and wrapped up within power relations that exist within all aspects of human activity (Foucault, 1981), at 'the level of international corporations or the governments of nation states down to micro-level interactions between individuals on a moment-to-moment basis' (Block, 2007, p.26). Moreover, the

relationship between identity and social structure is one of mutual change and influence, rather than being causal, for

sociocultural and sociopolitical discourses will determine what resources are available for use in the ongoing project of identity construction, just as the outcomes of this process, in terms of identities, will in turn shape the discursive patterns at work in different contexts (Clarke, 2005, p.24)

Conceptualisations of identity of the self in poststructural theory are different to those considered in modernist and humanist thought (Weedon, 1997). There has been a rejection of the idea of a core, stable essence of the self towards an understanding of identity as multiple, hybrid and always incomplete (Block, 2007), the self as a continual work-in-progress, rather than a reified final state (Clarke, 2005). Holstein and Gubrium (2000) draw on Lyotard's (1985) work to conceptualise identity in contemporary societies, discussing how the postmodern demise of grand narratives, entails the breaking up of the notion of a stable, coherent identity. This anti-foundationalist position, assumes there is no essential aspect of identity that exists prior to its achievement through discourse, that identity is not pre-discursive nor a natural and neutral surface upon which culture acts, but rather is created through discourse, 'that there need not be a "doer behind the deed," but that the "doer" is variably constructed in and through the deed' (Butler, 1990, p.195). That is, as Sford and Prusak (2005) discuss, identities do not reside in the world itself, but rather 'it is the activity of identifying rather than its end product which is of interest ... the focus is not on identities as such but rather on the complex dialectic between identity-building and other human activities' (p. 17).

This reconceptualisation of identity as being produced within a sociocultural context, where the concept of 'I' has a radical instability, enables an understanding of individual agency as contingent, offering possibilities denied by a fixed identity. Individual agency is no longer 'trapped within the unnecessary binarism of free will and determinism' (ibid, p.201), but is

established through contested social practices. Claims to foundational identity, therefore, should be understood as a political strategy which attempts to disguise its intentions through an ontological claim.

The conceptualisation of identity as activity has led Butler to present her notion of identity as being performative, where

words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance ... such acts are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means

(Butler, 1990, p.185)

Butler's work is concerned with gender, but we can expand her ideas to include more general concerns of identity categories to understand subjectivity as a linguistic, corporeal and semiotic action that occurs within a specific context of space and time. Block (2007) discusses how performativity concerns how subjects attempt to create a consistent sense of themselves through the impression they give, to control the reception their identity creates. The act of identity creation relies on conventional and normative forces and power that are present in all social relations (Loxley, 2007). Socio-discursive power relations do not have a direct causal relationship with any manifested identity, it is the notion that identity is an ongoing performed process in a conflicted sociohistorical context that allows for it to be construed as neither completely determined nor arbitrary (Butler, 1990).

The socio-discursive context of this study, the UAE, has changed considerably in the last four decades, therefore the range of discursive resources available for identity construction has broadened as nationalist, pan-Arab, and Islamic discourses have ebbed and flowed in recent years. As the country attempts to position itself as a significant actor in the global economy, there is growing evidence of discourses of the imperatives of technological and economic development, entrepreneurship, together with educational discourses

concerning learner independence, critical thinking, communicative language teaching and student-centred learning. One additional rationale for this study that emerges from this discussion is an attempt to address what Medgyes (2000) has termed a 'largely unexplored area in language education' (p.445): the rarely heard voice of the non-native teacher of English. Power imbalances in the global world of TESOL in which native speaker knowledge and skills are accorded greater value (Canagarajah, 1999) may be challenged and the privileged western-derived knowledge base of TESOL restructured to reflect developing broader global realities (Hayes, 2005). The study of the construction of teacher identity within generally overlooked contexts of TESOL, therefore, can be of much interest, as recent work exemplified by Simon-Maeda's (2004) study of women tertiary EFL teachers in Japan and Hayes's (2005, 2008) work on non-native speaking English teachers in Sri Lanka and Thailand has testified.

2.2.3 Boundaries and Space

Recent years have seen exploration of the role of space in social theory that Paechter (2004a) has described as 'a spatial turn' (p.307). Edwards and Usher (2000) see this as a change to the modernist prioritisation of time and history at the expense of space which had been 'constructed ... as neutral, fixed and immobile, unrelated to the social and without impact on the formation of subject identity and biography' (p.32). Similarly, metaphors of space and boundaries between spaces have become prevalent in discussions of education and pedagogical practice (Lave and Wenger, 1993; Giroux, 2005). Edwards and Usher (2000) consider this repositioning to be a response to the reordering of space and time which globalisation has provoked and the wider range of discursive resources that have become more available in societies around the world, including the seemingly paradoxical re-recognition of the local.

Links between spatiality and identity are demonstrated by Paechter (2004a) in her assertion that

there has been an increasing understanding of identities as being developed, constructed and performed in spatial contexts' ... (that) ... in trying to understand the relationships between education and identity, we need to have a full awareness of the spatial context in which particular identities develop and are sustained (p.307)

With reference to teacher education, MacClure (1996) sees space and boundary phenomena, as being central to teacher development, teacher identity and particularly relevant to Action Research whether the transition across boundaries is understood as being physical and metaphorical. She discusses how the impulse within discourses of modernity is to 'settle' boundary issues and achieve a final transcendent position, to resolve dichotomies in favour of one side, whereas poststructuralist discourses resist this drive to certainty, in favour of celebrating an 'in-between-ness' or hybridity that defers resolution. One should attempt, therefore, to inhabit a position where one exists in a third place between discourses, avoiding dichotomisation, and be prepared to appropriate and reconstruct available discourses in order to construct identities which emphasise "the given and the possible" rather than just the "given" (Britzman, 1991).

2.2.4 Local and Institutional Space

The students and I cross the borders between college and schools where placement occurs almost daily. Before considering how the crossing of boundaries can offer opportunities for learning and conflict, I consider the influence that space itself has on the students' identities and practices, to explore how the enclosure of space produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'under a general formation of domination' (Foucault,1977,p.137).

The Arabic/Islamic culture, as performed in the UAE, has well defined discourses and social practices concerning space and gender. This opposition of spaces occurs in all cultures to various extents and, as in the UAE, is 'nurtured by the presence of the sacred' (Foucault, 1967, p.2). The creation and naming of both men's and women's colleges in seven major cities of the UAE reflects and simultaneously recreates these separate gendered spaces. Tamboukou (2004a) extends Foucault's idea of 'other spaces' (ibid), using the term heterotopia to provide a genealogical analysis of the development of women's education. I use this term, heterotopia, to indicate 'a multiple collective entity in the process of becoming' (Tamboukou, 2004b, p.187), considered to be in crisis with the mainstream of a society (Foucault, 1998), as a theoretical framework to offer several perspectives on this study.

Firstly, Tamboukou suggests heterotopias 'interrogate discourses and practices of the hegemonic space within which they are localizable' (Tamboukou, 2004a, p. 400) taking a productive role in the ways knowledge may emerge. The women's colleges allow an exploration of the educational space as one where women have generally been excluded, but also as a space where oppositional practices and discourses may emerge. One can see here, then, an instance of when education, as Tamboukou (2000) has elsewhere asserted, disrupts 'the unequal structure of gendered relationships and has affected women's position in the public world' (p.475). Secondly, the college heterotopias allow for engagement with the poststructural female subject as being 'radically unstable' (Butler, 1990, p.194), multiple, and contradictory. This understanding of the female subject allows for its emergence from the 'margins of hegemonic discourse' (Tamboukou, 2004b, p. 202) and the opening of new subject positions. Using Foucault's (1998) six principles of heterotopias as a guide, I now discuss the research context through the lenses they construct.

The first principle of heterotopias is they are constructed in a wide range of forms, but exist in all cultures. Their permutation as colleges of technology can be viewed as an aspect of the Islamic concept of the 'haram' - a space in which women can meet without male intrusion, although the 'haram' generally had no official educational role. The policing of the entrance and exits of the college through checking students' timetables, keeping them in a waiting room until a male relative arrives to collect them and the rigorous use of ten per cent absence meaning dismissal – absence means ten minutes late - all represent the use and control of time and space as a disciplinary practice, illustrating how 'power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use' (Foucault, 1977, p.160).

The second principle concerns heterotopias' relations to specific sociohistorical contexts. To understand the college context, it is necessary to place it within the Gulf Arab and Islamic milieu of the early 21st century and the concentric global discourses with which they interact. Women's colleges can be considered to challenge the totalising male domination of space outside the home, which together with the striving for the Emiratisation of the workplace, are creating spaces and breaks 'in woman's confinement within the private, ... (opening up) ... paths to women's appearance in the public realm' (Tamboukou, 2004b, p.401). However, while these openings may be one effect, they are also, ironically, one reason that teaching is a popular choice for some students, as it offers the possibility of employment in a female only environment. The openings are temporary and imply later closure.

Foucault's third principle involves the juxtaposition of incompatibilities, a space of multiplicities which surround a single space and are often contradictory. As the colleges were constructed to create opportunities for Emirati women, they can also be construed as a space of safety and virtual endeavour until they reach an acceptable marriageable age. This additionally exemplifies the fourth

principle which is that heterotopias are often connected with 'temporal discontinuities' (ibid). While Tamboukou's assertion that 'higher education unavoidably involved intervening in their "biological clock" ... annihilating, as it were, their future as wives and, more importantly, mothers' (ibid), may be somewhat overstated in this context, there is little doubt that compared to their mothers' generation the temporal cycle of current students' lives has been postponed.

The fifth principle involves exclusivity, with entrance constrained in some manner, 'a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable' (ibid). In this case, exclusionary and inclusionary practices have both micro and macro elements. From the macro position which concerns entry to the college system, there are systems of openings and closings which define the space. For example, there are no financial restrictions to Emirati nationals as the government funds all education to degree level, but entrance is limited to Emiratis, and not available to Indian, Pakistani, expatriate Arab and Westerners. An obvious element of exclusivity controlling entrance to the college is gender, as each city in the country has one college for male students and another for females. This represents an extreme commitment to gender segregation as property, staffing, and resource costs are all higher than an integrated system allows. On a micro level other practices of exclusion are apparent and rigorously enforced. All students are required to establish their identity (at the one gate in the eight feet wall which marks the perimeter) through unveiling their face upon entrance and exit and may only leave upon presentation of their timetable, whereupon many are required to wait (in a heterotopia within a heterotopia – the waiting room) until a male family member calls them. Such use of a timetable as a disciplinary practice to 'establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition' (Foucault, 1977, p.149) highlights use of time as a means for power to regulate individuals. The semi-ritualistic nature involved in negotiating the

boundary safely is emphasised by the roles reserved for each gender, performed under the disciplinary gaze of uniformed guards. There are exceptions in that some students on specific programmes (including education) are provided with a 'green card' which allows them to enter and leave college (e.g. for work experience or teaching practice) without being limited by the disciplinary demands of the timetable. A smaller number – depending on their family's permission – may drive themselves to college, but the practice of surveillance remains.

Although exclusion is one prime function of heterotopias, Foucault (ibid.) emphasises that they also exhibit the quality of opening. This can be exemplified by the government decree that the colleges are open to all Emiratis, and although English is the medium of instruction, there is no level of attainment below which entrance is controlled. Most students are obliged to complete a foundation year involving fifteen weekly hours of English study, so allowing entrance to almost everyone with minimal formal education. Such policies indicate that the college is a space both of complex and interwoven openings and closings.

Foucault's final principle concerns the transitory nature of heterotopias and their role as being 'reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis with respect to society ... in which they live' (Foucault, 1998, p.179). Within the Emirati context, Tamboukou's (2004a) description of crisis heterotopias seems apposite, as 'sites within "patriarchal" society, but at a distance from it – both real and metaphorical – wherein space, identity and politics come forcefully together' (p.402). Alongside this, the term 'heterotopias of deviation' describes a space where 'individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed' (Foucault, 1967, p.5), casts women's colleges in an interesting light, where - if old age can be considered a crisis, as Foucault suggests, so creating the need for retirement homes - then, perhaps,

so is the end of the process of female sexual maturation a time of crisis, one which calls for a space of sequestration, in an attempt to nullify incipient deviant behaviour.

This particular college, as with other heterotopias, is a space where relations of power are performed and resisted and Tamboukou's feminist analysis places the college within its socio-historical context without losing site of the individual women students' emergent subjectivity.

Having brought together two ideas that influence current debates concerning teacher education: action research and teacher identity, it is noticeable that although there is much literature that considers one or the other's contribution, there has been little attempt to understand 'how the experience of conducting research might contribute to the construction of teacher identities' (Trent, 2010, p. 153), despite their 'shared emphasis on development, change and becoming' (ibid, p.154).

My study, therefore, is an attempt to understand the extent to which the two major theoretical constructs, action research and identity, inform each other in one context of teacher education. I explore how students' experiences of reflective practice, in the form of small-scale action research projects, contribute to the process of sociodiscursive construction of their teacher identities, through consideration of the variable constructive influence of local and institutional spaces, heterotopias and borders upon this process.

Chapter 3 Research Background, Discursive Context and Methodology

This study concerns how a cohort of students construct and are constructed as professional teachers of English, exploring the process of identity formation through their school placement during which they carry out an action research project. I now outline the ontological and epistemological assumptions that inform the research methodology, which follows a broadly ethnographic trajectory.

3.1 Research ontology and epistemology

Ontology concerns assumptions of what one considers to be reality, whereas epistemology concerns how it is possible to know that reality. The two terms appear to have an implicit order of precedence in that ontology is generally categorized as being prior to epistemology (e.g. Crotty, 1998; Pring, 2000), implying that **what** we see precedes **how** we see. Scheurich (1997) questions this position, claiming that the two terms are 'essentially inseparable' (p.29), and it is possible to view epistemology as preceding ontology, for **what** one sees, may be shaped or constructed by **how** one sees, so questioning the possibility of knowing an objective reality through the tools – language, consciousness - we use to mediate such reality (Alvesson, 2002). The relationship between the terms 'ontology' and 'epistemology' may not be as straightforward as sometimes assumed, for although the terms refer to different concepts, the prioritisation of one before the other appears questionable.

I draw on postmodernist and poststructuralist ideas throughout this study, but there is much discussion and little agreement (Scheurich, 1997) concerning the meaning of these two terms due to 'an uncontrollable profusion of meaning'

(Stronach & MacLure, 1997, p.11), I therefore use the term poststructuralism throughout.

3.1.1 Poststructuralism and Language

The epistemological assumptions that underpin this study are constructed through my previous experiences and readings of research and are part of a specific socio-historical and discursive nexus, which structure and are structured by my ongoing understanding of the project, and can be considered a partial attempt to understand how recent critiques of social research can inform my research practice within the context within which I work (May, 2002). Having designed and carried out previous research projects, my understanding of and ability to articulate my epistemological assumptions has shown a trajectory from post-positivist (Hunt, 2004), to interpretivist ordered by a naïve realism (Hunt, 2006). I recognise that my previous understanding rested on two broad assumptions: firstly, the researched world is transparent to the consciousness of the researcher who stands in a one-to-one relationship of understanding with the world, and secondly, the meaning of the language used to describe the research is unambiguous (Scheurich, 1997). These assumptions have become questionable as an aspect of the crisis of representation (e.g. Alvesson, 2002; Denzin, 1997), which argues that there can be no direct relationship between language and objects in the world and the link between signifier and signified is arbitrary. Language is viewed as being self-referential in that one linguistic term appeals for meaning to other linguistic terms rather than to empirical reality. The possibility of an ultimate meaning grounded in reality is therefore continually deferred by further reference to other linguistic terms and meaning becomes provisional, contingent on the discourse – linguistic and non-linguistic - in which the subject is situated. For example, the term ‘worker’ may be read differently within a discourse of socialism to how it would be read in a discourse of bee keeping. Mishler (1991) captures this sense of deferral, describing how language is,

'contextually grounded, unstable, ambiguous, and subject to endless reinterpretation' (p. 260)

3.1.2 Research and Discourse

Discourse can be understood as a formation of associated meanings that are constructed through situated use, as 'language use anchored in an institutional context, expressing a fairly structured understanding or line of reasoning' (Alvesson, 2002, p.48). Possibly the most important insight that poststructuralism has provided is that discourses are not just neutral reflections of experience or meaning, but are simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by meaning, and discourse has 'active productive effects on the phenomenon it claims to understand neutrally' (ibid). This idea of discourse as being productive of and prior to understandings that structure experience has implications for interpretive research.

Interpretive researchers' reliance on texts - on language as data, written accounts of observed events and transcriptions of conversations and interviews – ensures that the reconceptualisation of language and its interpretation is of central importance in social research. The assumption that textual representations of reality are straightforward rests upon a presupposition that the phenomenon studied, or experience as lived by researched participants, can be directly grasped by the researcher through data collection tools, and that the researcher from his/her privileged position is able to recognise meanings in this data, which he/she can announce to peers. However, such presuppositions have been questioned since 'the twentieth century turn toward epistemological indeterminacy' (Lather, 2004, p.1) so that

the maintenance of objectivity through positioning the researcher as nothing but a passive instrument of data collection, are now exposed as falsehoods that seek to mask the realities of the research process.

(May, 2002, p.2)

The researcher, rather than being able to gaze upon participants and inscribe an objective meaning to their words and actions, is acknowledged as a participant in the research process with a unique socio-historical positionality constructed through the discourses of major markers of identity (age, gender, race, sexuality, location), lesser identity markers (educational background, language learning experience), or other markers which may be constructed from different areas of endeavour.

As a researcher, I have no access to a narrative of truth, which is 'always a social construction, which constitutes and is constituted by discursive practices in a particular historical period' (Alvesson, 2002, p.57). Such practices structure the world, not only actively constructing a subject's identity but influencing why and how the researcher approaches the research, from the initial choosing of the topic, through the framing of questions, the choice of what or who is to be observed, the selecting of what the researcher considers to be interesting or significant for analysis, to the approach to writing and dissemination of findings (Holliday, 2002). This process is infused by the social, a theory of writing is also a theory of the social (Denzin, 2002).

3.1.3 Research and Identity

It is necessary, before embarking upon this discussion, to warn that a suspension of belief is necessary, that a strategy, which Adams St. Pierre (2000) describes as 'the double move', (p.479) should be employed when reading. This involves using terms while simultaneously questioning them, the acceptance of meaning as contingent and 'under erasure ... simultaneously troubling and using the concepts we think we cannot think without' (Lather, 2004, p. 1). Poststructuralism poses challenges both for the writer and the reader. For example, I shall discuss identity categories – gender, religion, and ethnicity – and it should be borne in mind that these terms are constructed, provisional

and heterogeneous, not reducible to single totalising meanings. In short a subject's identity can be continually changing and reconstructing itself through different positions of social relations.

The idea that a subject's identity is the nexus or a 'nodal point' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000) of discourses that construct that identity within particular socio-historical settings creates space for the understanding of identity as not being an autonomous, unitary construct, but as being fragmented and hybrid. The notion of an ideal subject is, therefore, a myth concealing the diffuse nature of the subject. Lyotard (1985) considers the dissolution of identity as being one aspect of the poststructuralist attempt to break up grand metanarratives. Nevertheless, if we conceptualise identity as being constructed through discourses, there may be a tendency to see the identity of the self as being limited by these discourses, denying any sense of agency. We should also resist the trap of simplistic dichotomisation which allow 'little room for understanding the points of resistance, multiplicities, complicities, oppressions and liberating elements which undermine all binary oppositions' (Giroux, 2005, p.16.). For neither is the identity of the self in an idealized state of agency, free to choose from the array of discourses in which it exists, but in a state of flux within the socio-historical constraints of a particular culture (Denzin, 2002). Holstein and Gubrium (2000) view the identity of the self as going beyond binaries, as a

"floating" signifier that is nonetheless socially organized, flexibly yet systematically constituting presence and agency through practical usage ... a discursive framework within which further references, exchanges, accounts, desires, and resistances might be articulated (p.71)

I am, therefore, an integral aspect of the socio-historical context of the research and, as such, I am not privileged with the 'authentic, undistorted knowing ... of the sovereign knower' (Lather, 2007, p.1). As a teacher-researcher, I am unable to raise myself above the discourses within which I practice, but participate

within them, some of which are institutionalized within the educational establishment within which I work and which I share with the participants, others are broader historical and sociocultural strains.

3.1.4 Research and Power

Social science, like other discourses, has competing frameworks for deciding which claims of truth should be judged; of these frameworks poststructuralism can be considered an attempt to indefinitely defer truth claims (Scheurich, 2002). This strategy of limiting truth claims to socially and historically specific contexts enables one to locate the construction of truth in particular discursive fields of practice, contrasting with positivism's avoidance of power issues through its claim that science should be value free and true across all contexts. Power, therefore, plays a central role in the research process. Discourses have variable power in the social realm and, at any given time or in any given social context, may compete with each other for influence. The issue of power – whether admitted or ignored – is intimately tied to what can be considered knowledge, and how such knowledge may be judged as valid (Foucault, 1977). Such power manifests itself through discourse, and 'its effects of domination are attributed ... to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings ... (in) ... a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity' (ibid. p. 26).

The production of a work of research is an institutional practice and a disciplined endeavour in that it concerns the meeting of certain criteria and showing that these criteria have been met. It involves conforming to a normalised framework in order to support a claim of knowledge (Alvesson, 2002) and is intimately concerned with the production and exercise of power.

The particular nature of this study comprises of overlapping, mutually informing discursive formations which can be conceptualised as operating at

two levels. At a local level, this study is concerned with the social construction of the professional identities of teachers. It focuses on how identities are formed within the institutional and discursive practice of teaching, together with how they develop over the course of a placement and student research project. At this level, the study is influenced by discourses of:

- gender and gender relations;
- relative institutional power exemplified by teacher-student and school-college relationships;
- education, educational change and English language teaching;
- institutional discourses relating to the programme of study.

At a broader level, the study is positioned within a complex of discourses concerning:

- educational, economic and social development;
- Islam;
- language policy;
- trade, globalisation and neo-colonialism;
- centre-periphery relationships embodied by English language research and practice;
- modernity and tradition;
- Arabic and Western identities and relations.

The above listing is unlikely to be definitive, but serves to highlight that the study is positioned at a nodal point of a wide range of discourses, specific to the context of study, which is imbued with relations of power and knowledge. Through the examination of the students' experience of their action research practice, therefore, I hope as a teacher educator, to

begin to realize how female teacher identities are discursively constructed, why professional and identity formations are inscribed by gendered and sociocultural inequities, and how these discourses and identity formations need to be transformed to allow alternative, empowering discourses to become a part of female educators' professional knowledge landscapes

(Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 430).

3.1.5 Institutional Identities and Power

I now consider the deployment of power as exemplified by the relationship between myself as researcher and participants as researched. Prior to commenting on the discursive fields and specific relations of power, a diversion is necessary because relations of power are not only inscribed in aspects of the relationship that are constructed between myself and the participants through the practices of research and teaching and in the form of language with which I have little choice but to write. Positioning myself as a researcher and an active subject who creates meaning, knowledge, and so power, I simultaneously construct the participants, who have actively contributed to the study, as passive objects. Through my use of a 'set of linguistic distinctions' (Alvesson, 2002, p.56), it is possible to see knowledge construction as involving 'a power over others, the power to define others' (Sarup, 1988, p.73). Said (1985) highlights two problems inherent in attempts to research in the poststructural world,

the first set of problems is concerned with ... issues like who writes or studies (the Other), in what institutional or discursive setting, for what audience, and with what ends in mind, the second set of problems (focuses on) ... how the production of knowledge best serves communal, as opposed to factional, ends, how knowledge that is nondominative and noncoercive can be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions and the strategies of power. (p.91)

The instantiations of power mentioned above, generally (not always) involve my power over the participants, upon which I now expand.

While Said (*ibid*) discusses the construction of the 'Other' from the perspective of sociohistorical postcolonial relationships, the sociohistorical should not be privileged above other social formations. This point has been made by Giroux (2005) with reference to postmodern thinkers who emphasise the contingent, sociohistorical construction of knowledge but ignore the role of other constructs, specifically gender in the power/knowledge interface. Giroux claims

that a feminist theorising of the postmodern has two benefits as it highlights emancipatory possibilities, asserting the 'primacy of social criticism' (p.56), and prioritisation of ethics and politics above epistemology (Haraway, 1989)

My identity as a teacher carries institutional power, being built upon my role as the teacher of the two final year courses on the B.Ed., a role I have carried out for the past four academic years. The courses are integrated, have overlapping content, and introduce the students to reflective practice, action research and preparation for their role as newcomer teachers. I have virtually sole responsibility for teaching the courses, overseeing school placement, preparing and grading assignments indicating that I have much power over the extent that the students perceive the course, the grades they achieve, and their future career options.

Two other forms of power related to my identity as teacher are also apparent. The first concerns the teaching and learning of the discourse of academic English, necessary for the students to complete the 6,000 word report on their research. The second concerns how the students are inducted into and appropriate the discourses of reflective practice and action research. Both can be understood as induction into the use of specific discourses - reflective practice which attempts to position the teacher as an empowered decision maker and curriculum designer (McKernan, 2007); and the narrower textual discourse of the academic genre of report writing. Both processes can be understood through two models of learning. The first model conceives the above discourses as a symbolic form of power, the successful use of which confers upon the students' membership of a social group with cultural capital and power within the wider community (Bourdieu, 1991). The second model, privileging community above power, views the discourse of reflection as being itself a practice, a way of talking about a common endeavour which allows the students to move from a peripheral position towards a more central role in a community of practice, in this case, the teaching of English in Emirati primary

schools (Wenger, 1998). Similarly, learning about writing an academic research report, can be construed as a sign of movement from a peripheral towards a central position within education.

Using Wenger's (Lave & Wenger, 1993; Wenger, 1998) idea of communities of practice allows us to see certain features of the students' professional development as exemplifying boundary crossing between the communities of the college and that of the schools. The research project, therefore, is a boundary object 'that connects the practice ... with the outside world' (Wenger, 1998, p.106), providing a link between the school placement and the college requirement for academic credentials. My role as a guide to the students' boundary encounters with schools and by implication the wider world of education can be construed as a form of brokerage which 'transfers some element of one practice into another' (ibid, p.109). Boundary artifacts and brokers function as a means of introduction and guarantee newcomers' credentials to the community, and can be considered as conduits of power, as practices are disseminated from college to school, a specific instantiation of the academy – school, theory – practice divide.

3.1.6 Gender, Cultural/Religious Identities and Power

Distinctions between different identity categories and their boundaries are not as delineated as the linguistic terms we use to describe them might imply. There are overlaps and blurring of identities dependent on the sociohistorical context, so this section addresses both gender and cultural/religious identities, as to discuss the issues separately would convey a false ontological distinction as categories such as gender or race cannot be viewed through a single lens and as with other identity categories, 'the limits of gender as an exclusive category of analysis' (Butler, 1990, p. xvii) are clear.

This study is situated within a unique sociohistorical context, and it has been constructed within wider discourses within which Emirati society is situated, where Islam, family and clearly delineated gender roles are major traits. This study's setting of a women's college reflects the cultural/religious desire for gender separation outside of close family relationships. Although the power/discourse within the college reflects the privileging of the male above the female in which I, as a male researcher, am to an extent complicit, the students have some recourse to indigenous discourses of power, due to their status as Emirati nationals. The inscribed gender relations that I, as a Western researcher, have with the students therefore operate within a network of other discourses which circumscribe and disperse their effects.

3.1.7 Global Discourses

The institutional and religious/cultural discourses discussed above, are manifested within discourses which operate at broader global levels. The institution itself has been constructed as a response to the need for the UAE to diversify its economy, has a primarily technical role, and a stated entrepreneurial aim of creating graduates 'with the skills they need to meet the challenges of today's international global environment' (Kamali, 2007). The linkage of 'global work' (Nahyhan, 2007) to 'necessary language skills' (ibid), hints at the nexus of English language and globalisation which some commentators (e.g. Pennycook, 2001; Canagarajah, 2002) have commented upon as illustrating wider configurations of power manifested at societal level in moves for all but Islamic Studies and Social Studies to be taught through the medium of English, and at the institutional level in the college's English only policy (Hunt, 2006) and the wide use of international exams such as International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as gatekeepers to further study.

The above presents a picture of multiple discourses operating on multiple levels which together construct a unique research context as Emirati society aims to position itself within the global community and economy on its own terms by constructing itself as a nation with ‘skyscrapers ... a sophisticated network of highways ... (and a) ... communications network that can be the envy of the world’ (UAE Tourism Bureau), yet still retaining ‘the silent desert, wind tunnels and camels’ (ibid). This dichotomy positions the UAE as having the ‘best of both worlds’, simultaneously having modern technological developments, possibly emblematic of the west, while still being able to highlight a more eastern timelessness.

3.1.8 The Crossing of Boundaries

One of the byproducts of the plethora of discourses in which the study is situated leads to one of its most noticeable features: the degree to which both the researcher and the students are involved in the crossing of boundaries between discursive fields.

Boundaries are permeable, created by competing discourses with elements of overlap between them, and while problems can occur when notions are reified and then reintroduced as realities for analysis, it is worth considering how complexities of boundary crossing inform the construction of the students’ expertise and this study. While considered a source of difficulty and conflict, boundaries also encourage the development and transformation of new practices and understandings (Tsui & Law, 2007).

The students experience sixteen weeks placement in schools during their final year, approximately half the academic year in college, half in school, which means crossing between two discourses of education and English Language Teaching. The college constructs itself as producing graduates that ‘embrace change ... (make) ... a strong contribution to continuous quality improvement in

education, and are helping lead in the development of the nation.’ (Education Division) and students are exposed to and encouraged to teach English within a communicative, task-based pedagogy based on a social constructionist view of learning. This generally differs from the pedagogy used in schools, which can be characterised as being usually transmission based, with a curriculum dominated by assessment washback, where teaching and learning is constrained by assessment practices, having the affect of narrowing strategies so that only those validated by assessments are considered appropriate. This relationship is constructed in dichotomous terms by college staff and students, portraying their practices as unproblematic, a structural distinction that constructs the ‘natural’ or general term to acquire a hegemonic power of the marked or particular term (Butler, 1990).

The boundary between college and schools not only facilitates production of pedagogical dichotomies, but other instances of normalisation of unequal power relations. For example, all the college teachers are from BANA - British/Australian/North American – countries (Holliday, 1994), and speak English as their first language, whereas the school teachers are either expatriate Arabs or Emirati, and speak English as a second or third language – often perceived as a disadvantage in TESOL discourse. In addition, unequal gendered relations are apparent on both the level of ‘(mostly male) theorists’ interpretations of (mostly female) practitioners’ experiences’ (Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 430), and also in that college teachers are generally male, while the school teachers are all female. Additionally, the college teachers all have postgraduate degrees from BANA countries, the school teachers generally have teaching certificates from home countries, and can be characterised as working within the state tertiary, secondary and primary (TESEP) sector, which Holliday (1994) suggests means they ‘have other, wider social preoccupations and responsibilities which can overrule their choice of methodologies’ (p.93). Such preoccupations might include forfeiting classroom autonomy by following Ministry of Education edicts to ensure continuing employment.

One of the clearest indicators of this power imbalance is the salaries - college teachers can expect to earn three or four times as much as school teachers. This disparity extends to Emirati teachers, possibly accounting for students' appropriation of the unequal discourses mentioned above; a newly qualified Emirati graduate can expect to earn three times more than a Jordanian teacher with twenty years experience.

It seems that this study takes place in a nexus of discourses that are infused with relations of unequal power and where many discourses are constructed in binary terms, a form of thinking which Deleuze and Guattari (1987) characterise as the 'weariest kind of thought ... has never reached an understanding of multiplicity' (p.5). Binaries generally privilege one term above a second to 'produce very real, material and damaging structures in the world' (Adams St. Pierre, 2000, p.481) as they limit alternative discursive formations and practices that might emerge through greater flexibility.

3.1.9 Interpretive and Ethnographic Research

The methodology I employ is influenced by ethnography. However, this term has different interpretations, some carrying negative historical connotations. I now clarify my understanding of this term.

Ethnography can be understood as 'that form of enquiry and writing that produces descriptions and accounts about the ways of life of the writer and those written about' (Denzin, 1997, p. xi). This usage of the term appears coterminous with 'qualitative research' and covers a broad range of interpretive research practices, but is a useful alternative as it avoids the dichotomous relationship with quantitative research in which the term qualitative is sometimes negatively placed. Denzin's short description raises three issues.

Firstly, Denzin uses the words 'produces descriptions', rather than an alternative such as 'describes'. This acknowledges the constructive role the researcher plays in the process of creating an ethnographic account, that the account produced is one of that could be produced, constructed with this particular person's ideological stance, cultural and biographical history as influencing factors. Secondly, this definition places the 'life of the writer' in front of those researched, 'the written about', acknowledging the central position the researcher takes in ethnography. Rather than the researcher taking a hidden position, seeking to be invisible within the text, his/her presence is admitted. Finally, Denzin emphasises that ethnography is concerned with the creation of texts; the emphatic repetition of 'writing' highlights this inseparability.

Of the methodologies that constitute interpretive research, ethnography has a history and a developing trajectory that reflects and constructs political-ideological assumptions and has, recently, partially attempted to challenge these. It is necessary, therefore, to trace how ethnography has intertwined with other social formations.

A historical overview of interpretive research illustrates how ethnography is influenced by and influences broader social formations, such as economic discourses, where it has been linked to 'the cultural logics of capitalism and the economic formations that have been connected to these apparatuses' (Denzin, 1997, p.14). Similarly, there has been overlapping with aesthetic discourses through periods of realism, modernism and postmodernism and scientific discourses such as objectivist positivism, post-positivism and qualitative research, and ethnography has often been clothed in such terms. There is one social formation with which ethnography has been connected which is the diverse colonial projects that occurred during what Denzin and Lincoln (1994) term the traditional period of ethnography, in the early 1900s. The use of ethnography as an approach when writing about the exotic 'other', its attempts

to offer valid, reliable and 'objective' portrayals of 'exotic' cultures have been criticised on both epistemological (e.g. Lather, 2004 & 2007) and ideological grounds (e.g. Said, 1978).

Britzman (2000) identifies three characteristics of traditional ethnography (Denzin, 1997). Firstly, it is both process and product – an approach to research but also a completed text. Secondly, ethnographic texts are akin to novels, promising new insights and pleasure, and thirdly, they unproblematically depict knowledge of cultures through the portrayal of inhabitants' lives and as such are 'seductive, ... appear seamless ... (and) ... blur traditional distinctions among the writer, the reader, the stories and how the stories are told' (Britzman, 2000, p.27). It is through these assumptions of a stable, noncontradictory writer that an essentialised and noncontradictory Other is constructed, which can then be translated and explained for a reader who expects to understand new cultural secrets. As such, a reductionist version of subjects' lives is displayed as a truth. In Foucauldian terms, this ethnographic process is an instance where 'power produces knowledge' (Foucault, 1997, p. 27). However, it is a disreputable knowledge, based on a judgmental gaze of power and an assumed authorial omnipotence that claims to accurately understand research subjects' lives conveying understanding through transparent language.

Poststructuralism has questioned such epistemological/ideological assumptions, criticising the lack of acknowledgement of inequitable power relations inherent in traditional ethnographical research. Such challenges imply a crisis of representation that Denzin (1997) has termed 'a profound rupture' (p.17), the implications of which I now discuss.

3.1.10 The poststructural turn

Denzin's rupture has been described in a variety of terms through postfoundational questioning of humanistic thought with 'feminist, race, critical, queer, and postcolonial theories' (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 5), so revealing a clear ideological stance. This crisis, stemming from epistemological uncertainty but having ideological ramifications, has three aspects – the crises of representation, legitimation and praxis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994b; Denzin, 1997).

The assumption that texts can represent lived experience has been undermined by the view of language as being less a tool for representing a world of *a priori* meaning but a way of constructing meanings of the world, 'a constitutive force, creating a particular view of reality and the Self' (Richardson, 1994, p. 925). It is through writing of text that meaning is created – meaning does not exist prior to and separate of text, and so any direct link between world and text is severed. The poststructuralist ethnographic text is not autonomous, offering a reliable reflection of the world but a glimpse of that world. It does not attempt to create a representation of a shifting world through the changing subjectivities of those who are studied, but presents 'lived texts ... (as) ... representations that are themselves embodied representations of experience' (Denzin, 1997, p.33). This reflexive turn in research and writing has seen a growing concern with how both researcher and participants are portrayed in texts. If text constructs both, then researchers have a responsibility to themselves, the participants and potential readers to manage their subjectivity and explain *how* they construct their own reality (Holliday, 2002).

