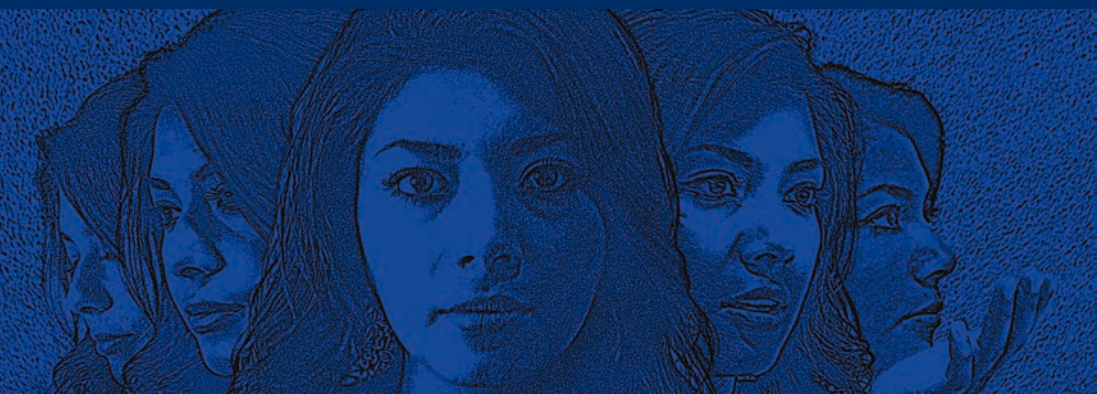


M. MARTHA LENGELING

# BECOMING

an English Teacher



Participants' Voices and Identities  
in an In-Service Teacher Training Course  
in Central Mexico



Becoming an English Teacher:  
Participants' Voices and Identities in an In-Service  
Teacher Training Course in Central Mexico



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M. Martha Lengeling



Campus Guanajuato | División de Ciencias  
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# Table of Contents





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i> , Keith Richards	15
<i>Author's Note</i>	19
Abbreviations	23
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION:	
A Story of Stories	25
Reasons for Research	28
On Becoming an EFL Teacher in Mexico: 'Falling into' the Job	28
Trainee Identity and Emotions	30
Personal Motivation	31
Story of Stories: Theirs and Mine	32
Research Questions	35
Contents	36
CHAPTER 2	
SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION	39
Background of L2 TED	40
Complexities of L2 TED	46
Evolution of L2 TED	46
The 'Banking' Concept and 'Knowledge as a Product'	49
Knowledge from a Sociocultural Perspective	57
Multifaceted Themes: Identity, Emotion, Context, and Reflection	63
<i>Identity</i>	63
<i>Emotion Connected with Identity</i>	75
<i>Teaching and Learning Situated within a Context</i>	79
<i>Reflection and Social Discussion</i>	82
Summary: Layers of Teacher Education	85
Teaching English and Teacher Education in Mexico	86
English and the National Educational Program	88
Realities of the Public School System	90
Why CLT is not Followed	91
Public School System and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)	92

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Public School System in the State of Guanajuato	93
‘Start All Over Again’	94
EFL: Private Sector versus Public School	95
Native Speakerhood as Entry into the Profession	95
Changes in EFL Training in Mexico	99
Change of Needs at the University of Guanajuato	100
The Evolving Story of COTE	102
COTE Framework	103
COTE Beginnings in Mexico	104
Mexican Advanced Professional Programme (MAPP)	106
Motives for COTE Implementation	108
COTE Impact in Mexico and Guanajuato	109
Sense of Ownership	111
Imposed Ideas from a Foreign Country	112
Summary	114
CHAPTER 3	
CONTEXTUALIZING THE STORY:	
Contexts and Protagonists	121
The Contexts of Guanajuato: State, City and University	122
Protagonists of the Story: Trainers, Observers, and Teacher-Learners	124
Inclusion of Self within One’s Research	125
Ideology and its Relationship to Research	129
<i>Martha’s Ideology</i>	130
<i>Support Staff: Protagonists of COTE Guanajuato</i>	133
<i>Multicultural Trainers and Observers</i>	134
External British Council Tutor	136
Eighteen Teacher-Learners: A Small Piece of Their Lives	137
Summary	138
CHAPTER 4	
BRICOLAGE:	
Piecing Together the Research Methods	141
Reasons for a Broad Qualitative Approach	141
Growing Fascination and Critical Incident	142

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reflexivity	143
Bricolage and Bricoleur: <i>'Piecing Together'</i>	145
Ethnographic Bricolage of Voices: Methodology	148
<i>Data Collection</i>	148
<i>Data Collection: Ethics</i>	149
<i>Data Collection via Journals</i>	150
<i>Reaction to ShJ and TJ Journals</i>	155
<i>Data Collection: Interviews</i>	157
<i>Data Collection: Focus Group Discussion</i>	162
<i>Data Collection: Observations</i>	164
<i>Data Coding and Analysis</i>	170
<i>Process Example</i>	172
Summary	180
CHAPTER 5	
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:	
The Beginning	189
Pre-COTE Considerations	190
Language Command	192
Family Expectations: <i>'Ease my Pain and Contain     some Anger'</i>	196
<i>'Falling into' the Job</i>	199
COTE Motivation	204
English Language Contact	205
<i>Credential Requirements</i>	206
Professional Advancement	210
Non-Native Speaker's Identity and Empathy	213
Summary	216
CHAPTER 6	
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:	
Struggles During the Story	219
Emotions	220
Insecurity at Course Onset	220
Low Self-Confidence: <i>'Like a Baby Beginning to Walk'</i>	221
<i>'No Pain. No Gain.'</i>	222

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Rookie Trainee	223
Time Management and Stress	224
On the Road to Time Management	224
‘Playing Catch Up’	226
‘A Nine to Five Job’	228
Envisioning the Future	228
Becoming a Father during the Course	229
Tutors’ Viewpoint on Stress and Time Management	231
Personal Upheavals	232
Academic Conflicts	234
Academic Writing Requirement	234
<i>Cultural Difference of Grades</i>	239
<i>Pleasing UCLES</i>	240
<i>Absorbing New Material</i>	242
<i>Observation Nerves</i>	249
Professional Conflicts	254
<i>Power Struggles: Coordinators versus Co-workers</i>	255
<i>Professional Struggles: Teacher versus Institution</i>	257
<i>Case Study: Teacher versus Institution</i>	260
Summary	263
CHAPTER 7	
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:	
Course Outcomes	267
Acquired Skills and Values	268
<i>Critical Thinking Skills</i>	268
<i>Empathy: Looking from the Other Side of the Fence</i>	270
<i>Improved Self-Confidence</i>	272
‘Supportive Social Environment’	278
<i>Self-Improvement</i>	286
<i>Gratitude</i>	288
Identity Shaping	291
<i>Epiphany: ‘Now a Real Teacher’</i>	294
<i>Impediments to Change</i>	296
<i>Resistant to a Foreign Course</i>	300
<i>Professional Image and Commitment</i>	301

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>The Trainees who were not Awarded a Passing Grade</i>	303
Teacher Development Model for COTE Teacher-Learners	307
<i>COTE Course Closure</i>	310
<i>Call for a Post COTE Course</i>	311
<i>COTE Impact on Trainers</i>	312
Chapter Summary	314
<i>Research Summary</i>	319
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
<b>CONCLUDING THE STORY:</b>	
Implications and Future Research	321
Limitations of Research	322
Revisiting Research Questions in Relation to Findings	324
1. <i>What emotions and cognitive processes do teacher-learners go through during COTE?</i>	324
2. <i>What problems and struggles do trainees encounter throughout the course?</i>	326
3. <i>How does this teacher training impact the teachers' sense of identity?</i>	328
Implications of the Research	330
<i>Implications for Mexico</i>	331
<i>Implications for the Wider Context of L2 TEd</i>	336
Suggestions for Future Research	344
<i>Suggestions for the Context of Mexico</i>	344
<i>Suggestions for the Wider Context of L2 TEd</i>	346
Conclusions	351
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
	353
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
	383
APPENDIX 1. <i>Autobiography: Martha's Herstory</i>	385
APPENDIX 2. <i>Interview of the Assistant ELT Director of the British Council in Mexico</i>	393
APPENDIX 3. <i>Interview of Paul Davies</i>	401
APPENDIX 4. <i>COTE SYLLABUS 2002-2003</i>	406
APPENDIX 5. <i>Questionnaire for Trainees</i>	410

APPENDIX 6. Consent Form	412
APPENDIX 7. Selected Excerpts of Shared Journal (ShJ)	413
APPENDIX 8. Selected Journal Entry of Martha's Journal (MJ-1) with Added Reflection (AR)	425
APPENDIX 9. Selected Trainee Journal Entries (TJ) and Feedback	427
APPENDIX 10. Post COTE Interview Questions of Trainees (PCI)	444
APPENDIX 11. Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Focus Group Questions (FGQ) and Selected Excerpts	445
APPENDIX 12. Selected Excerpts of Observation of Tutors and Trainees (ObT)	451
APPENDIX 13. Peer Observation Reflection Forms	464
APPENDIX 14. Selected Photographs of COTE	471
 TABLES, FIGURES AND PHOTOGRAPHS	 479

## PREFACE

Keith Richards, *University of Warwick*

When in the early nineties I interviewed a number of teachers about their careers, a surprising number described how they drifted into the EFL profession almost by chance. One of them, looking back a quarter of a century, even described it in generational terms. 'We were the hippy generation,' she said, 'who weren't quite sure what we were going to do and we've grown into it and made it our own.' But Martha Lengeling reveals that this phenomenon is not restricted by temporal and geographical boundaries. Here are the words of one of her teachers, speaking a generation later and from a different continent:

*I thought I would get a job in an administrative, tourism or pedagogical area. It never crossed my mind I would end up teaching. I used to say I would never be a teacher because I always thought teachers were boring, miserable, badly paid and not glamorous...*

Who, then, are these teachers, trusted to help students become proficient in a global language that might play an important part in their future? What leads them to become teachers and how does their identity as teachers of English emerge through the course of their professional training? These are the questions Martha Lengeling addresses in this groundbreaking and thought-provoking study. Her investigations into the pro-

cess of identity formation lead her into the realms of emotion and cognitive processes as she explores the challenges and struggles faced by participants in a teacher education course in Mexico, opening windows on aspects of language teaching and language teacher education in that country.

The 'COTE' course which features in this study is a one-year in-service training course in English language teaching offered by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) through the British Council in Mexico. It is recognized by the Ministry of Education and is part of a programme that has a global history going back over thirty years. This is the story of 18 trainees on the programme, their lives, experiences, feelings, hopes and insights. Their voices emerge with sometimes painful clarity in the chapters that follow, as the author seeks to understand how they sought to make the educational experience meaningful, but theirs is not a story of unalloyed success – of the 18 trainees who began the course only 11 completed it successfully.

Some readers might ask what benefits might be gained by reading a book featuring such a small group in a single university in only one country, but this would be a profound misunderstanding of the value of such work. Large scale studies can provide invaluable insights into characteristics of large populations, but they are not designed to understand the nature of experience itself. For this we need carefully constructed, richly informed and analytically rigorous studies designed to connect with similar studies in contributing to a gradually emerging picture. This is what Martha Lengeling offers.

Adopting a social constructionist perspective, Lengeling uses interviews, journals (including her own), observations, focus group discussion and informal conversations in order to develop a thickly contextualised account of the process of teacher education and its impact on the lives of the participants involved. English is a global language but the scope of our understanding of the world of those responsible for teaching it has for too long been embarrassingly narrow. That pic-



ture is, thankfully, beginning to change thanks to the work of researchers such as David Hayes and Amy Tsui, and our task now must be to extend our understanding to as many contexts as possible.

From this perspective, the pioneering work represented in this study makes an invaluable contribution on a topic of fundamental importance. I began this introduction with an illustration of how what Lengeling calls ‘falling into the job’ may have been a feature of EFL careers over the last half century, and there is every reason to suppose that other insights in this study will have global relevance. Anyone who doubts the significance of this should remember Fullan’s (1982, p. 107) observation that ‘[e]ducational change depends on what teachers think and do – it’s as simple and as complex as that.’

Understanding what teachers think and do demands thoughtful research design, thoroughness of approach and meticulous attention to detail, all of which are to be found in this book. It begins with a statement of the author’s position, an overview of themes and an introduction to the questions that informed the study, then moves on to a valuable discussion of relevant issues in EFL teacher education and an introduction to the Mexican context. This is developed further in Chapter 3, where we learn more about the author herself and her perspective on the project. Methodologists will find the following chapter particularly interesting, not least because of the way it opens up what is so often an obscure area: the process of analysis. The description here provides a detailed, carefully articulated and elegantly organised account of the relevant procedures as well as the issues associated with them.

The core of the book, though, is to be found in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, beginning with insights into the teachers’ lives and motivations for joining the course, moving on to an exploration of the emotional and cognitive dimensions of their encounter with it, and concluding with a picture of how they see themselves at its conclusion. It would be unfair to reveal here the author’s findings, but the interweaving of the professional and

## PREFACE

the personal provides an illuminating and sometimes moving picture of the developmental experience. Data are presented in an accessible and illuminating form, using well-chosen extracts that are substantial enough to allow participants' voices to emerge clearly, while the use of commentary and the identification of themes allow a convincing picture to emerge, rich in detail and conceptually coherent.

