An exercise in how experienced expatriate EFL teachers use their practical wisdom to Problematise Saudi Arabian ELC syllabi

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Abstract

In the past 30 years there has been a steady and growing appreciation in the literature of the importance and value of teachers’ practical wisdom (TPW)—or *phronesis* as it is also known—to further an understanding of classroom practice and of the need to find ways to help teachers generate and share their perspectives with others. Nevertheless, the potential of this kind of knowledge (understood by Aristotle to be both practical and moral in its orientation) to contribute valuable insights to educational debates has still to be realised. Rather, educational decisions about policy and practice in many contexts (whether at a national or institutional level) are still largely driven by theoretical and technical knowledge perspectives and teacher practical wisdom perspectives are still often under-valued and remain under-represented in educational literature. One of the main reasons for this put forward in this thesis is the tendency in much of the literature to see this form of knowledge as classroom bound rather than to realise the ways in which it can inform broader pedagogical discussions.

Bearing all of the above in mind, the aim of the study reported in this thesis into the TPW of 14 experienced expatriate English as a foreign language teachers (EEEFLTs) working in English language centres (ELCs) across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is threefold. Its first aim is to provide a platform for the EEEFLTs to demonstrate the contribution their TPW can potentially make in addressing syllabus related issues in the KSA ELCs they have worked and, in doing so, show how the use of TPW is not confined to the classroom. Its second aim is to increase the visibility of the participants’ TPW and thus raise awareness of the importance of research into TPW and to provide a model for how this can be conducted. The study’s final aim is to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of TPW.
Located in the interpretive paradigm, this study uses a TPW-friendly methodology to investigate TPW: interpretive phronetic educational research (IPER), which approaches and conducts educational research through a moral and practical problem-driven lens. This understanding drives the study’s methodology and all stages of its data collection and analysis and the methods used in both. The goal of such methods is an epistemological one to generate TPW whilst empowering it also by highlighting its validity and how it is easily articulated—and thus captured—and not confined to the classroom. To assist with its articulation and capture, the study employs a process defined as Problematisation: a four-stage process consisting of reflection, problematisation, deliberation and articulation which drives and shapes the semi-structured interviews the study employs and the secondary research questions that inform the primary research question.

The study concludes that the EEEFLTs use their TPW as a lens (that has 12 qualities) through which to view KSA ELC syllabi and, in doing so, identify many problems with the syllabi and subsequent consequences and suggest solutions to address both. These problems, consequences and solutions have been organised under six prominent categories that represent six main problem areas to emerge from the data that suggest the syllabi are teacher, textbook and test-centred, top-down, teacher-proof and time-driven. These categories represent six problem areas that in turn reflect the problematic, negative and disempowering context from which the data informing such categories and themes have been drawn. In this study, TPW is considered disempowered knowledge as a result of the disempowering context within which it has been acquired and is used. Previous TPW studies have been conducted in more positive settings and have perhaps for this reason not focused on TPW’s disempowerment. In contrast, this study takes on a much more political role
as it explores TPW’s disempowerment in the KSA ELC context as well as in the broader context of academia and the literature. TPW’s lack of visibility in TESOL and education has several implications because unless TPW achieves greater visibility, it may fade into extinction and its potential may never be realised. This study has been conducted in an attempt to prevent this happening.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Setting the Scene: A Real-life Account of a Staff Meeting in an English Language Centre in Saudi Arabia

It was a sweltering summer afternoon in a hot dry suburb in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). In a cool breezy air-conditioned room, a somewhat heated English Language Centre (ELC) staff meeting was taking place. One of the teachers in the meeting—an experienced expatriate English as a foreign language teacher (EEEFLT)—complained he was having a problem keeping up with the overloaded syllabus and having to race through it out of fear of falling behind and being reprimanded. He claimed this was reducing the quality of the teaching and causing him and other teachers unnecessary problems. To counteract these problems, he suggested reducing the syllabus—a textbook imposed upon the teachers without consultation. Likewise, he suggested giving the teachers who teach—or have taught—the syllabus a more active role in its design and implementation. In response, the disgruntled ELC head retaliated: “We have to finish the textbook! End of story!” He did this without pausing to allow those present the opportunity to discuss the possibility of teaching less of the textbook to allow teachers and students some respite from the relentless syllabus. “But we don’t have time to finish the textbook” replied the concerned teacher worriedly. In reply, the ELC head began a character assassination of the teacher’s teaching ability. He claimed that if the teacher was competent, then he should have no difficulty keeping up with the syllabus schedule. He finished his tirade by mentioning how the material in the textbook was very light and that—if anything—the syllabus needed adding to.
1.2 Deconstructing the ELC Meeting

I have chosen to start with the account above for two reasons. Firstly because—like the teacher depicted in the account—I am an EEEFLT working in a KSA ELC and it describes a meeting that I actually witnessed. Secondly, I believe it provides an illustration of how an important underlying debate in education, one that has and continues to be the focus of considerable interest, can play out in practice; namely, what should count as relevant and useful knowledge in developing our understandings of education and, on the basis of this, who should be recognised as a legitimate holder and producer of knowledge. It was attending meetings like the one above that served to trigger my interest in the knowledge base for TESOL, and, as I explain in the rationale for the study below, in seeking to demonstrate the important contribution that teachers and their knowledge can make.

The account highlights a particular form of knowledge that experienced teachers hold which is gained through and during extensive teaching experience in a given setting. In this thesis this knowledge is described as practical wisdom or phronesis, the name assigned to it by Aristotle (2000) in distinguishing this from two other forms of knowledge: technical and theoretical. The study reported in this thesis is interested to explore the specific kind of practical wisdom that teachers, such as the one whose story is reported above, hold—referred to hereafter as teachers’ practical wisdom (TPW).

The account above highlights two central characteristics of phronesis that are seen to distinguish this from theoretical and technical knowledge forms: its practical and moral orientation (Flyvbjerg, 2001). It also highlights the ways in which this knowledge is often undervalued and given little recognition. Thus, from the account
above it can be seen that the teacher draws upon his practical experience of having taught the textbook and it is this that has led him to his knowledge about the impracticality of teaching the entire textbook in one semester and to appreciate the problems this causes him and the students. These problems are not ones that pertain to theory or technical know-how but ones which pertain to the teacher’s ethical concerns about the quality of the teaching and learning experience and its impact on both teachers and students. Through a TPW lens—such as the one driving this study—such concerns are considered ethical concerns, which are value laden not value free and thus driven by the teacher’s values and what he considers to be ethical and practical in a given situation.

As the account above highlights, TPW is often overlooked and undervalued in discussions of educational issues as is well documented in the literature (cf. Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012a; Kinsella and Pitman, 2012). The teacher mentioned above has more than a decade teaching experience in KSA. This provides him with a wealth of practical knowledge that might have been useful in solving the problem. He is on the frontline, in the classroom, where the syllabus is delivered. Thus, he has a unique in-depth understanding and knowledge of the context in which the problem occurs. This in-depth knowledge of the syllabus in practice is what led him to identify problems with it, and it is therefore surprising at first glance why his ideas were dismissed in such a way.

There are a number of things that may have contributed to the ELC head’s response including the top down authoritarian nature of institutional culture in KSA described by Mullick (2013). Likewise, the ELC head may have not be entirely to blame for this situation and may be acting in his best knowledge and simply following orders or
doing what he deems to be correct and in the best interest of teachers and students. However, I believe that the rejection of this teacher as a legitimate holder of knowledge is perpetuated by the generally lower status of TPW vis-à-vis technical or theoretical knowledge compounding teachers’ low position and status as knowledgeable subjects in the institutional hierarchy in many parts of the world, including the Gulf States of which KSA is a member (Al-Okda, 2005). More broadly, I believe the response to and lack of appreciation of TPW in this setting is linked to a general under-representation of TPW in the field of education and academic publications (Basu, 2012) despite exhortations that teachers should see themselves and be recognised as researchers and knowledge generating practitioners (Burns, 2010; McKernan, 2008).

1.3 Rationale for Conducting this Study

The purpose of the study reported in this thesis is to address the issues regarding TPW highlighted above, both with respect to its low status in ELCs in KSA as signalled in the account presented at the start of this chapter but also more generally in the field of education at large. Despite the growing recognition of TPW (see for example Kinsella and Pitman, 2012; Cooke and Carr, 2014) there is a dearth of published studies that explore education (especially TESOL) through a phronetic lens. This dearth is even more pronounced with regards to EFL studies (such as this). I believe that increasing TPW’s visibility, by conducting studies such as this—which showcase its potential—and then disseminating them, is the most valuable way in which awareness can be raised of local issues, such as those depicted in this study, and the broader issues this signifies. EEEFLTs in KSA ELCs have voices that need to be heard and valuable knowledge (TPW) that needs to be shared. This study represents a platform for both.
In particular, in this study, I want to address TPW’s potential to contribute to understandings of educational phenomenon over and beyond the immediacy of classroom practice especially how it can be used by teachers to inform and evaluate EFL syllabi. In an attempt to do this, this study uses KSA ELC syllabi as an illustrative vehicle to highlight TPW’s value outside the classroom and to show that its use is not confined to the classroom because, although they impact on and are delivered in the classroom, syllabi are usually created and designed—and decisions made regarding them—external to it.

In conducting this study I am also attempting to counterbalance a great deal of current educational research that has been described by many education scholars as remote from practice and unappreciative of practitioners, their knowledge, and their role as holders and constructors of valid knowledge (cf. Clark, 2011; Dunne, 2011; Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012a; Macklin and Whiteford, 2012; Thomas and Pring, 2004). TPW research is practice driven and located in practice as TPW is acquired and used in practice. Hence, TPW research is close to practice and appreciative of practitioners, their knowledge, and their role as holders and constructors of valid knowledge.

1.4 Aims of the Study

Bearing the above in mind, the study reported in this thesis aims to:

• provide a platform for 14 EEEFLTs in KSA ELCs to demonstrate the contribution their TPW can potentially make in addressing syllabus related issues in the KSA ELCs they have worked, and in doing so, show how the use of TPW is not confined to the classroom;

• increase the visibility of the participants’ TPW and thus raise awareness of the importance of research into TPW and to provide a model for how this can be conducted;
and provide a deeper understanding of the nature of TPW.

1.5 Contextualising the Study

Demographically speaking, KSA—with Riyadh as it capital—is located in the Middle East in South West Asia between the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. It spans 2,149,690 square kilometres, which makes it the largest country in the Middle East and shares its international boundaries with Yemen, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Iraq. Its population—not including expatriates—is close to 21 million (World Population Review, 2014).

Politically speaking, KSA is an important and powerful country in both the Middle East and the world as it is one of the world’s biggest producers of oil and has the world’s largest oil reserve (Alseghayer, 2011). Also, it is considered to be the home of Sunni Islam and the two holiest cities in Islam, Makkah and Medina. KSA is a Muslim country led by a monarchy ruled by Islamic Sharia Law. Islam is the official religion and all Saudi Arabians are Muslims (World Population Review, 2014). Consequently, Islam plays a central role in all aspects of KSA life including education. Likewise, Islamic Sharia Law penetrates all aspects of life. In light of this, White native English speaker EFL teachers—such as I—who often come to KSA for financial reasons such as a tax-free salary, free accommodation and other benefits do not usually stay long-term in light of the sacrifices and restrictions living in an Islamic country such as KSA places upon them wherein certain acts lawful in many countries around the world are considered punishable crimes—even by death—and where the open practice of any other religion except Islam can incur severe penalty (British Embassy, Riyadh, 2015).
From a cultural norms perspective, KSA is considered a religiously conservative country and this is reflected in everyday life including the classroom. Saudi Arabia is gender segregated. As a result, education is gender segregated also with male only and female only schools, colleges and universities. ELCs are segregated according to gender also. Male teachers teach male students and female teachers teach female students. ELC textbooks are typically censored—especially those that contain materials that are deemed offensive to Islam—and often irrelevant to the average KSA student’s life as, for example, KSA does not have public cinemas, public houses, nightclubs, casinos, opera houses or theatres.

Fifty per cent of the population of KSA is under 25 (Arab News, 2013). This represents a problem because many jobs need creating to employ these youth so they can become productive members of society, contribute to KSA’s betterment and keep busy and away from deviant Islamic ideologies—especially those that incite unrest and sedition. The Saudi Arabian Government has attempted to address this issue by allocating more money for education. In light of this, in 2013, KSA was the biggest spender in the world on education and the following year allocated a budget of 56 billion dollars for education (Mohammed, 2013). An example of this is the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), which has signed contracts in 2013 worth 67.8 million pounds with overseas training providers to run its new vocational Colleges of Excellence (Tago, 2013). In addition, the Saudi Arabian Government has also attempted to address unemployment—considered a contributing factor in the adoption of deviant Islamic ideologies that incite violence and sedition against governments—through Saudisation. Since 2007, there has been a noticeable drive to implement Saudisation—a national policy to replace foreign workers with Saudi nationals in the private sector in addition to the KSA
government sector, which only employs Saudi nationals (Maisel, 2009). It is estimated that KSA has more than 8 million expatriate workers (Al-Amri, 2015). The goal of Saudisation is to reduce this number thus providing more jobs for Saudi nationals. Despite this, EFL has not really been affected due to the high status position the White native speaker EFL teacher holds underpinned by the (unfounded) belief that only White native English speaker Westerners—such as I—can and should teach English. As a result, Saudisation has not really affected the status and employment opportunities of White native speaker EFL teachers because they remain the preferred kind of EFL teacher even over native Saudi Arabian English as a Foreign Language Teachers (EFLTs).

From an academic EFL perspective, EFL is prospering in KSA, as is education in general. An example of this prosperity is King Saud University that boasts the biggest preparatory year EFL project in the world with more than 600 teachers and 20,000 students (Bell, 2012). Likewise, KSA is home to the recently built Princess Noura University that is claimed to be the largest women-only university in the world. Students who wish to attend this university must first complete a one-year preparatory EFL programme (Princess Noura University, 2013). Additionally, it is the home to the newly built King Abdullah University of Science and Technology where English is the medium of instruction (Harbi, 2009). Likewise, September 2013 saw the opening of 11 new English-medium technical colleges (Alasmari, 2013). All of these examples, plus the introduction of EFL preparatory year programmes in the majority of its universities, highlight how EFL is a fast-growing industry in KSA.

From a pedagogic perspective, EFL teachers in KSA ELCs are often required to teach students who have had little exposure to English and opportunity to practice
English outside the classroom. Consequently, their English language skills—especially their speaking skills—are often very weak. Conversation practice is often considered time consuming and therefore sidelined as teachers fight to keep abreast of the overloaded EFL syllabus schedule commonplace in many KSA ELCs (Alseghayer, 2012). As a result, the students do not get the opportunity to practice their spoken English because of the pressure placed upon teachers to finish the syllabus in the allocated timeframe so that what has been taught can be then tested and thus tend to adopt a passive role internalising information in preparation for tests. English is often taught in lecture fashion as any other academic subject and students are taught using traditional methods of learning such as teacher-centred and rote learning (Alseghayer, 2011). Textbooks taught in the way they are taught in KSA ELCs reinforce these traditional methods of learning especially since they—or their contents pages—are often used as or take the place of syllabi (Almurabit, 2012). All of the above—including the previously mentioned added challenge of living in a Muslim country ruled by Sharia Law and the sacrifice for Westerners that entails—contribute to a high turnover of teachers and add to the challenging context in which expatriate EFLTs find themselves in KSA ELCs.

From a critical applied linguistics (CALx) standpoint, KSA belongs to what Pennycook (1994) describes as the outer periphery of EFL. Thus, it is a consumer and recipient of all things EFL not a producer. One of the consequences of this is that its ELCs have to rely heavily on pre-packaged, one-size-fits-all EFL textbooks imported from mainly the UK and US. These textbooks are often culturally insensitive and contextually irrelevant to KSA and do not cater for the specific needs of Muslim EFL students who share the same first language (Alfahadi, 2012). To teach these textbooks, KSA ELCs rely heavily on EFL teachers—often inexperienced and
unqualified—recruited from mainly the UK and US. This matter is further complicated by the multitude of recently established recruitment agencies that have realised the financial rewards of finding teachers for these huge projects. Economic migrants not having the necessary experience and qualifications to secure employment in the West are able to find work via these agencies. Likewise, they receive a tax-free salary and other financial incentives to do a job that in the UK or US they would not be qualified—and thus allowed—to do.

Many experienced, qualified non-White native English speaker EFL teachers who want to teach in KSA find it difficult to secure employment as a result of ELC “gatekeepers” intent on building a “photogenic” faculty. Anyone who is seen as a possible threat to the realisation of this goal is filtered out at the earliest possible stage. Thus, inexperienced, unqualified White native English speaker EFL teachers are often favoured over experienced, qualified non-White native English speaker EFL teachers. Managers unable to show their overt prejudice enforce this unconscious discrimination by rejecting job applications from the latter. This situation is compounded by a widespread misassumption in KSA that only White people can be true Westerners and—by default—true teachers of English. Thus, from a non-White EEEFLT perspective, non-White qualified and experienced native English speaker EFLTs can find it difficult to secure employment and often have to take less well-paid jobs in order to do so. As many of these teachers are Muslims, they accept such jobs because they want to live and enjoy living in a Muslim country and the lifestyle and perks that accompany that. Nevertheless, despite these challenges and barriers, there is a vibrant albeit small community of experienced, qualified non-White native English speaker teachers, some of whom have participated in this study, who have managed to succeed in both securing and sustaining employment
in KSA. They belong to a minority within a minority who normally occupy the background—grateful for the chance to work and live in KSA: their home away from home. These teachers have made a long-term commitment to teaching EFL in KSA ELCs and constitute the bulk of the—albeit small—EEEFLT community in KSA. It would be incorrect however to claim that there are no experienced, qualified White native English speaker EFL teachers currently working in KSA ELCs. There are and I consider myself one of them.

1.6 Positioning Myself in the Study

Having completed a bachelor’s degree in post compulsory education and a master’s degree in applied linguistics, I have studied—and benefitted from—the works of many great education theorists such as Krashen (1988), Piaget (1972), Vygotsky (1962) and other highly respected academics like them who have made an immeasurable contribution to education and exhausted great amounts of time and effort in doing so—for which they are to be commended, acknowledged and celebrated. Nevertheless, on a personal note, I have experienced difficulty applying the knowledge I have learnt whilst studying such icons to practice and relating education theory to the classroom and using it to inform my everyday teaching and related duties. Alternatively, I have found myself using my own knowledge—acquired during my career—to navigate both and believe it is this knowledge that drives me and defines who I am as a teacher both in and out of the classroom. Thus, I believe that teachers, including myself, possess their own special kind of knowledge—phronesis—which may be informed by theory, be it teachers’ own theories or educational theories, amongst other things but that the knowledge teachers possess is practical knowledge as it is acquired and nurtured in practice be that inside the classroom or outside. In adopting this position, I align myself with many other
scholars such as Back (2002); Cooke and Carr (2014); and Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram (2012) who consider education and teaching to be practical not applied sciences.

Likewise, as others such as Flyvbjerg (2001); Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram (2012b) and Pring (2001) do, I consider education and teaching to be moral practices and phronesis as a form of knowledge that is compatible with this stance because it is both moral and practical knowledge hence the reason why this study is conducted through both a moral and practical—i.e. phrasonic—lens. Aristotle (2000) did not solely discuss theoretical (episteme) and technical knowledge (techne) in his seminal discussion of the different forms of knowledge. He also focused on practical knowledge (phronesis). Moreover, he considered it the most important form of knowledge. This is evident in Hargreaves’ comments (2010, p.1) how education “has neglected phronesis which Aristotle himself saw as most important”. Sadly, as Antonacopoulou (2009, p.6) explains, the form of knowledge Aristotle saw as most important is often overlooked and ignored in academia and education today: “Aristotle drew attention to three modes of knowledge one of which we tend to systematically ignore”.

On a more personal note, for several years, I have both witnessed and experienced personally how teachers’ knowledge—including my own—is marginalised and disempowered in KSA ELCs and how KSA EEEFLTs have little or no syllabus voice despite them having so much to offer. EFL textbooks are often at the centre of this disempowerment and used in a manner that disempowers EEEFLTs, their syllabus voice and knowledge. Likewise, I have witnessed the role ELCs, those in charge of them and EFL textbooks play in perpetuating this disempowerment. In essence,
neither such textbooks nor their authors are to blame. On the contrary, it is the way these textbooks are often incorrectly used as tools—often by those in charge of KSA ELCs—to restrain and disempower teachers and keep them in check.

In conducting this study to explore and address the above issues, I position myself alongside this study’s participants as I have experienced what they have experienced and understand their frustrations and thus have conducted this study to enable our voices to be heard. Hence, I am personally invested in this study so much so that I consider myself to be the 15th participant. I am using this personal investment—as well as my closeness, prolonged engagement and familiarity with the context and the EEEFLTs who inhabit this context—to attempt to provide a truthful, representative, insider account of events and to share this account via this dissertation in order to raise awareness of the situation and achieve the aims outlined in section 1.4 above.

1.7 My Methodological Stance

Located in the interpretive paradigm, this study uses a TPW-friendly methodology to investigate TPW: interpretive phronetic educational research (IPER), which approaches and conducts educational research through a moral and practical problem-driven lens (see section 3.6 for an in-depth discussion of this methodology). This understanding drives the study’s methodology and all stages of its data collection and analysis and the methods used in both. The goal of such methods is an epistemological one to enable the generation and consequent analysis of TPW whilst empowering it also by highlighting its validity and how it is easily articulated—and thus captured—and not confined to the classroom. To assist with its articulation and capture, as discussed in more detail in section 3.7.2, the study employs a
process defined as Problematisation: a four-stage process consisting of reflection, problematisation, deliberation and articulation which drives and shapes the semi-structured interviews the study employs and the secondary research questions that inform the primary research question. The data collected from the interviews is analysed using a TPW-friendly adapted version of Charmaz’s (2006) interpretive grounded theory method interpretive grounded phronesis method (IGPM), which shall be discussed in more detail in section 3.7.4.

As well as giving an overview of this study’s methodological stance, it is also important to define the parameters and boundaries within which this study resides i.e. what it is investigating (and, by default, what it is not). I have named this thesis An exercise in how experienced expatriate English as a foreign language teachers use their practical wisdom to Problematise Saudi Arabian ELC syllabi. Consequently, this has shaped and defined the parameters within which the study is conducted and thus they need discussing in more detail.

This study is considered an exercise because it acts as a model that other researchers could possibly consult or follow when investigating TPW. In conducting such an exercise, I have chosen to focus on experienced teachers because—as a form of wisdom—TPW is gained and acquired through experience as it is knowledge of particulars. Knowledge of particulars is gained through time and includes knowledge of a particular context also. For these reasons this study focuses solely on experienced teachers. As alluded to above, KSA can be seen by many as a challenging context to live and work in as a result of the restrictions Islamic law places on non-Muslim expatriates who work there. This affects expatriate EFL teachers in that many of them do not tend to stay in KSA long term. This reduces the
number of participants that fulfil the requirements for participating in this study. Nevertheless, there is a community of mainly Muslim, long-term, non-White EEEFLTs who enjoy living and working in KSA and the consequences that accompany this. As a result, although all this study’s participants are EEEFLTs, 12 of its participants are non-White. This study focuses on EEEFLTs in KSA ELCs because they represent the community to which I belong and have most knowledge and experience of. Therefore, I understand the problems they encounter and feel qualified to represent their views and study them in an attempt to discover more about them and make others aware of the problems they encounter as well as highlight the great contribution they and their knowledge can make.

I have chosen to focus on syllabi because, as mentioned previously, I consider the KSA ELC syllabi the EEEFLTs and I—as this study’s 15th participant—have encountered to be one of the main culprits in silencing and disempowering our TPW and us. Such syllabi constrain us in the classroom. Worse still, we do not have sufficient avenues available to voice our discontent. In light of this, it seems only right to confront the problem head-on and use that which silences and disempowers us (i.e. syllabi) to give our voices a platform and empower us and our TPW whilst also using syllabi as a vehicle through which to raise awareness of our plight and TPW’s potential and capacity.

As the study’s title suggests, I have chosen to focus on—what I describe in this study as—Problematisation (with a capital P). I do so because I believe as teachers we are problem-solving creatures who constantly, both consciously and unconsciously, use TPW to Problematise practice and that this is second nature for many teachers and that this problem-identifying and problem-solving process is at the heart of teaching
and education driven by knowledge generated by practitioners that they have acquired in and through practice. Consequently, in following Flyvbjerg (2006), considered the primary founder of phronetic social science (Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012b), I see education as a problem-driven practice and TPW as essentially a problem-driven form of knowledge as this knowledge is both acquired and used when identifying and solving problems and the study reported in this thesis is therefore interested to capture teachers practical wisdom as they identify problems and attempt to resolve them. To facilitate and achieve this, in this study I employ *Problematisation* (which shall be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3) as a framework. I employ such a framework driven by the above claim that not only do I—in echoing Bondi, Carr, Clark and Clegg (2011)—consider education and teaching to be problem-driven practices and TPW problem-driven knowledge but that research which investigates such knowledge is problem-driven research also. As a result, although not restricted to, such research is best conducted in problematic contexts so that it can identify problems and solve them also. This praiseworthy activity also ties in with the methodology’s moral slant to help identify and solve problems and—in doing so—fulfil its quest to arrive at what is described in phronetic social science as *morally defensible solutions* (Fenstermacher, 1978) whilst also deconstructing practices that are considered to be unethical. Typically, this deconstruction can take on a more political role as it attempts to identify and address cases of uneven distribution of power in education especially if they are caused by or result in teachers and their TPW being disempowered.

As a problem-solving process, Problematisation is used as part of this study’s methodology to generate TPW in that it is used to shape the interview process by prompting the participants to Problematise and helping them with this by providing
them with a conducive context in which to do so. The problematisation process is undoubtedly helped along by the problematic context in which the participants reside. As a member of the KSA EEEFLT community, I am fully aware of the problematic context they inhabit and endure. Furthermore, this is one of the reasons why the KSA EEEFLT community has been chosen to participate in this study as they can provide the data required to answer the questions that this study is asking.

As has been discussed and shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Problematisation as a TPW-generation method put forward in this study is being used to shape and drive the participant interview process—essentially a data generation process. The interviews have been designed to generate TPW because they have been designed to mirror the stages of the Problematisation process teachers use when using their TPW as they reflect on practice in order to problematise it then deliberate over the problems identified and their consequences in order to arrive at morally defensible solutions then articulate their conclusions. In doing so during the interviews in this study, it is hoped that the participants will provide data that can answer this study’s following three secondary research questions:

- What syllabi-related problems do the EEEFLTs identify?
- What consequences do these problems have?
- What solutions do the EEEFLTs suggest to solve these problems and their consequences?

By answering these three questions with data collected from the study’s participants during a round of in-depth interviews, I hope to capture the EEEFLTs' TPW so that I
can investigate it further and use this information to answer the following primary research question:

• How do the EEEFLTs use their TPW to Problematise KSA ELC syllabi?

Outlining the parameters of the framework upon which this study is designed would be incomplete without discussing an important point that needs to be made. This point concerns the use of the term *immoral* in this study (and other phronetic social science literature and studies mentioned below). In English, the term is a powerful term with powerful connotations. Nevertheless, in this study, it is being used in an educational context and thus in a slightly less dramatic sense in that, in the educational context in which this study takes place, it is used to describe something that is considered unethical, bad practice, and harmful to those affected by it. It is difficult to avoid using this term, especially when, as in this study, and in phronetic social science in general, education is viewed through a moral lens as a moral practice and driven by a goal to identify and address problems—especially those that are the result of an uneven distribution of power—and find morally defensible solutions. Likewise, the term *immoral* as well as the term *moral* are the chosen terms used by those scholars who discuss and view teaching, education and educational research as moral practices and through a moral lens such as Bondi, Carr, Clark and Clegg (2011); Dunne (2011); Flyvbjerg (2001); Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram (2012b); Kinsella and Pitman (2012); Murrell, Diez, Feiman-Nemser and Schussler (2010); and Stengel (2012). Consequently, for those discussing and investigating phronesis such as I, to not use the terms could be considered *sloppy workmanship* because these terms—along with others such as *good, bad, empower, disempower, theoretical* and *practical*—define phronetic social science, demarcate its boundaries and distinguish it from other forms of social science and have their ancestral roots in
Aristotle’s discussion of phronesis (its characteristics and how it differs from other forms of knowledge) recently revived by Flyvbjerg (2001) amongst others.

1.8 The Significance of this Study
This study has a number of potential significances. Firstly, it is significant because it helps deepen our understanding of TPW’s potential for education as a valid and valuable alternative form of knowledge that—amongst other things—can be used to interrogate and deepen our understanding of educational phenomena outside the classroom. Through investigating this, the study helps highlight how this knowledge form can be used to evaluate practice and help deepen our understanding about this disempowered knowledge form and the extent of its disempowerment and raise awareness of this. In doing so, this knowledge form provides a platform for those who do not have a voice as a result of this disempowerment and also shows how TPW is a powerful form of knowledge that is located and acquired in practice and generated by teachers themselves that deserves more recognition and visibility than it currently receives.

Secondly, conducting this study is important because most studies that have explored teachers’ practical knowledge have done so through either a cognitive or theoretical lens (as will be discussed in 2.7.1 in Chapter 2). Few have done so through a phronetic lens as this study has. In addition, while there are a small number of studies I have identified that do study teachers’ practical knowledge through a phronetic lens—i.e. practical knowledge as practical wisdom—such as Gholami (2006), Gholami and Huss (2010), James (2009), Tait (2008) and Toom (2006), they have largely relied on data collection methods, such as stimulated recall interviews, that disempower TPW by viewing it as knowledge that is difficult to
articulate and confined to the classroom. My study challenges this misassumption by collecting data through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted outside of the classroom to show that TPW can be easily articulated and that its use is not confined to the classroom. In doing so, it makes a much-needed addition to the limited number of studies that have used in-depth semi-structured interviews to elicit and study TPW, namely Barr (2011), Halverson (2002), Husu (2005) and John (1999).

Thirdly, TPW needs but does not have its own methodology through which it can be studied. According to Birks and Mills (2011), interpretive research methodologies generate theory through the use of grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). As Charmaz (2007) explains, grounded theory method is by far the most frequently used qualitative data analysis method in interpretive research despite its positivist underpinnings. In an attempt to address this problem, Charmaz (2006) has devised her own interpretive-paradigm-friendly version of grounded theory method (see 3.7.4 for a discussion of this). Despite this, both positivist and interpretivist forms of grounded theory method are somewhat unsuitable for phronetic research such as this study whose goal is to generate and analyse phronesis not theory. In an attempt to address this issue, in this study, I employ an adapted version of Charmaz's (2006) interpretive grounded theory method interpretive grounded phronesis method (IGPM) to analyse and generate TPW. Likewise, in light of this discussion and the need for a specifically designed methodology for studying and generating TPW, as mentioned previously, I have designed a TPW-friendly methodology: interpretive phronetic educational research, IPER, and use Problematisation as a framework within this methodology to help generate TPW.
In addition, TPW not only needs its own methodology but also this methodology needs to be put into action and practice as this study intends to do. Defining and showing how TPW can be investigated by actually conducting such a study which does that is necessary because Flyvbjerg (2004), although considered the founder of phronetic social science (as mentioned above), has yet to discuss in great detail, especially from a methodological perspective, how phronetic social science research should and could be conducted although he, Flyvbjerg (2001; 2006; 2004), has mentioned some general guidelines as to what phronetic social science and research should explore and study (for example, the good and bad/moral and immoral as well as disempowerment/empowerment in society along with the theory/practice debate in epistemology). In addition, Flyvbjerg has given little attention to TPW and educational phronetic social science and what it looks like and how it should or could be conducted.

Fourthly, while Flyvbjerg (2001) defines phronetic research as moral research driven by an incentive to address the uneven distribution of power in society to empower those disempowered as a result, none of the existing studies undertaken into TPW seem to be driven by this goal. As a result they do not discuss TPW as a disempowered form of knowledge that needs empowering. Thus, their methodologies—unlike this study’s—are not driven by this goal and, in my humble opinion, have missed an opportunity to draw attention to and address TPW’s disempowerment and empower TPW and therefore, unlike this study, do not explicitly announce this as the driving force behind the reasons for conducting their studies. In contrast, this study explicitly announces that it is investigating a disempowered form of knowledge of a disempowered community using a disempowered medium in KSA ELCs—the syllabus—and that the study’s
methodology, IPER, has been specifically designed to address and highlight this disempowerment and empower TPW and its holders. In doing so, this study depicts and represents a much more political TPW that constitutes a much more heightened awareness of its disempowerment—and those teachers who hold it—in the context in which it resides and the power struggles within such context. The studies that have explored TPW in an educational setting have done so in fairly positive settings in contrast to the disempowering negative context in which this study has been conducted. As a result, this study is said to take on a much more political role because it is driven by my own personal moral incentive—that I believe drives me as a teacher and defines who I am—to address an injustice, raise awareness of and deconstruct this disempowerment and in doing so offer a voice to a disempowered knowledge form and disempowered community of teachers.

Finally, while a few recent studies exploring EFL curriculum and syllabi in KSA have highlighted many problems and shown how KSA EFL teachers are disempowered (see for example those conducted by Alfahadi (2012), Almurabit (2012) and Mullick (2013), these studies have not explored or given emphasis to the TPW teachers hold and how this can contribute to understanding and improving EFL syllabi. In addition to not studying TPW they also did not study EEEFLTs nor were their studies phronetic or IPER studies. As far as I am aware, no studies have investigated KSA EFL syllabi through a phronetic lens nor used EFL syllabi as a vehicle to highlight TPW’s potential and capacity and, in doing so, highlight how it is valuable easily-articulated knowledge whose use is not limited to the classroom. My study challenges this misassumption by collecting data through in-depth semi-structured interviews that are conducted outside the classroom. In doing so, it makes a much-needed addition to the limited number of studies that have used in-depth semi-

1.9 Overview of the Thesis

Having introduced the thesis in this chapter, Chapter 2, the Literature Review, introduces the study’s key concepts and delineates the study’s focus. In doing so, it locates the study in the literature and identifies the gap therein that this study fills. Chapter 3 is the Methodology Chapter and it depicts how the study was conducted. It begins by outlining the paradigm driving both the methodology and study and how it shapes the methodological decisions made in the study especially the data collection and analysis. In Chapter 4, the Results Chapter, the findings that emerged from the data analysis are discussed. It is in this chapter that the three secondary research questions, which inform the study’s primary research question, are answered also. Chapter 5, the Discussion Chapter is where the significance and broader implications of these findings are discussed and where the study’s primary research question is addressed and answered in the light of the findings reported in Chapter 4. The thesis concludes with a summary of the study and the contribution it makes to knowledge—and how it has answered the three secondary research questions it set out to answer and, in doing so, has used and drawn on their findings to answer the study’s primary research question—before acknowledging its shortcomings and making suggestions for future studies in the closing chapter, Chapter 6.
Chapter 2: The Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses issues pertaining to and defines theoretical knowledge (TK) alongside practical wisdom (PW) and then the key concept this thesis explores: teachers’ practical wisdom (TPW). The next section addresses the status of TPW within education and establishes how TPW is less visible than TK. Having articulated the definition of TPW driving the thesis, to identify the gap this study seeks to address, the final section reviews the limited number of TPW studies conducted.

2.2 Knowledge and Aristotle

Aristotle was one of the first to discuss *phronesis*—or practical wisdom (PW) as it is often referred to—so much so that Floyd (2013, p.196) describes it as “an ancient concept, derived from Aristotle”. Aristotle (1994, 2000) discussed PW when discussing three different types of knowledge: *episteme, techne* and *phronesis*. In defining the three, Flyvbjerg (2001, p.56) explains that “Whereas *episteme* concerns theoretical *know why* and *techne* denotes technical *know how*, *phronesis* emphasizes practical knowledge and practical ethics”. In light of their importance in the theory/practice debate in education and the debate’s relevance to this study, the forms mainly discussed in this chapter and in what remains of this thesis—are theoretical knowledge (episteme) and practical knowledge/wisdom (phronesis).

2.2.1 Theoretical knowledge.

*Episteme*, a Greek term, translates into English as *theoretical knowledge* (TK). In defining TK from a phronetic social science perspective, Flyvbjerg (2001) considers it to be top-down, abstract, decontextualised knowledge. On a similar note, Carr (2006,
upholds how—as a contrasting form of knowledge—TK is everything that phronesis (practical knowledge) is not: “abstract rather than concrete, general rather than particular, context-free rather than context-dependent”. These definitions imply that TK is in direct contrast to PW and that they are two completely different forms of knowledge. Similar sentiments are echoed in the works of Dunne (2011); Kemmis and Smith (2008); Kinsella and Pitman (2012); Landman (2012); Schram (2012); and Thomas (2012) amongst others.

In light of the above, it is difficult to avoid discussing the two forms of knowledge dichotomously. This is perhaps one of the reasons why many scholars, such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph, continue to discuss the theory and practice in a dichotomous manner when affirming the existence of the theory/practice gap in education and contending that it is the result of an epistemological gap between two different forms of knowledge. In defining this gap, Kessels and Korthagen (2001, p22) describe it as being driven by the “episteme-phronesis distinction” or, in others words, “knowledge as episteme and knowledge as phronesis”. In retracing this dichotomy back to Aristotle, Eisner (1981, p.189) describes the theory/practice gap as being underpinned by “the distinction that Aristotle made over 2,000 years ago between the theoretical and the practical”. This distinction has been revived recently in the works of Flyvbjerg (2012); Cooke and Carr (2014); Kinsella and Pitman (2012); amongst others.

Understanding the similarities and differences between episteme and phronesis is important and important to this study. Nevertheless it is a complex, in-depth debate that has already been discussed in great detail by Flyvbjerg (2001). Although I acknowledge its complexity, I pen this thesis in the hope that it will cater to a broad
audience—especially teachers such as myself. Consequently, I want to avoid an in-depth debate on this matter that intricately focuses on the differences and similarities between the two different forms of knowledge. Therefore, I shall suffice with Flyvbjerg’s and Carr’s definitions in the previous paragraph for now and define TK later (in 2.4) by explaining how phronetic social scientists consider TK to be everything that phronesis is not—as reflected in Flyvbjerg’s and Carr’s statements above. In addition, I shall also explain TK and TPW (in 2.5 and 2.6) by explaining the positions they hold in education and academia as well as looking at how some academics have arrived at (in 2.6.3) what may appear to be a possible concession between the two forms of knowledge and a potential bridge to help alleviate the theory/practice gap and bring the two different forms of knowledge closer together and make them more compatible.

2.2.2 Theoretical knowledge: an empowered form of knowledge.

Deservedly so, TK holds a lofty position in education. This is partly due to a long line of formidable theorists such as Dewey (1916); Piaget (1972); Vygotsky (1962) and others who have contributed immensely to the field. In explaining this, Thomas (2007, p.1) describes how TK is seen as the essential ingredient or “sine qua non of academic life in the field of education”. Likewise, in highlighting TK’s lofty position in education, Birmingham (2004, p.314) explains how “Episteme is the form of knowledge taken by educational theory”. If it is the knowledge that drives education theory, it is the knowledge that drives curriculum theory and thus EFL syllabi and EFL textbooks. In light of the relevance of this issue to the study in hand, it shall be discussed in more detail in section 2.6.3.1.
Likewise, deservedly so, TK plays a central role in educational research—especially research located in the interpretive paradigm—because, according to many scholars (cf. Cooke and Carr, 2014; Kinsella and Pitman, 2012; Schram, Flyvbjerg and Landman, 2013), TK is what contemporary interpretive educational research generates. In addition, its central role is reified through statements made by scholars such as Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p.1) who describe grounded theory—described by its founders, Glaser and Strauss (1967), as a research method used to generate theory—as “the most widely used and popular qualitative research method across a wide range of disciplines and subject areas”. The issue of whether interpretive research generates theory (or not) is a central discussion in this thesis. In light of this, it shall be discussed in more detail later, mainly in section 3.7.4.3.

2.2.3 Phronesis.

As *phronesis* is a Greek word, attempts to translate the term into English have resulted in different terms being used albeit to describe the same term. The most commonly used of these are *the wisdom of practice* (Shulman, 1987), *practical reasoning* (Küpers and Pauleen, 2013), *practical judgment* (Schram and Caterino, 2006) and *practical wisdom* (Phelan, 1996). Although the terms describe the same thing, phronesis, I have chosen to use Phelan’s translation in this study because I consider it the most succinct and accurate and used by Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram (2012a) who are considered pioneers in phronetic social science. The interchangeability and synonymy of the terms is evident in Sayer’s (2011, p.71) comments that “This knowledge or phronesis (practical reason, judgement or wisdom), Flyvbjerg argues, cannot be reduced to episteme…”. In addition, this statement highlights phronetic social scientists’ recently mentioned focus on these
two kinds of knowledge and their centrality in the subsequent epistemological debate concerning theoretical and practical knowledge.