The second aspect of the crisis concerns how – given that language is relational rather than representational – ethnography is to be evaluated and interpreted. Rather than positivist appeals to notions of validity and reliability to buttress claims to truth (Lather, 2004), a range of alternative evaluative criteria have

been proposed. These range from a complete denial of any criteria and the privileging of none, to the value of situated knowledge produced in particular contexts that instantiate a small-scale cultural practice. By revealing validity as a mask of authority, all ethnography is shown to be ideological, based on values and politics, rather than an 'objective' scientific epistemology. The traditional ethnographer, attempting to erase his/her role in the research process by raising their subjective assertions to the status of spurious objectivity, is replaced by an acknowledgement of the validity of subjective positions and the denial of the ethnographer as a disinterested, unbiased recorder of events. The management of this subjectivity brings risks in that there is a solipsistic danger of the researcher focusing too narcissistically on their own subjectivities (Adler & Adler, 2008), so it is important to remember that the researcher is a social being, also enmeshed in discourses, and it is the business of social relations and 'how our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others' (Denzin, 1997, p.27) that the researcher explores.

The third aspect concerns how knowledge gained in research can be used to effect societal change. Despite the ideological commitment that the poststructural turn has often taken, social change remains problematic. The decentering of the integrated subject, while opening up possibilities to the individual, may lead to the questioning of all identity categories upon which political action has been based, leading to inertia. Nevertheless, this potential that poststructuralism offers means that the instability of such terms and the avoidance of closure is a necessary element of its emancipatory aims (St Pierre, 2000).

3.1.11 Poststructural Ethnography: A Contradiction?

My initial attraction to ethnographic research stems from four assumptions: that it would allow previously silent voices to be heard; that knowledge is

culturally-based; the long term involvement of the researcher in the research context is emphasised; and it utilises observation and discussion to construct understanding of social situations. Britzman (2000) has attempted to forge a link between these features of the approach while problematising the core modernist assumptions of traditional ethnography. In this respect, she documents recent developments as

pushing at normative disciplinary boundaries in terms of what it is that structures methodological imperatives, the ethnographer's stances, and the ethnographic voice; the kinds of theoretical traditions through which data are constructed, represented, and narrated; what are taken to be problems suitable for ethnographic research; and the problems of how one might read against the ethnographic grain. (Britzman, 2000 p.29)

I use this framework to discuss poststructural influences on my ethnographically informed research to illustrate how issues raised above may be instantiated.

Using a poststructural informed approach to ethnographic research is an enterprise fraught in contradiction, 'an uneasy dialogue' (ibid, p.32) between the ethnographic promise of a coherent narrative peopled with sense making subjects, read through unproblematic, mimetic representation and fragmented excerpts of stories involving discursively situated, changing people read through a shifting code. Denzin's (1997) crises are rendered by Britzman as challenges to the ethnographic authorities of empiricism, language and understanding altering the ethnographic project so that the establishment of an authoritative account of the Other is no longer its concern. Rather the preoccupation concerns questioning how participants' multiple voices construct and reconstruct their identities, producing contradictory and multiple narratives of experience. Denzin (1997) claims that these challenges to authority are at the centre of 'critical poststructural thought ... (and) ... lies in the recurring commitment to strip any text of its external claims to authority' (p.9). The aim of this project is to go beyond a story of student-teachers'

construction of their professional identities as teachers, but explore how identities are lived and produced through complex narratives, to examine lived experiences and the 'lived textuality' (ibid, p.33) of student' lives.

I now discuss methods of what is termed 'data collection', however, in line with the poststructural tenor of this work I use the term data construction, admitting my own position in the research process and texts constructed. Interpretive research is concerned with data as texts and, as social and the textual worlds are inextricably linked, I cannot write myself out of either, so my position must be explained, for, as Richards (2003) notes, 'recognition of the self ... is what informs new ethnographies' (p.143).

3.2 Research Methodology

3.2.1 Research Context

This study is set during the fourth academic year of a B.Ed. (English Language Teaching) degree, following a cohort of five female Emirati students, as they work on their final school placements – six weeks in semester one (August to December) and ten weeks in semester two (January to May).

Each student is responsible for teaching three days a week. In addition, they plan, research and write a small-scale Action Research project investigating an aspect of their practice they perceive as problematic. In semester one, they explore how they, their mentor and other teachers approach their topic through observation, interviews and a reflective journal. At the end of this semester, they write a preliminary report and a plan for implementing their research during semester two. The students negotiate with their mentors an amount of time in which to implement their action research, generally one 40 minute lesson per week, which I observed in my role as college mentor. This compromise between student and school mentors has developed to enable the

students to have an amount of freedom from the rigidities of the curriculum, yet still allow the mentors to ensure that the curriculum is followed. While implementing their project, the students collect data in the form of participant and peer observations, short, semi-structured interviews and their reflective journal. Finally, the whole process is written as a 6,000 word report which, upon completion of grading, is sent to the University of Melbourne, an integral aspect of the institution's benchmarking process. It is significant that academic approval for the action research is required from an institution from a different context, whose members have minimal knowledge of the schools in which students work. This entails the criteria used to assess students' work having scant account of students' requirements. Thus, I am accountable to ensuring my institution is positively assessed, rather than ensure the action research serves to develop teachers.

3.2.2 Research Questions

The research questions have emerged from my professional interest in reflective practice, in particular its specific form of Action Research. A second aspect emerged from my professional studies and engagement with poststructuralist ideas, in particular with current notions of identity (Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1997), and work that uses such ideas in relation to teacher identity (Clarke, 2005; Miller Marsh, 2003). My questions attempt to bring together and explore the above concerns:

- How does the final year school placement contribute to the socio-discursive formation of Emirati teacher identities?
- How do Emirati students construct their teacher identities through experience of reflective practice?
- How does the undertaking of an action research project contribute to the socio-discursive formation of teacher identities?

This study considers each of the five student teacher participants as individual cases and their experiences of their placements are described and analysed as individual cases prior to my drawing out of any common themes that may emerge. I now move to consider the basis of my usage of case studies, followed by a discussion of the application and status of the use of constructed textual data in interpretive research.

3.2.3 Case Studies or Cases?

The issue of whether a particular study may be construed as a case study is not as straightforward as the simplicity of the term may imply. For although Scott and Usher (1999) state that a case study can be considered both an approach to research and a procedure applicable within any research methodology, Richards (2011) finds that while this 'distinction is clear and practical ... it does not reflect general usage, which tends to be rather lax' (p.2). However, it is useful to consider the above with relation to this study, as due to the participants' different experiences, defined by differential relationships with mentors and students during their placements it seems apposite to consider each as a separate case. I therefore use the term '*case*' in preference to '*case study*' to indicate that I am not employing '*case study*' as the main organising structure for the study, but rather merely as a tool to approach the construction and analysis of data that serves the purpose of a poststructuralist ethnography.

Richards (2011) does, however, proceed to identify four essential characteristics of case, which I utilise to position this study. Firstly, a case study is bounded, a factor that Merriam (1988) considers as a 'deciding factor' (p. 9). This consideration is achieved through each participant's unique experience in each school, as the school itself provides a natural boundary, so constructing each case. Secondly, case studies are contextualised within a specific

sociohistorical frame, they are 'not a separate entity, but a located one, existent in some particular geographic, political, and cultural space and time' (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 119-120). Each of the five schools in the study comprises a specific micro-culture constructed by interpersonal and institutional relationships, which is further located within a broader sociocultural network, as described above. The third trait is that case studies are studied in their natural context, a consideration which Richards (2011) consider to be 'a fundamental tenet' (p.4), and which I achieve through day-to-day engagement with the student participants as they prepare, teach, and negotiate the vagaries of school life. The final characteristic is that case studies should draw on multiple sources of data, necessary 'in order to do justice to the complexity of the natural context' (ibid, p.5) and it is to the sources of data that I now turn.

3.2.4 The Construction of Textual Data

As the teacher responsible for both courses, I have a close relationship with the students throughout the year, involving a wide range of interactions and it is from these interactions that I construct the textual data from which this study is created.

The lesson observation and the post lesson discussion are a common aspect of the student mentoring process and provide two of the major sources of information upon which this study is based.

During lesson observations it is inevitable that only a small aspect of the lesson is observed creating a text which forms the basis for a written report. Three representations of the lesson are constructed:

- the mentor's selection of what is observed – informed by biographical and sociohistorical discourses;
- notes written as the lesson occurred - partial and constrained by time and attention;
- tidied up, word-processed forms used as data.

The observation texts are produced using a template which includes the following headings:

- Professionalism and Understanding
- Planning for Learning
- Implementation of Learning
- Monitoring and Assessment
- Reflection (completed after the post lesson discussion)

Comments are used to refer to competencies under each heading which the students are working towards. Experience with using this template shows I write many notes in the margins as they do not fit comfortably into these predetermined categories. I decided, therefore, to write freeform notes for each lesson and rewrite them for bureaucratic purposes later. I arranged to observe each student for the same lesson each week, in which they would implement their research.

The process of writing observations was exploratory, as I had to satisfy the dual roles of mentor and researcher, the notes functioning as observation notes of the lesson and evaluative comments for the students' report. Similarly, I had to represent the students' voices without usurping their voices as author. Denzin's (1997) comment on Bakhtin's insight that 'the social world is best described as a parallax of discourses' (p.46) encourages an observing gaze that is feminine and multisensory and questions objectivist pretensions of the defining masculine gaze. Therefore, I attempted to create a questioning text

that allowed me to be researcher, mentor and sometimes neither – an interested, misunderstanding observer. As researcher, I described the class, as mentor I evaluated them, as misunderstanding observer, I ‘wondered’ - a term with which Somerville (2007) describes ‘being uncertain; not proving, but wondering’ p.225) – akin to ‘the aside’, a writing practice that makes use of in-between space, a device ‘to speak to the reader without the rest of the text hearing’ (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 271), where the discourses of my subjective positions as mentor and researcher can be suspended.

The post-lesson discussion was the second tool I used for constructing data which were recorded on an mp3 player, dated, named, and transferred to hard disc. Initially there were tensions between my roles of mentor and researcher and I became concerned that if discussion tended towards one or the other, my data would be compromised. However, it became clear that I was working under a representationalist misconception about the nature of data, assuming that written data reflects ‘reality’. However, although influenced by Holliday’s (2002) discussion of how the collation of textual data involves several stages of selection, the implications had evaded me: that my selection of topic, methodology, discussion questions, and all unspoken assumptions contributed to the data being the artifact upon which my project was based, rather than the data as a representation of a separate reality. I began to see the data as a living text in its own right, not representing anything other than itself. That we cannot know beyond the text, that any presence which the text may refer to is unknowable, came to me as an insight, making the implications clear. The data cannot be compromised, that would require the assumption that there is a pure form of data from which my data became degraded. The data stands alone having no relationship with anything other than itself.

The third method for constructing data utilised texts from other college work. The *Research Methodologies* course features three assessments - focus group

discussions, encouraging students' involvement with their research, scaffolding development through guided reading and discussions. During the first discussion I wrote notes, but it was so complex that for the following discussions I gained permission to record them. The discussions were on the following topics:

Discussion 1:

Describe action plan – consider how it changed.

Describe activity you used, discuss your rationale and success in using it

Discuss preliminary data have you collected; what may it show and mean? How does it relate to research questions?

Discussion 2:

Read Holliday (2002, pp.99 – 103), underline concepts you would like clarifying.

Discuss types of data and relate to your work

Consider relationship between types of data and writing – what does this imply?

Discuss difficulties Holliday mentions and solutions he suggests – relate to your position

Discussion 3:

Read and discuss Mills (2003, pp 103 -110).

Discuss how your research questions have changed/developed.

Discuss data analysis techniques Mills describes; consider relevance, practical advantages/disadvantages.

Present examples of data, analyse, discuss possible insights it shows.

Discussion 4:

What did you gain from doing your Action Research Project?

What were the problems for you in doing the Action Research Project?

To what extent do you think your experience gained during the Action Research Project may be of use to you in your future career, if at all?

If next year's students asked for some recommendations regarding the Action Research Project what would you say to them?

Do you think the Action Research Project could be changed in any way to benefit student learning? If so, how?

3.2.5 Data Analysis and Status of Data

A further concern I had about interpretive data focused on the status afforded to texts; the extent participants' comments can be considered truthful. This relationship has been discussed by Foucault (1980) and, having considered the extent we should understand participants' language to be true, it was with relief that I read his comment that 'the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which themselves are neither true nor false' (p.118). My aim, therefore, is not

concerned with how 'true' participants' statements are, but to consider how they construct aspects of their experience and identity through discourses they employ, to achieve 'a discursive focus on networks of practices which constitute subjects in shifting, multiple, contradictory sites ... (which) ... constructs a more complex understanding of identity and citizenship. (Lather, 1991, p.42)

Holliday's (2002) work on the use of texts in qualitative research, in addition to Lather's approach to validity in interpretive research after poststructuralism (Lather, 2007b), her writings on voice and the role of the researcher in data analysis (Lather, 2007c) provide a framework for my data analysis, upon which I expand below.

The process of writing about data involves the construction of meaning from text. Since the development of interpretive research, approaches to data analysis have undergone reconceptualisation. The notion that the researcher occupies a position of privilege with relation to discovering meaning, while highlighting the lingering influence of positivism within the interpretive project, is challenged by the growing understanding of 'the researcher as active constructor of meaning' (Radnor, 2002, p.68). This implies that as researchers are positioned at the centre of the study from its inception, it is his/her duty to justify their interpretation of this data.

Throughout this study, I have been immersed in the construction and maintenance of networks of social relations embodied by myself as college mentor, with students, school mentors, principals, Ministry of Education supervisors, and school students. The construction of data involves textual reification of some of these relations (Wenger, 1998). This is not a setting into which I have entered solely with the intention of study, but a network of relationships with which I am variously familiar. Acknowledgement of my situatedness within the context of the study and its influence on my decision

making is addressed through the process of explicitly positioning myself as researcher within the text. This involves the strategic deployment of data and commentary to show management of my subjectivity (Radnor, 2002).

A further factor which impacts upon data analysis concerns the large amount of raw data that the study generated, including:

- approximately nine thousand words of text written by each student as assignments
- observations of thirty six lessons over the course of placements
- transcripts of post-lesson discussions
- transcripts of focus group discussions during and after the project (discussions 1,2, 3, and 4)

With such data, one could explore interpretations from many theoretical positions, for as Holliday (2002) describes, data analysis involves constructing a particular understanding, when others might construct a different understanding with equally valid meaning. Additionally, Holliday's (ibid) discussion of data has been influential in forming my understanding of the relationship between 'reality' and data. The researcher's selection of tools with which to create data, rather than revealing reality, constructs a partial interpretation producing data in a raw form. This raw data is further produced and refined as the researcher reads, identifies and generates themes. Parts of this refined data are then employed to illustrate themes within the text of the study. The raw data has, therefore, gone through a process of simplification, refinement and selection – interpretation – at the end of this interpretive process, the status of the data has changed so that it is now an artifact, a simplified reification of complex social processes.

Another dilemma that relates to the status of textual data concerns my role in presenting others' voices. Should I let the participants' stories speak for

themselves? Lather (2007c) views the relationship of the researcher to the data as a 'dance – getting in the way of the data, getting out of the way of the data' (p.27). She contends that the assumption that there is one interpretation which will be self-evident if the text is allowed to speak for itself is erroneous, arguing that one implication of poststructuralism is that it 'makes you suspicious of voices as some innocent, uncomplicated story' (p.27). The researcher's role in contributing to the form of the data is inevitable. Since all other aspects of the study have involved my intentions, it would be dishonest to present this data as if it contained unsullied truth. With the manipulation of data understood as a given, the central question becomes the extent that the manipulation is visible. The decision must reside with the researcher, but one 'can't get away from manipulating the data. That's what we do!' (ibid, p. 29) Throughout the study, therefore, I selected data in which I am interested, which resonate with the themes I explore in the literature review and shed light on contemporary discussions of teacher development and the sociodiscursive formation of identity within a rarely considered context.

3.2.6 Validities and Ethical Concerns

Education has been slower than other areas of social research to recognise the centrality of ethics in the research process (Pring, 2003). As the ideological basis of research methodology has come to be recognised with the acknowledgement that 'educational research is grounded, epistemologically, in the moral foundations of educational practice' (Nixon & Sikes, 2003, p.2), so moral considerations should be approached prior to methodology. Pring (2003) recommends an ethical approach that is necessarily informed by the research context and a balance of intellectual and moral virtues, making two points. Firstly, emphasising that ethical consideration must be based on protecting the interests of participants in particular research settings, rather than arguing for a more relativist position, where ethical considerations may differ according to

setting. Secondly, he argues that the moral, exemplified by the ethical imperative and the intellectual, the research impetus to establish validity, are inseparable.

As the proliferation of forms of validity has increased in recent decades, the convergence of the epistemological and the ethical has grown (Lather, 1993) and the importance of developing a coherent ethical stance not inherited from positivist science has become more central in interpretive research. Ethical issues are recognized as an important aspect of validity and not merely concerned with protection of participants (Mills, 2002). Being derived from the quantitative tradition, in which validity is construed as describing the accuracy with which data measures what it is intended to measure and as a concern with establishing the ‘truth’, alternative configurations of validity have been suggested (e.g. Mishler, 1990; Lather, 1993). Particularly influential has been Guba (1981), who also challenges the separation of ethics and validity, suggesting that trustworthiness is more appropriate than validity and should be addressed through the criteria outlined in Table 3.1, below.

Guba’s Criteria for Validity of Interpretive Research		
CRITERIA	DEFINITION	STRATEGIES
Credibility	Researcher’s ability to take into account all complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained.	Prolonged and persistent participation – peer debriefing – triangulation – member checks – corroboration or coherence – referential adequacy – slice of life data
Transferability	Researcher’s belief that everything is context bound	Detailed, descriptive data -detailed descriptions of context
Dependability	Stability of data	Overlap methods – establish an audit trail
Confirmability	Neutrality or objectivity of data collected	Practice triangulation - practice reflexivity

Table 3.1 – Adapted from Guba (1981)

The above can be seen as an intermediate, transitional validity grounded in what Lather (2007b) has termed ‘scientificity’ – the lingering hegemony of the

natural science paradigm in areas beyond its application. The interconnection of ethics and validity, however, is apparent in Guba's model through the:

- involvement of participants in creating meaning (member checks)
- emphasis on rich description of context to reconceptualise generalisation as transferability, where responsibility for establishing links across contexts resides with the reader
- practice of reflexivity through self-critical examination of assumptions

This attempt to break away from a positivist understanding of validity appears inadequate in three respects. Firstly, the idea of data stability as being a virtue precludes contingency and contradiction, undermining acceptance of complexity. Secondly, the notion that data may aspire to objectivity elides the researcher's role in its construction, suggesting realist ontology. Thirdly, Guba's criteria exhibit an underlying belief in an objective reality existing prior to and separate from the research context which 'has little meaning if realities are multiple and constructed' (ibid). Similarly, an assumption of an autonomous, coherent subject ignores understandings of identity as unfinished and multiple. Scheurich (1997) is critical of attempts to recast validity, considering them to be attempts to 'reshuffle the paradigmatic furniture' (p.159) masking an realist validity, the function of which is to police boundaries that delineate the 'Same' (that which is known) from the 'Other' (that which is unknown). Validity is an indicator of Western science as a civilisational project which divides the privileged 'Same' from the untheorised 'Other', a dichotomising practice which is a 'violent imposition on a world of multiple, substantive differences' (p.88). In this discussion, the border between the ethical and the epistemological is dissolved; validity is shown to be a hegemonic practice, as academic imperialism in Scheurich's terms.

Thus, ethical considerations have become central to the research process. The ethical approach where researchers make a judgment that privileges ends over

means has been replaced by a stance where 'ethics and politics are integral to the propositions and practices of research' (Fox, 2003, p.95).

Scheurich (1997) additionally highlights the necessity of active engagement with participants. Researchers should search for and ensure a range of voices are heard, recommending that 'we need new imaginaries of validity that ... celebrate polyphony, multiplicity, difference(s), the play of the Other' (p.88). I, therefore, encouraged participants to voice their ideas over the course of the project. Additionally, in the findings chapter, I have treated each participant separately, rather than as instances of identity categories, so allowing for differences to emerge and each participant's voice to be heard as much as possible within the limits of the study. Therefore, my ethical position can be summarised by a commitment to encourage 'the accelerating proliferation of marginalized voices' (Lather 2007b) and the recognition that 'validity has moved from a discourse about *quality* as normative to a discourse of *relational practices* that evokes an epistemic disruption' (ibid).

I used British Educational Research Association's (BERA) recommendations to structure ethical aspects of the study, which emphasise that 'all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for:

- The Person
- Knowledge
- Democratic Values
- The Quality of Educational Research
- Academic Freedom' (BERA, 2004, p.5)

3.2.6.1 Voluntary Informed Consent

- Participants were fully informed about aims and processes of the research prior to the project beginning. They were also informed of what

their participation would entail, how their participation would be reported and that their participation would have no affect on their academic progress or potential grades.

- Despite the institution having no ethics committee, I sent details to the Director and the Dean of Studies and approval was granted.
- Participants attended a meeting in which the research was discussed and were invited to voice any questions or concerns. A signed, written summary of the discussion was given, of which all participants and I kept a copy. All participants were guaranteed that they had the right to withdraw at any time, without questions or repercussions

3.2.6.2 Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- All participants are over eighteen and could not be described as vulnerable in the manner BERA describe; nevertheless the power differential inherent in my relations with the participants has to be acknowledged.
- BERA recommend that one 'must seek to minimize the impact of their research on the normal working and workloads of participants' (p. 8). Therefore, I ensured all forms of data were an integral aspect of the participants' work. Additionally, the post-lesson debriefings which, from my position as a researcher had been planned as unstructured interviews were reconfigured so that my primary role was that of mentor, as my responsibility is that of teacher educator and I cannot jeopardise students' grades at the expense of my study.

3.2.6.3 Privacy

- All participants received written notice that confidentiality of names, titular positions and schools was assured. However, although the institution within which the study was carried out may be identifiable by fellow professionals in the UAE, particular participants would remain anonymous due to the different cohorts that had passed through the institution.
- Participants were informed that they could have access to data produced at any time if they wished. Indeed observation notes were given to participants for developmental purposes when preparing future lessons.

3.2.6.4 Disclosure

- BERA considers it 'good practice for researchers to debrief participants at the conclusion of the research and to provide them with copies of any reports or other publications arising from their participation' (p.10). As the end of the data construction process was contemporaneous with the end of participants' college career, a final meeting took place in which participants discussed their experiences and understanding of my project and I thanked them for their participation and commitment.

A further requirement concerned the University of Exeter ethical process which involved providing details of the study, participants, and how informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. I also discussed prospective data collection and analysis methods, showing how they would not cause 'harm, detriment or unreasonable stress' (University of Exeter) and considered how possible political conflicts would be dealt with. Therefore, I had to show an

awareness of how the portrayal of my participants, Arab Muslim females, is a sensitive issue, that their images would never be required in the study, and that their complete anonymity would be assured. All participants signed written approval which were copied, returned, sent to my supervisor and forwarded to the School's Ethics Committee for approval, which was forthcoming.

Chapter 4 Findings

In this chapter I describe and analyse data collected during the study. This first section describing my approach and the rationale for the process of data analysis is followed by five substantive sections, each of which considers data concerning participant students in alphabetical order by their first name. This is in accordance with the study's critical stance, where a particularist position is emphasised (Hunt, 2007), and each student is viewed as individual, rather than as examples of 'deterministic constructs ... dictated by membership in a larger social, cultural, or linguistic group' (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 451), in this case female, Muslim, Arabs.

Throughout this analysis, I address the research questions introduced above (Section 3.2.2) concerning the socio-discursive construction of the participants as Emirati teachers and how participants attempted to create their teacher identities through reflective practice. In particular, I explore the contribution that participants' undertaking of an action research project during the placement contributes towards the socio-discursive construction of their teacher identities.

In each case I present the content in the same order. Firstly, I discuss the context of each participant's placement, highlighting particularities of the school, teachers and student involved. I then present the title of each student's action research project and consider their reasons for selecting their research topics based on commentary in their preliminary reports (written after initial exploration of their topic midway through the academic year), or their final reports (written as their thesis at the end of the academic year). From this, I present thematic treatments of the findings which I have constructed from the data and which resonate with the theoretical trajectory of the study.

4.1 Amal

4.1.1 Context of placement

Amal spent both periods of her fourth year placement in one of the girls' model schools, which are better resourced than government schools due to parents contributing an annual fee to the school. Maha also completed her practice in this school. The school environment is of recent construction, well maintained, with modern facilities, and classes tend to be decorated, rather than have the bare walls of the government schools. Additionally, there is a belief within the community that model schools have higher educational standards. Although there is no formal research to show this, anecdotal evidence among the education community within the city would support this claim. The majority of English teachers within the school are expatriate Arabs, mainly Tunisian, apart from two Emirati teachers who are recent graduates of the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme, one of whom, Noura, was Amal's mentor. The school is advised by one of the six companies employed by Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) and several advisors work in the school, to facilitate curriculum and professional development.

4.1.2 Constructed Dichotomies

I now discuss Amal's rationale for her study as described in her final report. I then draw upon her comments during focus group discussions to consider how Amal places herself within a range of dichotomous conceptual and social relationships and the implications this positioning has for her understanding of her teacher identity.

During her time in school, Amal worked on her action research project entitled '*Discovering the impact of using communicative strategies to enhance oral fluency*'. In this extract from her preliminary report, Amal describes her reasons

for choosing this topic discussing how she views her teaching within its sociohistorical setting:

I experienced traditional ways of teaching where the teachers used mainly two methods which were grammar translation and the audio-lingual method. The only chance to speak in the classroom was either to repeat after the teacher or respond to a question with one word or to do the daily greetings, without extended chances of using the target language. The rationales behind this study are firstly that speaking is a fundamental aspect of a second language skill that is gaining little focus in the language teaching process of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) classrooms. Also, secondly students do have the language, but they do not have the ability to use it, as they hesitate to respond to even questions that they already know the answers of.
(Preliminary Report)

We can see how Amal constructs a dichotomy between '*traditional ways of teaching*' and her own practice which is constructed on several levels. Firstly, she uses a discourse of method, where traditional pedagogies, exemplified by grammar translation and audiolingualism, are positioned oppositionally against her own practice and the primary focus is on speaking, a position strongly influenced by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Secondly, Amal contrasts these pedagogies by placing them at opposite ends of a discourse of freedom and control, highlighting that students in her class have '*extended chances*' to speak rather than the limited opportunities offered through repetition and response in '*traditional*' classes. Thirdly, she constructs a temporal dichotomy, in which her past as a learner is compared negatively to her present as a teacher. Finally she dichotomises having knowledge of English with being able to speak English. A further implied dichotomy, although not stated as such, is the positioning of current teaching in UAE schools as being deficient, because her implementation of strategies to enhance oral fluency is portrayed not as merely an enhancement (despite the title of her research), but as '*fundamental*'. Within these dichotomies, Amal occupies a position that seems to straddle both aspects, because despite her construction of them as incommensurable, her learner history has been in schools where '*traditional*

ways of teaching' were the norm, where grammar translation and audiolingualism were utilised, and where, presumably, she had little '*chance to speak*'. Yet, presumably, she can be considered as a successful learner of English as she has studied it to degree level and become a teacher of the language.

There are other instances where the sometimes contradictory stances she takes towards social relations in the school are apparent. Their positive nature is apparent in her final report when she mentions '*new experiences while talking and interacting with other participants over the period of the research*' and further emphasised when she discusses '*the whole English staff (who) were encouraging us to try out and it's OK even if you don't get it from the beginning you will get it*' (focus group 2). In the final focus group discussion, she characterises the school community as open, constructive and collaborative, '*I think talking to the other teachers, not only the English ones, did help with sharing experiences ... listening to them ... attending PD sessions ... was a real benefit*'.

However, her attitude is more negative when, on the same occasion, she recognises constraints upon her agentic practice that occurred in the form of her '*principal's attitudes towards group work ... the students are not teachers ... so you can be controlled more*' (focus group 3) when '*you don't have a supportive environment that will support your area or new ideas*' (ibid). Amal also characterises relations with her mentor at the school in a similar manner, at times portraying her as helpful '*one of the benefits for my research was having a supportive ... a graduate teacher from HCT ... she's up to date with the techniques and teaching methodologies ... a supportive advisor*' (focus group 2). Later she admits that there are disadvantages to having a recent graduate as a mentor, '*because it's your first year in school and you try to prove yourself ... try to get well with the situation*' (focus group 3). The selected data highlights the

specific socially situated quality of any class-based research effort and highlights how the action research project contributed to Amal's socialisation as a teacher, through increasing participation within the school discourse community (Eraut, 2000). Her status as a student, a newcomer yet to create her own credible capital in the position of teacher, appearing to gall her on occasions, is characteristic of the position of student.

The question of Amal's positive or negative attitude at different times in the data is, in a sense, irrelevant. What are of interest are her engagement and questioning of practices for it is through this process of engagement that students become aware of the affordances of practices, the often unspoken expectations of how things are done in a school (Kelly, 2006). Amal's intensive experience of sixteen weeks' participation in the school community and her reflection on her practice and experience therefore contribute to her sense of emergent identity as a teacher through the process described above, which 'consists of negotiating the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities' (Wenger, 1998, p.145).

The excerpts above can additionally be interpreted to highlight how Amal used her action research topic as a vehicle for presenting her identity as a teacher through allegiances she creates within this set of binary distinctions. For example, she constructs and positions herself within the binary distinctions of them/us, effective/ineffective, traditional/modern, a process which allows individuals to position themselves in relation to others (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000), and which can be considered a form of 'dividing practice', and is one method of objectification that creates individual subjects (Foucault, 1982). Amal's prioritisation of the modern over the traditional, of freedom to speak over repetition of teacher utterances, and her present as a teacher over her past as a learner, point to her utilisation of the student-centered discourse prevalent on the B.Ed. programme and in the college environment in order to

differentiate herself from teachers in the school, and position herself as an embodiment of change, a teacher bringing a newer, freer pedagogy to the school. Her use of student-centered discourse represents the influence of the college organisational culture in comparison to her earlier educational experience and highlights Holstein and Gubrium's (2000) point that formal organisations 'provide publically designated resources for producing selves' (p.165). Amal's four years in college allow her to draw on this discourse, because of the college's official status and power in respect of schools. The distinctiveness and discursive stability of CLT, allows Amal to take on the identity of a communicative language teacher, by using 'linguistic enactments of discourses at particular times and in particular places' (Block, 2007, p. 17). This idea of an individual's identity being a sociohistorically situated performance (Butler 1990), where identity is constituted through conventional acts (Loxley, 2007) is further indicated by the fact that the textual excerpts discussed above are taken from her final report on her research and the final two focus group discussions and can be therefore understood as examples of identity work, whereby individuals attempt to control their subject positions, by managing how they are perceived by others. In this case, she aims to create alignment with the college-based discourse of learner centered pedagogy, claiming membership of the broader discourse community that it represents.

4.1.3 Class Management and Discipline

I now explore three subthemes all of which can be construed as issues that emanate from Amal's difficulties with class management and discipline. The first two subthemes concern Amal's attempts to control her students' use of language. Firstly, I present how she attempts to limit students' use of their first language in class. Secondly, I discuss issues surrounding power and control in respect of teacher and student voice in Amal's class. Finally, I explore Amal's

use of physical positioning of students, and how her actions contribute to a contradiction between Amal's practice and espoused beliefs.

4.1.3.1 Limiting Use of First Language

One noticeable strand in the data concerns her attempts to control students' use of Arabic, their first language (L1). In her lesson on 3rd March, I observed three instances where Amal questions the use of Arabic in her class. Firstly, *'Who's using Arabic in my class?'*, a moment later, she says *'Mariam, I can hear some Arabic from your group'*, and she asks the whole class *'Why am I hearing Arabic in my class?'* (Obs. 3.3) However, the indirect, question form of instruction; the fact she has to say it three times, and my comment that *'I can't really notice any difference in the language students' use after her reminder'* (ibid) all appear to show her stance as not being completely effective. The following week, in the post-lesson discussion, Amal states *'the main challenge was also today that they are a monolingual class ... they are using Arabic ... they are able and I know they have enough vocab to communicate with each other but they aren't using that vocab in the classroom'* (discussion 10.3). On 24th March *'she admonishes one group for using Arabic'* (Obs. 24.3) and a few minutes later the following exchange occurs,

one student says, "Miss, can I use Arabic?" Amal says, "try to speak English". It turns out that the student wants to check the meaning of what they will have to do. The student then says in English "so I draw a flag of Saudi and write it". Amal replies "yes" (ibid).

This passage appears to bear out Amal's belief that her students are reluctant to speak English. After that lesson, when asked about enforcement of English, Amal mentioned that this practice was a policy which is *'from the English teachers - as long as it's an English session you have to speak in English'* (discussion 24.3) because *'the school environment is the only place they can use English'* (ibid). I asked her to expand and she stated that English is enforced *'in*

and outside the classroom not only with just my students even if they are grade eight or nine if they are talking in Arabic I will say speak to me in English' (ibid).

Nevertheless, Amal's attempts to police L1 use are inconsistent and contradictory, as on several occasions she uses Arabic as a method for explaining English usage. For example, in the same lesson as when she challenged the class's Arabic use, *'Amal asks one student to tell the rest of the class the Arabic word for 'experiment', (obs. 3.3), she justifies this approach in the final focus group discussion, saying 'if it's for translation or something ... I will be satisfied in the class, but for normal ... I would rather prefer that they tried to use English' (discussion 3). I legitimated this pragmatic basis for using L1 when, in discussion after class, I state 'I think that's a productive way of using Arabic in the class ... you don't want to spend twenty minutes trying to elicit it or demonstrate it ... it's a waste' (discussion 3.3). Arabic is, therefore, co-constructed between Amal and I, as being of value only when it can contribute to the learning of English. The diminution of the status of Arabic appears set to continue, however, as the opportunities for the school students, as speakers of Arabic as a first language, to use it as a tool for learning seem likely to diminish further as Amal highlighted, 'they are encouraging more English because they are applying (English) in Maths and Science ... they want the students to become more familiar with English' (focus group 3).*

The insistence on use of English and the attempts to deny students' use of their first language are a central tenet of the CLT method (Phillipson, 1992) and have often been justified by recourse to pedagogical claims that rest upon a string of assumptions which Auerbach (1993) has described as inferring that the "more students are exposed to English, the more quickly they will learn; as they hear and use English, they will internalize it and begin to think in English; the only way they will learn it is if they are forced to use it" (pp. 14-15). This practice is claimed to be a part of student-centred pedagogy and 'progressivist' practice,

but has been challenged as being both psycholinguistically inadequate as it ignores the contribution L1 can make to the development of L2 (e.g. Phillipson, 2002), and ethically and politically problematic. Lin (1999), for example, discusses the extent to which attempts to enforce English use are embedded in unequal power relations that surround and discursively construct classrooms and can be 'implicated in the reproduction of social inequalities in different contexts' (p.393). Using Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence which describes how practices within schools that disadvantage students are legitimised in peoples' consciousness, Lin analyses attitudes to English medium education in Hong Kong, in which parents fight for their children to be allowed entry to English medium schools 'because they have steadfastly accepted the symbolic representation *English-medium schools = good schools*' (p.395, emphasis in the original). It seems that Amal, in her espoused theory if not always in practice, has similarly accepted the symbolic violence contained in the English-only = good methodology nostrum of CLT. This process, which Bourdieu coined misrecognition, describes how people misidentify a practice and attribute to it a cultural power it does not have, an act that is 'not a simple lack of awareness of the objective reality of a particular cultural practice but a strategic misconstrual of practice as other than what theoretical knowledge makes it out to be' (Acciaoli, 1981, p.29).

It seems clear from the data discussed and the discrepancy between Amal's sometime acceptance of Arabic in practice and her seeming theoretical commitment to English-only that there is no deterministic relationship between particular incidences of ELT, the structures of ELT methodology and the broader aspects of global structure often associated with it. Martin-Jones and Heller (1996) comment on these loose connections, highlighting the

Interstices ... spaces where structures fail to seal hermetically, and which provide sites ... where different practices of resistance (those of students and/or teachers) can be developed and where different world views can be articulated' (p.7).

This allowance of structural spaces, fissures, presents us with the opportunity to view Amal's inconsistent theorising and practice with relation to the role of L1 in ELT as a facet of her emergent teacher identity which she is struggling to construct from the discursive resources available to her, from the discourse of Communicative Language Teaching and from the pragmatic discourse that could be termed 'if it facilitates English learning, then use it'.