Readers who share Martha Lengeling's hope that her book will offer valuable insights into the problems EFL teachers face in their local environments and in teacher education programmes worldwide will not be disappointed. This is an engaging, illuminating and insightful book that makes a significant contribution not only to our understanding of teacher education in Mexico and our appreciation of the experience of in-service trainees there, but also to our more general appreciation of what EFL teacher education involves for those who experience it.

Keith Richards  
26 July 2010

## Author's Note

This manuscript examines the identity formation of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers who went through a one-year in-service training course - Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) from the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES). The COTE course was offered through the British Council in Mexico at a public university, the University of Guanajuato, in central Mexico. In addition, it looks at trainees' emotions, problems and struggles during the course, and finally it explores the impact this training had upon their identity as teachers.

I explore a sociocultural perspective of teacher education and how it applies to the Mexican context. This perspective views knowledge as socially constructed by individuals within a context (Johnson, 2006).

I present parts of the 18 trainees' lives: how they became EFL teachers, their motivations for taking the course, struggles, identity formation, emotions, and course-end realizations.

In terms of research approach, the teachers' lives and emotions are represented through a narrative of voices. I am the narrator of the trainees' life stories and I position my life story within this research, because of shared similarities. I include my reflections as an EFL teacher having lived and worked half of my life in Mexico. I also include the voices of course tutors and administrators at local and national levels.

In general terms I adopt a broad qualitative ethnographic approach using three concepts as a basis for inquiry: voices, reflexivity and *bricolage*. The sources of my data are journals, observations, interviews, and a focus group of tutors. By these means I try to explore the multifaceted layers of teacher education in Mexico.

The data reveals how the trainees construct meanings of gained knowledge with fellow colleagues and transform their identities. More importantly than the gained skills, the trainees gained self-confidence which empowered them emotionally and professionally.

My premise in this manuscript is therefore that, based upon the sociocultural perspective, the location of identity and emotions should be more firmly placed within the professional discourse to understand the complexities of teacher education.

## Acknowledgements

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Gratitude to Paul Davies, Anamaria Aramayo of the British Council in Mexico, Patricia Begne Ruiz Esparza of the University of Guanajuato, the local tutors and the external tutor of the COTE Course in Guanajuato, and others for their openness, contributions and time during this research.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

A special thanks goes to the 18 teacher-learners who allowed me the privilege to teach, listen and observe their part of the story.

To all family members on both sides of the border: North and South. For my parents who gave all of their children the opportunity for further education. Gracias a la familia Hernández Ornelas de León, Guanajuato.

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To Benjamin, Thomas and Gabriel for encouraging me.

To all the rest who were part of this story and journey.



# Abbreviations

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BC	British Council
BS	Bachelor of Science
COTE	Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
DFID	Department for International Development (formally Overseas Development Administration)
DGES	Dirección General de Educación Superior - Department of Higher Education
DOTE	Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGQ	Focus Group Questions
FN	Field Notes
I	Interview
ICELT	In-Service Certificate of English Language Teaching
ILCE	Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa – Latin American Institute for Educational Communication
INSET	In-Service Teacher Training
LACAD	Latin America, Caribbean and Atlantic Department
L2	Second Language
L2 TED	Second Language Teacher Education
MA	Masters of Arts
MAPP	Mexican Advanced Professional Programme

## ABBREVIATIONS

MEXTESOL	Mexican Association of Teachers of English
MJ	Martha's Journal
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
ObT	Observation – Tutor
PCI	Post COTE Interview
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SAC	Self-Access Center
SEP	Secretaría de Educación de México - Mexican Ministry of Education
SESI	Subsecretaría de Educación Superior e Investigación Científica - Sub-Secretary of Higher Education and Scientific Research
ShJ	Shared Journal
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TJ	Trainee Journal
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate



## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION:

## *A Story of Stories*

*I was ten when I had my first English class and since that day I started to love it... One day when I was taking one of my English classes many years ago, I heard one of my teachers say that he had improved his English by teaching. Then I decided to be one. I started giving private classes to a friend in my house, three times a week, two hours a class, with a grammar book, songs and videos and at the same time I was hired in a bilingual elementary school to teach second grade. That's how I became a teacher. (PCI-5 - Post COTE Interview with teacher-learner number 5; see Chapter 4, Data Collection: Interviews)*

*I started by accident. Someone listened to me speaking English and he offered me a job as a teacher. After the first class, I loved what I did and here I am. (PCI-16 - Post COTE Interview with teacher-learner number 16; see Chapter 4, Data Collection: Interviews)*

The excerpts above came from teacher-learners during the 2002-2003 COTE (Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English) course held at the University of Guanajuato in central Mexico. These two individuals expressed enthusiasm for their formal studies in EFL (English as a Foreign Language). Eventually they went on to become successful teachers in the EFL profession.

Both are Mexican non-native speakers of English who excelled in language learning. Language was their entry into the

EFL profession. Following the suggestions of others, they became teachers. Their experiences seemed somewhat haphazard. In the first case, the teacher-learner became a teacher after overhearing her English teacher comment on how he had improved his English by becoming an EFL teacher. If he had bettered his language by teaching, so could she. She began teaching in an improvised manner using whatever materials she had at hand, offering private classes at home and simultaneously she got a more formal job in a school. In the second case, the teacher-learner was overheard speaking English and *voilà*; he was offered a class. Instantly he was impassioned with teaching. In both cases social interaction played a pivotal factor in career decisions.

Both entered the profession with no prior formal education in teaching EFL. Their expertise was their command of English, which was instrumental for gaining entry into the EFL profession, not their knowledge of skills and techniques. They survived the beginning years of teaching and relied on their instincts and/or their past language learning experiences. What is obvious is that both of these teacher-learners enjoyed and excelled in English. It is as if from that pivotal moment they stepped forward and became EFL teachers. They never hesitated and never looked back. I wondered if they felt like teachers once they started teaching and how they saw themselves. So easily they entered into the profession, yet, I wondered what prompted them to take the COTE course.

In the manuscript, which follows, I will be examining life experiences such as the above. Passages will be analyzed to reveal teacher-learners' identities, emotions and motivations. I will use their journal entries to form a narrative of voices: a figurative representation of the COTE course experience.

The central focus of my essay will be to carefully examine the trainees' identity formation – how they see themselves before and during this course as well as at course-end. Identity formation is also linked with how the trainees emotionally identify themselves. I base my research upon a sociocultural perspective where knowledge and meaning are socially constructed within

a context (Johnson, 2006; see Chapter 2). I want to investigate how they construct meaning from the COTE course, as well as the emotions that are part of this process.

The field of teacher education needs more research so we can better understand the larger picture of learning, not simply its product (Freeman, 1995; Freeman, 2001a; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2006). Teacher education has moved on from a 'knowledge as a transferable product' view (*ibid*) to knowledge seen as socially constructed through interaction within a context - a sociocultural perspective (Johnson, 2006). I argue that the sociocultural perspective of teacher education more realistically represents teacher education, but I suggest that more emphasis be given to identity formation and emotions to fully examine the complexities of teacher education. Knowing how teachers feel about their professional growth, identity formation and emotion, as well as the struggles they encounter as learners, helps us more fully understand the nature of teacher education.

Before going further, I need to explain some of the important terms, concepts and locations that will appear in my study. The COTE is a one-year EFL in-service training course offered by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES), through the British Council in Mexico. This course is officially recognized by the Mexican Ministry of Education. Since 1979, the course has been taught worldwide (Brown, 2001). The 2002-2003 COTE course was held at the Language School of the University of Guanajuato, a public state institution of higher education in central Mexico. In subsequent chapters, I will be addressing some of the broad teacher-education issues in Mexico, and the State of Guanajuato.

Finally, throughout my research, the hyphenated term 'teacher-learner' or 'trainee' will appear interchangeably to refer to the teachers who take this in-service training course as learners. Diversity and professionalism are key ideas here. COTE participants arrived in Guanajuato with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Most were seasoned instructors

with formed teacher identities and beliefs. No two are exactly alike. All the terms above refer to individuals who were in the educational process of constructing an EFL teacher identity.

### **Reasons for Research**

My reasons for investigating the COTE course are simultaneously educational and practical. Identified research outcomes can help us better understand teacher evolution (Ball and Goodson, 1985) and the core of teachers: their identities and emotions. COTE research can also advance how teacher education is viewed from a sociocultural perspective and add to this evolving view by including issues such as identity formation and emotions to understand the intricacies of teacher education to a greater extent. On the educational side, my research specifically benefits the University of Guanajuato, the State of Guanajuato, and Mexico as a nation. And certainly, my research has potential application at many world training sites, regardless of their similarities or differences to the Guanajuato COTE. As for the Mexican Ministry of Education and the British Council, this study will help individuals presently involved in a training course, and those who may want to initiate one.

On the practical side, my investigation benefits training involvement. Research in this area contributes to the more effective day-to-day planning of teacher education programs and curricula. Also this investigation inevitably influences how training courses are taught and the way teachers and learners work interactively or reflectively. I am certain this research will offer valuable insights into the problems EFL teachers face in their local environments and in programs worldwide.

### **On Becoming an EFL Teacher in Mexico: 'Falling into' the Job**

Throughout my discussion, the phrase 'falling into' the job appears repeatedly, so I will clarify from the onset how this meta-

phor applies to the EFL profession. I turn to an excerpt from a trainee interview:

*In 1993 I decided to study English in a formal way. I had problems in my marriage and I wanted to be prepared to support my family and myself if I got a divorce. I did not finish my studies and was living in a town without a university to continue my education...my two children were very young to leave alone for a long time. My two favorite subjects at school were math and English. My choice - English - was to find a good job as a secretary or something, so I started studying English. My tutor told me I had the abilities to be a teacher. I did not believe him much... I received an offer to be a teacher but only on Saturdays to keep an eye on my children. I got a divorce and moved. I never thought that I would enjoy teaching so much and sharing what I know would be so rewarding. (PCI-15 - Post COTE Interview with teacher-learner number 15; see Chapter 4)*

In the case above, a non-native speaker motivated by economic need studies English to acquire a business-world job. Yet, she ends up teaching English instead. Entry into the profession hinges on a command-of-language, not teaching skills. As we will see in subsequent excerpts (Chapter 5), many individuals have precipitously entered the EFL profession in this manner. I, myself, am an example of this (see Appendix 1). Surprisingly enough, many current successful EFL teachers have found these first experiences rewarding.

This is not a comment of criticism, but simply a statement of fact. Before going on, I want to examine the ambiguity surrounding the profession as expressed in formal literature. Teacher education in EFL has been described as ‘the field of professional activity through which individuals learn to teach’ and ‘the sum of experiences and activities through which individuals learn to be language teachers’ (Freeman, 2001a, p. 72).

This may be a rhetorical academic statement on the surface; yet, there are no simple answers to the question - How does one become an EFL teacher? The process is complex, merits deeper understanding, and varies widely among cultures and individuals. In this book, I will be focusing on the Mexican context: how teachers in Mexico have typically begun EFL careers. For years, like their worldwide counterparts, they have 'fallen into' into the jobs (Duff, 1997; Freeman, 2000; Williams, 1995).

A common thread in the Mexican context has been a previous exposure to English, usually via an American context. Frequently, future EFL teachers from Mexico have lived in the United States for a period, or have studied several years in the States at primary, middle, or high schools. The following excerpt, from a Trainee Journal presents a typical narrative:

*Later we went to live to the U.S.A. in order for the whole family to learn the language. We went to live to Utah for eight months. I'm a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Days Saints - the Mormons, and...then we went to live to Houston, Texas for two more years. Later, we returned to Mexico...I teach at a technical college. (TJ5-8 - Trainee Journal of teacher-learner number 5, entry 8; see Chapter 4, Data Collection via Journals)*

Upon their return to Mexico, many individuals like the above have received job offers teaching English in the Mexican educational system. They entered the profession, largely due to their command of English. So effectively, they began careers as EFL teachers, with limited formal teacher education. Through time some of them have ended up in the COTE at the University of Guanajuato.

### **Trainee Identity and Emotions**

To better understand why these individuals become teachers and specifically how they become EFL teachers, we need

to examine their experiences carefully. The primary focus will be on identity in the context of how the teacher-learners see themselves. To understand the identity formation of the teacher-learners I shall also look at motivation - the driving force behind the individual to enter this profession and take this course. Analyzing the motives of teacher-learners who participate in the COTE course is largely supposition; and can, perhaps, best be approached through a series of questions that address the complex learning process of trainees. These questions offer insights into their lives, emotions and identities. Many of the same inquiries will be echoed in the formal Research Questions, listed at the end of this chapter. A line of questions might proceed like this.

What initial force or incentive attracts teacher-learners to the COTE? Why do they choose an in-service course, imported to Mexico from Great Britain? What values have they attached to this course prior to arrival? Do teacher-learners arrive with long-term wishes, hopes or expectations? Are these realized? How does participation in the COTE change teacher-learner identity as a person, and particularly as a teacher? What is the aim of teacher-learners for completing the course? Does the COTE represent a learning experience, or simply an end product credential to continue working, or an international 'paper'?

To even approach an answer to these questions I will be exploring in detail the cognitive processes and emotions of teacher-learners principally through a study of stories and voices. I would now like to discuss my own motivation.

### **Personal Motivation**

At this point I include my personal motivations in relation to why I am researching this topic of teachers' lives. When I first began teaching years ago, as an American in Guanajuato, my narrative for becoming an instructor was not all that different from EFL teachers in Mexico, or for that matter, throughout the world. I too 'fell into' the job as an EFL teacher. My early

American training in education strongly influenced my classroom-style and professional preconceptions.