2.3 Teachers' Practical Wisdom (TPW)

This study is exploring a specific kind of phronesis, teachers’ phronesis. As phronesis, teachers’ phronesis is known by several definitions also including teachers’ practical knowledge (Carter, 1990); teachers’ personal practical knowledge (Golombek, 1998); and teachers’ practical judgment (Tait, 2008). Despite this variation, the terms appear synonymous in that they all describe and define teachers’ phronesis i.e. as teachers' knowledge, in the form of wisdom, as being both practical and moral. For clarity and consistency, I have decided to simply add the term teachers to Phelan’s (1996) term, PW (used above), resulting in teachers' practical wisdom (TPW). Somewhat ironically, although Phelan attributes practical wisdom to teachers, she does not use the term teachers' practical wisdom and appears to not have a term to describe it.

2.4 Some of TPW’s Characteristics

TPW has been described as a credible and valid form of tacit—albeit easily articulated—practical knowledge that is moral and deliberative in nature (cf. Kemmis, 2012; Saugstad, 2002). Additionally, it has been described as a context-dependent form of knowledge that teachers acquire through experience that is a form of stand-alone knowledge in and of itself (cf. Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard, 1999). Likewise, it has been described as bottom-up, concrete and particular knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2001). These characteristics are discussed in detail below.
2.4.1 Practical knowledge.

When viewed through a phronetic lens, education is considered a moral practice (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012b, Pring, 2001). Through such a lens, teaching is considered a practical activity. Likewise, through this lens, teachers are considered practitioners—albeit moral practitioners. The knowledge they possess is considered practical knowledge acquired in and through practice and used in practice. From a problem-driven perspective—such as the one driving this study—this practical knowledge is used in practice to solve practical problems. In highlighting the problem-driven nature of teachers’ knowledge, Borg (2006, p.13) explains how “much of what teachers know originates in practice and is used to make sense of and deal with practical problems”. In describing such knowledge, Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard (1999, p.60) explain how “Knowledge that is principally known and produced by teachers—the knowledge of teachers—is called “practical knowledge”. This knowledge is not produced or generated for them. They generate it. It belongs to them. They own it.

Adopting this practical approach to education, knowledge, teaching and the teacher has an immense influence on this study—especially from a problem-driven and problem-solving perspective—because, when viewed through such a lens, syllabus problems are considered practical problems. These sentiments are echoed in Reid’s (1978, p.29) comments how he considers syllabus problems “practical problems that are moral rather than technical in nature”.

2.4.2 Moral knowledge.

When viewed through a phronetic lens, education is considered a moral practice. When viewing education through a phronetic lens, teaching is considered a moral
practice (cf. Dunne, 2011; Murrell, Diez, Feiman-Nemser and Schussler, 2010; Stengel, 2012; Pring, 2001). Through such a lens, teachers are considered moral agents who use moral wisdom to arrive at solutions to problems that arise as a result of looking at education through a phronetic lens. Likewise, through this lens, conducting educational research is considered a moral practice especially when it addresses moral issues such as disempowerment and marginalisation. Hence, when viewed through a moral lens that considers education and teaching as moral practices, teachers’ practical knowledge is considered moral also, moral knowledge or as Cooke and Carr (2014, p.91) put it “moral wisdom”. These sentiments are echoed in the works of many social scientists (cf. Carr, 2006; Dunne, 2011; Kemmis and Smith, 2008; Schram, Flyvbjerg and Landman, 2013; Thomas, 2012).

In highlighting TPW’s moral characteristics, Schwartz and Sharpe (2010, p.8) explain how “practical wisdom is not a technical or artistic skill. It is a moral skill”. Likewise, Halverson (2004, p.92) states that “Phronesis is an essentially moral form of knowledge”. From such a perspective, such knowledge is seen to shape how teachers think and act and constitutes the moral code of practice they abide by and prescribe to. This study does not so much focus on how teachers use this moral knowledge in teaching but how, as teachers, they use their TPW—as moral knowledge—for Problematising syllabi they have encountered. In Problematising such syllabi they identify problematic syllabi and suggest solutions that are known in the field of phronetic social science as morally defensible solutions (Fenstermacher, 1978) (as mentioned previously in section 1.7). Described in Carr’s (2007, p.277) words, morally defensible solutions are “the morally appropriate and fitting thing to do in a particular situation”. Such solutions are one of the goals for and behind using phronesis in the situation described above and in decisions—concerning
education—in general as well as the goal of phronesis-driven education research. Albeit in relation to research that explores curriculum issues, describing this goal, Carr and Kemmis (1986, p.30) explain how phronesis-driven research “sees curriculum research as a form of enquiry which is reflective and deliberative and which results, not in the production of theoretical knowledge, but in morally defensible decisions about practice”.

When viewed from the perspective outlined in Carr and Kemmis’s comments above, TPW’s use is considered as being problem-driven. From a phronetic perspective, the problems driving this study, including syllabi problems, are considered practical and moral problems. In view of this, TPW—as moral knowledge—is viewed through a problem-driven lens. Hence, this moral knowledge is used and viewed as knowledge capable of identifying and solving problems with KSA ELC syllabi—often occurring as a result of disempowerment—and arriving at a morally defensible solutions. Such an endeavour is a moral venture that is approached through the moral lens of the teacher. Similar sentiments are echoed by Henderson and Kesson (2004, p.57) who explain how teachers use their TPW for “inquiry into problem definitions and solutions”. Through a phronetic social science lens, such a process is governed by a moral compass to find “good” solutions i.e. morally defensible solutions. These sentiments are echoed in Phelan’s (1996, p.98) remarks when she explains how “Practical wisdom is about obtaining values that teachers desire, bringing about that which they believe is good for students”. The sentiments above appear to be derived from the foundations of phronesis laid down by Aristotle (2000) who describes it as knowledge used to weigh up the good and bad for mankind in order to establish the good. Likewise, they also highlight TPW’s deliberative qualities and the central role deliberation plays in weighing up any given situation in order to decipher the good
from bad and identify problems and attempt to solve them and arrive at morally defensible solutions.

### 2.4.3 Deliberative knowledge.

According to Barr (2011), amongst others, teachers use their TPW to deliberate to identify and find solutions to problems. For this reason, TPW has also been described as deliberative in nature in that it involves a weighing up of the good and bad. Consequently, Saugstad (2002, p. 380) describes TPW as a “moral virtue which involves having a true understanding of what is good for/the best for humans and governs the person to act morally, based on correct deliberations”. Likewise, Barr (2011, p.30) explains how “One particular aspect of phronesis which is of importance for education is that it requires deliberation”. Also, in describing PW’s qualities—which are at the core of TPW—Eisner (2002, p.375) explains how “Phronesis, on the other hand refers to wise practical reasoning. Practical reasoning is deliberative”. On a similar note, Kinsella and Pitman (2012, p.2) describe TPW as “deliberation that is based on values, concerned with practical judgment and informed by reflection”. This statement also highlights the role reflection plays in informing such deliberation. In highlighting reflection’s important role in bringing tacit knowledge to the surface, Schön (1983 p. 61) explains that “Through reflection (the practitioner) can surface and criticise the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialised practice”. Although reflection has been characterised as morally neutral (Korthagen, 1985; Taggart & Wilson, 1998), in this study, I show my support for Birmingham’s (2004, p.314) conclusion that reflection is a value laden—not value free—moral action: “The model of reflection being built here differs in that its essence is moral; in particular, it is essentially the virtue phronesis”. Likewise, support for this stance is evident in Larrivee’s (2000, p.295) comments how reflective
practice involves “the conscious consideration of the moral and ethical implications and consequences of classroom practices on students”.

2.4.4 Context-dependent knowledge.

PW is context-dependent knowledge as it is knowledge that is acquired in context and built up and informed through spending time in such a context to the extent that Kessels and Korthagen (1996) claim all practical knowledge is context-dependent. As mentioned previously, due to its practical nature, one of PW’s strengths is its ability to solve practical problems. Arguably, this is because it is knowledge acquired in the context in which the problem arises. As a result, it represents in-depth knowledge of the particular context at hand. In explaining this characteristic, Floyd (2013, p.203) explains how “Because of its emphasis on the particular, practical wisdom is nuanced and contextual”. On a similar note, Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram (2012b, p.2) explain how PW “grows out of intimate familiarity with practice in contextualized settings”. Acquiring intimate familiarity with practice in contextualised settings requires time, highlighting how PW is acquired through experience over a period of time. I am extending this argument to claim that TPW, as it is a kind of PW, is context-dependent also. Korthagen (2001, p.255) alludes to this when he explains how “What teachers use in practice is phronesis: situation-specific principles, context-dependent, that help them to rapidly arrive at decisions that solve practical problems”.

2.4.4.1 Bottom-up knowledge.

TPW is generated by teachers. In this sense, it is bottom-up i.e. teacher-driven knowledge as opposed to top-down knowledge that is often imposed on teachers who are expected to act upon it and put it into practice. It is knowledge that belongs
to teachers. As a result, it is empowering knowledge that places teachers at the centre of the knowledge construction process. It is knowledge that represents their understanding of their practice located and acquired in practice. As it is bottom-up knowledge, it is anchored in practice. Hence, it is contextualised, context-dependent knowledge. In this sense, it can be used to solve problems from the bottom-up and as a ‘ground level, frontline’ lens through which to view practice and practice related problems and their solutions.

2.4.5 Stand-alone knowledge.

Thomas (2010, p.578) explains how TPW is a stand-alone form of knowledge in and of itself when he argues that TPW is “judgment made on the basis of experience and without recourse to the external guide that theory putatively provides”. In explaining how this is possible, Schön (1991, p.68) explains that phronesis “is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the new case”. This is an intriguing and different way of looking at knowledge. In explaining this further, Kessels and Korthagen (2001, p.24) describe how TPW is “an essentially different type of knowledge that is not concerned with scientific theories, but with the understanding of specific concrete cases and complex or ambiguous situations”.

2.4.6 Knowledge gained through experience.

As Flyvbjerg (2001, p.57) points out “More than anything else, phronesis requires experience”. Likewise, Freeman (1996, p.99) explains that “This contextual know-how is learned over time”. Also, Schwartz and Sharpe (2010, p.8) describe how “we associate wisdom with experience”. In extending this argument to TPW, Berliner (1987, p.64) explains exactly how—amongst other things—TPW is gained through
“thousands of hours of instruction, and tens of thousands of hours of interaction with students”. Berliner’s statement highlights how much of an important part experience plays.

As discussed above, TPW requires experience. In acquiring this experience, teachers are exposed to numerous different forms of input—in and out of the classroom—such as teaching, reading education journals and books, conducting research, designing and evaluating syllabi, attending workshops, conferences and the like. Likewise, teachers normally complete some kind of teacher training of varying amounts at a variety of different times in their careers which would likely include the studying of education and teaching theories. Hence, although TPW is practical knowledge that does not mean that it cannot be informed by other than that including TK.

2.4.6.1 Concrete knowledge of particulars.

In defining TPW, Birmingham (2003, p.191) explains how it is concerned “not with abstract principles but with the particulars of a concrete situation”. Aristotle (2000) explains how knowledge of particulars comes from experience and thus only become known after having spent time in concrete situations. Hence, TPW is acquired in and drawn from concrete situations such as the ELCs discussed in this study: a particular setting with particular characteristics. Similar sentiments—albeit with regards to education research—are echoed by Thomas (2010, p.578) when explaining how “Traditional research favours abstract theories whereas phronetic research favours concrete ones”. As a result, research conducted in a phronetic setting may not be—and is not intended to be—generalisable or transferable to other settings. It does not
generate theories that are universally applicable. It generates context-specific knowledge.

2.4.7 Tacit—albeit easily articulated—knowledge.
Although TPW is considered tacit knowledge, this does not mean it is impossible to articulate. On the contrary, several scholars have addressed this misassumption (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006; Freeman, 1991; Schram, 2012). According to Polanyi (1969, p.144), “all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge”. Thus, there is no reason to single-out phronesis for being more difficult to articulate than any other form of knowledge.

2.4.8 A credible form of knowledge.
Several scholars have challenged the claim that, as a form of knowledge, TPW is not a valid— and thus valuable—form of knowledge. One of these, Elbaz (1981, p.67) argues that “What teachers know is capable of being formulated as ‘knowledge”. In extending this argument to educational research, Beijaard and Verloop (1996, p.278) strive in their campaign to convince others that “research must consider the practitioner’s knowledge as a legitimate source of data”. Sadly—as previously mentioned—this is often not the case. Similar sentiments are echoed in Carter’s (1990, p.300) claim that educational research often “ignores the practical knowledge and personal intentions of teachers”. More recently, scholars such as Schram, Flyvbjerg and Landman (2013), Thomas (2012) and Simmons (2012) have vented similar frustrations.
2.5 TPW’s Status in Education

Having defined PW and TPW, this section turns its attention mainly to the latter by discussing how TPW occupies a marginalised and disempowered status within education. Phronetic research, including phronetic educational research, is (or should be) underpinned by PW and a goal to generate TPW as opposed to the current body of educational research that Thomas (2012), amongst others, claims is underpinned by TK and a goal to generate TK. As a result, phronetic educational research and TPW lack visibility within educational research and the general body of educational knowledge.

2.6 Educational Research, TK and TPW

In contrast to TPW, deservedly so, TK occupies a respected position in the field of education in light of the immeasurable contribution it has made to the field. Consequently, it is much more visible than TPW (cf. Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012a; Simmons, 2012; Thomas, 2012). In occupying this position, TK maintains its position as the preferred form of knowledge generated by educational research whereas TPW could be considered as somewhat disempowered. The extent of this apparent disempowerment is evident in Schwartz and Sharpe’s observation (2010, p.11) that, concerning PW, “Currently, it is little mentioned in the academy, rarely mentioned in books…never mentioned in the public debate about how to heal and reform our major health care, educational, legal, and financial institutions”. According to Simmons (2012, p.246), TPW’s disempowerment is as a result of education’s “dominant hierarchy that privileges the natural sciences over the social sciences”. As a result, TPW is frowned upon, marginalised and dismissed as inferior and unscientific (Flyvbjerg, 2004). In light of this, Macklin and Whiteford (2012, p.94) explain how those who conduct social science studies, educational
research included, “have lost their way because they have attempted to deny or ignore phronesis and have opted instead for, at best, technical, and, at worst, theoretical knowledge”. This stance has affected educational research so much so that researchers often feel that for their research to be considered valid and reliable, it has to emulate the natural sciences. In explaining this dominance, Thomas (2012, p.26) describes how “As the twentieth century turned to the twenty-first, calls for more 'scientific' research into education increased in number and volume”. Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram (2012c, p.296) claim that the source of the problem lies with “the dominant scientistic social science that unreflectively tries to apply the models of the natural sciences to the social world”.

2.6.1 Educational research is often distant to practice.

Although educational research has been and is of unquestionable benefit that deserves recognition and acknowledgement, Borg (2013); Kinsella and Pitman (2012); Rossi (2013) and Thomas (2007; 2012) choose to criticise it when they claim that a great deal of it is distant to practice. Kennedy’s (1997, p.4) sentiments echo this when he explains how “research has not been relevant to practice”. Carr (2007, p.272) reiterates this criticism when voicing his reservation that educational research has become “a practically sterile activity…largely irrelevant to the needs of the educational policymakers and practitioners to whom it is supposedly addressed”. McIntyre (2005, p.359) claims that the reason for this is that the wrong kind of knowledge is being studied and generated: “the kind of knowledge that research can offer is of a very different kind from the knowledge that classroom teachers need to use”. In making such a claim, McIntyre draws attention to the ‘prickly’ debate in educational research that occurs at the level of epistemology between two different forms of knowledge, TK and TPW. The scholars above believe that researchers tend
to view research through a theoretical lens whereas teachers tend to view it through a practical one. Likewise, they believe that when researchers conduct research, their goal is often to generate theory and that, whether teachers conduct research or not, they seek knowledge that can help them in their practice i.e. practical knowledge. In explaining this, Bulterman-Bos (2008, p.412) explains how “The way in which researchers view education differs fundamentally from the way in which teachers view education”. This discussion in its entirety appears to suggest that this clash of stances and opinions can be traced back to the recently mentioned ‘prickly’ debate that, in claiming is the result of an epistemological clash between practice and theory, Cheng, Cheng and Tang (2010, p.94) explain, has its roots in the “gap between theoretical and practical knowledge”.

2.6.2 Teachers often find educational research difficult to access.

Many scholars have voiced their concerns about educational research (cf. Bevan, 2004; Borg, 2009, 2013; Bulterman-Bos, 2008; Kennedy, 1999a, 1999b; Mortimore, 2000). There are two main reasons for their concerns. The first—its difficulty to translate into and its distance from practice—was discussed in the previous paragraphs. The second, discussed here, relates to what they claim is the dense, abstract, scientific register that educational research often uses that ostracises many teachers and makes it difficult for them to access. These sentiments are echoed in McKernan’s statement (1988, p.154) that “a good deal of current educational and curriculum research is written in a language that teachers do not understand, and is largely inaccessible to the teaching profession”. Sanders and Schwab (1979, p.353) stress this point also when arguing that “Researchers publish for, and identify with, groups which do not include practitioners”. Although their claim was made a long time ago, it seems to have been ignored as twenty-one years later the same criticism
resurfaced with Pring (2000, p.496) complaining about educational research’s over reliance on “theoretical language that, too often, is impenetrable and distant from the language within which teachers pose and solve their problems”. A decade later, the problem resurfaced again. In a study of 505 English language teachers conducted by Borg (2009), a recurrent view was that educational research was considered too theoretical and hard to understand and access. More recently, Sallee and Flood (2012, p.137) suggest that the problem still exists when they describe researchers as blameworthy for “engaging in inquiry that is inaccessible to the practitioner...Although speaking to others in the scholarly community is important, researchers must also be able to translate their results into more accessible language for multiple audiences”.

Many of the scholars mentioned above are of the opinion that, as a result of educational research's distance from practice and TK being the main form of knowledge that educational research generates, a gap has emerged between theory and practice.

2.6.3 The theory/practice gap in education.

Although scholars such as Mueller (2011) and Lenz Taguchi (2007) do not agree, many contemporary scholars such as Cheng, Cheng and Tang (2010); Jackson, Bluteau and Furlong (2013); Kinsella and Pitman (2012); and Merriam and Bierema (2014), believe that the theory/practice gap is a real gap that continues to affect education. In highlighting to what extent, Kristjánsson (2005, p.456) describes it as “one of the most intractable historical problems of education”. Despite this, Mueller (2011, p.63) upholds that the theory/practice gap in education is somewhat of a false dichotomy. In mustering support for her stance, she quotes Lenz Taguchi: “the theory/practice divide is a false dichotomy (or troublesome binary) that itself requires
“deconstruction, dissolution and/or transgression” (Lenz Taguchi, 2007, p.275). Despite both scholars sharing this opinion, surprisingly, their stance echoes somewhat the thread running through this entire thesis which arises out of the acknowledgment of the prevalence and existence of the theory/practice gap in education whilst attempting to overcome and dissolve it as well as acknowledging that TK is an empowered form of knowledge and that there needs to be a more balanced, more democratic solution to the theory/practice gap one in which practice and practical knowledge are given a platform. In addition, she upholds—as this thesis does also—that theory can inform practice. She does not acknowledge phronesis in her discussion of how to bridge the theory/practice gap because—although it is a different definition of phronesis to the easily articulated form posited by Flyvbjerg (2001) in reviving Aristotle’s (2000) work—she believes it to have already failed in this task (as her statement about phronesis being silent and experiential knowledge below highlights).

Muller and Lenz Taguchi’s stance on these issues discussed in the previous paragraph can be further clarified by unpicking Lenz Taguchi (2007)—as it is considered a reference point regarding this issue, which many education scholars, who consider the theory/practice gap in education to be a false dichotomy such as Mueller (2011) and Pacini-Ketchabaw and Kocher (2011), cite.

Lenz Taguchi (2007, p.278) acknowledges the theory/practice gap exists when she explains how “there is a gap between theory and practice”. In reiterating these sentiments as well as highlighting the ever common top-down application of TK to practice, she explains that her goal in writing the 2007 above-quoted article was “to work towards a dissolution and/or transgression of the modernist theory-practice
binary that dominates ECE (Early Childhood Education) and teacher education practices, where theory is meant to be applied to practice” (p.275). Likewise, she also believes theory is an empowered form of knowledge evident in her comments that “there is another central aspect of the theory-practice binary, a relation of power; where academic knowledge (that is predominantly theoretical and masculine), is more highly valued than (motherly feminine) pre-school-practices” (p.279). In addition, she acknowledges Polanyi’s (1983) work on phronesis as an alternative form of knowledge that Polanyi put forward to try to address this problem but—in her opinion—failed: “the theorization of what has been conceptualized as ‘silent and experience-based knowledge’ (Polanyi, 1983) to upgrade practice has basically failed” (p.279).

Polanyi (1983) considered phronesis to be a tacit form of knowledge that is not easily articulated. From Lenz Taguchi’s final statement above, it would seem that she holds this opinion also especially as she describes such knowledge as ‘silent and experiential’. In disagreeing with Polanyi and Lenz Taguchi, phronetic social scientists such as Flyvbjerg (2001); Schram (2012) and Kinsella and Pitman (2012) believe phronesis to be easily articulated just as TK is. Lenz Taguchi (2007) and those who have followed her lead such as Mueller (2011) and Pacini-Ketchabaw and Kocher (2011) may not be aware of Flyvbjerg’s (2001) phronetic social science and the progress it has made since 1983 and appear to have overlooked phronesis—and its potential—in their works and its ability to bridge the theory/practice gap.

The views of Lenz Taguchi are also in line with those reflected in this thesis that theory can inform practice. In highlighting these views, she explains how teachers do not embark on training with “an empty toolbox needing to be filled with educational
theories and methods, but rather with a toolbox *already filled* (and continuously refilling itself), with tools needing to be unpacked, investigated, and reformulated*. As shall be discussed in more detail later (see 2.7.2), this thesis acknowledges that TK can inform TPW and thus practice. Such an understanding appears to be driving Lenz Taguchi’s chosen position that the theory/practice gap is a false dichotomy because she believes that TK informs practice and that—as she (p.287) puts it: “Being a professional teacher or researcher is about acknowledging—down into the bare bone—how theory and practice are interdependent, and in a certain understanding, one and the same”. This stance is similar to the one—to be discussed later (see 2.7.2)—held by other scholars who have attempted to address the theory/practice gap in a similar manner by claiming that teachers possess their own theories of practice that drive their practice. In echoing the importance the above scholars have given to the theory/practice gap in education, I intend to focus on the gap in my study, especially since it is central to the study.

In discussing the theory/practice gap in educational research, Beycioglu, Ozer and Ugurlu’s (2010, p.1088) conclude that “There have been issues about the role and value of research in education. The main issue is the [deep] gap between theory and practice in educational research”. Amongst others, Thomas (2012) believes that this gap has emerged because mainly researchers conduct research not teachers resulting in “outsider” theoretical not “insider” practical knowledge. In this sense, he believes that researchers are often more empowered than teachers when it comes to conducting research and that teachers are often viewed as consumers of research not researchers themselves or generators of knowledge. This may be due to the disempowerment teachers encounter in education and academia wherein they and their knowledge do not receive the acknowledgement they deserve. Jackson’s
(1992, p.403) sentiments echo this also—and are still pertinent today—when he argues that “Classroom teachers, on the average, occupy an inferior social status in relation to researchers”.

**2.6.3.1 Syllabi problems caused by the theory/practice gap.**

The literature discussed above also suggests that the theory/practice gap not only affects educational research but also other fields of education including curriculum and syllabus design and development which includes syllabi at the centre of this thesis’s discussion, EFL syllabi. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain such syllabi are often informed by theory in a unidirectional way in that theory is applied to practice in a top-down manner. Black and Halliwell (2000, p.104) refer to this top-down process as “the one-way action of applying theory to practice”. According to Schwab (1971), applying theory to practice in such a way is driven by an assumption that if the theory is applied correctly then the required results will be achieved.

From such a perspective, the syllabus—often in the form of ready-made textbooks—is used as a vehicle to transfer theory, be it derived from research or theorists’ theories, into the classroom often regardless of the contextual make-up of the classroom. Duarte (1998, p.618) claims that the use of such a unidirectional approach results in EFL syllabi that are based on “an externally derived theory and a corresponding method, which, provided the teacher has followed it accurately, will work regardless of the instructional context”. In highlighting the significance of these theories, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.20) describe how “three different theoretical views of language and the nature of language proficiency explicitly or implicitly inform current approaches and methods in language teaching”. This statement appears to support this chapter’s previous discussion about the respected status of
TK in education, as their statement appears to be claiming that TK informs all current approaches and methods in language teaching. As syllabi are often textbooks or their contents pages, in EFL, these different theoretical views have become, and been used as reference points to design, textbooks driven by the assumption that—provided the textbook is followed correctly—learning will take place regardless of the context. From this perspective, the textbook is considered a foolproof recipe for successful learning as it is perhaps inescapably driven—be that explicitly or implicitly—by one of the three different theoretical views of language and the nature of language proficiency that inform current approaches and methods in language teaching and thus inform EFL curriculum, syllabi and textbooks and other commercially produced materials.

Richards and Rodgers’s above statement suggests that although EFL/ESOL syllabi may be informed by research and/or TK, they are not necessarily informed by practice—especially since their statement does not mention practice or practitioners. Likewise, Wyatt (2011) claims that practitioners (i.e. teachers) are not usually involved in EFL syllabus and textbook design. Albeit made over thirty years ago, Ben-Peretz’s (1980, p.53) comments regarding this point are still relevant today in that, regarding syllabus design, “Only rarely are teachers’ own interests and concerns allowed to influence or direct the choices made”. Regarding EFL syllabi, Wyatt (2011, p.2) expresses similar sentiments when he explains how “Many English language teaching (ELT) contexts around the world are characterized by a top-down approach to curriculum design, with all materials provided to teachers, together with instructions on how to use them”. Wyatt’s comments highlight how teachers are only really involved at the implementation stage. Furthermore, even at this stage their involvement is restricted and prescribed.
The above approach represents an approach to syllabus design and delivery that often overlooks the most important participants in this equation: humans. Such an approach manifests itself in the control of instructional inputs that comprise the syllabus to achieve “consistently predictable learning outcomes. Since interpretation and intuition play no part in this causal equation, teachers are seen as inconvenient variables. Teach-proof curricular materials and scripted lessons are two manifestations of this” (Piantanida and Garman, 2009, p.50). What makes this discussion more relevant to this study is that such syllabi are particularly dominant in the Middle East. El-Okda (2005, p.33) explains this when he describes how the syllabus “in almost all Arab countries follows a top-down model in which teacher involvement is confined to the implementation of pre-designed packages of teaching materials”.

From a KSA EFL syllabi perspective, Almurabit (2012), voices similar sentiments. Such syllabi disempower teachers and their PW relegating them to “page turners” and “mouse clickers”.

In all fairness, if used correctly, EFL textbooks are useful tools and learning aids. The problem is when they become the syllabus and when they are used as tools to control teachers and replace them as the main resource in the classroom. Sadly, this is a common occurrence in many parts of the world including in KSA (Alseghayer, 2012). To complicate matters, these textbooks are often used, contrarily to how they were intended and designed to be used, as scripts to be followed rigidly.

2.7 A Review of Existing TPW Research

As teachers’ practical knowledge is a shared term that has different meanings for different researchers and academics, this final section begins by addressing this issue because it mistakenly implies that TPW research is thriving when it is not.
Albeit through an empirical lens, after delineating the definition of TPK—the one synonymous with TPW—I am using in this study, I review the limited number of TPW studies conducted. Finally, I outline the gap in knowledge that my study fills especially from a methodological standpoint.

2.7.1 TPW research: defining the territory.
Discussing and defining TPW through an empirical lens presents a slight dilemma as there is some confusion surrounding the term teachers’ practical knowledge (TPK), a term which different groups of scholars—i.e. researchers and academics—use to define and describe different things. Some phronetic scholars use the term TPK instead of and when discussing TPW and thus use the two terms synonymously. Others define and discuss TPK through a predominantly theoretical lens whilst others do so through a predominantly cognitive lens. Thus, before examining any literature or studies, there must be a discussion of these three different ways the term TPK has been used in the literature that results in the isolation of the definition of TPK—synonymous with TPW—driving this study and the phronetic educational research studies that have been conducted that are relevant to this study.

2.7.2 Defining TPK through a theoretical lens.
The first group consists of scholars who use the term theory—or a derivative—when defining TPK in their studies and other works. An example of this is evident in the terms teachers’ practical theories (Kettle and Sellars, 1996), practical theories of teaching (Sanders and McCutcheon, 1986) and teachers’ personal practical theories (Feryok, 2005). Although those belonging to this group use the term practical to define the knowledge teachers possess—they still locate it in a theoretical framework. An example of this is Kettle and Sellers’s study (1996, p.1) that—in their
words—chronicled changes in the practical theory of two student teachers over a period of 12 months driven by the belief that “every teacher has a practical theory of teaching which guides practice in the classroom”. This suggests they believe practice is theory-driven and that such theory is practical i.e. practical theory. Likewise, Feryok (2005, p.288) couches her discussion of TPK in theory also. This is evident in her comments made in the findings of her study exploring what she describes as teachers’ personal practical theories that “theory acts as a heuristic for practice…theory, as a source for beliefs, can guide or direct practices”. In addition, Sanders and McCutcheon (1986, p.54) define TPK through a theoretical lens also. This is evident when they explain how teachers possess and develop “practical “theories” of teaching…the principles or propositions that undergird and guide teachers’ appreciations, decisions, and actions”.

In contrast to Flyvbjerg’s and Carr’s previously discussed definitions of theory (see 2.2.1), the above-mentioned kind of TK is seen to be concrete rather than abstract, particular rather than general and context-dependent rather than context-free because it is situated in practice and practice is concrete, particular and context-dependent also. Likewise, it is considered as bottom-up (teacher-driven) knowledge—as opposed to top-down knowledge—as it is generated by teachers not generated for them by other than them. In a sense, it is knowledge for teachers by teachers.

From such a stance as the one discussed above, education theories are assessed for their practical worth and teachers determine the validity and value of such theories based on their practical currency (albeit mainly in the classroom). When viewing teachers from this perspective, a power shift occurs in that the seal of
approval for education theory lies with teachers who decide whether such theories have practical worth in the classroom. Johnson's (1996, p.767) sentiments echo this when he argues that “theory can inform classroom practice only to the extent to which teachers themselves make sense of that theory”. It is teachers that decide whether a theory is useful or not: “It is practice that determines the validity of theory rather than theory that determines the validity of practice” (Carr, 1986, p.180). Thus, in Dorovolomo’s (2004, p.10) words, this stance views “teachers as theory generators” and “as theory-builders who continually construct, elaborate, test and refine their own practical theories of teaching” (Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood and Son, 2004, p.294).

Viewing the two forms of knowledge through such a lens offers an alternative lens through which to view the theory/practice gap. In essence, it bridges the gap because it allows theory to be defined in a similar manner to practice i.e. concrete, particular and context-dependent. In addition, such theories are empowering because they are bottom-up—not top-down—generated by teachers: teachers are considered as generators of knowledge alongside education theorists and researchers and the like. Marsh (2009, p.250) explains how, by adopting this approach to theory and practice, “the traditional dichotomy of theory–practice disappears since all now become practitioners who theorize”. Likewise, Kristjánsson (2005, p.457) describes how “the old theory-practice dichotomy is transcended…The theory that remains is the practice-embedded theory of participant knowledge, as contrasted with the traditional spectator-like theory from nowhere”.

Nevertheless, the decision to adopt such a stance raises certain questions because the knowledge the scholars above are describing—despite being described as
theoretical knowledge—would be, from a phronetic social science perspective, be considered phronesis as it has many of its characteristics: it is concrete, particular, context-dependent knowledge located in practice and generated by practitioners despite their being no mention of phronesis’s moral characteristics—an essential component. In addition, it is described as practical knowledge albeit practical theoretical knowledge. I believe such a conclusion is credible especially as a discussion of phronesis is barely visible in education. Thus, many scholars may be unaware of Aristotle’s discussion of phronesis and its relevance to—and as an alternative lens through which to view—education especially the practical knowledge that teachers generate. Phronetic social scientists may disagree with this stance because they believe that practical knowledge cannot be theoretical nor can theoretical knowledge be practical. They uphold that episteme and phronesis are two completely different, separate forms of knowledge and that a democratic approach to the problem is needed, one that acknowledges that both are two different kinds of knowledge that are both as useful and as valid as each other and can coexist peacefully together and inform each other (as discussed above).

2.7.3 Defining TPK through a cognitive lens.

Although some scholars use the term TPK in their works, they discuss and define TPK through a predominantly cognitive lens amongst them Akbari (2009), Borg (1999, 2003, 2006) and Wyatt (2009). To complicate matters, these scholars sometimes couch their discussions in theory also as the previously discussed group of scholars do. An example of this is when Borg (1999, p.161) comments how “teachers’ theories, as a form of practical knowledge, cannot be examined without reference to what actually goes on in the classroom”. Despite this, overall, this group’s works locate TPK in a more cognitive than theory-driven framework as
evident when Borg (2003, p.103) describes Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard’s (1999; 2001) studies in TPK as “a major contribution to the study of teacher cognition...Using the notion of practical knowledge as the conceptual basis of their work...”.

In viewing TPK through such a lens, this group does not appear to discuss TPK’s moral characteristics. This is in contrast to one of the most recognised figures in TPK, Elbaz—who they often cite when discussing TPK—commenting that “Moral concern pervades all of teachers’ work and the knowledge that grows out of that work, yet...researchers looking at teachers’ knowledge have said relatively little about the moral, tending instead to concentrate on cognitive aspects of teacher thinking” (Elbaz, 1992, p.421). Despite Elbaz’s comments, after reading her works, the oversights she mentions in her quote apply to her also as she does not adopt a phronetic approach in her work of late nor recent: she does not include or mention phronesis nor does it drive her work. Confining TPK—synonymous with TPW—to the field of teacher cognition is perhaps incorrect because it is more than simply teacher cognition as Halverson (2004, p.93) observes: “as a comprehensive human capacity, practical wisdom bridges our conventional categories of cognition, affect, and behavior”.

To sum up, in adopting this approach, both groups of scholars mentioned in 2.7.2, and what has preceded from 2.7.3, do not trace “the notion of practical knowledge to its source in Aristotle’s original distinction of practical from theoretical knowledge” (Carr, 1995, p.137). In defining TPK, both groups of scholars above make no mention of phronesis and thus appear to not consider the knowledge teachers possess and generate as phronesis. Likewise, they make no mention of Aristotle, the
founder of phronesis, in their works. Also, they do not mention or discuss the distinction between wisdom and knowledge—i.e. between TPW and TPK—anywhere in their works. In light of this, if these scholars do not consider TPK to be phronesis, then they more than likely consider it episteme i.e. theoretical knowledge (Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012a; Thomas, 2012).

2.7.4 Using TPK and TPW interchangeably intending phronesis.
A third group of scholars discuss TPK through a predominantly phronetic not theoretical or cognitive lens. Despite this, they still use the terms TPK and TPW interchangeably albeit intending the same concept, phronesis albeit that of teachers. This can be confusing because—as we have seen—scholars from the two groups mentioned above use the term TPK also, albeit with different implications. This definitional confusion needs to and has been clarified because it falsely suggests that phronetic scholarship and research are thriving when they are not. Clarifying this confusion helps demarcate the gap this study fills because it addresses this misconception that somehow TPW-research is thriving and that TPW studies should be located in this thriving body of knowledge or considered flawed and condemned for not doing so. As it stands, TPW research does not have a noteworthy body of knowledge to locate itself in especially a body of educational research knowledge.

An example of how the terms PK and PW are used interchangeably is evident in Caduri’s (2013) comments that “Aristotle (1994) was the first to distinguish between two sorts of knowledge: one theoretical...the other practical (Phronesis)...Hence, practical wisdom is the knowledge or understanding that enables its possessor to do the right thing on (sic) the right time. Viewed in this light, practical knowledge...(p.40, my emphasis). The use of the terms interchangeably suggests
the two terms describe the same concept, phronesis. Another example is when Sayer (2011, p.74), when describing phronesis, comments how “Epistemology—the theory of knowledge—typically ignores practical knowledge”. On a similar note, when Griggs and Howarth (2012, p.169) describe Flyvbjerg’s approach to social science, they comment how “Flyvbjerg thus grounds his approach on a search for practical knowledge”. Likewise, Flyvbjerg (2001, p.56) uses the two terms synonymously also evident in his comments that “phronesis emphasizes practical knowledge”.

Having defined the definition of TPK driving this study—the one synonymous with TPW—this definition is now used to drive what remains of the study beginning with an outline of the background underpinning this section of the review, followed by a review of some of the studies that have been conducted before identifying the gap that this study fills. Thus, from here on, the terms knowledge and wisdom are used interchangeably when discussing TPW in the sense that when viewed through the phronetic lens that drives this study, phronesis—as practical wisdom—is considered a form of practical knowledge and thus can be described using the term knowledge.

2.8 Phronetic Educational Research

A traditional literature review normally includes a discussion of a selection of some of the important studies that have been conducted relevant to the study being conducted. This section of the literature review does that but not in as much detail as is customary for an EdD thesis. This is due to TPW’s virtual absence from the literature. There are only a few TPW studies that have been conducted and therefore it is difficult to find relevant studies to discuss and even more so phronetic studies driven by a phronetic epistemology and methodology especially in education not to mention TEFL.
Alas, TPW's status and visibility in education has not improved much in the thirty years or so since Schwab (1983, p.243) informed us that, in education, which includes educational research, “the practical is not particularly respectable academically”. This lack of improvement is evident in Breier and Ralphs’ (2009, p.479) conclusion, more than twenty-five years later, that “The Aristotelian concept of phronesis or practical wisdom is gaining popularity…in literature on education as authors attempt to define the other-than theoretical knowledge that characterizes good teaching”. Stating that PW is gaining popularity suggests that it is not yet popular and receiving the recognition it deserves. Furthermore, from an educational research perspective, this situation has not improved much although there have been some important PW-themed books published during the last decade or so although educational research has yet to follow suit. In this revival of Aristotelian phronesis, one scholar, Bent Flyvbjerg, has played a major role although his work has focussed mainly on an epistemological debate between two kinds of knowledge, PW and TK, not a methodological discussion how phronetic research should be carried out and its methodological underpinnings. I am conducting this study in an attempt to address these methodological shortcomings.

scientists appear to locate phronetic research in the interpretive paradigm although they do not explicitly mention this.

Despite their valiant efforts, even some of those who contributed to the two books acknowledged that both books were mainly about the theoretical issues involved in “justifying and doing phronetic social science, with only two illustrative case studies of applied phronesis, one in each book” (neither of which was educational) (Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2011a, p.3). On a similar note, Nøhr (2013, p.395) mentions how “while the theoretical argument was convincing, followers and critics alike were pointing to a lack of illustrative case studies and asking: how is phronesis supposed to be applied”? This question was answered in the next book, Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis, that Cornish (2012, p.1) explains manages to “show us, not merely to tell us, the value of phronetic social science, by providing a series of examples”. Regarding the book, Schram (2012, p.15) comments also how “Phronetic social science…has so far existed mostly in theory…The aim of Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis is to rectify this deficiency in the literature by bringing together case studies illustrating phronetic social science”. For him to state this in 2012 highlights the disheartening state phronetic social science is in.

If phronetic social science is in a disheartening state, phronetic educational research is in a worse state because—although educational research is social science—the three books do not specifically focus on education: even when case studies are depicted, they focus mainly on programme management and planning not education. Hence, the books do not really address TPW’s disempowerment in education although in Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis, from the eight case studies, Shdaimah and Stahl (2012) studied power and conflict in a collaborative research
project into the home repair and maintenance needs of low-income Philadelphia homeowners while Simmons (2012) studied whether or not to include a module on Action Research for Social Justice and Human Rights on an MA in Social Justice and Human Rights programme. Despite this inclusion, both studies are in an abridged form (Shdaimah and Stahl’s contribution spans 15 pages and Simmons’ 18 pages). One of the consequences is that the case studies lack depth, depth that is necessary if someone—such as myself—has to analyse them and critique them academically especially concerning details about the participants and the data collection and analysis methods and process. An example of this lack of depth is evident in the term case study being mentioned thirty times and case studies thirty-eight times throughout the book, without any explicit working definition of what any of the contributors consider a case study being given despite Savin-Baden and Major (2013) claiming there are seventeen different kinds of case study. Thus, these works fail to demarcate clearly what exactly phronetic social science is and how it should be conducted and what data collection and analysis methods should be used to do so. Even though they use case studies—commonly used in interpretive research—the reader is left in doubt especially when taking into account Flyvbjerg’s (2004) comments that phronetic social science is not linked to any specific paradigm and thus it does not have a paradigm nor is it confined to the interpretive paradigm. Despite this, other researchers appear to have adopted the interpretive paradigm as a home for their phronetic research. This is especially the case with those researchers who have conducted phronetic educational research.