As an alternative to the above analysis and its attendant emphasis on macro forces of power, Foucauldian analysis allows an understanding of a more interpersonal, micro-power. Amal's attempts to manage students' speech can be construed as featuring a more subtle power, a disciplinary technology which aims to inculcate students into good habits, 'which aim at subjecting pupils in the social order of the classroom, rather than as pedagogic practices which aim at facilitating students' learning' (Chouliaraki, 1996, p.103). Drawing on Foucault's notion of power as 'a diffused, complex and shifting field of relations ... held together by sets of micro-practices of "technologies" of power ... oriented towards the human body and ... targeted to discipline it into certain ways of being' (ibid. p.106), Amal's instructions and admonishments to the students concerning Arabic serve as a body-object articulation which defines the relationship that 'the body must have with the object that it manipulates' (Foucault, 1977, p. 153). In this situation, such formulations have the effect of being 'explicit and obligatory prescriptions' (ibid.) that combine the students' speech (via their bodies) and English (the object) into a corporeal positioning that creates a relationship between the body's movements and its efficiency in addressing particular demands (Chouliaraki, 1996). From this perspective, Amal's comments to students on their use of Arabic may be understood as being concerned with inculcating them into a normative discourse of compliance, where students' choices of which language to speak, when and where to speak are circumscribed, rather than with promoting learning of English per se.

4.1.3.2 Appropriation of Students' Voice

A second strand within this theme concerns how, during lessons, Amal sometimes attempts to control students' access to classroom discourse through appropriating their voice. I have selected two examples where this aspect of her practice appeared particularly noticeable.

On 10th March, her class was involved in a discussion activity considering possible inventions of the future using 'may be' and 'might be'. After the discussion, Amal asks students from each group to read their suggestions to the class as follows:

one student reads out, - Amal paraphrases. [Does she need to do this?] Then she asks, "Why is that a good idea, Fatima?" Fatima justifies her idea and Amal comments. She then asks the second group to read their idea. [There is a problem, the students can't hear the reader, let alone write what she says]. So Amal reads instead. And so on. (discussion, 10.3)

I observed a similar event on 14th April, after the class had constructed plans for an advertisement for a given product, Amal asked student groups to show the class what they had made and '*so a student talks – mumbles – Amal echoes their comments sometimes, e.g. "Mouza said ..."*' (Obs. 14.4). At the time, my comment was that '*this seems to undercut the students' own talk*' (ibid). Instead of offering an opportunity for students to communicate with each other, Amal places herself between students to clarify and upgrade their English so that it is more readily comprehensible, depriving them of opportunities to negotiate and construct meaning between them. She imposes her own understanding of the utterances upon the class, controlling both topic and structure of students' speaking opportunities.

I told Amal that I was pleased with the level of discussion during the speaking activities, but I raised the issue of her limiting student talk during discussion, mentioning that '*one thing I want you to be careful of ... is that sometimes you*

echo the students a bit ... if the student is a bit quiet you will often repeat exactly what she's said and that ... devalues their own communication' (discussion 14.4). While occasional reiteration of student comments may provide clarification, her continual repetition, in these lessons at least, seems to both delegitimise students' attempts at communication between themselves – a key tenet of the communicative language movement – and contradict her wish to construct a class where students' contributions are valued.

These excerpts seem to show that while Amal is happy to encourage communicative strategies during allocated discussion times and planned as legitimate discussions, she seems less willing to allow students' to talk directly with each other. Her repetition or clarification of students' speech, disallows their contribution to constructing class discourse, as Amal appropriates their ideas, so knowledge is teacher legitimated. Within the student groups, discussion is mandated, but during other times in the lesson when Amal might wish to allow students to speak, by attempting to encourage students to suggest possible inventions or present work to their peers, the majority of classroom discourse is mediated through the teacher, and so topic selection and speaking rights as a whole remain tightly controlled. This is not, therefore, about times in a lesson when Amal might legitimately wish to assert her position of power as a teacher and lead the discourse in the class, but rather inability to cede control when it may serve her pedagogical purpose.

Such control strategies may appear to contradict Amal's allegiance to the practices of CLT, but as Chouliaraki (1996) has commented implicit regulation is a feature of espoused 'progressivist' pedagogies once the discourse enters the context of the institution, the classroom. Amal's practice may be construed as indicative of the allegiance her teacher identity owes to the assumptions of CLT – unsurprisingly, when considering that much of her formative teaching experience within college has been guided by people such as myself,

representatives of the BANA (British North American Australian) world (Holliday, 1994) where CLT has been an orthodoxy for several decades.

4.1.3.3 Asserting Classroom Presence

Amal's construction of her class as a place of regulation, is not limited to control of speech. Throughout the data, there is reference to a range of physical disciplinary practices and exploitation of spatial arrangements and relations which Amal employs in order to control students. Her dominance of the classroom space is apparent on several occasions. In her first observed lesson, I noticed *'she moves to the rear of the class and watches [seems to give an impression of confidence of her domination of the classroom with her physical presence]'* (Obs. 3.3). On April 7th, I observed that *'unlike Badreya, Amal moves all around the room and guides the students' from several different places'* (Obs. 7.4). Later in the same lesson, *'Amal then mixes some students around "Noura I want you to move to ..." and "Reem I want you to move to ..."'* (ibid). In discussion, when asked about her rationale for this, Amal stated *'I just moved Mariam and Al Yazia because I had Al Yazia and Salama talking all the time ... the two of them are low ability students I know they will not work they will keep chatting to each other'* (discussion 7.4). Here we see how Amal ensures all students are within her gaze, so she can arrange individuals either to maximise legitimate, class-focused speech or minimise their extraneous, personal talk. In discussion, Amal elaborates on this, *'I did ask two students to move from their places ... and they weren't happy'* (ibid), her aim is to encourage speech *'because it's a lifelong skill ... they have to communicate with each other ... and different people whether they like it or not'* (ibid). The students must talk, therefore, in order to improve their communicative competence, but within the limits Amal sets and only when sanctioned. Movement, in this example, appears to be utilised for a clear pedagogical rationale.

However, an example of spatial movement for disciplinary movements occurs in the same lesson. In discussion, Amal explains why one student is placed to *'work in isolation while the rest of the class are working in groups ... (because) ... she refused to work and I told her OK it's your decision'* (ibid). When I countered that this may not encourage her, Amal replied *'it does with this girl ... because she wants to ... she struggles but she wants to do everything on her own she doesn't want to listen to others or share ideas or anything'* (ibid). Again, we see the methodological imperative of communication and sharing of ideas provide a rationale for Amal's spatial positioning of students, in this case involving the physical isolation of a student.

Amal's disciplinary strategies operate on a second aspect of students' behaviour, as she positions their bodies within the classroom space. The assignment of places within the class is ostensibly to ensure student involvement and communication, and has a pedagogic aim within the pedagogic space. At a different level, however, the class is a place for *'supervising, hierarchising, rewarding'* (Foucault, 1977, p.147), with a disciplinary aim in a disciplinary space. Amal arranges the students in order to *'eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation'* (ibid. p. 143). The instructional discourse of communicative methodology that Amal espouses can be understood as being subordinate to the regulative discourse of social order, which according to Bernstein (1995) is the regulative discourse that *'creates order, relations and identity'* (p. 46). The embedded nature of one discourse within the other constructs the pedagogic discourse, which is *'a discourse of skills of various kinds and their relations to one another, and a discourse of social order'* (ibid) the primary purpose of which is to recontextualise the communicative discourse through its subordination to the regulative discourse. In Amal's class,

it is more important that students know *how to act* rather than *why* they are engaged in communicative activities (Chouliaraki, 1996).

The data that I refer to in this section is selected from the focus group discussions as Amal contributed the most on these occasions and her commentary addresses her experiences on the placement and the contribution that the action research project made to her development as a teacher. She also considers her sense of agency as she attempts to put new methods in practice and so try to expand her range of strategies based upon her reading around her research topic.

Amal states that action research allowed her *'to be more selective at trying out ... er ... more theory in class ... I used to read about theories but never had enough confidence to try it out ... but this opportunity really gives me the chance to* (focus group 2). A sense of her enhanced agency is apparent in her report, as she states it *'was beneficial as I had the chance to put theory into practice and try new methodologies that I would not get the chance to do so in normal teaching situations'* (Final Report). In these excerpts, it seems that Amal's understanding of theory here is of an individualist, technical nature which involves what Zeichner and Liston (1996) view as a restrictive understanding of reflective practice encouraging teachers *'to replicate in their practice the findings of educational research conducted by others that has allegedly been "proven" to be associated with effective teaching'* (p.74). Although she is able, at times, to break away from following the page-by-page curriculum, she seems to construe her role as that of a conduit that transfers to the school communicative language teaching (CLT) developed within the world of English Language Teaching (ELT), rather than construction of an alternative situated pedagogy.

As the majority of Amal's teachers in the college, including myself, have worked in the professional discourse of ELT for many years, it is perhaps not surprising she has appropriated the discourse of methodological purity associated with CLT. However, more recent theoretical developments have problematised many assumptions of CLT, constructing it as hegemonic practice representing a socio-political project under the guise of a universal methodology tied to commercial interests (Phillipson, 1992; Block & Cameron, 2002). This relationship was famously described by Kachru's (1990) terminology of inner circle countries (traditional bases of English, e.g. United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), outer circle countries (where English has significant status, e.g. India or Nigeria) and expanding circle countries (where English has no official role, e.g. China or Russia) and draws attention to the differing roles of English and differential power relations that status of English both reflects and constructs. Kachru's description of this relationship is couched in terms that explicitly reference the commercial concerns operating within ELT, depicting the inner circle to be 'norm producing', the outer circle as 'norm developing' and the expanding circle as 'norm dependent'.

The recognition of inner circle domination of the production of methodologies and learning materials has been accompanied by calls for greater valorisation of contextualised judgement and the opening of

new opportunities for the expertise of language teachers in periphery contexts to be recognized and valued ... (making it) ... feasible for teachers to acknowledge and work with the diversity of the learners in their classrooms, guided by local assessments of students' strategies for learning rather than by global directives from remote authorities' (Block & Cameron, 2002, p.10)

Amal's action research can be understood as a catalyst which may change not only her own practice, but through involvement with her mentor and other teachers may contribute to changing the practice in the school. This sociocultural view of construction of teacher knowledge as being facilitated by

participation in 'a complex web of distributed knowing and collaborative learning' (Kelly et al, 2007, p. i) presents the benefits of action research for provoking some kind of dialogue, although it may be too much to claim whether any teacher development or substantive change occurred.

4.2 Badreya

4.2.1 Context of Placement

Badreya spent both periods of her placement in a girls' model school, albeit a different school to Amal and Maha. However, both schools have close links with each other, having until recently been on adjacent sites and they are advised by the same company contracted by ADEC. This school is of very recent construction, and features a central open area covered by shading, off which are open areas, with classrooms on each side. The teachers are mainly Jordanian or Tunisian with a few Emirati. Badreya was encouraged in her action research by one of the advisors who was keen for Badreya to work with stories in the school.

4.2.2 Class Management: The Co-construction of Disciplinary Practices

I now introduce Badreya's study as described in her preliminary report. I then discuss two themes which appear in Badreya's data. The first theme concerns problematic relationship with her students which manifested itself through difficulties in class management. The second theme concerns Badreya's relationship with her school mentor, also beset by difficulties.

Badreya's topic entitled 'Using Graphic Organisers to enhance Reading Comprehension' involved investigating the uses of Graphic Organisers (GOs) with stories and their impact on comprehension of narratives. She chose this topic for pedagogic reasons, as '*studies suggest that stories take a fundamental*

position in teaching English ... because they seem to support their language learning by contextualizing the language and providing a relaxed atmosphere (Preliminary Report), and 'researchers claim that GOs enhance comprehension by covering more learning styles such as spatial and independent (sic) which would provide the students with a life-long skill' (ibid). She also appealed to a broader rationale, emphasising the social context within which her work occurs

recently major curriculum changes have occurred in UAE schools regarding the emphasis of teaching English by using more communicative approaches, which resulted in using language in a more contextualized activities such as stories. (ibid)

A third reason highlights personal investment in the topic

as a child I always enjoyed reading stories because it was a way in which the curriculum became more enjoyable and understandable. I also enjoyed the course about stories' reading by using voice and actions which make the story alive. Therefore, I like to transfer this experience to my students to make their learning experience memorable (ibid)

Badreya's interest in her topic, her wish to use stories and GOs and attempt to create learning experiences for students that differed from the rigid curriculum presented her with two major dilemmas, both of which had implications for the course of her placement and together dominate the data and my discussion.

A critical feature of the data is the extent to which developmental and pedagogical implications of her research are not discussed. For although there appears to be a relationship between Badreya's research and the sociodiscursive construction of her identity as a teacher, the relationship is not as one might expect, for through implementing her work on reading and graphic organisers, Badreya provokes interpersonal problems both with students and her mentor. These issues overshadowed her placement to such an extent that, for both Badreya and I, they became our central concern, and so they are at the centre of my discussion.

But firstly and most apparently, throughout her placement, Badreya struggled with class management, consideration of which took up a large proportion of our post-lesson discussions and which affected Badreya's understanding of how she should be and act as a teacher and how students should be and act as students. Secondly, her determination to assay what, within the school context, can be considered as a quite radical change in practice also placed strain upon her relations with her mentor.

I have constructed two separate yet similar aspects of this theme, both linked by mine and Badreya's attempts to address the difficulties she faced and co-construct a workable disciplinary practice. Firstly, I discuss how Badreya and I draw upon particular discursive resources to jointly construct her identity as a teacher and how this entails a particular positioning of students' identities. Then I discuss how Badreya's espoused progressive pedagogy is undermined by a disciplinary pedagogy with which she and I become preoccupied to the virtual exclusion of other priorities.

4.2.2.1 Classroom Discourses and Teacher and Student Identities

Badreya had been teaching her class for two weeks, and was focusing on introducing Graphic Organisers in relation to 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. With the students sitting on carpet at the front of the class, after introductory activities, Badreya read the story twice. It was during this second reading that one of the students' asked her '*why Goldilocks' hair was sticking up*' (Observation, 8.11). Badreya's reaction was interesting as '*she seemed a little perturbed ... she could have asked the class to think of reasons why, instead she just answered abruptly "she's just woken up" and moved on*' (ibid). A short time later, I observed '*she was also nonplussed when one particularly talkative student asked what the name of the bird in one of the pictures was in English.*

Badreya replied “crow” and was taken aback when the girl replied that she didn’t think that was right’ (ibid).

In these excerpts, Badreya seems reluctant to permit students’ contribution to the lesson. Rather than viewing their attempts at engagement with the story as a sign of interest and encourage them to join her in co-constructing a dialogue around the story, she stifles the first sign of students’ appropriation of the pedagogic discourse for their own needs. Badreya is caught here at the boundary between two discourses, which can be understood as being represented by the college and the school. She is attempting to implement a progressivist educational discourse which emphasises experiential and interactive methods and is often considered to be child-centred (Chouliaraki, 1996) and represented by the college where she is being initiated into progressivist discourse practices. She is finding, however, that in the institutional context of school she prioritises the regulative discourse of social order, where the practical contingencies of students’ expectations, the hierarchy of mentor teachers’, advisors’ and school principals’ priorities are more influential.

The dominant regulative discourse completely contains the progressivist pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1995) and, not surprisingly, Badreya appears to have difficulty reconciling these discourses, attempting to involve the students actively in her class as the progressivist communicative language teaching (CLT) requires and ensure that the regulative prerogative is addressed. In this context we can understand CLT as an example of a Bernsteinian theory of instruction which ‘belongs to the regulative discourse and contains within itself a model of the learner and of the teacher and of the relation’ (Bernstein, 1995, p. 49). Neither Badreya nor her students were able to take on the roles they are required to sufficiently to construct an effective learning environment. Badreya’s difficulties using CLT within a regulative discourse may have been

exacerbated by both her and her students' lack of familiarity with the child-centred practices since their model of learner and teacher is constructed within a transmission orientated pedagogy.

In February, there was a longer, more complex occurrence of a joint attempt by Badreya and I to achieve reconciliation between pedagogic and regulative discourses. Here, I describe the sequence of events, followed by comments selected from relevant post-lesson discussions and implications these events have for how her teacher identity is constructed.

By February 25th, Badreya is finding class management to be of increasing concern and is frustrated by her inability to keep students on task. During the lesson, she encountered problems while reading 'The Gruffalo's Child' (Donaldson & Scheffler, 2004). Her attempt at pre-reading discussion had to be abandoned because *'there is much lost as the students are shouting out so much'* (Obs. 25/2), she moves quickly onto reading the story, but as she reads

students (about four or five) get up for a better look, others stroll for no apparent reason. One student (Rawdha) shouts out so Badreya tells her to go back to her desk. Badreya continues to read for a while, but then says she feels the students "are too naughty", stops the reading, says she will not read today and sends the class back to their desks. She then asks the class to remind her of the classroom rules – some shout out "miss, miss", so Badreya reiterates them, but ... while she's explaining the rules (e.g. listen, follow my instructions) – she accepts them not listening (ibid).

During discussion, Badreya and I discuss strategies she could use to address her problem for the next lesson. Badreya suggests *'next time ... whoever gets the stick with the mouth picture on it can speak'* (discussion 25/2). I then commend her for a more physical approach to managing the class, in particular how she'd *'got them to stand up and get into a line and sit down as a way of sort of shaking them up a bit'* (ibid). Badreya remembered how *'working with the eye contact last semester was a very good strategy ... whenever I saw them with my*

eye directly and said my order they would follow me ... but this semester it doesn't seem to have any effect' (ibid). She rules out a discipline chart because she tried one the previous semester 'and they did not care' (ibid). Following this, I suggest what she's 'got to do is to be more consistent ... because you were saying things like listen but still allowing shouting out ... you're saying don't speak Arabic but then you're ... responding to it' (ibid). This leads onto an exchange which indicates how Badreya and myself co-construct the students' use of Arabic as a classroom management or regulative issue, rather than pedagogical or moral. Consideration of whether students' use of Arabic can be used to facilitate learning or whether students may have a right to use their first language in their learning is not mentioned, rather it is dually constructed as an impediment to the smooth management of the class.

B: <i>I noticed that whenever I speak in Arabic I respond to them ... immediately.</i>	1
R: <i>to be truthful I have no problem with them saying something in Arabic, but is it a school policy that they shouldn't?</i>	
B: <i>no, but ... whenever you allow them to speak in Arabic they would be ... their behaviour will be worse ... because then they get the chance to speak ... more ... and together ... and more jokes ... but for example when I say no more Arabic, girls like Mariam and ... Owaya they will stop talking, less sidetracked.</i>	5
R: <i>so, there's a ... class control management thing about it 'cos I wondered if it was a policy.</i>	10
B: <i>no, it's not ... when they are speaking within ... topics I'm teaching them in Arabic I don't get annoyed ... but when they are just giving ... sentences which they are not supposed to say inside the classroom.</i>	

(discussion, 25.2)

Other class management strategies are mentioned, including my advocating Badreya attempt strategies based upon the behaviourist influenced assertive discipline programme (e.g. Canter & Canter, 1992), which emphasises confiscation, separation of students, delaying break times, eye contact, the use of classroom space to assert power and intimidation by 'standing over' students, praise, 'catching them being good' and rewards.

On 10th March, I observed Badreya again and, unsurprisingly, some strategies we had discussed were apparent. After greeting the class, she *'emphasises that today she wants good behaviour or she will keep the class in over break'* (Obs. 10.3), she gets the students onto the carpet whereupon she

shows the class a big pair of lips ... "it's Miss Mouthy – if you want to talk you have to be holding this" ... she asks the students to name 5 things and 5 colours (on the cover of the book) ... starts to interrogate the students about the cover, handing out Miss Mouthy when she wants an answer. [Much of the talk is teacher-based and driven ... B has her agenda and doesn't go off track]. She leads a short conversation ... which leads onto some discussion of cartoons they like. [This is nice; ... finally ... the students have some input into the discussion.] (ibid)

However, acceptance of students' contributions proved to be minimal, as shortly afterwards *'at the end of the reading, she says "OK, back to your seats" immediately. This interrupts a girl who is asking a question she has just started "miss, why?"' (ibid)*

I now analyse this data with reference to implications her disciplinary techniques may have for construction of her identity as a teacher. I positioned Badreya and her students as being in the process of negotiating their roles at the confluence of two discourses – the progressivist and the traditionalist – while finding a way for them to construct a working relationship that allows Badreya's progressivist pedagogical discourse to operate within the regulative discourse. However, there are several interwoven issues upon which I now expand.

The first issue I explore concerns how Badreya's disciplinary techniques address themselves to students' bodies rather than their minds (Foucault, 1977), exemplified by Badreya's differential positioning of students within the classroom. One example is when Badreya moves students from the collective grouping on the carpet to individual positions at their desks, she changes how she constitutes the students as subjects (Obs. 25/2, above). From being

involved in collaborative learning, where all the class's knowledge and experience are drawn upon, they are moved so they are constructed as individual subjects, whose contribution to the class is valued as individuals (unauthorised discussion is more difficult) and judged as correct or incorrect by the teacher. This move marks a shift in epistemological assumptions and power relations between Badreya and students. In the first instance, knowledge is to be mutually constructed through a social process of negotiation; in the second it is understood as a quality that students possess and which they have to show to the teacher to attract praise. With regard to the power relations, there is a move from Badreya's 'covert regulatory practice' (Chouliaraki, 1996, p.103) within the 'progressive' pedagogical discourse towards a more explicit regulatory practice that constitutes a more traditional pedagogical discourse. I observed a second example when Badreya asked

(students) to stand up, continuing with "show me your eyes, show me your ears, put your hands on your head". She then asks a student to be "miss". The student's name is Alia, so she becomes Miss Alia and does 4 or 5 instructions, "sit down, stand up, sit down". [... I don't know why she's doing this, but when I look up I notice she's calling some students to sit in front of her on the carpet ... a way of selecting the students who respond well to the instructions to go and sit on the carpet (Obs. 24.3)]

Neither strategy Badreya used seem to have a clear pedagogical aim, but rather can be understood as use of disciplinary technologies, the 'joining of knowledge and power ... that come together around the objectification of the body' (Rabinow, 1984, p.17) in order to create a 'docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (Foucault, 1977, p. 198) in an attempt to facilitate her implementation of a student-centred pedagogy.

The rationale for using such technologies isn't Badreya's alone, however, as several excerpts of data from discussions highlight how, as her tutor, I offer advice, almost ventriliquising her voice, saying '*when they're all on the carpet everyone looking at me ... sitting legs crossed arms crossed ... looking at me and*

you do that and it takes time ... but after a month ... it happens straight away' (discussion 14.4). As this was near the end of her placement, I became more insistent that she show what I consider effective teaching and my comments became more explicit, *'no don't accept it ... I only want those who put their hands up and speak quietly ... you've really got to get them tight first ... when you've got these controls and routines first then you can be a bit more flexible ... but you can't be flexible to begin with'* (ibid). My recommendation that she use techniques borrowed from assertive discipline (above), emphasises how disciplinary strategies that focus on minor aspects of students' behaviour are the prime focus. The pedagogical aims of the lessons are virtually overwhelmed by the co-production of techniques for promoting normative student actions and identities. Foucault's disciplinary techniques and Bernstein's regulative discourse are co-constructed by student and tutor, pedagogical discourse is subsumed and the quality of learning is not prioritised at all.

A second reading of the data is that working within the mixed space of the traditionalist and progressive discourses has destabilised Badreya's and the students' identities, so they are unsure how to act as they would in traditionalist or in progressivist lessons. It is possible to view the overt student misbehavior, therefore, as resistance to the change Badreya is pursuing, the data revealing the process of their mutual negotiation and attempt to establish equilibrium whereby both Badreya and the students can exist within one discourse. Further confusing the situation is Badreya's inability to embody effectively and consistently the progressivist discourse she espouses, so undermining her own aims from the position of successful implementation of her research and perhaps more importantly, her construction of a teacher identity in which her practice reflects her espoused beliefs.

The final point concerns how discourses and practices are co-constructed by Badreya and myself within a knowledge/power nexus (Foucault, 1980; Rabinow, 1984) evident on several levels. Badreya exercises power over her students as she encourages them to act within the norms of constructivist pedagogy (open to discussion, willing to take risks, and participate in knowledge construction) so she can demonstrate her application of technique and understanding of child-centred pedagogical knowledge, specifically CLT, to myself, her tutor. On another level, as her tutor, I observe her teaching, judge – based on ‘superior knowledge’ - to what extent it matches criteria of being child-centred and aligned with CLT and with the power my ‘accredited knowledge’ bestows upon me, objectify Badreya’s identity as a subject, a certified teacher.

4.2.3 The Co-construction of Problematic Mentor Relations

I now examine Badreya’s relationship with her mentor, Miss F. The relationship although seemingly cordial in my presence, was a cause of frustration to Badreya which she described as being problematic at times. The relationship between mentor and student may create misunderstandings and strains, in particular when student and mentor are members of different discourse communities (Orland Barak, 2005). I use three examples of data to show the relationship between Badreya and Miss F as being co-constructed by Badreya and myself and characterised by a dichotomous quality. Secondly, I discuss how Badreya’s struggle to achieve a sense of agency within a distributed network of other agents may be understood as a byproduct of change, as power and resistance flows through discourses.

Miss F., Badreya’s mentor, is Jordanian and has worked in the UAE for ten years. She had been a mentor in the previous year, having mentored another final year student. I was familiar with Miss F, and felt she would have good

understanding of Badreya's needs during placement. Badreya had chosen to work with her, as she felt that the school was likely to be supportive and more flexible than others in accommodating her research.

In the first example, we were discussing how Badreya had worked individually in class with a student, Mouza, who had recently transferred from a government school and was struggling with English. I am surprised when Badreya mentions that *'she's going to fail ... dismissed by the end of term ... they have to get more than seventy per cent'* (discussion 10.3). Badreya then mentions that *'Miss F. informed her of this in front of the class more than once ... whenever she gets angry ... and she says you're going to have to look for another school ... and you're going to leave the school'* (ibid). The implication being that to treat Mouza in such a manner is unacceptable and Badreya and I co-construct an approach to dealing with Mouza as exemplifying better practice and showing a deeper knowledge of her students.

<i>R: oh dear ... that's nice that you go straight to her ... have you considered which group you put her with whether it's with kids who might help her</i>	1
<i>B: she works with Alia ... one of the excellent students in the class ... she likes to share the activity with her friends</i>	
<i>R: well that's a good idea ... put them together ...</i>	5
<i>B: I'll continue with the next class with the story and other activities</i>	
<i>R: OK good ... I'm pleased you're developing good contextualised knowledge of the students (ibid)</i>	

The second example occurred two weeks later and, during the discussion, we consider an incident that occurred when Badreya asked the class to write a response to questions and, having modeled possible answers, had cleared them off the board. This prompted complaints from the students, which I attributed to their preference for copying text because it's easier. Badreya then replies:

<i>B: yeah ... when Miss F. is teaching them what she is basically doing is ... for example she will give them an activity in the beginning of the class ... and this activity will take the whole of the class ... you can't see more than</i>	1
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<p><i>one activity in the class ... and Miss F. has them sit at the desk while they are working and whoever finishes comes to her desk ... but who doesn't finish she doesn't know about them until she checks ... their journals but after two weeks ... she will notice there's too much (missing)</i></p> <p>R: <i>(missing) right</i></p> <p>B: <i>it's the same with the workbooks and ... worksheets ... it just disappears ... when I teach them ... some have improved ... but some of them are annoyed ... it's going around which is what's annoying them ... when I check on them ... they just say errr she's coming now</i></p> <p>R: <i>but ... you know ... they need the support ... while they're doing the work</i></p> <p>B: <i>but what Miss F. says is they are big enough to know what they must do ... and we had many arguments inside the teacher room ... she feels they must do it on their own</i></p> <p>R: <i>and also ... well they need support especially with the writing ... and they need your feedback ... two weeks later you could show them the paper and it's well I don't remember this you know we've moved on ... so I agree with you.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p>
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(discussion 24.3)

The final example occurred on April 2nd as we were talking about how her class finds working independently difficult, as Badreya claims, they are often 'asking is it right is it right is it right?' (discussion 2.4) and 'they want to do one bit then check one bit and check' (ibid). We then elaborate on this theme:

<p>B: <i>because ... if you notice Mariam did the right order that when she went back to Miss F. she shouted at her because she thought the two of them were in the wrong place and she told her to tear it up ... Miss F. always wants it to be one hundred per cent correct.</i></p> <p>R: <i>can't be, can it?</i></p> <p>B: <i>no</i></p> <p>R: <i>not if it's the children's work</i></p> <p>B: <i>she wants it ... that all the language is correct and at the same time looks good ...</i></p> <p>R: <i>but it's part of the developmental process you can't expect them to get everything right at this stage</i></p> <p>B: <i>I don't mind them sharing their work ... they are in grade three ...</i></p> <p>R: <i>but they are so used to being spoon fed every stage ...</i></p> <p>B: <i>because they have the idea that they must get it right every time</i></p>	<p>1</p> <p>5</p> <p>10</p>
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(ibid)

In the above examples, Badreya and I create a dichotomy, working from within a student-centred discourse which portrays Miss F's practice as being flawed in that she is insufficiently student-centred, while constructing Badreya's putative practice as being more aware of and sensitive to students' needs. In the first excerpt, we show Miss F. belittling a student (Mouza), whereas Badreya states how she would support her learning. In the second extract Badreya is critical of Miss F's untimely marking and feedback practice; in contrast, Badreya states that she prefers to monitor and support students in class when she perceives they require it. The final example describes students' inability to work independently, which Badreya and I construct as being due to Miss F's insistence on students' work always being correct and her critical attitude if it is not.

Towards the end of her study, in the final discussion, Badreya commented on the interpersonal negotiation required to carry out action research yet function with one's mentor and others in the school, mentioning that '*you do want support of some sort but not interfering*' (focus group 3) and that '*it depends on if you get a good relationship between you and your mentor*' (ibid). She continues, highlighting strategies for constructing a positive relationship with mentors, including

doing what they want from you plus doing what you want ... without being collaborative with them and without breaking the relationship with them ... students who always try to be right when they are with a teacher without keeping in mind that we are students who are there because we are seeking their help ... some students have the idea ... that we're doing a favour for the teachers and it's the opposite way.

(ibid)

These dilemmas that Badreya faces in relation to students and mentor can be understood as her attempt to break through what Britzman (1991) terms 'defensive teaching' – a process whereby 'teachers maintained discipline and the consent of students by the ways in which they presented course material'

(p.45). Defensive teaching valorises the practice of covering the curriculum rather than engagement with issues, sacrificing meaning for an illusion of progress, pretence in which teachers and students are implicated. Badreya's problematic relationship with her mentor can be considered a product of her mentor's concern that the material might not be covered by end of semester, an eventuality which could entail questions being asked about her teaching ability by her principal or zone supervisor. The students, however, are used to a learning environment based on the 'tacit agreement – if you go easy on me, I'll go easy on you' (ibid, p.46), and resist Badreya's attempts to change emphasis to a more constructivist approach. Such structural dynamics interact with other socio-historically constituted actions which manifest themselves as Badreya's idiosyncrasies, for example her inability to come to grips with effective class management strategies. Her struggle to reconcile these two discourses draws parallels with Britzman's (1991) distinction between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses – the authority of the school, the zone and the ministry is at odds with Badreya's subjective voice.

Badreya struggles to construct a teacher identity in which she is comfortable, but simultaneously appears to be accepting a 'ready-made' identity in which she is positioned by the discursive practices that exist prior to her arrival in the school. Throughout her placement, she has difficulties in accessing the discursive space that her action research may offer her, and struggles to construct a sense of agency for her or her students. She seems unable to select discursive resources from those available so that new practices, discourses and identities may emerge.

This linkage between Badreya's potential agency and that of her students can be theorised fruitfully through drawing upon activity theory and what Engeström (n/d) has termed fractured or distributed agency. However, he points out that 'agency is typically framed in terms of control' (n/d, p.4) but

that in complex infrastructure and organisations where consequences of our actions may be unintended and unforeseen, there is a call for an understanding of agency where control does not intrude. Perhaps the assumption that Badreya's dilemmas were rooted in her inability to control the class was a mistake, for activity theory suggests that there is a need for an understanding of agency as a multiplicity which can reside any place within a network or within a network as a whole (Engeström et al, 1999). Within activity theory's theorisation of agency, Badreya's sense of identity depends on her sense of herself within the network of the school and her ability to negotiate with and influence the organisation to affect change. She appears to be unsure of her ability in this regard, exemplified in this excerpt from a discussion in which she draws on her experience of working in an ADEC managed school, to contradict Hessa's suggestion that schools in which ADEC are operating 'are so ... open' (focus group 3), replying that

it doesn't matter whether you are in a model school or a government school at the end it's your class and your strategies ... if I had a government school for my project I would do the same thing ... and maybe I'd have a mentor even more enthusiastic about what I'm doing ... but when we are in schools as full time teachers no-one will control our strategies. (ibid)

She appears to have a strong sense of her own agency, denying that differing schools may have differing powers to affect her practice. She seems to believe that her practice is unaffected by any outside structural or interpersonal forces, looking forward to a time of complete freedom after graduation. A few lines later she discusses how her work was, in fact, limited by other demands, 'we had about one or two sessions for each class ... we would need to do a test on Thursday, a test on Tuesday. On Monday, the second session would be for the journals ... so you don't have freedom ... it's too structured for you' (ibid). The discussion progresses and Badreya challenges Hessa's assumption that ADEC schools are more open to new ideas 'government schools are more interested in having ... (students) ... because we have all these new ideas that the school needs ... ADEC ... have very structured ideas about how teaching ... they try to

apply it in the schools without really thinking about what the teacher wants to do'. Badreya appears to have developed some resentment at the restrictions which she feels ADEC have imposed on her and under which she worked. There is a clear, if ironic, sense that she perceives the body responsible for school reform as working against teachers' agency and attempting to impose top-down solutions.

Within social systems such as schools, activity theory suggests that change emerges from systemic tensions caused by contradictions and deviations (Engeström, 2008). Badreya's research can be seen as the beginning of the change process, but she is facing resistance from other positions in the network (her students, her mentor, and ADEC advisors) and does not have sufficient power to ensure that her change effort takes hold even within her class. Her relatively powerless position as part-timer and newcomer in the school entails recognising that if others in the school wish to deny her space in which to deviate from organisational norms, she is in a difficult position to do otherwise.

4.3 Hessa

4.3.1 Context of Placement

Hessa spent her fourth year placement in two different schools. In the first semester she worked in a girls' preparatory school teaching years eight and nine as, at that time, she believed she preferred working with this age group. However, it became apparent that Hessa was having difficulties with students, including preparing suitable activities, class management, and receiving little guidance from her school mentor, who spent no time co-planning or observing. The Head of Education and I decided, in consultation with Hessa, to arrange a new school for second semester, as she would be in danger of failing her placement, and had been unable to implement any aspect of her research. So Hessa began second semester at a girls' government primary school teaching

year two. Her mentor (Warda) is a graduate of the college, had a good understanding of the support Hessa required and was prepared to give her classroom time to implement her research. Hessa was the only student in this school and developed a strong relationship with her mentor. It was one of increasingly few schools in the city which had not had advisors placed in it by ADEC, and so remained relatively untouched by the waves of changes overtaking other schools.

I have constructed three thematic sections with which to discuss Hessa's data. Firstly, I discuss the lack of pedagogical structure in Hessa's lessons and how she feels a lack of organisational skills is an attribute of her identity that she is, in some sense, 'chaotic'. I also theorise how this attribution may have implications for her ability to construct a viable teacher identity. In the second section, I discuss how Hessa begins to bring a stronger pedagogical structure to her teaching and suggest that development of her practice and change in understanding of her identity can be construed as a social process. Finally, I highlight how Hessa's action research can be considered only one factor in the sociodiscursive construction of her identity as a teacher.

4.3.2 Structure and Chaos in Teaching

Hessa's topic was entitled 'The Listening Process: Pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening' and involved investigating the impact of using a task-based approach to teaching listening. She had a dual focus – teaching and learning of a language skill – listening – through a specific methodology - task-based learning. As with other participants, one of Hessa's reasons for selecting her topic reflected perceptions of her own problematic experiences of learning English '*because I did not have many listening lessons as a student and the focus of learning listening was to pass the exams*' (Final Report). She also

showed an awareness of methodological stagnation in English teaching in Emirati schools in which

there was little variety in teaching listening. The listening lesson would start by giving the worksheets or text. Then, ask the students to listen to the tape, which is often hard to be understood, for several times usually three. Finally, ask the students to answer the questions in the work sheet or the book. To be exact, listening is always given as a test. (ibid)

For Hessa her concern about listening revealed dissatisfaction both with the fact that she had few English lessons which focused on listening as a skill, and, as a teacher, with the methodological narrowness with which listening is taught in schools.