Later, while working on COTE, I initiated my formal training as an EFL trainer. Likewise, I began to listen to the stories and experiences of my fellow trainees. I reflected on their professional and personal development, and recognized common threads between myself and the teacher-learners. These commonalities created a sense of empathy for me as the author of this book. This was the initial impetus for my research.

From these abovementioned reflections, I decided to examine the teacher-learners' identity formation and emotions, via an investigation of voices and stories. A number of scholars (Butt and Raymond, 1989; Coffey, 1999; Denzin, 1989; Goodson, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Sikes, 2001) advocate the use of the personal narrative as well as locating the researcher's position within the narrative. Because I am looking at identity and emotions, I chose to look at the personal side of the teacher-learners and how they interacted socially with each other. I am also part of this social interaction and so I have included my 'self' within my research including my autobiography and an account of feminist ideology. To do otherwise would be impossible.

Now, more than twenty-five years later, I still live in central Mexico and work at the University of Guanajuato. My involvement in the COTE course has grown, to include roles such as administrator, tutor, observer, and researcher. The personalization of who I am within this research adds to the understanding of what happens to the teacher-learners. I include my ideology (see Chapter 3, Martha's Ideology) and autobiography (see Appendix 1); both may throw light on my identity, my feminist beliefs, and my interpretation of those I am researching. In these pages, I shall analyze and reflect on what I have seen during a one-year training period from August 2002 to August 2003.

### **Story of Stories: Theirs and Mine**

In the data analysis and interpretation phase of this study in



Chapters 5-7, I will be constructing a narrative - an unfolding collection of many stories. The main protagonists are teacher-learners, who participate in an in-service training course imported to central Mexico. Minor characters include local tutors, administrators, and external evaluators. I appear in this story and simultaneously serve as its narrator. Understanding who I am as the author of this discourse will elucidate the trainees' lives and experiences. My story is also part of their story or better said 'our story'.

The many voices heard in this presentation shed light on what happens to teacher-learners as they progress through the COTE course, as their teacher identities are shaped, changed or transformed. The value of voices heard in this section offer implications in areas such as: teacher self-concept, teacher emotions, teacher education, and reflective journal writing. Furthermore, the voices heard come from varying cultural backgrounds - Mexico, the United States, and Great Britain - and are located in one central context - Guanajuato. The individual layers of each participant reveal the complexity and richness of teachers and teacher education as a socialcultural activity.

We can visualize this narrative metaphorically. Just as anthropologists piece together shards of pottery reflecting an ancient culture, I am constructing a multi-faceted mirror that reflects the images of many. The mirror never reflects a single unified image. You may never see the entire picture, or hear the entire story, but I am trying to approach, as closely as is humanly possible, towards a useful interpretation of the experiences of COTE participants.

I am conducting qualitative research in the postmodernistic era in an anthropological setting. My position strongly counters traditional objective inquiry. To close this section I offer the thoughts of several scholarly contributors who promote multi-voice presentation. Brandist (2001) introduces us to the ambiguity and uniqueness of the multi-view approach this way:

*No individual perspective is adequate to the whole in itself, for only the concrete totality of perspectives can present the whole. (p. 11)*

In another quote, Brandist refers to Bakhtin, who focused on how humans act and think, via language. Bakhtin's methods verge on literary interpretation of dialogue, and promote the study of collective forms of daily speech. Bakhtin encourages us to dig deep and go beneath the surface and look for the hidden agenda:

*Languages of heteroglossia, like mirrors that face each other, each of which in its own way reflects a little piece, a tiny corner of the world, force us to guess at and grasp behind their inter-reflecting aspects for a world that is broader, more multi-leveled and multi-horized than would be available to one language, one mirror. (Brandist, 2001, p.11, citing Bakhtin)*

Finally, I turn to Holliday (2002). He promotes exploration beneath the surface, and simultaneously links the importance of interpretation to the qualitative research venue:

*It [the qualitative belief] maintains that we can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality. Interpretation is as far as we can go... The pictures are themselves only interpretations - approximations - basic attempts to represent what is in fact a much more complex reality - paintings that represent our own impressions, rather than photographs of what is 'really' there. They are created by collecting a number of instances of social life. (pp. 5-6)*

In summary, I will present glimpses, images, and reflections, all of which represent my interpretation of the complex process of the teacher-learners' experiences, as they participate in

COTE. This process simultaneously represents the ‘textuality’ (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981, pp. 3-11; Trask, 1999, p. 314) of COTE participants’ personal and professional lives.

I construct this textuality using my roles within the COTE, and I position myself within this research, using segments of my own personal history so that the reader may understand the interconnectedness of our experiences and how I chose to represent these experiences. This chapter now continues with the Research Questions and lastly the essay contents.

## **Research Questions**

At this point I will clarify the underlying questions and issues of my research. The inspiration for my book occurred long ago during my experience as a local tutor, observer, and COTE course administrator and I viewed it as a ‘critical incident’ (MJ-21 - Martha’s Journal, entry 21; see Chapter 4).

From a practical perspective, the Research Questions were actually formulated early in the data collection and coding cycle but they evolved during this process. These are the questions that guided my inquiry throughout the research process.

In the following summary, the Research Questions are arranged according to the learning process of trainees.

1. What emotions and cognitive processes do teacher-learners go through during COTE?
2. What problems and struggles do trainees encounter throughout the course?
3. How does this teacher training impact the teachers’ sense of identity?

In addition, I examine what I will term Research Issues in relation to the specific problems of teacher-learners within their own context:

- A). What is the background of trainees before coming to the training course?
- B). What is the developmental status of EFL in Mexico?

C). What is the process of becoming an EFL teacher within this context?

I specifically look at one year of the COTE and track the trainees' experiences, identity formation, emotions, and self-realizations during that period. Particularly, I consider how the trainees view themselves at occupational entry in EFL, what inspired them to matriculate in the course, and finally their insights at course-end. This represents a small part of their professional and personal lives. The set of issues refers to the context of Mexico and particularly central Mexico and the specific problems EFL teachers in Mexico have. The Research Issues are meant to guide me, shed light on the multi-layers and provide explanations in the inquiry of the Research Questions.

## Contents

At the onset, I will summarize the contents of the individual sections in this essay, largely to orient the reader. A brief overview of the eight chapters follows:

*Chapter 1* presents my vision for this study, a general overview of related themes, and my motivation for conducting this research. I include my Research Questions and Research Issues.

*Chapter 2* introduces aspects of teacher education relevant to my study. I examine EFL teacher education from a socio-cultural perspective where knowledge is constructed through social interaction in a context. I argue that the sociocultural perspective needs to fully address the issues of identity and emotions. I describe teacher education in Mexico and the State of Guanajuato with reference to the COTE course.

*Chapter 3* focuses on educational and social contexts. I describe the State of Guanajuato, the University of Guanajuato, and COTE in Guanajuato. I include my own story - how I became a teacher (see Appendix 1), and the stories of course tutors. I outline key aspects of my feminist ideology and identity which explain my position as the interpreter. Finally, I look at

18 trainees who took this one-year course from August 2002 to August 2003.

*Chapter 4* covers the research methods used in this study specifically: interviews, journals (Martha's Journal, the Trainees' Journal, and a Shared Journal), observations, a focus group and informal conversations. I describe why each method was chosen and why my research was conducted with a broad qualitative ethnographic approach using three concepts as a basis for inquiry: voices, reflexivity and *bricolage*.

*Chapters 5, 6 and 7* explore the construction of teachers' identities and present data collected during the 2002-2003 COTE year. I also analyze and interpret this data. Chapter 5 covers how trainees became EFL teachers, and explores their motivation for taking the course. Chapter 6 identifies trainees' emotions and cognitive processes during the course. Chapter 7 offers an account of how trainees see themselves at course completion with insights into how the course influenced them.

*Chapter 8* describes the implications of my research, as well as the future of the field. I conclude with a discussion of how my research offers value in better understanding the emotions and identity processes of teachers in an in-service training program, as well as their constructed identities based upon a sociocultural perspective. I also offer suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

# *Second Language Teacher Education*

*The forms of knowledge that we produce and use are often closely related to perceptions that we have of ourselves and the projections of ourselves that we undertake. (Goodson and Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3)*

I begin my discussion and review of second language teacher education - L2 TEEd -with a quote from Goodson and Hargreaves that suggests a relationship between human knowledge and identity. Curiously enough, the words ‘perceptions’ and ‘projections’ carry a mirror-like reflecting quality. These words also lend a reflexive quality to identity.

In the sections that follow, I will analyze scholarly passages such as this, in order to lay out the background and interpretation for the investigation that follows. My intentions in Chapter 2 are to look broadly at the complexities of L2 teacher education in order to shed light on the lives of classroom teachers and how they develop as teachers. I will specifically examine teacher education in Mexico and Guanajuato using the COTE course as a reference.

Before going on, I would like to briefly summarize the material that follows. Chapter 2 consists of three major parts. In the first section I address, under the umbrella of teacher education, the key issues: ‘teachers’ knowledge’ and a ‘sociocultural perspective’ for teacher education. Then I delve into key issues for this investigation including: identity, emotion, context, and reflection.

In the second section, I examine EFL and teacher education in Mexico, looking specifically at the public school system,

under the auspices of the National Educational Program at the time of this study. I focus on how public school students continually retake the same levels. Another concern focuses on native speakers, who typically receive preference over non-native speakers for EFL positions due to their language command, rather than teaching skills (e.g. MJ-14-16 - Martha's Journal, entries 14-16; see Chapter 4). For many years, such precedence has dominated the EFL profession, throughout Mexico and worldwide (Duff, 1997; Freeman 1989; Freeman, 2000; Freeman, 2001b; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Johnston, 1997; Williams, 1995).

In the third section, I describe the framework of the COTE course, offered by UCLES, under the direction of the British Council in Mexico. My focus centers on why the COTE course was introduced. I look at its initial stages in Mexico and Guanajuato. Before going further, I shall conduct a review of the literature which consists of a background of L2 TEd readings and then specifically an analysis of the sociocultural perspective.

### **Background of L2 TEd**

Beginning in the mid 1980s, a change in the formal literature regarding second language teacher education became evident. Prior to this point, attention was focused on the methodology of ELT teaching. Books in print included: Celce-Murcia and McIntosh (1979), Harmer (1991), and Lewis and Hill (1993). All these materials came out with the word 'teaching' in their titles. They were filled with advice on how to handle the four skills, lesson planning, textbook selection, error correction, class management, etc. They represent the 'skills and techniques' or 'how to' books. As a young teacher entering the EFL profession in Mexico, I poured through these books in order to find answers to questions and also techniques to help me through my teaching.

At about this same time, a new focus on teacher education entered the formal literature. Articles began to address



the complexities in teaching areas such as: contexts, teacher awareness, decision-making, the affective domain, classroom psychology, teacher cognition, and reflection. In recent years, this trend has continued. Now, we can see a volume of published material in areas such as: teacher identity, emotion, teacher thinking, teachers' lives, and narrative inquiry.

This change in literature demarcates the point where teacher education is no longer considered solely, as a set of transferable skills. 'The mechanics' of what needs to be taught, and how it should be taught have been amplified with an emphasis on teachers and what they do. The shift mentioned above parallels the rise of the Internet age, multi-culturalism, and the global economy. A growing need to learn English has become evident. We now live in a world where second language learning represents the norm.

In this book I will examine teacher education, specifically in regard to the COTE course. Segments of the following documentation cover training courses from Britain. In her doctoral thesis for Canterbury Christ Church College, *The Reproduction of a Professional Culture through Teacher Education for ELT*, Baxter (2003) ethnographically analyzed the discourse of teacher education courses for English language teaching in Britain. In a Master's thesis for Aston University, *The Ownership of Change: Purposes, Perceptions and Observations after an In-Service Training Course*, Prudencio Bilbao (1995) explored the COTE course in Mexico. Turning to the context of Mexico, I include a doctoral thesis from the University of South Florida, *Community of Practice as Community of Learners: How Foreign Language Teachers Understand Professional and Language Identities*, by Ban (2006), who explores the fluid identity formation of Mexican teachers who participated as exchange teachers in the United States. I myself have published articles from my research and COTE course experiences. These titles include: 'Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and teacher training' (2005a), and 'ELT innovation in central Mexico' (2005b).

Other sources of specific issues and contributors that have connections to my research follow. These issues include: teacher education, context, reflection, teachers' lives, emotion and identity. After a brief background of these six issues, I will explore more in-depth teacher education based upon a socio-cultural perspective.

I begin with second language teacher education because it is the focus of this book. Contributions made by Freeman (1989, 1995, 2000, 2001a, 2001b) have aided the profession in understanding the complexities of teacher education, and also in questioning how the profession examines this topic. Freeman's work influenced the abovementioned shift from skills-based knowledge, to a sociocultural perspective. Freeman and Johnson (1998) questioned the 'knowledge product' and 'research-driven' trends (p. 399). They argued for a view of emphasizing teachers' knowledge and the sociocultural context within research. In 2003, Johnson and Golombek collaborated in defining teacher learning as being socially constructed, and negotiated within a context based upon Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Recently, Johnson (2006) mapped out a 40-year narrative overview covering the evolution of teacher education. She advocated the sociocultural view, which in turn recognized teachers as owning knowledge.