**2.8.1 Phronetic educational research studies.**

Phronetic research studies are very scarce even more so in education. After searching for such studies in education, I found only nine studies: Barr (2011),
Gholami (2009), Gholami and Husu (2010), Halverson (2002), Husu (2005), James (2009), John (1999), Tait (2008) and Toom (2006). These studies were chosen because they explicitly claimed they were studying phronesis. As it is not possible to discuss each study individually, I have chosen a selection of excerpts that represent the overall gist of the studies that were, apart from Barr (2011), whose study had 24 participants, small scale studies with Gholami (2009) having five participants; Gholami and Husu (2010) two; Halverson (2002) 14; Husu (2005) one; James (2009) three; John (1999) five; Tait (2008) three; and Toom (2006) four.

The nine were chosen because they are educational studies that explore the Aristotelian notion of phronesis. An example of this is Barr (2011, p.4) who explains that “The thesis takes a concept from Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics and applies it to Higher Education in Further Education in England”. On a similar note, Halverson (2002, p.32) explains how “This thesis is based on an argument that the Aristotelian idea of phronesis, or practical wisdom, offers a valuable framework to capture and represent the wisdom of instructional leaders in schools”. Likewise, Tait (2008, p.26) describes how, in her study, “Aristotle’s notion of phronesis…is the main theoretical framework used to interpret the deliberations of the teachers of this study”.

In examining the nine studies—none of which explored EFL, TEFL or syllabi—I will discuss them paradigmatically, epistemologically and methodologically. The methodological section of the discussion focuses mainly on a certain data collection method some of the studies have used that disempowers TPW. As TPW is a moral form of knowledge that is acquired through experience, before finishing with a discussion of whether the nine studies explicitly state phronesis’s moral qualities in
their findings, I discuss the nine studies’ attention—as well as lack of—to the link between experience and phronesis in choosing their studies’ participants.

2.8.2 Identifying the paradigm the nine studies are located in.

All nine studies are located in the interpretive paradigm. Gholami (2009, p.49) in explaining his rationale for doing so—whilst echoing the sentiments of the other nine researchers—explains how “The knowledge claim of this study (i.e., that teachers construct practical knowledge and that its epistemic nature may be studied from their views) is in accordance with assumptions embedded in “constructivist’ paradigms...According to this paradigm, individuals construct their knowledge within and in interaction with social contexts”. In doing so, Gholami highlights a fundamental tenet of the interpretive paradigm where actors—including teachers—are viewed not as passive recipients but constructors of knowledge which they construct as they interact with others. On a similar note, James (2009, p.86) explains how “Since the intellectual puzzle of this research study is not so much to ascertain the content of student teachers’ phronesis, but to explore how student teachers actually construct and use phronesis, the choice of research design, in particular, will be interpretive”.

The decision, taken by the nine researchers, firmly locates their phronetic studies in an interpretive framework and thus highlights the compatibility between the two. In addition, it highlights how the interpretive paradigm can accommodate phronetic educational research that is value-laden, context-dependent, subjective research that focuses on the particular. In locating phronetic research in the interpretive paradigm, Schram (2012, p.16) explains how phronetic research “contrasts practical versus theoretical knowledge, positivistic versus interpretivist methodologies,
qualitative versus quantitative data-collection efforts...”. As a paradigm, it provides phronetic researchers with qualitative methods that enable them to get close to the phenomenon being studied in order to capture this value-laden, context-dependent, subjective account and obtain an in-depth thick description—one of the main aims of phronetic research: “Fundamental to phronetic research is a focus on ‘thick description’ (Sandercock and Attili, 2012, p.142). In an attempt to achieve this thick description, many of the—albeit few—phronetic researchers including, but not restricted to, Basu (2012), Landman (2012) and Schram (2012), as well as some of the nine above (Barr, 2011; Halverson, 2002; John, 1999; James, 2009; Tait, 2008) have used case studies to investigate phronesis.

2.8.3 Using case study as a methodology.
Discussing case studies is challenging as scholars disagree on what a case study is. Crotty (1998) considers it to be a method whereas Creswell (1998) considers it an approach although Thomas (2009) considers it a design frame and Dul and Hak (2008) a methodology. Unfortunately, some of the five researchers, who described their studies as case studies, contribute to this confusion also as they use the term in different ways. One of the more noticeable examples is John’s (1999) study where—on the same page—he describes the case study as a method: “a suitable method”; approach; “the case study approach”; and paradigm: “the undeserved low status of the case-study as a research paradigm” (p.42).

Likewise, instead of describing the methodology she uses as being case study, Tait (2008) describes it as stimulated recall (SR) and both case study and SR as her study’s method when commenting that she “will define and describe ‘stimulated recall’ (SR)...outlining some potential strengths and limitations of this method...[and]
present some merits of the use of the case study and discuss some of the ethical considerations when using these qualitative methods” (p.31). Later in the thesis, she describes SR as a methodology: “As the main goal of SR is to elicit and trace the thoughts of participants, it is not surprising that cognitive psychology was also amongst the first field to use such a methodology” (p.34). This is confusing especially when taking into consideration that she introduces her study as “three case studies of teachers engaging in conversations about their practical judgments as they observed video-recordings of their teaching” (p.ii). Such a statement suggests that case study is her methodology and interviews—SR interviews—her data collection method. If phronetic research is to achieve the recognition it deserves, it needs to be much more robust. This criticism is also applicable to Flyvbjerg’s previously discussed works (see 2.8) as they do little to clarify coherently exactly how phronetic research should be conducted. In addition, the nine studies discussed in this section do not help in this matter also as they seem to add to the lack of clarity.

Although the five researchers mentioned above used a case study methodology to investigate phronesis, only Tait (2008), Halverson (2002) and John (1999) explicitly state their rationale for doing so. In highlighting her rationale for using a case study methodology to conduct her phronetic study, Tait (2008, p.41) explains she did so because “the current research attempts to provide a “close-up,” “good example” of teachers’ deliberative processes”. In highlighting his rationale also, Halverson (2002, p.293) explains how “cases enable practitioners to make tacit knowledge explicit”. Despite this, he does not give any more detail about how such a methodology enables this. In highlighting his rationale, John (1999) believes that using a case study methodology enables him to answer his study’s research questions: “the ‘case-
study’ with an interpretative framework would seem an ideal type for the answering of the research questions outlined earlier” (p.42).

2.8.4 The data collection methods the nine studies employed.
As all the studies above are located in the interpretive paradigm, they used qualitative data collection methods—mainly interviews—as their primary data collection method. They predominantly used two different kinds of interviews: stimulated recall interviews and semi-structured interviews. Stimulated recall interviews constitute one part of a two-part data collection method known as stimulated recall. Thus, in order to discuss stimulated recall interviews, stimulated recall must be explained first.

2.8.4.1 Stimulated recall.
Developed by Bloom (1953), stimulated recall has come to be known by several names such as stimulated recall method (Vesterinen, Toom and Patrikainen, 2010), stimulated recall methodology (Gass and Mackey, 2000), stimulated recall interview (Yinger, 1986), stimulated recall classroom observation (Abdelhafez, 2010) and stimulated recall technique (Marland, 1984). Despite this variation, these terms appear synonymous in that they all describe a two-stage qualitative data collection method used to study teachers in their classrooms. The teacher is either videotaped or audiotaped teaching (or both). This observation is then used as a stimulus for an interview where the recording is played back to prompt and stimulate the teacher to recall what he or she was thinking during specific incidents. Such incidents are chosen either by the researcher or teacher-participant or a mixture of both. As Toom (2006, p.88) explains, the purpose of the observation is “to generate the stimulant material for the stimulated recall interview”.

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As some people such as Gass and Mackey (2000) consider stimulated recall to be a methodology, to avoid confusion and also emphasise that it is a method and not a methodology, I follow Toom’s (2006) lead and use the term *stimulated recall method* from here on. This decision is also informed by the stimulated recall method’s founder, Bloom, (1953, p.61) who described stimulated recall as a method not methodology when explaining how: “The basic idea underly the method of stimulated recall is that the subject may be able to relive an original situation with vividness and accuracy if he is presented with a large number of the cues or stimuli which occurred during the original situation”.

Stimulated recall method has become popular in studies exploring teachers’ practical knowledge especially those that do so through a cognitive lens such as van Tartwijk, den Brok, Veldman and Wubbels (2009) as well as a theoretical lens such as Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood and Son (2004). Likewise, it has become a popular data collection method for researchers studying teachers’ practical knowledge through a phronetic lens also and five of the nine researchers above used it in their studies. In using stimulated recall method as a data collection method, Tait (2008) and Toom (2006) videotaped their stimulated recall method observations whereas Gholami (2009), Gholami and Husu (2010) audio recorded them and James (2009) did both. In conducting their stimulated recall method interviews after having recorded the observations, Gholami (2009), Gholami and Husu (2010) and Toom (2006) adopted a researcher-led approach where they chose segments of interest and then asked the participants questions about them. Alternatively, the participant may be the one leading the interview in that the teacher-participants stop the recording and explain what they were thinking during the selected event as evident
in Tait’s (2008) study. In addition, the interview may be a mixture of both as James’s (2009) was.

2.8.4.2 Critiquing the stimulated recall method.

Despite the stimulated recall method’s popularity, it is perhaps not the best method for studying TPW. It is a method borrowed from cognitive psychology (Gass and Mackey, 2000). As a result, it is unsuitable for studying TPW as TPW is more than cognition (Halverson, 2004). TPW needs methods it can call its own that can empower it and highlight its prowess.

Despite the various ways of approaching stimulated recall method interviews, the interviews are—more often than not—researcher-driven in that the researcher chooses specific events for the teacher to comment on during the stimulated recall method interview. These sentiments are echoed in Toom’s (2006, p.92) comments how “I viewed all the videotaped lessons carefully before the STR-interview situations [STR=stimulated recall], as it is normal when the STR is used…I chose the surprising moments…I made detailed notes about the time and location of pedagogical moments in the videotapes and I also wrote down several central questions that I intended to present to the participant during the STR-interview”. Support for this is evident in Gholami’s (2009, p.56) comments also: “I identified selected pedagogical incidents while observing the lessons…I reviewed the designated points and made notes and questions to use in the interview…I interviewed the teacher about those specific incidents”. This is inevitable as, during the observation, the researcher makes notes and prepares questions to ask the teacher-participant during the stimulated recall method interview. These sentiments are echoed in Shkedi’s (2005, p.74) comments how “the researcher
episodes from the transcription of the observation...During the stimulated-recall interview, the interviewer introduces the episodes to the informants, one at a time, and asks for explanations...Many times, the stimulated-recall interview is conducted a few days after the observation...[as] it takes this amount of time to listen carefully to the recording and then to transcribe it”. In this lies the dilemma because the time needed to transcribe the observation delays the interview and can cause the teacher-participant to forget. As mentioned previously, the stimulated recall method is underpinned by the belief that teachers’ tacit knowledge is stored in their short-term memory and is difficult to articulate once it has left there. This is one of the reasons, Slough (2001, p.3), amongst others, suggests that “stimulated recall procedures should be conducted as soon as possible after a task is completed”. This is also why Gholami (2009) and Gholami and Husu (2010) use the stimulated recall method to capture what they describes as teachers’ knowledge-in-use driven by the assumption that it is stored in the short-term memory and that the stimulated recall method is the best method to elicit and capture such knowledge.

In his study, Gholami (2009, p.55) differentiates between two kinds of knowledge: teachers’ overarching beliefs and teachers’ knowledge-in-use: “Two distinct forms of teachers’ practical knowledge of general pedagogy were targeted in the present study: teachers’ overarching beliefs and teachers’ knowledge-in-use” (my emphasis). In espousing the same assumptions, Gholami and Husu (2010), believe that teachers’ overarching beliefs can be captured directly using interviews but teachers’ “knowledge-in-use” cannot. As a result, they believe teachers’ overarching beliefs should be studied using interviews not the stimulated recall method and teachers’ tacit practical knowledge by using the stimulated recall method not interviews: “Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on teachers’ overarching
beliefs…stimulated recall interviews were used to collect data on the other form of teachers’ practical knowledge (knowledge-in-use)"

I do not consider Gholami and Husu’s (2010) classification beneficial or correct as it implies that—although teachers’ overarching beliefs and teachers’ knowledge-in-use cannot be collected using the same data collection methods—both forms of knowledge are considered practical knowledge. Alternatively, if we submit to Gholami’s assumption that teachers’ overarching beliefs can be captured using interviews then we can argue that these overarching beliefs drive the teachers’ practical knowledge-in-use and thus, if one can be captured using interviews, the other can also especially if the one driving the other is considered as being easily articulated and capturable through interviews. Likewise, if viewed through Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard’s (1999) lens that considers all practical knowledge as tacit, using interviews to capture one suggests that it is a suitable method to capture the other.

Using the stimulated recall method is considered disempowering as it suggests TPW is difficult or impossible to articulate and thus needs the stimulated recall method to act as an intermediary to bring TPW to the surface so it can be elicited and captured and thus analysed. Likewise, it confines TPW to the classroom. It does so because it is a method designed to study teaching in the place of practice—which in education is predominantly the classroom—and designed to capture practical "knowledge-in-use" (Gholami and Husu, 2010). Such a position is underpinned by a more traditional assumption that “to understand the teachers’ personal practical knowledge, one needs to understand how they work in their classroom” (Clandinin, 1985, p.366).
In addition, as is often the case, if using the stimulated recall method is considered good practice and considered the best way to elicit TPW, it can prevent teachers from conducting research if its use is confined to the classroom. Teachers—including myself—may not be permitted to conduct research in the classroom let alone video record teachers and then arrange further interviews to view the recorded teaching sessions. I did not conduct this study in my classroom because I knew I would not be allowed to. Using the stimulated recall method to study TPW demotes TPW to a form of knowledge that can only be used in the classroom as if TPW and the teacher depart company when they leave the classroom. This is in conflict with the underpinnings of this study reflected in Boschman, McKenney and Voogt’s (2012, p.3) statement that “Practical knowledge underlies not only teaching but also other teaching related activities” (my emphasis). Likewise, these sentiments are echoed in Eryaman’s (2007, p.20) argument that “Phronesis involves the ability to understand how complex and messy situations hang together in teaching and other educational practices” (my emphasis).

2.8.4.3 In-depth semi-structured interviews.

Although five of the nine studies used stimulated recall method interviews as their main data collection method, Barr (2011), Halverson (2002), Husu (2005) and John (1999) used in-depth semi-structured interviews. In addition, Gholami (2009), Gholami and Husu (2010) and James (2009)—who used stimulated recall method interviews as their main data collection tool—used semi-structured interviews also. Despite using them, they used them for a different reason to those of the nine who used them to capture TPW. This is evident in Gholami and Husu’s (2010, p.1522) explanation behind their rationale for using such interviews: “At the beginning of the study, we did the first round of semistructured interviews with the two participating
teachers in order to understand their overarching beliefs”. On a similar note, Gholami (2009, p.159), who also used the stimulated recall method in his study, explains how “Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on teachers’ overarching beliefs”. In addition, James (2009) used the stimulated recall method and semi-structured interviews also.

Regarding this issue, I believe semi-structured interviews are more suitable than stimulated recall method interviews as the former empower TPW. They do so because they are driven by the belief that TPW is easily-articulated and does not need an intermediary method such as the stimulated recall method to bring it to the surface in order to capture it. In addition, using such interviews does not confine TPW’s use to the classroom and enables TPW to be studied outside the classroom as Barr’s (2011) and Halverson’s (2002) studies have shown. As a result, such interviews enable the researcher to conduct studies at different research sites as Gholami (2009, p.53) did with “six class teachers (i.e., teachers who are teaching several subject matters in an elementary grade) from two different schools”. In addition, they enable researchers to conduct studies with different kinds of participants as Barr’s (2011, p.104) study shows: “Interviews were conducted with 12 students, 8 staff and 4 managers”.

2.8.5 Data analysis methods used: grounded theory method

Although all the nine studies above explicitly mentioned the data collection methods they used, only two of the nine studies, Tait (2008) and Gholami (2009), explicitly discussed the methods they used, grounded theory method, to analyse their data and arrive at the themes they did—an oversight on the part of the seven. In any study, the data analysis methods used need explaining as it is important to know
what methods were used and how especially as grounded theory method—the most commonly used data analysis method in interpretive research—has been described as having both positivist and interpretivist versions. As both did not discuss or explicitly state whether they used a positivist or interpretive version of grounded theory method nor cite any of interpretive grounded theory method's proponents such as Bryant and Charmaz (2007), I believe that, despite both studies being interpretive, they used a positivist version of grounded theory method to analyse the data they collected and build up themes in the data as is often the case with interpretive research (cf. Charmaz, 2006). My study intends to address these shortcomings by not only explicitly discussing the methods I used to analyse my data and arrive at themes but also disclose and discuss the paradigm underpinning the data analysis methods.

2.8.6 The experience levels of the nine studies’ participants

The levels of experience of the studies’ participants varied significantly. Gholami (2009), Gholami and Husu (2010), Halverson (2002), Husu (2005), John (1999), Tait (2008) and Toom (2006) investigated experienced participants whereas James’s (2009) participants were inexperienced. Barr (2011) did not take experience into consideration in choosing his participants and did not discuss this issue. This is unsurprising considering he studied students, teachers and managers not purely teachers. In doing so, he has taken phronesis to be a kind of common sense form of knowledge that is not necessarily acquired through experience—hence the reason why the issue of experience is not addressed in his study. On a similar but slightly different note, James (2009, p.86) comments how his study investigates “how do student teachers construct and use phronesis to enhance their professional
development”. Mirroring Barr (2011) above, James’s study appears to overlook the link between phronesis and experience.

Not using experienced participants conflicts with phronetic social science underpinnings that “experience, the accumulation of encounters with particular situations, is a key aspect of practical wisdom” (Halverson, 2002, p.390). Thus, it contradicts it and, once again, gives ammunition to critics especially when those who conducted such studies do not explain the reason why such a decision was made. In explaining the reasoning behind their decision to study experienced teachers, Gholami and Husu (2010, p.1521) explain how “The source of data in this study were experienced teachers who had been teaching for at least four years, because one of the most important sources of teachers’ practical knowledge is professional experience”. On a similar note, in his study, Gholami (2009, p.52) comments how “Because one of the most important sources of teachers’ practical knowledge is their professional experiences, I decided to select the participants who had been teaching at least four years”. In doing so, he sets the benchmark for experience as being four years and above. Likewise, in her study, Tait (2008, p.50) explains how “the three participants were all experienced teachers, ranging from 8-16 years of teaching experience”.

2.8.7 Attention given to the moral nature of TPW in the nine studies’ findings.

Although moral themes are evident in the findings of the nine studies, they are more implicit than explicit. Without doubt, the nine studies contain some missed opportunities that could have been used to highlight phronesis’s moral qualities. This should be easy to do, as a phronetic study will be peppered with moral themes
because it is driven by moral knowledge: they will emerge even if the researcher is not explicitly looking for them. These sentiments are echoed in Halverson’s (2002, p.379) study, where, although he did not set out approaching his TPW study through a moral lens nor did he discuss his study’s results and findings through a moral lens, he could not avoid the moral-driven themes that emerged: “Although the documentation of the relation between practical wisdom and moral perspective was not the primary emphasis of this research, the data...point toward a way in which the phronesis framework might be used to investigate the moral perspectives that inform leadership practice”. What follows is a selection of some of the many instances that could have been used to highlight phronesis’s moral characteristics as a knowledge form which “guides the teacher to think educationally, which means to be committed to the double task of the self-development of each individual learner in her or his own interests and, simultaneously, the development of the good for mankind” (Kemmis and Smith, 2008, p.16).

Although Gholami (2009, p.122) in his study did not define phronesis as moral knowledge nor approach his study through a moral lens, he discussed phronesis’s moral characteristics even if he was unaware of this and them. This is evident in his comments how, in his study, “the teachers generally wanted to accomplish something good or to avoid something harmful vis-à-vis the students”. This highlights the moral lens through these teachers view their practice even though Gholami did not pick up on this in his discussion. On a similar note, Gholami and Husu’s (2010, p.1523) study highlights how one of the teachers used his TPW to make a moral decision based on his analysis of a situation he encountered: “because it was the last hour of my teaching for today and they already seemed to be tired, I tried to make a little change so that they could still feel good”. Likewise, similar sentiments
are evident in Tait’s (2008, p.108) study when she comments on one of her participants: “Donna is observed constantly making accommodations for her individual students...There is no doubt that this takes extra effort on her part”. In doing so, the participant appears to highlight the moral commitment that drives her practice. Despite this, Tait did not seize this opportunity to discuss this in relation to TPW and its moral characteristics.

Barr’s (2011) study discusses phronesis through a moral lens and mentions the term moral more than 20 times in the literature review but does not mention it once in the results and conclusion even when the study discusses the main features of phronesis garnered from the data analysis. This is the case even after he quotes Schön to support his claim that phronesis is moral knowledge: “The moral character of phronesis identified from the review of Dunne (1999) and Birmingham (2003) above can also be discerned in this quotation from Schön” (Barr, 2011, p.44). This phenomenon is not confined to Barr’s study. On the contrary, it is a general observation of the nine studies. Another example is when John (1999, p.129) mentions how one of his participants “talked at length about ‘doing the right thing’ with his students”, but fails to use it as an opportunity to explore the link between phronesis and morality in more depth. Despite him stating that his participant talked at length about it, he still did not see the need to include it or have it as a designated theme that emerged from the data. Likewise, although the term moral is used more than 20 times in Toom's (2006) study, it is not used in the results and only once in the discussion section. The term is used mostly in the literature review where he uses it to define phronesis as a moral form of knowledge that has “affective, social and moral dimensions” (p.22). Sadly, this thread is not carried through the study. As a result, the study loses its moral focus.
Another noticeable moral theme that was not given the attention it needs is the oversight of the nine studies to forefront and highlight TPW’s disempowerment. The studies fail to mention that TPW is a disempowered and marginalised form of knowledge. As a result, the nine studies were not driven by a quest to empower TPW and thus failed to mention and acknowledge that—as a result of TPW’s disempowerment—they had conducted their studies in an attempt to empower TPW and to address this imbalance and disempowerment. My study attempts to address this and the other above-mentioned shortcomings of the nine studies discussed above.

2.9 The Gaps My Study Addresses

Unlike the nine studies discussed previously, this study has been designed to be purposely and explicitly driven from the outset by the belief that TPW is a disempowered form of knowledge and to explain why this is the case also. Thus, the entire study is conducted in an attempt to address this problem and draw attention to it. In not designing their studies so that this intention drives them, the nine studies above have overlooked a core component of phronetic social science, described in Flyvbjerg (2001)—that strives to address the uneven distribution of power in education—especially as a result of TPW’s disempowerment and the detrimental consequences this has on both TPW and teachers.

Likewise, unlike the nine studies, this study has been specifically designed to empower TPW. This is evident in the data collection methods I have used. The stimulated recall method is a method that disempowers TPW. The studies that have used stimulated recall method (see 2.8.4.1) have contributed to TPW’s disempowerment because it is a method that confines TPW’s use to the classroom
and views TPW as difficult—if not impossible—to articulate. As I consider TPW as easily-articulated knowledge, this study does not use stimulated recall method and uses in-depth semi-structured interviews—driven by the Problematisation process outlined previously in section 1.7—to generate and capture TPW and, in doing so, highlight how easily it is articulated. In addition, these interviews are not conducted in the classroom, which additionally shows how TPW can be both elicited and captured outside the classroom. Likewise, as mentioned in the previous chapter, I have chosen to study syllabi because they can be used to highlight how TPW’s use is not confined to the classroom because decisions made concerning syllabi design and how they should be delivered are made outside the classroom despite syllabi playing an important role in the classroom.

In addition, my attempt to empower TPW is evident in the data analysis method I am using that is being used specifically to empower TPW. As a method, grounded theory method does not empower TPW because many scholars (see 3.7.4.3) consider it to be a method that generates theory not PW. To combat this, I have—in adapting grounded theory method—employed a more-TPW-empowering version of grounded theory method, interpretive grounded phronesis method, which is used to analyse and generate TPW. In true interpretive paradigm fashion, when employing this method, I do not adopt an objective role to generate this knowledge but take an active role in generating knowledge with the participants and using my prolonged engagement to weave the data and themes together to arrive at a representative and trustworthy account of events and picture. Adopting this approach can additionally empower teachers’ TPW—teacher-researchers’ TPW—in that the teacher-researchers are viewed in a more empowering light as people who use their TPW as a lens through which to conduct research and are given an active empowered role at
the centre of the research process as the main research instrument through which the entire study is conducted. In addition, in contrast to the nine studies, these methods are subsumed within a methodology that has been designed to empower TPW also. It is my own methodology, interpretive phronetic educational research (IPER), which shall be explained and discussed in more detail in the next chapter, Chapter 3, after making one final point.

On a local level, this study fills a gap in KSA’s knowledge base as it explores an unexplored form of knowledge with an unexplored community in a relatively unexplored country through a previously unexplored lens using a previously unexplored approach. In doing so, it highlights how TPW can be used to both identify and help solve KSA ELC syllabi problems and the contribution EEEFLTs and their TPW can make to help achieve this. As a result, it fills a bigger gap created by the lack of TPW studies in education and thus both contributes and raises awareness of TPW’s scope and capacity and the need for TPW to be recognised and given the platform it deserves in academia and education.

**Chapter 3: Design of the study**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the design of the study. After detailing the research questions this study addresses, the chapter begins with a discussion of the study’s ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings. In doing so, it lays some important foundations that reflect the lens through which the study is conducted. This includes a discussion of why I have chosen the study design I have and how the study’s ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods are connected together in light of this design. Informed by this framework, the chapter’s
second part discusses the actual way I conducted the study focusing mainly on the data collection and analysis process and the steps I took to address ethical issues and ensure the trustworthiness of my account.

3.1 Research Questions
This study is informed by and aims to address the following primary research question:

• How do the EEEFLTs use their TPW to Problematise KSA ELC syllabi?

To answer this question, this study seeks to address the following three secondary research questions:

• What syllabi-related problems do the EEEFLTs identify?
• What consequences do these problems have?
• What solutions do the EEEFLTs suggest to solve these problems and their consequences?

3.2 Paradigmatic Considerations in Designing a Study
A study’s design in educational research is underpinned by specific ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs collectively known as a paradigm (Grix, 2004). These three components coexist in a directional relationship in that a researcher’s ontology informs his or her epistemology, which, in turn, informs his or her methodology: “ontology logically precedes epistemology which logically precedes methodology” (Grix, 2001, p.29). These three components inform the data collection and analysis methods employed by the researcher when conducting educational research: “ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions, these, in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these, in turn, give rise to
issues of instrumentation and data collection” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.3).

In simple terms, ontology deals with issues related to the nature of reality, epistemology with issues related to the nature of knowledge, methodology with ways to study knowledge, and methods with how to collect and analyse knowledge. In reflecting these sentiments, Marsh and Furlong (2002, p.18) describe the first two components of a paradigm when they comment how “If an ontological position reflects the researcher’s view about the nature of the world, their epistemological position reflects their view of what we can know about the world”. In defining the third and fourth, Birks and Mills (2011, p.4) explain how “a methodology is a set of principles and ideas that inform the design of a research study. Methods, on the other hand, are practical procedures used to generate and analyse data”.

I have chosen to limit my discussion of paradigms to the positivist and interpretivist paradigms. This is because they are the most relevant to my study: although my study is located in the interpretive paradigm, I consider TPW’s disempowerment to be partly due to positivism’s continued dominance over academia and educational research and because the positivist paradigm—along with its epistemology, methodology and methods—stands in direct contrast to the interpretive paradigm in which my study is located.

3.3 The Positivist Paradigm and its Defining Characteristics

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), positivists adopt a realist ontology, a dualistic objectivist epistemology, an interventionist methodology and favour quantitative data collection and analysis methods. Positivist researchers adopt a realist ontology as
they believe the world is founded on a single reality that is real—not socially constructed—that exists independently of our knowledge of it (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Believing in such an ontology drives researchers to adopt a dualistic, objective epistemology. A dualist epistemology is one where there is “a duality between observer and observed that makes it possible for the observer to stand outside the arena of the observed, neither influencing it nor being influenced by it” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.12). This, in turn, results in an objectivist epistemology wherein, as Guba (1990, p.20) explains, from such a stance, it is “both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, noninteractive posture”. As methodological decisions are informed by a researcher’s ontological and epistemological beliefs, the positivist—i.e. interventionist—methodology mentioned above needs to allow, and be designed so as to enable, the researcher to capture objective knowledge, in order to study it, whilst also remaining distant and detached from it. In describing how this is achieved, Bryman (2001, p.12) explains how an objectivist epistemology is “an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality”. On a similar note, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.7) explain how adopting an objectivist epistemology “will demand of researchers an observer role, together with an allegiance to the methods of natural science”. Hence, researchers who adopt such a methodology choose to collect their data using methods that are compatible with their paradigmatic beliefs i.e. quantitative methods as opposed to interpretivists who prefer qualitative methods. Such methods shall be discussed after discussing the ontology, epistemology and methodology of the interpretive paradigm.

As discussed in the previous chapter, I am not alone in voicing my concerns on positivism’s dominance over academia and educational research. On the contrary,
Simmons (2012, p.246) recently described positivism as “the dominant hierarchy that privileges the natural sciences over the social sciences”. Likewise, Grix (2004, p.80) explains how positivism “has proved to be the most dominant research paradigm of the past century”. The effect of this dominance is evident in Schatzki’s (2006, p.117) comments how “out of the desires to count as science and to garner the prestige and support enjoyed by science, social inquiry has long sought to emulate the latter’s methods”. One such method, developed in an attempt to make qualitative data and interpretive studies more acceptable and scientific, thus representing another example of positivism’s dominance on interpretive educational research, is grounded theory method (GTM). Although Birks and Mills (2011) maintain GTM is the most recognised and popular research method used in interpretive studies to analyse qualitative data, Bryant and Charmaz (2007) consider it to be anchored in positivism.

3.4 The Interpretive Paradigm: Its Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

Larson (1993, p.288) explains how the interpretive paradigm “adopts a relativist ontology, a subjectivist epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectic methodology”. Although they do not mention methodology, nevertheless, Guba and Lincoln (1989, p.13) add an important and necessary term, *monistic*, when they explain how the interpretive paradigm “rests on a relativist rather than a realist ontology, and on a monistic, subjective rather than dualistic, objective epistemology”.

- **A relativist ontology**

Interpretivists adopt a relativist ontology as they believe reality to be the product of individual consciousness internal to the individual “rather than something external to them” (Bryman, 2008, p.20). In addition, they believe social reality to be the result of individual cognition (Guba, 1990). Likewise, they also believe that “there is no one
reality, but rather multiple realities” (Abdelhafez, 2010, p.85). Holding this view also necessitates a belief that no account of reality is more valid than another. This is reflected in Onwuegbuzie, Johnson and Collins’s (2009, p.122) observation that a relativist ontology represents “Multiple contradictory, but equally valid accounts of the same phenomenon representing multiple realities”. In addition, all of these realities are equally important and valid. These sentiments are reiterated in Schram’s (2006, p.45) claim that “Interpretivists operate from the belief that all constructs are equally important and valid”.

- **A monistic subjectivist epistemology which considers knowledge as context-dependent and fallible**

Interpretivists view knowledge as monistic—as opposed to dualist—in the sense that the researcher and researched construct meaning together. Guba (1990, p.27) elaborates on this relationship when he explains that the “inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two”. Thus, regarding the relationship between the researcher and the researched, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005, p.271) explain how “Whereas positivists assert that researchers should separate themselves from the object of study, interpretivists contend that these two entities are dependent on one another and that qualitative researchers should take advantage of this relationship better to understand phenomena”. Thus, it is considered impossible and undesirable to separate the knower from the known.

Also, interpretivists view knowledge as a subjective, value-laden human construction, constructed in the mind (Bassey, 1990). In explaining how it is constructed, LeCompte and Schensul (1994, p.48) point out that it is “constructed—
or made up—as people interact with one another”. Although positivists would disagree, subjective knowledge is valid and reliable knowledge. Although it does not represent the absolute unequivocal truth as defined by positivists, it represents truth as defined by interpretivists: consensual truth. These sentiments are echoed in Snape and Spencer’s (2003, p.14) conclusion that “If several reports confirm a statement, then it can be considered true as a representation of a socially constructed reality”. Thus, truth is constructed in people’s minds just as knowledge is: there can be multiple different versions due to multiple interpretations as people create different truths as they interact with one other. Long (2002, p.55) refers to this as “truth that emerges out of the mediated encounters between existing beings”.

In addition, interpretivists view knowledge as context-dependent. In highlighting the importance of context to such knowledge, Abdelhafiez (2010, p.88) explains how a subjectivist epistemology “does not only focus on the knowledge constructed of the individual, but also on the context in which it is constructed”. According to a subjective epistemology, knowledge is “grounded in (i.e. defined with respect to) specific contexts” (Borg, 1998, p.25). In explaining this, Schram (2006, p.9) describes how a subjective epistemology is “Informed by a view that knowledge is context sensitive or context specific—that is, it proceeds from the assumption that ideas, people, and events cannot be fully understood if isolated from the circumstances in which and through which they naturally occur”.

Likewise, interpretivists regard knowledge as fallible as they believe “knowledge is inherently uncertain and that scientific knowledge is always tentative” (Borg, 1998, p.25). Thus, as Fenstermacher (1994, p.23) explains, they believe that “we can be wrong about we claim to know”. In support, Thomas (2009, p.87) explains how “If
there is one single thing that you need to absorb from the whole discussion about ontology and epistemology it is that knowledge is a frail thing. You can’t be certain of anything”.

- **A dialectic, hermeneutic methodology**

Borg (1998, p.27) describes a dialectic methodology as one that assumes “an ongoing two-way exchange between researcher and researched in which the role of the latter is not that of passive object of study, but that of a knowing subject”. Thus, a dialectic methodology is a personal methodology as opposed to the more traditional impersonal methodology adopted by positivists that is detached and disinterested. These sentiments are echoed in Caterino and Schram’s (2006, p.9) observation that a dialectic approach to methodology requires researchers to “forgo a disinterested position of detachment and to enter into dialogue with those they study. Dialogical social inquiry challenges traditional notions of impersonal objectivity and truth”. Hence, as Toma (2000, p.178) describes it, the researcher is “not a detached observer but is a participant with the subject in the search for meaning”. In adopting this approach, both parties construct knowledge together.

Borg (1998, p.26) describes a hermeneutic methodology as one which “through a process of interpretation, gains access to and explores the personal meanings individuals attach to experience”. Within the confines of research, this denotes that “Research participants provide researchers with interpretations, which researchers then reinterpret” (Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2008, p.138). Bryman (2008, p.366) explains this also when he describes how, from a hermeneutic methodology perspective, “the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants”. To achieve such a
Perspective, interpretive researchers tend to use qualitative methods as they enable them to get close to the phenomenon being studied.

3.5 The Interpretive Paradigm and this Study

To conduct this study, I want to construct knowledge with the participants—knowledge that is context-dependent, qualitative and subjective—to obtain a close-up in-depth account of the participants' constructed realities. It is the interpretive paradigm with its relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology and dialectic, hermeneutic methodology and qualitative methods that enables the capture—and analysis—of such data, in this case spoken data (as the participants articulate their TPW). In addition, the interpretive paradigm, with its dialogic hermeneutic methodology allows me to get close to the participants and the data and use my insider knowledge and prolonged engagement with the participants and their context to build up a thick description of events and representative account. As explained in the previous chapter, Flyvbjerg's (2001) discussion of phronesis focuses on epistemology not methodology: it does not explain how phronetic research should be carried out methodologically (to the extent that Flyvbjerg does not locate it in a research paradigm). In view of this, I have attempted to design a methodology that allows me to conduct phronetic research in an educational setting. As a methodology is underpinned by both an ontology and an epistemology, I have located this methodology in the interpretive paradigm as I consider it the most compatible as phronesis is subjective knowledge that is constructed and thus represents multiple realities. I have named this methodology interpretive phronetic education research.
3.6 Interpretive Phronetic Educational Research (IPER)

As the interpretive paradigm, IPER is driven by a relativist ontology; a monistic, subjectivist epistemology; a hermeneutic, dialectic methodology and employs qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Despite this, IPER is distinguished by its moral underpinnings in that its ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods are viewed through a phronetic moral lens. From an ontological perspective, in believing there are multiple realities, IPER also assumes that those in education construct their realities through a moral lens and—in doing so—express their moral tensions and concerns. Epistemologically, these constructed realities are subjective, value laden, informed by a moral code of practice and constructed and acquired over time through experience and interaction as teachers cross paths with others in education. Borg (1998, p.24) locates tacit knowledge, TPW included, firmly in a monistic, subjectivist epistemology when explaining how knowledge “is a construct of the human mind not an objective reality to be discovered but rather one created by the individual knower…encompassing both propositional and tacit knowledge” (my emphasis). In echoing similar sentiments, Greene (1990, p.235) explains how interpretive knowledge includes knowledge that is “both propositional and tacit”. Taking this into consideration, from a methodological perspective, an IPER study differs slightly from other interpretive studies in that its methodology is designed and tailored to enable it to capture, analyse and generate practical not theoretical knowledge. To do so, it employs a hermeneutic, dialectic methodology where teacher-researchers use their TPW to study TPW and to interpret the participants’ interpretations. In addition, they use their TPW to identify phronetic educational research-related topics and communities to study. As TPW is considered qualitative subjective knowledge, qualitative data collection and analysis methods...
are used that can accommodate a moral and practical lens and be used to both collect and analyse subjective TPW.

### 3.6.1 IPER and dichotomies.

As discussed previously, phronesis—the driving force behind phronetic social science—is defined by phronetic social scientists as being practical and moral knowledge (Schram, Flyvbjerg and Landman, 2013). In this sense, it approaches education through both a moral and practical lens. In doing so, IPER approaches education through a three-pronged dichotomous lens. The first lens is driven by a contrast at the level of epistemology between two contrasting forms of knowledge, phronesis and episteme (Schram and Caterino, 2006). The second lens is driven by a dichotomy that is the result of the two different forms of knowledge, being described as practical knowledge (phronesis) and theoretical knowledge (episteme). The third lens is driven by a dichotomy within IPER in that IPER—driven by a moral form of knowledge, phronesis, and following Flyvbjerg’s (2001) phronetic social science lead in this—focuses on uneven distribution of power in education. As a result, it views distribution of power through a dichotomous lens in that it considers an uneven distribution of power to be bad practice and immoral i.e. unethical and considers an even distribution of power to be good practice and moral i.e. ethical (Sayer, 2011). Likewise, through this dichotomous lens, it views and assesses practices—in education and education research—as being disempowering or empowering and teachers—in education and education research—as being either disempowered or empowered (Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012a). In education, this also necessitates that IPER addresses another dichotomy, the theory/practice gap, as it considers it to be foremost driven by an uneven distribution of power where educational knowledge is often generated in a top-down
manner because it is often generated by researchers and theorists who occupy more privileged positions than teachers in education and teachers are often considered consumers of other people’s theories not generators of their own and thus occupy a disempowered position in education (Clark, 2011).