One factor in Hessa's change of school midway through the academic year was her inability to cope with the class management of fourteen year old students. However, her first two lessons with grade two students, which I analyse below, presented me with the same concerns, namely a lack of planned structure and consistency, together with an inability to provide learning activities which involved students. Although the lessons from the first semester do not feature within data presented here, they inevitably coloured my impression of Hessa during the data collection, particularly when her lessons seemed to offer no change to her practice. This section then should be read, rather than being about just two lessons, as concerning the final lessons of a longer period.

A major theme apparent throughout the data from Hessa's two lessons on February 24th and March 2nd concerns Hessa's and my preoccupation with the dichotomy of structure and chaos. Here, I use the term structure not in the standard sociological sense of relatively permanent 'long-term background conditions for social life' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.22), but to refer to the quality of consistent pedagogical aims and practice that were sometimes missing in Hessa's teaching. Her lessons appeared to bear little resemblance to

her plan and, having once begun, took on an improvisational quality. This preoccupation is jointly constructed through my contemporaneous observation notes and our discussions on the theme, and emerges as we move through the process of Hessa's placement.

A lack of lesson structure is apparent in both lessons. The excerpt below culled from notes written on February 24th, gives a sense of my concerns.

<i>Hessa asks class to get on the carpet at the front of the class, near the whiteboard. She draws a cake on the w/b and asks the Ss what it is, they reply correctly ... She repeats question 3 or 4 times, and she says word 'when' about 4 times too. A student says the word "birthday". Hessa asks the Ss to 'clap for her'. Hessa asks a student "How old are you?" and elicits some students' ages ...</i>	1 5
<i>She then asks 'What is a candle?', and spends sometime drilling the word 'candle' and its syllables. She draws 3 candles on the cake on the w/b, and soon we have settled into the IRF pattern: H: How many candles are there? There are...?? S: three H: ... candles on the cake.</i>	10
<i>Hessa asks Noura how old she is, and writes the answer on the board (Noura is 8 years old). She then drills this sentence twice. Hessa then picks up a doll and asks: "her name is what? Her name is...?" She repeats this phrasing perhaps 7 or 8 times. She is trying to elicit a sentence such as 'Her name is Mahra', but is finding the only way to prompt students is to get them to repeat after her word for word ...</i>	15
<i>Hessa shows the class A4 worksheet and asks "What can you see?" – she begins to give instruction but breaks them up to concept check 'candle' by asking a student to draw one, by which time she has to restart her instructions. Hessa is hesitant, struggling to get over her idea of what she wants them to do...</i>	20
<i>Hessa is going over the same questions again, asks the Ss what they are going to do in Arabic, but gets little response. She finally hands out the worksheet activity and goes out to each table in the class to check and clarify. Hessa monitors then stops the activity and gets 2 students to the front and attempts to demonstrate, but some Ss are writing and are not listening. After the brief demo she goes back to the class, leaving the 2 students who demonstrated still standing. The bell goes. Hessa says "stand up, girls" and the class is dismissed.</i>	25

(Obs. 24.2)

The significance of this excerpt, I suggest, lies in several features.

There is the sense that neither the students nor Hessa appear to know the aim of the lesson which involves language concerning the topic of birthdays, students' ages and names, which are presumably all used on the worksheet mentioned, but Hessa never seems aware of the demands of the task herself or presents them to the class. In discussion, I suggested that she needs to *'give it a bit more structure'* (discussion 24.2), before reiterating that she must *'make sure 'cos you tend to improvise ... you make it up'* (ibid). In the final exchange of the discussion I request Hessa *'come and see me on Thursday'* (ibid) and show me ideas she has for the following lesson – a rare occurrence for a final year student.

A second issue concerns the lack of focus. Several times Hessa interrupts the lesson to focus on a side issue (e.g. drilling *'What is a candle?'* [line 6], *'concept checking "candle"'* [line 19], and stopping to demonstrate, then abandoning that demonstration [lines 23 – 27]), giving the sense that she is failing in her aims, or that some contingency occurred which she must address, which then becomes a new focus, her previous concern seemingly forgotten. She does not refer to a plan and appears to respond to what she perceives to be demands of the lesson at that particular time.

Thirdly, the majority of description focuses on Hessa's actions as teacher, as she is the person actively involved in the lesson. Hessa repeats herself on several occasions (e.g. lines 3 and 14) and students feature only in response to her speech and actions. Hessa speaks virtually constantly throughout, while the students' language is generally confined to one word answers or repetition of Hessa's utterances (e.g. lines 4 and 10). The students do not participate in the lesson in any meaningful sense, as it is cut short as they begin the worksheet (lines 27 – 28).

Despite Hessa and I having discussed her plan prior to the lesson, the second lesson reveals the same concerns with lesson structure. There is a lack of clarity concerning aims, when I comment that she *'needs to think through her plan more logically ... break it into clear steps'* (Obs. 2.3), that her planning shows *'a lack of detail and procedure ... you need to think through exactly how you are going to do something ... confused stages of lesson'* (ibid). Once again, a lack of focus is revealed when instructions *'are confused – you tell Ss to do one thing (work) and then you don't let them do work (you keep talking)'* (ibid). An excessive teacher-centredness is apparent, as during discussion, I point out the plan has *'got here what the teacher does ... (but) ... what are the students doing? ... this is just blank it seems to me that the students are just doing nothing and what I want you to do is to make sure that the students are involved'* (discussion 2.3). Hessa's chief concern when planning is focused entirely on her own actions.

Hessa's inability to create structure in her teaching seems not to be a developmental problem, for during discussion, in relation to a comment that her *'work on the whiteboard is ... chaotic'* (discussion 2.3), she replies *'I know I'm chaotic everywhere ... everything in my life is chaotic'* (ibid). This portrayal of herself as having a chaotic, disorganised essence extends beyond comments in one-to-one discussions with myself, but something more fundamental on the two occasions she raises the issue in focus group discussions. On April 10th, while discussing writing about data, as part of a discussion clarifying what might constitute data, I emphasise that the students shouldn't make their writing too complicated, Hessa states *'I'm trying but my mind doesn't work like that'*. On May 18th, when asked to give advice to the following year's students, Badreya mentioned *'just keep organised and don't panic'* (discussion 18, 5), to which Hessa replied *'ah organisation ... I hate it'*. This recognition of her problem with planning and teaching structured lessons as part of her life experience, her personal identity, occurred on another occasion when we met to conference

written work she submitted. On that occasion, I mentioned that her writing was disorganised and she had replied that she knew this and it was how she was.

Hessa's presentation of this chaotic quality as being an immutable part of her identity, rather than just one possible subject position and a product of social context allows her to attempt to place the problem she has with constructing a coherent lesson plan as beyond her control and not of her responsibility. It suggests additionally that she seems to perceive herself as having little agency in a basic aspect of performing the role of teacher. This is further exemplified by her difficulty in recognising that the role of teacher necessitates 'the exercise of control' (Nias, 1989, p.182) suggesting that she has little sense of her own position as main agent in the classroom. While it has been recognised that students may have difficulty in reconciling themselves as figures of authority (Pollard, 2002), Hessa's attribution of her specific inability to change her practice to a permanent state of identity, '*my life*', '*everywhere*' – appears somewhat defensive.

Hessa's sense of her own identity seems to be relatively stable. She claims an awareness of a chaotic quality which permeates her life and through that her teaching. If one understanding of identity is as a signifying practice that operates through repetition (Butler, 1990) then it seems difficult to come to any other conclusion than that Hessa is struggling to construct her identity **as a teacher**, as she appears unable to perform, after more than three years' study, a basic level of teacher performance. Unlike the other students where one can sense changes in practice, Hessa seems to have difficulties in fashioning her chaotic practice into a coherent structure; she constructs herself as having very little agentive control. If we construe agency as being related to identity through being 'located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition' (ibid, p. 198) then she seems at a loss to exhibit a sense of agency, as she has

performed the same role over several months, but struggled to initiate variation on her performance.

Butler's notion that identity is constructed through performance of practices and there is no presence prior to this, that there is no essentialist doer behind the deed, that the doer is 'variably constructed in and through the deed' (ibid, p.195), appears to indicate that Hessa's inability (at this stage of her career) to 'do teaching' implies that she is resisting the idea of being a teacher. However, despite her assertion that her chaotic teacher presence is a pedagogical manifestation of her 'natural' character, her story changes over time as one might expect.

4.3.3 The Socio-discursive Construction of Practice and Knowledge

In this section, I examine how Hessa alters her practice. I show how this process of construction of teacher practice and knowledge can be considered as collective, drawing on different socio-discursive resources.

Throughout Hessa's data there are indications that her practice is constructed as part of a collective enterprise (Miller Marsh, 2003), as Hessa, myself, a colleague, and Hessa's mentor all contribute towards the mutual project of Hessa's teaching. This joint process may be indicated by reference to data concerning the lesson on 9th March (which I co-planned with her), the lesson on 23rd March (which Hessa planned alone, but shows her mentor influence) and the final lesson of her placement when we are joined by my colleague.

Having criticised her lessons' lack of structure and students' lack of active involvement in lessons, Hessa and I considered approaches to address these issues through discussion and scaffolding. During one lesson I noted that students were more involved, *'this is probably the first time ... that I've seen her*

set up and use a group activity that allows the Ss to participate and use language in an enjoyable, meaningful context' (Obs. 9.3). Additionally, Hessa's task-based approach utilising a listening activity supported by an introductory pre-task and concluding post-task (Ellis, 2003) provided '*a good overall structure'* (Discussion 23.3) upon which to construct a further lesson. Hessa also evaluated this lesson very positively, remarking '*I liked my lesson ... way better than last semester ... way better'* (ibid). Such positivity reflects and constructs structure and involvement as valuable pedagogical practices which Hessa needs to appropriate and display. Additionally her statement allows Hessa to align her conception of effective practice with my own. The influence of her mentor upon Hessa's class management is also apparent. When I remark she is developing effective class management strategies and enquire how that came to be, she answers

Warda in her class I saw her ... demonstrating when they've finished ... so I added that ... I'll ask them what are the rules ... and I'll check they have all their pencils ... I'll check they're ready ... usually I like to put them in groups ... and usually I will make them go into line ... I saw Warda telling them to do it ... she was just much easier telling them to do it ... so one day I saw Warda and she just asked them to get up ...the way she did it ... so just now I like to do it differently ... now we are confident doing that every lesson (ibid)

The closer relationship with Warda in comparison to her mentor in the previous semester has allowed Hessa better opportunities for observation and appropriation of some of Warda's class management practices.

In Hessa's final lesson, we are joined by Sarah Brown, a college supervisor. Hessa's growth in confidence seems to have encouraged her to attempt a broader range of activities which, in this lesson, is a running dictation. The students are divided into four groups; a student from each group must run outside the room, read short texts, run back inside and then dictate to her group the text, who listen and must then draw what it describes. Although, Hessa's demonstration/instructions are '*longwinded and disjointed'* (Obs. 13.4),

at the end of which Sarah tells me *'I'm lost'* (ibid) she seems to have reached a stage where she can devise a task-based lesson. During the discussion, Sarah and I almost unanimously co-construct both the more and less successful aspects of the lesson. In this excerpt, we suggest an alternative approach to the group dictation.

<i>S: have them do a ... go out to a particular set of things ... and have each group do something different rather than the same is all I was thinking of there</i>	1
<i>H: yeah, but I wanted to check it with them all</i>	
<i>R: what I thought was ... you could have for example ... four sentences that are on pink paper ... one group ... a pink group do those sentences</i>	5
<i>S: and they go and find them outside</i>	
<i>R: then the yellow group go and find the yellow sentences blue find the blue sentences green find the green sentences</i>	
<i>S: that would logistically set it up for each group to do something different</i>	10
<i>H: yeah</i>	
<i>R: and they could do it on a [big piece of paper]</i>	
<i>S: [a big piece of paper]</i>	
<i>R: and then 'cos they're all different ...</i>	15
<i>S: 'cos they're all different ... then [they tell the story]</i>	
<i>R: [write them and show them] and tell them</i>	
<i>S: tell the story</i>	
<i>H: nice yeah ... but I don't think the students are capable of doing that</i>	

(Discussion 13.4)

One noticeable factor is how Sarah and I echo one another and build upon each others' contribution in lines 11 and 12, 13 and 14, and 15 and 16. Hessa seems to resist the suggestions, her contribution seeming to have a defensive quality in both lines 3 and 17, beginning both with *'yeah, but'* and offering reasons why change would be problematic. It is possible that she feels somewhat overwhelmed by what she perceives as a dual attack on her (after a relatively successful lesson) by people who are in a position of power over her. The next extract presents co-construction of positive aspects of the lesson as Sarah and I highlight the quality of Hessa's relationships with the class.

<i>S: a huge improvement in your ... your management your manner and your use of voice ... so that's great</i>	1
<i>N: you've got ... you have a good relationship with these classes in this school now don't you?</i>	
<i>H: all of them yeah</i>	5
<i>N: good</i>	
<i>S: really good yeah</i>	
<i>H: I like it here</i>	
<i>N: you're very busy as well teaching lots of different ones</i>	
<i>S: that's right yeah</i>	10
<i>H: ... they are ... nice kids</i>	

(ibid)

In this case, Hessa contributes to the discussion by echoing, emphasising and adding to the positive evaluations Sarah and I make.

Placed together, these vignettes above highlight how learning to teach involves social involvement with more experienced practitioners, the 'trying on' of practices within a controlled environment by the newcomer, followed by the growing wider use, ideally leading to appropriation, adaptation and reconfiguration of the practices.

Having discussed how the development of Hessa's practice was a community effort, I make a short diversion to illustrate the collaborative construction of academic knowledge. An example from a different context illustrates how other participants in this study – Amal, Badreya and I - contributed to the construction of Hessa's understanding of action research terminology and processes. In this excerpt, all participants met to take turns to lead a discussion on progress and problems surrounding implementation of their research, their data collection and analysis. Hessa begins by discussing comments she's received about her teaching, and I question whether this is data for her project.

<i>H: ... the feedback from the lesson was positive and er ... as you can see they all do ... the lack of classroom management ...</i>	1
<i>R: but do you think in what way is this data? How is this data? Is this</i>	

<i>information?</i>	
H: <i>yeah, I can ... what do you mean? I'll give the lesson plan.</i>	5
R: <i>yeah</i>	
H: <i>and I'll give this one</i>	
R: <i>OK</i>	
H: <i>Ok and this will like ...</i>	
B: <i>but now you have this piece of information, right?</i>	10
H: <i>yeah</i>	
B: <i>so what does this indicate for you?</i>	
H: <i>It shows ... it shows that working with students with listening especially with a class that lack ... lack using listening ... is ... good ... it doesn't really harm the er ... teaching environment the students are able to listen they are able to listen in a classroom in like a very mature way without er making it such a difficult ...</i>	15
R: <i>hmm hmm</i>	
A: <i>I think</i>	
B: <i>can you relate?</i>	20
A: <i>you're employing a range of strategies that focus on the learners, engage and motivate them</i>	
H: <i>yeah</i>	
A: <i>you can use this as an evidence that the students are engaged and motivated in the classroom</i>	25
R: <i>in doing a listening activity yes you can</i>	
B: <i>but its best to try and relate your ideas to your research questions</i>	

(Focus Group, 2)

The notion of action research as a collaborative enterprise, as it is often portrayed (e.g. Carr and Kemmis, 1986) seems at odds with its use as a high stakes assessment in an undergraduate education programme. However, although the proliferation of definitions and approaches to action research may be frustrating to some (e.g. Cohen and Mannion, 1997), such conceptual indeterminacy has the advantage of encouraging teacher researchers to adapt the dual foci of action research for specific contexts, and contribute to the construction of teacher knowledge as they deem fit. In the light of this, what I find of interest in the above excerpt is that the inclusion of action research as an individual assessment, despite its non-voluntary status does not seem to preclude participants' collaboration or contextualised construction of knowledge.

We can view Hessa's greater involvement in guided practice as placing her on a trajectory, 'an evolving form of membership' (Lave & Wenger, 1993, p. 53), in which her learning to teach, her practice, developing sense of her own agency and identity as an effective teacher and the social relations in which she is embedded are all integrated. For although she still has much to learn, Hessa has begun her journey towards becoming a teacher as 'moving towards full participation involves ... an increasing sense of identity as a master practitioner' (ibid, p.111).

4.3.4 Action Research and Identity

The above illustrates how Hessa's decision to use a task-based framework to construct her listening activities in her research have, together with modeling, intervention and constructive discussion, allowed her to begin to find a solution to some long standing concerns in her teaching. When Hessa began her project, she hoped to focus solely on teaching listening, but I suggested that she required a methodological framework, in an attempt to provide a clearer focus for her project. Hessa's research, therefore, had a decisive, if serendipitous, impact on her practice, for although in some ways her practice was still problematic, it is possible to discern improvement during the final weeks of placement. This is exemplified in excerpts from the discussion with myself and my colleague, Sarah, after the lesson on 13th April, when Sarah comments she is '*much more relaxed in the room improved use of voice and even your management there's a lot of it I can see a lot of change ... a lot of change that's great*' (discussion 13.4). I add '*it's really good that you're trying to include this listening activity student to student*' (ibid) and that her attempting to '*think of a way that challenges you to do it a new way of doing it ... that's very positive* (ibid)

Hessa's research, together with contributions from others involved in her development over the course of her placement have enabled her to alter her practice and so create a slight discursive space which allowed her to conceive of herself as 'doing teaching' and construct a different, less immutable identity.

4.4 Maha

4.4.1 Context of Placement

Maha is several years older than her peers in the cohort; she is in her early thirties and is married with three children. She is quietly spoken, rarely contributes to college discussion but has a calm demeanour and good relationships with her students and seems to manage her lessons with an ease her peers cannot match. Maha spent both placements working in the same girls' model school as Amal with whom she worked closely. She taught year six students which meant that she and Amal often observed, provided support, and planned lessons together. Maha had a good relationship with both her mentor teacher, Amina, a graduate of the college and the ADEC advisor for English, participating actively in all aspects of school life, including faculty meetings, trips and break duties.

In this discussion, I have constructed three threads from the data which I present. Initially, I draw on data from two dates in April which I use to highlight how temporal and spatial aspects of social structure constrain and produce discursive resources Maha can utilise in constructing her teacher identity. I also consider implications this may have for understanding schools as a place for teacher learning. Secondly, I draw attention to how Maha's use of space within the classroom may affect both her own emergent teacher identity and those of students within her class. The final section illustrates how Maha's sometimes contradictory attitude to the use of Arabic can be viewed as a process in which

she is 'trying out' methodologies while attempting to fashion a contextually relevant English Language teaching pedagogy.

4.4.2 Social Structure, Practice and Identity

Maha's approach to her research developed over the course of the year, but was finally titled 'Exploring the Impact of Using Contextualized Activities, Students' mini Dictionary and the Word Bag Strategy on Learning Vocabulary'. Her initial interest began with the unformed idea that she wanted to work on vocabulary teaching. During the first semester, Maha observed grade six English lessons, focusing on how the teachers approached the teaching of vocabulary while also interrogating her own vocabulary teaching practice. At the end of the placement, Maha decided to focus on teaching vocabulary through contextual games and activities. One of her reasons for selecting this focus was an apparent methodological rigidity she had noticed in school, she noted,

The teachers used flashcards to introduce and revise new words, and then they repeated the words with the students many times. It seems obvious that all of the teachers follow the same technique in order to help the students learn the words. They gave them time to write the new words in their notebooks and as homework they have to write the meaning in Arabic and English and draw pictures ... Additionally, ... I observed that the students were unmotivated and they seemed to be bored because of using flashcards the same strategies all the time.

(Preliminary Report)

During the second semester Maha's thinking became more focused. She identified a discrepancy between teachers' espoused ideas concerning vocabulary teaching and their practice, claiming that '*teachers believe in the importance of teaching vocabulary in context, however, they don't have the time to create activities and games for introducing and revising vocabulary in context*' (Final Report). She decided to implement two specific activities which encouraged contextualisation of vocabulary – firstly, using students' mini-

dictionaries and word bags, and secondly, the regular use of activities in which vocabulary was presented within a textual context rather than being pre-taught - a common strategy in Emirati schools. In my analysis, I have chosen to focus on this second aspect of Maha's work, because it afforded me the opportunity to observe a broader range of teaching, her use of word bags and dictionaries tended to be momentary and intermittent.

Maha found class management and lesson aims, learning activities and pedagogical structure to be generally unproblematic, in that she was able to manage activities and construct effective task-based structure for her lessons. Therefore, the data builds a picture of her practice and identity differently to the other students. One aspect of this concerns how existing socio-temporal structures and practices within the school partially determine how Maha constructs and experiences her own practice and teacher identity, circumscribing her possible options in teaching and so limiting her potential teacher identity and this forms the basis for the theme of this section. I illustrate this theme through consideration of Maha's lessons on the 7th and 14th April.

One structural influence can be noted in the approach that the school (and in fact the majority of schools in which the students work) has to time and space. The school day is divided into eight forty-minute lessons between which students move from class to class. Rigid barriers between subjects, teachers and places of learning are commonplace in secondary education in many countries, but are less prevalent in the primary sector. In the majority of UAE government schools, however, strongly insulated classification of subjects is the norm and a function of power relations 'which always operates to produce dislocations ... punctuations in social space' (Bernstein, 1995, p. 5). For Bernstein, this arbitrary status of classification is disguised as a natural order and the degree of insulation between specialised discourses and specialised

identities contributes to the construction of relations between individuals and within individuals (ibid, p.7). The following example illustrates how this process operates in Maha's case when she taught a lesson which involved the students in the following sequence of activities.

1. *Maha asks class to sit on the carpet, presents them with a pretzel, asks them to taste it, and talk about flavour, texture etc.*
2. *She reads text about the origins of pretzels, asking comprehension questions after this*
3. *The students watch video showing how to prepare and cook pretzel.*
4. *Maha hands out recipe template to groups of students and asks them to fill in materials and procedure, which she then checks by gathering class around one central table and narrating process.*
5. *Groups of students create pretzels (the dough is pre-prepared).*
6. *The lesson ends, Maha tells class to cook them at home and next lesson they will write an advertisement for pretzels.*

(Obs. 7.4, edited)

During discussion after this lesson, I remark that the lesson had good pace and that she didn't constantly hurry the students to finish. Maha replied '*you can't when you give them something to make ... you can't push them because they need time 'cos they are young children ... they need time*' (Discussion, 7.4). Maha's student-centred practice in this lesson of letting students take the time the task demands causes her problems in the following week's lesson. This is apparent as she sets up a running dictation, involving texts on the wall outside the class which students must read then dictate to their partner, as described below.

1. *She puts class into groups of three students, shows and explains a worksheet, then checks understanding, asking 'what will you do?' One student summarises.*
2. *Maha hands out papers, asks students to choose roles.*
3. *She checks their roles and names, asking 'are you ready?'*
4. *She opens door then closes it, saying 'listen I don't want to see any fighting'.*
5. *Eventually, 'are you ready? 1 ... 2 ... 3 ...' Long pause, she answers more questions, then '1 ... 2 ... 3 ... go' and the students begin.*

(Obs. 14.4)

The above excerpt occurred over several minutes and there was a clear sense of delay and unwillingness on Maha's part to begin the activity, at the time I wrote that she *'she seemed very reluctant to start'* (ibid). She appears to slow the lesson to ensure her control, as she claims *'because they are fighting'* (discussion 14.4), when, to my eyes, they were merely waiting to begin. As the activity continued and the students ran in and out of the class, involved and talking to each other, Maha *'calls out "1 minute"'* (ibid). A short time later she *'starts a slow count up to 10 and "OK, stop now"'* (ibid). This is in contrast to the previous lesson when she had been happy to let students take as long as needed on the task, this time she decided that a time limit was necessary. In discussion, I asked why she had done this.

R: <i>is that just to hurry them?</i>	1
M: <i>yes, make them hurry</i>	
R: <i>it's not a real I will finish in one minute?</i>	
M: <i>no no I told them that they have ... two minutes I think ... two minutes left I said to them yeah.</i>	5
R: <i>you use time countdowns quite a lot at the beginning and you counted up to ten didn't you to get them finished.</i>	
M: <i>yeah</i>	
R: <i>I think that's fine ... in my experience they always say OK one minute, but it's never one minute ... five minutes later...</i>	10
M: <i>and then they say wait wait wait wait</i>	
R: <i>it's one of those dilemmas especially in a forty minute lesson</i>	

(Discussion 14.4)

The second manifestation of structural control of time occurred when I noticed that she had begun *'a short discussion going over main points of the lesson ... (and) ... seems to have fallen back into Q and A'* (Obs. 14.4). During discussion, I tell Maha that

R: <i>I got the impression the last few minutes you were improvising watching time come to the end of the lesson, is that right?</i>	1
M: <i>yeah, I asked them to write the words ... but then I forgot about (the toy) and then the diary ... and then I remembered ... and the girl who talked ... they have to read ... and then I asked them to sit and pay attention ...</i>	5

R: <i>you were rushing, putting a lot in at the end, weren't you? ...</i>	
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M: <i>yeah.</i>	
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(Discussion 14.4)

In the first excerpt, she cuts short the activity before it fulfilled its learning potential and in the second she rushes students through a plenary, confusing herself and forgetting routine aspects she had planned. These two instances highlight how Maha's practice is distorted to take into account the structural reality of forty minute lessons, which is a product of strong classification of subjects within this school and within the broader educational system.

Strong classification has the effect that Maha has little opportunity to relate to other teachers 'in terms of their intrinsic function, which is the reproduction of *pedagogic discourse*' (Bernstein, 1995, p.10, emphasis in original). This is because strong classification, through separation of discourses, requires weaker relations between teachers, with the effect that the knowledge in pedagogic discourses is 'not open to public discussion and challenge' (ibid.). Therefore, potential alternative practices she could use are circumscribed by unquestioned structural factors which mean that Maha has fewer resources to draw upon as she constructs her emergent teacher identity. The co-construction of teacher practice and identity that we identified in Hessa's case is, therefore, less likely. If structural construction of social space in this institution tends to produce constrained identities and voices (ibid. p. 12), it is perhaps surprising that current school improvement efforts in the UAE tend to focus solely on agentive practice of individual or small groups of teachers rather than addressing the social conditions in which their efforts take place.

This theoretical conceptualisation that teachers' learning only happens within the classroom where practice occurs implies that teacher learning is an individualist endeavour, involving the unproblematic transfer of knowledge from one context – college or university - to school, rather than a social

process of becoming a teacher through graded membership of a working community (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998). We can recognise here what Britzman (1991) has termed 'the normative discourse of learning to teach ... (which) ... presents it as a normative dilemma that precludes the recognition of the contradictory realities of school life' (p.8). The positioning of learning in the school into discrete places and times, therefore, has implications for the learning of student teachers within the school as it narrows the range of practical and discursive resources upon which they may draw. The assumption that there is a beneficial quasi-symbiotic relationship between the theoretically inclined college and practical orientated school where learning that occurs in each context informs the other creating a virtuous circle is fractured.

This breaking of the assumption that college and school form a beneficial relationship appears to support the growing theoretical understanding of the central role teaching as an activity plays in the construction of teacher identity. Such theories, emphasising the 'focus on activity and participation that have come to the fore as the notion of a learning context has become more complex' (Edwards, 2005, p.4), also highlight the practical and discursive realisation of hybrid spaces between learning contexts, emphasising learning as a situated practice (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Tuomi-Grohn and Engestrom, 2003) and have attempted to frame learning as occurring in the interstices between learning contexts. Rather than the relationship between college and school being characterised by a kind of epistemological colonialism, a dichotomous relationship, privileging knowledge from one domain over another, it is the engagement with the space in-between, the borderland itself where discourses and practices meet and influence each other that comprises learning. The situation in which Maha is teaching, by compartmentalising pedagogy into strictly guarded times and places, limits her ability to explore the physical and epistemological borders of practices, entailing Maha constructing only a restricted form of teacher identity.

4.4.3 Heterotopias, Identities and Arabic in English Lessons

The second aspect of Maha's data concerns use of Arabic, usage of social space in her lessons, and their influence on teacher and student identities.

When examining Maha's practice with relation to students' use of their first language, both her emergent practice and emergent identity as a teacher can be understood as sites of discursive struggle. As a newcomer in the school, her practice is as likely to be influenced by customary practices of English teachers in school and her mentor as by knowledge gained in the education programme in college. Indeed, the amount of time she spends with her mentor and that they are both young Emirati women might indicate that Maha would tend to construct her practice relative to Amina rather than relative to myself were it not for the salient fact that her graduating grades are heavily weighted toward my judgments.

The discussion of her 25th February lesson highlights the role of her mentor and the school in one aspect of Maha's practice, the use of Arabic in the English class. I mentioned I was impressed by the quality of students' talk during a pair activity and *'I could really tell that they were talking about the work'* (Discussion 25.2). Maha then stated that *'we have a system for helping them with their learning strategy ... if they use Arabic in the classroom ... we will bring a broom and ask them to clean the English Club'* (ibid). I'm unable to hide my surprise, the conversation develops as follows.

R: really?	1
M: mm yes (laughs)	
R: is that school policy?	
M: no it isn't it's English	
R: It's an English policy?	5
M: It's Amina's policy	
R: Is it really?	
M: yeah	
R: wow	
M: I'm thinking of another strategy ... it will be in my next lesson when I	10

<p><i>have punishment corners and the students have to go there and learn the words of the new unit</i></p> <p>R: <i>do you think you need that 'cos</i></p> <p>M: <i>yes</i></p> <p>R: <i>I thought they were so well-behaved</i></p> <p>M: <i>sometimes yes ... but the student who sits in the middle</i></p> <p>R: <i>ah yes on her own</i></p> <p>M: <i>yes this one</i></p> <p>R: <i>I wondered why she was there</i></p> <p>M: <i>she is always talking and walking around the class she can't sit</i></p> <p>R: <i>so what happens when you have a pair work does she move with a pair or?</i></p> <p>M: <i>... when I do a pair work ... I ask her to do it alone ... for she keeps talking in Arabic</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p>20</p>
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(Discussion 25.2)

In this extract, I consider three aspects. Firstly, Maha discusses a punitive policy she uses to ensure students speak English involving students who transgress being given a broom to clean the English Club. Secondly, starting in line 10, she suggests she might develop other 'punishment corners' where students learn vocabulary from a course book unit. The third feature concerns her isolation of one student who is required to work alone in the lesson, even doing pair work individually.

Examining these features one is struck how, in each case, space is manipulated by Maha to exert power over students. The understanding that identities are constructed and performed within social spaces (Paechter, 2004a) allows us to consider the kind of identities Maha and her students are constructing and performing. We can view their relationship as having a high power differential, in that Maha is free to position any student who goes beyond the boundary of what she considers effective learning behaviour within a separate space, a heterotopia, a place whose inhabitants have a relationship of crisis with the mainstream of a society (Foucault, 1998, Tamboukou, 2004b). If we can consider the school or class as a micro-society, then we can perceive how Maha, as the most powerful agent, is able to place students within and without

this society through their first language use. For these students a large element of their cultural, linguistic and religious identity may be denied them in English classes on pain of being placed without the society of the class. Tamboukou's (2004a) assertion that heterotopias 'interrogate discourses and practices of the hegemonic space within which they are localizable' (p. 400) encourages us to see the students' transgressions - their use of Arabic - as a challenge to the English-only hegemonic space, an attempt at learner agency within the methodological structure.

It is necessary here to mention that the English-only hegemonic space can extend beyond this classroom and is an effect of broader societal structures within the UAE (e.g. the recent decision that Maths, Science will be taught through English), global methodological ideas (e.g. Cook, 1999, 2001), and may additionally be construed as an aspect of political neo-imperialist imperatives (Auerbach, 1993, Phillipson, 1992a, 1992b). We can construe the inequitable power relations within Maha's class as reflecting and constructing societal and global power relations, involving the subjugation of local identities to demands of neo-colonial structure.

Tamboukou (2004b) develops Foucault's five features of heterotopias (Foucault, 1998) and it is worthwhile considering the isolation and disciplining of students through perspectives they provide. One of the features, for example, holds that a heterotopia relates to a specific sociohistorical context, in this case an education system undergoing rapid change where new pedagogies are being explored, developed, and imported. Perhaps English-only methodology can be viewed, therefore, as a reaction against previous dogma of English through Arabic, a stage on the way to the synthesis of a locally developed, situated pedagogy (see Clarke & Otaky, 2006). A second principle concerns placing together incompatibilities, realised in this case by the duality inherent in Maha's all English/no Arabic stance and undermined by students'

code mixing. As with Maha's and the students' positions on use of Arabic, there can be no theoretical middle ground (in practice Maha's stance is unworkable, the boundary is blurred).

A further principle highlights connections between heterotopias and breakages in time or 'temporal discontinuities' (Tamboukou, 2004b, p.401). Here pressure to cover a set amount of work 'the unit', demands of monthly high-stakes assessments, in addition to allocation of learning to forty minute periods all combine to produce breaks in time, to which Maha's creation of the punitive heterotopia may be seen as a reaction. The fifth principle discusses the transitory nature of heterotopias, their status as 'spaces of crisis' (Foucault, 1967, p.5) in which, while exclusion is the main function, may also work to create openings which alter surrounding space. From this position, we can think of Maha's creation of heterotopias as offering possibility of change within her practice and that of the school. The very continuation of students' use of Arabic points to the hopelessness of Maha's task and we can argue her need to create punitive heterotopias in order to impose English-only serves to undermine the student-centered approach she espouses elsewhere (e.g. Discussion 3.3). The social antagonism inherent in this issue seems to subvert the complete closure of alternative options – the use of Arabic - that Maha and Amina are attempting, that some manifestations of structure are open to change through actions and practices of subjects in social situations. Despite this, however, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) have argued some social structures may not be as contingent as some have assumed (e.g. Derrida, 1978) and that 'class, gender, race, and age relations affect the contingency' (p.125) so a sense of structural permanence may be perceived by social actors. While this may well be the case, the current reforms in the UAE appear to be encouraging the possibility of methodological openings, a sense of structural contingency in which closure offered by English-only methodology may be challenged.

Maha's development as a teacher should go beyond the appropriation of a predetermined methodology and involve her constructing a sense of her own agency through the development of contextualised practice, a situated pedagogy. Her sometimes contradictory stance regarding the use of Arabic is the focus of my third and final theme, as it suggests the emergence of a more nuanced pedagogy in her practice.

4.4.4 Methodology in Practice

In contrast to her stated strictures against practice that admits 'the explicit valuing of the use of L1' (Wells, 1998, p.1) and L1 as a mediating tool in the development of L2, there are times when Maha's practice is accepting of students' use of Arabic.

On 30th March, for example, Maha is discussing vocabulary pertaining to trade and checks students' understanding by eliciting Arabic terms for 'produce', 'import' and 'export'. A week later, when she is demonstrating the process of making pretzels, she *'goes through the process, narrating as she does, checking understanding with questions in L1, 'we add 1 teaspoon of yeast, do you know what it is in Arabic? Student replies 'amira'. Maha 'that's right' (Obs.7.4).* A short time later, the class is working in pairs to make pretzels, I note *'there is much code switching, talk in groups ... with myself and with Maha'* (ibid). On these occasions, Maha is accepting of students' use of Arabic. Despite this, in discussion she emphasises that *'they are not allowed to speak in Arabic in the class'* (Discussion 7.4). When I mention that in fact the students were speaking in Arabic, she replies, *'sometimes ... but we will punish them when they speak in Arabic'* (ibid). I return to this issue.

R: <i>I'm thinking more about ... your trying to stop them speaking spoken Arabic ... does that make a difference does that work? ... in terms of stopping of them 'cos if you use it at the beginning of a new topic ... to conceptualise English by using a bit of Arabic.</i>	1
M: <i>yeah but not all the time we stop them just when they ... when it's easy</i>	5

<i>and they try just to use Arabic ... and they know it in English</i> <i>R: ah so ... when you want them to use English for a task or an activity.</i> <i>M: yes.</i>	
--	--

(Discussion 7.4)

Maha appears to modify her methodology here; pointing out it is only during activities that she thinks Arabic should be prohibited. She states that speaking Arabic should be prohibited when students need to use English to complete an activity, when they have been taught the language for that activity but they prefer to use Arabic. In this excerpt, she appears to be striving for her own understanding of appropriate use of Arabic rather than the more essentialist stance Amina uses. Maha's striving can be viewed as an attempt to construct her teacher identity through appropriation of discourses that work for her in this context - as an element in an emergent "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998). Rather than conceptualising teacher education and development of teacher identity as merely mimicry of others, it seems more useful to construe Maha's still-in-process learning as 'discursively constituted ... an effect of social processes' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 122) amid the affordance of opportunities from a *mélange* of discourses (Clarke & Otaky, 2006), whereby

teacher thinking is ... continually being renegotiated through social interaction ... (and) ... in order to attain membership in a given group, an individual must appropriate one or more of the discourses that flows through the community and become proficient at negotiating meaning and actions within the genres' borders

(Miller Marsh, 2003, pp 6 -7)

Learning to teach involves the ongoing contextualised appropriation of educational and other social discourses in the process of the construction of an identity as a teacher. It is a 'social process of negotiation rather than an individual problem of behaviour' (Britzman, 1991, p. 8).