Part of L2 teacher education is context sensitivity, which promotes an understanding of cultural intricacies, and focuses on the role they play in the teaching-learning process. Hayes' (2000) study regarding ELT teacher training in Sri Lanka criticized 'cascade training' as marginally effective due to its filtering processes. To overcome this problem, he suggests that cultural sensitivity in project implementation should be considered to meet the needs of local participants (also see Hayes, 2004). Additional scholars include Stephen Bax and Adrian Holliday, both colleagues of Canterbury Christ Church University. Holliday (1994) is known for his work on culture-sensitivity, and also for creating awareness of the ideas of small and large cultures (1999). Both terms amplify the concept of

culture, by addressing the intricacies and prescribed ideas that culture carries with it. On the other hand, Bax (2003) mentions that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at times fails to deal appropriately with the cultural context and emphasizes the importance of contextual features in successful language learning. Bax (1997) reiterates this same idea of a context-sensitive approach, or trainee-centered approach for teacher educators, who frequently are outsiders to the environment, in order to foster more effective training.

Next, I examine reflection, and its roles in promoting teacher development and improving classroom teaching methods. Based upon Dewey's work and later Schön (1987), reflection has remained an integral part of education; yet it gained stature during the 1980s. The work of Calderhead (1993, 1998) aided the conceptualization of reflection and teacher development. Moon (2002) provided a critical overview of reflection; in addition, she offered ample practical advice on the applications for reflection. Moon and Lopez Bouillon (1997) outlined problems associated with reflection, and teachers' reluctance to use it. Reflection is not an easy skill to be taught or learned; we should question whether every teacher holds the ability to reflect. Wallace (1991) contributed to the field by relating reflection to teacher education, based upon Schön's reflective model, and offered practical advice for teacher training in reflection. Other scholars such as Gephard and Oprandy (1999) have made contributions, via an exploratory approach, using reflection to promote teacher development.

Having looked at reflection as part of teacher development, the theme of teachers' lives appears commonly in education, but only recently in ELT. Researching teachers' lives includes a variety of aspects prevalent to this research such as: voice, narrative, thinking, life experiences, motivation, emotion and ideology, to name a few. Ivor Goodson from the University of Brighton (1991, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2003) has extensively researched teachers' lives, careers and voices. This view has interlaced the personal and professional in the attempt to un-

derstand what teachers bring to the teaching-learning process, situated within a context. Huberman (1993a), in *The Lives of Teachers*, documented the development and career cycles of teachers in Switzerland. He supported the belief that teachers should retain an understanding of teaching complexities. In 1975 Dan Lortie wrote *The Schoolteacher*, a classic sociological perspective of teachers in the United States. Lortie defined the term ‘apprenticeship of observation’ in relation to the time students spend in class observing the teaching-learning process. Concerning teachers’ lives, Munro (1998) conducted a feminist study directed toward women science teachers. All of the scholars above have researched different contexts, using varying methodologies; yet a common point prevails; they all studied teachers in-depth to understand what instructors bring to the teaching-learning process.

Another area in teacher education is the study of emotion. I look specifically at the teacher-learners’ emotions during a small part of their lives (see Research Question 1, Chapter 1). Past literature has slighted this subject; only recently has it gained favor in education. A major contributor to the field includes Zembylas (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2005), who calls for renewed research into emotion via ethnographic studies (2005, p. 483). Three literature pieces on this topic, mentioned in this review, (Hargreaves 1998a; Zembylas, 2003a, 2003c) have linked emotion with feminist studies and subsequently marginalized the topic. Nias (1989), who researched primary school teachers, links the importance of emotion and a ‘mutually supportive social environment’ within teaching contexts (p. 153). Subsequently, Nias (1996) criticized the lack of research into teacher emotion, which she considered at the core of teacher understanding. Known for his research on innovation and educational leadership, Hargreaves (1998b) established a relationship between teacher emotion and teacher development, in order to improve educational quality in a changing world. Both Day (2004a) and Hargreaves (1998a) stand in agreement; teacher emo-

tion represents the core essence of teaching. All the scholars above voice a firm belief; emotion needs to be included in educational discourse.

Linked to emotion is identity, which is the major theme of my research. Emotion refers to Research Question 3 (Chapter 1). Evidence suggests that literature of identity is growing; however, I believe the topic remains highly controversial and under-reported. Norton (2000) studied identity shaping among immigrant women language learners in Canada. Her study was based upon second language acquisition, using concepts such as ‘sites of struggles’ and ‘power relationships’ (see also Norton Pierce, 1995). Norton argues for a reconceptualization of second language acquisition, to include the learner’s identity placed within a context. This book marks a growing interest in identity within ELT discourse. In 1997, Norton served as Guest Editor of the *TESOL Quarterly* on ‘Language and Identity’. In the opening article, Norton (1997) declared English as owned by native and non-native speakers alike. Many studies have tried to define the identity shaping process; yet, He (1995) in her study of university student counselees and counselors, captured the process, as a ‘continual emerging and becoming’ (p. 216). Likewise, Duff and Uchida (1997) studied the socio-cultural identity negotiated by EFL teachers inside Japan, with respect to teaching culture. The researchers discovered a complex identity shaping process, strongly influenced by a teacher’s past experiences. The work of Johnston, Pawan and Mahan-Taylor (2002) serves as a pilot for a larger study concerning EFL teachers in Japan. One episode described an expatriate teacher who created and shaped cultural identity within the adopted country’s context.

As previously stated in this research, I am investigating how the COTE participants’ identities were shaped, and how they assumed a professional mantle. In the following I will examine the highly interconnected issues of identity, emotions, context and reflection, within the Mexican environment. I now turn to the major issues of this chapter.

## Complexities of L2 TEd

*I remember as a beginning COTE tutor looking at the syllabus and thinking the task of training seemed somewhat easy and straightforward. My reflection was to just teach what was on the syllabus and this knowledge would transform the teacher-learners into teachers. This thought did not last long. The more I conversed with the teacher-learners and observed them in their contexts I quickly realized that the education process was more complex than I had expected. This reflection demonstrates how I also saw myself as the giver of knowledge to the trainees. I also realized I had a hegemonic attitude toward them as learners. Why did I think I could so easily give out knowledge to others and control this process? Why did I think knowledge was such a commodity and one to give and not share or construct? Sadly, I also assumed they did not have knowledge. The realities of being a teacher trainer abruptly shook my thoughts and preconceived ideas. (MJ-51 - Martha's Journal, entry 51; see Chapter 4)*

I begin with my own journal entry reflecting on my experiences as a novice COTE trainer. This passage sets the stage for much of the material that follows. My original idea to just teach the syllabus and transformation would take place suggests a simplistic, idealized view of education. With time and experience, I began to question myself; all of this would change. Two key words appear in the above entry: 'knowledge' and 'commodity'. In the sections that follow, I will examine teacher education from a sociocultural perspective or social constructivist view (Johnson, 2006; Johnson and Golombek, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wenger, 1998).

### Evolution of L2 TEd

To shed light on the recent direction that second language

teacher education has taken, I shall draw upon the work of Freeman and Johnson (Freeman, 2001a; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2006). They have narrated this history over a 40-year period of time. Their analysis begins in the mid-1970s just as 'skills-based learning' was losing favor. I myself entered teaching at about this time. Johnson (2006) has summarized this view without mentioning shortcomings.

*Historically grounded in the positivistic paradigm, L2 teacher education has long been structured around the assumption that teachers could learn about the content they were expected to teach (language) and teaching practices (how best to teach it) in their teacher education program, observe and practice it in the teaching practicum and develop pedagogical expertise during the induction years of teaching. (p. 238)*

This approach viewed technical knowledge of the 'hows' of the content area as essential for L2 TE. It might be referred to as the 'packaged goods' for any context. Skills, techniques and content were delivered to inductees. Trainees practiced them until mastered. According to Johnson, the problem of this thinking is that the effective practice of techniques or methods will somehow directly influence student learning. This approach may also be seen as 'top-down' directed. Research experts focused commentary primarily on content knowledge and student outcomes. They gave out guiding principles; teachers in the field were expected to follow them. Freeman and Johnson (1998) criticized this approach for failing to consider teaching or learning contexts, or the prior experiences of teachers (p. 399).

As a word of defense for the technical knowledge view, I know from my own past experience as a younger EFL teacher there were many times when the technical knowledge was what I needed as quickly as possible to solve a doubt or problem due to time constraints and/or the limitations of the context. I was dealing with basic issues such as time management, or a

native speaker's need to understand my own grammar for my non-native students' queries. At that period in my career I was insecure and did not have much time or support from fellow colleagues. Being able to tap into the technical knowledge as soon as possible helped me to survive those beginning years as an EFL teacher in Mexico and gave me confidence as a teacher who had 'fallen into' the EFL job in Mexico.

By the late 1970s, teacher cognition was beginning to gain ground. This view focused on teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decision as cognitive processes that shaped their behaviors (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, p. 400). This trend continued expanding through the mid-1980s until it eventually gained general favor. I now would like to examine this topic from several critical points of view. Hawkins (1994) called this a 'paradigm shift' with a focus on 'cognitive process'. And, he describes the phenomena this way:

*The field of teacher education is also experiencing a paradigm shift. It originally focused on a view of teaching as a technical endeavor – teachers needing to acquire and be able to employ specific skills and practices – then moved to viewing teaching as a cognitive process, with a focus on uncovering, analyzing and shaping teachers' thinking. (p. 4)*

Johnson (2006) has called this 'knowledge as a product' to 'knowledge being owned by teachers' a transition and describes the ensuing shift in research focus in the following:

*cognitive learning theories and information – processing models shifted the focus of research to questions about what teachers actually know, how they use that knowledge, and what impact their decisions have on their instructional practices...still focus on content knowledge and teaching practices, but teachers conceptualized as decision makers and were expected to ben-*



*efit from making their tacit knowledge and decisions explicit. (p. 236)*

In another excerpt, Johnson (2006) elaborates on how the change represents a point-of-no-return; how teachers should be free agents to make decisions within their own environment. In the following Johnson comments on this change:

*teacher educators could no longer ignore the fact that teachers' prior experiences, their interpretation of the activities they engage in, and most important, the contexts within which they work are extremely influential in shaping how and why teachers do what they do. (p. 236)*

From here Johnson (2006) adds a sociocultural twist to the recent history of teacher education. Teachers are now recognized as owning comprehension. They have created, negotiated, and transformed the knowledge from the professional and personal contexts within which they are positioned. In light of these changes, I call on research to focus on teacher identity and emotion as the next wave, the next 'paradigm shift'.

### **The 'Banking' Concept and 'Knowledge as a Product'**

Having discussed the evolution of L2 TEd, which includes the sociocultural twist and 'knowledge product' concept, I will analyze this concept, particularly as it relates to L2 TEd. To do this, I will examine two critics from the education field (Freire and hooks), as a preface to the concepts offered by two critics from the L2 TEd field (Freeman and Johnson). All of the individuals above encourage holistic learning and they question the 'knowledge product' idea. Freire and hooks use the 'banking' term, while Freeman and Johnson use the terms 'knowledge transmission' or 'knowledge as a product'. I will consider each in turn.

Freire (2000) criticizes education as a 'banking' system, and frequently uses the words 'fill', 'containers', and 'receptacles' in a 'banking' context (p. 72). Freire refers to learners, who go to the 'bank', to take out 'money' or in other words, a metaphor where information and knowledge have been reduced to a commodity transfer. He denounces the 'banking' educational system as top-down oppressive (p. 73). To use a different metaphor from other scholarly sources, teacher education represents more than simply learning how to 'fill the mug from the jug' at the information well (Dadds, 2001, p. 50; Freire, 2000; Roberts, 1998, p. 2; Tedick, 2005, p. xv; Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 58); but rather, it concerns preparing learners to make choices as to why and how to creatively fill the mug.

Along these lines, hooks (1994) also emphasizes the need for teachers to go beyond the 'banking' system-concept, so they and their learners may become critical thinkers (p. 5). She urges teachers to educate their learners holistically, and 'to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth' of their learners. (p. 13). She supports Freire's criticism of the 'banking' system; and she encourages teachers to view their learners as active classroom participants, not 'passive consumers' (p. 40).

Having explored the 'banking' system concept according to Freire and hooks from the field of education, I shall now look at Freeman and Johnson (1998) and how they relate these ideas to teacher education. From the onset, Freeman and Johnson (1998) picked up on the previously introduced 'fill the container' and 'banking' concepts and began commenting on 'empty vessels waiting to be filled':

*Drawing on the work in general education, teacher educators have come to recognize that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about*

*teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms.  
(p. 401)*

The key point in the passage above is that Freeman and Johnson distinguish ‘empty vessels’ from unique individuals. The former are waiting to be ‘filled’ while the latter have backgrounds, beliefs and values that must be shaped into successful classroom teachers.

To go one step further, Freeman (2000) challenges the teacher education view, which regards knowledge as a ‘product’ (p. 2). He suggests that this attitude remains prevalently ingrained within the educational system.

*Seen as a product, we act as if teacher knowledge can be packaged and taught in pre-service teacher education, can be tested in teacher tests, and can be upgraded through professional development simply by introducing new concepts and ideas. (p. 2)*

The ‘knowledge as a product’ idea as expressed above echoes Freire’s ‘banking’ concept. Both views consider knowledge as isolated packages of goods that are transmitted or transferable to the learner. This seems almost like a computer that can be upgraded, memory expanded, and parts exchanged in order to get a better one - a somewhat dehumanized view.