As IPER is located firmly in the interpretive paradigm which celebrates multiple realities, it acknowledges, for example, that something that is viewed as bad practice to one person may not be to another and something that is considered disempowering may seem empowering to another and something which may be immoral i.e. unethical to one person may be ethical to another. Likewise, it acknowledges that such terms are socially constructed. This study is but one of those realities and an example of how I have socially constructed my understanding of these terms and how phronetic social scientists—as a community of practice—have socially constructed these terms and such stances are paradigmatic and methodological stances (see 3.4). Driven by phronesis, such stances are also driven by the notion of education and education research as moral practices and teachers as moral practitioners. In addition, the interpretive paradigm also celebrates different opinions and positions. One such position suggests that education is a moral practice (Pring, 2001) and that by addressing issues of morality—issues of disempowerment, ethics and the like—it reserves its right to have a voice in academia and to describe education through a moral lens taking its permission to do so from the tenets of the interpretive paradigm whilst also acknowledging and celebrating that not everybody will necessarily agree with the positions phronetic social scientists hold.
As mentioned previously, IPER—as well as phronetic social science in general—follows the lead of those who look at and approach education through a moral and practical lens. One way it does so is to approach education through the notion of good and bad practice taking its incentive to do so from Aristotle's (2000) definition of phronesis as deliberate knowledge that is used to determine what is good and what is not. The notion of good practice and also best practice are fairly mainstream concepts in education as Schwarzer (2009) and Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (2012), amongst others, highlight and uphold. One of good and best practices’ goals is to identify bad practice and try to improve and transform it into good practice or best practice. In order to correct bad practice, bad practice must be identified as thus. In this lies another dichotomy at the heart of education and education research that some may view as an inevitable and inescapable one whereas other perhaps see it as caricature and contrived. From an education research perspective, acknowledging this dichotomy also requires the acknowledgment that there is good research and there is bad research. Good research receives awards. Bad research does not. Good research represents good practice. Bad research does not.

3.6.2 IPER is a problem-driven, moral, practical methodology.

An IPER methodology is phronesis-driven. Thus, IPER studies, such as this one, view both researchers (in their capacity as teacher-researchers) and researched (in their capacity as teachers) as approaching education through a phronetic lens. In defining one of phronesis’s qualities—and thus one of the qualities that drives IPER and this study—Flyvbjerg (2001, p.196) explains how “Phronetic social science is problem-driven”. Likewise, in the same book, he describes how “Phronetic research focuses on practical activity and practical knowledge” (p.134). In taking these two qualities mentioned by Flyvbjerg into consideration, phronetic research is considered
problem-driven research and the problems driving it are considered practical problems. Extending this line of thinking to IPER suggests that IPER studies are problem-driven also and that the problems driving such studies are practical problems because educational problems are practical problems (Dorovolomo, 2004). Practical problems need practical solutions. Phronetic social scientists such as Sayer (2011) and Landman (2012) believe that phronesis represents the form of knowledge—as it is gained through practice and situated in practice—that is most suited to solving practical problems. To solve educational problems—syllabus problems included—Kessels and Korthagen (2001, p.30) explain how what we need is “not conceptual knowledge, episteme…It is perceptual knowledge, phronesis”. In addition, a problem-driven lens is a moral lens because solving educational problems is a moral endeavor. As educational problems are considered practical problems, these practical problems are considered moral problems. Thus, it can be said that an IPER lens is both a moral and practical problem-driven lens.

To counteract positivism’s dominance of social inquiry, Schram (2006, p.18) recommends adopting a phronetic social science approach with the intention of “challenging the dominance of positivistic research”. As discussed previously, this dominance is not restricted to the positivist paradigm. On the contrary, it also affects the interpretive paradigm especially as for many years interpretive researchers have been using a positivist-driven GTM to analyse qualitative data. In following Schram’s lead and adopting such an approach, I have attempted to tailor-make this study to highlight TPW’s capacity in an attempt to empower TPW whilst also acting as a real-life example of what IPER is and how it can be conducted.
3.6.3 IPER strives to obtain a context-dependent thick description focusing on particulars.

In typical interpretive paradigm fashion, IPER strives to achieve a context-dependent thick description of events. To do this, it focuses on particulars. To achieve this thick description, IPER collects data via methods that allow the researcher to achieve a context-dependent thick description of events—such as semi-structured in-depth interviews—and analyses this data using methods that allow for a dialogic, hermeneutic approach compatible with interpretive research such as interpretive grounded phronesis method (which is discussed below). A dialectic, hermeneutic IPER methodology—as interpretive methodologies do—focuses on particulars; generalisation to a wider population is not the goal: its beauty lies with the particular not the universal. Erickson (1986, p.130) explains this when he describes how “the primary concern of interpretive research is particularizability, rather than generalisability”. In describing interpretive inquiry, Schram (2006, p.44) discusses this in more detail when he explains how it focuses on “particular people, in particular places, at particular times—situating people’s meanings and constructs within and amid specific social, political, cultural economic, ethnic, and other contextual factors”.

In view of the above discussion, I have chosen semi-structured in-depth interviews as my method of data collection. The method I have chosen to analyse and generate data collated from such interviews is a phronesis-friendly interpretive version of grounded theory method, interpretive grounded phronesis method (IGPM). In view of this, these methods need discussing and explaining albeit through an IPER lens.
3.7 Data Collection and Analysis Methods in IPER

Blaikie (2000, p.8) defines methods as “techniques or procedures used to collate and analyse data”. As mentioned previously, in any given paradigm, there is a directional relationship not only between ontology, epistemology and methodology but between methods also. Consequently, a study’s data collection and analysis methods should be compatible with the other three components of the paradigm underpinning it. As this study is located in the interpretive paradigm, the data collection and analysis methods should be compatible with a relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology and dialectic, hermeneutic methodology that enables the researcher to take a subjective snapshot of constructed reality through the lens of those studied. Qualitative methods are the most compatible and suitable to achieve such goals: “qualitative methods are most appropriately employed when the goal of research is to explore people’s subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences” (Devine, 2002, p.199). As mentioned previously, to do this, researchers use and need methods that enable them to “get close” to whom they are studying (Sechrest and Sidani, 1995).

3.7.1 Interviews.

Interviews—especially semi-structured in-depth ones such as the ones used in this study—are often used in interpretive research as they enable the researcher to collect subjective data and explore topics more freely and in more detail and give the participants the opportunity to express themselves in depth (Esterberg, 2002). In addition, a major part of counteracting positivism’s dominance of educational research and empowering TPW is addressing the misconception that teachers are unable to articulate their TPW and therefore it cannot be studied. To address this entails adopting a more TPW-friendly data collection method—semi-structured in-
depth interviews—to highlight how easy it is for teachers to articulate their TPW, as opposed to the disempowering stimulated recall method and its subsequent interviews popular amongst those who study TPW (as discussed in the previous chapter). Another reason for choosing interviews—especially in-depth ones—is because they are more compatible with the interpretive paradigm driving this study as their use “marks a move away from seeing subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations” (Cohen, Morrison and Manion, 2011, p.409).

3.7.2 Problematisation.

As mentioned previously, Problematisation is being used in this study as a framework to generate TPW during the interview process. In light of its importance, it needs discussing in more detail especially since, as far as I am aware, it is a new concept and framework used to generate TPW during interviews that has yet to be used in interpretive educational research.

Little has been written about how to generate TPW in order to capture it as the majority of those who have studied TPW believe it cannot be directly articulated (as has been discussed in 2.8.4.2). Based on my reading of the literature as well as my Problematisation of this study, I have developed a framework I believe can help generate TPW so it can then be captured during the interview process when the participants are Problematising the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered because it requires the participants to reflect on such KSA ELC syllabi, identify problems with them and their consequences, deliberate over the problems in an attempt to find solutions to the problems identified—if any—and then articulate their thoughts during
this process. As discussed below—this process is loosely based on Burns (2010) when she discusses problematisation (with a small p). In light of this, in addition to what I have learnt through reading, I believe Problematisation to be a four-stage process comprising reflection, problematisation, deliberation and articulation. I attempt to explain this process below by providing a real-life example of this process in action followed by a more detailed explanation of what this process is and how it is used in relation to educational phenomena.

After witnessing the staff meeting, which was discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1, I reflected on it. As a result, I began to problematise KSA ELC syllabi and analyse them in greater detail especially in relation to their practicality, morality and disempowerment of teachers. Whilst deliberating on this issue and attempting to address these problems, I decided to conduct this study to address the problems I discovered. During this process, I articulated my thoughts in both writing and speech—mainly via correspondence with my supervisors—culminating in the submission of this thesis. Thus, I reflected, problematised, deliberated and articulated. To do so, I consulted my own knowledge that I have gained during my experience teaching in KSA ELCs. I believe it was this—practice-based knowledge—or TPW as it referred to in this study, which I relied on and used during this process. Likewise, I believe the teacher in the meeting followed the same process i.e. he reflected on the ELC syllabus, problematised it, deliberated over the problems he identified and their consequences, attempted to find solutions for these problems and then articulated this during the meeting and, to do so, relied on and used his TPW. Asking the participants in this study—at the interview stage—to reflect on the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered in order to identify problems with them and their consequences then deliberate over these in an attempt to find solutions to the
problems identified and articulate this during the interview, I believe will enable me to capture their TPW during this process because—as I have previously mentioned—I believe such a process is driven by TPW. Once the participants’ TPW is captured (by recording the interviews), I can examine it in more detail and then explain it in more depth. As I know the participants and the KSA ELC context well, I am aware that such a context is problem-riddled and that many of the problems stem from syllabus related issues and this is another reason why I have chosen to study KSA ELC syllabi and use Problematisation as a framework through which to gain access to the participants’ TPW.

3.7.2.1 The Process of Problematising Practice.

In loosely defining and explaining Problematising, Burns (2010, p.2) explains how this process entails “taking an area you feel could be done better, subjecting it to questioning, and then developing new ideas and alternatives”. Burns’ statement highlights three of the four stages involved in Problematisation: reflection, problematisation and deliberation. It does so because, in order to identify the area that needs improving, the teacher needs to first reflect. Once identified, the teacher then deliberates by subjecting the area to the above-mentioned questioning and developing of new ideas and alternatives which represents the deliberation stage of the process. In this thesis, I not only attempt to define Problematisation and demarcate its stages more concretely but I also expand on Burns’ definition by adding a final additional stage, the articulation stage, and thus define Problematisation as a four-stage process. In this study and in view of its phronetic underpinnings, Problematising is considered a problem-driven process that is both moral and practical because, through a phronetic lens, solving problems is considered a moral endeavour and solving problems in education requires action
thus it is considered a practical endeavour also. Its purpose is to identify a problem or an injustice and fix it by acting upon and implementing an action plan to solve the problem/injustice. In their role as practitioners, I believe teachers Problematise constantly as the above real-life examples suggest. I have simply formalised the process so that it can be used to help elicit and study TPW. Throughout this discussion—and subsequent thesis—when spelt with a capital P, Problematising, Problematisation and Problematise refer to a complete process whereas non-capitalised forms refer to the problematisation stage of the four-stage process of Problematisation: reflection, problematisation, deliberation and articulation.

**Stage 1 of the Problematisation process: reflection**

This study explores what Schön (1991) describes as reflection-on-action as opposed to reflection-in-action. This is because although the participants are being asked to reflect upon past and present syllabi, they are not being asked to reflect whilst carrying out an action. Thus, it is retrospective reflection.

Although TPW is often considered tacit knowledge, it can be accessed through reflection-on-action. In explaining this kind of reflection, Golombek (1998, p.460) claims it can “enable teachers to articulate their practical knowledge”. Reflection on these past, and even current, situations represents the starting point in this four-stage Problematisation process. It provides the key to the teacher's TPW.

**Stage 2 of the Problematisation process: problematisation (small P)**

Reflection is followed by problematisation in order to identify problems because the teacher must first reflect on the situation and context first before he or she problematises. Crotty (1998, p.156) describes problematisation as “a pedagogical
process that presents the concrete, existential situation of those involved...as a set of problems”. Thus, it involves viewing education through a problem-driven lens. Such a problem-driven lens views education as a value-laden field where power is distributed unevenly. When viewed through a phronetic lens, such problems are viewed as being both moral and practical in nature.

- **Stage 3 of the Problematisation process: deliberation**

Grundy (1987, p.65) considers reflection and deliberation as synonymous by claiming that deliberation is “often called ‘reflection’ in current literature”. However, deliberation appears to be different from reflection—general reflection that is—because it is reflection for a reason. In this manner, it is similar to critical reflection. Nevertheless, it differs from critical reflection, because it is used as a tool to arrive at the best possible solution to a problem. These sentiments are echoed in Englund’s (2006, p.506) definition of deliberation as a “carefully-balanced consideration of different alternatives”. In addition, when it is used to solve practical problems—such as syllabi problems—it is often labelled ‘practical deliberation’ and is underpinned by a moral disposition to choose the best alternative from a range of choices. In the context of this study, as mentioned previously, it is used to suggest morally defensible solutions to problems with ELC syllabi and used to identify what action should be taken. McKernan (1996, p.21) explains this when he discusses how “Practical deliberation responds to the immediate situation which is deemed problematic from a moral perspective—there is a sense in which curriculum action must be taken to put things right”.

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Stage 4 of the Problematisation process: articulation

Having discussed three of the four processes involved in Problematisation, it would be meaningless if teachers were not able to articulate these. The practical knowledge that teachers hold is often described as tacit unarticulated knowledge (Beijaard and Verloop, 1996). Although TPW may be tacit knowledge, it does not mean that teachers cannot articulate it. They can, as studies conducted by—amongst others—Barr (2011) and Halverson (2002) have shown and this study hopes to do the same. Likewise, there are many voices in the literature that believe it is easily-articulated knowledge also such as Flyvbjerg (2006); and Golombek (1998); amongst others who claim that it is wrong to single out phronesis as the only form of knowledge that cannot be articulated and that all forms of knowledge can be articulated. In doing so, they give new life to a similar stance made many years ago by Polanyi (1969, p.144) who explained how “all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge”.

In view of the discussion above, as shown below, I have developed the primary research question and the three secondary research questions that I address within the primary research question to reflect the four-stage process discussed above. Each of the three secondary research questions has been designed to reflect a specific stage of the first three stages of the four-stage Problematisation process (reflection, problematisation, deliberation and articulation) which, informed by my reading and my own efforts to exercise my TPW, I believe teachers follow—the EEEFLTs in this study included—when using their TPW to Problematise educational phenomena.
3.7.3 Grounded theory method (GTM).

GTM has been described as positivist and interpretivist and both a methodology and method of data collection, generation and analysis (cf. Bryant and Charmaz, 2011; Schram, 2003; Seaman, 2008). In this study, I am using GTM as a method—not a methodology—for data generation and analysis. As my study is an interpretive study that collects and analyses qualitative data, I am using an interpretive version of GTM, *interpretive grounded theory method* (IGTM) developed by Charmaz (2001). As mentioned previously, in an attempt to make this method more TPW-friendly, I am using an adapted version of IGTM and have named it *interpretive grounded phronesis method* (IGPM) which I consider to be a branch of IGTM hence why although the following discussion discusses IGPM, it does so through an IGTM lens. The main difference between the two methods is that, according to Charmaz (2000), IGTM is used to generate theory and ground it in the data collected by the researcher and this is why it is called grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). IGPM on the other hand is used to generate TPW and ground it in the data, which is considered TPW. In light of this, some issues need explaining.

3.7.3.1 Grounded theory as a method.

As a method, GTM was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* as a systematic and scientific way to analyse qualitative data to obtain results that fulfill positivist standards for research and rigour (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). It did so by applying a complex, rigorous and detailed three-stage coding process to the data known as *open coding*, *axial coding* and *selective coding* (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). GTM was designed as a way to ground theory in the data researchers collected by using a method known as *the constant comparative method*—a method used to move back and forth
between data making comparisons—that allows researchers to develop and advance theory during each step of the data collection and analysis process (Charmaz, 2006).

### 3.7.3.2 GTM as both a methodology and a data collection and analysis method.

In suggesting that GTM can be both a research strategy (i.e. methodology) and a method, Punch (2005, p.154) describes how “grounded theory is both a strategy for research, and a way of analyzing data”. Regardless of whether GTM is considered a methodology or method, both are used to generate “new theory from data, as opposed to testing existing theory” (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.2). As a methodology, it is a way to conduct research inductively. As a method, GTM is used to analyse data inductively. Despite this, as a method, GTM has been described as more than just a data analysis method.

As a method, GTM has been described as both a data collection and analysis method. In explaining how this is possible, Willig (2013, p.72) describes how “Grounded theory is unlike most other research methods in that it merges the processes of data collection and analysis”. As Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p.608) explain, GTM “involves the researcher in data analysis while collecting data—we use this data analysis to inform and shape further data collection. Thus, the sharp distinction between data collection and analysis phases of traditional research is intentionally blurred in grounded theory studies”. In reality, GTM is more a data generation method than data collection method as it is not used to collect data but to generate it. It does this by using the constant comparative method and theoretical sampling.
Constant comparative method and theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) play an important role in data generation and analysis in grounded theory method. The data collected is analysed using the constant comparative method as the researcher moves back and forth between the data comparing and building theories, categories and themes—be they main themes or subthemes. This analysis generates data—in the form of emerging theories, categories and themes that can be used to shape and inform the next data collection event. This process is known as *theoretical sampling* (Charmaz, 2000) in that the data is sampled and this sampling results in the emerging theories, categories and themes being used to shape and inform the next round of data collection: for example, questions can be tailored to probe initial findings further in the next data collection event and/or to focus in on a specific area that has emerged if deemed necessary. Likewise, if not already chosen, participants can be selected or “theoretically sampled” as the researcher purposively samples and chooses the next participant who can help fit and furnish the study’s emerging theories, categories and themes.

**3.7.3.3 GTM and positivism.**

Despite their efforts, Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p.35) explain how Glaser and Strauss’s GTM was “anchored in a clearly positivist epistemology; something that became readily apparent in the ensuing decades”. GTM’s positivist realist ontology and objectivist epistemology are evident in Schram’s (2006, p.102) comments how it is driven by a belief that “some external reality is waiting to be discovered by an unbiased observer who records facts about that reality”. Similar sentiments are echoed by Birks and Mills (2011, p.6) who explain how it is anchored “within an ontological and epistemological frame where there is an assumed reality worth discovering as a detached objective observer”. Its interventionalist, disinterested
methodology is evident in Denscombe’s (2007, p.102) comments how it is built on the assumption that “the meaning of the data will emerge inductively from the data if studied using a suitably neutral methodology”. Despite its positivist roots, ironically, as mentioned above, it has become the most popular tool to analyse qualitative data. Nevertheless, a more interpretive version has been developed in recent years, interpretive grounded theory method (IGTM), which is gaining both credibility and popularity.

### 3.7.4 Interpretive grounded theory method (IGTM).

In an attempt to free interpretive research and qualitative data from the shackles of positivism, Charmaz (2000, p.510) campaigns for a constructivist/interpretivist GTM (henceforth known as IGTM): “A constructivist approach to grounded theory reaffirms studying people in their natural settings and redirects qualitative research away from positivism”. In highlighting GTM’s positivist roots, Charmaz’s (2006, p.131) comments how “objectivist grounded theory resides in the positivist tradition…the stand erases the social context from which data emerge, the influence of the researcher, and often the interactions between grounded theorists and their research participants”. Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p.609) criticise positivist GTM claiming it assigns the researcher the unbefitting role of “dispassionate, neutral observer who remains separate from the research participants, analyses their world as an outside expert, and…”. In contrast, Charmaz (2000, p.522) explains how, in IGTM, “The researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold under the eyes of an objective viewer. The story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed”. On a similar note, albeit from a broader paradigmatic perspective, Piantanida and Garman (2009, p.59) elegantly explain how “Rather than assuming the traditional stance of a detached and neutral observer, an interpretive inquirer, much like a tuning fork,
resonates with exquisite sensitivity to the subtle vibrations of encountered experiences”. These comments represent the stance I have taken in relation to both data collection and analysis in this study.

In direct contrast to GTM, IGTM promotes a dialectic relationship between researcher and participants. In explaining this, Charmaz (2000, pp. 521-522) explains how “A constructivist grounded theory assumes that people create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectic processes”. In explaining this, Schram (2006, p.102) explains how IGTM through its dialectic methodology “grants greater significance to the mutual construction of data by researcher and participant in the process”. Thus, both the researcher and researched play an equally important role in constructing knowledge and do so together in a dialectic manner. Adopting such a stance—in contrast to positivist GTM—empowers the researcher and researched not the method. This mutual construction of data is especially visible when—as in this study—semi-structured in-depth interviews are used as the data collection method to enable dialogue between the researcher and researched.

3.7.4.1 IGTM and data analysis.

In conducting qualitative data analysis, IGTM researchers adopt a more active role and do not assume that, if left alone, the data will speak for themselves as is the case with those researchers who use positivist-driven GTM to analyse qualitative data. When employed in GTM, the constant comparative method is employed in a disinterested objective manner so as to allow the themes to somehow emerge themselves from the data without the researcher’s influence. Contrarily, as the main research instrument, IGTM researchers use themselves as vessels to analyse and process the data through. In doing so, they use and guide the constant comparison
method to move back and forth between the data looking for and trying to build up relationships in the data such as categories and themes. Thus, the data do not speak for themselves; they speak through the researcher. As a data analysis method, the constant comparative method plays a major role in this process: “In the process of analysis, grounded theorists employ the method of constant comparison” (Schram, 2006, p.103). The goal of this data analysis is to build and generate some kind of theory—with the aid of the constant comparative method—that is grounded in the data.

**3.7.4.2 IGTM and building theory.**

In positivist-driven GTM, the researcher adopts a disinterested theory-building role and builds theory by allowing the data to speak for themselves and, in doing so, believes that somehow theory will emerge: “the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Corbin and Strauss, 1998, p.12). IGTM, on the other hand, assumes that the researcher—as the main research instrument—plays an active role in building theory together with the participants. Despite these differences both are said to build theory inductively. In explaining this, Birks and Mills (2011, p.11) explain how “Grounded theory methods are referred to as inductive in that they are a process of building theory up from the data itself”.

**3.7.4.3 IGTM and generating theory.**

Despite the different ways GTM and IGTM build theory inductively, the explicit goal of both—in building theory—is to generate theory because building is a means to an end not an end in itself (as is the case with building a house). The end of the theory-building process is signified by the creation i.e. generation of theory.
In explaining how the goal of GTM is to generate theory, Dörnyei (2007, p.259) explains how the term *theory* in grounded theory “comes from the explicit *goal* of the method to create a new theory” (my emphasis). Whether used as a method, as Dörnyei’s example above highlights or a methodology, as highlighted in Kinach’s (2006, p.234) statement that “Grounded theory is a methodology for generating theory”, GTM was developed in response to previous data analysis methods and research methodologies that were designed and used to verify theory whereas grounded theory—as both a method and methodology—was designed and is used to generate theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). In explaining this shift, which began around 1967, and its reception, Birks and Mills (2011, p.2) explain how “The notion of generating theory from data, as opposed to testing existing theory, resonated with scientists and grounded theory as a research design became increasingly popular”. Despite this shift, the goal of grounded theory remained, and appears to still remain, the same i.e. to generate—not verify—theory. In support of this claim and in explaining this distinguishing trait, Strübing (2007, p.585) describes how “grounded theory emphasizes the generation of theory. This is a distinctive feature of grounded theory”.

In explaining how IGTM is driven by the same goal as GTM to generate theory, Charmaz (2006, p.2) explains how IGTM consists of “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves”. An important point to notice about Charmaz’s statement is her choice of the word ‘construct’ to explain how such theories are generated in line with the tenets of the interpretive paradigm that knowledge—in this case, theory—is constructed. In its quest to generate theory, IGTM—like GTM—relies on several theory-driven procedures and concepts such as theoretical coding
(Charmaz, 2006), theoretical sampling (Covan, 2007), theoretical saturation (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007), theoretical integration (Birks and Mills, 2011), theoretical memoing (Glaser, 1988), and theoretical sensitivity (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Despite this, Birks and Mills (2011, p.113) highlight what they consider to be a shortcoming of many studies that claim to be grounded theory studies when they explain that “many studies claiming to be grounded theory do not actually generate theory…We believe that this failure is most often a consequence of the researcher struggling with the advanced stages of advanced coding and theoretical integration”.

3.7.4.4 IGTM and coding.

The categories and themes that emerge from the processes conducted above are gradually constructed with the help of another process known as coding. Many of the terms and concepts used to describe coding are contested so much so that there is often more than one term used to describe the same process. In addition, many of the terms and concepts used which potential grounded theorists need to master and understand in order to analyse and code their research data are very complex. Kelle (2007, p.192) describes these concepts as “complex concepts like theoretical coding, coding families, axial coding, coding paradigm and many others...”. Someone who has also raised concerns regarding the complexity of grounded theory and its coding procedures is Thomas (2009, p.202) evident in his comments and advice for those researchers thinking about using the grounded theory method that “the nuts and bolts of grounded theory are unnecessarily complex and I advise you to avoid them”.

Not only are the concepts used in coding complex and difficult to grasp but also the way in which these concepts are used to analyse data is complex and difficult to
grasp. In explaining this difficulty, Saldaña (2009, p.42) describes how GTM coding consists of a prescribed set of complex and detailed data analysis steps that must be followed which require “meticulous analytical attention by applying specific types of codes to data through a series of cumulative coding cycles”. In an attempt to counteract this, Charmaz (2006, p.2) advocates a less-structured approach to data analysis that adopts a much more relaxed less systematic rigid approach which reflects flexible guidelines for “analyzing qualitative data to construct theories “grounded” in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules”.

Despite Charmaz’s efforts, grounded theory data analysis—especially coding—still remains a complex and challenging procedure. In addition, both versions discussed above are unsuitable for analysing the data I have collected because both versions appear to be designed to generate theory. As previously mentioned, in sections 1.7 and 2.9, I want to generate TPW from the data I have collected not theory, as phronetic social science contends that “Practical wisdom, rather than explanatory theories, should be the ambition of social scientific research” (Cornish, 2012, p.1). As a result, and as this study is an interpretive study, I have simplified and modified Charmaz’s interpretive-friendly version of GTM to create a TPW-friendly data analysis process interpretive grounded phronesis method (IGPM) which I intend to use to analyse the data I have collected and generate TPW from this analysis having used interviews to capture the participants’ TPW after it was generated through the Problematisation process discussed previously in section 1.7.
3.7.5 Interpretive grounded phronesis method (IGPM).

3.7.5.1 Constant comparative method, phronetic sampling and phronetic sensitivity.

As GTM and IGTM, IGPM arrives at results, in the form of categories and themes, that are grounded in the data and achieves this through using the constant comparative method (see 3.7.3.2) to move back and forth between the data building up relationships within the data. In addition, GTM and IGTM use a procedure known as theoretical sampling (see 3.7.3.2) as a way to generate data and build up relationships in the data. IGPM uses the same procedure in exactly the same way although I prefer to use the term phronetic sampling, as it is more compatible with phronesis and IPER. When analysing data, interpretive grounded theorists rely on what they call their theoretical sensitivity to piece the data together. IGPM employs this procedure exactly the same way as it is employed in IGTM although I use the term phronetic sensitivity (as well as describing the person who has this as phronetically sensitised and not theoretically sensitised as is the case in GTM and IGTM) because it is more compatible with phronesis and IPER. From a GTM perspective, a grounded theorist must ensure that his or her theoretical sensitivity does not cloud or affect the data analysis process and must allow the data to speak for themselves whereas interpretive grounded theorists are encouraged to actively use their theoretical sensitivity to piece the data together as is the case with IGPM albeit use their phronetic sensitivity.

Drawing on Charmaz (2006), in this study I use what I consider to be a more practical and simplified—less systematic—sequence of steps to analyse and code the data I have collected. Instead of following a set of rigid predefined steps as many grounded theorists do, I let the data guide me although, in reality, I play a substantial
role in driving this entire process also as the 15th participant and as the main research instrument—through whom this entire study is conducted including the data collection and analysis. In adopting this role, I use my prolonged engagement with and insider knowledge of the community and context being studied to piece the data together. In other words, I use my phronetic sensitivity.

3.8 Conducting the Study
Having discussed this study’s paradigmatic and theoretical underpinnings, I now discuss the study through a more practical lens as I explain how I actually conducted the study. I do so by discussing the participants and the sampling strategy I used to recruit them followed by the data collection and analysis procedures I employed.

3.8.1 The participants and the sampling strategy.
14 experienced expatriate EFL teachers (EEFLELTs) took part in this study. They were handpicked (Opie, 2004) and deliberately selected because they were seen as candidates “likely to produce the most valuable data” (Denscombe, 2010, p35). This purposive sampling frame enabled me to obtain an information-rich sample—representative of the phenomenon being studied—belonging to the target population (Shank and Brown, 2007).

In my study, an important selection criteria was that all the participants had taught or had been teaching EFL in an ELC in KSA for a minimum of five years. This criterion was stipulated because I am studying the PW of experienced teachers and, as Flyvbjerg (2001, p.57) points out, as mentioned previously (see 2.4.6), “More than anything else, practical wisdom requires experience”. Likewise, Kessels and Korthagen (2001, p.27) explain how “An important prerequisite of this type of
knowledge is that someone has enough proper experience”. Scholars differ on exactly how many years of experience a teacher needs before being considered experienced. Halkes and Deijkers (2003, p.11) explain how, in their study, they “considered teachers teaching for more than three years experienced, less than 3 years inexperienced”. Likewise, in their study, Gholami and Husu (2010), considered experienced teachers as those teaching for at least four years. Despite this, in this study I have elected to follow Tsui (2003) who considers an experienced teacher as having a minimum of 5 years teaching experience.

3.8.1.1 Profile of participants.

I do not want the participants to be able to be identified and this is why this section is shorter than normal and less detailed. People who know me—including ELC managers and the like—may know the participants and if I elaborate too much it may be easy to identify them as well as the ELCs in which they work and have worked. I have discussed this with the participants and we have agreed that I would only report their nationalities, skin colour and KSA cities in which they work or have worked, number of years they have taught in KSA ELCs along with their main teaching qualifications—albeit in a manner which no one will be able to identify them—and that I would use letters of the alphabet to identify them as discussed below (see 3.8.5). This may not be ideal but as a researcher I have to respect the requests of those whom I research i.e. the participants who have participated in this study.

Between them, the 14 participants have an average of 9.4 years’ experience and a cumulative total of 131 years’ experience teaching EFL in KSA in more than twenty different ELCs. As is shown in Table 3.1 below, their individual experience ranges from five to 19 years. Currently, they are teaching in ELCs in three different cities,
Riyadh, Jeddah and Hail. The sample was selected for pragmatic reasons also as I have direct access to the participants after building up a network of professional acquaintances whilst in KSA I can readily access for this study. Through this network I was able to find 14 participants who not only fit the criteria but were also willing to participate and were also available to be interviewed before the 2012 summer holidays began. Three participants were from the US and 11 were UK citizens. All of the participants—bar two near-native speakers—were native speakers of English. Only two of the participants were White and the rest non-White.

The group were chosen for their homogeneity in that they were all experienced expatriate EFL teachers who had taught EFL in KSA ELCs for more than 5 years. In addition, they were chosen because I knew them to be sincere in their profession, morally upright and committed to teaching EFL in KSA as I knew them personally before the study began to the extent that I know that all bar one of the participants are married and have children living and attending school in KSA i.e. that they are invested in KSA and enjoy living in KSA. I know this information about them because they belong to a network of teachers that I have gotten to know over the years I have been teaching EFL in KSA.

Table 3.1 Participants’ experience and qualifications

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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teaching Experience in KSA</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>MA</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>BA, TEFL Cert + PGCE</td>
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As mentioned above, the entire sample consisted of expatriate teachers. Johnston (1995, p.256) defines expatriate teachers as “any teacher who is a citizen of one country but working in another”. No native KSA English as a foreign language teachers were selected because I do not belong to or have intimate access to this community, nor a level of trust within this community, which allows me to conduct such research. Likewise, I do not want to be an “outsider looking in”. I belong to the KSA EEEFLT community. Thus, I am an “insider” able to provide an “insider” insight and unable to achieve this level of closeness and intimacy with any other community. In addition, no women have been selected. Education in KSA, and life in general, is segregated by sex and I do not have direct access to female EFLTs. Furthermore, interviewing female teachers raises numerous ethical issues in a country such as KSA, which has strict laws preventing unrelated men and women mixing together.
3.8.1.2 The challenges the participants face.

The participants face several challenges. Firstly, they do not have a syllabus voice. Although they are able to identify, and suggest solutions to solve, problems with the syllabi they teach—and have taught—they do not have a platform for their voices to be heard and are thus disempowered and somewhat helpless. Secondly, their knowledge is marginalised in light of this. Consequently, they have little or no input or ownership of the EFL syllabi they teach. As a result, the context in which they work is a frustrating and challenging one. Changing jobs in the hope that a better job will be found is not necessarily a solution to the problem they find themselves in because the literature suggests that similar situations are to be found in ELCs across KSA (cf. Almurabit, 2012; Alseghayer, 2011). Thus, their places of work are sites of tension. As they want to continue to work and live in KSA, they have few options other than to accept the dilemma they find themselves in whilst earnestly hoping that it improves. Finally, the majority of the participants face further challenges as a result of their skin colour: 11 of the 14 are non-White native English speakers and there is one non-White near-native English speaker. One is a White near-native English speaker and the remaining participant is the only White Native English speaker.

3.8.2 Data collection using semi-structured interviews.

As mentioned previously, interviews are the main data collection method used in this study. I have not used the stimulated recall method—with its subsequent stimulated recall interviews—even though it is the most popular method used in studies that have investigated TPW (cf. Barr, 2011). I have chosen to use semi structured or in-depth interviews—as they are also known—for data collection because they enable me to collect rich interpretive data I require to answer the study’s research questions and allow the participants to express themselves freely and vent their frustrations.
support, Devine (2002, p.201) explains how “the in-depth interview is about listening to people talking in order to gain some insight into their world-views and how they see things as they do”. In explaining the ability of in-depth interviews to accomplish this whilst giving a voice to the participants, Esterberg (2002, p.87) explains how because marginalised groups have often been silenced, “they have not always had the opportunity to tell their story. In-depth interviews allow them to do so”. To facilitate this, open-ended questions were asked. In explaining their usage in in-depth interviews, Creswell (1998, p.8) explains how interpretive researchers “tend to use open-ended questions so that the participants can share their views”.

3.8.3 Conducting the interviews.

Each teacher agreed to one interview with the possibility of a follow up interview if needed. Despite this, it was not necessary to conduct follow up interviews as the first round of interviews contained more than enough data to conduct the study especially as many of the participants' interviews lasted more than an hour. In addition, I did not want to impede on them anymore than I had already, as all 14 of the participants were full time teachers married with children bar one unmarried teacher. They had given up a lot of their free time already for which I was very grateful and did not want to intrude on their lives any further.

The majority of the interviews took place during a four-week quiet period prior to the 2012 summer holidays. I chose this time because it is a time when the teachers were not teaching after having recently finished invigilating and marking exams. 12 of the participants agreed to face-to-face interviews which were recorded using an iPhone that was inconspicuously placed between the participants and myself to ensure it was as unobtrusive as possible. The remaining two participants were interviewed
over the phone: my iPhone was placed on speakerphone and the conversation was recorded using an iPad. A time was agreed upon that was convenient to the participants: one that would least interfere with their schedules.

The first of the 14 interviews took place in the teacher’s private office. One participant preferred to invite me to lunch at his house to conduct the interview there. Another participant preferred to come to my house for the interview. Nine of the interviews were conducted in coffee shops located nearby the participants’ domiciles and, as mentioned previously, two took place over the phone. There was no time limit on the interviews. The interviews stopped when the participants wanted. Some had more to say than others did. In total, approximately twelve and a half hours of interviews were recorded.

### 3.8.4 Interview questions.

In order to elicit data that would answer the primary research question along with its secondary questions, I asked the participants two main questions. To assess the suitability of these two questions I intended to ask, I first piloted them on one of the participants. After slightly tweaking them, they were finally ready to use. For the first interview question, I asked the participants what problems they had experienced with syllabi whilst teaching EFL in ELCs in KSA. There were two reasons for asking this question. The first reason was for the participants to simply answer the question (by reflecting and problematising) and the second reason was to enable me to access their TPW when they did this because, in order to answer the question, the participants would have to access and articulate their TPW. The problems they mentioned would be their problems—both identified and defined by them—representing knowledge that they had constructed as 'constructors of knowledge'
underpinned by their own TPW acquired through years of experience and Problematising their practice.

For the second interview question, I asked the participants what they thought the solutions were to the problems they identified. This question was designed to encourage the participants to suggest and thus articulate solutions to the problems they had identified and their consequences. This question was designed to elicit data that captured the deliberative characteristics of phronesis as the participants deliberated in order to arrive at morally defensible solutions. This is especially so when viewed through a lens that considers teaching a moral practice and teachers as being bound by a moral code of practice encouraging them to act morally and educationally as discussed in Chapter 2. Likewise, this question was designed to capture data to highlight TPW’s moral qualities as the participants draw on their TPW to find solutions to problems which—in and of itself—is considered by phronetic social scientists to be a moral venture.

Both questions were driven by the Problematisation framework I had designed to get the EEEFLTs to Problematise the syllabi and elicit their TPW whilst doing so and thus allow me to capture their TPW during the interviews. Hence, the idea behind the above approach to both the design and asking of the two scripted interview questions was that, in order to identify problems with the syllabi they had encountered, the EEEFLT participants would need to reflect on the syllabi in order to problematise the syllabi. Then, they would deliberate in order to arrive at moral defensible solutions to the problems they identified and their consequences. Finally, they would need to articulate their conclusions and—possibly—the reasons for, and the way they arrived at, their conclusions. This final stage, the articulation stage, was
the real goal of the question-posing process because it compelled the participants to articulate their tacit TPW. It is at this stage that their tacit TPW is verbalised and articulated and thus can be captured (recorded) and then analysed. Only the two questions above were scripted. The others were spontaneous and in response to the participants’ answers during the interviews.

3.8.5 The data analysis procedures employed in this study.

First, each interview was transcribed after it had been recorded and before the next interview took place (see Appendix 1). Secondly, after being transcribed, it was read several times in order to become familiar with it. Thirdly, a line-by-line analysis was conducted (see Appendix 2). This line-by-line analysis refined and fleshed out relevant phenomena discovered in the initial reading of each transcribed interview. Fourthly, an incident-to-incident analysis was conducted (see Appendix 3) were bigger chunks of data that represented related incidents or experiences each EEEFLT had encountered or experienced were compared. Finally, the transcription was read repeatedly and any additional phenomena were compared and contrasted to find similarities and common themes as well as differences. These stages of analysis were driven by the constant comparative method in that there was a constant moving back and forth between the data looking for connections between the data which also revealed new phenomena and relationships in the data as well as embellishing those already present. In addition, this process was used to refine and build up themes in the data. After the first interview, the fourth and fifth stages of this procedure were expanded in that this comparing and contrasting occurred not only within the different parts of the same transcribed interview but across transcribed interviews also in the form of incident-to-incident analysis across cases (see Appendix 4).
With each transcribed interview, relevant themes to emerge were used to help guide and inform the next interview in that wherever and whenever I got the chance I would—as is the case when theoretical sampling is used albeit in this case phronetic sampling—probe further some of the findings of the previous interview(s) with the current interview such as when during the first interview, Teacher A spoke a lot about the textbook-centredness of the syllabi he had encountered and how the syllabus was the textbook. This was discussed in more depth and detail during the following interview because Teacher B mentioned it also as well as in subsequent interviews so much so that it eventually became a core category with the syllabus being the textbook as one of the themes subsumed under this category albeit as a consequence of textbook-centred syllabi.

The decision to begin analysing the initial interview data (which was also the case with subsequent interviews) immediately after it had ended and been transcribed, was prompted by Corbin and Strauss’s (2008, p.144) advice that when employing GTM “Unlike conventional methods of sampling, the researcher does not go out and collect the entire set of data before beginning the analysis. Analysis begins after the first day of data gathering”. Additionally, pragmatically, if data are allowed to accumulate and analysis is delayed until data collection finishes, it becomes difficult to navigate and analyse the data due to the large amount.

After all 14 interviews had been analysed, the transcriptions were collated and saved as a single Microsoft Word document. The document was printed out and bound together in a book so I could read and annotate it whenever possible. It was at this stage that the 14 participants were assigned letters of the alphabet from A to N. This decision was made after some of the EEEFLTs expressed their preference to be
assigned a letter of the alphabet rather than a pseudonym that they described as being unflattering, false and artificial. The contents of the book were constantly being revised and reduced as more analysis was conducted that resulted in unusable data being put to one side. This was a painstaking and time-consuming task. I could have used computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) such as NVivo. Instead, I used myself as the research instrument through which the data were analysed and pieced together having quickly discovered, as others have, that there is “no substitute for a good set of highlighters from W. H. Smith, a pen and paper, and a brain” (Thomas, 2009, p.207). I additionally did so because it is more in line with the interpretive paradigm—underpinning this study—that knowledge is constructed by humans in the minds of humans not computers. Likewise, I had become accustomed to using highlighters and a pencil during the previous stages of the data analysis (as is evident in Appendices 2, 3 and 4).