With regard to the influence of her research, Maha's decision to teach vocabulary through contextualised activities has enabled her to engage with a

range of issues concerning students' behaviour and dilemmas concerning the role of first language in learning English. While she appears to have already formed an understanding of vocabulary teaching and how she believes it should be practiced prior to carrying out her research, it seems that the more substantive learning she has been engaged with involves issues which emerge through engagement with research but may be considered byproducts of that process. Maha's engagement with action research highlights how its benefits for teacher learning may be unforeseeable and entirely different to the original aim.

4.5 Nadia

4.5.1 Context of Placement

Nadia spent both her placements in a girls' primary school working with grade four students. The school was older than others in the city, and as a government school, did not have resources in terms of space or facilities of model schools. Nor had it any advisory support from ADEC. The school buildings had a rundown air about them; many classrooms had noisy air-conditioners and little in the way of decoration upon the walls to brighten them. There was a lack of technical teaching aids which are prevalent in other schools; the majority of classrooms featured only a whiteboard. The school had one advantage in that the mentor, Mariam, is experienced, a graduate of the college; has empathy with the students and is helpful in accommodating their requirements for their action research. However, in Nadia's case, Mariam was on maternity leave for all but the final week of the placement and her place was taken by her substitute, Kholoud. In comparison to the others Nadia received very little school-based guidance during her placement, her relationship with Kholoud can be optimistically characterised as benign neglect. Nadia mentioned that *'the teacher wasn't happy ... because I'm ... always taking her time she thinks ... and wasting the time on students'* (Focus Group 3). I

enquired whether she discussed her project with Kholoud, she replied '*I didn't, I avoided discussing anything with her ... because ... all she thinks about is follow the curriculum and do whatever I'm supposed to do*' (Ibid). Kholoud appeared to consider her mentor role as an imposition, she would reluctantly and resentfully attend Nadia's class, and often interfere by translating Nadia's instructions, fall asleep or leave mid-lesson. After a few weeks, she stopped attending completely, to Nadia's relief. In effect, Nadia was left to herself for much of her placement and Kholoud told her she wouldn't mentor her, with - as we see - ambiguous results.

4.5.2 Student Identities, Teacher Identities and Action Research

Nadia's research was entitled 'Developing a Learning Centre to Enhance Independent Learning', involved implementing learning centres, 'a small area within the classroom where students work alone or interact with others, ... a place where a variety of activities introduces, reinforces, and/or extends learning' (Opitz, 2006, p.2). Her stated aim was to improve students' independence, while her rationales for selecting this topic were several. From a pedagogic stance her aims were two-fold. Firstly, she hoped it would promote general social skills, '*independent learning and responsibility and ... encourage positive social behavior*' (Final Report). While from a language learning perspective, she stated that in learning centres '*students can improve and learn more through interacting in a real situation where they can use the language skill that they have acquired*' (ibid). A further reason Nadia used was she perceived a lack of independent learning opportunities for students in many schools, claiming '*this method is not used in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) English classes ... most of the used strategies are teacher centered, where students are passive, receptive ... have no role in their learning*' (ibid).

Nadia implemented learning centres during the second semester of her placement. Rather than use her classroom, she prepared a room, termed 'The English Club' (many schools have such rooms, tending to have a television, video, a PC, and an array of bilingual posters). In this school the room had been abandoned, so Nadia used it, as it had several advantages. She could permanently arrange furniture, rather than rearrange the room each lesson, leave learning materials confident that they would not disappear and display her students' work on the wall – a practice generally frowned upon in schools.

I now examine how Nadia's struggles to implement learning centres in her lessons affected the development of her identity as a teacher. I also consider how these attempts to alter her pedagogy had implications for students' identities and how as Nadia's thinking and practice developed during her placement her students' learning practices and identities also developed. To illustrate this, I discuss Nadia's first lesson and the dislocation created for her and students, highlighting the problem of sudden discursive change, its implications for construction of teacher identity and the socially embedded nature of learning. Finally, I show how Nadia's research can be understood as having constructed both a physical and discursive space in which dominant methodologies and ideologies can be resisted and reconfigured.

4.5.2.1 'A Big Mess' – Sudden Change of Discourse

The first lesson in which Nadia used learning centres was, by her own definition, '*a big mess*' (Discussion 4.3) that made her feel '*dizzy*' (ibid). She started the lesson without introduction or preparation to explain how the class would work and how this lesson would be different from other lessons. She put students into random groups then visited each group explaining the tasks which related to the topic 'the five senses'. She did not prepare them to use lexical items or linguistic structures and functions they required, nor demonstrate the

tasks. After a short period, she clapped three times and told students to change groups, which they did all at the same time creating noise and chaos. I wrote *'one group had some items in a bag (rock, ball, feather boa) and had to write a sentence saying "It feels soft, hard etc"'. They weren't sure what they should do or knew the adjectives they should use'* (Obs. 4.3). A short time later, Nadia clapped again asking each group to move to the next activity. I wrote another group is *'unsure how to proceed, both in terms of language and actual procedure'* (ibid). Nadia asked the class if they had finished, they all shouted out affirmative. She is about to direct everyone to new learning centres, when she pauses and *'she tells one group where to move to, but ... seems uncertain'* (ibid). I realise she has lost track of which group have done which activities and there is ten minutes chaos before each group is at a new activity.

Although one of her aims was to encourage student collaboration, I noticed although Nadia arranged the students sitting in groups to facilitate this, they all worked individually. I visit a group of students and note they have

3 items on their table (onion, flower, perfume) and the instruction "write a sentence about the smell" - they don't appear to have written anything – there is probably a confluence of reasons for their inability to do this task

- 1. they have little or no experience of writing freely*
- 2. they do not have the language ability*
- 3. there has been a lack of modeling in terms of both (task and language)*

T ... assumed that to work independently she just needs to give them the task and away they go. (ibid)

Additionally, throughout the lesson, students were very demanding of Nadia's attention, raising hands, or calling out 'miss, I finished' or 'miss, I need help'. When the bell goes, they quickly collect all belongings and depart. Nadia does not instigate a plenary, there is no farewell.

In the discussion Nadia appears exhausted at first, after a few minutes she comments:

<i>R: er ... do you see what the problem is?</i>	1
<i>N: yeah</i>	
<i>R: what?</i>	
<i>N: yeah they don't know what to do and they didn't know what to make and ...</i>	5
<i>R: yeah</i>	
<i>N: and what to write</i>	
<i>R: that's right so there's two things ... task knowing what to do ... there's the language to use it and it's ... to us it's quite obvious</i>	
<i>N: yes</i>	10
<i>R: but they've never done anything like this before so they spent five minutes just looking at the bag</i>	
<i>N: (laughs)</i>	

(Discussion 4.3)

Nadia identifies the two main problems with the lesson; very few of the class knew how to do the tasks or knew the language with which to do them. In short, students were disorientated and confused. Nadia underestimated the steps she had asked the students to take from their familiar learning practices to the unfamiliar. One possible approach to understanding this is to consider Nadia's and the students' confusion in terms of their respective identities.

Reference to two recurring ideas which occur in sociological literature, albeit with different nomenclature, helps to explain different forces that influence construction of identities and provide a valuable perspective on problems Nadia and her students face.

Bourdieu's notions of habitus (personal background, formative infant and collective familial history) and field (relationships within a wider social space and social organisations in which we live) are analogous to Reynolds' (1996) ideas of cultural scripts and workplace landscapes which describe 'those subjectivities available to us to choose from as we play our part' (p.71) and to indicate 'those conditions which impact upon our performance' (ibid). Similarly, Britzman (1991) uses *the given* to describe cultural myths which 'provide a set of ideal images, definitions, justifications, and measures for thought, feelings

and agency that work to render as unitary and certain the reality it seeks to produce' (p.222), and *the possible* to recognise the contingent and 'the polyphony of forces that interact, challenge, beckon, and rearrange our practices and the positions we take up' (p. 239). Bourdieu, Reynolds and Britzman use these twin terms to describe sociohistorical factors that work to construct identity. Each of their analyses point to the importance of interaction between the personal and the cultural, past (where we have been) and future (where we are going), local and global, and the stability and contingency of practice, discourse and identity.

Using the above, it is possible to construct an understanding of Nadia's problems in this lesson in terms of her almost completely disposing of the given of students' experiences of learning and their identities as learners. She has presented them with a 'possible' she has conceived, without any attempt to ameliorate or warn them of changes of practice. The relationship between students' habitus and field has been breached by a new discourse of learning which directly affects their existing learning practices. This opening of the possible may have shaken the cultural myth that students have constructed concerning accepted practice of Nadia as teacher and their practices as learners. Nadia seems to have some awareness of this disruption her practice is having on her students' lives, as she states she '*sometimes think(s) that they are afraid that there can be changes in their routine*' (Discussion 8.4).

To understand this discursively, it is useful to consider Britzman's (1991) discussion concerning the persuasive cultural myths which teachers (and by implication learners) use to create an appearance of certainty and order. Such cultural myths 'perform the work of discourse: communities are counted and discounted; particular orientations to authority, power, and knowledge are offered; discursive practices are made available; and persons are constructed or "interpellated" as non-contradictory subjects' (p. 222). The term 'interpellated'

describes how subjects are positioned by discourses and their associated practices and 'give their consent to particular formations of power because the dominant cultural group generating the discourse persuades them of their essential "truth", "desirability" and "naturalness"' (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 30). Reynolds (1996) uses subjectification to refer to the same process, describing how 'each person actively takes up the discourses through which they and others speak/write the world into existence ... through these discourses they are made speaking subjects at the same time that they are subjected to the constitutive force of those discourses' (Davies, 1993, p.13). We can construct Nadia's dilemma as one derived from contradiction between students' identities as constructed by discourses and practices of school as being generally passive and Nadia's own wish to construct them as problem-solving, goal-orientated students aware of the purpose of their learning. However, it seems likely that, in this case, what Nadia construed as problem solving may well have been a sense of confusion at not understanding either the task or the language, compounded by a wish not to admit this to Nadia. The students are used to looking to teachers for guidance; understand study as work to be done individually, under strict temporal control, exemplified by such teacher instructions as '*you have 2 minutes*'. Students also seem to believe each word they write should be completely correct, the focus on the product of learning rather than process, illustrated by '*one of the writing groups ... (is) ... struggling – one of the students has been able to do it, ... the others are now copying from her paper which is being handed around the group from person to person*' (Obs. 25.4).

The change of discourse and disparity between practices extant in school and Nadia's imported practices is apparent in the discussion when Nadia mentions one particular group of students who have difficulty writing.

N: <i>I thought they couldn't write ... what they think ...</i>	
R: <i>why did you think that?</i>	
N: <i>they all stopped writing ... they (are) all afraid they might get</i>	

something wrong ... so when I came here they couldn't show me work ... they were crying when I asked to see ... but they didn't let me look ... so I wrote the first page and the other page they wrote on their own.

R: *... you need to make sure that the others are still ... on task*

N: *maybe they're afraid and maybe they're not sure ... I don't know ... maybe they're not confident enough to ask ... maybe they think it's a silly... task so they didn't ask 'cos they didn't want to do it.*

R: *you still need to emphasise ... you don't expect all their writing to be perfect ... is that the expectation in the school ... if they put a pen to paper it must be perfect?*

N: *mostly right yeah ... what are you writing here... why are you writing this way? why does your handwriting look like this? so they stop doing things.*

R: *... so you're working against the culture ... almost.*

N: *yes ... I've told them they won't get everything right.*

(Discussion 15.4)

Of interest in the above is the sense that Nadia and I construct the practices and identities of all the students differentially rather than jointly. Nadia's position seems to be that the '*students couldn't write*', they are '*afraid they might get something wrong*', or they are '*not confident enough*', simply, the students cannot write. However, my interpretation is more analytical, as I suggest she is challenging '*expectation in the school*', and '*working against the culture*'. In her final comment, '*yes*', Nadia appears to finally agree with my analysis, highlighting how discursive relations can be infused with micro-workings of power as Nadia and I struggle over how the students should be constructed. This theorisation of how identity is fashioned emphasises the intertwining of Nadia's emergent teacher identity with that of the students in her class, so that we can consider '*the discourses that ... (the teachers) ... draw upon as they author their teacher identities shape their pedagogies in very specific ways. More importantly, the instruction carried out by each teacher creates limitations and possibilities for the social identities of the children in their care*' (Miller Marsh, 2003, p.152).

4.5.2.2 Inconsistent Change and Action Research

I now describe changes Nadia made to her practice during following lessons, drawing out how students respond to more incremental changes in practice and how these changes are inconsistent, hesitant and partial, but that a new discursive space is constructed.

After the initial shock of the first lesson, Nadia backtracked, rethinking her approach and, over successive lessons, altered her practice, providing scaffolding for students as transitional support as they come to terms with a different pedagogy and their emergent new understanding of themselves as learners. She implemented the following strategies.

- She cut the tasks down from five to two or three, allowing students time to focus on the work, for example *'two table have stories for finishing, three have a piece of card with instructions to divide it into five'* (Obs. 25.3).
- She ensured that tasks were appropriately integrated into curricular themes students follow in other lessons, Nadia said *'I'm trying to prepare them before by giving them such a lesson within their class ... within their lessons'* (Discussion 15.4)
- She created easy-to-follow extension activities *'with the same language content to the matching groups'* (Obs. 25.3).
- She identified students and groups which require differential tasks and particular attention. On March 26th, Nadia *'moves to monitor and within a couple of minutes she moves to the group we identified yesterday as needing more help and guidance'* (Obs. 26.3)
- She encouraged students to focus on process rather than correct product, so they wrote more, *'I think they will spend more time writing ... but because they're not under pressure to write the right word at the right time ... in the right order so they're just doing their work even though they're not sure if it's correct'* (Discussion 8.4)

- She either gave explicit instructions or elicited procedures for tasks at start of lessons, which over time ensured students' focus on tasks improved. I remarked *'as soon as you said here's the work here's the instructions they all ... they all started ... they mightn't have been able to completely understand what they had to do but they were involved and they were getting going'* (Discussion 25.3).
- Her task design included reiteration of tasks and language. I remarked students asked her to check work less. I suggested she use a system where she *'had one (task) which is familiar, one which is new and give all your attention to the new'* (Discussion 8.4). Nadia replied *'actually this is the real reason ... because I tried to avoid miss here miss there'* (ibid).

Nadia's implementation of these strategies evinced positive changes in emergent learning practices students employed and Nadia's practice, as illustrated below, significant because also in attendance were Mariam, her mentor and Salaha, a zone supervisor from the Ministry of Education and Youth.

The extent students began to become more self-reliant in their learning is apparent when, *'within 3 or 4 minutes all 5 groups of students are working together and independently (without calling on T) to do the task and are being monitored and helped by the 2 teachers'* (Obs. 8.4). In discussion, there is a short exchange which appears to show a sense of positive change.

<p>N: ... <i>'because they're really improving ...</i> R: ... <i>in terms of what ... their language?</i> N: <i>yeah their language, their confidence</i> S: <i>even their behaviour too</i></p>	1
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(Discussion 8.4)

A second change is that students, rather than being resistant to doing work that is not explicitly teacher sanctioned as correct, have begun to write despite

errors they produce. I mention to Nadia, *'you should have a look at what some of them have written 'cos some are quite good ... 'put the juice in the bowl' ... 'put the fruit in the bowl' it was all the right kind of language if sometimes spelt a bit ... strange'* (Discussion 8.4). Nadia responds, *'the one thing for sure they start to write'* (ibid).

However, while there appears to be growing confidence in students' writing, there is little positive change to students' spoken English. Nadia and Salaha express concern at the amount of Arabic students use during tasks, so we discuss when it may be helpful for them to use Arabic and English and strategies for encouraging English use when appropriate. Nadia comments *'they can talk in English ... but because they are afraid of making mistakes or maybe people will laugh at them'*, Salaha adds *'cos they haven't tried'*. I remark that *'I noticed there was one girl who said something to you ... and you said "no, in English" and then I heard her clearly say "please can I go and wash my hands" ... perfectly good English'* (ibid). Nadia comments that students attempt to avoid speaking English, saying *'no they'll say not ask me not ask me teacher please don't ask me ... she feels silly and they'll start laughing and they always laugh'* (ibid).

Perhaps the public nature of speaking in class, unlike the more private nature of writing which, in this class is shared only with the teacher, entails students taking too much of a risk. Williams and Burden's (1997) remark that *'ways in which individuals view the world and their perceptions of themselves within the world, particularly within a learning situation, will play a major part in their learning and construction of knowledge'* (p. 96) indicates an approach to understanding the position of students, as they come to terms with the changing learning environment. Williams and Burden discuss several studies (e.g. Huang, 1994; Weinstein, 1989) which highlight how children are sensitive to teacher behaviour and the extent to which negative feedback (marks, praise

or criticism) can have a profound effect on these perceptions. The perception of comments from significant and powerful figures such as teachers may have a clear effect on growth of personal identity, so it may be that expectation of grammatical accuracy extends to students' spoken English, negatively affecting confidence and willingness to take risks.

Nadia is, however, not completely consistent or successful in reconfiguring her practice. This is not a story of steady incremental improvement despite Nadia's and students' achievements, rather it stops and starts, with false beginnings and backward steps – an inconsistent change, created in the negotiated space opened up by her action research project. In the final week of placement, Nadia was still unable to address the problem of students' lack of collaboration and communication while involved in group work, so she complains that *'sometimes I say I don't want to hear "miss"'* (Discussion 15.4) to indicate her frustration with students' overdependence on her. I suggest she employ a variant on 'think, pair, share' and tell students *'the first thing you do is ask the person next to you ... the third (sic) thing before you ask me ask the people on your table ... then you can if you still don't know put your hand up and I'll come and see you'* (ibid). Her apparent inability to find a solution to this dilemma, points to Nadia as only partially inhabiting the discourse in which she is working, showing she is still in the process of thinking through the implications for her own practice. The process of becoming a teacher is always incomplete and the placement's time frame of ten weeks is too short a period for Nadia to completely construct an effective pedagogy of interaction and collaboration. The research, however, has created a space in which she may wrangle with the dilemmas of practice, in which she constructs her emergent teacher identity.

Despite the caveat, there were indications that her students were – albeit intermittently and inconsistently – adjusting to the demands Nadia was placing

upon them and tentatively constructing a different learner identity as a result of their involvement in practices that she was discovering how to implement.

4.5.2.3 The Space Between

I now consider the nature of the space created by Nadia and students as an opening in the authoritative discourse and discuss implications such an understanding may have for teacher education within the UAE.

The first lesson in which she implemented learning centres had a sobering effect upon Nadia. In subsequent lessons she became clearer in her aims, more definite in class management, and aware she could not introduce change without consideration of students' experience and expectations concerning learning. Nadia had to take account of the cultural myths they inhabited in order to try and change them.

From a Bakhtinian perspective, Nadia is caught in the struggle between the authoritative discourse of school and her internally persuasive discourse. The authoritative discourse is that of the school, the teachers and the education bureaucracy with which her students are familiar and in which their learner identities have been co-constructed. It is a discourse

which demands allegiance ... (and) ... is "received" and static knowledge, dispensed in a style that eludes the knower, but dictates, in some ways, the knower's frames of reference and the discursive practices that sustain them ... these positions already have the power to authorize subjects

(Britzman, 1991, pp. 20-21)

Her internally persuasive discourse is a discourse in which she **chooses** to engage rather than one in which she is **forced** to engage (Miller Marsh, 2003, my emphasis), it inhabits the same space as authoritative discourse but, as Bakhtin claims, (1981) is 'denied all privilege' (p. 342). Nevertheless it is the

changeable and flexible nature of internally persuasive discourses that allows the blooming of 'ever newer ways to mean' (ibid, p. 346), to create spaces that encourage novel practices, ideas and values which may contribute to the reconfiguration of the authoritative discourse (Miller Marsh, 2003). Nadia's research allowed her to negotiate a physical space (the English Club) and a time (one forty-minute lesson each week) in which she may develop her practice away from the gaze and structure of authoritative discourse.

Additionally, it is possible to consider that her research contributed to development of the English club as a heterotopia, a place in a state of crisis within the school as a whole, both a challenge to the integrity of the larger space but also an opportunity for discourses and practices in the heterotopia to influence a reconfiguration of the dominant space. Within this heterotopia, there is a parallel, relational structure in which Nadia and her students are mutually involved in discursive change and construction of new learner and teacher identities. Through her research, Nadia and the students are involved in actively authoring identities as teacher/learner and learners respectively, rather than being passively immersed in an imposed discourse. This process is highlighted in Miller Marsh's (2003) comment that 'much of the work that is done in classrooms by teachers and their students involves the crafting of identities' (p.9). However, this comment appears to be a truism and requires a caveat. Identities are produced in all classrooms at all times, but Miller Marsh's comment appears to omit the effects of inevitable workings of power in classrooms and broader social contexts on producing student and teacher identities (Cooper & Olson, 1996). Perhaps it is more important to consider the quality of identities being mutually crafted in classrooms and the extent to which students and teachers are able to be agentive in the process of identity construction rather than be defined by inflexible, hierarchical structures of authoritative discourse.

It seems that through her research, Nadia has opened a space between a progressivist discourse emphasising child-centred pedagogy, employing interactive and experiential approaches through a task-based approach and a traditionalist discourse emphasising a teacher-centred pedagogy, utilising transmission of and individual reception of factual knowledge (Chouliaraki, 1996). This space permitted Nadia and her students, for a short time, to be 'freed from those obligations which are imposed by a notion of subjectivity, which is conceived as being fixed and coherent ... because it does appear that by extending notions of subjectivity the children's imaginary worlds are extended' (Brown and Jones, 2001, p.149).

In summary, being involved in her research has afforded Nadia the opportunity to create a rupture in the authoritative discourse, has shown her that she is able to generate change and knowledge which can inform her work, while also encouraging her to work against the status quo (Miller Marsh, 2003). Nadia has faced difficulties that challenged her assumptions about her role and students' roles in learning, she has been able to develop new meaning from her practice which served to destabilise her identity as a teacher.

By dispensing with an essentialist, unified notion of identity and reconceptualising it as provisional and multiple, as both individual and social, we gain an insight into the complexity of learning to teach by teaching. For example, as teacher educators, by emphasising the possible to students at the expense of the given, the opportunities that action research may create for changing practice, reconfiguration of discursive resources, and reconstruction of teacher identity may contribute to educational reform within the UAE.

Britzman (1991) views critical engagement with the specific sociohistorical position of the teaching context as a necessary condition for teachers to transform rather than reproduce existing institutional practices. Nevertheless,

even as the need for education reform is recognised and implemented within the UAE, it is rare for there to be a focus on social processes of teacher practice and construction of teacher knowledge and identity.

4.6 Synopsis

One recurring theme that is apparent appears to be a lack of commonality in the data comprising the five participants' cases. The quality of participants' experiences on placement, the differing processes of becoming teachers and the construction of their identities as teachers vary considerably, can be seen as idiosyncratic and not reducible to any one constellation of factors. Such indeterminacy appears to emerge from interaction between discursive practices of the college and participants' particular schools and the discursive practices of participants, mentors and other more marginal (but potentially significant) actors within the broader social setting in a specific historical juncture. Each individual inter-institutional discursive node can be considered a different space where each participant is involved in the process of learning to teach and constructing a viable teacher identity.

Secondly, and despite each case being individual, there is, paradoxically, a common idea that I highlight, similar to the idea of the creation of a particularistic discursive space described in the previous paragraph. It seems that participants' utilisation of action research has afforded them an agentic sense of being able to create an opening in the edifice that is the UAE school curriculum. To a differing extent, and in different aspects of the curriculum, each of the participants constructed a social, historic and metaphoric space in which they were able to work on construction of practice and identity.

Thirdly, for several participants, there appears a shared preoccupation with class management and disciplinary concerns and, it seems this theme plays a

main role in how they understand and enact their practice and significantly contributes to construction of participants' teacher identities. I explore these three domains in greater detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 Summary of Findings

5.1 Common Themes

In this section, I discuss the institutional and discursive relationship between college and schools and how the idiosyncratic nature of relationships influences development of identities. I discuss how a transitional space between institutions can be understood as a hybrid place of learning. Finally, I consider student teachers' preoccupation with discipline and how temporal and spatial structures produce and constrain practice and emergent teacher identities.

5.1.1 Practice, Borders and Hegemony

The networks of relationships that exist in institutions in the study are central to an understanding of sociodiscursive construction of students' practice and identities. One approach to analysis is through considering the differing qualities of institutional spaces and borders between them and how they influence students' appropriation of discursive resources.

The students display a rhetorical position that emphasises separation of practice between college and schools, often dichotomising the two institutions, explicitly valourising the practice of college as modern and child-centred with that of school as outdated, traditional, and teacher-centred. This binary opposition is sometimes expressed in criticism or disparaging remarks concerning mentor teachers (Badreya) or their practice (Amal), drawing a sharp border between discourses and practices of each institution, and portraying their own practice with missionary ardour. Trent (2010) portrays a similar tendency to construct an 'us and them' dichotomy in a study of Hong Kong students, who construct themselves as 'modern', in contrast to mentors who are portrayed as the differentiated 'other' as traditional or old-fashioned. Clarke (2006) describes this as

a powerful ideological positioning that largely constructs the students' community of practice, through this set of binary oppositions, in contradistinction to and at times in antagonism towards, past and present teachers in government schools (p.235)

Similar findings are reported by Harold, McNally and McAskill (2002) at Zayed University in the UAE.

Although this 'constructed opposition' (Clarke, 2006, p.232) has a strong presence in students' accounts of practice, there is still a distance between the rhetoric and reality as, with the possible exception of Maha, much of their practice can be characterised as teacher-led, revealing a separation between their espoused practice and practice in action.

This 'oppositional affiliation' (Danielewicz, 2001) with which students position themselves can be construed as an essential aspect of their construction of identities, particularly at this stage in the career trajectory as it may help to reduce uncertainty, providing a framework upon which practice may develop. Such allegiance to this ideological position may function as a scaffold that allows for construction of a sense of community among students, through the 'otherisation' of government teachers. Clarke (2006) suggests that allegiance to progressive educational theory may be due to immersion in progressive practices during the education programme and 'the "messianic" rhetoric that underpins progressive approaches, maps readily onto the mission and rhetoric of nation building that is part of the Emiratisation project' (p. 233). Nevertheless, this position the students maintain may also limit discursive resources they take up during identity construction and it is doubtful such hostility is beneficial for either party or the development of Emirati schools. The tendency to dichotomise may need to be challenged by teacher educators to encourage students to develop an understanding of complexities of practice so they do not become over reliant on one model of pedagogy (Hinchman & Oyler, 2000). Bates (2008) claims that recognition of the contingency of

students' antagonistic discourse is a central aim of teacher education and acceptance of ambiguities should be approached through critical reflection on diverse teaching practices. In this respect it appears that action research as an aspect of critical reflection has not achieved its goal.

If we understand discourse as structuring of meaningfulness upon chaos of reality and that this necessarily requires closure of other possibilities of meaning, then a powerful discourse may, with continued articulation, achieve a position of hegemony where its assumptions become normalised as 'natural' rather than as only one possible configuration among others (Clarke, 2005). We can construe these oppositional positions of practice and discourse as being hegemonic, as a struggle for dominance between traditional discourse, which enjoys hegemonic status within schools, and the newer discourse dominant in college. Torfing (1999) indicates how hegemonic discourse tends to construct certain identities as 'threatening obstacles to the full realization of the chosen meanings and options ... (and that) the negation of identity always gives rise to social antagonism' (p. 121). So it is perhaps unsurprising that Nadia and Badreya's relations with their mentors are problematic, whereas Amal's and Maha's, both college graduates, are less so.

5.1.2 The Learning Space

The physical separation of college and schools also highlights the discursive differences that exist between sites and emphasises the idea of borders as places of learning and growth. This question of boundary learning appears linked with Stronach and McClure's (1997) suggestion that meaning in action research emerges from space between the words 'action' and 'research', and it involves 'engagement with boundaries' (p.116). This idea of an interzone where a hybridity of practices and discourses may compete and flourish is a common theme in post-structural reprioritisation of space over time (Edwards

& Usher, 2000; Paechter, 2004a) and resonates with Trent's (2010) study, in which a participant argues that

doing this research gave me space to think about what knowledge I could use from the course and test out different teaching methods, what would work and what didn't, what might be good in the classroom and what isn't. (p. 163)

The usefulness of considering spatiality as an influence in the construction of knowledge and learning has received growing recognition. Hulme et al (2009) utilise the notion of 'third spaces', drawing on Schön's (1997) reference to 'indeterminate zones' (p.6) characterised by 'uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict' (p.7) and on Bhabha's (1984) space of openness and hybridity. Based on this framework, they discuss how

ideas developed in third space and hybridity add further layers of interpretation to the experiences of practitioners ... who work ... in settings where what is most often at stake is the re-formulation or re-engineering of professional knowledge and practice'
(Hulme et al, 2009, p.540).

These theories appear to shed light on this study and highlight sociodiscursive forces at work as students attempt to transform, albeit in a minor way, their practice. Bhabha's understanding of third spaces as places of 'resistance being opened at the margins of the new cultural politics' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 33), positions them as a critique of colonial and post-colonial discourse (Hulme et al, 2009). This stance portrays students' efforts in an interesting light and perhaps, asks more questions than it provides answers. For example, to what extent can students' utilisation of Western-developed theories of learning be characterised as a post-colonial creation of a third space? Is the attempted replacement of indigenous didactic pedagogy an indication of new post-colonial realities? How successful are students' attempts at formulating a contextualised pedagogy in which they appropriate theories and practices from different discourses over a period greater than this study covers?

Although separation of the two sites may also serve to accentuate students' sense of dichotomy and opposition, the quality of each particular border between college and the four schools in the study varied, as did the resultant teacher learning that occurred. Paradoxically this may lay grounds for students' construction of their identities as being determined exclusively by neither one discourse nor the other. The students' regular crossing of borders and their immersion in both communities may mean that they had to negotiate construction of their teacher identities through careful selection of discursive resources from each context, and achieve a balance of social and emotional commitments necessary to work effectively in each place without alienating the powerful, while attempting to fashion their identity.

Within each of the students' practice there is a particular rearrangement or rebalancing of the two discourses that develops. The students' individual uptake of these discursive resources during the process of identity construction depends additionally upon preexisting interpersonal and intrapersonal factors such as self-confidence, self perception, mentor relations, conceptual understanding of teaching strategies, willingness to take risks in practice, and mentor understanding of their role. This sociodiscursive process, embedded in practice, highlights the contingent nature of teacher identity and the socially distributed and negotiated construction of what constitutes effective pedagogy. This is perhaps best exemplified by Nadia's process of finding a practice which satisfies both her desire to encourage student autonomy and her students' desire for certainty. Similarly, other students seem to have had varying and inconsistent levels of success in reconciling demands of college and school, their appropriation and synthesis of respective discourses, and so one should not expect their experiences, their learning or their emergent identities to be similar or coherent.

In this context, the quality of borders between the space of college and those of schools appear to offer opportunities for constructing practices which may avoid methodological certainties of either 'traditional' or 'new' paradigms (Clarke, 2006), but rather support an understanding of teacher development whereby students select available social and discursive formations as resources for constructing an identity. As such, it is possible to construe the students' engagement with action research as contributing in a small way to the strength and diversity of the knowledge base of TESOL (Hayes, 2008) and to the 'decentering (of) the production of the discipline and discourse from Anglo-speaking countries to a diversity of sociocultural contexts in the world' (Lin et al, 2005, p. 218). Furthermore, it seems that teachers' identities are also the product of an agglomeration of personal historical factors which may be largely unrecognised and influence the extent to which sociodiscursive resources are appropriated. As the students leave the college and permanently cross borders to schools, their teacher identities are in a state of flux - provisional and in a state of becoming.

5.1.3 Class Management, Disciplining Bodies and Teacher Identity

It is understandable that at this stage in their career one feature of classroom practice that concerns students is class management. One aspect of students' class management is their reliance on spatial and physical arrangement of students as a method of attempting to ensure compliance.

Foucault's (1977) use of the term *docility-utility* brings together ideas of passivity and of a body utilised for an ulterior reason, based on a relationship of discipline that ensures the human body becomes more obedient as it also becomes more useful and vice versa. Students' use of strategies as requiring students to stand up to answer questions with other examples such as spatial isolation of students (Amal), ensuring attention by getting students to stand and sit down (Badreya), use of punishment space to inculcate good habits

(Maha) have the aim of subjugation of 'pupils in the social order of the classroom, rather than as pedagogic practices which aim at facilitating pupils' learning' (Chouliaraki, 1996, p. 103). Foucault's term is correctly constructed because docility must precede utility. In Bernstein's terms, the regulative discourse dominates the pedagogical discourse. This concept allows us to construct an understanding of the social context of students' development which could be significant for how they perform their practice and for resources they can draw upon in constructing their identity. For example, we can see in the data how students struggled to consistently practice a student-centred pedagogy because of the imperative of class management and control, the prime example of this trait being Badreya. This could be construed as an effect of the historical strength of the 'traditional' discourse of teaching and learning in schools, allied with students' status as outsiders and novices with low status who rely on goodwill and approval of mentors for grades. Taken together these factors contribute to the likelihood that the students' practice may be characterised by transmission of knowledge, encouraging passive learners who display low motivation and self esteem. It is therefore ironic that students' regularly complained of their students displaying such behaviour. Foucault describes the disciplinary technologies described above as being varied, petty or diffuse, emphasising that it is through 'political awareness of these small things' (1977, p. 141) that control emerges.

Having considered space, I now discuss temporal techniques for achieving control through establishment of rhythms and cycles of repetition. The structural imposition of forty minute lessons is one main strategy in achieving this. All government and model schools have similar temporal structure and, despite reform towards a more 'progressive' paradigm of learning, it seems that clearly delineated lessons and subjects have not been challenged, appearing to be beyond its scope. Bernstein's (1995) term classification describes the extent of clear-cut separation of learning into subjects or

disciplines and the quality of the relationship that exists between categories or discourses. Classification is strong when 'each category has its unique identity, its unique voice, its own specialised rules of internal relations' (ibid. 7), then it has the effect of 'the force of the natural order' (ibid) which is constructed and maintained through generally unquestioned power relations. Accepting Bernstein's formulation, any attempt to import a more 'progressive' practice into schools is likely to prove problematic without a concomitant weakening of the classificatory regime currently practiced.

The strong classification manifested in practice of the manipulation of time and space will also necessarily have implications for range of practices that students' may appropriate as they construct teacher identities. This may limit sociodiscursive resources they utilise in constructing emergent identities because links between categories – classes, topics, subjects, discourses and practices – are more difficult to establish. Bernstein (1995) identifies a dual function of classification; it has both external and internal functions which face 'outwards to social order, and inwards to order within the individual' (p. 7). The creation of external and internal order comes at the price of suppression of 'contradictions, cleavages and dilemmas' (ibid), the opening up, consideration of and engagement of which is central to reflective practice and at which, to some extent, the action research was partially successful.

Arrangements of space and time within schools tend to militate against the possibility of critical reflection which Zeichner and Liston (1996) consider should encourage interaction between academic research and teachers' theories, engaging teachers fully, while recognising the importance of their guiding values, a critical reflection that conceptualises teachers' working in a sociohistorical and institutional context in which workings of power are apparent, as a collaborative social practice to enhance professional growth (ibid).

5.2 Addressing the Research Questions

I now respond to questions I posed in section 3.2.2 above, which considered the role of students' teaching placement and their experiences of reflective practice through action research in contributing to sociodiscursive construction of their teacher identities. I begin by highlighting difficulties action research may have in providing workable solutions to educational dilemmas despite its potential to open a hybrid space. I then consider how students', through participation in action research, were nevertheless able to fashion a social space in which they could develop agency. I also emphasise the particular, variable and collective nature of this fashioning.

5.2.1 Intractable Routines

One aim of reflective practice and action research is for teachers to question 'the goals and the values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches or... (examine) ... his or her assumptions' (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p.1). Reflective practice concerns development of praxis, the dialectical integration of thought and action (Dick et al, 2009). Action research has been described sceptically as being 'touted as a tool to engender reflective practice' (Price & Valli, 2005, p. 57) and may be understood as an attempt at a more formalised form of reflective practice that emphasises the interlinking of reason and practice (Freire, 1972). Within this framework, one aim of action research is the problematisation of routine teacher action which, in literature is often theorised as working at the technical dimension. In considering the questions it appears significant that for two students, Hessa and Badreya, one aspect of their routine practice proved to be intractable.