The above criticism of the ‘transferable knowledge’ or ‘knowledge as a product’ idea seems reminiscent of how Freeman and Johnson (1998) define the ‘process-product research’ as being research driven knowledge. In addition, transferable teaching behaviors are associated to quantifiable learning results in one context. In the following one can see how the process-product research perspective tends to overlook teachers and does not take into consideration human exchange:

*[process-product research]...ignores and devalues the individual experiences and perspectives of teachers. In-*

*stead it creates an abstract, decontextualized body of knowledge that denies the complexities of human interaction and reduces teaching to a quantifiable set of behaviors... (p. 399)*

A gloss of the passage above suggests that when we reduce 'knowledge' to a transferable 'product', its underlying social 'context' is lost, ignored or negated. The authors also criticize the 'knowledge product' view as not recognizing the teachers' lived experiences and beliefs. Unfortunately, a social activity as complex as teaching cannot be simplified.

At this point Freeman and Johnson (1998) pick up the 'knowledge product' concept and try to pinpoint its origins. They begin by examining the gap between teachers and researchers in regard to 'teachers' knowledge' and then examine how teachers' thinking, perspectives, and contexts are neglected. Teachers' knowledge describes a 'process' that is complex and hardly predictable:

*Moreover, what constitutes teachers' knowledge is determined not by teachers themselves, or even by partnered or participatory examinations of their work, but by researchers who, in an effort to improve the scientific respectability of their work, view teaching as discrete behaviors, distance their conclusions about teaching from the contexts within which it occurs, and ignore the individual perspectives and understandings of the teachers who carry out the very teaching practices that they have studied. (p. 399)*

The passage above suggests that researchers have been the primary arbiters, critics, and interpreters of teacher's knowledge. Unfortunately the same 'critic-arbiter' trend has dominated the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences for years. This raises the old 'chicken or egg' question as to which came first. In an attempt to legitimize their studies, researchers have promoted

a scientific, detached, mechanistic approach to human activity, specifically in this case, teaching.

Another factor defined by Freeman and Johnson (*ibid*) contributing to the ‘knowledge product’ point of view concerns the gap between theory and practice. In this line of reasoning knowledge originated from theorists who researched ‘effective teaching’. Then they passed the information down to teachers, who had to apply it in the classroom. Freeman and Johnson disapprove of this ‘knowledge product’ power relationship. Authority resides in the hands of experts, rather than with day-to-day users. Research generated knowledge essentially prescribed policy in the field.

Many contributors support the ‘teachers’ knowledge’ in-the-hands-of-teachers point of view (Brumfit, 1983; Freeman, 1995; Freeman, 2001a; Johnson, 2002; Wallace, 1991; and Ur, 1992). They believe instructors hold the ‘inside’ track on lived classroom experience; and this expertise represents a valuable, untapped information source.

As a sidelight to the theory versus practice problem, I present a contribution made by Butt, Raymond, McCue, and Yamagishi (1992). This material reiterates the ‘teachers’ knowledge’ in-the-hands-of-teachers view:

*Teacher thinking, action and knowledge are of vital importance in the endeavour to understand how classrooms are the way they are. How teachers’ thoughts, actions and knowledge have evolved and changed throughout their personal and professional lives will help us to understand how classrooms have come to be the way they are and how they might be otherwise... (p. 57)*

Several key points appear in the passage above. First, the authors suggest that how teachers function in the classroom offers a unique analogy of the teacher-learner process. Also, the evolution of ‘teachers’ knowledge’ probably represents a significant element for understanding the classroom. Changes in

'teachers' knowledge' occur holistically in both personal and professional lives. Lastly, the authors observe that teachers' lives inside and outside the classroom cannot be separated.

While the gap between theory and practice has been prevalent for some time now, I do see the gap being narrowed with activities such as action research, reflection, and teacher research groups. As a reflection, I wonder if this gap is an 'us' and 'them' problem. I also see individuals who are teachers and researchers at the same time. As well, I encourage research focus to include both researchers and teachers working together in the quest of more knowledge for the teaching/learning process.

Having discussed 'teachers' knowledge', the question that comes to mind is: where does this knowledge come from? Johnson and Golombek (2003) have made contributions to the literature in this area and use the term 'teacher learning' in lieu of 'teacher knowledge':

*Teacher learning is understood as socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting (Bullough, 1989; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Freeman, 1996). Moreover, it emerges from a process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers... (p. 730)*

Johnson and Golombek reference the works of Bullough, Cobb and Bowers, and Freeman in defining the exact nexus for 'teacher learning'. It represents a social interchange, drawing upon an understanding of 'self, students, and subject matter' within a specific context - 'curricula and setting'. It could be further described as a constructed process where teachers and students bring prior knowledge, values, and experiences that are set within past contexts to learning. As well, Johnson and Golombek ascertain that it is a 'shaping' process rather than an 'imposing' one. Before moving on, I would like to look

at the prior ‘contexts’ mentioned above, and examine their origin.

Concerning prior experience as a student, Lortie (1975) uses the term ‘apprenticeship of observation’ in reference to the class time individuals spend as students, observing the teaching-learning process firsthand (p. 61). Teacher-learners bring with them a wide range of experiences, opinions, and ideas; all are situated within a context, or several contexts. As well, there are individuals who are arguably ‘natural’ teachers, ‘born to teach’, or have the ‘knack’ for teaching. Ultimately, all of this forms the base for an accretion of knowledge and experience, which is constantly changing and transforming itself.

Many formal contributors have mentioned the prior experience of teachers (Freeman, 2001a, 2001b; Freeman and Johnson, 1988; Freeman and Richards, 1996; Johnson and Golombek, 2003; Lortie, 1975). Butt et al. (1992) make reference to Pinar’s ‘architecture of self’ term in referring to the knowledge via experience that teachers bring to teaching:

*We gain personal knowledge throughout our lives. Experiences prior to teaching shape what Pinar calls the architecture of self, which consists of the contribution of the many elements of the private existential person, such as beliefs, values, disposition, feelings, guiding images, principles whether explicit, implicit, tacit or intuitive. (p. 59)*

The passage offers an existential view. We encounter struggles within our personal environment, we exercise free will, and we search for meaning; inevitably we develop ideas about teaching. These prior experiences provide the raw material from which teacher identity and emotion eventually form and solidify.

How the argument above applies to the COTE course can only be described as complex. Every new teacher-learner arrives for the COTE with some preconceived ideas about teach-

ing and learning. Certainly, experienced teacher-learners have their own previous years of classroom experience to draw upon. But even teacher-learners, new to the field, bring with them experiences and beliefs, primarily as former students (Bailey, Bergthold, Braunstein, Jagodzinski Flesichmann, Holbrook, Tuman, Waissbloth, and Zambo, 1996; Freeman, 2001a; Goodson, 1994; Lortie, 1975). Some teachers have taught in other subject areas. Other trainees' life experiences of learning English outside of their country form part of this knowledge (see Chapters 3 and 5).

In closing this section, I turn to another contribution by Butt et al. (1992) concerning teacher's voice. This material resonates with the previously mentioned ideas of identity and emotion. I cover this topic because the central focus of my research concerns how teacher identities form within the COTE course context. Within this research, voice is a primary way for investigating teacher emotion and identity:

*The notion of the teacher's voice is important in that it carries the tone, the language, the quality, the feelings, that are conveyed by the way a teacher speaks and writes. In a political sense the notion of the teacher's voice addresses the right to speak and be represented. It can represent both the unique individual and the collective voice; one that is characteristic of teachers as compared to other groups. (ibid, p. 57)*

Two key points appear in the passage above. First, the authors identify the political significance of the teacher's voice. Teachers have a right to be heard and represented. This is a straightforward argument. Second, the authors identify the tone of voice as the primary written-and-spoken language indicator of emotion. This may represent a direct way to investigate teachers' lives. Because the sociocultural perspective deals with socially mediated activities, social interaction, social construction, negotiation and situated contexts, humans play an important



part in this mode of thinking. Understanding the identity and emotions of those involved in this interaction is essential, and warrants further attention.

### **Knowledge from a Sociocultural Perspective**

As previously mentioned, in recent years teacher education has turned away from the traditional belief where content knowledge was mainstream. Classroom instruction meant giving out information to learners, and, learning represented ‘product transfer’. The sociocultural perspective positions knowledge within a social milieu. Classroom instruction entails non-ending thinking processes. Learning represents a complex developmental unfolding. This considers: how teachers construct knowledge and meaning; how they retain this information; how they function as transmission agents; and how they retain educational methodology. This change affirms that teachers hold a complex body of knowledge, gained from socially constructed experiences within a social context. Johnson (2002) describes this point of view in the following:

*constructed as a highly situated and highly interpretative activity that requires teachers to figure out what to do about a particular topic, with a particular group of students, in a particular time and place. And teachers and students and teaching and learning are shaped by the institutional settings in which they work. Teacher education, in essence, is the formal label we give to our response to the learning process. It describes what we do to develop professional knowledge among teachers, and it defines how we create professionals in our field. (p. 1)*

Johnson articulates teaching as a finely tuned interchange between teachers and students, regarding a focused topic. This interchange takes place within a specific time, place, and setting. Teacher education means learning how to conduct this

interchange, which is a complex task. The passage above contains social implications - the social context of teaching.

There are several terms in the literature that describe the 'knowledge construction' position. These include: socioculture, interactionism or social constructivism. Throughout my research I will use the term sociocultural perspective. This approach is largely based on the investigation of Vygotsky (1978, 1986). Well-known for contributions in child development, I have adapted his work and those who use Vygotsky's work such as Johnson and Golombek (2003), Lantolf (2000, 2003), and Verity (2000) to L2 TED. COTE teacher-learners interact with many individuals, and this influences how they construct meaning. Language represents the primary tool to mediate among people (ibid). Vygotsky's approach emphasizes culture and the role it plays with people and learning. In my investigation, I focus on the formation of teacher identity within the COTE course. In L2 TED, Johnson (1996) sketches out the sociocultural perspective:

*Researchers and practitioners have begun to recognize that what teachers know about teaching is not simply an extended body of facts and theories but is instead largely experiential and socially constructed out of experience and classrooms from which teachers have come. In addition, they have begun to recognize teaching as a socially constructed activity that requires the interpretation and negotiation of meanings embedded within the classrooms and schools where teachers teach. And finally, they have begun to recognize that learning to teach is a complex developmental process that is acquired by participating in the social practices associated with teaching and learning. (pp. 766-767)*

A key phrase 'largely experiential and socially constructed' establishes the tone for the passage above. The words suggest that teaching takes place via social interaction. Johnson articulates

on the nature of social interaction and suggests that knowledge transmission occurs in a highly mediated fashion, within a specific context. Finally, 'a complex developmental process' describes learning how to teach, and suggests that this represents a never-ending, evolutionary, folding out process.

At this point I would like to pause for a moment and question the above passage. I wonder if all learning is carried out through social interaction. In my everyday life I can think of an example such as memorizing a telephone number where there may not be any social interaction or negotiation. In the language classroom, some learners enjoy studying the grammar rules on their own and feel comfortable knowing this information, or a learner may ask for specific information concerning a grammar or phonetic rule and want exactly what the learner asked for. As well, there are learners who do not prefer to socially interact in a class. Is it safe for the teacher to assume that because this learner does not interact that he or she is not learning or processing the information? In the end, an understanding and sensitivity of who the learners are is needed as well as how to let the learner decide for himself or herself how he or she will use the knowledge.

In light of L2 TEd, Johnson (2006) recasts this in the following way:

*Research depicts L2 teacher learning as normative and lifelong, as emerging out of and through experiences in social contexts: as learners in classrooms and schools, as participants in professional teacher education programs, and later as teachers in the settings where they work. It describes L2 teacher learning as socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of the self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting. It shows L2 teachers as users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge who make decisions about how best to teach their L2 students within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts. (p. 238)*

Yet, two points are found in the passage above. The venues where L2 teacher learning takes place are located in many contexts: classrooms, schools, programs, and the workplace context. I would expand this list to embrace all situations where teachers construct their knowledge, whether personal, local, regional, national, or international. This includes everyday contexts such as the teachers' lounge, school hallways, conference rooms and our homes. The phrase 'creators of legitimate forms of knowledge' promotes a L2 professional legitimacy which only recently has garnered its position.

In light of all the previous material, I shall link identity shaping to 'socially mediated activities'. In this book, the epiphany represents a key point in teacher-learner identity formation (see Chapter 7). This refers to that moment late in the COTE course when participants assume a professional mantle. I refer to this as 'clicking' in Chapter 7. Johnson (2006) articulates the abstract transformation of self within the educational context in the following:

*Learning, therefore, is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal mediational control by individual learners, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity. (p. 238)*

The interesting aspect in the passage above concerns the locus, when 'external socially mediated activity' and 'internally mediated control' converge. This represents the transformation point or the moment when student-learners begin to act on their own motivations and with tangible objectives. Epiphany commences from the inside out.

Another point I examine related to the epiphany theme concerns 'confirmation' (Chapter 7). Teacher-learners who make important self-realizations late in the COTE course usually require peer approval. They often turn to contemporaries,

tutors or myself to verify their change. Roberts (1998) has formally commented on the relationship between social media-tion and identity in the educational world:

*Apart from the practical environment of an education system, we live within a personal environment of relationships and social exchange. Our sense of ourselves, privately and at work, is defined by our relationships. As teachers, the relationships we have with learners, colleagues and supervisors all help define our sense of self as teacher. Therefore, our development will be framed by the relationships and dialogue that are available to us. (p. 44)*

From the above quote we can see that we do not form holistic identities in isolation. Identity formation represents an ongoing process within a specific social interchange context. In Chapter 7 I lay out the ‘click-recognition-confirmation’ model.