Undoubtedly this final stage of data analysis was the most intensive and focused data analysis stage. As was the case during the other data analysis stages, the constant comparative method played a major role in refining and cleaning up the data as I moved back and forth between the data piecing everything together and preparing it for inclusion in this study. There was so much data so a decision had to be made as to what to include especially as the results chapter in an EdD thesis is normally around 10,000 words and I had 100,000 transcribed words (enough for several studies).

It was during this final stage of data analysis that it became very clear that six problem areas had become prominent in the data so much so that they had become main categories under which all other themes were subsumed (see Appendix 5).
These areas reflected categories to emerge from the data as a result of the EEEFLTs Problematising the KSA EFL syllabi they had encountered and thus describing them as teacher, textbook and test-centred, top-down, teacher-proof and time-driven. It was these six problem areas that were driving the problems the EEEFLTs had encountered. Likewise, these six areas were responsible for the consequences that the EEEFLTs highlighted in their interviews. In addition, when suggesting solutions to help alleviate the syllabi-related problems the EEEFLTs had encountered—along with their consequences—these were also driven by these same six categories. As this study is a phronetic problem-driven study, which employed Problematisation as a framework through which the EEEFLTs were required to Problematise the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered, these findings are not surprising. Also, the two scripted interview questions were designed to get the EEEFLTs to Problematise the syllabi and in doing so identify problems, consequences and solutions to both. In addition, the three secondary research questions that this study is attempting to answer require the EEEFLTs to describe the syllabi related problems they encountered, their consequences and the solutions they suggest to solve both. Likewise, I have played an influential role in weaving the data together in order to answer the three secondary research questions so that the primary research question can be then answered as the research questions need to be answered from and by the data, which I believe they were as I will show in the next chapter where the results of the data analysis are discussed in more detail. Likewise, my prolonged engagement with and insider knowledge of the EEEFLT community—i.e. my phronetic sensitivity—has had an influence on how I have pieced the data together as it has no doubt coloured and affected the data analysis process and helped me to piece together the data to arrive at what I consider to be a truthful representative account.
3.9 Ethical Concerns

Guba and Lincoln (1989, p.83) rightly observe how design of the study issues also concern “rules for the conduct of inquiry”. As far as possible, I have followed the ethical guidelines for educational research outlined by the British Educational Research Association (2011). Likewise, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1998) and the University of Exeter’s research guidelines, the participants have been explained the purposes for which their data is to be used. Furthermore, the participants have been informed they can withdraw from the study at any time and that their participation is voluntary. All participants have submitted a University of Exeter informed consent form (see Appendix 6). Any data they have supplied has been stored safely and securely. In addition, care has been taken not to present the study “in a way that allows any subject’s identity to be disclosed or inferred” (Herman and Flecker, 2003, p.56). Finally, all identifiers have been removed and every possible effort made to protect the participants’ identities.

This entire study—especially the data collection methods used to collect data from the participants—originates from ethical guidelines advising researchers “to minimise the disruption to people’s lives” (Dawson, 2007, p.151). This is echoed in what Booth, Colomb and Williams (2003, p.87) suggest: “When researchers study people, they may inadvertently harm them...by embarrassing them or violating their privacy”. I did not want to encroach on the participants’ spare time and violate their privacy. Thus, the participants—gathered through the sampling frame discussed above—chose the time and place where the interviews took place. That is why I was reluctant to conduct a second round of interviews especially as I had gathered enough data during the first round to do what I needed to do.
3.10 Trustworthiness of the Account

I acknowledge that the methodology I am employing in this study is subjective, value laden and will result in an account that is my own interpretation of the participants’ interpretations of events. I believe this is nothing to be ashamed of rather something to celebrate as others, such as Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 104), do: “My subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and as a researcher, equipping me with the perspectives and insights that shape all that I do as a researcher”. I believe my insider knowledge and prolonged engagement with the participants and the KSA ELC context they inhabit allow me to speak on their behalf. Likewise, the participants have trusted me to speak on their behalf by giving their permission for me to do this. I belong to this community. If I cannot piece their views, thoughts and attitudes together to form a representative account, who can? I have lived similar, if not the same, experiences and encountered similar, if not the same, problems. I could have chosen a phenomenon and sample that I have no knowledge of. I did not because I wanted to be the 15th participant. I am an invested stakeholder in this research. Although this account depicts my view of reality, I have tried to be as truthful as possible and provide a trustworthy representative account of events. To achieve this, I have used my insider knowledge and prolonged engagement that I have gained through working in different KSA ELCs over a period of eight years to gather the data together in a responsible truthful way to form what is the next chapter, the Results Chapter.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of my data analysis. In doing so, it answers the study’s three secondary research questions. It begins by discussing the problems the EEEFLTs identified with the KSA ELC syllabi along with their consequences followed by the solutions they suggest to help alleviate the problems they identified and their consequences. It follows this pattern in an attempt to mirror the process the EEEFLTs follow when using their TPW for Problematising their practice: they reflect in order to identify problems, deliberate over the problems identified and—whilst doing so—consider the consequences before suggesting solutions to alleviate the problems and their consequences. In addition, it follows this pattern to answer, individually, the three secondary research questions which explore the syllabi-related problems the EEEFLTs identify along with their consequences and the solutions they suggest to help address both. In addition, it follows this pattern to illustrate how interpretive phronetic educational research (IPER) researchers such as myself—in view of IPER’s problem-driven nature—can use a problem-driven TPW lens through which to organise their data. To report the data, I have chosen a cross-case analysis instead of a more narrative approach because I believe using the former achieves a more rounded and representative overall picture and account of the sentiments of the participants as a whole. Throughout this chapter, the participants have been assigned letters of the alphabet from A to N (as discussed previously in 3.8.5) as they requested and to protect their identities.

The data and consequent themes discussed in this chapter are indicative of, informed by and reflect the challenging context from which they have been drawn and woven together. Consequently, the themes are problem-driven. Thus, the
themes to emerge from the data reported in this chapter are subsumed under six problem areas. As a result, the syllabi the EEEFLTs have encountered are described as being teacher, test and textbook-centred, top-down, teacher-proof and time-driven. In light of this and for coherence purposes, from here onwards, I will refer to these syllabi as Type-T syllabi as all the problem areas begin with the letter ‘t’. What this study and I have done is to unite each of the six problem areas under the unified term, Type-T syllabi, and thus help formalise and clarify the discussion and its central elements.

Undoubtedly, there is some overlap between these six problems areas but I believe this is due to the interconnectedness of KSA ELC syllabi wherein the six areas somehow slot together and represent necessary parts of the same dysfunctional system and machine. So, for example, a teacher-driven syllabus may also be a top-down syllabus and vice versa. At the other end of the scale, all six problems areas may be present in one syllabus. This chapter contains several examples of the interrelatedness of the different Ts that constitute Type-T syllabi.

4.2 Problems with the Syllabi Identified by the EEEFLTs

When Problematising the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered, in identifying problems, their consequences and suggesting solutions to these problems, the EEEFLTs define the syllabi through a problem-driven lens as being teacher, test and textbook-centred, top-down, teacher-proof and time-driven. Teacher, test and textbook-centred syllabi are those syllabi where the teacher, test and textbook are the focal and driving point of the syllabus. Top-down syllabi—in direct contrast to bottom-up (teacher-driven) syllabi—are syllabi where teachers have no or limited decision-making powers. Such syllabi are handed down to teachers to deliver.
Teacher-proof syllabi are syllabi that do not need real teachers to teach them because they are so comprehensive they do the job of the teacher who becomes a secondary resource whose main role is to deliver the pre-packed course book and supplementary materials. Time-driven syllabi are those syllabi driven by time in that they are designed around strict deadlines where material has to be completed normally so that tests can be taken to see how much of the course the students can regurgitate. Such syllabi do not allow learners to learn at their own pace and teachers to teach at a pace that the students can cope with. One syllabus may be driven by more than one T and some syllabi may be driven by all six. The more disempowering a syllabus is, the more Ts it will have.

4.2.1 Teacher-centred syllabi.

TB describes how the KSA ELC syllabi he has encountered during the last ten years have been “very much teacher-centred”. Many of the other participants expressed similar comments. One such participant is TD who complains about the predominance of what he describes as the “chalk and talk approach”. On a similar note, TB explains how he acknowledges the dominance of this approach in KSA ELCs wherein it is common practice “for the teachers to tell them [the students] everything”. These comments are but a selection highlighting the teacher-centredness of the KSA ELC syllabi the EEEFLTs have encountered.

4.2.2 Test-centred syllabi.

Another theme to emerge from the EEEFLTs’ interviews is the test-centredness of KSA ELC syllabi. These sentiments are reflected in TG concluding that—during the ten years or so he has been teaching in KSA ELCs—the syllabi he has encountered have been “very much test-oriented”. Another EEEFLT, from the numerous teachers
who expressed similar comments, is TE, who, when describing the programme where he currently works, explains how “the whole thing is based on exams”.

4.2.3 Textbook-centred syllabi.
Many of the EEEFLTs consider KSA ELC syllabi to be textbook-centred. One such teacher is TL who describes how “Most syllabi that I’ve come across are all geared around a specific book or a series of books”. In explaining this problem, TA describes how “There’s no syllabus, just a book…This is not a syllabus. Giving somebody a book is not a syllabus…basically it’s a book. It’s not a syllabus”. On a similar note, TG explains how “They talked about syllabus at *** but it was kind of like chapters two and three in Azar [a grammar book]…it was just following the book”. Likewise, TF explains how “It was a syllabus in terms of what you had to teach and what you didn’t have to teach or what you couldn’t teach but it was taken from the textbook”.

4.2.4 Top-down syllabi.
Reflecting on more than a decade working in KSA, TG describes how the syllabi he encountered were top-down and that he was not asked to participate in making syllabi decisions. Many of the teachers expressed similar sentiments. One such teacher, TE explains how, where he works, teachers are not involved in syllabi decision making as these decisions are “made at the top of the university…these decisions weren’t really based on a needs analysis”. Likewise, in one of the ELCs he previously worked at, TN explains how “the syllabus was very top-down”.

4.2.5 Teacher-proof syllabi.
Many of the participants described the KSA EFL syllabi they have encountered whilst teaching in KSA ELCs as being teacher-proof. One such teacher is TB who explains how, in the ELC where he currently works, “There is a student’s book. There’s a teacher’s book. There’s a workbook. There’s audio files, cassettes, tapes and CDs and there’s also videos, so it’s comprehensive”. On a similar note, TD explains how the syllabus in the ELC he currently works is so teacher-proof that “it does not need a teacher to teach it”.

4.2.6 Time-driven syllabi.
Many of the EEEFLTs described the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered as being time-driven. One such teacher is TK who explains how “you have material that you have to cover within a certain time period”. KSA ELC syllabi are described as being time-driven because of the central role time plays in defining them and built on the premise that set material must be completed within a tight timeframe. Such syllabi are defined and shaped by a lack of time as opposed to too much. These sentiments are echoed in TF’s comments how time has played an important role in driving the syllabi he has encountered in KSA ELCs in that “there is great rush all the time…there’s a tremendous rush”.

4.3 Consequences of the Problems Identified by the EEEFLTs

4.3.1 Consequences of teacher-centred syllabi.

4.3.1.1 Compelled to deliver the syllabus in a teacher-centred manner.
As is evident from the EEEFLTs’ interviews, having to deliver teacher-centred syllabi appears to contradict their moral code of teaching thus causing them to identify it as a problem. Often, they have no choice but to revert to teacher-centred delivery
methods to keep up with the unrelenting syllabus schedule and avoid reprimand. In addition, some of the EEEFLTs have to skip more time-consuming parts of the syllabus especially communicative activities. These sentiments are echoed in TN’s explanation how, when he arrives at a communicative section of the textbook, he is often “forced to skip it because we have to cover the rest of the syllabus”. As a result, he complains that “you find yourself predominantly doing teacher-led tasks simply because you need to cover certain things”. Another teacher who finds himself in a similar situation is TG when he admits that, in order to cover the sheer amount of material required, he often finds himself reverting to “telling the students”. Likewise, in reflecting on the KSA ELCs he has taught in and identifying teacher-centred syllabus delivery to be a widespread problem also, TJ complains that “Basically you’re talking to your students...It’s more like a lecture you’re doing”. Thus, such syllabi shape the EEEFLTs’ syllabus delivery by encouraging traditional, teacher-centred syllabus delivery as teachers find them difficult to teach any other way.

4.3.1.2 Promotes over-reliance on the teacher.

In explaining the consequences of teacher-centred syllabi in more detail, TB explains how “The teacher has to feed the students”. Doing this creates an over-reliance on the teacher. In describing this over-reliance in more depth, TG describes how the students “look to us as like a coach”. Likening the teacher to a coach suggests the students expect the teachers to coach them through the syllabus from beginning to end and are responsible for their success and failure. In describing this in more detail, TG explains how, if students fail, especially their exams, the teacher is considered responsible: “I didn’t do well in my test, so let me start throwing mud…he
teacher didn’t follow the coursebook 100%. He opted to be more innovative in his approach and as a result I was affected”.

4.3.2 Consequences of test-centred syllabi.

4.3.2.1 Drastically shape syllabi delivery.

It is evident from the EEEFLTs’ responses that they feel that test-centred KSA ELC syllabi drastically shape syllabi delivery. Tests become the focal point of the syllabus and thus drive it. The sheer number of tests that students are given, evidenced in the EEEFLTs’ accounts, supports these sentiments also. Some ELCs have a more extreme testing regime than others. In explaining the situation where he currently works, TD explains that “every quarter semester they have an exam”. In a sixteen-week semester, this equates to a test every four weeks. From a considerably more extreme situation, TA complains that an ELC where he worked had a total of six tests in a twelve-week semester: “Four quizzes: two before, two after the midterm and the midterm and the final”. As the ELC implemented a skills-based syllabus, this equated to a total of thirty tests in one twelve-week semester as each skill had six tests a semester (reading, writing, listening, speaking and grammar). With so many, it is easy to see how tests can shape ELC syllabi especially their delivery and can become the focal point of the syllabus. As with teacher-centred syllabi, communication suffers as a result of a scenario that Zhao and Campbell (1995, p.385) describe as the “overemphasis on exams rather than real communicative ability in the teaching and learning of English”. These sentiments are reflected in TI’s observation that “because the exams are all mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary and reading, I found that I’m having to leave off teaching certain skills like speaking”. In identifying the negative long-term consequences this has, he explains how “that’s
why when after they've finished and they've graduated, their spoken English is very low; it’s very bad”.

4.3.2.2 The textbook must be completed.

In explaining this common theme to emerge from the data analysis, TI explains, in preparation for testing, teachers must “make sure all the textbook is covered...there’s so much pressure on the teacher to cover the syllabus, the whole syllabus”. In explaining the rationale behind such a decision, TA comments how “the entire syllabus has to be taught because if it’s not taught, students will complain that this might come up on the exam”. One teacher, TI, complains about the constant pressure to make sure he has covered the material necessary for the test when explaining how “there are so many deadlines. You have to, as a teacher, make sure you’ve covered all the units necessary before the exam, before the midterm, before the final, before the quiz”. Likewise, TD describes the pressure the teachers are under at the ELC where he works because if the teachers do not “keep up with the syllabus, then in effect, they [the students] won’t be prepared for the exams”. Thus, a discussion of KSA ELC syllabi would be incomplete without discussing the role EFL textbooks play in both defining and perpetuating test-centred syllabi. A similar link has been made by Alseghayer (2011, p.60) who describes KSA ELC syllabi as being “test and textbook-driven”.

4.3.2.3 The EEEFLTs feel compelled to teach to the test.

In view of the overemphasis on tests and their importance, many of the participants believe that KSA EFL syllabi make it difficult for them to teach except to the test. In highlighting this problem, TL complains how he has to “strictly stick to the content that is going to be in the exam”. Likewise, TM explains how he feels he has to “teach
exactly to the exam and nothing else counts other than that”. Thus, when the teacher diverges from that which the students will be tested on, he may face repercussions and comments from students such as “Why do we need to do this, teacher? I have an exam to complete in a little while” (TG). These sentiments are reflected in TM’s comments that during his time in KSA he has encountered students “learning for the exam so that they can pass the exam and that’s the be all and end all of the reason that they’re studying”. As highlighted previously, this overemphasis occurs at the expense of other activities that the teachers believe the students need especially communicative practice. Hence, these test-driven syllabi appear to compel the teachers to teach in a way that contradicts their moral code of practice.

4.3.3 Consequences of textbook-centred syllabi.

4.3.3.1 Contents pages become the syllabus.

In highlighting a common problem in KSA ELCs, TA describes how “what they do here in KSA is they just choose a book and divide it amongst hours and then they call it a syllabus”. When this happens, the contents pages of the textbook often become the syllabus. This is the case at TM’s current place of work evident in his statement that “the syllabus is the contents page of the coursebook”. Likewise, in describing an ELC where he worked, TG explains how “The contents page was the syllabus”. A common problem that arises when the syllabus is the textbook is that it becomes the focal point of study that must be followed religiously.

4.3.3.2 The EEEFLTs must strictly follow the textbook.

Many of the EEEFLTs dislike being compelled by the ELCs to strictly follow the textbook. From these is TA who explains how in all the ELCs he has worked “you have to stick to the book”. Likewise, TL explains how “Currently I teach in a
programme where the syllabus restricts any sort of lateral movement away from the syllabus”. Similar sentiments are echoed in TG’s comments that in the ELCs where he has worked he has found it “very hard to digress from the fixed syllabus”. Likewise, TC highlights how, in his current place of work, he was told by management to “stick to the syllabus”. TM describes how being unable to digress from the textbook upsets him when he complains that “I have to teach point by point. I can’t skip this grammar point. I can’t skip this vocab point etc…I feel like my hands are tied, I can’t really move away from the syllabus”. Likewise, TG explains how, during his ten years or so teaching EFL in KSA, he has encountered numerous examples “of teachers basically having to stringently follow books”.

4.3.3.3 Compelled to follow a scheme of work.

Some of the EEEFLTs mentioned that they are given a scheme of work—also known as a pacing schedule—that they must follow. One of these is TF who explains how teachers must “stick to the syllabus, stick to the scheme of work that tells you exactly what to do”. In other ELCs, this is known as a pacing schedule. By whatever name it is known, it is a tool used by management to ensure teachers do not digress from the syllabus. Hence, the reason why they seem so obsessed with it: “there is a pacing schedule…they’re very strict on it” (TD). Through it, the teacher “knows where he’s supposed to be at any given time in the semester” (TI). Thus, the schedule is precise in that it maps where a teacher should be when. One such schedule appears to be a weekly schedule: “they give you a pacing schedule…it is very rigid…It’s quite structured in terms of week by week” (TE). These weeks are often broken down into days as TE explains: “on this day you should be on this page”. On a similar note, TF comments how “You got to stick to the actual schedule and stick to the actual time frame as well: on this day you should be on this chapter”. Albeit in a different ELC,
TG encountered a more extreme version: “They were very stringent. In fact they had a pacing schedule...we were required literally page by page, lesson by lesson to really stringently move through the material and to cover it as comprehensively as possible”. Likewise, TF explains that he was told by management at his current ELC that “Everyone should be on the same page at the same time”.

### 4.3.3.4 Repercussions.

TJ describes the serious repercussions awaiting teachers who digress from the textbook in more detail when explaining how “we were told to stick to the books we were given and you’d be reprimanded if you did add some personal touch to your classes”. Likewise, TK explains how “You had to make sure that you covered the material for that day and if you were behind you were reprimanded”. These statements suggest a link between not adhering to the rigid syllabus schedule and subsequent repercussions. Although not mentioning any specific form of punishment, TM's comments reflect these sentiments: “if you don't complete the required units, of course, there's going to be some kind of repercussions”. Upon further analysis, the EEEFLTs’ interviews reveal repercussions ranging from light to heavy forms of punishment. In explaining a light punishment, TL explains how if management found out what you were teaching “disagreed with what was in the book, then you were called in and given a rap on the knuckles”. In explaining a more serious punishment, TD explains how not following the syllabus as deemed suitable by management can be considered a very serious matter that “could result in disciplinary action: a formal warning”. The most serious form of punishment was described by TL when explaining that a teacher he knows was dismissed because he was found to be “teaching English, but with a methodology which they didn’t
approve of, so it was considered a deviation of the syllabus...he was actually sacked”.

One wonders how management finds out about the situations above. TF enlightens us by explaining how “you have a book and you have a very rigid timescale to do it in and people are actually checking this”. Thus, for some teachers, there seems no escape because some ELCs monitor teachers’ syllabus progress. This monitoring takes many shapes and forms including “weekly curricular audits” (TD), “curriculum spot-checks” (TM) and unannounced visits where management “come in uninvited, unwanted” (TL). These kind of tactics frustrate the teachers as TM explains how the spot-checks “started happening every week and teachers were not happy about that”. Regarding the issue, TM explains how he has “spoken to a few teachers about this and they find it very condescending”. These sentiments highlight the struggle the EEEFLTs have to endure on a regular basis. One of the many sources of this struggle is the “pacing schedule” which the teachers have to religiously follow.

4.3.4 Consequences of top-down syllabi.

4.3.4.1 Needs analyses are not conducted.

In light of the decontextualised, dehumanised KSA ELC syllabi discussed above, the concept of needs analysis as a bottom-up, teacher-driven tool to gather information about students’ needs and then design syllabi tailored to these needs appears obsolete in many of the ELCs discussed by the EEEFLTs. In highlighting this, TM explains how he has “not worked at any place where a needs analysis was conducted”. Likewise, TF admits that in all the KSA ELCs he has worked “there hasn’t been, in my experience, any needs analysis”.
4.3.4.2 The EEEFLTs’ input is minimal.

Top-down syllabi relegate the EEEFLTs to syllabus deliverymen delivering the delivered syllabi. Thus, as TB explains: “teachers and students are not consulted. They have no input. It just came in the boxes delivered”. From this and the other EEEFLTs’ interviews, it seems as if the teacher’s main duty seems to be “to deliver whatever you’ve been told to deliver” (TA). Reiterating this, TF explains that “You’re just a performer really—there to deliver the syllabus”. Likewise, TB explains how “teachers are only there to deliver”. Thus, the teacher becomes the deliveryman delivering someone else’s goods: the syllabus. His job is to deliver the goods and comply. Such syllabi prescribe very limited and mechanical roles for teachers to the extent that they feel their hands are tied and are thus unable to change anything. In describing this situation at the ELC he works, TK explains how “our hands are kind of tied behind our backs”. On a similar note, TH explains how “As far as having control over any of the content or having any persuasion or having any fruitful thoughts towards direction as far as the teaching is concerned, we had no say in that. It was given...Our hands were bound”. Such a situation is indicative of top-down syllabi that restrict and devalue teachers’ input and do not afford it the platform it deserves.

4.3.4.3 The EEEFLTs are not involved in choosing the syllabus.

In KSA, using a textbook as the syllabus is so ingrained in KSA EFL culture that the EEEFLTs’ syllabus decision-making duties are often limited to choosing which textbook is to be used as the syllabus. Sadly, many of the EEEFLTs interviewed were not even given this opportunity. Thus, decisions regarding which textbooks are to be used as ELC syllabi are often made without consulting the EEEFLTs. These sentiments are echoed in TA’s statement how “The teachers are given a book to teach…the teachers they don’t choose the book…you’re just given the book. Like in
most places, there’s no sitting down discussing the needs of the students”. In using the phrase “Like in most places”, TA implies that it is not an isolated problem. TB reiterates these sentiments when he acknowledges that, in his experience, he cannot remember encountering “a place where the teacher has freedom to choose the syllabus”. In further supporting this, TA explains how “Teachers don’t have any choice in the books or the resources that they use to teach”. Likewise, TN explains how where he worked “The syllabus was already given...There’s the book. Go and teach X amount of units you need to teach...We didn’t have any say”.

4.3.5 Consequences of teacher-proof syllabi.

4.3.5.1 The teacher is removed from the learning equation in the classroom.

In highlighting this problem, TG explains how “there are plenty of examples that I could mention of teachers basically having to stringently follow books that pretty much removed their input”. Making sure teachers do not digress from the teacher-proof syllabi by preventing them from using their own materials is one of the many ways teacher-proof syllabi are enforced in KSA ELCs. Such sentiments are echoed by TJ who when asked if it was okay for him to use his own materials in the classroom answered “No, we couldn’t do that...you definitely couldn’t do that...I haven’t experienced anyone doing it...I assume that you’d be reprimanded if you did add some personal touch to your classes”. The EEEFLTs find such situations, the result of teacher-proof syllabi, extremely restrictive and frustrating, as echoed in TM’s comments concerning the syllabus where he currently works: “This is ridiculous. It’s so prescriptive...I’m teaching in shackles”.

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These teacher-proof syllabi remove the EEEFLTs from the learning equation in the classroom to the extent that little remains for them to do other than deliver the textbook contents in accordance with the teachers’ manual and contents pages of the textbook. In describing such a textbook, TF considers it “an instruction manual”. From this perspective, the teachers’ manual becomes an instruction manual for the instruction manual. This represents the epitome of teacher-proof syllabi where syllabus delivery—which is already heavily controlled and prescribed—is further controlled by a teachers’ manual explaining what the teacher should do, how and when. In continuing his discussion, TF explains that their input is considerably reduced by “teachers’ books that are very comprehensive”. In explaining just how comprehensive and prescriptive these teachers' books can be, TM explains how “the teacher’s manual is so prescriptive that I don’t need to do any kind of lesson planning”. Thus, syllabus delivery is reduced to the decontextualised, dehumanised mechanical following of “a mechanical script that all teachers are expected to parrot, without teachers thinking for themselves or taking into account the students they teach” (Null, 2011, p.8). This reflects a dehumanised approach to syllabus delivery where the best teacher is the one who can successfully deliver the syllabus “like a robot” (TM). Describing teachers as robots seems odd. Nevertheless, in describing the teachers at an ELC where he worked, TG admits that “the teachers were like robots”. Likewise, TB explains how he felt his main role was to “read from this page and turn the pages”. In delivering the syllabus in such a clinical manner, TM compares the teacher’s role to that of “the postman”.

4.3.5.2 Deskilling.

The EEEFLTs' reports highlight how, over a period of time, they feel that teacher-proof syllabi deskill them. Hence, deskilling is a prominent theme to emerge from the
EEEFLTs’ interviews highlighting how teacher-proof syllabi shape their syllabus delivery by compelling them to deliver the syllabi in ways that contradict their moral code of practice. In defining the term *deskilling*, TC defines it as a phenomenon that can “cause teachers to lose their actual teaching skills that they learnt”. TG feels that he has been de-skilled by previous ELC syllabi. How this process occurs is described by TJ when he explains how “You’re not really using the skills that you’ve got because you can’t because the syllabus is restraining you in a sense...that’s sad”. The end result of this process is that the teacher “becomes a teacher that doesn’t actually have teaching skills anymore” (TC). As a result, the teacher is relegated to a supporting role performing menial tasks such as mouse-clicking and page-turning as TE explains: “You’re not really using your full potential...You’re just turning over the pages”. The teacher is not using his skills; therefore he loses them. In explaining this phenomenon which affects many teachers, Apple and Jungck (1990, p. 230) explain how “lack of use leads to loss...the skills they have developed over the years atrophy”. In reiterating these sentiments, TC explains how a teacher in such a situation “loses everything that he learned in college and his experience about teaching because now he’s in a situation that is not allowing him to do what he learnt to do”. This is because he is in a situation that does not require a teacher as “It’s all ready...The only thing that we have to do is fit the book into a schedule, the semester schedule” (TI). Reiterating a previous point, TM claims that these syllabi are preferred by some teachers “especially the ones with lesser experience”. This may be because teacher-proof syllabi do not need much effort or a teacher to teach them. As TC explains: “you don’t really have to teach”. TJ describes how he has been unable to use the teaching skills he has learnt when explaining how “you can just literally chuck your Master’s away...it’s sad because I can’t remember having implemented some of what I’ve learnt”. On a similar note, TG explains how “I did a
Masters in TESOL and came directly to *** but it was as if everything that I had studied was absolutely useless”. Due to the high level of frustration teachers often experience with these syllabi, especially since they prevent the teachers from using the teaching skills that they have learnt, many teachers become demotivated.

4.3.5.3 Demotivating.

The demotivating frustration and internal moral struggle teacher-proof KSA ELC syllabi cause is evident in TF’s comments when he describes teaching them as “not a very nice experience”. Explaining this unpleasant experience in more detail, TJ describes how teaching such syllabi “takes away your motivation and the beliefs you hold”. Likewise, teacher-proof syllabi demotivate teachers to the extent that they, as TC explains, “become demotivated...You see a lot of teachers getting burnt out. It only takes a semester for some and then by their first school year they’re burnt out and they don’t want to continue”. These syllabi frustrate and demotivate teachers because they are designed in such a way that “you can’t really do what you want to do” (TN). TL compares this disempowerment to teaching with “your hands behind your back”. Over time, this depletes teachers’ motivation. It does so because it prevents them from teaching in accordance with their pedagogic beliefs and from using their teaching skills. These sentiments are echoed in TC's comments how these teacher-proof syllabi are “not allowing them [the teachers] to take all of the skills that they learnt and actually apply them”. In explaining the consequences, he explains how “it demotivates the teachers because they realise what they went to college to learn how to do; they find themselves now in a workplace that is not going to allow them to do that”.

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4.3.6 Consequences of time-driven syllabi.

4.3.6.1 Drastically shape syllabi delivery.

On a similar note to how they felt about test-centred syllabi, the EEEFLTs feel that time-driven KSA ELC syllabi drastically shape syllabi delivery. In highlighting how this occurs at the ELC where he works, TA describes how “you must complete the book, the units in the book in the time that you’ve been allocated”. As many of the EEEFLTs explained, this compels them to race through the syllabus for fear of falling behind especially when the syllabus is overloaded: “You don’t even have to worry about do you think this is enough time for me to finish all this. You have to”. TF likens the frantic process to jumping through hoops when he explains that “there’s a syllabus that has to be done in a certain time...it’s just really jumping through hoops, going through chapter by chapter. There’s no time”. Thus, the teachers are constantly trying to keep up with the syllabus, but—as these comments show—there is simply not enough time. In explaining this problem in more detail, TI explains how “We’ve been given the task of making sure we get through the book and in the semester there’s not enough time to go through a full book”. Also, TL explains, regarding the syllabus, how: “There aren’t enough hours in the day to teach it or in the course itself”.

4.3.6.2 Cause syllabus overload.

Another consequence of time-driven syllabi is syllabus overload when there is too much syllabus to cover in the allocated timeframe. TN believes that syllabus overload occurs when there is “too much being taught in one semester”. On a similar note, albeit at the ELC where he works, TI argues that it occurs because of the “short amount of time that we’re given to teach the syllabus”. In such a situation, TN finds himself “ploughing through the book, unit by unit”. On a similar note, TI comments
how at his ELC he finds himself “always ploughing through the material”. TF complains about a similar situation he finds himself in and likens this ploughing through the textbook that he has to endure to “cracking a whip to get the horse to the finish line”.

4.3.6.3 Do not allow the EEEFLTs the freedom to personalise the syllabi.

TF explains how he—as a result of the time-driven KSA ELC syllabi he has encountered—finds it very difficult finding “the time to do things I want to do, which I feel are very beneficial things really, but are not specifically catered for in the syllabus”. On a similar note, TJ comments how “it’s quite difficult to implement some extra stuff that you want to do. It’s quite rigid and there’s not enough time, as usual, so you’re basically just running through the book...there is no time to actually teach the students properly”. TB’s contribution highlights his dissatisfaction with the entire situation when he explains that “I don’t want to rush my students. I want to make sure that everything is understood”. Likewise, TA explains how “You’ve got to cover whatever you’re being given to teach and finding the time to add, for example, some academic reading, writing, things like this...there’s not enough time”. Also complaining about the lack of time to personalise the syllabus more, TJ’s comments that “because of the lack of time it’s very difficult for you to actually add something, some stuff from yourself. It’s quite difficult because you’re being checked on what you’re doing every time whether you’ve covered everything”.

4.4 Solutions to Alleviate the Syllabi Problems the EEEFLTs Have Encountered

After having discussed the problems the EEEFLTs have identified and their consequences, the discussion now turns to discuss the solutions the EEEFLTs suggest to help alleviate these problems and their consequences. It does so initially
from a general perspective by discussing the general solutions to help alleviate the problems they have identified with KSA ELC syllabi in general. This is followed by a discussion of the EEEFLTs’ specific solutions to help alleviate the problems and consequences of each individual T. In doing so—to the best of my ability—I am attempting to convey the general gist of the EEEFLTs’ overall sentiments and ground the discussion in the data collected from the participants’ interviews.

4.4.1 General Solutions.

4.4.1.1 Foregrounding the EEEFLTs and their TPW.

A common theme to emerge as a general solution to the syllabi problems identified by the EEEFLTs is that many of the problems they have identified are due to the passive, disempowered role teachers are assigned in KSA ELCs. This can be alleviated by foregrounding the EEEFLTs and their TPW by giving them a more active role in all things syllabus-related because if anyone can improve the situation, they can. They are the closest to the students and the syllabus and thus they have in-depth, insider, contextualised knowledge and experience of both. In identifying the teachers as the ones who are the most qualified and experienced to take on this challenge, TI explains that “those who can actually contribute to a positive syllabus for the Saudi students are the teachers”. Likewise, in affirming their suitability for the role, TB explains how “the teachers can make a change”. On a similar note, TA believes that “the teachers have the ability to play a role in changing things”. In order to do so, they need to be given the opportunity. In explaining why they deserve this opportunity and are the most suited and capable to take on such a role, TJ explains that the teachers “are closer to the students”. Consequently, they have a unique invaluable insight. In describing this insight, TI explains how the ELC teachers are “on the ground. They’re in the classroom, they can see the problems with the
students...their needs...how it is on the ground...what are the positives and the negatives of the syllabus”. Thus, this is a privileged insight that those who make syllabus decisions are not always privy to. Consequently, the EEEFLTs are the most knowledgeable to judge syllabi. An example of how suitable they are can be seen in TK’s suggestion—that draws on his wealth of knowledge and experience to stress—in order to alleviate KSA ELC syllabi problems, “you have to produce syllabi that are appropriate for EFL students not ESL students...taking into consideration cultural sensitivity...making sure it’s pedagogically appropriate”. Undoubtedly, the EEEFLTs are more suited for the task than managers who control and make syllabi decisions “without actually going in to the classroom or speaking to the teachers” (TI). Management needs to realise the EEEFLTs’ potential and how useful they and their wealth of knowledge and experience are in relation to syllabi. This wealth of knowledge and experience is evident in TF’s comments that “my own experience of these students, during the 10 or 11 years I’ve worked in KSA with Saudi students, has led me to understand certain problems, when they usually occur, when they’re likely to occur”. Thus, they are the most suited and knowledgeable to identify and address KSA ELC students’ needs than managers who choose a textbook and enforce it as the syllabus without consulting teachers. Granting the EEEFLTs a more prominent role in syllabi decisions would allow them—amongst other things—to use their knowledge and experience to conduct needs analyses and use the information gathered to design syllabi tailored to the students’ needs. Incidentally, this is a common theme that the EEEFLTs believe is a solution to help alleviate some of the problems they have experienced.
4.4.1.2 Conducting needs analyses.

A discussed earlier, many of the teachers complained that needs analyses had not been conducted at their ELCs both prior to the inception of courses or during. Their doing so reflects their support for conducting needs analyses. In addition many of the EEEFLTs were more direct in expressing their belief that needs analysis represents an effective solution to solving KSA ELC syllabi problems because they believe it will result in syllabi that “cater for the needs of the Saudi students” (TM). One such teacher, TD, believes that before any syllabus decisions are made “The first thing is there should be a needs analysis”. TA seems to hold a similar belief when highlighting how important he feels it is “to analyse the needs of the students”. In explaining in more depth how this must be done, TM thinks suitable KSA ELC syllabi can only be achieved “through a very thorough needs analysis”. Albeit on a big scale, in defining his understanding of “thorough” he explains that KSA ELC syllabi should be based upon information “gleaned from a needs analysis study that was conducted over maybe three years, for example…You need a team of ten people working on something like this full time…a team that’s able to conduct a needs analysis…[and] a department for that purpose”.

Believing that needs analysis is a generic solution to the syllabi problems the EEEFLTs identified suggests that they think that a long—not short—term solution is needed to solve the syllabi problems they have encountered as opposed to previous solutions with “a last minute tone” (TG). An attempt to adopt a broader longer-term approach is evident in TL’s suggestion that “We should have a goal of where they are now and where we want to take them, as opposed to just go through X number of units and we don’t care what the end product is”. Likewise, it suggests that they
believe a wider perspective should be used to approach the problem instead of the narrow syllabi perspective the EEEFLTs have experienced.

**4.4.1.3 Adopting a wider approach to solving syllabi problems.**

In approaching the problem from a broader perspective, some of the EEEFLTs believe that, for a needs analysis to be successful, those responsible need to look beyond the ELC. One such teacher is TD who suggests the need to “find out what is the level of English required in the faculties where they’re going to study”. Likewise, TM believes that “the best way to understand how to design a syllabus today, for future students, is to look at the engineering college. Go there. Observe the lessons. Listen to their lectures and speak to the students. Really find out what kind of English they need”. TE voices similar sentiments when explaining that in order to obtain a comprehensive view, the needs analysis must include “future employers and future teachers from the main campus”. From this, it is clear these EEEFLTs believe a wider approach is needed that can capture the necessary information needed to tailor-make syllabi to suit the students’ needs. In doing so, they have given ideas as to where this information could be obtained. In addition, some of the participants offer their ideas on how this data could be obtained.

**4.4.1.4 Research as a broader approach to solving syllabi problems.**

Without doubt, conducting the above-mentioned needs analyses is a form of research. In furthering this—likewise long-term—approach, some EEEFLTs identify research as an additional activity capable of informing such needs analyses. One of these is TK who believes that one way to help inform a needs analysis “would be to conduct research”. Likewise, TK believes that the syllabi decision-makers “need to do research...conduct thorough research”. Although not stipulating whether
conducted on an individual or departmental level or wider afield, TM suggests doing “an action research project”. Likewise, TA suggests conducting “some kind of survey”. From a similar perspective, TM suggests “interviewing or perhaps observing or running questionnaires”. Possible participants for such studies are identified in TK’s suggestion to "ask students what their opinions are". In agreement, TI thinks that "interviewing students would help...students who have been through these sort of books and courses". Likewise, teachers would need including also along with other stakeholders as suggested by some of the EEEFLTs. Adopting such a broad approach both represents and restates the argument underpinning this section and the EEEFLTs' suggestions corroborate the view that the problem needs to be approached from a broader perspective and use a variety of approaches to collect comprehensive needs-driven data to inform syllabi decisions.

Although discussed from a general perspective, the solutions above also serve as solutions to specific syllabi problems related to the six individual areas discussed above. This is because giving teachers a voice and involving them more in syllabi decisions is a general solution that—as a result of its numerous benefits—also helps alleviate problems related to each specific T. Likewise, actively trying, in addition to adopting different ways, to gather information to be used to help cater for students’ needs reflects a broad empathetic approach to syllabi that—if adopted as a principle—could help alleviate problems related to each specific area also.

Having discussed these solutions from a general perspective, all that remains is to discuss the specific solutions the EEEFLTs suggest to help alleviate each individual T of the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered. Before beginning this discussion, it needs mentioning that an obvious solution would be to simply avoid the problems
and consequences the EEEFLTs identified—related to each individual area—and design syllabi in a way that does so. For example, when discussing time-driven syllabi, many of the teachers complained about not having enough time to complete the syllabus. In doing so, they are also suggesting a solution to the problem in that they must be given more time to finish the syllabus or there should be less syllabus content.

4.4.2 Solutions to each individual T.

4.4.2.1 Teacher-centred.

Many of the EEEFLTs expressed their disapproval of the teacher-centredness of the syllabi they have encountered in KSA ELCs. One such teacher, TL, believes that KSA ELC syllabi “shouldn’t be teacher centred, they should be student centred”. Another is TH who believes there should be a move away from the predominant teacher-centred syllabus delivery mode to more of a focus on “the learning of English through other means through other non-traditional methods”. As previously mentioned, KSA ELC syllabi encourage a traditional, teacher-centred approach to syllabus delivery that promote an over reliance on the teacher and thus, as TN explains, “do not promote any kind of autonomous learning”. In order to alleviate this problem, TL believes that the syllabi should encourage “autonomous learning for the student”. In reiterating these sentiments, TG believes that the syllabus should be designed to engender autonomy in the students wherein the teachers “take more of a back seat”. Despite agreeing with this idea, TF is cautious and believes this process should be a gradual one: “It needs to be done gradually...bringing them slowly out of this reliance upon the teacher”. This caution is understandable in light of how widespread and engrained the problem is in KSA ELCs. One way to achieve this is by gradually introducing syllabi that “encourage the students to do work not
only in the classroom but outside the classroom as well’ (TC). These sentiments resonate with TH's belief that the syllabi should be designed to “develop pro-active learners of English”. TF believes the way to achieve this is to introduce syllabi that “encourage reading for pleasure, listening for pleasure, watching English things for pleasure...”. Likewise, in an attempt to wean the students off the teacher, TG believes that “there should be more of a push towards Jane Willis’s task-based learning”. These sentiments are reiterated in TN's comments that the students need more “project based learning”. As both focus on learning, they resonate with TF’s suggestion that "we should be focusing more on learning".