The students' experiences over the course of the study varied considerably. They take differing schemata of teaching into the teaching situation in addition to historical individual concerns, and these influenced not only selection of

action research topics, but more fundamental aspects of their practice. Davies (1996) terms this background which each person brings to an experience 'accumulated personal history' (p.342) and it includes their

sense of themselves not only as they are positioned in the present moment but also of themselves as persons who can or cannot be positioned in that way, i.e. as one who is located in certain ways within the social and moral order, who is known to act and feel in certain ways, whose life is explicable within known story lines (ibid).

Both Hessa and Badreya discovered their accumulated personal history influenced their practice, as I now discuss.

Hessa had difficulty in creating time for students to speak and participate in lessons with the result that, in one lesson (2nd March), she spent the time preparing students to do an activity by giving instructions, narrated the complete activity, concept checked the language focus, and ensured the students understood the task. The result was that the lesson finished without students even beginning the activity. During the discussion, we discussed her continual speaking and implications for students' learning and she stated '*silence is difficult ... oh, I can't handle silence for long*' (discussion 2.3), a stance she reiterated several times during placement.

Badreya, while able to plan and carry out an action research project on graphic organisers, struggled with class management strategies such as getting and keeping students' attention, and consistency in stating expectations of students and matching these with actions. I noted, '*the Ss shout out 'miss, miss'. Badreya – a little half-heartedly says 'hands up' – [but her actions go against her words – she doesn't back her words with actions and is a little inconsistent]*' (Obs. 24.3). Such comments were common during Badreya's placement and, despite her awareness of the issue, and the time we spent discussing strategies she could use, she became very frustrated, until she commented that '*I can't*

get the hang of them ... sometimes they're good enough for the lesson to go smoothly and sometimes they are ... too noisy ... it's the same each time ... I need to see things from a different perspective' (Discussion). By the end of her placement, this issue was not resolved.

Although such idiosyncratic dilemmas highlight how routine practice can remain unaffected by action research, the instances above appear to be qualitatively different. For, if we examine the excerpts above closely, we can discern that Badreya's dilemma appears to be more easily addressed than Hessa's. Badreya's difficulty in class management, albeit relatively long term, may be addressed through her consistent application of specific strategies, based upon theoretical approaches to class management that are readily available in undergraduate literature (e.g. Scrivener, 2005) and may be ameliorated with greater experience of teaching. Hessa's problem with silence, however, appears to be more of a psychological issue, and seems less amenable to a straightforward, technical prescription. Indeed, I had made similar comments to Hessa when I mentored her two years previously. It is questionable the extent to which action research is able to address such concerns, and if it were able to do so, any change may not be evident over the relatively short time frame of the study.

One possible reason for this is the institutionalised nature of the action research. Although students are encouraged to select a research topic in which they are interested, the range of topics is narrowly circumscribed to areas of academic suitability. Rather than being a voluntary choice, the students are subtly corralled towards researching a topic which provides a more rigorous semblance of academic credibility and broadly reflective of global orthodoxy of communicative language teaching. There appears to be a contradiction in the institution's use of and the effect of action research in its degree programme. While the rationale for action research is to encourage reflective practice, at

times the aspect of practice which students would benefit most from reflecting upon may not be considered worthy of reflection in the action research legitimised by the college. Rather than empowering students, it is possible to view the project as asking students to participate in a mimetic form of action research, providing an illusion of empowerment.

5.2.2 Power and Transgressive Agents

Despite limitations in the cases above, there is a sense in which students are able to appropriate action research in order to resist the 'traditional' discourse and practices of schools and so attempt to develop a localised pedagogy. Such appropriation involves recognition of opportunities that exist for changing practice in what may appear to be a monolithic edifice of discursive practice and may only be converted into actual change should the student or teacher be able to create a space and time – a heterotopia - in which hegemonic practice can be disrupted and, crucially, a sense of agency nurtured. A short reiteration of poststructural theory of agency is necessary here.

Foucault challenged the notion of the essential and coherent humanist subject by seeking to show how individuals are social beings, formed in relations of power and coercion and they 'may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (Foucault, 1997, p.136) by the productive nature of power. An individual's subjectivity can therefore be understood as being continually constructed and reconstructed through discursive practices with which they interact. Butler (1990) emphasised the 'performative status of the natural self' (p. 200), a discursively regulated process of repetition of practices functions to produce a culturally coherent and acceptable identity, and that this process 'ought to be understood as ... (occurring through) ... generative political structures rather than naturalized foundations' (ibid. p.201). Through this reconceptualisation of agency as being sociodiscursively constructed a space can open in which individual agency can be manifested. The decentering of the

subject is politically significant because ‘by abandoning the idea of an essential subjectivity, one opens up subjectivity to change’ (Weedon, 1997, p32), an idea which is central to an understanding of the poststructural conceptualisation of the subject. Additionally, Foucault (1977) contends that change is implemented through transgression, the crossing of boundaries or limits where ‘transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses’ (p.34). Transgression involves

historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying ... (that) is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom (Foucault, 1984, p. 46).

Indeed, it is striking that this definition of transgression invokes both reflection (‘recognize ourselves’) and the critical (‘undefined work of freedom’) suggesting reflective practice can build upon poststructural understandings of agency.

Students’ use of critical reflection in the form of action research seems to have allowed them to build metaphorical and, in Nadia’s case, physical spaces in which some degree of transgression is possible and in which, to varying degrees, they are able to develop agency. Giroux’s (1991, 2005) notion of ‘border pedagogy’ seems apposite here, which describes ‘a theoretical space for creating a discourse of creating new questions, offering oppositional practices and producing fresh objects of analysis’ (1991, p. 501). Brown and Jones (2001) conceive this theoretical space as being an intersectional area, where

transformation of consciousness ... takes place in the intersection of three agencies – the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they jointly produce (p.101).

The productive nature of power suggests that it may also be understood as creative and transformative (Foucault, 1977) which would seem to facilitate action research in the case of this study. The requirement that students carry out action research is presented to schools as an academic requirement, the

productive power of the higher status of college in relation to schools is, therefore, exploited to facilitate students' creation of a transgressive space. The extent to which students implement initiatives is frequently a site of discursive and interpersonal struggle between students, mentor, principals and advisors as each student negotiates the extent to which they implement their project. The main factor with which students can demand at least a minimal amount of time and space for implementation, appears to be the hegemony of college to cross institutional borders and project its power into schools.

5.3 Limitations of Study

Having constructed and participated in this study over almost two years, it is possible to become so familiar with its minutiae that any overview or attempt to gain a wider understanding of the study's position in the world seems difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, I address limitations of this study beginning with what I consider the most problematic aspect of the study - my dual role of teacher and researcher.

Advocates of a positivist approach may be critical of my insider role in the study because it may preclude my ability to observe and speak "objectively" about students and their experiences during placements. Robson (2002) details how studies that feature participant observation may be accused of subjectivity and insufficient attention to concerns of validity, but highlights that one benefit of insider researcher is

when working with people ... (insiders may explain) ... the meaning of the experiences of the observed through the experiences of the observer. The task of interpreting these meanings and experiences can only be achieved through participation with those involved' (p.314).

Any attempt to consider how people perceive meanings in social situations requires the researcher to engage with participants over a period of time, to

share experiences in order to gain in-depth understanding of social context. Robson suggests other advantages of insider research: that pre-existing knowledge and experience is beneficial and may reduce problems when implementing research and the dual role of practitioner and researcher may produce a synergy in research design and analysis. One example of synergetic benefits, of my familiarity with college and school contexts and detailed knowledge of academic demands placed upon participants allowed me to ensure my data collection methods differed minimally from usual practice of observing lessons and discussing feedback, ensuring I did not place more work on participants' busy schedule.

Labaree (2002) summarises the benefits of 'insiderness' as being fourfold: 'the value of shared experiences; the value of greater access; the value of cultural interpretation; and the value of deeper understanding and clarity of thought for the researcher' (p.103). While I do not address each point, it seems the issue of greater access has been crucial, for without the ability to visit schools, observe classrooms on a weekly basis and consistent, day-to-day involvement with participants, the study would have lacked in-depth engagement it demands. Additionally, the study would be open to accusations of anthropological exploitation, for while outsiders provide fresh perspectives, the power imbalance between outsider researchers and insider students can be viewed as epistemologically exploitative.

Labaree (2002) provides a historical and epistemological account of insider research illustrating how it has developed in tandem with interpretivist research perspectives over recent decades. Pointing out that the insider researcher has often been contrasted with researcher as outsider, he is critical of the positioning of insider/outsider as a duality and as the extremes of a continuum, resisting the temptation to provide a definitive statement of who can be considered an insider. The extent to which one researcher is inside or

outside a social system is historical and situational, Labaree claims, and 'a result of the person's biographical profile, political activities, research agenda and the relationship with the community under study' (p.102) and that this researcher - participant relationship is complex and changing. Labaree suggests that the 'x - y' axis of insider and outsider be augmented by a 'z' axis which 'represents the *degree* to which a researcher has gained insiderness at any given moment in time and space' (ibid. p.117). We arrive at an understanding of insider research that accords with the particularist stance of this study and, as highlighted in chapter 2, while I may be considered an insider in respect of college environment, academic discourse of English Language Teaching and as a native speaker of English, in other respects I am an outsider - a male, a non-Muslim, British not Emirati, nor an Arabic speaker. Labaree's position suggests all researchers are both insiders and outsiders, that this varies during research and that the particularities of each study and implications should be explicitly addressed.

5.4 Future Directions

This study addresses theoretical convergence of the sociodiscursive construction of teacher identity and action research within an undergraduate English language teacher education programme in the United Arab Emirates. My discussion of findings illustrated that the final year action research project in the B.Ed. programme offered participants the opportunity to construct practice within an 'interzone' where they could, to varying degrees, establish a sense of agency as teachers and implement practice which accords with their pedagogical beliefs. I now consider several possible options for future research possibilities. Firstly I consider two options that develop from this study within this research context, then provide broader suggestions for exploring connections between teacher identity and action research.

The students in this study have since graduated and most now teach in UAE schools. Since leaving college, my contact with them has reduced to occasional meetings in schools, or through hearsay reports. While there have been attempts by college to implement a support programme for newcomer teachers, such an eventuality never occurred. Therefore, a possible area of research would build upon this study as a narrative of newcomer teachers to investigate whether, how and to what extent they continue to develop a sense of agency during their first experience of teaching. Using interviews and reflective journals to construct data, the study would additionally offer the opportunity for newcomer teachers to be involved in a more equal capacity as co-researchers and include a reflective element. This approach would not only study development of newcomer teachers' identity and agency in their first year of work, but be an example of teacher research that contributes to newcomer teachers' professional development.

A second direction of possible research that builds upon this study, in keeping with its epistemological assumptions, would create a more collaborative endeavour involving a cohort of final year students' working together throughout their placements and action research to mentor each other and construct data about themselves and each other. The five cases of this study seem to indicate it is unlikely that new insights will not emerge from a similar study; however, a focus on empowerment of the student participants would have several benefits. Firstly, by placing them at the centre of the research, it could encourage a stronger sense of ownership of the process by students. Secondly, by ensuring the study encourages collaboration, I would emphasise the agentic and professional development aspect of action research in contrast to the course-based, individual assessment which is currently in place. Thirdly, the decentering of my central role in research to one of advisor, and positioning of students as main actors can be seen as an overt political decision in alignment with the critical aspect of action research concerning social

transformation. This redefinition of roles would aim to ensure Emirati women take an active role in construction of a contextualised educational knowledge at this important juncture in the country's development. This point is well made in Somekh & Zeichner's (2009) discussion of the dual focus of action research and its ability to generate both research knowledge and improve social action. A participatory role for Emirati teachers may additionally contribute to a decline in policies which equate development of UAE education with growing reliance upon imported pedagogies and imported teachers. As such, this putative study could contribute further than the present study has been able to do, to what Appadurai (2001) terms 'globalization from below', a process in which 'teacher-action-researchers contribute knowledge and learning from multiple local sites about the process of effective educational reform' (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009, p.5)

Taking a broader perspective of future research, I believe it would be worthwhile for the role of action research in construction of teacher identities to be explored in a wider range of different educational situations. Hayes (2005) highlights that despite the large numbers of non-native teachers of English working in state systems worldwide, they 'are marginalized in TESOL professional discourse' (p. 189) suggesting that the professional knowledge base is impoverished and that 'the power imbalance between NS and NNS remain static at best or increase at worst' (ibid). In the spirit of encouraging indigenous development of contextually emergent situated knowledge, research into the sociohistorical construction of teacher identity could particularly be appropriate in outer circle (e.g. Hong Kong, India) and expanding circle countries (e.g. Russia, Brazil) which are still overshadowed by powerful ESOL industries, including teacher organisations, universities, publishers, and examination authorities of inner circle countries (e.g. USA, UK, Australia) (Kachru, 1990). Although ESOL has been accused of deriving much of its status from, in the past, British colonial structure and, in the present, US neocolonial

structure (e.g. Phillipson, 1992a), it is counterproductive to reify this relationship as dichotomous, complicated as it is by 'increasing cultural hybridity, human migration, and media expansion' (Canagarajah, 2002, p.134). Nevertheless, inner circle research journals, professional organisations, teacher training programmes and textbooks mirror traditional commercial relationships of the globalised market, constructing new products which often require purchase of new teaching and learning materials and professional development, so creating 'a vortex of professional dependence into which periphery communities get drawn ever deeper' (ibid, p. 135).

Although Canagarajah's argument concerns transfer of language teaching methods, I believe that it can provide a theoretical context for use of action research in peripheral ESOL communities, so that teachers are able to free themselves from hegemonic notions of successful pedagogy and expertise, to 'develop their own tradition of professionalism and expertise' (ibid, p.149). Research that addresses this methodological/ideological axis in peripheral contexts, and then disseminated can begin to address global imbalances of cultural capital through providing examples of situated pedagogies affecting construction of indigenous teacher identities as teachers negotiate and appropriate the myriad discourses available to them.

5.5 Implications for Practice

In this final section, I reflect upon the ideas with which I began the study in an attempt to resolve issues that have been central to my work and discuss practical implications the study may have for use of action research in teacher education. As this study began with questions concerning my practice, so I consider practical implications of my learning from the study, as a central role of the professional doctorate concerns integration of theory and practice and,

as this study advocates this integration, it is fitting that I begin with reflection upon the practice of the study.

5.5.1 Reflections

In the introduction, I discussed my grasping at Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as if it were a rock, as it provided a sense of certainty on which to base my practice. For every dilemma that may have arisen, CLT had a readymade methodological prescription. This study has revealed to me that, despite my questioning of CLT orthodoxy, my knowledge and acceptance of the validity of teacher subjectivity, the pedagogical and developmental benefits of reflective practice and action research and their role in students' construction of viable teacher identities, my approach still cleaves to the certainties of CLT. This is shown in how I ensure that students select a 'suitable' topic; topics which often attempt to ensure students implement action which conforms to features of CLT. Amal's project involving 'communicative strategies to enhance oral fluency' concerned two constructs which are considered central to CLT. Badreya's project on 'graphic organisers' discussed an approach which emphasises students' interaction with stories and generic writing structures. Hessa's project developed from general 'listening' to 'teaching listening through a task-based approach' due to my concern about broadness of her original idea; the task based element being included at my insistence. Maha's project on contextualised vocabulary learning and student-centred activities similarly reveals a preoccupation with CLT and broader student-centred methods; use of contextualised vocabulary learning arose from my concern she was implementing insufficient strategies. Nadia's work on learning centres and learner independence focuses on development of a trait which has grown in dominance with CLT (and primary education, in general) over the last few decades (Tudor, 1996).

Therefore, my intellectual position of seeing action research as a tool for empowering students, for developing a suitable and grounded pedagogy of English language teaching within the UAE, appears to be undermined by my expectation that students' projects conform to CLT nostrums. It seems that both Badreya and Hessa would have benefitted from being encouraged to deal with aspects of their practice with which they were clearly struggling, class management and lesson/activity planning, respectively. One wonders which topics other students may have selected for their project, if I had not emphasised the perceived necessity for them to focus on an aspect of English language teaching? From my perspective now, only Nadia's project appears to be most successful in terms of being relatively free from CLT, perhaps because it focused on a generic teaching/learning strategy, rather than specifically language teaching.

The selection of topic and the directions in which the project leads students is of crucial importance. If aims of action research include exploration of problems derived from their own practice, the construction of discursive space that is meaningful to students in which their practice can develop, then the imposition of a topic means that this space constructed is also an imposition. The students in this study are faced with a circumscribed space in which some discursive options are occluded, unavailable as resources for them to draw upon in the process of implementing their practice and constructing identities.

It appears that the particularity of discursive spaces created in the five cases discussed is, to an extent, created by myself, my own methodological positions and merely mediated by the students. This also has implications for the construction of teacher identities, as it calls into question the extent to which students are developing their own teacher identity within a sociodiscursive space or performing a mimetic action.

5.5.2 Ways Forward

I have argued that the students are presented with a circumscribed set of sociodiscursive resources and this may have implications for the range of practice they develop and hence limit construction of teacher identities. I now discuss three proposals for how teacher educators may alter their practice in order to encourage students to go beyond a mimetic form of action research towards a more authentic, self-initiated process.

5.5.2.1 Inclusive Notion of Practice

Teacher educators should attempt to utilise a model of action research that provokes students to develop a wider understanding of their practice. In place of creating a fetish of a particular methodology, teacher educators should encourage consideration of topics that are based upon students' reflections on previous experiences of practice. Through asking students to consider and discuss topics from reflections and mentor feedback, it seems more likely they may be able to select a topic that addresses their own developmental needs and be sufficiently rigorous to satisfy academic credentials. Through integrating action research into students' already existing cycles of reflection and practice, by placing the project within their emergent professional life stories instead of considering it as merely an academic assignment separate from previous studies and placements, one may be able to encourage students to select topics which are more likely to address questions central to their practice.

It was with the above considerations in mind, therefore, that in the following academic year I asked my students to reflect systematically upon their previous practice placements, to examine their written reflections, mentor comments and collate a list of possible research topics. It is significant, I believe, that of fourteen students in the cohort, six decided to select aspects of class

management for study, placing CLT as only one factor in the research context instead of a central construct.

5.5.2.2 Balancing Student-centred and Assessment Processes

The teacher educator should ensure that action research as individual assessment does not overwhelm its developmental potential. The extent of teacher educator involvement in guidance regarding the project is also relevant in ensuring that, while it is a keystone assessment of the degree, there should be a primary focus on development of students' understanding of their practice. The temptation may be to 'play safe' by advising students with methodological certainties and a prescribed thesis structure, to ensure 'good quality' projects that receive 'good grades', to please bureaucratic structures and attract student acclaim, particularly when students are struggling with data analysis or, as Holliday (2002) termed 'the dark night of the soul'. In order for students to develop an 'authentic' identity that is emergent from context of work rather than a parodic display of accepted methodological structure, it is necessary to balance the didactic role of giving professional advice and the developmental role of facilitator. The ability to judge this balance seems to be a fundamental form of knowledge in teacher education pedagogies. From a sociodiscursive position, effective teacher education pedagogies involve the ability to create and negotiate a balanced, third space between global and local discourses and teacher education institutions and school discourses.

5.5.2.3 Collaborative and Supportive Action Research

Despite the influence of individualistic assessment practices, teacher educators should attempt to include more long term and supportive collaborative student work, because linked to the tension between action research as assessment or developmental tool, is the contrast between action research as an individual

endeavour (necessitated by the individual basis of the assessment process) and as collaborative process. While it may be that participants in school-based action research could work collaboratively, the need to construct individual, qualified teachers who will probably work as sole teacher in a class (almost certainly, in the Emirati case) through a rigorous assessment practice necessitates an individualistic approach. Nevertheless, inclusion of collaborative elements over the course of the year may lead to less reliance on the teacher educator's perspective and social construction of a more localised pedagogy that addresses particular, educational needs. Although students participated in focus groups in which they discussed progress in implementing action, and examples of and interpretations of data, it is possible for a wider range of collaborative actions to be introduced, where emphasis should be on developmental opportunities offered, rather than assessment practices to be exploited, as in section 5.5.2.1 above. An example could be placement of students into facilitative groups for duration of the project, with roles such as critical friends, readers of drafts, sounding board or co-collectors of data. This would allow for the individual nature of the assessment to be preserved, while encouraging construction of both a stronger understanding of action research and particular dilemmas that it may address.

I contend that the practice of using action research for development of student teachers may be more effective through alteration of three factors. Firstly, there should be a broader conceptualisation of the range of pedagogical practices that action research may address. Secondly, teacher educators should become aware of, develop their own practice in, and work effectively within the third space, as an interzone space of hybrid discourses. Finally, there should be an emphasis on collaboration throughout the project with students afforded an explicit supportive role. Taken together, I believe these practices make it more likely that students could develop a personally resonant approach

to their action research which they perceive to be of value to them as they develop their identity as effective teachers.

Appendix – Sample of Case Notes

Field Notes	Participants: Researcher, Amal (T), Grade 6	Date and Time: 3.3.2008 11.30am
Details of Activity: Lesson Observation – Model Girls School A		
<p>Contemporaneous Notes</p> <p>T switches on A/C and says ‘Sit down, girls’. T then introduces the unit of the book ‘Just Imagine’. Asks Ss to close their eyes and imagine they are flying like a bird. She asks those observing to do the same too [And we all do so. There is silence.]</p> <p>After a few minutes, she asks them to stop and asks Ss “How does it feel?” [A bit of a general question, asked to no one in particular - I wonder if anyone will respond.] Some Ss raise their arms and T nominates, telling them to ‘raise your voice’ – with emphasis. Ss say things like “I can see whole world”; ‘I will fly to the market’. T reiterates the Ss answers and reformulates answers. One S says ‘I don’t like it, because if Allah made me a bird I would have no mind’ [Blimey, I think]. For each reply, the reformulates the reply. [Is this necessary? It cuts back on real communication].</p> <p>After this, T shows the class a box, and asks them to discuss in groups what be in it. The Ss discuss and make suggestions to each other. T uses a bell on the table to close the discussion. Then asks them to say their guess to the class. She also asks Ss to use the target language ‘it might/may be’, because the first student had said ‘Is it a?’ So, students say things like ‘It might be a ball’. She then uses the question form ‘What can it be used for?’, and supplies a possible reply ‘It can be used for experiments’. [T asks 1 S to tell the rest of the class the Arabic word for ‘experiment’, which she does. [It seems none of the students have come up with the correct suggestion]. T shows 1 or 2 what is in the bag and asks them to say what it is – they can’t.</p> <p>T establishes that it is a mouse – which leads to a story concerning a mouse. [Good use of Ss names – really helping to create a good relation with them. Good accurate, fluent T language in English with a good sense of pace.] t shows the book cover on an OHP, asks Ss to look at picture and gives them 1 minutes to ‘look and think’. [I feel that this emphasis on thinking is a nice change from performance questions – although she could be a little more specific that just ‘think’, e.g. ‘think about what’s happening in the picture’. After a minute, T asks the students “What do you think the story is about?” The Ss reply with suggestions. T accepts them. , e.g. A mouse trying to fly’, ‘a mouse is inventing a machine to fly’. T elicits ‘wings’. [T encourages students to say possibilities through discussion – good open elicitation and acceptance of ideas]. She then asks a S to read sentence by sentence (from the OHP) – they are very keen and happy to do this. [A good way to share the story, I think, as it doesn’t have a big book format].</p> <p>At one point, a shoe lace is mentioned, T says ‘A shoe lace – do you know what a shoe lace is?’ She then shows her own shoe lace (lifting up her feet), saying ‘we use it to tie our shoes’. [She could have turned this to the Ss - e.g. by using her focus on thinking, ‘discuss it with a partner and find your own shoelaces’. Give the work back to the Ss].</p> <p>Before moving on to the next section of the story, T asks Ss to think – she shows good emphasis on ‘thinking’ and prediction. She continues, saying she wants them to think in class, then says ‘you have 3 minutes to share your ideas’. The Ss talk in pairs and small groups, but are interrupted by the T ‘Who’s using Arabic in my class?’ [I can’t really notice any difference in the language Ss use after her reminder]. Again, she says ‘Mariam, I can hear some Arabic from your group’ [Policing of Arabic]. At this point, she refocuses the Ss and hands out a worksheet with ‘characters’ ‘events’ ‘invention’ and ‘ending’. There is 1 worksheet per group [forcing them to work together] and the Ss discuss and note down their ideas. [This could be a jigsaw activity – 4 groups and 4 ideas]. T then shows an OHT of the worksheet and elicits answers, then asks Ss to write on the w/b? [No, she doesn’t – she does oral Q and A]. [She could hand out pens to each group at the same time, rather than waiting for a representative from each group to write individually – results in a lull and the other Ss not being involved. Additionally, oral feedback to a written task can be problematic - as people can’t understand or hear each other – nor does it help with spelling]. [This tends to be turning into an IRF pattern and she loses momentum – how could she reorder this an keep the energy level higher – the Ss are flagging]. T then goes on to tell Ss that they have 5 minutes to check what they’ve written by reading the story. They begin and once again we hear ‘Why am I hearing Arabic in my class?’ So, the SS take out books and T moves around the class and monitors asking Ss to read silently = the class talk level drops. She continues to monitor, then gives a countdown – 2 minutes – and tells Ss who are reading to ‘read carefully, I will ask you about something’. [This makes a nice change, as some Ss seem to rarely explain to the Ss why they are going to do and why</p>		

– and if I haven't read the plan, then it feels like being lead along a dark passage]. As, they finish, T says 'If you're ready clap your hands one.' [They do]. If you're ready clap your hands twice' [They do].

[There is a knock at the door – a student enters, looks around, smiles, and retreats].

T asks Ss to put stories away now, and 'the group who can answer a question correctly will get 2 stars'. She asks a comprehension question 'which materials did the mouse use for his invention?' She lets them discuss (for one minute) – when they are finished they sit up straight and keen with hands up (most of them). [I like this use of group cooperation and competition].

T hands out board pens and asks a S from each group to come to the w/b and write the name of their group and their answers. [T says not to worry about spelling]. She moves to rear of class and watches [seems to give an impression of confidence of her domination of the classroom with her physical presence = power]. T asks Ss to read again (what is on the w/b) and check their answers. [The team names are 'Style Girl', 'Music Team', 'Spoons' and 'Pioneer']. There's a bit of chatting, so T asks Ss to listen, one S reads the answer verbatim from the story, while T ticks the answers on the w/b for each group. She sees that 'Music Team' have won and draws 2 start next to the name of their group on the w/b. [Is this cumulative? Part of a system?].

As the start of the next stage, T gives Ss a slip of paper, saying 'Make a brilliant new invention' and asks them to work on the group to write down the materials they will need. **THE BELL GOES.** T summarises what they have done and previews the next lesson [which I presume will involve will involve the Ss making their own invention in groups – like the mouse did].

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1	Am	actually I didn't ... in this plan I tried to change instead of reading I tried to ... listen to the students read	
	R	that's better	
		... ah so your original plan was for you to read the story	
	Am	the first story was for me to read the next story was for the students to read	
	R	Right why did you change?	
	Am	In the middle I felt	
		I needed to give them a chance to go ... try themselves and to	
10		know exactly how accurate they are ... with their reading	
	R	so you	
		just decided in the middle of the lesson just as you came to	
		that point you thought I'll let them do it?	
	Am	yes	
	R	OK that's good	
	Am	I think it was ... a good try ... there were able to read ... but I	
		need to look more and more to different students reading	
	R	you'll have to select so that everyone gets a go	
	Am	I tried to select	
20		one from each group	
	R	... OK ... 'cos the danger is I find I've done	
		this myself is we select the ones we know will be good fluent	
		readers so that everyone will understand	
	Am	... mmm ... I've never	
		listening to them reading [anything] so it was just ...	
	R	[oh OK so]	
	Am	...mmm I think today they were more motivated than yesterday	
		to participate in their group yesterday I don't know what was	
		wrong in the class ... erm ...they weren't willing to work in their	
30		groups they wanted to work on their own	
	R	I was impressed how	
		well they worked in groups	
	Am	they are used to work with me in	
		groups but yesterday I had some difficulties with them	
	R	they	
		seem ... maybe it was the nature of the activity or something	
	Am	maybe something was happening in the class ... I dunno	
	R	They	
		seem used to working in groups when you say work in groups	
40		bang they do it	

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	Am	but still then I have the problem of those	
		who just want to be the leader of the groups all the time they	
		won't give their friends a chance so I'm trying to have it ...	
		each week I'll have the leader of the group the writer and the	
		reporter so they can share the activities ... it will be randomly	
		... each week it will be changed	
	R	because if you're not careful ...	
		as you say some people dominate and some sit back ... and do	
		nothing so to give roles is a good idea	
50	Am	... mmm ... I found that	
		they are willing to be in a position of being responsible at this	
		age OK with them they won't hesitate but with a grade nine	
		they won't respond as much as girls in grade six	
	R	yes they get	
		self conscious when they get older ... a bit more nervous about	
		it	
	Am	but I think that if they are used to it from the primary age it	
		will be easier for them even in grade nine or grade twelve	
	R	yes that's right ... it's possible that the people at grade nine the	
60		students at grade nine have less experience of it ... so it's a bit	
		more frightening especially at that age when your fourteen you	
		don't want to be shown up ... OK ... I like the ideas of you ... well	
		changing the plan at the time in the lesson because that's what	
		the lesson demands ... you know remember that the plan is just	
		a plan ... if you think ... why can't I do it this way especially if it's	
		more involving of the students why not? try it see how it goes	
	Am	I think ... as long as I'm covering the objectives the lesson OK	
	R	besides we know you can read the story	
	Am	hm hm	
70	R	... it becomes	
		another thing if they read it ... if you read it they're listening	
		and they might be reading it but ... it's better to get them as	
		much involved as possible	
	Am	they would have been passive but in	
		this ... stage they would have been active and trying to	
		participate ...	
	R	do you consciously plan for the students to be	
		active and involved as much as possible?	
	Am	... er my main objective	
80		would be to have all the students' attentive for the forty five	

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		minutes ... and I think this is one of the impossible things to do	
	R	it is	
	Am	but I want them to enjoy their learning ... not just being packed up in the classroom or being quiet ... following my instructions ... I want to hear their voice in class	
	R	... 'cos if they're more involved they're likely to be more attentive as well ... there's the old saying about if you tell me I understand five per cent but if I do it I understand about fifty percent and if I talk about it and do it I understand about seventy five percent ... so	
90		I think that's very true ... OK ... let's see ... how did this fit in with your research then this lesson?	
	Am	... erm with the discussions in the group having them talk to each other sharing their ideas also I'm trying to get them to select a representative of each group to speak ... so they are sharing it they are feeling with each other it's not always the same person for example I have Mouza Mouza's one of my week students who won't participate but because she's sharing ideas she's more encouraged to participate and take part in the class today she was brilliant in the class	
100		becoming more confident ...	
	Am	becoming more confident becoming more relaxed in the group she wasn't in this group she was in another group I changed her group	
	R	oh OK	
	Am	so she started to take part and participate more in the class which showed great improvement with Mouza within two weeks	
110		good good ... yes I noticed there was a lot of ... good work and I noticed you encouraged it by giving them one work sheet so that they had to look at one and talk to one and somebody writes and they all talk about it rather than one ... worksheet each which my experience is they'll just sit there and do this ... as individuals	
	Am	... but the main challenge was also today that they are a monolingual class ... they are using Arabic ... er ... they are able and I know that they have enough vocab to communicate with each other ... but they aren't using that	
120			

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		vocab in the classroom	
	R	they do have good language I can tell so	
		is that 'cos I noticed in your class and Maha's her previous	
		one both of you saying ... er... you're using Arabic who's using	
		Arabic ... is that your policy or is that school policy? Or an	
		English teachers ...	
	Am	... it's from the English teachers as long as it's	
		an English session you have to speak in English	
	R	for anything	
130	Am	And	
		also the school is preparing an English week next week ... next	
		week will be English week ... students if they want to	
		communicate even with other staff members if they want to	
		communicate with us they have to use English	
	R	for the whole	
		week	
	Am	yes ... last week was the Arabic week and the Arabic	
		teachers encouraged everyone to use the Standard Arabic	
	R	oh	
140		really? Not Khaleeji Arabic?	
	Am	no standard	
	R	was that tricky for	
		you?	
	Am	No because I used to write stories and poetry in Standard	
		Arabic ... I'm trying to encourage the students even in the	
		morning when they would greet me I would respond in English	
		or I would not respond if they are speaking in Arabic I want	
		them to try and try because I think the school environment is	
		the only place they can use English ... at this stage.	
150	R	yes so not	
		just in the classroom	
	Am	in and outside the classroom not only with	
		just my students even if they are grade eight or nine if they are	
		talking in Arabic I will say speak to me in English ...	
	R	... do you think	
		that Arabic has a role in helping them learn English?	
	Am	yes of course	
		... for example with the word experiment I tried to give them an	
		example but er ... when a student said it in Arabic ...yes I ... now	
160		I am correct ... I will ensure they will have a clearer idea	

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	R	good	
	Am	I will attempt other alternatives like drawing or pictures but at this stage because she just responded in Arabic ... OK ... correct and clear in her mind	
	R	and did that enable you to get that particular vocabulary item across to the whole class very quickly 'cos as the students ... as the vocab gets more difficult they get more advanced ... it's not possible to always draw things or show them a picture because it's more abstract and sometimes with a thing like experiment	
170	Am	I tried	
	R	it's just easier	
	Am	to	
		model it ... and she just verbalized it ... the Arabic word	
	R	because	
		I think that's a productive way of using Arabic in the class ... you don't want to spend twenty minutes trying to elicit it or demonstrate it ... it's a waste ... OK ... er ... I noticed when they when you had the box and you were asking them to guess what was in it you were highlighting the target language ... using might or may be ... they were ... so that was nice ... the ... er the lesson had a nice structure ... it was coherent for example the beginning when you asked them to sit down and imagine about ... being blind tied in with both being imaginative and ... the story	
	Am	and also because they just came back from the art session I wanted them to calm down	
	R	a little bit ... have you seen ...	
190		Mariam uses nap time ... we used to do something called sleeping lions you had to be sleeping lion it was for very young children they're a bit big for that but just calms ...	
	Am	I've seen	
		one of the Arabic teachers having a rain clap clap ... five four three two one ... tapping	
	R	ah ... fingers on the palm	
	Am	That was	
		interesting and I think I might apply it in my class	
	R	why not? ... it's	
		... things like this if you make them a routine ... then they work quickly	
200			

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	Am	yes I'm telling them if you are ready clap your hands ...	
	R	did you make that up?	
	Am	yes	
	R	'cos sometimes I know Maha's	
		taken up things that she's seen Asma do or one of the teachers	
		... it's always good to see how people deal with these things	
		experienced teachers ... let me see ... one thing I noticed is	
		you were very you emphasised a lot their ...thinking ... I want	
		you to think for example ... you asked them to look at the	
210		pictures of the photograph of the story and said I'll give you	
		one minute to look and I want you to think ... had you ... is that	
		a conscious decision?	
	Am	I wanted them to think ... I think with	
		giving them thinking time they will think of more vocab ... they	
		will think of more ideas but I think if they just look at the	
		picture they will respond immediately without thinking ... but if	
		they thought about it they might come up with new ideas that	
		they won't ever	
	R	it's good	
220	Am	... also because I know that ... some of	
		them are really gifted I have some of the gifted students in my	
		class but they aren't trying to work hard with the word thinking	
		and be brilliant be creative they are trying ... everyone's trying	
		to cope with each other ... sharing	
	R	it's a good idea get them to	
		think before speaking ... too many people just ... say something	
		without ... I noticed that it's useful ... er ... sometimes ... you	
		might find if you use the word think it might [SCHOOL BELL	
		DROWNS OUT SPEECH UNTIL] thank you	
230	Am	it's break	
	R	you might	
		want to make them ... more specific thinking tasks 'cos think	
		can ... well you can about anything ... so you might want to say	
		what's happening in the picture ... think about this think about	
		that just to focus them ... it depends for example when you	
		started the lesson you asked them to think ... imagine your	
		blind and think ... well that's fine it could be a bit vaguer but	
		you might want to focus it ... but anyway it's a good idea I like	
		it ... er ... I've got this three times thinking I've noticed this	
240		it's quite ... it's very emphatic ... er ... there's a lot of	