Roberts goes on to use a ‘navigation’ metaphor in describing the unique path each teacher follows during their educational development. Again a holistic view appears. Teachers must concurrently manage their personal and professional lives:

*Teachers therefore have to ‘navigate their professional and personal lives with such a landscape [social landscape], and, as their landscapes differ, so will the course and nature of their development. (p. 44)*

Once more, the social implications are mentioned in the passage above, which refer to the social context of teaching. Each teacher follows an individual developmental path, largely due to his or her unique social milieu.

Finally, I close this section with a formal contribution to the literature by Freeman and Johnson (2004). In the following passage they link social values to a sociocultural perspective:

*The ways in which knowledge is structured and understood in each of these settings create and sustain certain meanings and values over time (Lightfoot, 1983; Sizer, 1983), and thus we believe teachers' professional learning cannot be understood apart from the sociocultural environments in which that learning takes place or the processes of establishing and navigating the social values in which it is embedded. (p. 121)*

Freeman and Johnson suggest that 'teachers' professional learning' cannot be separated from its host social environment. To echo Roberts' sentiment, as teachers 'navigate' their own teacher developmental paths, they may follow the social values embedded within the social milieu.

As a reflection upon the above discussion concerning the sociocultural perspective, I would question if all knowledge is approached in the manner in which learners make sense of it based upon their own lived experiences, their beliefs and their context. For whatever reason, some knowledge is learned or transmitted to people because it is the same knowledge in every context. Again I would like to use grammar as an example. Grammar is relatively straightforward and consists of rules concerning its usage. In this sense, teacher-learners would learn a large majority of grammar through the transmission mode and in practice they would decide how to put or not put to practice the grammar knowledge. I also wonder if all teacher-learners are able to make sense of knowledge in the same way and if we can expect them to make sense of all knowledge. It would seem that some knowledge in our ELT profession is transmitted to us and later we decide if and how to make use of this information – whether to make sense of it then or to make sense of it later, to reject it or to just accept it without question. These decisions are complex and ultimately depend on what the knowledge is, what the circumstances are, and what this knowledge means for the teacher and learners.

Having discussed the sociocultural perspective, I will now look at a variety of themes that are related to this perspective.

### **Multifaceted Themes: Identity, Emotion, Context, and Reflection**

My previously stated focus in this study centers on how participants form teacher identities within the COTE course. Throughout this study I will use the terms: identity, emotion, context, and reflection to promote my agenda. I shall define them in this section, particularly from a sociocultural perspective, and specifically in regard to L2 TED.

Much time will be spent examining identity. We will see that identity is frequently constructed in a co-formed, co-produced manner via social exchange. We will discover that the word ‘context’ remains nearly synonymous with the sociocultural perspective. Then we will see that many of the subsequent terms form interlocking relationships with identity. In the sociocultural world, identity and context form an indivisible pair when discussing teacher development. Likewise, identity, voice, context, and emotion frequently form a complex construction; although, the formal literature has under-reported emotion.

Finally I present reflection, because I believe it is critical for success in the field. We will see ‘self-examination’ as the key descriptor for reflection, and a complex relationship forms between context, reflection and teacher education. In light of this introduction, I now continue with identity because it is a main research point and refers specifically to Research Question: How does this teacher training impact the teachers’ sense of identity? (see Chapter 1).

#### ***Identity***

Within L2 research, a growing recognition of identity has appeared from several scholars including: Duff and Uchida (1997),

Johnston et al. (2002), Norton (1997, 2000), and Norton Pierce (1995). In this section, I broadly define identity, but always within a sociocultural perspective. I will analyze passages from authors in the field in order to investigate the nature of identity; then, I shall delve into how this might apply to COTE participants and myself. Secondly, I shall look at teacher identity based upon teacher development.

I begin by examining Norton (2000), who links identity with the human need for group membership. This represents identity at its most basic level:

*identity references desire – the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and the desire for security and safety. (p. 8)*

Affiliation broadly includes a wide variety of aspects such as: race, religion, nationality, gender, social class, ethnicity, profession, institution, education, politics, and family, to name a few (Hall, 2002, pp. 32-33).

Charon (1990) begins to outline the complex relationships involved in identity. In this case, identity is seen as a passage through the world:

*an important part of self-concept. It is who the individual thinks he or she is and who is announced to the world in word and action. It arises in interaction, it is reaffirmed in interaction, and it is changed in interaction. It is important to what we do. (p. 89)*

Several critical points appear in the excerpt above. When referring to 'self-concept', Charon assigns a projection, persona or wish-fulfillment component to identity. Charon also suggests that we reveal our identities via motivated actions. The author reiterates the word 'interaction' three times, in asserting that identity is constructed via exchanges with others. In summary, identity might be figuratively represented by a mirror that re-



flects who we are; how we see ourselves; how we perceive others and how other people perceive us.

The following quote by Johnston et al. (2002) offers a complex view of identity and one that articulates my own perspectives. The following excerpt recognizes four traits of identity:

*First, identity is complex and contradictory, comprising multiple, often conflicting allegiances and belongings. Second, identity is crucially dependent on social, cultural, and political context. Third, identity is to a significant extent established, negotiated, and developed through discourse. All of these qualities mean that identity is not stable or fixed but is rather dynamic and subject to change over time. (pp. 58-59)*

The use of ‘context’ acknowledges a complex construction where the sociocultural perspective is part of the context while identity formulates an identity-context relationship. We can also see how identity here echoes the previously mentioned ‘constructed-via-exchange’ quality. Finally, identity has a dynamic, ever-changing nature.

Concerning identity being dynamic, Burr (2003) offers her view of identity and links identity construction, voice, and the previously mentioned dynamic-change:

*Our identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us, and which we draw upon in our communications with other people. A person’s identity is achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different threads... All these [threads] and many more are woven together to produce the fabric of a person’s identity. (p. 106)*

Interestingly enough, Burr defines the raw materials for identity construction as cultural ‘discourse’ and interpersonal communication. The former term implies a language component

to identity shaping. The later term implies a context specific component to identity shaping. Finally, Burr presents weaving or fabric metaphors to envision identity as a continuum, rather than a discrete object. According to her, identity is something of creation.

According to Richards (2006) it is through the use of language that we expose our identity to others:

*every time we speak we reveal – whether deliberately or accidentally – something of ourselves and who we take ourselves to be. (p .3)*

Speech plays a pivotal role in how an individual discloses knowingly or not the essence of who this individual is. How one makes use of speech represents the identity of the individual.

Having discussed identity, I will summarize the many facets that we have seen. Scholars have recognized identity as a research topic only recently. A sociocultural viewpoint promotes an indivisible relationship between identity and context. Identity originates out of the human need for group membership. It can be seen as a projection, a persona or a mask for passage through the world. One key concept that frequently appears presumes that identity is constructed via exchanges with others, largely through culture, language, and communication. Identity is dynamic and ever-changing, and is perhaps best described metaphorically as a mirror, fabric, or weaving.

At this point, I shall leave theory behind, and investigate practical identity aspects as they apply to the COTE course. My focus centers on identity challenges, difficulties, or issues in the L2 world. I offer myself as an example. I am: Caucasian, middle-class, female, wife, mother of three Mexican-American sons, professor and program coordinator in a Mexican public university, Midwestern American expatriate living in Mexico, raised Catholic, politically Democrat, etc. As can be seen, I express my identity via affiliation to a range of social groups. My personal and professional identities have evolved over time;

but my cultural identity raises the significant issues. I do not share kinship with North Americans who hold a common history, language or worldview (see Norton, 1997, p. 420). In fact, I am an American who has spent half her life outside her native country, specifically in Mexico and in the Guanajuato culture. I work in a British language program. And, I was studying in a British PhD program. This only touches on the big identity issues within my life.

Having used my self as an example, I now focus on the teacher-learners and language affiliation, which is a key identity issue for many COTE participants. Each individual in this study brings a unique array of personal and social backgrounds to the COTE course. There are only three native speakers. For the majority, English is not their native tongue, but a second or third language. Others are considered bilingual. A teacher-learner's interest in learning English is largely based on personal significance of the language. Some identify with the language, and want to be known as English learners. Others want to belong to the group of English speakers or English teachers. Those who learned English in the United States needed the language for survival in the adopted culture. The unique point here is that trainees frequently identify themselves strongly with the English language.

Furthermore, many non-native speakers must overcome barriers in the construction of a new language identity. L2 studies may mean negotiating, adapting, or rejecting a prior identity for a new one (Davies, 2005). I, myself, have gone through this process. Despite language command, native speakers may not always recognize L2 speakers as group members.

Norton (2000) has commented on the significance of language affiliation and how language command ascertains identity in the following:

*it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains*

*access to - or is denied access to - powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. (p. 5)*

In other words, language represents the gatekeeper. COTE participants gain access to native speaking groups largely due to their language command. And, COTE participants gain access to the EFL profession largely due to their language command. Chapter 5 will discuss how an interest in English has influenced participants to take the COTE course or make career decisions.

Finally in light of the above interpretation of the role that language plays in identity, it is of interest to briefly examine professional identity and how we see our 'selves' within our professional careers as teachers. Day (2004a) offers these observations:

*Teachers' professional identities – who and what they are, their self-image, the meanings they attach to themselves and their work, and the meanings that are attributed to them by others – are, then, associated with both the subject they teach...their relationships with the pupils they teach, their roles, and the connections between these and their lives outside the school. (p. 53)*

Professional identity is not solely bounded by the educational institution, or for that matter, a teacher's personal sphere. According to Day (ibid), teacher's identity is linked also to students and the subject matter in regard to professional identity. Every sphere the teacher touches may become a context for accruing a professional identity.

Having discussed identity, I shall now go a step further and look specifically at teacher identity and how it relates to teacher growth. In order to do this, I will draw upon the cognitive progress of teacher developmental stages.

There are a number of models or schemes concerning teacher development which include: Bullough and Baughman

(1993), Colton and Sparks-Langer (cited in Crookes, 2003), de Sonneville (2007), Fuller and Bown (1975), Huberman (1992), Johnston, Pawan and Mahan-Taylor (2002), Kagan (1992), Katz (cited in Long, 1999), Maynard and Furlong (cited in Farrell, 2003), Pennington and Richards (1997), Ryan (cited in Nimmo and Smith, 1994), Maldrevez and Bodoczky (1999), and Sikes, Measor and Woods (1985) to mention a few. I shall look specifically at four: de Sonneville (2007), Fuller and Bown (1975), Johnston et al. (2002) and Maynard and Furlong (cited in Farrell, 2003) to offer a broad view.

To begin with I will present each scheme and then discuss the four together. Fuller and Bown (*ibid*) and Maynard and Furlong (*ibid*) both use stages and have similar outlooks concerning teacher development. Fuller and Bown (1975) delineate the teacher development stages as: 1) Survival; 2) Mastery; 3) 'Either settle into stable routines and become resistant to change or else may become consequences-oriented: concerned about her impact on pupils' (pp. 36-37). This scheme shows how a teacher moves from concrete concerns to more abstract ones (Stroot *et al.*, 1998). On the other hand, Maynard and Furlong (*ibid*) present teacher development in relationship to mentoring beginning teachers in five stages: 1) Early idealism; 2) Survival; 3) Recognizing difficulties; 4) Reaching a plateau; and 5) Moving on (p. 96). Concerning other views of teacher development, de Sonneville (2007) uses four phases instead of stages to map out teacher learning based upon the work of Meyers and Clark and Harri-Augstein and Webb (p. 57) in Table 1.

In the phase descriptions there is either a high or low level of competence and a level of unconsciousness or consciousness thinking. According to de Sonneville, the learner moves from 'passive assimilation' to 'transformation and awareness'. The third phase is open to possible change accompanied by teacher awareness and finally the fourth is unconscious internalization of the new behavior. Through this process acknowledgement is fundamental to teacher learning. De Sonneville (2007) defines acknowledgment as:

*the validity or recognition of the teacher, which comes about when teachers have the space to present their own perceptions of their teaching without judgments. (p. 55)*

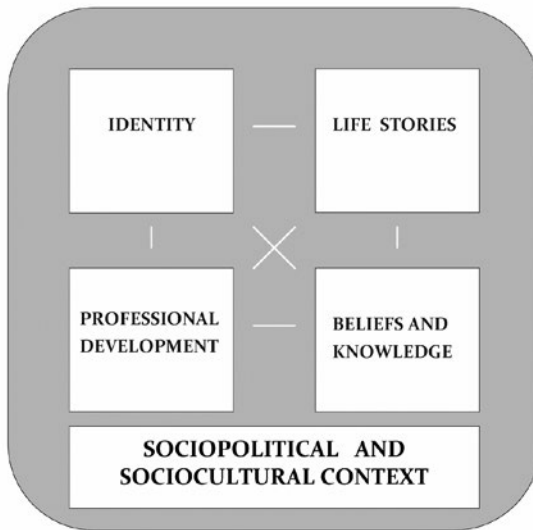
According to de Sonneville, acknowledgement is necessary for teachers to gain self-awareness which in turn helps in the articulation of reflection. I would add to this definition that the teacher should be given the space to present their own perceptions of who the teacher is.