4.4.2.2 Textbook-centred.

Although mentioned previously, it is necessary to restate the decision to use the terms textbook and syllabus (along with their plural forms) synonymously in view of the EEEFLTs stating that the textbook—or its contents pages—is the syllabus in the KSA ELCs discussed previously in this study. This phenomenon has become so widespread and engrained in KSA ELC culture that some of the EEEFLTs seem to have taken it as inevitable and unchangeable and thus limited their suggestions to improving the problem but not suggesting ways how to remove it. This has resulted in them limiting their suggestions to the confinements of the textbook. Thus, the suggested syllabi are still textbook-centred albeit more student-friendly. In addition, they reduce the moral dilemma the EEEFLTs experience when having to teach these textbooks knowing they are not what the students need. One such teacher who, in an attempt to arrive at a more student-friendly syllabus, limits his suggestions to the textbook, is TC who believes the ELCs need to be “more careful in the books that they choose and considering the students…making sure that the books they choose to teach from suit the students”. Likewise, TM urges those responsible for such
decisions to choose “a textbook that will suit the needs of the learners more”. In contrast and reiterating many of the EEEFLTs’ sentiments in attempting to solve this problem, TD believes that choosing the syllabus should not be restricted to choosing a book as the syllabus: “it shouldn’t be: we’re choosing a book and the book is the syllabus”. His comments suggest that more thought needs to be given to the issue and that the over-reliance on textbooks as syllabi needs to be avoided.

Choosing a textbook that suits the learners’ needs not only requires suiting their pedagogic but also their cultural needs also by not exposing them to culturally insensitive material. These sentiments are reflected in TK’s advice that when choosing a textbook, “a lot of thought has to be given to the cultural backgrounds of the students”. Regarding this, TI believes that textbooks should be chosen that are “culturally sensitive and include themes that they have here in KSA, going to the desert, for example, or something happened inside a mosque”. This is in response to contrasting scenarios and situations that the students cannot use outside the classroom such as “parties, boyfriend/girlfriend, free mixing, cinemas...” (TM). In addition, this would help alleviate another problem where the EEEFLTs are compelled to teach the textbook even though they know it is culturally insensitive and inappropriate. In describing this dilemma, TN explains how “as soon as you open it, there’s some insensitive picture... and we have to teach it because it’s part of the syllabus”. Likewise, TJ explains how the textbook he teaches from contains culturally insensitive material: “stuff like Valentine’s Day, birthday celebrations. It’s completely inappropriate here in this context but you were forced to teach that to the students”.

A common consequence of textbook-centred syllabi is syllabus overload. Many of the teachers’ suggestions call for a reduction in the amount needed to be covered in
order to solve this problem. One such teacher is TI who reinforces the need to make sure that “the syllabus is not so packed out that it’s just a race against finishing or reaching a certain point in the book”. On a similar note, TN believes that “Maybe half the book could be taught”. Likewise, TL suggests “reducing the number of units would be beneficial to us and to the students...that’s the best thing to do”. He believes that doing so will help both the students and teachers and give them “a little more time and freedom”.

4.4.2.3 Test-centred.

In reflecting the EEEFLTs’ general sentiments whilst offering a solution to alleviate test-centred syllabi, TG believes KSA ELC syllabi should “step away from a heavy focus on summative testing”. This would help alleviate the problem wherein teachers feel compelled to teach to the test. TH believes there is a need to move away from teaching to the test that requires teachers to "follow the book page by page and allow them [the students] to memorise and do all the other things that aren’t considered to be the best practice in classrooms nowadays". As discussed previously, ELC tests are often limited to testing how much of the textbook can be recalled. Thus, TG’s suggestion resonates with TH’s that in order to solve the problem, the ELCs must “remove an over-focus on testing from the book”. TH suggests a way to do this is by focusing more on formative testing and task-based learning with formative assessments and less teaching to and learning for the test and more teaching and learning from a “non-formalised, non-stressed angle”. On a similar note, TI believes the way forward is to adopt a more formative approach to assessment that is conducted in a less-formal way through the use of tasks and activities. Whatever the solution, these comments, as well as the other EEEFLTs’ comments, discourage an overemphasis on summative testing and suggest a more
holistic approach to assessment. One teacher, TC, whose sentiments echo such ideas, believes that—instead of the constant stress that summative tests cause—there should be “more focus on fun and games...[and] time to play games, different types of games”. In support, albeit from a different perspective, TG thinks that in order to counteract this test-driven approach, there must be “syllabi that reflect task-based learning, communicative approaches and enforce the high productive levels in classes”.

4.4.2.4 Top-down.

In an attempt to alleviate the problems the EEEFLTs have encountered due to top-down KSA ELC syllabi, many of the teachers suggest adopting a more bottom-up approach where information gathered through needs analyses is used to design syllabi tailored to students’ needs. In their effort to reach the widest audience, EFL textbooks used in KSA ELCs are often of the one-size-fits-all type discussed earlier in this study. As a result, they are often found to be unsuitable both pedagogically and culturally, just as the EEEFLTs found them to be in this study. TE believes the problems he has witnessed could be solved somewhat if the ELCs were to “produce in-house materials”. In explaining how he thinks the teachers should go about such a task, he explains that “the teachers need to design it...collaborate with the other teachers and utilise their knowledge...from that write a book. Then, do a pilot...then run with this book and have a trial period”. In their entirety, his comments emphasise the need for KSA ELC syllabi to be built on information gleaned from needs analyses. In addition, they reiterate a preference for in-house syllabi as opposed to ready-made one-size-fits-all EFL textbooks. They also reiterate previous EEEFLTs’ comments to approach the problem from a wider perspective in that needs analysis should be used to gather a broad spectrum of information to use to tailor-make
syllabi to the students’ needs. Similar sentiments are echoed in TF’s comments that “if it’s to be done properly, it needs to be a needs analysis in terms of future employers, future teachers from the main campus, the teachers in the college…the stakeholders and get the teachers then to write a book”. Similar ideas are suggested by TD who thinks there is a need to “find out what is the level of English required in the faculties where they’re going to study. So if you’re going to go to medicine or engineering or humanities or law, what level of English is required in those colleges and then work out, work on a syllabus”. Likewise, TM suggests that, after all the necessary information has been collected from the stakeholders, the syllabus designers need to “go back and design a syllabus based around what they’ve said. Run it. Pilot it”. The term stakeholders here includes both students and teachers as well as other invested parties. In order for this to be effective, TF suggests that it needs to be “a continuous process that begins before the course starts and continues throughout”. Likewise, in order for this process to be successful, communication between teachers and management needs to be improved. These sentiments are evident in TC’s comments that “there needs to be a better relationship between management and the teachers”. Managers need to listen to the teachers—especially the EEEFLTs—as they have a wealth of useful knowledge and experience.

4.4.2.5 Teacher-proof.

After both acknowledging and condemning the prevalence of teacher-proof syllabi in KSA ELCs, TN suggests “there should be more freedom...more left to us, more freedom for us”. Likewise, TB believes that teachers “should be given more freedom to make decisions”. This freedom to make decisions is especially important concerning what to teach from the syllabus and how. TA believes that teachers
should be allowed more “freedom in changing the syllabus”. In explaining this in more detail, TF believes that he should be given more freedom to do things in the order he wishes and “add extra things if need be or perhaps modify things into a different format...change the order maybe”. Many of the EEEFLTs complained about having their movements restricted by the teacher-proof syllabi they have encountered to the extent that they have not been able to modify or adapt the textbooks. TM was one such teacher who in response to this problem believes that “there needs to be some leeway. There needs to be room for movement and not so much restriction”. TC believes that the syllabi should be flexible enough so that if needed, they can be adjusted and adapted: “these syllabi are set up to benefit these students. When you find that they’re not doing what they’re supposed to do, then naturally that tells you that they should be adjusted and that’s not what is done”. On a similar note, TL explains how in order to improve the situation there needs to be a move away from what he has experienced where “the syllabus is the Holy Grail and that’s something we need to move away from. The syllabus...it’s something which is prone to change. It’s not divine. It’s manmade and it can be altered and tweaked and it should be altered and it should be tweaked”. Teacher-proof syllabi restrict the teacher’s movement so much so that they can deny the teacher the right to teach. They do so because they relegate the teacher to a secondary support role wherein "The coursebook is the teacher" (TF). In order to resolve this problem, the ELCs must “give some rights back to the teachers” (TB). By returning to them their right to be in control of the syllabus, they allow them to adapt and modify the syllabus in ways they see befitting and allow them to be what they are: teachers.
4.4.2.6 **Time-driven.**

From the students’ perspective, TJ believes that there is a need to “give the students more time to complete the syllabus”. To accomplish this at the ELC where he currently works, he believes that they should “add one semester”. In explaining his reasoning behind this suggestion, he explains how “if you cover the same amount, the same syllabus in three semesters instead of two, I think you’d have more time to focus on your students more, give them more individual attention and make it more communicative because now it’s just basically grammar-translation”. On a similar note, TI believes the students need more time to absorb what they are being taught and this would also allow the teachers “to see whether they’ve actually grasped what we’re teaching them”. In addition, it would lessen the pressure on the teachers if they were to follow TJ’s advice to give them “more time to teach the syllabus”. This would free up important time that could be utilised in ways the teachers saw best. From the teachers’ perspective also, TC believes there should be “more time given to the teachers to do extra activities in the classroom...to play games for example”. From a textbook perspective, TN believes that “the whole book it doesn’t have to be taught in a semester”. Doing less of the textbook would allow more time for these activities and alleviate the problem TF has experienced were "there’s no time really to do anything other than the book". In general, TF believes that “there has to be some sort of a confidence or strength to actually say that this is going to take a lot longer than is anticipated”. Overall, the teachers’ general sentiments how to solve this problem are echoed in TN’s comments that “We have to slow down”. Similar sentiments are echoed in TF’s realisation that "the students actually need a lot more time. If they need that more time, they’re not given that time...there’s a big drive to get things done very quickly".
4.5 Locating Problematic KSA EFL syllabi in the KSA Literature.

The EEEFLTs’ accounts above highlight the dominance and prevalence of problematic Type-T syllabi in KSA ELCs. These findings resonate with observations made by other teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) academics in KSA. In doing so, they also help locate and ground this study’s findings in the KSA TEFL body of knowledge albeit from an EFL syllabus—not TPW—perspective as phronesis has yet to penetrate TEFL in KSA.

In reflecting similar sentiments as to those expressed by the EEEFLTs above when describing the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered as being teacher-centred, Ahmed (2012, p.223) claims that KSA EFL syllabi promote “whole language group lecturing”. This kind of delivery encourages an over-reliance on the teacher. Thus, the EEEFLTs are not alone in identifying this dilemma. Others have noticed this problem also such as Alseghayer (2011, p.57) who believes that EFL syllabus delivery in KSA “is based on a teacher-centered transmission model”. Likewise, Storch and Aldosari (2010, p.359) describe KSA EFL syllabi as being “very much teacher-fronted”. Also, in a study conducted by Almurabit (2012, p.237) at the ELC where he works, he found the syllabus to be “mainly teacher-centered whereas the teacher represents the main source of knowledge and authority in the classroom with passive learning taking place among students”.

As witnessed above in this chapter, the EEEFLTs described the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered as being test-centred. On a similar note, Almaini (2011, p.478) describes KSA EFL syllabi as being “driven by an assessment system”. In highlighting the extent of this, Almurabit (2012, p.238) discovered at the KSA ELC where he works that “No other independent or standardized form of evaluation,
besides the internal tests which are heavily reliant on textbooks, is used to determine the actual proficiency level of students”. In addition, Almurabit’s comments highlight the major role textbooks play in such a test-centred syllabus that are heavily reliant on textbooks and thus textbook-centred also.

Regarding the textbook-centredness of KSA EFL syllabi, Storch and Aldosari (2010, p.359) describe them as having “a heavy reliance on the use of a set textbook”. Similar sentiments are echoed in Ghsoon’s (2013, p.222) claim that KSA EFL syllabi overemphasise “covering the textbook materials according to the prescribed pacing schedule”. These comments are supported by Bacha, Ghosn and McBeath (2008, p.291) who argue that KSA EFL teachers are often forced to be “very much textbook bound and try to finish the whole book with students”. Similar sentiments were made by one of the EFL teachers who participated in Mullick’s (2013, p.44) study and complained about the textbook-centredness of the syllabus where he works when commenting how “the publishers own it [the syllabus], they put together a book and it’s taken on wholesale…”.

Top-down syllabi are described as top-down because—unlike bottom-up (teacher-driven) syllabi—teachers are not involved in their design or planning. In addition, top-down syllabi are described as top-down because they are not bottom-up student-driven syllabi in that they are not based upon needs analyses and thus not tailored to the needs of the students. In highlighting the presence of the former in the KSA ELC where he works and conducted his study, one of the participants in Mullick’s (2013, p.43) study explains how “We have a top down structure...we are told what to do without any explanation even when we know that there are better avenues to take and we raise this with proof, we are told no...”. On a similar note, another of the
study’s participants explains how “the teachers just teach what they are forced to teach” (p.45). In highlighting the presence of the second characteristic of top-down syllabi, in his current KSA ELC, Almurabit (2012, p.233) explains how no needs analysis was conducted “prior, during or after their [the students’] courses of study”. On a similar albeit more general note, Alseghayer (2011, p.46) concludes that “the objectives of EFL curriculum do not seem to be derived from a needs analysis of the Saudi EFL situation or context”. In addressing this issue, Syed (2003, p.339) explains how “A priority is to develop socioculturally appropriate materials and pedagogy designed for the specific needs of students in this region”.

Regarding teacher-proof EFL syllabi in KSA, Ghsoon (2013, p.222) has come to the conclusion that an EFLT’s main job in KSA is to “simply deliver prescribed materials”. Mullick (2013, p.47) draws similar conclusions and thus concludes that the five teachers in his KSA study considered themselves as “passive bystanders who simply did what they were told”. In an attempt to counteract this widespread problem, Alseghayer (2011, p.54) suggests that EFL teachers “should be given the freedom to navigate within the established curriculum’s standards by designing their activities and materials according to their students’ needs, interests, capabilities and knowledge”. In support, Almaini (2011) and Alma’shy (2011) express similar sentiments.

Regarding time-driven EFL syllabi in KSA, Alseghayer (2011, p.58) highlights the extent that KSA EFL syllabi are driven and shaped by time when he explains how EFL teachers in KSA “face pressure to cover the materials prescribed in voluminous textbooks and packed curricula within a limited period of time. As such, keeping pace with the tight curriculum schedule is the priority in the EFL classroom”. Similar
sentiments are echoed by Ghsoon (2013) who complains how EFL teachers in KSA are not given enough time to teach the materials they are given and have to strictly adhere to a pacing schedule. Alseghayer (2005) expresses similar sentiments.

Although the KSA-related literature above is not extensive, in view of the limited research that has been conducted in KSA on EFL syllabi and the infancy of research conducted and reported in English, it represents quite a substantial discussion and presence and all the more reason why solutions need to be found to the problems discussed in this study and alternative ways to approach EFL in KSA especially EFL syllabi delivery and design.

4.6 Conclusion
In typical IPER fashion, this chapter has reported the practical and moral dilemmas and struggles that the EEEFLTs have encountered during their time teaching EFL syllabi in KSA ELCs. Although in doing so, it has highlighted the many problems the EEEFLTs have encountered, it has also highlighted their ability to use their TPW as a lens through which to Problematise such syllabi and in doing so provide solutions to the problems they identified as well as highlighting the moral and practical TPW lens through which the teachers view such syllabi. This lens shall be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the findings presented in the previous chapter. The results in chapter 4 highlighted the syllabus-related problems that the participants identified, the consequences of these problems and their suggested solutions to these
problems. The primary research question posed in this study enquires how the EEEFLTs use their TPW to Problematise KSA ELC syllabi. In answering this question, the results in Chapter 4 appear to have revealed how TPW is the lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematise the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered and also the lens through which they view such syllabi. This chapter seeks to explore this lens in more detail by discussion of the insights into the participants’ TPW the results provide and the ways in which they confirm and/or extend the conceptualisation of TPW introduced in this study’s Literature Review, which will be cross-referenced or further elaborated on as needed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of the study.

5.2 What Chapter 4 Reveals about the EEEFLTs’ TPW

As will be discussed below, the results presented in chapter 4 appear to confirm that TPW is the lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematise—as well as view—the KSA ELC syllabi they have experienced. They also highlight a number of qualities of the TPW they hold. Some of these qualities can be seen to echo and provide empirical evidence of those qualities of TPW highlighted in the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2 but the study has also revealed a number of additional qualities of TPW as will be discussed.

5.2.1 TPW as the lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematise the KSA ELC syllabi.

The EEEFLTs’ comments reported in Chapter 4 are relevant to practice and made in a language other teachers can relate to and understand because they are bottom-up (teacher-driven) comments located in practice. During the interviews, the EEEFLTs relied on this knowledge—their own personal knowledge—that they have acquired in
and through practice as reflected in the comments they make in chapter 4 without exception. Through a phronetic social science lens, such knowledge—as phronesis—is considered practical and represents their value-laden and driven views as to what is ethical—or to use a classic phronetic social science term, moral—in such a situation. This is also reflected in the six Type-T syllabi themes that emerged from the analysis as each T is articulated with reference to a moral and practical lens: the problems and consequences related to each T—in accordance with phronetic social science terminology—are considered immoral, bad practice and impractical and the solutions related to each T are seen as moral, practical and good practice. The EEEFLTs’ comments made in the interviews are practical because, through a phronetic lens, the syllabi problems they identify and attempt to solve are practical problems that need practical solutions. In addition, the EEEFLTs are practitioners not theorists or researchers. Their comments are made in an attempt to help identify and solve the KSA ELC syllabi problems the EEEFLTs have encountered, which in and of itself is construed as a moral endeavour.

The EEEFLTs’ comments are contextualised as they are made in regards to the KSA ELC context in which the EEEFLTs teach and in relation to something concrete that they teach, syllabi. Likewise, the EEEFLTs’ comments are deliberative in that they are made as a result of them deliberating over the problems—and the consequences of the problems—the KSA ELC syllabi problems they have identified in an attempt to arrive at morally defensible solutions (previously discussed in 2.4.2). The EEEFLTs are not laymen. They make these comments based on their experience and their understanding of the context in which the problems occur as they all have a minimum of 5 years EFL teaching experience in KSA. Thus, they have had sufficient enough time to acquire TPW.
In its entirety, the discussion above indicates that the EEEFLTs use their TPW to Problematise the syllabi discussed in Chapter 4. Their comments have all the characteristics and features of TPW as bottom-up (teacher-driven), practical and moral knowledge of concrete particulars that is acquired in context through experience in practice (Kinsella and Pitman, 2012). Thus, Chapter 4 in its entirety appears to highlight how the lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematise the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered is a TPW lens especially considering how it seems to have many of the qualities that have already been discussed in this study’s Literature Review.

5.2.2 TPW as the lens through which the EEEFLTs view the KSA ELC syllabi.

It follows from the points above that the EEEFLTs Problematise the syllabi through a TPW lens because their Problematisation is driven by their TPW. In this sense, Problematisation is seen as a lens within a lens: the bigger lens being TPW. As a result, when they are Problematising, their TPW can be captured because it is TPW that is driving their Problematisation. Thus, through this process of Problematisation, I was able to access the teachers’ TPW. Arguably, their TPW lens is the lens that they not only view KSA ELC syllabi through but education in its entirety. Support for this claim is gleaned from Dunne (2011) who believes that teachers view education through a phronetic—not theoretical lens.

Use of this TPW lens is not limited to one stage of the Problematisation process. It is used for all stages. Hence, it is the lens through which they reflect, problematise, deliberate and articulate. As a result, it is the lens through which they identify the KSA ELC problems along with their consequences and the solutions to help address
them both and the lens through which they articulate this during their interviews. Likewise, it is the lens through which they view each T of Type-T syllabi: in phronetic social science terms, they identify what they see as immoral/unethical—the problems and their consequences—and then follow this by suggesting what they see as morally defensible solutions to solve both.

5.2.3 The qualities of the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens.

The results of my analysis presented in Chapter 4 above highlight a number of qualities of the TPW that the participants hold; namely, that TPW is:

1. a practical lens driven by practical knowledge,
2. a moral lens driven by moral knowledge,
3. a valid and valuable lens driven by valid and valuable knowledge, TPW,
4. a bottom-up (teacher-driven) contextualised lens,
5. a deliberative lens gained through experience that reflects concrete knowledge of particulars,
6. the EEEFLTs’ own personal lens driven by their own personal knowledge, TPW,
7. an easily articulated lens driven by easily articulated knowledge not confined to the classroom,
8. a disempowered lens,
9. a problem-driven and problem-solving lens generated through Problematisation,
10. a lens the EEEFLTs use to deconstruct power,
11. an empowering lens,
12. an idiosyncratic shared lens acquired in a negative shared context.

These 12 qualities together constitute the TPW lens through which the EEEFLTs both Problematise and view the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered. In what follows I will consider each of these in turn. As the data reported in Chapter 4 are considered TPW, they contain and encompass all of TPW’s qualities. Although TPW
has such qualities, it is not compartmentalised knowledge in the sense that it can be considered practical but not moral or easily articulated but not gained through experience and so on. The first eight qualities revealed by my analysis, mirror and reaffirm qualities that have already been discussed in abstract form—mainly but not exclusively—in section 2.4 of Chapter 2 adding concrete empirical examples of these qualities of TPW. The remaining qualities, (9-12 above) highlight new qualities of TPW that this study has unveiled.

5.2.3.1 A practical lens driven by practical knowledge.

As section 2.4.1 has previously shown, TPW is considered practical knowledge. The interview findings, reported in Chapter 4, provided numerous examples of how the EEEFLTs use this practical knowledge to suggest practical action that needs to be taken in order to resolve the problems they identified in the syllabi and their consequences. In highlighting the link between TPW and action, Kemmis and Smith (2008, p.15) describe TPW as “the moral disposition to act wisely”. Extracts shown in Chapter 4 contain many examples of the EEEFLTs’ Problematising of KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered through a practical lens and the ways they identify them as impractical and bad practice. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all of these, it is important to discuss at least one example—that of overloaded syllabi—in order to explain this point and, through explaining it, convey the overall gist that drives all the examples where the EEEFLTs Problematised the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered through a practical lens and the ways they identify them as impractical and bad practice.

The EEEFLTs appear compelled to teach overloaded syllabi, which they consider impractical and an example of bad practice due to the sheer amount of material that
must be covered in the short timescale available. More importantly for this section, this example highlights how—when Problematising the syllabi they have encountered—the EEEFLTs approached this task through a practical lens that filters out the impractical identifying it as problematic and bad practice. This suggests that their TPW acts as a practical lens that identifies syllabi as both impractical and as bad practice.

As Gholami (2009, p.37) explains, when viewed through a phronetic lens, “Education is not a theoretical activity, but a practical one”. Extending this claim to teaching sees teaching as a practical activity also (Carr, 1986). Extending this claim further to include teachers and their knowledge sees teachers as practitioners and the knowledge they possess as practical knowledge, TPW. TPW is practical knowledge because it is a form of phronesis and as Schram and Caterino (2006) explain, phronesis is practical knowledge. When this knowledge is viewed as the lens through which teachers view education, such a lens becomes a practical lens. Thus, the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens is considered a practical lens driven by practical knowledge. Through this practical lens, education problems are considered practical, not theoretical, problems (Sanders and McCutcheon, 1986). Educational problems include curriculum problems which, as Reid (1978) explains, are best understood as practical problems or, as Eisner (1981, p.189) suggests, “problems having to do mainly with ways to act rather than with ways to know”. Since syllabi are part of the curriculum and subsumed by it (Troudi and Alwan, 2010), then syllabus problems are considered practical problems also.
5.2.3.2 A moral lens driven by moral knowledge.

As discussed previously in section 2.4.2, TPW is considered moral knowledge. As the results in chapter 4 appear to show, the EEEFLTs have acquired TPW through years of teaching EFL in KSA ELCs witnessing what they consider to be the injustice of Type-T syllabi and not having a platform to share their anxieties. In this sense, the results reported in Chapter 4 suggest that the EEEFLTs’ TPW acts a moral lens through which they can express their moral concerns and discord. The results in Chapter 4 appear to reflect the moral crises that the EEEFLTs have experienced as a result of Type-T syllabi and the way the EEEFLTs express these crises through their TPW that results in the morally-loaded and driven language evident throughout Chapter 4. Likewise, the language the EEEFLTs use in Chapter 4 reflects the discomfort and frustration the EEEFLTs feel from not being able to teach in a way they see best and the consequences of this. The language they use epitomises the moral struggle they endure so much so that all the EEEFLTs use emotional language to express the discomfort they feel with some likening it to feeling like a robot (TG, TM), a postman (TM) and having their hands tied and bound (TK, TH) unable to do anything about the situation they find themselves in.

In explaining this moral lens, Abdelhafez (2010, p.242) explains how, when viewed through a phronetic lens, “education is at heart a moral practice”. Extending this claim to teaching sees teaching as a moral practice also (Stengel, 2012). Extending this claim further to include teachers and their knowledge sees teachers as moral practitioners and the knowledge they possess as moral knowledge, TPW. TPW is considered moral knowledge because it is a form of phronesis and as Küpers and Pauleen (2013) explain, phronesis is moral knowledge. When this knowledge, TPW, is viewed as the lens through which teachers view education, such a lens becomes a
moral lens. Thus, the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens appears to be a moral lens driven by
moral knowledge. In addition, the results in the previous chapter suggest that the
lens, through which the EEEFLTs reflect, is perhaps a moral lens also.

The TPW lens that the EEEFLTs have used to reflect on their practice appears to be
somewhat of a negative lens as the data reported in Chapter 4 highlight how the
participants mainly reported what they consider to be bad practice. In doing so and
perhaps in view of the negative context from which the data have been drawn, the
data collected from the participants, on the whole, have been very critical of EFL in
KSA ELCs. Such comments suggest that the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens, which they use to
reflect on their practice, is thus value-laden not value-free and this lends support to
the claim that the EEEFLTs’ lens is a moral lens and that reflecting on practice is a
moral practice that is value laden not morally neutral. In support, rather than seeing
reflection as morally neutral as Korthagen (1985) and Taggart and Wilson (1998) do,
this conclusion—drawn from the data—echoes the views of Birmingham (2004) and
Larrivee (2000) who view reflective practice as being value-laden and a moral
practice. These sentiments are also echoed in Larrivee’s (2000, p.295) comments on
how reflective practice involves “the conscious consideration of the moral and ethical
implications and consequences of classroom practices on students”. Taking these
comments into consideration, it becomes understandable how and why the
EEEFLTs have approached their reflection through such a lens and thus arrived at
the conclusions they have. As reflection is one of the four stages of
Problematisation, if the reflective lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematise the
KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered, is confirmed or considered as a moral lens,
it has implications for the other three stages (problematisation, deliberation, and
articulation). It does so because this claim could be used to support a claim that all
four stages of the Problematisation process are conducted through a moral lens thus strengthening the claim made in this study that the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens is a moral lens.

Those who believe that reflective practice is a moral practice believe it to be driven by the belief system that the person reflecting on his or her practice holds. In doing so, they also acknowledge that any such conclusions that arise as a result of reflective practice are socially constructed and that different people may arrive at different conclusions when reflecting on the same context and practice for example, what a teacher deems to be best practice in a given context may not necessarily be shared by other teachers—and perhaps students to that extent—within that same context. Interpretive research—phronetic social science included—celebrates and embraces this diversity as they acknowledge that there is not only one reality but many (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). That phronetic social science embraces such diversity is evident in Flyvbjerg’s (2001, p.139) comments that “Phronetic research is dialogical in the sense that it includes, and, if successful, is itself included in, a polyphony of voices”.

5.2.3.3 A valid and valuable lens driven by valid and valuable knowledge, TPW.

In 2.4.8, TPW was described as a valid and valuable form of knowledge. As the EEEFLTs’ lens is driven by such knowledge, their lens is likewise a valid and valuable lens driven by valid and valuable knowledge. The results show just how valid and valuable this knowledge is because this situation calls for contextualised knowledge of particulars—TPW—knowledge that is bottom-up (teacher-driven). If the previous chapter raised any doubts as to the validity of the EEEFLTs’ knowledge,
below is an example of how valid and valuable the EEEFLTs’ knowledge is evident in the following summary of the solutions they suggest to help alleviate the KSA ELC syllabi problems they have encountered:

The EEEFLTs suggest the teacher-centred syllabi need to be made more student and learning-centred and include more varied and interesting ways to learn and deliver syllabi than teacher-centred approaches. Instead of being driven by tests and having them as a focal point, test-centred syllabi need to adopt different forms of assessment. These forms of assessment should be designed to evaluate students more holistically as opposed to how much they can regurgitate from a textbook. This would also help counteract the focus on teaching to the test as a result of these test-driven syllabi. Textbook-centred syllabi need to adopt more in-house approaches where syllabi are driven by thorough needs analyses. In addition, if textbooks are a must, the teachers need to be involved in choosing—and, if possible, adapting—suitable textbooks. Recruitment policies may need to be changed in order to recruit teachers capable of such tasks. Top-down syllabi need to be more bottom-up where teachers are given more syllabus decision-making rights and communication—especially regarding syllabi decisions—must be a two-way not one-way process (from management to teachers). Teacher-proof syllabi need to be made more teacher-friendly and flexible and allow teachers the freedom to adapt or revise the syllabus when needed and allow them to use their teaching skills unlike the situation described by the EEEFLTs in this study. Time-driven syllabi need to be driven by students’ needs as opposed to temporal deadlines in the form of summative tests. More time needs to be timetabled in to subsequent syllabus schedules to allow teachers to address the students’ needs that arise when delivering the syllabus. The 14 participants’ comments suggest that implementing these recommendations would
free the teachers from the moral dilemma of teaching the syllabi despite them knowing they do not cater for the needs of the students.

Chapter 4 and the discussion in the paragraph above reveal what kind of syllabi KSA ELC syllabi are and their inherent problems and issues. Likewise, they highlight the solutions the EEEFLTs suggest to help alleviate these problems. This is all useful information that can be used when designing KSA ELC syllabi to help avoid the pitfalls this study has uncovered. This information can be used to help design phronesis-friendly KSA ELC syllabi that are better than the ones the EEEFLTs have experienced and more in line with the phronesis-friendly KSA EFL syllabus definition I shall outline in the final chapter.

5.2.3.4 A bottom-up (teacher-driven) contextualised lens.

Previously in 2.4.4, TPW has been described as bottom-up (teacher-driven) context-dependent knowledge. As TPW is acquired and situated in practice, it is considered contextualised knowledge. Hence, the results reported in the previous chapter are examples of contextualised not decontextualised knowledge. TPW is knowledge of particulars in that it is knowledge of a particular context. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the EEEFLTs have all worked for a minimum of five years teaching EFL in KSA ELCs. Hence, they have acquired their TPW in the context in which this study takes place. Therefore their TPW is context-rich bottom-up (teacher-driven) knowledge.

This context-rich bottom-up (teacher-driven) knowledge is unique knowledge that provides and endows the EEEFLTs with a unique insight. The results reflect how unique and rich of an insight each individual EEEFLT has as someone on the “frontline” teaching KSA ELC syllabi and getting to know the syllabi’s strengths and
weaknesses. In essence, they are the most informed about these matters and thus possess a wealth of knowledge on this matter. No one except a teacher teaching the syllabus has the same privileged bottom-up perspective. No one is as privileged as they are in regards to the in-depth understanding of the context in which this study takes place and the in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the syllabi because they are the ones who witness the syllabi in action. As Chapter 4 has shown, the EEEFLTs’ insight is so unique—gained through many years of experience teaching problematic KSA ELC syllabi—that it can be used not only to identify problems but also to find solutions to them. In suggesting solutions, they draw on their TPW that they have acquired through years of teaching experience in the context in which the problems occur. This discussion shows how unique of an insight the EEEFLTs’ insight is and how it represents a bottom-up (teacher-driven) context-driven lens.

Through this bottom-up context driven lens through which the EEEFLTs view the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered, their comments made in Chapter 4 suggest that the weaknesses of the syllabi they have encountered outweigh the strengths. Even though the EEEFLTs could have mentioned the strengths of the syllabi, they very rarely did. They could have simply said that they had not encountered any problems. They did not. On the contrary, their interviews were filled with their personal accounts of the multitude of problems they have encountered. This appears to suggest KSA ELC syllabi are in a dire state and highlight the debilitating consequences of a top-down syllabus regime and likewise reflect the sentiments of KSA academics such as Alfahadi (2012); Alma’shy (2011); and Alseghayer (2012).
This bottom-up teacher-driven lens is further unique as it is a student-driven lens also—as the data reported in Chapter 4 show—because the EEEFLTs’ comments highlight how they have their students’ best interests at heart and become upset that the Type-T syllabi they are compelled to teach do not cater for their students’ needs. This theme is also evident in the solutions they suggest to help alleviate top-down Type-T syllabi.

5.2.3.5 A deliberative lens gained through experience that reflects concrete knowledge of particulars.

In this study’s Literature Review (see 2.4.3, 2.4.6), TPW has been described as deliberative knowledge gained through experience that reflects concrete knowledge of particulars. The data reported in Chapter 4 appear to confirm this because the data have been supplied by experienced participants who have acquired their TPW lens through years of experience having to deal with Type-T syllabi in KSA ELCs. Furthermore, in light of this, their lens is not an abstract one. On the contrary, it is concrete and describes concrete situations in KSA ELCs that the participants have experienced and lived. In view of this, it is also knowledge of particulars in the sense that it is knowledge of particular specific situations through which the participants have acquired their TPW as they Problematise the syllabi they have encountered and thus deliberate over them (as deliberation is an integral stage of the Problematisation process). The data in Chapter 4 highlight how the EEEFLTs used their TPW as a lens through which to deliberate over the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered and in doing so identified problems therein as well as solutions to solve such problems. As well as confirming these qualities, the data furnish them further because they give them a real-life concrete context to exist in and show exactly what such concrete knowledge is, what the particulars of the context are and how such an
account would not be possible unless the participants views were underpinned and driven by many years of experience.

5.2.3.6 The EEEFLTs’ own personal lens driven by their own personal knowledge, TPW.

Previously in 2.4.5, TPW has been described as a teacher’s own personal stand-alone knowledge that does not necessarily refer to or rely on TK. Likewise, the data reported in Chapter 4 have the same qualities and can thus be described in the same manner as shall be shown below.

During the interviews conducted, only on extremely rare occasions did any of the teachers refer to applied linguistics or second language acquisition theories and instead predominantly relied on their own knowledge, TPW, acquired and accumulated through years of experience teaching. This suggests that the TPW is the EEEFLTs’ own personal stand-alone knowledge. It belongs to and is constructed by them. It is stand-alone knowledge because it is knowledge in and of itself that does not necessarily rely on other forms of knowledge such as theoretical (or technical) knowledge as Thomas (2010, p.578) explains when he describes phronesis as “judgment made on the basis of experience and without recourse to the external guide that theory putatively provides”. Through an IPER lens, which is also a phronetic social science lens, the data and knowledge the EEEFLTs generate is considered TPW not theory. It is practical knowledge situated in practice. The EEEFLTs are at the centre of this knowledge generation process generating knowledge that it both relevant to practice and accessible and relevant and applicable to the encounters teachers experience in their classrooms and practice beyond the classroom. Ascribing the role of knowledge generators to the EEEFLTs
is a much more empowering role than that of passive consumers of other people’s knowledge and theories. From such a perspective, the EEEFLTs are more than passive consumers of other people’s knowledge. They are constructors of knowledge in their own right. This study is support for this claim also because for the purpose and duration of this study, the EEEFLTs are not passive consumers of other people’s knowledge. They are participating and collaborating with me to construct knowledge. Thus, in Eisner’s (2002, p.381) words, they are “collaborators in knowledge construction”. Without their invaluable knowledge and participation, this study could not take place.

5.2.3.7 An easily-articulated lens driven by easily-articulated knowledge that is not confined to the classroom.

As discussed previously in section 2.4.7, TPW is not knowledge that is difficult or impossible to articulate. Likewise, as discussed in 2.8.4.2, TPW’s use is not confined to the classroom. The data reported in the previous chapter highlights how the use of the EEEFLTs’ TPW is not confined to the classroom because the EEEFLTs used their TPW outside the classroom as the interviews they participated in were not conducted in the classroom. Likewise, it is evidence that the EEEFLTs’ TPW is easily articulated because the EEEFLTs articulated it easily. If they did not, there would be no study and no Chapter 4. Challenging this misassumption and acknowledging that TPW’s use is not confined to the classroom is important because confining TPW’s use to the classroom suggests that it has limited use and cannot be used in other areas of education. This study has been purposely conducted to address such misassumptions. Showing and acknowledging that the EEEFLTs’ TPW is easily articulated as the interviews did broadens TPW’s educational scope and use and frees it from the confines of the classroom because if it can be articulated, it
can be captured easily. If it can be captured, it can be studied. If it can be studied, it can be disseminated. If it can be disseminated, it can receive the acknowledgment and exposure it deserves. If it receives the acknowledgement and exposure it deserves, the systems that disempower TPW can begin to be challenged.

Using in-depth semi-structured interviews (conducted outside the classroom) as opposed to stimulated recall method interviews (typically used inside the classroom—due to them being specifically used and designed to record and observe teaching practice), conducting this study outside of the classroom as opposed to inside, and exploring that which is decided and designed outside the classroom, the syllabus—although undoubtedly it impacts on the classroom—are ways in which this study has attempted to show that TPW’s use is not confined to the classroom. The EEEFLTs in this study had no difficulty in articulating their TPW during the interviews that were conducted. They did not need stimulated recall interviews to help bring their “unarticulated and tacit” knowledge to the surface so that it could be captured in order to be analysed. Despite Gholami (2009); Gholami and Husu (2010); James (2009); Tait (2008); and Toom (2006) using stimulated recall interviews in their TPW studies, these findings are supported by and echoed in Barr’s (2011) and Halverson's (2002) studies (previously discussed in section 2.8.1) who conducted TPW studies outside the classroom and did not use data collection methods that confined it to the classroom such as the stimulated recall method. Likewise, support for this claim is gleaned from other researchers who have conducted studies where teachers have easily articulated their TPW during interviews (cf. Husu, 2005; John, 1999). In light of this discussion, there is no reason why TPW cannot be used in a variety of different educational domains and settings. TPW is teachers’ knowledge. It
belongs to them and they use it (and should be able to use it) wherever and whenever they need both inside and outside of the classroom.

Although the participants have acquired their TPW through years of experience in their roles as teachers in KSA ELCs, such experience however is not confined to practical experience in the classroom alone because teachers often spend large portions of their time outside the classroom, attending meetings and professional development workshops, preparing lessons, reading education literature and marking tests amongst other things. During these periods, they are exposed to numerous different forms of input that can all inform their TPW. Hence, although TPW is practical knowledge, there is no reason why it can be informed by other than that including TK. As mentioned previously (see 2.4.6), TPW is acquired through experience and this experience may take many forms. As discussed by Back (2002), teachers internalise this input and draw on it during practice wherever and whenever they need it.

**5.2.3.8 A disempowered lens.**

As highlighted previously, when education is viewed through a phronetic moral lens, it is considered value laden not value free and viewed as being underpinned by an uneven distribution of power (something that is evident in Chapter 4’s results). Thus, despite TPW being empowering knowledge, in reality, and in the context in which this study has been conducted, as the previous chapter has shown, it still remains a disempowered form of knowledge as has been previously discussed in sections 2.6 and 2.8 of this study’s Literature Review.