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		involvement throughout getting them writing at the board ...	
		so it was nicely structured like that getting them to read they	
		Write the answer then check by reading again a lot of	
		involvement ... er ...	
	Am	I think this is the appropriate age with the	
		students to start being independent ... depending on the	
		teacher to be dependent on their own ... so I'm trying to step	
		behind just a little bit and let them do it	
	R	I noticed there was	
250		one point when they were writing on the board and I think this	
		shows the confidence you had ... they were at the front you	
		moved to the back so ... and there's two things I think about	
		this it shows that you're confident in the class ... but it also	
		shows that you're in charge of the class which you know	
		anyway ... you know I think ... I've seen this with inexperienced	
		teachers they stay in teacher position at the front centre they	
		don't move because that's where teachers stay but a more	
		experienced or certainly a competent teacher is all over ...	
		everywhere ... the classroom belongs to them ... and I did notice	
260		that you're getting around and you monitor them a lot and	
		you're with them and talking to them and this helps your	
		relationship as well with them 'cos they don't see you as ...the	
		teacher there but next to them behind them all around	
	Am	there	
		are occasions when I used to sit with them on the floor	
		without even a mat or anything ... just sitting ... not worrying or	
		anything and they were calling me miss your abaya don't worry	
		never worry just sit ...	
	R	so, yes, lots of participation and I wrote	
270		here ... you use students' names well and that helps good	
		relationship ... your English is fluent and accurate most of the	
		time there was a question you got wrong but everybody gets	
		questions wrong ... there was good pace to the lesson they	
		were into it they were listening and looking ... it was nice ...	
		from that point of view ... where's that questions ... it's been	
		annoying me ... er ... can't find it ... (lengthy pause)	
	Am	was it the	
		word?	
	R	... no ... where did I find it ... it was a small thing ... ah ...	
280		question form what it can be used for ... what can it be used for	

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		but this happens a lot ... with everyone ... so ... if I were you if you're ever thinking of questions and it's difficult because you can't always predict which questions you're going to use for a plan in a lesson plan ... but if you think I want to ask a question have I got the subject and verb the right way round ... what it can be ... what can it be ... if in doubt change them round so it's what followed by the subject ... but no very nice ... the other thing was interesting when they ... er ... you found ... the vocab shoe lace ... and ... do you know what a shoe lace is? ... OK ...	
290		and I think you missed ... that was one opportunity you missed for student involvement the only one I found I think 'cos you use students a lot ... they are very active ... do you know what a shoe lace is? and then you showed them a shoelace and we use it to tie ... and that was the only opportunity you missed to turn it to the students and say show me a shoelace ... where are your shoelaces hold them up or point to them ... you could have gone to that ... let them [do it]	
	Am	[they] said miss Manal ... should have laces ... then we pointed to Manal and that was why	
300	R	oh good	
		so ... I think ... your teaching is good it's confident clear language focus ... nice throw of activities that are coherent and tied to each other and er ... and I'm also very pleased with how your letting the students take the class ... do the class ... let them do stuff ... and they're very used to it I can tell ... do it in a group ... come up here write it on the board ... you do it ... you just set it up so that's very nice ... keep on doing that as much as you ... and it ties in with your action research doesn't it that sort of thing	
310	Am	yes	
	R	so whenever you do it ... whenever you notice like you said yesterday they weren't so good that's the sort of thing that will go in your journal ... why what happened try and figure out why? groups have moods like people do perhaps they just didn't feel like it yesterday perhaps they did today ... but the evidence you've got the materials the plan ... er ... my notes when you get them plus your reflections will be good evidence for your research project ... just check there's nothing else is there? ... oh the only other thing ... I liked this ... you	
320		wanted each group to write in each section	

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	Am	er ... to predict as	
		much as they can	
	R	as they wanted to ... yes that was nice and	
		how you put it up on the board and let them write .. well you	
		wrote the characters here ... and then you let them ... speak	
		their ideas ... I think sometimes well that was the only time in	
		the lesson that the pace flagged a little bit ... you noticed as	
		well didn't you? and I think the reason is it's because it's a	
		written activity and the feedback is oral ... if you'd done ...	
330		written feedback ... OK go and write your ideas in the boxes ...	
		I'll put them on the overhead ... go and write your	
		ideas in the boxes and then just have a look at them so it's	
		written feedback for a written activity ... the other thing you	
		could do because you've got four groups ... you could do a	
		cross group activity do you know what I mean by that?	
	Am	yes	
	R	where ... so one group does this ... spends time focusing on	
		one particular one and then the groups change and share	
		their knowledge ... or you just say this group you fill in on the	
340		board here and you that and you that ... and then they can copy	
		it down ... but it's a small thing it's just an alternative for group	
		work	
	Am	er I wanted ... I was going to let them do it on the board	
		but I go the ... fear of losing time right ... so that's timing	
	R	... right	
		the practical issue of timing is always a problem if you had an	
		hour and a half you could involve them more but student	
		involvement sometimes takes longer ... it's just quicker for you	
		to do it ... this is when what we want educationally our	
350		educational principle is ... er broken because of the timing we	
		have to fit it into a forty minute class it's really annoying isn't	
		it?	
	Am	yes	
	R	I know OK ... so good ... and I liked at the end how you	
		summarised the lesson and highlighted the next lesson ... when	
		is it?	
	Am	tomorrow	
		(long pause)	
		the other class they invented their own	
360		inventions today	

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	R	did they?	
	Am	and tomorrow each group will present	
		them to the class and then they will show them to all grade six	
		... each class will have their inventions displayed in front of	
		their class	
	R	oh that's good that's a great idea	
	Am	And they will write	
		journals	
	R	You see these are good tasks they have an end point	
370		and during the process they're using English ... very nice tasks	
		er ... just one more thing ... you know you gave the music team	
		two stars ... are the stars cumulative from lesson to lesson?	
	Am	... yes and er weekly we will collect the number of stars ... the	
		highest group the group with the highest number of stars are	
		rewarded at the end of the week	
	R	because sometimes I've seen	
		people put stars up and then at the end of the lesson they	
		forget them	
	Am	no we have records	
380	R	you have records	
	Am	and each	
		group will count how many stars they have ... they count	
	R	and	
		what do they get if they win?	
	Am	they are competing with each	
		other	
	R	just a race	
	Am	er ... certificates at the week and a simple gift	
		for the children	
390	R	and this is school policy?	
	Am	no ... just grade six	
	R	just	
		grade six ... oh good ... I'm very interested in how teachers use	
		competition and cooperation at the same time and I noticed	
		you used this in group work ... the group cooperating together	
		but competing with another group	
	Am	yes	
	R	this is a very motivating	
		thing to do ... in my experience different students from	
400		different contexts love it and you did that nicely where ... you	

Field Notes	Participants: Neil (R), Amal (T), Grade 6,	Date and Time: 10 th March, 11.30am
Details of Activity: Class Observation –Model Girls School A		
Contemporaneous Notes		
<p>T starts with a quiet focus at the start of the lesson, letting the students wait, she begins saying ‘Salaam Aleikum’ . The students reply ‘was aleikum Salaam’ – this is different, most classes start with the ritual rather than this more overtly Arabic and Islamic greeting.</p> <p>T gets Ss to sit down on the floor in a circle. She asks them to hold hands, close their eyes and think for one minute. (about what?). She is holding a bright green and yellow cuddly toy – she talks gently and soothingly ‘think about something special or important – when you’re ready open your eyes’. ‘Are we ready?’ ‘OK eyes on me.’ T throws the cuddly toy to one girl, saying ‘What did you thought of?’ – she self corrects ‘What did you think of?’. The students reply different types of chocolate’, ‘an electronic dog’. T asks the Ss to choose someone to throw the cuddly toy to, and she must then describe what she thought of, one S describes a ‘machine that tells you when to pray’.</p> <p>[A knock at the door, an older girl comes in and speaks in Arabic, T then says “Fatima, can you get your things you need to see the social worker’.]</p> <p>they continue - Fatima starts ‘I think ...’ T stops her, gestures behind her (past) and Fatima restarts ‘I thought about a machine that helps animals’. T asks the other Ss ‘What do you think?’, but they seem reluctant to continue – [perhaps they need a more focused question]. Other suggestions include ‘a machine that would help animals talk’, a machine that would let us go the past and see dinosaurs’.</p> <p>[There is some good discussion, it is T directed but the Ss speak quite confidently and fluently – a nice chatty experience]</p> <p>T explains that they will go to their desks and consider inventions in the future, e.g what will a mobile phone look like in 200 years – she uses Ss names, ‘try to think about it in the future’ and she gives the Ss a time to think, asking them to be creative. After some probing, they then come up with ideas – mobiles will ... talk by themselves, have arms and legs, we’ll be able to use ot to get any information we want, there will be pictures with sound – T rephrases ‘so we can see people and hear them’.</p> <p>T then asks R what he thinks, so I speak saying ‘mobiles will be very small like a button’. She moves on’ What do you think, Mahra?’ who replies ‘it will be in our brain like surgery’. T then rounds up the discussion asking Ss to go back to their places quietly. They do so.</p> <p>T hands out a worksheet with 4 questions and gives one questions of reach group to discuss and write an answer to – saying ‘you have 3 minutes’.</p> <p>[The worksheet focuses on ‘might/may’ – suggested use, but the previous discussion used ‘will’. Like Hessa T seems to feel the need to comment as they work – ‘use English, Fatima’. She then stops the lesson ‘I forgot to tell you something’, and asks them to use ‘might/may – perhaps a written example might be of help – but still the introductory discussion used a different form].</p> <p>The Ss have one piece of paper per group to encourage discussion, and they are very involved discussion quietly – T monitors quietly. After they seem to have finished, T asks the Ss to read their work to the rest of the class who should listen and write [A kind of cross group, jigsaw activity]. One S reads – T paraphrases [does she need to do this – it devalues the Ss talk]. Then ‘Why is it a good ideas, Fatima?’ – S justifies her idea and T comments – [perhaps she could have asked other Ss to comment, rather than T doing it]. She then asks the 2nd group to read their idea. [There is a problem, the Ss can’t hear the reader, let alone write what she says.] So T reads instead – great language! It’s a full description of a washing machine in the future. [I’m not sure the Ss → Ss reading – dictating – works – they can’t understand each other]. T explains that on the worksheet automobiles = cars, but I can’t tell if she said it equals cars or other modes of transport – anyway her explanation is confused.</p> <p>T gets the Ss to improvise their answers to each other, but again the target language is ‘will be’ - looking at the worksheet one can see that the questions are formed like ‘what will be like? How will you use them?’ but T suggest that they use ‘may/might’ for the answer so a confusing model of language for the students.</p> <p>T then comes to me and tells me that she has changed the plan and that the class wanted to do something different, they’ve made inventions and they are going to explain them to each other (team to team).</p>		

- Team 1 – stand up and show made up robot and describe it and what it does it is a machine to help animals fly up to trees to get what they want - a mouse on a frame tied to some balloons. T asks the other Ss to comment ask questions, then asks the Ss what are they made of and the SS describe it.
- Team 2 – ‘miss, it’s not complete – ‘it’s OK just explain’ – and this follows the same pattern as above.

[T improvises well because 2 groups aren’t ready, so she asks them to write on the board and describe to the rest of the class – it’s a submarine for Ss to go under the water to escape from teachers when they haven’t done the homework. ‘Submarine’ – one girls wants to know what the word means – T tells her – she could have turned this back to the Ss]

{sometimes there’s an issue with timing on such open tasks – 2 groups haven’t finished yet, what can we do so they’re all ready and prepared at the same time – i.e. to keep them together. }

[So they’ve made an invention, spoken about it – could they go on to do some kind of guided writing about it?]

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1	R	you were disappointed with that	
	Am	yes because when they speak	
		in Arabic they have wider thoughts but when they speak in	
		English they are afraid to use the English ... maybe because they	
		are thinking in Arabic and trying to translate it into English	
	R	yes	
		well you gave them time which is a good thing to do ... they do	
		need time to A think of things then B translate or try to ... so ...	
		you did well not to come with answers very quickly ... so that	
10		was good	
	Am	I had the idea of holding hands ... because ... they are	
		I already noticed still there is ... like ... they aren't communicating	
		well with each other ... so I don't want to show them that they	
		are enclosed boundaries with each other	
	R	well it helps them	
		[bond]	
	Am	[and] they are all sharing the same feeling at the same time and	
		thinking together ... even if we are having different things we	
		talk together here saying the same things	
20	R	and I noticed at the	
		start of the lesson and I noticed in your plan that they come from	
		music?	
	Am	art	
	R	art and they're sometimes a bit excited ... the first	
		minute you calmed them down you kind of just stood there and	
		got them to look at you and waited that's a good idea ... waiting	
		is one of the best ... ways of managing a class not too long and	
		it did make a difference ... they were calm and quiet ... it's	
		interesting you say that felt that they don't talk to each other	
30		or communicate ... as an outsider coming in I thought they did ...	
		but that's just... maybe I don't know the class but to me they	
		seemed to communicate quite well	
	Am	... er they are trying to ... but	
		because they are competing each other ... they have this	
		sensitivity towards each other ... sometimes they would refuse	
		to work with ... less able students	
	R	yes this is a common problem	
		with groups I don't want to work with her ... for one reason or	
		another ... maybe it's personal or work	
40	Am	... that's why even on the	

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		floor ... I just didn't ask them ... I did ask two students to move	
		from their places ... and they weren't happy ... they made funny	
		faces but they did move ... after that they were satisfied when	
		they were talking	
	R	... yes I know they all want to ... it's the same	
		with the women at college they always want to be with their	
		friends ... it's up to you ... the advantage of them being with their	
		friends is they're more likely to talk more and do the activity	
		more motivatedly but if you want to mix them you can ... but	
50		you have to kind of make sure it's ... [random]	
	Am	[??????] because ... it's a	
		lifelong skill ... they have to communicate with each other ...	
		with different people whether they like them or not	
	R	indeed yes	
		... that's true ... and I think if you did it fairly or randomly or	
		moved them ... every week or two weeks they wouldn't mind	
		so much but once they're stuck in their friendship groups ... they	
		don't like to move out of them	
	Am	yes	
60	R	It's always a problem and it	
		depends so much on the students from a particular class ... part	
		of your ... teaching them as you said is to teach them how to	
		learn is to work with people they don't know or don't know very	
		well ... or have lower or better abilities because that's life	
	Am	in the	
		other class ... we are having the same problem ... particularly	
		with one specific student Amna's solution was to let the student	
		work in isolation while the rest of the class are working in	
		groups ... but since yesterday she's working within the group	
70	R	is	
		she? did you put her back in the group then yesterday?	
	Am	yes	
	R	there	
		you go	
	Am	she refused to work and I told her OK it's your decision	
		whether you would like to share or not ... you are in the group	
		... for the first five minutes she didn't do anything then she	
		started to talk	
	R	sure she got board ... what's the point of just	
80		sitting there ... yeah just get on with it ... that's interesting ... the	

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		trouble is I think ... just isolating somebody it doesn't encourage them very much	
	Am	it does with this girl	
	R	does it?	
	Am	because she wants	
		to ... she struggles but she wants to do everything on her own	
		Sse doesn't want to listen to others or share ideas or anything	
		... but since yesterday she's working	
	R	... well OK keep an eye on	
90		her	
	Am	she's upset with me but she's working	
	R	well that's OK	
	Am	she's	
		irritated with me but she's working and I'm satisfied	
	R	that's good	
		good	
	Am	OK you'll get used to it and you'll speak to Miss Amal again	
	R	well you know ...we're not ... there to be friends we're not there to be liked all the time ... sometimes we have to make a decision	
100		for the child that's in their interest that may not like ... they'll get over it ... I know sometimes beginning teachers think their job is to be liked	
	Am	no	
	R	if you're liked then that's good ... but sometimes there is a distance you have to ... your older you're more experienced ... of course you can't be their friends really ... you have a responsibility as well so ... that's interesting OK	
	Am	er ...	
		... maybe I tried to be more closer to the students so I just sit	
110		with them on the floor ... sharing the same ideas learning the same things with them so ... I'm always trying to remind them that we are in the class one family I'm trying to show them that	
	R	... I thought they contributed and had ideas ... it was an interesting way how you let them choose each other by throwing the cuddly toy ... and they could choose who to speak to ... which takes you out ... you know you can help encourage or prompt but it means that it's not always coming to you which is a nice thing they can take over and if they get better at it and more used to it they'll do it more ,, and they can control the	
120		conversation	

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	Am	they were trying to choose their friends ... it is the first	
		time so I just let it go ... maybe the other times I will just ask	
		them close your eyes throw the toy	
	R	see who it gets OK good I	
		mean there are all sorts of ways to do it er ... they their	
		ideas they came up you were asking them to what do you think	
		... and that's a difficult question to answer because it's open ...	
		what do you think ... I don't know ... so they did well to be able	
		to answer that ... sometimes they did sometimes they can't ...	
130		if you try an open question and you get no response try a more	
		focused one ... is that a good idea? ... why? sometimes they need	
		a push an idea to prompt ... but I thought they ... you know ... it	
		was nice they had ideas a machine that would help animals to	
		talk ... that let us go to the past to see dinosaurs	
	Am	I thought of	
		expanding their ideas by asking other people if they can think	
		about their friends ideas ...	
	R	... I thought they were quite confident	
		fluent considering they were in a second language and informal	
140		talk ... it was nice ... and not always through you it wasn't always	
		teacher asks question, student answers teacher judges the	
		answer ... it was quite natural ... and then you asked them to go	
		to their desks and you said but before you go we'll ... and you	
		used a mobile phone in two hundred years as an example ... for	
		the four questions on the worksheet didn't you?	
	Am	yes	
	R	So there	
		was a lot of discussion about that and they came up with some	
		good ideas ... again you had to give them some time to think and	
150		you did so they did ... er ... I think be careful that you don't	
		always rephrase your answers ... if they come up with something	
		don't feel you always need to say Fatima says and you make it	
		simpler or something ... sometimes it's OK just to let what they	
		say and move on to the next one ... so it doesn't come through	
		you all the time ... and then they went back to their groups and	
		there were four groups and you allocated one question to each	
		group ... and that was nice they talked and worked on it quite ...	
		concentrated weren't they?	
	Am	yes	
160	R	and what was interesting you	

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		had to ... interrupt them to insist on the language right didn't you?	
	Am	yes	
	R	... the difficulty I think with this is you've got here use might or may but here you've got will ... so you've got a little bit of contradiction	
	Am	hmm hmm	
	R	and the other point when you did you modeled it	
170	Am	I didn't use	
	R	you modeled it using will when you were talking about the mobile phone so you need to be very careful ... I know it's really hard ... sometimes because you ... will	
		Is for sure obviously and might and may are possibilities ... you have to be very careful ... what language am I using? is this the one I'm noting? so there was a little bit ... of confusion about what should they use but you stopped them and told them so they did ... what that because they were writing it will?	
	Am	yes	
180	R	yes	
		So ... maybe a good rule of thumb ... a good straight rule is it's not the case in general English but if you're teaching it if the question has one form then the answer should have the same the question has what will washing machines be like? they will be like this ... what might they be like? Might opens up much broader because possibilities ... there are more possibilities than certainties ... so what might washing machines be like? how might you use them? then they would use that form in the answer ... but you were aware of that which is a good thing	
190		you corrected for it in the class ... the worst thing you could do is just sort of ignore it ... it's easy to do ... oh I've made a mess of which language it should be ... er I'll just let them carry on and then you find yourself teaching will ... which is the point of the lesson of course ... how did you feel it went? ... you almost wanted to cross group didn't you? ... because you gave them one sheet of paper to encourage them to work together how did they? ... and then you wanted them to stand up and read it and dictate it to the other groups how did you feel that worked?	
200	Am	I think it was ... good but maybe if one group had the	

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		paper ... they are always practicing listening and writing at the same time ... er don't know it was	
	R	did they note ... did the other groups note down what the others said?	
	Am	yes	
	R	they did erm ...	
		'cos it's a bit tricky one person reading and the others and them speaking and the other listening ... because unless you do a dictation two or three times but that gets boring ... so you have to do it only once – it's enough	
210	Am	but ... I noticed that for example ... when I was reading pioneers one of them was writing and the other students were telling him the answer again	
	R	oh OK	
	Am	listening and telling their friends	
	R	so they were helping each other	
	Am	yes ... and that was what made me yes I don't need to repeat it	
220	R	OK good ... the only time you had to repeat it was the last girl who read it really fast didn't she? And I couldn't understand what she said ... but I was impressed what they wrote ... when you read it and I could understand it I thought ... they've done a lot here it's interesting like a white button and a red button and if you used this ... they've come up with a lot of ideas and a lot of language ... so I like the idea of cross [grouping and sharing]	
	Am	[they have a star system] in the school	
	R	sorry	
230	Am	they use stars to be accepted in the groups	
	R	oh are they ... they were good	
	Am	yeah	
		one	
	R	one star ... Is that Fatima?	
	Am	no Noura	
	R	it's good	
	Am	but she's still quiet	
	R	ah she keeps it to herself does she ... but it's nice you try and do that to try and share the information in the feedback because	
240			

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		it's more interesting say than ... do four that would take a long time ... and then how do you you can't share the information afterwards	
	Am	yes	
	R	they just think ... about it so that's a nice idea	
	Am	the	
		adaptation just happened	
	R	did it?	
	Am	the adaptation of the lesson	
250		plan ... because they came and they were eager and I said OK they are confident they can do it let them speak	
	R	... so what	
		did you plan to do originally?	
	Am	... er ... thinking of a new invention	
		... two hundred years ... because they have it in their work book they have to write it so instead of using the book and I thought they can cut it with each other try to design their own posters then they can do it in the workbook	
	R	I think sometimes you have	
260		to respond to the situation as it is	
	Am	and I was really proud of them	
		that they were able to stand and speak about their inventions	
	R	yes weren't they ... and you asked ... you got the others to ask them questions which they did you asked them questions about what it's made of and how you use it and they ... speak and answer well compared to lots of other students	
	Am	I didn't know	
		that they wanted to do it or otherwise I'd have wrote the grammar down	
270	F	ah yeah ... well take some pictures of their inventions ... especially that one that takes the mice up ... it's a really good idea ... no I think ... I don't know how far you want to go with the unit but now that they've talked about it ... if I was teaching the class I'd try and do some guided writing ... show Them a picture of an invention I might have made and say this is what is does and this is what it's made of then they have a model ... and they've talked about it and once you've talked about it it's easier to write and then a group writing what it's for what it's made of 'cos it would be nice to do that ... get them	
280		to write about it too	

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	Am	maybe with their own inventions that they	
		make they can write up their paragraphs we will model one on	
		the board	
	R	and it's quite structured ... here's a paragraph that says	
		what it's for here's another one that says how it's made and I'm	
		sure they could do it ... to a good extent ... I like the idea of	
		making these things ... it's really nice .. they don't get the chance	
		to do this in ... the regular government schools so I think ...	
		there's a lot of writing here what did you explain	
290		automobiles are?	
	Am	transport	
	R	They're just cars ... but they're very	
		old fashioned American way of saying cars ... if you lived in about	
		1956 you'd call it an automobile ... I don't think they do that	
		much now	
	Am	that's what Asma told me	
	R	Asma did! ... If one of	
		your students happened to be in an English speaking part of	
		the world and said look at that automobile .. it sounds very old	
300		fashioned to me ... very ... she emailed me the other day for	
		foreign words in English ... I don't know why	
	Am	... this is our English	
		week and we are trying to do different things	
	R	OK ... fine ... fine	
		there ... the presentation at the end were good I like the idea	
		of presentations ... whether oral or just written because it gives	
		a product and you can put it on the wall ... you can put it in a	
		Folder ... video it ... camera take a picture of it	
	Am	they will build	
310		their own invention corner ... and they will display their	
		Inventions ...	
	R	... I mean this one girl said when you were asking	
		the different teams to present miss it's not complete ... that's	
		good ... they have a lot within them and it worries me that in	
		about ten years time when they come to the college they'll be	
		much better than the people who come to the college now ...	
	Am	... no I think here they know exactly what they want ... and it's	
		easier for them	
	R	OK ... overall it's nice so your teaching all of	
320		Amna's classes at the moment are you?	

Field Notes	Participants: Amal (T) Neil (R) Yr 6	Date and Time: 24 th March – 11.30am
Details of Activity: Class Observation - Model Girls School A		
Contemporaneous Notes		
<p>I enter late ... T is at the front of the class, talking about USE trade – on the4 w/b is the agenda of the lesson and the words ‘Can we live alone?’; Meanwhile, she is asking questions, e.g. What do we import from China, Japan etc. Where do we import oranges from? The Ss are putting arms up and answering.</p> <p>One Ss says – ‘miss, we can buy from the USA inventions for doctors and nurses’ – T paraphrases back to her ‘you mean medical equipment’. She continues, ‘So, after all this, do you think we can live alone?’ Some Ss say yes, so T asks her to justify her opinion. She says, if we don’t deal with countries, we won’t know about their inventions, so we won’t need them. T discusses this and says ‘without these things, we’d all be back in the desert’. Discussion ensues, there’d be no school’.</p> <p>Then T breaks up the discussion and asks Ss to discuss in groups and write down ideas onto A3 paper to answer the question “Why is it important to know other countries?” Ss discuss and make notes, T monitors, helping one group in particular, she admonishes one group (pioneers) for speaking Arabic, but she moves from group to group helping them write their ideas. [I go around to see and the groups of Ss are writing things like ‘fashion, ‘food’ and what is interesting is the sense of we need all these things and we have nothing to offer ourselves – I find it a little sad].</p> <p>After about 10 minutes, T asks each group to come up with one idea orally – one group says ‘technology’. A asks another group to add to this, she write ‘import’ on the board and says ‘pioneers, what about you?’ ‘we need it for development so we can develop like other countries’. T repeats their phrase. Another group says ‘education’. [I need to question T here, she generally refers to whole groups, rather than individuals – a mix might be better – and should she write their ideas on the w/b, rather than keep it oral?]. One group says ‘fashion’, so asks ‘Is fashion important?’ – A short discussion follows, then one S asks ‘what means fashion?’ Another agrees with this question. T doesn’t give an answer, but asks ‘Have you seen fashion TV?’ [A simple definition in Arabic, or let a S do it might be better]. [It’s developing into a bit of a Q and A, with a sense of where is this leading, too much preamble and establishing of background knowledge, we should be onto a task by now. This means there’s either a lack of planning, or there’s too much of a Q and A focus anyway].</p> <p>[Somehow, as I’m writing, T gets into a discussion defining ‘import’ and ‘export’ – she explained their meanings, but could have checked in L1.]</p> <p>[Again, I notice she refers to Ss by their group name, e.g. spoons could you?’ which allows Ss to avoid questions and responsibility – by now the class seem ‘dead’ - one girl – illustrating the comment says ‘to help us when we are in trouble’, and then another mentions ‘like Palestine, we need to help them if we didn’t know we couldn’t help them’. A continues, asking them to think in groups for tomorrow import and export in the UAE and shows a booklet they will make listing imports/exports for certain countries. One S says ‘Miss, can I use Arabic? A says ‘try to speak English. It turns out she want to check the meaning of what they will have to do. Nevertheless, the S says in English ‘So, I draw a flag of Saudi and write it’. T replies, yes, now decide in groups what you will write about. T hands out booklets, ‘start now’ but the bell goes ‘OK, we’ll continue next lesson.’ [Overall, too much teacher talk and Q and A, they could have gone on to the book task sooner – an issue is: how will they find out the information?</p>		

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1	R	so anyway ... talk me through the lesson ... 'cos I was waiting out here and I saw Sally and she took me in with Amna so I missed the beginning what were you doing at the beginning?	
	Am	at the beginning they had to er ... solve a puzzle	
	R	right	
	Am	which all	
		they had a picture of the world map ... they had to discuss about different continents ... and this is a revision of what they are covering in social studies ... the whole unit is related to social studies	
10		studies	
	R	it's nice how it all ties together	
	Am	Er ... after talking about the continents we started to talk about living in isolation and how can we help each other or how can we live without others' needs ... without the needs of others ... er ...	
	R	do you mean on a personal level or on a ...	
	Am	I started with them from the class ... to countries ... just to let them visualize it and think about	
20		It ... can they live in isolation in the class or can the city of ***** ... can either live in isolation from other countries? Then we tried to discuss the importance of communicating with other countries ... I tried to elicit from them as much as I could because as I told you they already covered this is social studies ... the difficulty is coming again and again with the limited vocab	
	R	they didn't know import did they or export?	
	Am	no	
	R	that surprised me	
30	Am	they know the words in Arabic but they are waiting for me to translate	
	R	ah	
	Am	or having the word but not sure if it's the right word or not	
	R	Yes I thought so ... they must know this in Arabic if they've done it in social studies and er ...	
	Am	they came ... to me to ask if trouble is equivalent to problem if it's the same word ... does it mean the same thing?	
40			

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	R	difficult to say ... depends all on the context	
		that they're both in ... trouble ... why did they ask you about	
		trouble?	
	Am	er ... their ... example is if a country is in trouble other	
		countries can help	
	R	oh I see can help I see ... what ... 'cos I thought	
		... I was amazed ... because you were talking about import and	
		export and then after a little conversation about import two of	
50		the kids said what does import mean ... and I thought they knew	
		it ... so afterward they said they didn't and you kind of gave a	
		... you gave a definition ... you described what it is ... is there any	
		reason why you can't say tell me ... tell me what it is in Arabic	
		like that? ... and try and make that link	
	Am	it would be easier but I	
		dunno with my gestures I thought it might be more clarified	
	R	yeah I would have thought so but ... don't be worried or	
		concerned about ... a term like that if ... if they can ... if you think	
		they can come up with it in Arabic and tell you then let them ...	
		it's quicker and then they all know and you can move on ... er	
60		... I mean I know there's a thing in this school guarding against	
		using of Arabic too much ... but I think sometimes it's far easier	
		if you've got a difficult word just say it and move on	
	Am	yes	
	R	OK	
	Am	I was planning about the countries' capitals ... but the discussion	
		took more time than was planned .. so we will save itfor next	
		lesson and we will just brainstorm what the students know	
		about different countries and what can I build on that	
		knowledge ... and start from their knowledge ... from what they	
70		covered in social science or from their [general knowledge]	
	R	[so they've] chosen four	
		countries each group has chosen a country er ... and I think it's a	
		nice group activity to make a little booklet like a little passport	
		... and my question one question I wrote down where would	
		they get the information from? just background knowledge?	
	Am	from their background knowledge and from what they covered	
		in social studies ... then we can build their English up ...	
	R	... what kind of knowledge are you looking for ... just imports and	
		exports?	
80	Am	right now it's import and export ... then which countries	

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		do they think can contribute best to the UAE	
	R	... yes that would be	
		a nice thing to do ... if it's just imports and exports make sure	
		you know in advance a list of what each of those four... 'cos they	
		told you ... the four countries ... more or less five or six things	
		they import and export a lot of ... in case they get stuck	
	Am	that's	
		what I was doing on my laptop ... yes checking ... on the internet	
		on top imports and exports for common countries	
90	R	has your	
		laptop got Encarta on it your college laptop?	
	Am	... er I think so yes	
	R	and mine has ... I only found it at the weekend but if you look at	
		that you could perhaps project ... there must be an information	
		page for each country ... you could project it and look at the	
		different types of information ... for an example country not one	
		of the four they've got and then ask them to go and find that	
		kind of information so they've got import export but there could	
		be population ... religion ... kinds of religion or something like	
100		this ... you could really expand that I think ... it's an interesting	
		topic because they'd be interested in it as well	
	Am	... er yeah ...	
	R	depends how much you have to be tied to the curriculum	
	Am	within	
		the curriculum you have to talk about products importing and	
		exporting them ... where does products begun or were invented	
		or discovered or ... origins of the product ... and the next will	
		be reading which I'm trying to break out about the invention	
		of movies ... the discovery of pop corn and blue jeans	
110	R	(laughs)	
	Am	I was reading them and they felt boring I was thinking about the	
		students ... how could they ... finish pre-reading? and I really	
		didn't find a purpose for this reading	
	R	so you're going to find new	
		readings different ones that might be more interesting for	
		them?	
	Am	... er I can adapt these readings ... with the same	
		information because ... they have to transfer some of the	
		information to their workbook ... with similar information but	
120		may be on a different theme	

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	R	you could do computers ... cars ... TV	
		there's all sorts	
	Am	... I'm having students interested in Japanese culture so I'm trying to think of subjects related to their interests	
	R	Nissan? they make lots of things though ... that would be fairly easy then wouldn't it? ... or they also make lots of toys don't they? that'd be interesting	
	Am	I know they make animation ... people are crazy about them	
130	R	what are those little things ... er ... the toys ... the virtual pets do you know what I mean?	
	Am	they used to be the fashion a few years ago but not anymore ... nowadays they are more excited with the mp4 and the mp3	
	R	amazing	
	Am	... I dunno movable playstations ... they have now the moveable ones without being plugged into electricity it's with a screen and you can take it anywhere	
140	R	ahh ... I don't know ... but those are the sorts of products ... and what are those robot dogs the Japanese make? ... there are all sorts of weird things it's really interesting ... anyway ... er ...	
	Am	in general this one seemed more successful to make it more custom and brainstorming and everything ... I tried to build up their ideas ... I just wanted to know their ...	
	R	I liked the discussion when you asked them to write on the A3 ... some of them are a bit fussy though and one group you know they had to draw very nice lines ... they don't need to do they? ... just write it down it doesn't need to be beautiful ... typical girls you know	
150	Am	yes ... she's an artist	
	R	is she?	
	Am	yes and she likes everything to be neat	
	R	but that may be one reason that it took longer ... girls far more than boys like everything to be ... just so ... er ... but you moved around nicely and helped them with ideas ... I was quite impressed with some of their ideas actually ... fashing ... there was one group	
160			

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		discussing how to spell fashion whether it was F-A-C-H or F-A-S-H so I let them discuss it which was quite interesting ... erm ...	
	Am	style girls	
	R	sorry?	
	Am	style girls	
	R	is that their name? style girls oh well	
	Am	and	
		they are interested in fashion	
	R	... erm ... what else ... one thing	
170		that struck me watching it is how you don't really refer to the students by their individual names very much ... you often call	
		because it sounds every strange you know when you start	
		talking to spoons	
	Am	(laughs)	
	R	... OK spoons ... spoons pioneers ... I	
		think it's a good idea to have the groups and have a group identity but don't forget to make sure remember they're	
		individuals too within the groups ... so try to address them as	
		Individuals sometimes ... as names by names 'cos otherwise	
180		they might think ... especially if they don't get on with the rest	
		of the group that well ... they might get a bit resentful ... or	
		unhappy about it	
	Am	... er the reason why sometimes I keep with	
		the group names is to make them relax ... then in your group	
		I might choose an individual or let them choose by themselves	
	R	OK so you could say somebody from pioneer group or	
	Am	choose	
		a representative of your group and they can ... but if I started	
		with naming a specific girl she might get nervous	
190	R	She might but	
		they do like to have the individual recognition sometimes of	
		names so that ... particularly if ... you want one student to	
		contribute ... anyway ... er ... what else did I note down? ...	
		... after the initial discussion which was nice and you did the	
		group writing ... I felt that the next discussion ... was a bit .. it	
		was a bit too much question answer question answer	
		particularly when ... well they were almost arguing with you	
		weren't they? ... asking about can the country survive alone and	
		they said yes but you thought no and they said yes we'll go and	
200		live in the desert ... I think you did well to move on from that	

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		because you could go on forever just talking about that sort of thing ... er ...	
	Am	the next discussion was planned to be on the floor ... but I felt not enough time er ... room for the girls and I didn't want to waste time moving the desks so I just completed it ... I wanted them to discuss with three others to share their ideas ... without me	
	R	I don't think that quite worked ... I know I felt you were there a lot sort of leading the discussion and getting them to ... I mean ... you were asking about fashions as well ... er ... is fashion important and some said yes and some said no ... er I think that there was feeling not too much but a little bit that your questioning was getting in the way a bit too much I think a bit more ... sometimes it's a really good idea if you want to do that is to not say much ... and there's a silence and a space and after a while they will start talking to each other ... er ... and I spoke about this to Hessa and Hessa said she hates silence she can't stand quiet ... so what happens is that you need to be quiet Hessa so that they can talk but she doesn't like quiet so	
210		she just keeps talking ... sometimes as a teacher you need to be quiet	
	Am	yes	
	R	it's a bit difficult because we're so used to being the knowledge we know things so we have to talk about it ... and sometimes it's better for them they construct their own knowledge [by talking]	
	Am	[hear them]	
	R	sorry?	
	Am	need to hear them ... not just talk	
230		to them ... sometimes you need to be (???) with them	
	R	that's true	
		you do ... yes ... it's a shame you'd just started that little booklet when the bell went ... there so short these lessons ... a double lesson would be better and you'd have had that done and it would be a very coherent piece of work	
	Am	yes	
	R	from the	
		talk and the brainstorming and then ... they can make their booklets ... do you think and it's just occurred to me it's one	
240		booklet per group ... how many girls in a group six?	