**Table 1 Transformative learning process**  
(de Sonneville, 2007, p. 57)

PHASES	DESCRIPTION	CHARACTERIZED BY
1	unconscious lower level competence	Learners acquire knowledge of facts and skills, but there is little, if any, change of perception or interpretation.
2	conscious lower level of competence	The opportunity for change arises, as learners become aware of the discrepancy between what they think they do and what they actually do. They have the possibility to adopt a conscious, critical attitude towards aspects of their teaching.
3	conscious higher level competence	New behaviour can be tried out consciously and there is the possibility for change to take place.
4	unconscious higher level of competence	Learners have internalized the new behaviour and use it unconsciously.

Finally, Johnston, Pawan and Mahan-Taylor (2002) present a theoretical framework for teacher professional development based upon research in general education and in TESOL. Instead of stages, they offer a holistic view based upon focal points (teacher life stories, professional development, teacher beliefs and teacher identity) situated in a sociopolitical and sociocultural context (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 Teacher professional development (Johnston et al., 2002, p. 55)**



The above authors mention how the four focal points are interrelated within a sociopolitical and sociocultural context. Compared to the previous schemes, this framework differs with the inclusion of teacher identity and the life stories. The teacher is firmly located within this framework through identity, beliefs and knowledge and life stories.

Having presented the four schemes, I will now continue with the discussion. The cognitive development of both the Fuller and Bown and Maynard and Furlong illustrate how be-

ginning teachers move from struggling with their teaching to gaining control of professional techniques and skills to reaching the highlands of teaching. In both schemes we can see how teachers' concerns change. They begin by being concerned with how they must survive the day-to-day problems teachers have. Next they become aware of limitations the context has and not necessarily student problems. Finally they focus on their students. Through these linear processes the teacher understands the barriers he or she needs to overcome. Interestingly enough, Fuller and Bown recognize that a teacher may resist a change or may make changes according to student needs (see stage 3) while Maynard and Furlong's scheme does not reflect this same possibility.

Related to change, Schön (1987) suggests the cognitive activity of reflection is needed for development in one's teaching to take place. Similarly, Calderhead (1987) mentions that responsibility for what one does and critical analysis of teaching are needed for teacher development for both in-service and pre-service education (p. 270). If this is the case, teachers who do not make changes may not have the adequate skills to carry out reflection. Bengtsson (1995) also makes reference to the role of reflection in the following:

*The relationship between science and teacher is thought of as a relation between a passive teacher who applies scientific knowledge whereas reflection gives the teacher self-control over his or her professional tasks. (p. 25)*

Likewise this is reminiscent of knowledge from a sociocultural perspective (see Chapter 2) where the teacher makes sense of knowledge and decides whether and how to use the knowledge through reflection. This cognitive process also relates to Woods' (1996) study of teacher decision-making.

Because Maynard and Furlong relate teacher development with mentoring and reflection, I question whether this scheme is realistic to all contexts, especially those that do not have or



offer an environment for teacher support. This may be the case for some teacher-learners who work in a context in which they are the only EFL teacher and have limited or no contact with other EFL teachers or colleagues in other teaching areas

Many of the teacher development schemes given above do not take into consideration the teacher who has followed a different developmental path such as the ones in this study. In Chapter 1 I mention that the majority of the teacher-learners in this study have 'fallen into' the job. This means that their developmental path may be dissimilar than the previously mentioned developmental stages. I question if all EFL teachers follow this linear path of development. These studies look specifically at beginning teachers and not mature teachers - in age and experience - such as the ones in this study. The teacher-learners in this study had a wide range of years of experience when they entered the COTE - 20 years to ½ a year (see Table 2 at the end of this chapter, page 116). The average number of years is approximately 6.5 years for the 18 teacher-learners.

Concerning the use of stages, Nimmo and Smith (1994) criticize this use because in their opinion these stages do not represent the process of teacher development and the use of stages compartmentalizes parts of the process with descriptions that do not take into consideration the differences of individuals. Johnston et al. take on a holistic view of teacher development where the four focuses of identity, life stories, professional development and beliefs and knowledge are located within contexts (social, cultural and political). This framework breaks away from the other three schemes of linear stages.

Another point to consider is that three of the four schemes were designed with in-service teachers in mind while Johnston et al.'s framework was used for teachers in practice. In-service teachers hold different knowledge than pre-service teachers who have not had teaching experiences such as the ones in this study (see Chapter 5). Having 'fallen into' the job, these teacher-learners had different background knowledge than in-service teachers whose entry into the profession was based

upon their educational background. All of these trainees constructed knowledge from lived experiences throughout their lives. Bodycott (1997) makes reference to this knowledge in the following:

*Pre-service teachers enter colleges and universities with a wealth of knowledge and experience, gathered from a life-time of exposure to families, peer groups, teachers and schools. From this milieu of experiences hierarchical groups of mental constructs develop that assist a person describe the world and determine their actions at a particular point of time. The types of constructs that underlie pre-service teacher thinking include conceptions, imagines, perspectives, orientations, and theories. It is from these, that other subsets of constructs emerge, such as beliefs, attitudes and values (Richardson, 1996). (pp. 57-58)*

While the teacher-learners in this study were not pre-service teachers, the sources of knowledge that Bodycott mentions above also apply to in-service teachers. Similarly the cognitive and affective constructs are part of the trainees' teacher thinking as mentioned by Woods (1996) and Head and Taylor (1997) in teacher development. These complex constructs are the basis for identity and emotion formation.

Concerning identity construction, Beijaard, Meijer and Verlop (2004) offer a number of professional identity features: an on-going process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences, implication of both the person and context, harmonizing sub-identities, and agency (p. 122). Teacher identity is shaped through constant interpretation and reflection of experiences. Also taken into consideration are the individuals situated within contexts and an accommodation of identities. Finally these authors include agency which refers to how the professional has the ability to make decisions and take action (also see Burr, 2003).

To summarize the many facets regarding personal identity, teacher identity and the COTE course, applying identity theory to practice may prove challenging. Therefore, I call for more research into L2 identity formation, particularly in regard to non-native speakers; this applies to both teachers and learners. In this section, we discovered how context - every context and individual encounters - may eventually contribute to identity. We also discovered that language affiliation and language command represent significant means to verify identity and gain social entry.

In this section I have broadly explored the concept of identity and I then focused the discussion on teacher identity based upon teacher development. Including both identity and teacher identity shows the multidimensional processes of how the past and present blend and have an affect upon the future. In Chapters 5-7, I shall refer back to the aspects of identity, making reference to the abovementioned teacher development schemes and in Chapter 7 I shall offer an alternative teacher development scheme based upon the data that I gathered from this research. I now turn to emotions linked to identity.

### ***Emotion Connected with Identity***

*Emotions are at the heart of teaching. They comprise its most dynamic qualities, literally, for emotions are fundamentally about movement. Emotions are basically “mental states accompanied by intense feeling and (which involve) bodily changes of a widespread character” (Koestler, 1967). The Latin origin of emotion is emovere: to move out, to stir up. When people are emotional, they are moved by their feelings. (Hargreaves, 1998a, p. 835)*

I begin with the passage above that details the linguistic origins of the word ‘emotion’. In referring to Koestler, Hargreaves reiterates the traditional view of how one metaphorically sees

emotion as a barometer located within the individual - an instrument revealing thoughts, ideas, and mental states at any given moment. In this section, I shall link identity and emotion together within the discussion of teacher education. More specifically, I will link the sociocultural perspective with emotion.

Historically, educational research has not focused on emotion. This may be due to the 'knowledge product' idea, which does not take into consideration past experiences and social interaction among people within a context. Lortie's research (1975) offers a good starting point for investigating teacher emotion (Hargreaves, 1999, p. 87). Other scholars such as Day (2004a), Goodson (1981), Hargreaves (1998a, 1998b), Head and Taylor (1997), Nias (1998), and Zembylas (2003, 2002) have focused increased attention on emotion in teaching. All the individuals above have called for more research into this area to better understand the larger picture of teaching.

To begin this discussion, I draw upon the work of Zembylas (2003d), who offers in-depth comments concerning emotions and identity. The implications touch on sociological, anthropological, psychological, and educational fields:

*Whatever the emotions, voiced are the meanings of identity, of how the teacher self is constructed and re-constructed through the social interactions that teachers have in a particular socio-cultural, historical, and institutional context. The search for understanding teacher identity requires the connection of emotion and self-knowledge. This way of looking at emotion and teacher identity reflects an emerging concern with the role of emotion in identity formation and change. It also reflects an interest in how social constructs such as individual and group identity in teaching create and maintain certain ideas about teachers' emotions. (p. 213)*

Zembylas formulates a complex correlation between emotion, voice, context and identity. In short, emotion indirectly reveals

identity via voice, within a context. He recognizes the evolutionary nature of teacher development as a never-ending process of construction and reconstruction. In addition, Zembylas links identity shaping to social interactions within a specific context. In other words, our identities are co-formed in exchanges with other people.

Zembylas goes on to support the study of emotion, in relationship to identity, as an emerging postmodernistic trend and critical concern. Identity shaping is located within a group context. Certain social units such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and students share similar developmental processes. Lastly, he posits the concept that identity shaping is probably ideologically driven. Certain images, thought patterns, and ideas contribute to the formation of a specific identity. The analysis above best formulates my own thoughts and feelings regarding emotion.

Having linked identity with emotion, the next section examines this relationship from a social constructivistic point of view, which deals with affiliation. Zembylas (2003d) has offered these interesting comments on the topic:

*The literature that views emotion as socially constructed provides a counter-discourse to the theorization of emotion as a psychological phenomenon that is 'located' in the individual. The emotions that teachers experience and express, for example, are not just matters of personal dispositions but are constructed in social relationships and systems of values in their families, cultures, and school situations. (p. 216)*

Zembylas asserts that teachers' emotions do not form in isolation; but rather, they are constructed from experiences with people within culture, relationships and morals. Zembylas promotes a holistic point of view; the boundaries of emotion are not solely limited to classroom or school, but include family, friends, contemporaries, and colleagues.

Addressing the relationship between emotion and teaching, Hargreaves (1998b) comments on this association in the following passage:

*Teaching is an emotional practice that also involves heavy investments of emotional labour. It cannot be reduced to technical competences or clinical standards alone. The emotions of teacher are, in this sense, not just a sentimental adornment to the more fundamental parts of the work. They are fundamental in and of themselves. They are deeply intertwined with the purposes of teaching, the political dynamics of education policy and school life, the relationships that make up teaching, and the senses of self which teachers invest in their work. (p. 330)*

In the quote above, the phrase ‘reduced to technical competencies’ echoes how teacher education was previously viewed as an isolated package of knowledge, transferable from one context to another, disregarding environmental intricacies (see Chapter 2). Another important issue to be introduced is that emotions are embedded within the essence of teachers and teaching. They are rooted in the various cultures of education - politics, classroom, and school. Emotions and identity cannot be left behind when we enter the classroom.

Both Hargreaves (1998a, 1998b) and Zembylas (2003) relate teacher emotion to feminist studies. Both scholars mention how the caring aspect of teaching has been marginalized. Both emphasize the need to include emotions more firmly within educational research and discussion.

To summarize this section, I linked emotion with identity in regard to teacher education. Historically, the ‘knowledge product’ view has slighted research into emotion by removing the context term. This essentially situates emotion within the individual. A sociocultural perspective promotes a constructed view of emotion, as co-produced via social interactions within a specific setting. A holistic view encompasses all settings, not

simply teaching colleagues and classrooms. In Chapters 5-7, I introduce data that covers both identity and emotion.

***Teaching and Learning  
Situated within a Context***

*Those lives are lived in complex contexts in which personal, educational, political, and socioeconomic discourses all influence the way the life is told. It is only by recognizing these fundamental truths that we can begin to make headway in understanding the lives of teachers in our field. (Johnson, 1997, p. 708)*

In this exposition, the word 'context' appears countless times and its meaning should be clarified. I begin with a passage from Johnson, who defines context in relationship to teachers' lives. The interesting point above concerns the wide array of discourses faced by teachers. Johnson locates context within a social environment.

Having presented identity in the previous section, now I offer a complex passage by Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), which formulates more completely the relationship between identity, context and teacher education:

*understanding teacher development involves understanding not only the knowledge and skills that teachers should acquire; but also, understanding what sort of person the teacher is, and the context in which most teachers work. (p. 160)*

The authors quantify teacher education in three categories. These consist of the content knowledge and skills, the teacher's person, which refers to identity and lastly context. Hargreaves and Fullan (ibid) effectively locate context within a physical environment via the closing word 'work'. Both passages above outline the relationship between teachers and context. This acknowledgement reveals progression from the 'knowledge

product' view to one that recognizes environment and prior experience.

Johnson and Golombek (2003) have commented on how a sociocultural perspective broadens our view concerning L2 TEd in the next quote:

*The explanatory powers of a sociocultural perspective on teacher learning enable the field of L2 teacher education to move beyond simple descriptions of teacher learning as, for example, largely experiential, but allow it to trace the inherent complexity of those experiences and make visible what those experiences ultimately lead to. By capturing this transformative process, teacher educators are able to see the rich details of how teacher learning emerges out of and is constructed by teachers within the settings and circumstances of their work. (p. 735)*

The authors counter the 'knowledge product' view as simplistic, descriptive and experiential. By locating teacher education within a context, we begin to see the dynamic nature of its composition and emergence; we begin to see it as a 'transformative' process. For COTE participants, like the ones I study here, examining trainee context helps us understand their identity formation and learning acquisition.