The EEEFLTs’ lens is a disempowered lens because—as Chapter 4 has shown—the
EEEFLTs are prevented from using it by Type-T syllabi. Thus, in the situation described in Chapter 4, the syllabi appear to be empowered whereas the EEEFLTs appear disempowered. Their comments made during the interviews seem to be evidence for this and too numerous to mention especially those that refer to them feeling shackled, bound and helpless. The data have shown how each T disempowers the EEEFLTs and their knowledge. In addition, each of the themes under each of the Ts and the themes in their entirety in section 4.3 of Chapter 4 are disempowering. Individually, each T and the subsequent themes subsumed under it are illustrative of a disempowering context, but the six Ts together along with the themes are illustrative of a very disempowering context. This would suggest that the more Ts an ELC syllabus has, the more disempowered the EEEFLTs and their knowledge are because each T restricts the teacher and if there are more Ts then it would suggest that this results in more disempowerment because, for example, a teacher-centred syllabus is less disempowering than a syllabus that is teacher, test and textbook-centred, top-down, teacher-proof and time-driven. In explaining how—as Ts—two Ts (textbook-centred teacher-proof syllabi) can disempower teachers and their TPW, I quote Akbari (2008, p.646) who explains how “Textbooks now take care of all the details of classroom life, and most of them come with teacher guides that include achievement tests and even all the examples teachers need in their classes”. In such a situation, syllabus delivery is reduced to the decontextualised, dehumanised mechanical following of “a mechanical script that all teachers are expected to parrot, without teachers thinking for themselves or taking into account the students they teach” (Null, 2011, p.8). Those who enforce such Type-T syllabi on the EEEFLTs are empowered whereas the EEEFLTs are disempowered. In addition, the EEEFLTs’ TPW is disempowered whereas the knowledge of those enforcing the syllabi is empowered. In confirming these claims that the EEEFLTs and their TPW
are disempowered as well as the extent of this disempowerment, the comments made by the participants during the interviews highlight how many of the ELCs mentioned in Chapter 4 have mechanisms in place to punish those EEEFLTs who do not conform to their Type-T-syllabi-driven regimes (see 4.3.3.4). Similar findings were found in Assaf’s (2008, p.244) study wherein it was discovered that a team was set up by management to conduct “classroom observations and gather test data to insure teachers are covering the curriculum”.

What is equally disturbing is how the majority of the participants in this study are doubly marginalised and disempowered: not only is their TPW marginalised but they themselves are marginalised. They are marginalised as a result of their skin colour because 12 of the 14 participants are non-White. As a result, it is more difficult for them to secure an EFL teaching job in KSA ELCs that require only native speakers because they do not fit the criteria of native speakerism that native speakers of English should preferably be White (Romney, 2010). As a result of their colour, they are also marginalised as they are the minority—at least in the KSA ELCs where I have worked. Similar observations (reiterated here, although previously mentioned in section 1.5) have been noted by both Alosaimi (2007) and Alseghayer (2012) who complain about the unwarranted preference in KSA to employ inexperienced unqualified White native English speaking EFL teachers as opposed to non-White experienced and qualified native English speaking EFL teachers.

This study has intentionally not focused on the skin colour of the participants because it primarily wanted to show how much the EEEFLTs have to offer regardless of their skin colour. Nevertheless, mentioning this issue now adds to the weight of the argument driving this study in that these EEEFLT participants have
made a long-term commitment to teaching EFL in KSA despite the many challenges and hardships they face. They deserve a platform and acknowledging more, especially in light of the valuable contribution this study has shown they can make and the in-depth understanding and knowledge they have of KSA ELC syllabi that can and should be put to good use.

Having discussed how the study’s findings confer, reflect and add more information to the TPW qualities that were discussed mainly—although not exclusively—in 2.4 of the study’s Literature Review, the next section discusses new qualities that this study has unveiled about TPW.

5.2.3.9 A problem-driven and problem-solving lens generated through Problematisation.

Although previously in section 2.4.2 TPW has been described as problem-driven and problem-solving knowledge, there has been no previous discussion in the literature or this study’s Literature Review of a possible framework through which to generate such problem-driven and problem-solving knowledge. For this reason the following discussion was not included in the previous section where qualities that have already been discussed in the study’s Literature Review were revisited because, as one of TPW’s qualities unearthed as a result of this study, this study has put forth Problematisation (see sections 1.7 and 3.7.2.1) as a worthy and befitting framework to explain how TPW, as problem-driven knowledge, is used as problem-solving knowledge to identify and solve problems and how Problematisation can be used to shape and drive this process and the generation and articulation of TPW. In doing so, it has provided a more in-depth, holistic depiction of TPW as problem-driven and problem solving knowledge and also provided a real life empirical example thus
giving it a real life context and operationalising and explaining Problematisation in the process.

The lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematise the KSA ELC syllabi appears to be problem-driven because Problematisation is a problem-driven process designed to both identify and solve problems. In this sense, it is a problem-solving lens also. This claim resonates with the EEEFLTs’ data because not only do the EEEFLTs identify problems with the syllabi, they also suggest solutions to help alleviate the problems they suggest. In their everyday practice, teachers identify and solve problems constantly and it is second nature for them to reflect on practice, identify problems with it and then try to find a solution. For experienced teachers—such as the ones who have participated in this study—this becomes second nature.

As the results show, the Problematisation framework used in the interviews appears to have succeeded in helping the EEEFLTs articulate their TPW. The EEEFLTs articulated TPW not theoretical (episteme) or technical knowledge (techne). The results appear to show how Problematisation is a useful framework through which to explore TPW. This may be because it is a compatible and phronesis-friendly framework because, like TPW, it is a process that identifies unethical practice—in this case Type-T syllabi—and removes it by trying to solve the problem. From a phronetic social science perspective, solving a problem is a moral act in that it attempts to solve a problem and thus remove something harmful. It is also a moral act because by suggesting a solution to a problem, it replaces the problem with a solution and thus replaces the harmful with the good. Likewise, Problematisation involves both the impractical and practical because it is a process that identifies the impractical—in this case Type-T syllabi—and attempts to solve this problem by
replacing it with something more practical. It is also practical because the solutions it suggests to solve the problems it identifies are solutions that need acting upon and putting into practice. In addition, it also identifies bad practice and attempts to remove that bad practice by replacing it with good practice. Likewise, the problems Problematisation both identifies and solves—when, as in this study, education and teaching are viewed as practical activities—are considered practical problems that require practical solutions.

Using Problematisation as a framework in this study has helped in showing how TPW is easily-articulated knowledge whose usage is not confined to the classroom because—in this study—Problematisation was used outside the classroom to elicit the EEEFLTs' TPW and as a framework through which they could and did articulate their TPW.

5.2.3.10 A lens the EEEFLTs use to deconstruct power.

From an educational perspective, TPW is rarely described as a form of knowledge that can be used to deconstruct power so much so that the nine studies discussed in section 2.8.1 do not mention it thus. In this study, I align myself with Flyvbjerg (2001) and Kinsella and Pitman (2012) who believe that phronetic social science should explore power relations in order to deconstruct them in an attempt to arrive at a more balanced, democratic distribution of power and give a voice to the disempowered. In following their lead, I believe this study has shown the central role power has played in this study and in the context in which it takes place: the EEEFLTs appear disempowered, as does their TPW. Type-T syllabi appear empowered as do those those who enforce them. In light of this, the EEEFLTs have used their TPW to deconstruct and critique this power relationship and the data reported in Chapter 4 in
its entirety is evidence of this. In doing so, their TPW acts as a medium through which the EEEFLTs' voices can be heard. From such a perspective, in this study, the EEEFLTs' TPW lens is considered somewhat of a critical lens that they have used to critique the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered as well as the context in which they have found themselves as a result of and in relation to such syllabi. In reiterating the conclusions made above, the results in Chapter 4 suggest that the EEEFLTs view the syllabi they have encountered as disempowering. Likewise, in relation to the context that they have experienced, the EEEFLTs view the ELCs they have taught in as disempowering places of contention and struggle as they identify who has the power, what they do with it and how they, the EEEFLTs, are disempowered by it because if they do not conform and adopt a passive and subservient role in relation to syllabus design and delivery, they can be punished, as was the case with those teachers who were seen to have deviated from and fallen behind the syllabus schedule (see 4.3.3.4).

5.2.3.11 An empowering lens.

TPW is yet to be discussed as and considered an empowering form of knowledge. Despite this, the data collected in Chapter 4 highlight how powerful this knowledge is. Given the chance, TPW is empowering knowledge as it empowers the EEEFLTs because it is their own special knowledge that they own that can free them from the shackles of being passive consumers of other—more privileged—people’s knowledge. The findings in Chapter 4 have highlighted the extent of the disempowerment the EEEFLTs and their TPW experience so much so that they have not been able to use this knowledge to empower themselves even though it is empowering knowledge. Ironically, the data have highlighted how the EEEFLTs are being disempowered by empowering knowledge. Nevertheless, this does not mean
that TPW is not empowering knowledge. It is. The results have highlighted how the EEEFLTs have constructed it themselves and acquired it through years of teaching experience and just how useful it is. The EEEFLTs own it. It is theirs. It is just as valuable as the knowledge that researchers and theorists possess and generate. Ascribing TPW to the EEEFLTs—and teachers in general—raises their status in education. They are viewed as possessing valuable knowledge that can make a valuable contribution to the field of education. Through this more empowering lens, teachers are not viewed as robots as some of the EEEFLTs have described themselves. They are viewed as valuable as they possess a valid form of knowledge more valuable than TK in this context as TK does not have the solutions to the problems the EEEFLTs have identified. The EEEFLTs do. This knowledge needs to be celebrated not undermined. Likewise, studies that explore such knowledge need to be celebrated also and given a platform for this knowledge to be heard and disseminated.

Webb (2002, p.47) explains how teachers are “often considered powerless...subordinates at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, people who carry out tasks developed by more knowledgeable professionals”. As mentioned recently, ascribing TPW to the EEEFLTs empowers them as it raises their worth in education. One reason for this is that through this new lens the EEEFLTs are viewed as professionals not technicians at the bottom of the educational hierarchy simply following orders and implementing other people’s decisions. Chapter 4 appears to have shown how the EEEFLTs have not been treated as professionals but as technicians. In echoing such sentiments and explaining this, Stuart and Tatro (2000) make the distinction between the teacher as a technician, who subserviently executes somebody else’s directives and requests, and the teacher as a
professional, who is autonomous and exercises his or her own judgement. Despite this, teachers still appear to reside at the bottom of the educational hierarchy. The data collected from the EEEFLTs in this study appear to support this conclusion also.

5.2.3.12 An idiosyncratic shared lens acquired in a negative shared context.

To a certain extent, the TPW lens through which the participants have Problematised their practice appears to be idiosyncratic in that it has generated localised knowledge applicable and specific to the context in which it has been acquired—in this case, the specific context described in this study. As a result, the results are not necessarily applicable to contexts and scenarios outside this given context although this is normally the case with interpretive research which is renowned for embracing idiosyncratic lenses such as those evident in case studies.

Despite the idiosyncrasy of their individual accounts and contexts—to the extent that they teach different classes in different ELCs in different locations—the participants’ accounts are also very similar. This suggests that, although their individual TPW may be idiosyncratic, they share a common body of knowledge: a phronetic body of knowledge. Likewise, through a practical knowledge lens—albeit not a phronetic but a teachers’ practical theory lens (as discussed previously in 2.7.2)—several scholars have come to the same conclusion that there is a practical body of knowledge that teachers share along with their own individual idiosyncratic practical knowledge. In explaining this, two such scholars, Sanders and McCutcheon (1986, p.63), comment how “While a teacher’s practical theories are often shared by others, they are used as part of an individual teacher’s unique, personal teaching style, and they develop
out of that teacher’s personal interpretations of many small “studies”. Since the interpretations are individualistic, the theories will be”.

When, as discussed earlier (see 2.7.2), teachers’ practical theories are viewed through a TPW lens which views them as TPW not teachers’ practical theories, this knowledge represents a practical body of knowledge that can complement and support the applied theoretical body of education knowledge that already exists. Such a body of knowledge may help to bridge the well documented theory/practice gap and research/practice gap in education also (cf. Borg, 2013; Rossi, 2013; Thomas, 2012) because when TK and TPW are viewed as two sides of the same coin in the sense that they are two kinds of knowledge needed in education, especially teaching, then this denotes a more balanced and compatible approach to the discussion of the place and status of both TK and TPW in education and academia.

The participants who took part in this study display—to a certain extent—a shared TPW lens. This shared body of knowledge has presented itself—amongst other things—in the form of shared themes evident in Chapter 4 so much so the data collected from the participants display and confer virtual consensus on the unhealthy state of the KSA ELC syllabi the EEEFLTs have encountered along with solutions to address such problems. One of the possible reasons the participants display—to a certain extent—a shared TPW lens may because they are very similar in that they are all male EEEFLTs who have been teaching in KSA ELCs for more than five years. In teaching and working in such places, they interact with their own—similar—communities of practice and, in doing so, discuss practice—especially syllabus related issues—and share their ideas and grievances. Another reason for this may
be because they have acquired their TPW in a similar way i.e. through teaching Type-T EFL syllabi and learning how to survive in and navigate similar problematic situations as a result. An additional reason for this could be because they have acquired their TPW in a similar context i.e. in KSA ELCs as discussed in chapter 1. As the EEEFLTs have shared the same context, it is perhaps not unusual or odd that the data they have provided display similar shared themes—as Chapter 4 has highlighted—especially considering how TPW is a context-dependent form of knowledge that is acquired in practice that draws upon and reflects the context from which it has been acquired. In this sense, it is considered a contextualised lens, as is the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens also. Likewise, earlier in this chapter (in 5.2.3.4), this study discussed how the EEEFLTs’ lens is a contextualised lens. In addition, in this study’s Literature Review in 2.4, TPW has been described as context-dependent knowledge as it is acquired and applied in practice i.e. in the context in which it is acquired and applied. It just so happens in this study that this context is somewhat of a negative context. This however does not seem to have been discussed in the literature before nor have there been any studies that have explored this perspective and thus explored the possibility that the context in which teachers acquire their TPW may shape and define it. In this sense, this study has perhaps discovered something new about TPW in that it appears that the negative context in which this study takes place has shaped the EEEFLTs’ TPW and this has been echoed in the data collected from them and the subsequent negative themes to emerge that have been reported in the previous chapter.

That the TPW reported in Chapter 4 has been acquired in what appears to be—according to the participants’ accounts—a negative context may be one of the reasons why this negativity is reflected in their accounts. Needless to say, this is
neither odd nor shocking in light of the context from which the data have been drawn, as this negative context is the overarching backdrop against which this study takes place. Both researcher and all the research participants have shared and inhabited this negative context for a number of years experiencing similar incidents and events that have shaped their experience and in turn shaped their TPW. As a result of this, I have no doubt conducted this study through a lens that is coloured and shaped by this negative context. Likewise, the participants have participated in this study through a lens that is perhaps also coloured and shaped by the same negative context they have experienced and inhabited for a number of years also. Likewise, having acquired my TPW from the same context from which the data have been drawn has no doubt affected the stances and decisions I have taken in this study and concerning its research design and methodology in the search for a compatible paradigm and research design to provide a platform to a disempowered form of knowledge, TPW, and a disempowered community of practice, the EEEFLTs, one that could also accommodate a somewhat forgotten form of knowledge, phronesis, and celebrate its diversity, capacity and validity and the contribution it can make to education.

In view of the discussion above, this study has taken a different approach to the nine studies discussed in the Literature Review in 2.8.1 as—unlike them—it has arrived at and unearthed findings that focus on TPW’s disempowerment and the disempowerment of those who hold TPW. In this sense, it has taken on a much more political role in raising awareness of the EEEFLTs’ plight as a result of the negative context they find themselves in and the effects and inappropriateness of such a context and to giving them a voice and a platform to be heard. One possible explanation why this is thus is that the nine studies were conducted in more positive,
less disempowering settings and thus were not considered problematic settings that needed fixing nor were the participants or their knowledge in such studies considered disempowered and therefore did not need empowering. As a result, the nine studies appear more exploratory than problem-driven. In contrast to the nine studies and in light of the negative context that the EEEFLTS and I inhabit and the desire to address this and raise awareness of it and to suggest solutions to help alleviate the situation, this study has been a problem-driven study from the outset. In doing so, it has followed Flyvbjerg’s (2001) lead that phronetic social science is problem driven research driven by the goal to identify problems and suggest solutions to the problems studied and unearthed and to address uneven distributions of power that may be the cause of such problems. That the nine studies were conducted in a more favourable less oppressive setting than this study was is perhaps also a possible explanation why the nine studies did not focus on the moral aspects of TPW and how phronetic social science is driven by the goal to raise awareness of uneven distributions of power. This is difficult to do if the context is not a disempowering one or those conducting such studies do not take power relations into consideration or do not think them to be important. This may also be the reason why those who conducted the nine studies do not discuss TPW as a disempowered form of knowledge and why they do not discuss TPW as an empowering form of knowledge also. In making the link between the negative context in which this study takes place and the kind of TPW this study has explored and generated lies one of the contributions to knowledge this study makes which is a direct result of the negative context, which it reflects and reports on.

In the above-discussed negative context, using TPW, as a lens to reflect on practice, could be considered somewhat futile and disheartening especially if, as in this study,
the required changes cannot be implemented as a result of the unfavourable context the EEEFLTs inhabit. Thus, the EEEFLTs’ reflective practice could be considered somewhat pointless because reflective practice—which, in the context of this study, represents the first stage of the Problematisation process employed during the interviews to encourage the EEEFLTs to generate TPW—is often conducted to discover and implement solutions to the problems it unearths in an attempt to improve practice.

Despite the negative context the EEEFLTs find and have found themselves in, it does not appear to have affected the EEEFLTs to the extent that they have become exclusively negative and unable to view the situation—and context they find themselves in—except through a negative lens. On the contrary, the EEEFLTs’ accounts could be perceived as being very positive because—although the participants see the context they inhabit as a negative context—nevertheless, they have been both eager and forthcoming to suggest solutions to the problems they have experienced and identified. In doing so, they have provided solutions to the problems they have encountered. As they have in-depth knowledge of the context in which the problems arise and why they arise, their contribution in this matter is invaluable. This in itself is a very positive thing. Having each spent more than five years teaching in KSA ELCs has undoubtedly affected the participants. Despite this, inhabiting and constantly reflecting on the negative context they inhabit has produced positive results and their accounts represent a truthful representative picture of the KSA ELC context and related events. My experience of the same context echoes these sentiments also. The EEEFLTs have not let the situation they have endured for many years dishearten them and they continue to persevere. They
appear invested and committed to improving the situation and their interviews and participation in this study suggest this also.

Likewise, although the context the EEEFLTs find themselves in is negative and problematic, when viewed through a more positive lens it can also be considered as a positive and productive environment where important skills and knowledge are acquired because it represents a breeding ground for TPW—problem-driven knowledge—as well as for this problem-driven study driven by a problem-driven methodology. If the context had been less challenging and less negative, the EEEFLTs might not have had much use for their TPW and not been able to refine and cultivate it as they have done in the context in which this study takes place. In addition, there would be no great need to conduct a problem-driven study such as this if the context was unproblematic. Nevertheless, this is not to say that TPW can only be acquired and utilised in negative contexts. TPW is acquired through experience and experiences can be both good and bad. Likewise, those who claim that phronesis is acquired through experience such as Flyvbjerg (2001) and Sayer (2011) do not define whether such experience should be negative, positive, both or that this is not important as long as it is experience. This however could be seen to perhaps contradict the notion that phronesis is problem-driven knowledge. A possible way to circumnavigate, incorporate and overcome this would be to view such problems more as puzzles. From such a stance, phronetic social science would still be problem-driven but these problems would be viewed more as puzzles. An example of how this would be possible and how TPW could be used in a more positive context and way albeit still in a problem/puzzle-driven context could be achieved by—in light of this study’s conclusions and using such conclusions as a starting point—physically designing and implementing in-house, tailor made,
teacher-driven/student-centred, KSA ELC syllabi tailored to the needs and interests of the KSA ELC students they are intended for. Undoubtedly, albeit in this more positive context and approach, Problematising practice should and would drive this process as it has driven this study. In both contexts, Problematising practice should be viewed as a continuous, cyclical process similar to the process that drives action research where practice is constantly being reviewed and improved and updated in view of the results of such reviews in a continuous, cyclical, never-ending seamless process.

Although the EEEFLT’s TPW has been used in (as well as acquired in and drawn from) a negative context, this does not necessarily mean that TPW’s usage is restricted to negative contexts and that it cannot be used in positive ones (even if it has been acquired in a negative context as such a context is still an educational context and—to some extent—education contexts are similar in many ways i.e. they usually have teachers, syllabi, exams, classrooms and the like regardless of whether they are negative or positive). Likewise, as the terms negative and positive are socially constructed, something that is positive for one person can be negative for another and vice versa. Furthermore, as the nine studies discussed in 2.8.1 have shown, TPW can also be used in positive contexts. More accurately, TPW has predominantly been discussed in positive settings and through lenses that do not discuss TPW in negative contexts nor do they discuss TPW’s disempowerment as a result of a negative uneven distribution of power hence the reason why the studies discussed in 2.8.1 have not described TPW’s status in education, TESOL and the like as disempowered.
5.3 Some Implications of the study

Drawn from, and as a result of, the discussion above in this chapter and Chapter 4 in its entirety, this study has several implications that have consequences that affect different levels of education. The following discussion focuses on a selection of these that affect educational research conducted in the interpretive paradigm, knowledge and EFL syllabus design and implementation. This is followed by a discussion of some suggestions how these implications can be addressed and alleviated.

From an interpretive paradigmatic perspective, this study has implications at the level of epistemology, methodology and method. As discussed previously (see 3.2), in interpretive educational research there is a directional relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. As in this interpretive study, the study’s ontology has defined the epistemology used, which has defined the methodology used, which has defined the methods used. The end goal of these was to generate TPW so that it could be captured and analysed and the findings of the analysis reported and discussed. In order to achieve this, decisions were made at the level of epistemology to allow for an alternative form of knowledge other than TK to be generated. In turn, this decision, made at the level of epistemology, would also define and prescribe the specific methodology, data collection and analysis methods used and needed to generate TPW. This can only be achieved if at the level of epistemology within the interpretive paradigm, it is possible to choose between TK and TPW and the paradigm can become more accommodating to TPW and thus accommodate and embrace studies that generate TPW (in addition to the already accepted TK). Hence, there is a need to recast the way the term knowledge is understood and widen its semantic range in educational research (and education) so that an epistemology in interpretive research is not restricted to theoretical
knowledge alone. There needs to be another option available, a new epistemology, albeit a revival of Aristotle’s ancient epistemology, a phronetic epistemology—essentially a moral and practical epistemology—that drives interpretive phronetic social science and thus generates phronesis through the use of methodologies and methods that can do so and also enable its collection and analysis. As discussed previously (see 3.4), the interpretive paradigm adopts a subjectivist monistic epistemology. There is no reason why such an epistemology cannot accommodate both theoretical and phronetic knowledge—or episteme and phronesis as they were originally known—especially as phronesis is subjective monistic knowledge (see 3.6).

From a knowledge perspective, albeit one that is not discussed through a paradigmatic lens as is the case in the above paragraph, this study has implications concerning who is considered a valid holder and generator of valid and valuable knowledge and what kind of knowledge is considered valid and valuable in education. This study has shown that practitioners can generate their own knowledge and that this knowledge is valid and valuable. Nevertheless, this knowledge needs to be embraced and accepted by others and in academia and not seen as a threat to TK but as a form of knowledge that can complement TK and enhance our understanding of educational phenomena and considered simply an alternative form of educational knowledge that is equally valid and valuable and deserving of more recognition than it currently receives.

From an EFL syllabus perspective, this study has implications concerning what is considered appropriate syllabus-wise and who has the right in KSA ELCs—and ELCs worldwide—to comment on syllabus-related issues and to participate in
sylabu sn design. This study has shown the wealth of knowledge and contribution the EEEFLTs and their TPW can make in the field of EFL syllabus evaluation, design and delivery and showed how such knowledge is not confined to the classroom. The EEEFLTs' TPW can help solve the problems EFL in KSA is facing, but unless the EEEFLTs are given the opportunity to do so, the situation will not improve. Their views are so important because they are drawn from and driven by knowledge that is and has been acquired in the context in which the syllabi are designed and delivered. It is a great loss if this kind of knowledge remains under-utilised and not given a platform and the acknowledgement it deserves not only in KSA ELCs but also in ELCs worldwide and in academia.

The discussion above has highlighted how TPW is disempowered at the level of educational paradigm, knowledge and syllabus. To address this disempowerment and help alleviate it requires a long-term plan that increases TPW's visibility in education and raises awareness of TPW and its disempowerment at these levels and also highlights TPW's capacity as a valid and valuable form of knowledge that can contribute positively to education and to furthering our understanding of educational phenomena. On a local KSA level, part of this plan requires that awareness is raised about Type-T syllabi and the ordeal EEEFLTs endure in KSA ELCs and the legitimacy of the EEEFLTs' TPW driven by a goal to strive for TPW to be recognised as a legitimate form of easily-articulated knowledge that is not confined to the classroom and useful for all areas of education. To begin putting this plan into action, TPW needs to become more visible and legitimate in education and academia on a global scale before it can become more visible in KSA.
5.3.1 Achieving TPW visibility and legitimacy on a global scale.

One way TPW can achieve visibility and legitimacy on a global scale is through KSA ELC teachers adopting a phronetic approach and researching their practice and publishing the findings (especially as this has become easier and more accessible to a wider audience through the Internet). In view of the disempowered status EFL teachers in KSA ELCs hold, this is a difficult task because many KSA ELC teachers are not privileged enough to be allowed to conduct research in their workplace. Although this may seem a big problem, it is not because conducting TPW research is not confined to the classroom or workplace. I am not privileged enough to be allowed to conduct research in the classroom at the ELC where I work so I deliberately conducted my study outside of the classroom and workplace. Thus, conducting studies on TPW with the intention of disseminating the findings is not an impossible task. It can be done.

Another way TPW can achieve global visibility and legitimacy is by, wherever possible, teachers outside KSA and outside EFL becoming teacher-researchers—as I and many others have—so that they can raise awareness of and empower themselves and their TPW and show others TPW’s capacity and legitimacy and in doing so protest against the disempowerment of teachers and their TPW and campaign for a more teacher and TPW-friendly academic and educational system that view teachers as valid holders of valid—albeit practical moral—knowledge, their own special knowledge, TPW. By disseminating their findings, phronetic research will become so widespread that it cannot be ignored and academia will be obliged to listen. If phronetic research is respected in academia and considered valid research that generates valid knowledge this will open the way for it to be accepted in other areas of education including syllabus design. Likewise, in researching their practice,
these teacher-researchers will help address the uneven distribution of power in education where teachers—such as myself—are not privileged enough to conduct research and when they do it is not considered valid research that generates valid knowledge and is conducted in what many might consider a non-traditional way through a non-traditional lens.

5.3.2 Achieving TPW visibility and legitimacy in KSA.

TPW’s disempowerment in KSA ELCs has many wide-ranging implications because if TPW remains disempowered, so do the EEEFLTs and so does their TPW and KSA ELC syllabi will remain disempowering and Type-T. Therefore, there must be a plan of action put in motion that attempts to address and help solve this.

Those involved in education in KSA need to be made aware of the benefits of TPW and need educating as to what they are. Change needs to occur outside KSA—such as the change mentioned in section 5.3.1 above—so that change can occur inside KSA in that TPW-research needs to achieve visibility and legitimacy in education and academia in order to achieve visibility and legitimacy in KSA in the sense that those in education in KSA are made aware of it and its potential and thus come to accept it and acknowledge its legitimacy. Doing this will make it easier to achieve visibility and legitimacy in EFL in KSA and thus in KSA ELC syllabus design and delivery. Despite claiming that change has to occur outside KSA in order for it to occur inside KSA, teacher-researchers in KSA can contribute to change outside KSA by conducting TPW studies in KSA and publishing them. Ideally—as this study has done—such research would expose and explore TPW’s disempowerment in KSA whilst also promoting its potential and capacity.
5.3.3 Implications for phronetic educational research.

Not only has this study’s Literature Review highlighted how phronetic educational research is almost invisible in the literature, it has also highlighted how phronetic educational research tailor-made to empower TPW is non-existent even with regards to the studies that have implicitly empowered TPW by not using disempowering data collection methods such as stimulated recall interviews (see 2.8.4.3). To address this problem, there needs to be more phronetic educational studies conducted that are designed and tailor-made to empower TPW—as I have attempted in this study—that adopt a TPW-friendly and empowering methodology in an attempt to achieve this goal and generate TPW. In addition, for TPW and TPW-driven research (such as interpretive phronetic educational research (IPER)) to achieve the recognition and legitimacy it deserves, such studies need to be rigorous and robust unlike some of the TPW studies discussed in the Literature Review which lack both and thus probably cause more harm than good.

5.3.3.1 Emphasising TPW’s moral characteristics.

Through an IPER lens, the results in the previous chapter—and the discussion in this—have highlighted how TPW is a moral form of knowledge and how the EEEFLTs use their TPW as a moral lens through which to Problematise and view the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered. The Literature Review highlighted how—although some phronetic educational research has been conducted—the researchers who conducted them missed an opportunity to discuss the results and findings through a moral lens despite discussing the moral qualities of TPW in the introductory chapters of their studies (see 2.8.7). This could be considered by some to be an oversight that needs addressing because TPW is moral knowledge; therefore, it should be the thread that links all the parts of a study together and not
relegated and confined to a discussion of how PW and TPW are moral knowledge in a study’s literature review.

There is a lack of educational research that explores education through a moral lens. To address this, more phronetic educational research needs to be conducted. I believe adopting and using an interpretive phronetic educational research methodology, such as the one used in this study, to conduct such research could help possibly achieve this goal. In conducting such studies, phronetic researchers need to remember and actively emphasise the moral qualities of phronesis that underpin TPW—and phronetic social science—and report the results of their studies and their findings through a more moral lens that is more phronesis-friendly and more in line with the principles of phronetic educational research. Failing to do this falsely suggests that TPW is simply practical knowledge when it is much more than that.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter begins by discussing how the study has answered its three secondary research questions then moves on to discuss how it has answered its primary research question and achieved its aims. Following this, the contribution this study makes is summarised after which the study’s limitations are discussed. Finally, suggestions for future research are made along with one last reflection.

6.1 Answering this Study’s Research Questions

In Chapter 4, this study answered and addressed the following three secondary research questions:

- What syllabi-related problems do the EEEFLTs identify?
• What consequences do these problems have?
• What solutions do the EEEFLTs suggest to solve these problems and their consequences

In answering these questions, six prominent themes emerged from the data that represented six syllabus problem areas. As a result, the KSA ELC syllabi the EEEFLTs encountered were described as being teacher, test and textbook-centred, top-down, teacher-proof and time-driven and thus were described collectively as Type-T syllabi with each T representing a specific problematic characteristic of the syllabi the EEEFLTs had encountered. These six problematic characteristics were also used as themes under which the consequences of the problems the EEEFLTs identified were discussed along with the EEEFLTs’ solutions to help alleviate both the problems and consequences.

Drawing on the findings from Chapter 4 in which the three secondary research questions were answered and addressed, the study then answered and addressed the following primary research question in Chapter 5:

• How do the EEEFLTs use their TPW to Problematisethe KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered?

In addressing and answering this question, the discussion revealed how the EEEFLTs use their TPW as a lens through which to Problematisethe KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered. As a result, the EEEFLTs’ TPW could be captured through this Problematisation process because it drives this process. In view of this, the lens through which the EEEFLTs Problematised the syllabi was regarded as being the TPW lens through which the EEEFLTs viewed the syllabi because—as a lens—it is driven by TPW. Having established this through discussion of this issue in
Chapter 5, the characteristics of the EEEFLTs’ TPW lens were described in more detail through a discussion of 12 of its qualities drawn from the data collected and reported in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

6.2 Achieving the Study’s Aims

This study’s has achieved the aims it set out to in section 1.4 as it has provided a platform for the EEEFLTs to demonstrate the contribution their TPW can potentially make in addressing syllabus related issues in the KSA ELCs they have worked and, in doing so, shown how the use of TPW is not confined to the classroom. Likewise, it has increased the visibility of their TPW and thus raised awareness of the importance of research into TPW and provided a model for how such research can be conducted. In addition, it has helped provide a deeper understanding of the nature of TPW.

6.3 The Contribution this Study Makes to Knowledge

This study has contributed to knowledge in several ways in that it has contributed to a better understanding of TPW, IPER, EEEFLTs in KSA ELCs, Problematisation and KSA ELC syllabi.

First, this study has shown how valid and valuable TPW is as a form of easily articulated knowledge whose use is not confined to the classroom. In addition, it has shown how the EEEFLTs are holders of this valid and valuable knowledge even if they are not recognised as being so and that what they hold, TPW, is valid and valuable knowledge even if it is perhaps not yet recognised as such in education and academia. Likewise, it has highlighted how TPW can be used—and its capacity to identify and solve KSA ELC syllabi problems in—a negative and disempowering
context and given an in-depth contextualised account of this. In doing so, this study has contributed towards highlighting TPW’s capacity and legitimacy and given it and its holders a voice and visibility. Also, this study has provided a unique look into KSA EFL syllabi through a never-before-studied EEEFLT TPW lens. In addition, it has shown how TPW drives the lens through which the EEEFLTs both viewed and Problematised the KSA ELC syllabi they have encountered and explained some of the qualities of this lens which confirm many of the qualities discussed in the study’s literature review along with some new ones. In addition, it has shown how—in the context in which the study took place—TPW was a useful tool to identify and solve the problems the EEEFLTs identified because it is bottom-up, teacher-driven knowledge that belongs to the EEEFLTs and has been acquired through several years teaching in the context in which the problems occur. This study has shown how this bottom-up teacher-driven knowledge is a privileged form of knowledge and perspective that others—such as the ELC managers described (both explicitly and implicitly) in this study—may not possess nor have access to as they often do not view the EEEFLTs as holders of valid knowledge. Attributing this knowledge to the EEEFLTs—as this study has done—empowers them because they are considered generators of knowledge not consumers of other people’s, which, as this study has shown, is just as valid and valuable as TK.

Secondly, this study has contributed to a better understanding of IPER, and highlighted how this TPW-driven methodology is a useful methodology for studying TPW. In doing so, it has given IPER a home by locating and grounding it in the interpretive paradigm. Within the confines of this paradigm, this study has adopted a new—much needed—phronesis-friendly lens through which to view this monistic, subjectivist epistemology and hermeneutic, dialectic methodology and data collection
and analysis methods. This is urgently needed because Flyvbjerg (2004) has yet to discuss in any detail, especially from a methodological perspective, how phronetic social science research—especially educational research—should and could be conducted bar mentioning that case studies are a useful methodology to study phronesis whilst also, somewhat confusingly, claiming that phronetic social science is not affiliated with any specific paradigm whilst also describing it as interpretive. In addition, the limited phronetic educational research studies that have been conducted and discussed in this study have done little to address this problem. In addition, as far as I am aware, unlike this IPER study, no studies that have explored TPW in education have claimed to generate TPW nor made the decision this study has made at the level of epistemology—recently discussed in 5.3—that has resulted in their methodologies and methods being tailor-made to generate, collect and analyse TPW.

In contrast to this study, the handful of studies that have studied TPW (discussed in 2.8.1) have done so in more positive settings than the setting in which this IPER study has taken place. This may be one of the reasons why they have not described TPW as disempowered knowledge or those who use and have acquired it as disempowered (nor empowered for that matter). In adopting such a stance, they appear to have unknowingly depoliticised TPW and disconnected it from its broader context—the literature and the world of education and academia—in which it resides where it, according to phronetic social scientists, is considered disempowered knowledge generated by the disempowered. This study has taken a more political approach that views and unashamedly announces TPW and its holders as disempowered and—as a problem-driven study—in an attempt to address the problems that cause the disempowerment of TPW and TPW related research—
deconstructs this disempowerment and uneven distribution of power partly responsible for TPW’s current unhealthy status in academia and the literature. In TPW’s defense and in an attempt to highlight its capacity and validity, this study contests that TPW—as a valid and valuable form of knowledge—is easily articulated and can be easily generated through research that has its own tailor-made methodology to enable it to generate such knowledge, IPER. This stands in direct contrast to some of the studies (see 2.8.4.1) that seem to have contributed to TPW’s disempowerment by claiming that it is knowledge that is difficult to articulate and confined to the classroom and using data generation, collection and analysis methods that reinforce this.

Likewise, this study has made a contribution to knowledge because it has also shown how IPER can be conducted and what it looks like and outlined the methods of data collection, generation and analysis that inform such a methodology that can be used to collect, generate and analyse TPW. Taking this a stage further, from a pragmatic practical viewpoint, this study has also been—as the title implies—designed as an exercise in conducting IPER that others could possibly consult, emulate or take inspiration from. Thus, it has been a real-life exercise in, and example of, phronesis in action as it shows how an IPER study can be conducted from beginning to end from choosing a problem to identifying how to solve it through to choosing a compatible sample to help gather data to solve this problem by employing Problematisation as a framework to generate TPW and TPW-friendly and empowering data collection, generation and analysis methods that can capture, analyse and generate TPW. These qualities in their entirety perhaps make this study somewhat unique and different from the previous—albeit limited—phronetic educational studies that have been conducted.
Thirdly, this study has contributed to knowledge because it has shone a much-needed light on the plight of a disempowered community: EEEFLTs in KSA ELCs. In doing so, it has highlighted the wealth of knowledge they have that is not being utilised. Their knowledge has been the cornerstone of this study and with its help the EEEFLTs have deconstructed the KSA EFL syllabi they have encountered and in doing so, identified problems, their consequences and solutions to both whilst also highlighting the unjust way the EEEFLTs are treated as a result of Type-T syllabi. In addition, this study has shown how the majority of its EEEFLT participants are doubly disempowered as a result of their skin colour. In light of this, this study has empowered them because it has given them a voice and raised awareness of their plight. From this perspective, IPER could be described as a methodology that represents the voice of the disempowered practitioner.

Fourthly, this study has employed a previously unused framework—Problematisation. In doing so, this study has formalised this process in a way that it could be used—not only in this study but by others also—as a framework to study TPW and also shown how it can be used as a framework to investigate EFL syllabi and generate TPW at the same time as well as its problem-solving potential.

Finally, this study has provided a deeper understanding of the dismal state KSA EFL syllabi are in and has highlighted how disempowering the KSA ELC syllabi are that the EEEFLTs have encountered and how this not only affects the EEEFLTs but the students in these ELCs also. In doing so, this study has contributed to a better understanding of KSA ELC syllabi, their problems and the consequences of these problems, whilst additionally offering solutions to address these problems. It has done so by using a Type-T syllabi lens through which to view their inherent
problems, the consequences of these problems and their solutions. As this study has been problem-driven and thus aims to not only identify problems but attempt to help solve them also, it would be inappropriate—having defined Type-T syllabi—to not provide an alternative syllabus framework that could act as a syllabus model or set of guidelines to consult or follow—when designing EFL syllabi—to help avoid the problems evident in Type-T syllabi. Although the phronetic syllabus framework defined below is intended for EFL syllabi (as well as ESOL syllabi), there is no reason why it cannot be used outside the world of TEFL/TESOL and for educational syllabi in general.

A phronetic EFL syllabus is driven by a phronetic view of education, which considers education—including syllabus design and delivery alongside teaching—a moral practice. As TPW, its driving force, is knowledge acquired through contextualised experience in practice, it is a contextualised not decontextualised syllabus which is bottom-up (teacher-driven) not top-down, in-house (designed by teachers), tailored to the needs of the students as opposed to a pre-packed, one-size-fits-all textbook imposed on both students and teachers that reflects a body of decontextualised knowledge that teachers must transfer to the students regardless of contextual factors. It is a practical not impractical syllabus, grounded in practice, doable and manageable as it is aligned with students’ capabilities. Likewise, it is a moral syllabus driven by moral knowledge that has the best interests of all involved and affected parties at heart and attempts to empower them by giving them a syllabus voice. To teach such a syllabus would not involve teachers having to forsake their moral code of practice. Also, a phronetic syllabus is a problem-driven syllabus, as it is driven by problem-driven and problem-solving knowledge, which attempts to identify, avoid and address problems whenever and wherever possible.
Consequently, it is built on and driven by thorough needs analyses conducted prior to its inception, and regularly, by those who will design and deliver it. I believe this phronesis-friendly definition is a more appropriate definition and syllabus type/model not only for KSA ELCs but for wherever in the world Type-T syllabi are dominant.