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	Am	six	
	R	it's just a	
		thought that that might be ... not enough involvement for	
		example if one or two girls dominate ... maybe two or three of	
		them will not get much work to do	
	Am	er...	
	R	[keep an eye on them]	
	Am	I've been thinking of having eight groups ... each three girls will	
		work together	
250	R	aha yes	
	Am	my concern is with the students' level ...	
		because in each group I will have maybe one or two brilliant	
		students ... and the rest need support ... so how could I divide	
		them fair enough ... with enough in each group that was the	
		problem	
	R	difficult ... it's not easy but er ... on approach is to make	
		sure you keep your eyes open and make sure that they are all	
		doing stuff and not just sitting back ... if you could give them a	
		role or if you see anybody you think oh she's not doing much	
260		... get her in get her involved ... er ... I know myself when I've	
		done things like this in the past ... you've got the four groups and	
		I always use groups and I always use four groups or often do and	
		within four groups is two ... so a pair here and a pair there and	
		they can share ideas and talk about it but they're making a	
		separate product so that there's enough involvement ... er... so	
		this is one of your ... activities communicative activities?	
	Am	yes	
	R	yes	
		they were good students for doing that and they'll talk ... so you	
270		had a nice bit of introduction and brainstorming and sort of	
		making sure they know their background knowledge and tying it	
		in with Social Studies and then discussion and writing it down	
		and I think that works quite well ... and I think they're a good	
		group for you to do it with because they're not afraid of talking	
		to each other	
	Am	yes	
	R	and working together	
	Am	yes	
	R	they're quite good at	
280		that	

Field Notes	Participants: Amal (T), Neil (R), Grade 6	Date and Time: 31 st March 11.15
Details of Activity Class Observation – Model Girls School A		
Contemporaneous Notes		
<p>On the w/b: “A Small World” – agenda and date. T asks SS to stand in the centre of the room and tells them there will be a ‘Chinese Whisper’ [noticeably she uses Ss’ names more already]. T starts the whisper and off it goes around the class. The SS are quiet and observant as this happens ‘Manal, stop talking, please’. She’s very formal and keeps close control of the class. {The activity uses the whole class, so they have to wait either for the whisper to come to them or for it to reach them}. [What about in groups – make it more a competition to see the different iterations the original sentence can be changed to by the end?] The phrase that was whispered is ‘Inventions change out lives’. Ss go back to their tables; T asks them how and for them to give examples? There are some nice answers, e.g. electric lights – help us see at night. T pushes Ss to give details and they do well, she then asks Ss to link inventions to countries ‘electric items from Japan, etc. – [it might be an idea to put this on the w/b, especially as they may need to refer to it]. Al Yazia says ‘We import petrol from the USA’.. A asks her to ‘think about that’, so there is a pause. T says again, ‘think’. [Puts her in the spotlight a bit]. The S then says ‘We export petrol to the USA’.</p> <p>T then gives instructions for the group activity. Each table has details of country/import/export in a text – and each group has one piece of paper in which they must put the details of 4 countries (1 per table). T monitors, encouraging English. [Is one piece of paper enough per group? – In terms of all Ss being involved and active? T tries to address this by having a quick word with each group, asking them to change the writer]. T rings a small bell, she keeps at the front of the class and Ss change round and go to another table. [How did she judge this? A preset time or the feel of it? Perhaps it could be done in pairs, swapping role each time – as it is it’s easy for the dominant to dominate and for the passive to be passive.]</p> <p>As the texts have 4 inventions, T could ask each group to do texts A for France, USA, China etc, then either present or poster the ones they have information for, or each group of 2/3 could have 1 text which they need to get certain information from and present that in a poster. {The other issue is the differential finishing of groups – what to do? A doesn’t let the situation last too long and sends them back to their original tables.] There’s now a plenary – Q and A where T asks Ss things like ‘Which inventions did you like most, she asks several Ss individually, then moves onto ‘What is interesting about this?’ So T shows a poster of the UAE and products and asks for some sentences about the picture. One S says, ‘We can import from the UAE oil’. T asks S to think sp she changes ‘import’ to ‘export’, T writes the sentence on the w/b ‘UAE exports oil’ [needs ‘The’]. She goes on ‘UAE exports dates to other countries’ ‘Oil was discovered in 1939 in Abu Dhabi’ [What about imports from?] This is a model for what T wants the Ss to make for the different countries they have just read about. Ss are now either making a poster or writing sentences [T needs to take care that they don’t copy from the original text]. She could leave Ss with the notes that they have made [It’s not clear if the poster is about products and countries of just products only. I think the task could have been conceptualized better to the SS – as I’m don’t think they are doing the same thing. In fact there were no instructions as such, but rather more on an assumption they knew what they were doing].</p>		

Field Notes	Participants: Amal (t), Neil (R) Yr 6, Amna	Date and Time: 7th April 11.15am
Details of Activity Class Observation - Model Girls School A		
Contemporaneous Notes		
<p>T writes some verbs on w/b – ‘discover, import, export, invent, wear and grow’. T tells the Ss they have 2 minutes in groups to decide on the past / past participle. The Ss have to complete a table to show base verb, past and past participle. Ss get to work quickly and assiduously, with some mixed code muttering – then ‘finished, miss’. Shortly after, T rings a bell and she asks groups to change cards to ‘check each other’. Unlike Badreya, T moves all around the room and guides the Ss’ feedback from several different places. She asks Ss 1 at a time to write the answers on the w/b [good, clear, written S to S feedback, the SS are very quiet, but watching and participating by correcting the other groups’ papers. The first 4 answers are the same regular. The student who write ‘grow’ on the w/b gets the past tense wrong – so T asks the class to check it and one S corrects it to ‘grew’. T then elicits the scores for each group and puts them on the w/b – scores range and group who got it all right get 2 stars and clapped.</p> <p>T asks Ss to think about this sentence and writes ‘Americans finished the first electronic computer in 1942, highlighting and eliciting words that make up subject, verb object and extra information. [Subject she elicits first, but would verb be better?] She tells the class ‘it’s active, can we change it to passive?’ She asks a S to do this. [The class are so quiet, is it because she’s quite severe?] The Ss writes the passive sentence correctly, T checks why she wrote ‘was finished’ as was is in the past, and the S replies because the first sentence is in the past. She hands out a worksheet for Ss to do in pairs [There is a nice development logic to the lesson with good linking between parts]. {T then mixes some Ss around ‘Noura I want you to move to ...’ and Reem, I want you to move to ...’ I wonder why?}.</p> <p>[Ss quietly work in pairs as I mingle, some are using the extra information after the passive, rather than the agent who did it, e.g. ‘Fireworks were invented in 1932’ not ‘fireworks were invented by the Chinese’] As the Ss start to finish, T asks Ss to clear the w/b and S write individually on the w/b. Manal, a S, writes ‘Fire works were invented more than 2,000 years ago’ [good, T picks up on the S writing fireworks as 2 words and leaving off capital ‘F’. [I wonder how T could involve the rest of the class more in this – it’s virtually a private conversation between her and Manal]. After each S has written, T asks ‘Is it correct?’ and (if necessary) asks another S to correct. [There’s a tendency to drop pace and attention here]. A S writes ‘Oil was discovered in Abu Dhabi in 1939, but another S shouts out ‘mistake, was should be were’ [Tdidn’t hear this and didn’t notice or let it go]. She continues, by telling them to write 2 sentences. [About what? Why? T should suggest a topic or an area to write about – obviously the current topic, but it could be narrowed down a bit.] [The lesson seems to have petered out a bit here, T is monitoring – several Ss are still waiting to be checked – do they need to be? [I’m not sure where T is going with this – what will the Ss do with their 2 sentences – what is the aim?]</p> <p>T asks 1 S to write a sentence on the w/b and asks another to write one on the other side [There’s a problem of how to involve the rest of the class – as the other continue to write on the w/b]. Another 2 Ss write sentences. [Empty time – how can she get the others to do something – many SS are passively involved in this – need to give them a stake in the process. How could it be more student-centered?]</p>		

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1	R	it was a bit slow ... I felt the pace dropped towards the end	
	Am	hm	
		hm	
	R	but anyway you tell me what did you think about it?	
	Am	even at	
		the beginning it was ... the game was supposed to be on	
		PowerPoint but because the computer had broken down first	
		I told the students to write the words on the board	
	R	that's OK	
10	Am	instead of the PowerPoint ... er I think they did quite well ... in	
		dealing with them ... er	
	R	I mean it had an explicit grammar focus	
		rather than communication ... looking at base verb past tense	
		past participle it's OK	
	Am	today I tried to focus on pair work instead	
		of group work	
	R	OK	
	Am	er ... I think it worked except for two pairs ... I	
		had two low students sitting in front of each other not doing	
		anything I had to go an encourage them ... some of the pairs	
		were hesitating because they want to be paired with their	
		friends	
	R	yes OK	
	Am	but at the end they tried to do well	
	R	It's always a	
		problem they always want to work with their friends but ... that	
		doesn't mean you should let them ... you know it's for you to	
		decide who you think it is best for them to work ... so that's	
		alright ...	
30	Am	... er...	
	R	but it was noticeably quieter probably because it	
		was in pairs ... although the only part that wasn't was the first ...	
		putting the verbs in ... the categories	
	Am	categorizing the verbs	
	R	Yeah	
	Am	Er ... anyway I think the aim was clear ... [for the adjectives]	
	R	[yeah it was]	
	Am	I think they ... did reach the objectives because they started	
		writing their own sentences and changing them into passive	
40	R	did you think ... that was the last bit when you asked them to	

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		write sentences ... do you think they might have needed some	
		guidance write about this topic or something because it's very	
		broad ... and I know you wanted to when they've written two	
		sentences you wanted them to put them on the board or do	
		something and change them into passive ... but they could have	
		written about anything and they might not have been able to	
		change them ... I don't know if you ... perhaps you could have	
		said here are six verbs if you use one of these then they are	
		more likely to make a active sentence into a passive ... but you	
50		haven't quite finished have you?	
	Am	no	
	R	so what are they going to	
		do with the two sentences?	
	Am	er ... because it's passive for them	
		because the next stage will be using the past to form questions	
		... so I just ... me and Maha decided to give them more	
		practice in grammatical forms before starting moving to the	
		other forms	
	R	what you could do is ... you could make it interesting	
60		if you want to ... when they've written the two sentences ... you	
		could get them to put their names on the papers and they	
		exchange papers and then somebody else has to change the	
		sentences whether it's into passive or questions ... in fact that	
		could be the link ... make them into passives OK ... now can you	
		make them into questions ... if that's the next stage	
	Am	er ... also	
		this part of the project is a speaking assessment because	
	R	is it?	
	Am	yes for the speaking assessment they are supposed to choose a	
70		product or invention and find out about it ... and just do a	
		presentation talking ... using probably the passive we don't want	
		the name of the inventor	
	R	... oh I see so something general that's	
		been invented ...	
	Am	and they are going to be assessed	
	R	are they?	
		how? what criteria will you use?	
	Am	they have fluency	
		accuracy communication and ideas and it's from last	
80		semester ... having the same criteria for speaking and listening	

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		... but except pairing them and doing an interview you can do a presentation	
	R	it's a good idea to vary it ... is Alia back then?	
	Am	yes	
	R you know I thought ... sometimes these things have to be done ... it's not easy to make passive and how it works clear at that level ... it's not used very often anyway ... but I thought the lesson hung together it had a nice structure to it ... it started nice with the categorization and they checked each other so you	
90		did build in some elements of pair work and group work and cross grouping ... so you still managed to make it mainly student centred by getting the students to do stuff ... rather than you taking it over and presenting the language to them ... er ... and the one group got the language right ... it was interesting I thought when you wrote the sentence Americans finished the first electronic computer in 1942 ... and you elicited subject object verb and extra information ... that was that was nice and clear sometimes when you're doing the active and the passive it's easier to focus on the verb first because the verb is	
100		what changes	
	Am	yes	
	R	and from the verb you can see the subject and object usually ... er ... and they were a very quiet class today ... even quieter than usual ... but they did the work OK so ... I think you were right though when you said that in pairs they weren't as sure of that as in groups ... that's fine they just need more practice perhaps ... and also there's more safety in groups you know if it's just two people ... and you make a suggestion and it's wrong then it's a bigger mistake if there are a whole	
110		bunch of other to discuss it ... what else did you do after that ... after the ... American who finished the first electronic computer	
	Am	they considered the worksheet in pairs	
	R	and before that you modeled it didn't you the first one you got a student to write the passive which she did	
	Am	hmm hmm	
	R	fine ... and you asked a concept question ... why it was in the passive and they understood and they explained that then the worksheet which they should do in	
120		pairs ... maybe you can encourage them a bit more in pairs	

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		they were very ... but they're just like that sometimes ... had you moved some? ... why? you moved some of the students didn't you? Noura I want you to sit next to dedededed Reem can you move was there a reason?	
	Am	... er ... no I just moved Mariam and Al Yazia because I had Al Yazia and Salama talking all the time and the two of them are low ability students I know that they will not work they will keep chatting to each other	
	R	so they're	
130		talking ... and it's not task based talking?	
	Am	no	
	R	It's other stuff	
	Am	yes	
	R	but	
		did it work? did it make a difference?	
	Am	yes they started working	
	R	OK good	
	Am	and Al Yazia was working with Manal and she started calling me miss I have a question miss check this	
140	R	I heard ... OK I	
		did wonder why you'd done that ... students work quietly in pairs ... it was interesting as I went round 'cos the first sentence was ... I think they got it wrong ... the first one ... do you know why? ... a lot of them wrote fireworks were invented in whatever the year was	
	Am	without by the Chinese?	
	R	right without	
		the ... it depends which part you want to emphasise ... but the example sentence you changed to ... the first electronic	
150		computer was finished by Americans so you either ...	
	Am	that was	
		finished by Americans by a year	
	R	did you you put it by the year?	
	Am	yes	
	R	oh that one works then ... because there's the direct object and there's the indirect object ... which is the extra information ... er ... sometimes it's possible to choose either to finish the sentence with so they could say ... fireworks were invented by a Chinese cook or fireworks were invented in 1932 ... and it	
160		doesn't really matter if you're just focusing on the passive I	

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		suppose ... but it might explain if a different group got a different answer	
	Am	no they all did the same	
	R	they all did the same one	
	Am	and	
		they all complained ... or most ... saying miss if we have by Chinese cook it won't be passive we know who invented it	
	R	yes	
170		that's right ... er ... well it's still passive you're still using the passive verb but it's only for extra emphasis if you put that information on ... but generally it's good that they know that that they don't need that information because that's the point ... of it ... OK ... and then they wrote their answers on the board fireworks were invented more than two thousand years ago ... I thought that I was pleased that you picked up on the little mistakes ... these are important I know other people let them go the capital F ... the fact that fireworks is one word not two separate ones ... because otherwise if you don't pick up on it they won't and they'll just let things go so it was good ... the only thing was I think ... and I like how you get the students to write the answers and they're good at that and they know that ... they're allowed to do it and to make mistakes and if there is one you get another student to help ... my only questions was ... would be ... it got a bit slow there writing the second sentence this class are good but another class might get really restless	
	Am	OK	
	R	and I don't know how you can do it ... sort of keep them more involved	
	Am	hmm	
190	R	especially of someone's a bit slow writing and you've got ten answers you know ... it could really cause problems ... what do you think you could do about it? is there any way we can get round that?	
	Am	if I elicit the answers orally I can write them ... [but there will be]	
	R	[it'd be quicker]	
	Am	less student involvement	
	R	I know	
	Am	but I want them to build on their confidence and class movement	
200			

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	R	it's a dilemma isn't it? It's a problem ... if you do it	
		quick then ... you can take over and it's teacher centred and you	
		do everything ... or you can let it take the time and the students	
		get involved ... the only thing is how do we get 'cos if you have	
		six or seven answers and six are involved in writing on the board	
		that means there are fourteen or fifteen who don't do anything	
		... I guess the key is to make sure you involve different children	
	Am	... er I try to encourage the rest of the class who are the judges	
	R	yes yes	
210	Am	to check their answers	
	R	check her answer is it right? don't	
		let it go on too long ... OK ... there was an interesting point when	
		one student wrote oil was discovered in Abu Dhabi in 1939 ...	
		and another student said it was a mistake ... you could have	
		picked up on that ...	
	Am	she said were	
	R	she said were and she's	
		wrong it's not a mistake but you could say why do you think it's	
		a mistake? why is it? you know make it a point ... a teaching	
220		point but you could say Reem whatever her name said this is	
		wrong what do you think? let them fight it out and discuss it a	
		bit maybe	
	Am	because they discussed ... this issue later before and	
		they said countable and uncountable ... that's why I just	
	R	passed	
		over it ... OK ... and then they moved on to writing two sentences	
		... maybe a topic or something or use those six verbs or	
		something to narrow it down kind of the lesson sort of ... died a	
		little then	
230	Am	yes	
	R	didn't it? ... some of them had written sentences	
		and needed checking .. and others didn't you were kind of	
		waiting for the bell to go weren't you?	
	Am	(laughs)	
	R	I think	
	Am	because I	
		... with passive even I cannot change to a speaking activity or	
		discussion or anything else	
	R	no it's difficult isn't it? ... it's never	
240		easy to teach ... it's always kind of false the only other thing you	

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		can do is if you might have a very simple text and they have to underline the passives or something ... but they're not actually going to use it very much it's something they need to be aware of I guess ... er ... but then you asked them when they'd written the two sentences you asked them to write a sentence on the board	
	Am	I wanted them to change it	
	R	to change it to the passive	
		and again you had the same problem 'cos a lot of them had lost attention by then I think	
250	Am	I wanted to motivate them ... I wanted to ... to exchange papers and check for each other	
	R	yeah that's a good idea	
	Am	just ... I was modeling and talking	
	R	ah OK apart from that ... I appreciate that it's not easy to do a revision lesson and passive ... my only point would be that make sure you get them involved when you've got others writing on the board and try	
260		sometimes you might want to if you feel it's going slow ... give it some life	
	Am	yes	
	R	you know go on ... partly for you as well because if you think it's going slow then they do more	
	Am	sometimes if I feel ... like they are slowing down I'll stop the lesson let them jump and [break the lesson]	
	R	[oh yeah]	
	Am	but because you are there	
270	R	(laughs)	
	Am	and they are not used to it	
	R	oh you know sometimes they need I mean it's just before lunch right? so they're hungry lack of energy sugar levels low you know sometimes it's a good idea a bit of ... some kind of energy ...	
	Am	I did that with them	
	R	huh?	
	Am	I did that with them	
280	R	good	

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		yeah why not ... you should try teaching the first years at four o' clock they're like this ...	
	Am	they have to jump	
	R	ah it's hard ... but no	
		it's fine Amna sometimes you have to say to yourself the students we have to deal with this ... there's no way it's going to be bam bam bam great activities we just do it ... move on	
	Am	real	
		life (laughs)	
290	R	yeah it's real life and you find you know when you have a full timetable it's not always possible to spend that much time making beautiful activities ... unless you've got it from before ... you're thrown in a class with two minutes notice ... that's what the book's ... for that's what the book's for ... so it's OK ... alright you're doing fine ... did?... did ? Suzanne saw you you last week didn't she?	
	Am	yes	
	R	She hasn't been to see you at another time?	
300	Am	no	
	R	has Sarah been to see Maha?	
	Am	no just me	
	R	just you ... no she's been to see Badreya this morning	
	Am	no I mean in this school	
	R	is Asma back?	
	Am	yesterday yes today no	
	R	...	
310		yesterday but not today	
	Am	today her father had an appointment I think and she went to the hospital	
	R	Yes he's been ill a long time hasn't he? ... OK ... anyway that's fine ... I'm sorry to disappoint you ... it's not week 10	
	Am	we're all tired	
	R	tell me about it! ... yes but you've got a long time to do yet	
320			

Field Notes	Participants: Neil, Amal (T), Asma, Yr 6, Miss S (ADEC advisor)	Date and Time: 14 th April, 11.15am
Details of Activity Class Observation - Model Girls School A		
Contemporaneous Notes		
<p>Straightaway, T hands out some cut out letters for groups to arrange – different words for each group. They spell ‘airplane’, ‘fireworks’, ‘chocolate’ and ‘popcorn’. As the Ss finish, T asks them to clap once and then gets them to relay their words to the rest of the class – elicits they are products and then elicits a few other products. [T asked Manal a question – pushed her to answer and asked her to raise her voice – wonder why?]</p> <p>A links this to imports/exports and elicits important import/export products (e.g. oil, gas, technology, food) [Interesting T tends to echo Ss answers, so when they answer e.g. electronics, she emphasizes the term but indicating she wants more – nearly becomes ‘guess what the teacher’s thinking’.</p> <p>T then tells Ss they will listen to Miss S talk about products from her country, but first they have to do read the names of the products and uses, then match them as they listen to Miss S. The products are authentic material (hand products) from a health shop in South Africa. After this preparatory exercise, Miss S begins her talk, she goes on to talk in detail for about 6 minutes. [Could different groups have different tasks – then creates an opportunity for an information exchange after the listening]. Miss S emphasizes the significant words, through repetition and stress, she also tells the Ss ‘you need to write this’, so although the actual content is authentic, the actual listening text (improvised?) is graded and emphasized through repetition and stress to allow the Ss to access the task. [Did Miss S script this, or is she reacting to signals from the Ss?] The Ss listen to her monologue – she tends to go off topic a little (as in authentic speech, I suppose). [Seems a long time, a lot of effort for a reading and matching – as the Ss don’t process the language or produce any, as they do in group work, i.e. the matching is done silently].</p> <p>T then tells Ss they will have a product, they should compile information in groups, to prepare to make an advert for that product, and then disseminate or present that information the following day. T takes various cleaning products out of a bag and gives them to the Ss. Ss become heavily involved in this group work. [but I wonder if ... some groups needed either a model or some kind of example of list of points they should write about – I go to see, and there is quite a variation in what the different groups have worked on or written about]. [I wonder if there will be an oral aspect amongst the groups prior to the writing, so they talk can scaffold the writing]. T demonstrates a possible poster advert (in the shape of a brainstorm/mindmap).</p> <p>When some students knock on the door, they immediately withdraw on seeing me [it puzzles, and sometimes annoys me, why are there always people knocking on the classroom doors to give messages, or to empty the bins, the cleaners are the worst offenders – there regularly interruptions].</p> <p>T asks one group to show the class their advert plan [but they haven’t had enough time to think and prepare, have they? – probably T could use this busking time for groups to outline their plans. T is really putting them on the spot, as they have not had time and I feel sure that some rehearsal or preparation would help them. [or of course, in plenary they could share some information orally about their respective products].</p> <p>So, a S talks – mumbles – T echoes their comments sometimes, e.g. Mouza said’ [This seems to undercut the Ss own talk]. And so, the group of Ss who are explaining their plan are involved, but as the rest of the class can’t hear [what can we do with the rest of them? Involvement again}. The Ss who are presenting, could be asked to try and remember what they wrote and speak, rather than read – presentation as speaking, not reading. As the bell goes, 2 of the groups have gone up to ‘speak’, so there are 4 left to do {I wonder if will continue next lesson?]</p>		

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1	Am	yes I think it was good in general it was a revision of the whole unit	
	R	yes I thought so ... the language was familiar for them	
	Am	er ...	
		I tried to let the students speak more about products ... counties' contributions ... therefore we had Miss S speaking about her own country and the contribution of her own country to other countries	
	R	did you approach her to do that you asked her?	
10	Am	yes ... yesterday I asked her if she would be happy to be involved as a part of the lesson and she was willing and happy to do it ... I think the students enjoyed speaking to Miss S ... listening to her ... as they travel abroad they are interested in knowing more about South Africa none of them have ever travelled to South Africa ... but I had a girl from the other class they are planning to do in the summer because they want to know Miss S's country ... her part although some of the language was complicated for the students but she was trying to simplify and show them with gestures and with her sample	
20	R	... was she ... did you ask her to talk about specific things ... or did you give her a script or just talk about this	
	Am	she brought the script and yesterday we had a discussion about it	
	R	right that so you could select the types ... the language	
	Am	yes ... I did select the matching and she meant to do it slowly so they can do the matching ... so in this particular part it was listening for specific information ...	
30	R	'cos it struck me the way she speaks obviously she speaks as a native speaker very authentic text ... so what she said is authentic but she makes it a little bit easier for them by repetition and emphasising certain words doesn't she?	
	Am	yes	
	R	so I think it's a balance you don't want it to be too simple for them ... but then again if it's pure native speech it will be too difficult	
	Am	yes	
	R	it was a nice balance I think	
40	Am	... er then with the	

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		product I tried to provide them with a few simple products that they can start off with ... as I told you before it will be part of their speaking assessment	
	R	right	
	Am	and what they chose is the students will design posters or PowerPoints and they will speak about specific products and then they will be assessed ... on that	
	R	do you have criteria?	
	Am	yes	
50	R	OK ... 'cos ... yeah OK	
	Am	in the criteria they are focused on accuracy fluency communication skills and ideas	
	R	alright ... 'cos the first group ... to go back a bit ... they had their product ... they looked at it and they wrote down some information on it ... some groups did that really well ... I was really impressed ... two groups in particular they had written quite a lot in detail other groups not so much or not as well ... did you think ... or did you want ... to you had a choice to either model it which would take a long time or ask them to cover	
60		certain pieces of information do you know what I mean? so you have to write this this this this this and this	
	Am	er I told them find me the names of the products the countries ... and the uses and then you will go away and find extra information ... some of them started writing as they find about the products they started to add more from what they already know from their prior knowledge	
	R	yes yes and they made up some stuff too which is OK ... er as it's an assessment because they all have different	
70		products all six groups have different products ... once they've written it down would you be able to have a whole class plenary ... to let them say talk about their products or will that ... because what I'm thinking of ... they've written a little bit then in the future they're going to make an advertisement or something I thought it might help their ... writing their thinking by speaking about it before they write ... usually it does but that might affect the assessment wouldn't it? ... it depends how you see the assessment if you see it as ... being isolated from everything else or you know you prepare them for it by getting	
80		them to talk and rehearse a bit	

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	Am	that's why I tried to encourage	
		them to come out and share their ideas	
	R	right	
	Am	so they will have it	
		clear in their minds what they are going to do exactly	
	R	that's	
		different though isn't it? ... because the two groups that came	
		up were talking about the advertisement they were going to	
		make so they hadn't really had any time to make any plans ...	
90		they kind of made it up I think as they stood at the front of the	
		class ... I wonder before that could you get them to talk about	
		the basics ... where's it from what is it what's it for?	
	Am	... er ... I	
	R	as a whole ... whole class	
	Am	as I was monitoring them and talking to	
		them I was telling them think about what you are going to put in	
		your poster ... how would you design it how would you prepare	
		it	
	R	OK	
100	Am	I was talking to the girls a lot	
	R	OK	
	Am	as groups	
	R	'cos it's a nice	
		thing if you have five or six different groups ... with six different	
		things then ... at the end it gives you the opportunity for them to	
		share that information like natural communication they can just	
		.. so long as they don't read it which is likely but if you just say	
		put your paper away I want you to just talk and the other groups	
		can just listen ... it's a little bit of natural communication but also	
110		... it's scaffolds anything they do again	
	Am	... er this group strategies	
		started from yesterday's first group and they are more centred	
		and focused on their task	
	R	have you changed the groups?	
	Am	yes	
	R	I	
		thought so	
	Am	changed them yesterday	
	R	how and on what basis?	
120	Am	er me and Alia discussed the idea with them we tried to have	

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		students in the same ability levels with higher levels in the	
		groups	
	R	because I noticed one I had always noticed Manal had	
		moved ... and I suppose some of the others thought	
	Am	everyone	
		had moved	
	R	everyone moved ... it's a good idea ... from time to	
		time anyway	
	Am	they ... er ... at the beginning they refused because	
130		they want their peers but I told them you can't stay in the same	
		place all semester all semester long ... we will change from time	
		to time and we agreed at that point ... and after a week or a	
		couple of weeks they will be changed again	
	R	well ...	
	Am	I will make	
		sure that they won't get back to their peers	
	R	... this isn't a bad	
		teaching tip for the ... class atmosphere because if they're	
		always in the same groups then you're dealing with ... groups but	
140		If you mix them up from time to time they'll be a whole class ...	
		OK ... good I had noticed ... er ... just to go back is it Manal one	
		girl? You picked on her at one point I wondered why ... you were	
		pushing her to answer you she didn't ... say speak up I just	
		wondered why you did that it's not a criticism	
	Am	I wasn't hearing	
		her ...	
	R	because you couldn't hear her	
	Am	yes and I know she knows	
		the answer but she always hesitate to answer in front of the	
150		class	
	R	was she?	
	Am	yeah	
	R	lacks confidence in her own ...	
	Am	Manal is a	
		student who came from a government school ... to a model	
		school but all of them are coming from model schools to this	
		place ... and she still hesitates in front of her classmates ... even	
		with teachers she's just a bit different from the others ... once	
		they get used to model schools they know how to communicate	
160		with teachers	

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	R	so do you think she feels self conscious about it a little bit?	
	Am	she has friends but I think yes she is self conscious ... but if I encourage her she will speak and participate more	
	R	right you have to offer her chance to show ... yes you can do it just like the others ... OK good that's interesting ... but she's only been in the class this year?	
	Am	yes	
170	R	I guess ... because there are some strong girls in that class that speak English well but are smart girls ... perhaps it's a bit the style of learning is a bit frightening for her a bit to begin with	
	Am	er... even one of the students Nora ... I think she has the highest mark in all subjects among grade six but she's too shy to raise her voice and speak ... she speaks in a low voice	
	R	... it's interesting both times I've noticed you've used this different groups having different parts of the topic which is like the word at the beginning ... the airplane the product ... and that's a really good idea because it always offers you the chance of afterwards ... they share the information whether it's a quick what's your word or an on the carpet discussion ... but it's always a good idea I think ... er ... OK	
	Am	and these words are coming up on their spelling test	
	R	oh	
		are they? but they don't know that?	
	Am	no ... they know the list ...	
190		Miss Asma gives them fifteen words a week ... and she'll say here's your spelling for Tuesday	
	R	so they're expected to go and learn them basically homework is learning spelling ... is their a homework policy here? [how long?]	
	Am	[yes] but Asma has to follow a policy no homework at the weekend	
	R	oh really?	
	Am	because if you give homework at the weekend they will never do it ... and families complain we go out of Al *** they don't have time ... so	
200		homework is in the week	

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	R	I think that's ... well you have to leave	
		time for the family as well ... it can't be all work can it? ... OK ... er	
		... so ... and they're getting make a product compile some	
		information find some more information and tomorrow they're	
		going to present it and that's their speaking assessment	
	Am	yes	
	R	and	
		how are you going to assess them?	
	Am	not only me it will be me and	
210		Asma and the other students and then we will average the mark	
	R	OK ... try to ensure that especially with a presentation that they	
		don't read so it's speaking speaking because it's very ... you had	
		the last two groups you had the last two groups up to discuss	
		what they were going to do ... the first group spoke ... quite	
		naturally the second group the girl just read from the paper ...	
		and really that's not speaking and they're liable to get zero for it	
		because it's just reading ... it's not the same thing ... try to	
		encourage to try and speak ... naturally ... they should be able to	
		do that ... er OK so that's what they're going to do ... that's	
220		interesting ... erm ... they were very involved in the group work	
		in using the products ... and figuring out what to write and group	
		writing	
	Am	and they were too close to the products because they	
		know ... my personal life	
	R	I said to Miss S I think she's gone to	
		the mall and got a lot of freebie free things from one of the	
		shops	
	Am	no!	
	R	that's what you can do you can say you're from the	
230		school can you donate them please I think they might ... so how	
		many are in each group four?	
	Am	four students there are twenty	
		four	
	R	four's OK ... so four groups of six 'cos sometimes I think if it's	
		one writing which is what's happening more than four you're	
		going to have students not being involved ... OK ... no that's good	
		... then you showed them a kind of ... brainstorm of what they'll	
		put up on the board ... I got the impression then ... that was	
		improvising a little bit ... is that right? ... that's when I thought oh	
240		she's improvising now I can tell ... which is fine we all have to do	

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		this from time to time ... which is when you could have cross	
		grouped if you'd looked at the time ... one from each group go	
		to another group and talk about their presentation about their	
		product it's a little rehearsal before the real one ... it doesn't	
		hurt to give them practice	
	Am	I thought of giving them this after the	
		assessment because ... when I forget out of my mind I couldn't ...	
		work students they can't work in six groups ... they are four	
		groups and four students would be easier	
250	R	it would be easier but	
		you can do it say you've got six groups of four right? six groups	
		of four and to each group of four you give them a name apple	
		banana orange lemon apple banana range lemon and then you	
		say apples sit here bananas there oranges there and lemons	
		there ... and they go to their places and then you can say I want	
		you to tell your group about your project ... all the information	
		about it ... and then when they've done it OK back to your first	
		place ... you have to do it through numbering	
	Am	so they will end	
260		up with four groups	
	R	of six?	
	Am	yes	
	R	that's right they will	
	Am	oh I added them	
		together	
	R	Well there's always two ways of doing the sum six fours	
		four sixes five fives five fives ... you just have to give them a	
		number and they'll do it ... it works nicely of you do it quick ...	
		... what annoys me about not just this school some schools is	
270		always having people knocking on the door ... it's usually the	
		cleaner ... why? ... 'cos I was just remembering those girls	
		knocked on the door ... and giggled and ran off	
	Am	yes ... because	
		the nurse wanted two girls from the class	
	R	ah OK ... I don't know	
		the nurse the cleaner ... they walk in and disturb the class you	
		know stay out and wait five minutes	
	Am	it's the routine of the class	
	R	I know it is it drives me mad	
280	Am	you will be amazed if you have forty	

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		five minutes without disturbing	
	R	very rare I was in Badreya's	
		earlier and she was disturbed ... at one time the maid just	
		walked in ... walked across the classroom in front of Badreya	
		talking did something and went out ... wait ... I'd get really cross	
		with that I think ... OK nevermind ... that's fine ... one thing I	
		want you to be careful of or aware of is that sometimes you	
		echo the students a little bit when you're talking ... if you for	
290		example as a question ... especially if the student is a bit quiet	
		you will often repeat exactly what she's said and that kind of	
		devalues their own communication ... there was one point in the	
		lesson when every time a student said something you'd repeat	
		It ... de du de repeat it de du de repeat it and it's one way of	
		cutting back your own talking is to be aware of this and try and	
		let as much as possible communication go from student to	
		student ... not always you saying it or through you ... it doesn't	
		happen all the time but sometimes ... OK so next lesson where	
		will you begin?	
	Am	after engaging them with the lesson	
300	R	a quick	
		reminder round up you could ask them to ...	
	Am	they can tell	
	R	discuss	
		their products	
	Am	they can tell me what they covered today	
	R	or just	
		get them to talk amongst themselves ... it doesn't always have to	
		come to you ... let them ... talk in your groups about your	
		products then you could cross group them if you wanted to OK	
310		go and talk to somebody else ... now back in your groups you're	
		going to prepare your advertisement and then you are going to	
		have to talk about it ... off you go ... that would be nice ... and	
		that's tomorrow	
	Am	yes	
	R	good ... OK ... do you think the students are	
		a little afraid of you?	
	Am	no	
	R	no OK	
	Am	because they will sit with me on the	
320		floor they will talk ... just before you entered the class we were	

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		jumping in the class ... and playing guitars like these ... because	
		they were sleepy they'd had the first period ... and they were	
		sleepy and didn't talk to them I said come on and jump	
	R	oh good	
		you got them energized ... that was good ... because they were	
		very respectful of you ... you don't have any problems with class	
		management or anything ... you know they're very good and	
		attentive	
	Am	I have quiet students but ... they are ... in control	
330	R	yeah	
		they are oh yes ... you don't have much of a problem ... at all ...	
		OK fine Amal	
	Am	but I do have two ... the other class	
	R	do you? ... How	
		do you deal with them?	
	Am	they are totally spoiled ... I will just	
		change their places ... let them sit in front of me close to me and	
		they will be ... under control	
	R	So you move them towards you?	
340	Ar	yes	
	R	how does ... what is their behaviour that tell you they're spoilt?	
	Am	... the way they speak ... they aren't well towards or do	
		something they are too lazy ... they just want to be the teacher's	
		pet	
	R	they don't want to do anything but be your friend?	
	Am	no	
		... I think	
	R	but you're dealing with it?	
	Am	I'm their friend as long as	
350		they are learning	
	R	oh yes ... it's conditional	
	Am	hmm hmm	
	R	in fact ... be	
		careful ... they might think you are but you're not you're in a	
		position of power over them you're much more older than them	
	Am	yes	
	R	you have responsibilities they don't understand like to get	
		them to learn and stuff ... I think it's always a ... difficulty to say	
		to kids yes I am your friends	
360	Am	but	

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