6.4 Limitations

As any study, this study has limitations. Nevertheless, I believe it has achieved its goal to highlight the plight of the EEEFLTs and their TPW and—in doing so—show TPW’s capacity as a valid form of knowledge that deserves recognition. Nevertheless, as the paradigm underpinning this study accommodates different versions of reality, I acknowledge that this account is my version of events and others may view such events differently (and thus consider there to be more limitations). Regardless of this matter, it needs mentioning that the absence of women—the reasons for which have been explained above—is one of the study’s main limitations. Likewise, the sample size is fairly small although, in defence, this reflects the sensitive nature of the topic and data wherein there is only a small sample of participants who—in addition to fitting the criteria—I know well enough for them to agree to participate. In addition, some people may consider that conducting only one interview with each participant represents a limitation. The decision to not conduct another round of interviews was made mainly because I felt I had collected enough data during the first round and that a second round of interviews would simply cause hardship for the participants for reasons discussed previously.

Undoubtedly, TPW is not a panacea for all KSA ELC syllabi problems and never will be nor is it a panacea for education problems in general. Nevertheless, it offers hope in the context in which this study has been conducted. It offers hope for teachers’
knowledge (in the form of TPW) and shows its capabilities and scope in highlighting how KSA ELC syllabi are lacking and how they can be improved. In addition, it offers hope to the students who are the recipients of such syllabi and the indirect focus of this study. In making this claim, I have not intended to disparage and dishonour TK (or any other kind of knowledge). On the contrary, I have acknowledged TK and the immeasurable contribution it has made and still makes in education. In doing so, I have explained how TPW can be informed by such knowledge and how this study has been driven by theory in its attempt to extend the notion of teachers’ practical theories to claim that teachers possess their own kind of knowledge—practical knowledge—which is a different form of knowledge than TK and used seasoned academics such as Dunne (2011); Kemmis and Smith (2008); Schram, Flyvbjerg and Landman (2013); and Thomas (2012)—amongst others—to support my claim.

This study has been conducted in a challenging environment. This may have affected the results somewhat especially as the researcher shares and inhabits the same environment. If someone else was to have conducted this study, they may have approached it through what could be seen by some as a more positive lens and arrived at more positive findings. I have endeavoured to paint a representative picture of KSA ELCs and the challenges the EEEFLTs face. It just so happens that it is not a predominantly positive one. Nevertheless, it is a truthful and representative one. Likewise, I have also tried to show the value of TPW and the participants in offering viable solutions to EFL syllabi problems in KSA ELCs. Such solutions may not be the best solutions but I believe them to be a step in the right direction. No doubt, there are examples of good practice to be found in the data collected from the EEEFLTs as they adopt coping mechanisms in order to navigate and survive in the disempowering context they find themselves in, but the goal of this study has been to
report their grievances and the disempowering context they find and have found themselves in not to explain how they cope with such a context (In addition, they did not discuss this greatly in their interviews nor was it a prominent or common theme across all participants). Future studies could explore how the EEEFLTs attempt to achieve best practice within such a challenging environment but this study is not driven by this goal. Its aim—as phronetic social science—is to highlight the EEEFLTs disempowerment, disempowerment of their knowledge and the disempowering context that they inhabit. In doing so, I have attempted to use my insider knowledge and prolonged engagement with the participants to paint a true, representative picture based upon the contents of the data.

6.5 Future Research

As mentioned in the previous chapter, more IPER studies need conducting to increase the IPER body of knowledge. Teachers can contribute to this body of knowledge by investigating their practice through an interpretive phronetic lens as I have. Such research is not only needed in KSA but throughout the world.

To extend this study, a case study could be conducted with one of the 14 participants to obtain a deeper understanding of TPW—and of a single individual’s TPW—than has been possible with this study. Amongst other things, this could be used to explore in more depth some or all of the characteristics of the TPW lens that this study has revealed and discussed. Alternatively, this case study could focus not on one person but on one ELC—with possibly several EEEFLTs—and one syllabus: such a larger-scale study could be used to explore further the commonalities and shared aspects as well as to explore the inevitable differences and idiosyncrasies in the TPW lenses of EEEFLTs. Such a study would enable the exploration of one site
in depth and to possibly interview others affected by such syllabi such as students and those responsible for such syllabi. It would also enable the researcher to enter the classroom and see the syllabi in action and perhaps obtain copies of the textbooks and accompanying syllabus schedules to gain and thus provide an alternative perspective. In addition, recorded observations (not the stimulated recall method kind) could be used to complement data collected from interviews and capture the problems the EEEFLTs encounter as a result of Type-T syllabi. Alternatively, if this study’s participants agreed, the interview data collected in this study could be analysed by another IPER researcher to obtain an additional perspective and unearth new perspectives that both complement and extend this study’s findings. Likewise, I could reanalyse the data—especially as it comprised 100,000 words—to investigate in more depth some of the themes that emerged in this study or search to uncover new themes and new perspectives albeit in line with the methodological parameters and goals this study has outlined.

Alternatively, in extending this study, EEEFLTs in KSA and other than them could replicate or use this study’s interpretive phronetic methodology as a guide choosing their own area of practice to investigate or investigate the same topic I have albeit with a different sample in a different setting. Likewise, replicate studies could be conducted in other ELCs in other parts of the world. From a syllabus perspective, this study could be the catalyst for other studies and researchers to use it as a point of departure exploring—amongst other topics—each individual T of Type-T syllabi or focusing on one or more Ts in a single study or how ELC syllabi disempower teachers and their TPW. The approach could be widened and all kinds of syllabi—not only EFL syllabi—could be investigated. Likewise, such studies could explore areas further afield than the syllabus. In addition, Problematisation could be studied
in more depth also and used as a lens through which to conduct additional IPER studies and discover more about the Problematisation process and what it can help reveal about TPW.

6.6 Final Reflection

Conducting this study has been a roller coaster ride taking me to the darkest places that required all of my determination and strength to survive. Having completed the journey, I feel relieved and proud to have survived. I have learnt—amongst other things—an immense amount about educational research, TPW and KSA EFL syllabi. Nevertheless, I feel the most valuable things I have learnt and acquired as a result of my toiling to connect the pieces of this giant intricate puzzle have been determination, patience and (ironically, given the topic of my research study) how to solve problems.

I fully understand that the stance I have taken in this study may be considered as controversial and that—in adopting such a stance—I have set myself up for criticism and perhaps failure as it stands in contrast with traditional views of education and educational practices. Nevertheless, the goal behind conducting this study was always to raise awareness of the issues this study addresses and contains and to be the voice of disempowered people and knowledge. I have been honoured to be allowed to take up this challenge. In addition, it has been my love for education as a voice for those with no voice that has provided me with the motivation and perseverance to complete this lofty task. To me, education is about challenging givens and norms. Doing this has entailed taking a dangerous gamble. If you are reading this thesis, then that gamble has paid off and been successful. I could have followed a much safer route but I would not have felt comfortable and sincere doing
so. Many in education would perhaps agree that such a gamble should be celebrated especially if entails sacrificing one’s career, efforts and time so that other people’s voices and alternative—even if less-traditional—forms of knowledge and research can be heard and given a platform.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: A selection of excerpts from the transcribed interviews

Speaker key

GS   Garry Sharkey
TA   Teacher A

TA you do have to stick to the book as they say what they call a syllabus. It’s actually not a syllabus like, the syllabus is from what I understand a syllabus is something that you design, but what they do here in Saudi Arabia they just choose a book and divide it amongst hours, 40 hours or, and then they call it a syllabus like book one, book two, book three and they will call that a syllabus... you have to cover the workbook and the course book you have to cover that. So it doesn’t really leave that much time for creativity on the part of the teacher, but there is a small room, in the places I’ve worked there is room to be creative in your classroom.

GS But that’s with the condition that you complete what you have to complete from the syllabus?

TA Sorry...

GS That’s with the condition that you have to complete first of all what you need to complete from the syllabus.

TA Yes, you must complete the book, the units in the book in the time that’s, that you’ve been allocated. Yes, you must, the workbook and the student book you must complete those in any place I’ve worked in, any institute I’m talking about here, any institute and no there isn’t much time for creativity on the part of the teacher. I mean, when I mean creativity I mean extra exercises that you might want to include aside from the book there’s not enough time, there’s not enough time to do that, but what you can do is, or what can be done is substitute, for example, some exercises in the book as long as you get the point across to the students that the same point what the book is trying to put forward as long as you cover that I would say there is room for creativity, but you’d have to skip the book and make your own activity. You’d have to skip the book and make your own activity, but I mean in Saudi Arabia it’s, you know, to do with, you know, money especially in institutes. This is my view, not based on anything I’ve read or anything, but from my experience working in the private sector, working in any institute it’s to do with money and there’s not an actual curriculum specifically for the needs of the client.

GS Is that the same thing even at ***

TA Again, at *** no, I wouldn’t say the syllabus has being designed for their needs, again, the student’s been given a book or a preparatory course or something like this anywhere in Saudi Arabia, Qasim, Riyadh, Jeddah, they’re given a book, the
teacher’s gonna teach this book but the skills they actually need for them to help them in their studies when they go into the colleges: academic writing, academic reading, it’s not focussed in these books. Some small areas, some small parts there’s some writing, there is writing, yes, but not academic writing and the little that they need not academic writing or reading that they need to help them with their studies when they go into the college. No, so again, in the government sector like in the college from my view, my opinion is, it’s not designed the syllabus is not designed for the student, they’re just given a book and the teacher makes this his book, and the management or the organisation then call it a syllabus, they call it a syllabus. So it’s not meeting the needs of the student. The skills that they need to enter into the college, I’m talking about academic skills, reading and writing skills, but if the student wants to brush up on his general English.

2. Speaker key

GS  Garry Sharkey
TB  Teacher B

TB  Yes, I was teaching in Saudi Arabia for the last 11 years, this is my 11th year.

GS  So, at these places, was it a course book you were teaching?

TB  Most of them, 99%. You can hardly see a place where the teacher has freedom to choose the syllabus.

GS  So, in all of the 11 years, you’ve never worked in a place where you’ve had the choice to do what you want to do?

TB  There is sometimes where there might be an hour or so in a week, where you are allowed to use your own material, just to fill a gap, or to, like, supporting materials, or in the beginning of the semesters, when the books still haven’t arrived, they ask teachers to use their experience, to fill the time. Like, it’s called the style of routine. The teacher has to give to the students, feed to the students.

GS  Oh, teacher centred?

TB  Yes, teacher centred.

GS  The jug and mug kind of thing?

TB  That’s right.

GS  Yes.

TB  Just turn the page, finish on time, this is how many units you need to cover, and this is the where the exam is going to come from. It’s been actually shipped from outside the country, it’s not tailored for the country. Historical information,
geographical facts, everything is based on another culture. It has got nothing to do with this country. So, it’s alien.

GS Just follow the books?

TB That’s the norm, too much questions are not welcomed.

GS What was it like a student’s book, workbook?

TB Both of them, both of them actually.

GS So, what was the syllabus then? Was it, did you have a document, or was it the contents of the course book?

TB There is student book, there’s a teacher’s book, there’s a work book, there’s audio files, there’s cassettes, tapes, and the CDs, and there’s also videos, so it’s comprehensive, a wide range of choices, but because the information is outdated, and it was too long, the amount of the hours that students are expected to sit in the class, and the...

GS Did you feel like you almost were relegated to a secondary, almost as a secondary resource? The primary resource was the, it seems like the materials and the books?

TB Absolutely. We were only there to, you know, read from this page, turn the page, finish, that’s it.

GS Right.

TB You don’t even have to worry about, oh you know, do you think this is enough time for me to finish all this. You have to.

TB Anyone, yes. You don’t need to be a teacher.

3. Speaker key

GS Garry Sharkey
TC Teacher C

TC When the students themselves see you pushing through the curriculum, even though you see that they don’t understand something, it demotivates the students and it demotivates them from many different perspectives. One of the things, you know, that helps the student to stay motivated, one of the key factors to motivating a student, is when a student sees that the teacher genuinely has concern for their benefit.

The goal is to focus on the majority... the benefit of the majority of the students. You know? They’re missing their goal by doing that. So, it is definitely... You know, the syllabus in many instances is not... It’s not set up to give the students the benefit
that they really need and the sad reality is, you know, because I’ve worked with some of the people who actually make the syllabi and in many instances... Those individuals in many instances are just concerned with making the managers happy and showing them that they can come up with some, you know, profound-looking syllabi... syllabus, even though it doesn’t really provide the benefits that their students actually need and that’s... you know, it’s unfortunate because the students could be learning a lot more. They’re not stupid, it’s just the curriculum is not designed for them and that’s really unfortunate. It’s really unfortunate.

4. Speaker key

GS Garry Sharkey
TD Teacher D

TD The first thing is there should be a needs analysis... So if you’re going to go to medicine, or engineering, or humanities, or law, what level of English is required in those colleges and then work out, work on a syllabus. So we don’t do that, we don’t make that... we’re taking the general and EAP or ESP approach... whether we’re going through Touchstone you know, one, two, three and four, and there are six levels, they determine your levels by a placement test which isn’t aligned with the textbook... they’re used to the teacher giving them everything.

Okay, some examples are daily... specifically, I can’t remember the actual details, like when we were doing particular exercise or particular unit, how we did that, but I just know that I benefited from the partner teacher, in the approach to teaching, the delivery, you know, the use of resources, the use of... the explanation, certain vocabulary, how to teach the vocabulary, how to teach the grammar... I mean, we had teachers’ books that were very comprehensive, and we used it often, because every day you had to prepare for the lesson. But it was always relevant in the Saudi context, and that was the point that you’re making; it wasn’t... you’d have... you’d take things from the book where you think they’re applicable to your particular students. And that’s the other point: Saudi students are not... they’re not all the same. The coaches, you know, the... where they’re from in Saudi affects, you know, how they behave sometimes, their learning styles are different.

TD No, we... there was a pacing schedule; there always has to be... the schedule has to be... and they’re very strict on it.

GS Very strict?

TD Very strict on it, by management.

GS Meaning...?

TD Meaning that because it’s a very prescriptive course, and the attendance is very prescriptive and the exams are very prescriptive, so the curriculum team had to conduct... regularly, weekly conduct curricular audits, to check that teachers... at what level they are... are they on pacing schedule, on the schedule or not.

GS And what would happen if they were not?
TD They have... well, and they'd be asked to basically, you know, keep up to speed, and, you know, it's...

GS What happens if they still continued in...?

TD Just continued? It's a serious problem.

GS Serious problem, as in...?

TD Serious problem, as in possibly could result in disciplinary.

GS Disciplinary, like dismissal?

TD No, just maybe a warning.

GS Formal warning?

TD Yes.

5. Speaker key

GS Garry Sharkey
TE Teacher E

TE It was basically at the top of the university, and the thing is, to be honest, these decisions weren't really based on... because there was no needs analysis initially, so your needs analysis should be... should dictate to you what books you choose or if not produce in-house, or out, it might cost a lot of money, but at the end of the day, you've got to look at the goal. Yes, so the whole point being because there was not needs analysis, now, this year we've basically said we'll touch down for general English and in the second semester we'll use another book which is trialed by Oxford, it's called cue skills.

TE It's quite structured in terms of week by week.

TE you have to cover this unit within this particular week, so it's up to the teacher, like, as long as he can choose that unit in that particular week, then he's all right. The thing is we have people obviously off, like just before the mid-term exam, and certain tests, like CA continuous assessment with stuff there to do, in terms of by this time, you should be on this day, and we're going to be... The mid-term exam is based from this unit onwards. So there is, like, a slight check.

TE It's not. It's just basically tick box approach, just to get onto to the next level. That's why you find that, you know, they're not really... this whole *** is lacking a lot. It's wasted millions because of the fact that they haven't basically carried out the
proper, you know, needs analysis. It’s the same approach with college *** to ***. it’s the same thing.

TE It’s basically the curriculum makes all the decisions. These books that we teach at the moment, they’re not Middle Eastern editions, so they will make a decision, right, like for example, a few schools had one whole unit, whole chapter on music. They decide, right, you’re doing that particular unit.

TE The syllabus is. Yes, the thing is the syllabus today has to be taught because if it’s not taught, the students will complain, but hang on a second, this might talk about the mid-term exams, the teachers basically are denying me an opportunity to learn.

6. Speaker key

GS Garry Sharkey
TF Teacher F

TF Bottom up also means the Saudi parents, bottom up also means the Saudi admin, there’s a lot of...information that has to be taken from a lot of stakeholders, basically.

GS Of course, yes, important.

TF So, I would add that about bottom up, because I think a lot of time we focus on one thing. Sometimes we focus on the students, or sometimes we focus on the teachers, actually we should be focusing more on learning. Whatever is required for the learning, and that’s the teachers, that’s the students, that’s the building, that’s the parents, whatever, the government, whatever, that’s what is...

TF I’m not going to add on what you said there, but I’m just saying that the teachers have an angle, but they don’t have a complete picture. The management also have an angle, and they don’t have a complete picture, but they have the responsibility, which is a big difference, so I as a teacher, I can just say to them, look. This is wrong, this is not happening, but ultimately the management is actually the ones who are responsible for the effects of what they implement, and so they have other considerations as well.

TF A long time ago. I was a little bit ahead of the schedule, a little bit ahead. I think I was supposed to do five units in the four weeks, and I was going a little bit ahead, simply because I wanted to do something extra. I can’t remember what it was, but there was a reason for going ahead, and then I was actually reprimanded for going too fast. You got to stick to syllabus and the actual time frame as well: on this day you should be on this chapter.

GS Exactly, and you were reprimanded whether you went too fast or too slow?

TF I went too fast, because as I said, I was going too fast, because I wanted to do some interactive software that I wanted to take them to use, yes?
Right, and teachers have a deadline, you know, to... so, that’s what, it’s between the devil and the deep blue sea. Another factor with the students here – and I feel sorry for them along this line – is that, you know, if I were Saudi and from a, you know, a village, and not accustomed to city life and city amenities and all that, kind of, stuff, I would have a big chip on my shoulder about having to learn a foreign language to get along in my own country.

Definitely. Yes, it’s...

I don’t know if I could deal with that or not.

But they never discussed, like, from, the syllabus from the students’ perspective?

No.

And maybe not even that, when I first came. Just, here’s the book and I remember... I did a Masters in TESOL and came directly to ***, but it was as if everything that I had studied was absolutely useless...

I mean, there... literally, there was no paper given, I mean, no copy of anything given. I’m thinking, when I first came to ***, it was just, you know, like if I was teaching and listening. Well, here’s the book and you’re supposed to cover the first three chapters before mid-semester and the last two after mid-semester.

So the book was the syllabus.

Yes, right.

Amazing.

Pretty much almost exactly, in those days. Then there was some progression made. Someone decided something should be printed.

Syllabus wise.

Syllabus wise, but what often... I don’t know how it was when I left ***, but very often, the syllabus and sometimes ones that I made, I just follow the pattern, you know. Before the first quiz, chapters one and two in Azar, but you can skip so and so section on something.

Yes, so it was really the syllabus...

It was still book based.

Reflected the contents page.
TG Contents that... The contents page was the syllabus, pretty much, you know. Even when it was written up.

GS Yes, so that doesn't really, I guess, address the needs of the students.

TG No.

TG It was similar to someone taking courses in swimming, you know, book courses.

TG And writing a paper on swimming and taking quizzes and tests on swimming and get a very good mark and then the course is finished and then someone throws you in the water and you drown. There was a guy, I remember, there was a guy who graduated with his Masters, completed his Masters before I did and came to the ***. And he was a nice guy, good guy, sharp guy, a good head and everything – he didn't make it. He had a nervous breakdown.

8.Speaker key

GS Garry Sharkey
TH Teacher H

Part and parcel of that was of course the material was to be followed quite stringently. They were to work at their own pace, so there was some degree of student autonomy, but as far as teacher input is concerned, all we were really given is a manual on how to deal with potentially difficult subjects or language or structure or syntax or vocabulary or so on.

But as far as having control over any of the content or having any persuasion or having any fruitful thoughts towards direction as far as the teaching is concerned, we had no say in that. It was given... it was very much a fixed syllabus with... no-hands-on for the teacher basically. Our hands were bound.

GS What was the syllabus? Was it a book?

TH Yes. What they had is, they had eight levels; from level one to eight, level one being elementary and level eight being considered upper/advanced. Then between those there's lower/intermediate, intermediate and then upper/intermediate and the advanced.

Each book as far as I recall, each book has I think 16 units - between 12 and 16 units that were to be completed

So if I were to digress from the syllabus, then it would probably or possibly reflect badly in student test performance, which again would impact my teacher performance or people would consider that... how is it that we're hiring you to teach based on your...?
Because basically my skills as a teacher would be brought into question if I can't prepare the students to complete these tests, pretty much. It becomes this focus on test performance as opposed to language acquisition.

9. Speaker key

GS  Garry Sharkey
TI  Teacher I

TI  each level consisted of 12 units, 12 modules and the timeframe wasn't, you know, that we were given to teach or within the semester was, I don't believe was enough time for the students and for the teacher to actually be able to deliver and teach, you know, in a manner where students have enough time to digest what's being, you know, taught to them or for them to practice a certain grammar point or vocabulary that they've learnt, for them to be able to work on that, to practice it and for the teacher to, you know, sit back and allow them to use the language.

GS  Were these classes streamed with the different levels or all the same level?
TI  No, different levels. I mean, you know, if you mean...

GS  Like one group; was it mixed ability or...
TI  Oh yes. I mean, I think that's definitely a problem in every place I've worked.

GS  But the syllabus; was it... For example you had like level one, did they all study the same syllabus?

TI  Yes. They all studied the same syllabus. But just on that issue of mixed abilities within one class, I've seen that as a major problem here, you know, in both places that I've worked. It's difficult for the teacher when he has a class full of, you know, students with mixed abilities. And it's difficult for the students as well.

GS  And as well you're trying to keep up with the syllabus as well which obviously, there are a lot of students and...

TI  Yes. What happens is because, again I'm not just speaking about *** but also where I am now because the focus, and there's so much pressure on teaching English and they see that as the main subject that they need to know and learn to succeed so they want to get through a certain amount of books, like they want to make sure that students go from level one, level two and level three but they, you know, they have one year to do two semesters for example, or three semesters where I am now. We have trimesters. And because there's so much pressure on the teacher to cover the syllabus, the whole syllabus, in a class of mixed abilities, when you have students at a lower level you can't slow down and focus on these students and work with them. You can't because, you know, there are so many deadlines, there's a midterm exam and you have to, as a teacher you have to make sure you've covered all the units necessary before the exam, before the midterm, before the final, before the quiz. You know, we have quizzes and...
TI Yes. I suppose it would be the syllabus, because the time constraints and the short amount of time that we’re given to teach the syllabus. One thing I’ve found myself, resorting to using Arabic, even though it’s almost viewed as a crime.

10. Speaker key

GS Garry Sharkey
TJ Teacher J

TJ I think the experience in *** is quite similar to what you just mentioned. I mean, you know, we’re working with Headway which belongs to Oxford University Press and, yes, it’s kind of straightforward, you know, we’re teaching the grammar, vocab, you know, the four skills, a bit of everyday English and some writing. So, yes, basically we’re following a book as well and it’s quite difficult to... to implement some extra, you know... stuff that you want to do. I mean, it’s quite rigid and there’s not enough time, as usual, you know, so you’re basically just running through the book and... Well, the students are the victims, really, you know, because, first of all, they come in, you know, the prep year... most of them come straight up from the farm or, you know, wherever they come from. You know, they haven’t had any education whatsoever that’s actually relevant to what they’ll be doing in this prep year. So, you know, instead of giving them a chance to, you know, have them integrate into the programme, you know, they are being bombarded with... you know, straightaway with the verb to be, you know, adjectives, you know. They get bombarded with that kind of stuff, you know, in those first few weeks. You start off with grammar. Every unit starts off with grammar and then you do some vocab and then you work on the skills. So, you know, I mean, just because there is no time to actually, you know, teach the students properly... it’s quite difficult. So, basically they start with a massive overload of information, you know, and they can’t cope, really. I mean, you know, you can see it. After one semester, you know, at least half of your students, you know, they’ve dropped out... it’s difficult for the teacher. For example, what they say here is like, you know, you’re not allowed to use Arabic in class. That’s also a big discussion, obviously, you know, the pros and cons whatever. I mean, I think, especially for the beginners, and students who come in at elementary level, even at elementary level, you know, it’s quite essential, you know, to fall back to Arabic now and then, just to understand, you know, the basics. I mean, you know, that’s basically it, you know. I mean, what I think is, you know, they should have one semester before the actual prep year, you know, for the students, for the freshmen, really, you know, to just have them get used to studying at university level, really, because there’s a massive gap between secondary school and... or college and university in Saudi, you know. So...

GS So, basically at your place you’re saying that the textbook, the coursebook, is the resource, really, the main resource in the classroom.

TJ Well, it is the resource, yes. And it’s quite difficult because... Because of the lack of time, you know, it’s very difficult for you to actually add something, you know, some... yes, some stuff from yourself. You know, it’s quite difficult because, you know, you’re being checked on what you’re doing every time, you know, whether
you’ve covered everything. You know, there’s intermittent like, you know, check-ups and stuff to make sure that you’ve covered everything.

TJ   Well, obviously... Well, all staff, really, they objected, obviously, but, you know, it’s enforced by the management, so, you know, you can’t really do much. I mean, you just have to, you know, take it as it comes but obviously it’s an overload, so, you know, when they introduced the writing, you know, other subjects would suffer. You know, other parts of the curriculum suffered. So, yes, this is... Yes, it’s... I mean, it’s difficult.

11. Speaker key

GS   Garry Sharkey
TK   Teacher K

TK   Not enough emphasis or not enough investigation was given to looking at the student population and seeing what the students really can deal with. What they... where they’ve come from, in terms of their educational background; how they’ll be able to cope with the kind of curriculum. So that was the second place I was at. The place where I’m at now, it’s a little bit better, in that it gives you a structure... it gives structure and we have some flexibility but, we have two different streams of students. We have premed students and we have applied medical science students, like the paramedics, but we teach the same curriculum, do the same thing.

GS   To two different levels.

TK   Two complete different levels different levels, which is ridiculous. I mean, you have to create tests that are not too easy for the premed, but not too difficult for the AMS (applied medical students).

GS   Are they in the same class or different classes?

TK   No, they... Yes, they have their own sections, but they all take the same test. So now this is a curriculum nightmare, we have to... you have to, basically, you know, you can’t teach each group, based on their needs and what they, you know, their level. You have to teach both groups to one level and try to find out the medium. And that’s, you know, that’s just ridiculous, because the premed students, half the time, are just bored, because the material is so easy. And the AMS students, they’re struggling, because this is... they don’t even have the basics. They can’t even make sentences or write their names, yet they’re studying, you know, academic, you know, high power academic English books.

TK   Yes, we expect them, from a matter of three semesters, they go from writing a paragraph to write an essay, you know, coherent essay, you know, topic, you know, topic, topic sentences and everything like that. I mean, that’s ridiculous. I mean, how can we expect the students to do that, if they come from...? I mean, some students do, just by virtue of being hard workers and things like that but, I mean, in realistic terms it’s like, you know, really forcing then, you know. Pushing them, quite, you know, quite soon. So again, I think, in order for schools and institutions to have the most effective and efficient curriculum, you know, for the students, there needs to
do research about where the students are coming from, what the objectives of the school, you know, or the programme are.

12. Speaker key

GS  Garry Sharkey
TL  Teacher L

TL  Well currently I teach in a programme where the syllabus restricts any sort of lateral movement, away from the syllabus itself and the curriculum. It doesn’t give the teacher, for example, any room to manoeuvre away from the course or even do extensive further, if you like, consolidation work, with the students. If one does that, it means he’s got to break away from the curriculum, the syllabus, and he falls behind on the expectations of that syllabus and then he’s having to play catch-up. Previously, I’ve worked at places here, in the kingdom, where they haven’t been so restrictive in the syllabus, but they’ve been restrictive in their final exam quota. And what that meant was that students, who needed to pass this course, were solely focussing on the final exam. And they weren’t interested to learn anything else. So, explicitly, there wasn’t a control on the curriculum, but implicitly, it was a implied that someone had to stick to the content that was going to be in the exam. You know, possible remedies for that, would be to allow people with, of sort of, American or European heritage, that have considerable knowledge of the Middle East, to be the heads of the departments, when it concerns training or teaching. Because people with those sort of dual backgrounds, would be in a better position to know what the teachers need to do and what are the best interests, you know, of the students. And, at the moment, we have people who are fairly new to the country, running our department, with limited knowledge of what’s needed for the students. And it’s like tying your hands behind your back. It’s limiting the teacher’s ability. It’s limiting what they can do effectively and ultimately, it affects the students and it limits their options and the formal utilisation of the teacher’s skills, to their benefit, really.

GS  So how do you feel, in that position? You know, you have your beliefs about how English can be taught, how it can be learned, and you’re almost restricted by a syllabus that doesn’t really allow you to teach the way you want to teach.

TL  Yes, obviously it’s frustrating, to say the least, you know.

GS  So you mention the exam, over your 12 years of experience, do you think... the most important thing in a lot of these ELCs is the exam, almost?

TL  Yes, I have to tend to agree with that. I mean, it’s a uniform problem, across, not just Saudi Arabia but all of the Middle East, where too much emphasis is placed on the final exam.

TL  The majority of students are just interested, not learning the language, but just passing the exam. Then you find a bit of disparity in their approach. You also find that they’re perhaps antagonistic towards the teacher. But a genuine student, who knows what it is to be a student and what it is to be a teacher, actually appreciates the time and effort that’s gone into to produce extra work and supplementary material.
13. Speaker key

GS   Garry Sharkey
TM   Teacher M

TM    I think a lot of people here have got a similar story to tell. A lot of people who you’ll speak to, perhaps, might say exactly the same thing, you know, in that the syllabus is very, very prescribed, you know, and there’s not much room for manoeuvring, in terms of what they might want to teach and the way that the syllabus is chosen. And, like you said, the syllabus is, you know, the contents page of the course book. And the reason for that, you know, I would agree, is because, you know, over here... and it’s not just something that’s done at university level, but it’s something that starts from a very, very early age, from what I’ve seen, because I used to teach at school and before I moved into teaching, to university, what they do is, teach exactly to the exam and nothing else counts, other than that. So it’s not really so much, a learning experience for the sake of, you know, learning and benefiting post this class. It’s more to do with learning to the exam, so that you can pass the exam and that’s the all, you know, be all and end all of the reason that you’re studying. So in that reason, you know, for the final reason, obviously the textbook does very much become the syllabus. Not very many places, I mean, I’ve not worked at any place where, you know, a needs analysis was conducted to actually inform a decision of the administration with regards to what syllabus is needed.

In terms of the response from the teachers, some of them were like, yes, great. You know, especially the ones with lesser experience. They were like, great, you know. It’s so prescriptive; the teacher’s manual is so prescriptive to this book that I don’t need to do any kind of lesson planning. Because others were like, oh, this is a serious, you know, this is ridiculous, you know. It’s so prescriptive. You’re telling me I have to teach point-by-point, I can’t skip this grammar point, I can’t skip this vocab point, etc, that it’s really just, you know, I’m teaching in shackles, kind of thing. But basically, you know, I think, if that wasn’t there, for some teachers, then they would struggle in the classroom, you know. And a lot of teachers who come to Saudi Arabia, you find that, you know, they do need that support. It’s good to have that kind of a prescriptive syllabus for them, because I don’t feel confident that without that our teachers would be able to basically, kind of adapt the materials, so to speak.

TM    Needs analysis, yes, that’s the best way of going about choosing the syllabus and the fact that it’s prescriptive is not really so much of a problem now, because yes, it’s prescriptive, but in accordance with the needs that, you know, from a needs study that was conducted over maybe three years, for example. A needs study doesn’t take a month, does it, it takes, you know, a period of time. I think one of the ways of doing that is basically looking at, you know, what is it that the students really need. And the way that you do that, perhaps, is by looking at, or perhaps interviewing or perhaps observing or running questionnaires with people who were in that position and now they’ve gone out into the field. Or maybe they’ve gone out into the main campus. For example, if you’re talking about *** context, where they’re going to finish ***, go into the engineering college and medical college.
14. Speaker key

GS   Garry Sharkey
TN   Teacher N

TN   Yes. I mean you can maybe, like, skip some things, but that’s a different matter. But you still have to teach X amount of units, for example, 12 units, whatever it is, or how many there are. I can’t exactly remember; it was a few years back, because I’m teaching something else now. So, that’s one aspect of it. Maybe half the book could be taught, within that time, giving more space for teacher creativity, you know, with the backup from the administration and whatever. That, you know, you’ve got this book to teach, half of this book and the rest you can, you know, fare on with, you know... Anyway, that’s one point. There’s too much being taught in one semester... cramming it in too much and too much requirement from the students – too much. Whereas, you know, students, they don’t need all of that. For sure, we can cut out certain things and they can still achieve a good amount of the language, basically, without those things.

GS   Did you feel that put pressure on yourself?

TN   Of course. Not just myself, obviously, but other teachers. And when you speak about... when you speak to other teachers, they’ll tell you that. They echo the same sentiment. So that’s one thing. That was the first job. Even the second job, where I am right now - same problem...

TN   So he’s demotivated. So, in either case, there’s demotivation and demoralisation.

TN   There’s the book, go and teach X amount of units you need to teach, whether you’re teaching yourself or you’re teaching with a partner teacher whatever, it is, well, that’s what it is. We didn’t have any say. It was basically a group of teachers, who probably put the syllabus together and then we just have to follow suit.

GS   So it was there, all ready for you to teach?

TN   Yes.

GS   So what, like, say, you had like a syllabus schedule. If you got behind or what happened; did they check on you or...?

TN   They would usually, yes, they’d speak to you. Where are you with the syllabus? How are you coping? Do you need any help? That’s all fine, but then at the end of the day... You know, it could be you’re behind, not because you’re slacking or whatever, because you needed to slow down, for the students. Some students just can’t cope; you’re going too fast – slow down.

GS   And that’s something you’ve witnessed?

TN   Yes. We have to slow down. Myself, I try to use as much initiative as I can. I skip things which I don’t believe is necessary for the students, or I think it’s important for the students, but there’s only that much I can skip as well. Only that much I can skip, as well, because if the tests or quizzes is geared towards that; then you have to teach it. But I try to skip as much as I can and concentrate on productive skills.
Appendix 2: Line-by-line analysis

TC  There's this curriculum that everyone is stressing, you know, stick to the book, follow this and the curriculum is forcing them... the goal is completing the book, for example. In spite of whether the students understand it or not, you know, stick to this curriculum, complete the book. It doesn't focus on what the whole programme is supposed to be there for and that's the student and so, you know, at the end of the day you've completed the book, you may have lost all of the students... You know, realistically you may have lost all of the students but you have completed the book but, you know, the amount of benefit that the students actually got as opposed to what they could have gotten if you had gone slower is minimalised and, you know, when the students see that you're rushing through the curriculum and you're not giving them the concern that they need, they stop performing. You know, they slow down, they realise that, okay, it's all about the book and just completing the book. You know, I've heard students say that and I've heard many teachers say the same thing, is that they've... you know, you start to hear the students say, okay, teacher, we... you know, we just have to complete the book, right? And that... That's not what learning is.

The goal is to focus on the majority... the benefit of the majority of the students. You know? They're missing their goal by doing that. So, it is definitely... You know, the syllabus in many instances is not... It's not set up to give the students the benefit that they really need and the sad reality is, you know, because I've worked with some of the people who actually make the syllabi and in many instances... Those individuals in many instances are just...
Appendix 3: Incident-to-incident analysis (within case)

TE: It was basically at the top of the university, and the thing is, to be honest, these decisions weren’t really based on... because there was no needs analysis initially, so your needs analysis should be... should dictate to you what books you choose or if not produce in-house, or out, it might cost a lot of money, but at the end of the day, you’ve got to look at the goal.

TE: Yes, I think the main problem is that they don’t basically take into account... there’s no proper needs analysis time, right, and for that if it’s to be done properly it needs to be... you know, you need to make sure that you know, they tender for a contract, or they do their needs analysis, you know, in terms of future employers, future teachers from the main campus, the teachers in... you know, everybody, get the stakeholders and get them to write a book.

TE: It’s just basically tick-box approach, just to get onto to the next level. That’s why you find that, you know, they’re not really... it’s wasted millions because of the fact that they haven’t basically carried out the proper, you know, needs analysis. It’s the same approach with college *** to ***. It’s the same thing.
Appendix 4: Incident-to-incident analysis (across cases)

Appendix 4: Incident-to-incident (across cases) repercussions/pacing schedule

TF A long time ago I was a little bit ahead of the schedule, a little bit ahead. I think I was supposed to do five units in the four weeks, and I was going a little bit ahead, simply because I wanted to do something extra. I can’t remember what it was, but there was a reason for going ahead, and then I was actually reprimanded for going too fast. You got to stick to syllabus and the actual time frame as well: on this day you should be on this chapter.

TH They were very stringent. In fact they had a pacing schedule, what they termed and what’s understood to be a pacing schedule or recognised as a pacing schedule. So we were required literally page by page, lesson by lesson to really stringently move through the material, to cover it as comprehensively as possible, but with the sands of time ticking kind of thing. There was no option for me. If I had wanted to kind of have an open discussion or tell the students... you know, everybody close your books; we’re going to have an open lesson today, or whichever way the wind blows and we’ll kind of structure accordingly that was impossible because it was meaning that basically we’re now outside of our timeframe and the pacing schedule would be affected and consequently also the productivity of the students and then gauged to that or attached to that would be their tests as well.

TB A friend of mine, at a local university ***. It was packaged well, you deviated from the syllabus, you used a bit of reality. You should have been doing this page, this unit, instead, you were teaching something else. He was still teaching English, but with a methodology which they didn’t approve of, so it was a deviation of the syllabus. And he was actually sacked from his place of work.
Appendix 5: The main categories and themes that emerged from the data analysis

Problems with the syllabi identified by the EEEFLTs

- Teacher-centred
- Test-centred
- Textbook-centred
- Top-down
- Teacher-proof
- Time-driven

Consequences of the problems identified by the EEEFLTs

Consequences of teacher-centred syllabi

- Compelled to deliver the syllabus in a teacher-centred manner
- Promotes over-reliance on the teacher

Consequences of test-centred syllabi

- Drastically shape syllabi delivery
- The textbook must be completed
- The EEEFLTs feel compelled to teach to the test

Consequences of textbook-centred syllabi

- Contents pages become the syllabus
- The EEEFLTs must strictly follow the textbook
- Compelled to follow a scheme of work
- Repercussions

Consequences of top-down syllabi

- Needs analyses are not conducted
- The EEEFLTs’ input is minimal
• The EEEFLTs are not involved in choosing the syllabus

Consequences of teacher-proof syllabi

• The teacher is removed from the learning equation in the classroom
• Deskilling
• Demotivating

Consequences of time-driven syllabi

• Drastically shape syllabi delivery
• Cause syllabus overload
• Do not allow the EEEFLTs the freedom to personalise the syllabi

Solutions to alleviate the syllabi problems the EEEFLTs have encountered

General solutions

• Foregrounding the EEEFLTs and their TPW
• Conducting needs analyses
• Adopting a wider approach to solving syllabi problems
• Research as a broader approach to solving syllabi problems

Solutions to each individual T

Teacher-centred

• Introduce more student-centred less traditional ways of teaching syllabi
• Find ways to promote and encourage autonomous learning
• Introduce a variety of different ways to learn

Textbook-centred

• Choose culturally-friendly textbooks
• Choose textbooks that cater for the academic needs of the learners
• Reduce the amount of textbook that needs to be taught

Test-centred
• Move away from heavy focus on summative testing
• Move away from heavy focus on testing from the textbook
• Introduce a variety of different ways of assessment

Top-down
• Produce bottom-up teacher-driven in-house syllabi
• Conduct needs analyses
• Tailor-make syllabi to cater for the needs of students
• Improve communication between management and teachers

Teacher-proof
• Allow the teachers more freedom to adapt the syllabi they have to teach
• Move away from the textbook being the teacher

Time-driven
• Give the students more time to absorb what they are studying
• Reduce the amount of syllabus that needs to be taught in a specific timeframe
• Allow teachers time to teach other than the textbook
Appendix 6: A selection of consent forms

EXETER

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CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form.

all information I give will be treated as confidential.

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Signature of participant)

14/6/2012
(Date)

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s).

Contact phone number of researcher: Garry Sharkey, 0535348851

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

S.A.I.L.Rich@exeter.ac.uk (Director: Taught Doctorate in Education Programmes in TESOL)

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the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Signature of participant)

(Printed name of participant)

28 May 2012
(Dated)

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all information I give will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

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(Date)

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