Another author, Roberts (1997), sees contextually-based teacher development from a holistic perspective:

*Our personal development cannot be isolated from our social experience. While each learner-teacher constructs his or her own understandings in personal terms, this takes place in a social context, where our development is inseparable from our personal and working relationships, such that 'social exchanges are continuous and essential bases for advances in individuals' ways of thinking and acting' (Hennessy in Bell and Gilbert, 1996: 13). (p. 7)*



Roberts outlines several critical points in the passage above. First, teacher development and context cannot be separated. The construction process for teacher learning grows in a highly individual and personal fashion. And while we speak of personal and professional spheres, more likely, the reality represents an array of indivisible contexts. Finally, Roberts echoes the idea that the co-formed identity argument in ‘social exchanges are continuous and essential bases for advances in individuals’ ways of thinking and acting’.

As a side issue, Johnson (2002) has stressed the importance of considering context for curriculum design in teacher education:

*I believe the particular content and structure of any teacher education program must be decided locally. It must represent locally constructed responses to particular groups of teacher learners, who will be or are teachers of particular types of content, in particular instructional contexts, and in particular institutional settings. (p. 1)*

According to Johnson, teacher education programs need to be specific in regard to context. Content and structure should be decided within the local context; and likewise, content and structure need to be selected to fit the future contexts of teacher learners.

To summarize this section, I have formulated a relationship between identity, context and L2 TEd. The postmodern era abandons the ‘knowledge product’ point of view, and recognizes an indivisible relationship between teacher learning and context. This enables us to see teacher development as a constructed ‘transformative’ process, which is one that grows in a highly individual and personal fashion. This thought supports the idea that each of us faces a wide array of contexts within our lives.

Other authors (Bax, 1997; Day, 1999; Holliday, 1994b) also emphasize the importance of considering context. In Chapter

3, I address context specifically in regard to this research. I now turn to topics related to reflection and social discussion.

### ***Reflection and Social Discussion***

I present here two social phenomena that can potentially influence teacher development. Reflection implies the ability to look inward, meditate on one's experience, and arrive at a conclusion. Several authors have referred to the importance of critical reflection in teacher evolution, specifically Richards and Lockhart (1994) and Wallace (1995). Johnson (2002) defines reflective teaching this way:

*Reflective teaching is not a set of skills or tasks to be carried out; rather it is mindset, a set of attitudes, what Dewey (1938) called the attitudes of openmindedness (seeking alternatives), responsibility (recognizing consequences), and wholeheartedness (continual self-examination). (p. 2)*

Openmindedness and recognizing consequences describe traditional critical thinking. This refers to how we creatively anticipate and solve problems. These attributes are normally acquired in education. Continual self-examination uniquely describes reflection. This term alone makes reflection hard to teach or learn.

In the following quote Johnson (2002) links teacher evolution and context to reflection:

*A reflective teacher, Zeichner and Liston (1996) argue, examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice; is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching; is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches; takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change; and takes*

*responsibility for his or her own professional development. (p. 2)*

In the passage above, the author attributes much teacher verve to the heightened awareness and responsibility that comes from reflection. Johnson makes reference to reflective teachers taking into account the 'institutional and cultural contexts'. This represents a link to the sociocultural perspective. Moving beyond the 'knowledge product' idea means taking an active leadership role in the classroom and school.

Certainly, from my own observation, reflection represents an important self-analysis tool for educators. Yet several ontological questions crop up. I question if any educator can become a reflective teacher. As well, I wonder if reflection is an innate skill, or an acquired one, and I wonder if reflection can be acquired or if it can be taught. From a practical point of view, we may be overly optimistic to assume all teachers can be reflective.

The second phenomenon that may influence teacher development is social discussion. Social discussion is commonly referred to as networking, which is another avenue for teacher development. In the following passage, Solomon (1987) first offers comments on reflection, and then elaborates on the idea of social discussion:

*The most valuable lesson it [reflection] provides for teacher training is that we all need to hold out our ideas to other people, and receive their responses, not just to hear their criticism and approval, but also to understand better our own views of the world. Lack of social converse actually inhibits the healthy construction of personal beliefs because these only become real and clear to us when we can speak about them to others. (p. 271)*

'Our own views of the world' suggests context, and thus, a sociocultural perspective. Not being able to talk with others limits

how we build our beliefs. In addition, this acknowledges that our identities and beliefs are co-formed, co-produced via social interaction. Articulation of our views helps us make sense of these beliefs. Again, these ideas resonate with the previously discussed ideas on the sociocultural perspective and identity formation.

Certainly, from my own experience, the EFL teaching field presents some unique problems in regard to peer networking. Frequently, EFL teachers represent the only like-minded professionals, within a specific educational context or environment. So, they have no one else to turn to. Particularly untrained teachers, who ‘fell into’ the job, may find it difficult to discuss their professional concerns with teachers from other disciplines, and a strong sense of insecurity may inhibit them from voicing their deepest concerns.

Despite any ambiguity regarding the phenomena of reflection and social discussion, Johnson (2006) offers this recommendation for teacher education programs:

*Instead of arguing over whether or not L2 teachers should study, for example SLA [Second Language Acquisition, my addition] as part of a professional preparation program, attention may be better focused on creating opportunities for L2 teachers to make sense of those theories in their professional lives and the settings where they work (Freeman & Johnson, 1998a; 2004)... (p. 240)*

The author counters traditional scholarly debate in favor of practical experience. She recommends that L2 teachers be given space and chances to make sense of theories within their work context. This formulation reiterates the relationship between teacher development, identity, context, reflection, and social discussion. Teachers are called on to think, reason, analyze and unravel teaching concepts in a quest for self-identity. They need to explore and understand their own teaching-learning philosophy within their contexts. Johnson (2002) articulates

the search this way. Teacher-learners need to:

*individually and collectively question their own assumptions so as to uncover, who they are, where they come from, what they know and believe, and why they teach as they do. (p.2)*

Johnson asks teachers to be reflective or engage in dialogue individually and within groups.

To summarize this section, reflection and social discussion can play key roles in teacher development. Reflection represents a critical thinking skill, defined by the term 'self-examination'. A key question arises as to if everyone can learn to reflect. Perhaps the opportunity for more social discussion will help teacher to reflect, and teacher education can, or should, offer these forums. Several formal contributors have defined a complex relationship between context, reflection and teacher education.

### **Summary: Layers of Teacher Education**

As suggested above, L2 TE has traditionally focused on the acquisition of necessary skills and techniques while not taking into consideration social context, identity, and emotions. Below the surface of skills-set in teacher education lays a stratum of ideas and concepts in regard to education, specifically teaching. Frequently, an individual's former experiences as a student influence their success as a teacher (Bailey et al., 1996; Freeman, 2001a, Goodson, 1994; and Lortie, 1975). Also life and professional experiences are intertwined in teacher learning. Research into teacher emotions, identity and contexts - the deeper strata - perhaps represents a more complete way to understand teacher motivation and ideology; the only way to understand teacher's professional lives. Next, the second part of Chapter 2 is concerned with teacher education in Mexico at the public school level.

## Teaching English and Teacher Education in Mexico

Having addressed teacher education from a broad sociocultural perspective in the previous section and arguing the need to include identity and emotions more, I would now like to narrow the discussion to Mexico and describe how the Ministry of Education in Mexico views EFL teaching within its national curriculum. This discussion is based upon the time references of the COTE course 2002-2003. Examining the position of the Mexican government sheds light on the politics of EFL teaching and how teacher education is viewed. This information also sets the backdrop for Chapter 3 which introduces the protagonists of the stories: teacher-learners and tutors. This section links directly to the Research Issues, concerning EFL status in Mexico, as described in Chapter 1. In addition, I offer my observations regarding EFL education in: the State of Guanajuato; the public school system; and the private school system. This section specifically addresses how Mexican teachers have gained entry into the profession, how teacher education is approached in Mexico, and how native students are educated in English. All these aspects help the reader to better understand the social, economic, historical and political contexts of the COTE course situated in Mexico.

To begin with I will look at the position of the Mexican Ministry of Education in the time span of this research. In September 2001, Tamez Guerra, Director of the Mexican Ministry of Education, announced the National Program of Education, which emphasized short-term, quality goals for 2001-2006, and long-term objectives by 2025:

*The Ministry of Education of the new Mexican government [Vicente Fox, President of Mexico 2002-2006, my addition] is aiming for higher standards of quality in its plans for educational development... As the title [Reforma Integral de Educación Secundaria - Integral Reform of*

*Secondary Education] suggests, key policies include both a clear vision of equity, and higher general standards of quality. The new programme mentions both traditional indicators regarding illiteracy/literacy, desertion and coverage, and now, for the first time, officially recognized parameters for the measurement of student proficiency, quality of results, and the definition of a strategic vision. This strategic vision, it is hoped, will help the Ministry to achieve both national and international recognition of new, improved quality standards, within state educational systems throughout the country. (Translated by Thummler, October 3, 2001: summary and translation of Reforma article of September 27, 2001)*

Perhaps the single most noteworthy point in the *Reforma* article referenced above, concerns external evaluation (Reyes, 2001) in regard to this research. In 2000, The Ministry of Education officially recognized the COTE course (British Council for Mexico website, accessed Aug. 8, 2001) as the standard for EFL public school teachers. Individuals who completed the COTE course hold an internationally recognized accreditation; the rigorous external evaluation they receive during the course ensures uniformity of EFL teachers and programs in Mexico.

In 2004, the ICELT (In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching) replaced the COTE course. Eventually the new program became the COTE/ICELT course, with several changes in its presentation. The Assistant Director of ELT for the British Council in Mexico, Anamaria Aramayo, commented on these modifications in an interview:

*There are some changes, which I think will be good. There is a change of the COTE course itself, for example, they will make the language component a module so people can take the language component alone and get a certificate for that which will count. So they [UCLES, my addition] are becoming more flexible in that sense, which*

*is good... (I- Aramayo – Interview of Aramayo, April 16, 2002; see Appendix 2 and Chapter 4)*

In the interview above in 2002, Aramayo also mentioned her concern as to what would happen with the replacement of COTE with ICELT in regards to the Mexican Ministry of Education's recognition. Fortunately, the ICELT course also gained this recognition in 2004.

A noteworthy point, Aramayo was given the British Council UK cultural relations award in 2004 for her dedication. Only ten people worldwide received this award, which in turn shows the impact of the COTE locally, nationally and internationally. A recent web article summarized Aramayo's contribution. She,

*played a key role in organising specialised teacher training for 4,500 Mexican university English teachers [COTE courses – my addition], was instrumental in setting up 33 learning resource centres around the country, and negotiated for a major distance learning course. (Guardian, Nov. 5, 2004)*

The number of teachers trained increases each year. In addition, she became a Member of the British Empire in 2006, again for her work in the development of English teacher education programs throughout Mexico. I include the abovementioned information because it shows the lasting force the COTE has had upon teacher education in Mexico. High program standards, evaluations and benchmarks continue.

### **English and the National Educational Program**

I shall outline how English is placed in the National Educational Program and discuss how the Mexican Ministry of Education views the teaching of English at the time of this study (1993 Plan y Programa de Estudios de la Secretaría de Educación -



1993 Plan and Curriculum Program of the Mexican Ministry of Education). This information illustrates how EFL is perceived and represents the realities of the Mexican context. The Mexican Ministry of Education's web page (Secretaría de Educación Pública web page, accessed June 30, 2002) lists the national educational program by content subject areas. The foreign language subdivision maps out the corresponding educational philosophy. Spanish, the native language, receives priority at preschool and primary levels. Foreign languages appear as subject matter at the middle school level. Entering middle school, students begin studies in French or English; although English remains the dominant choice.

In order for the reader to understand the realities of Mexico and the position of EFL teachers in the public school system I shall now look at the English curriculum at the time of this study. This information sheds light on the relationship between COTE and the EFL profession. The abovementioned website lists Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a guide, for how teachers should present their classes. Interestingly enough, the Ministry of Education compares CLT with previous methods such as Grammar Translation, and Audio-lingualism. This information is also related to the COTE because COTE was initiated as a means to improve the level of EFL teachers within Mexico, (Interview of Aramayo, April 16, 2002; see Appendix 2 and Interview of Davies, Nov. 5, 2002; see Appendix 3 and Chapter 4), and much of the COTE curriculum is implicitly based upon CLT.

While linguistic competence has dominated previous language instruction in the last ten years, communicative competence remains the goal in the EFL curriculum. Such an ideology focuses on communication, rather than accuracy. Teachers assume the role of facilitators, and students participate directly using interactive activities, authentic materials, and learning strategies. This is mapped out in the Mexican Ministry of Education EFL curriculum during the course of this study from 2002-2003.

As a teacher trainer, I was pleased to read a description of how foreign language classes should be taught at this level, yet in actuality, this protocol hardly applies to most schools in Guanajuato. I include this information to show the perception of EFL in public education and the current reality of EFL teachers, in Guanajuato.

### **Realities of the Public School System**

Now I shall explore the realities of the public school system based upon my lived experiences as an EFL teacher and a community member of the local context. At the time of this study, my second son, who entered the public system, was not taught or tested with CLT. Unfortunately, large classes make it difficult for public school teachers to use CLT. Perhaps the teachers lack the training to use CLT. I am also curious to know if EFL teachers, at this level, know about the Mexican Ministry of Education's philosophy for foreign languages. I question whether teachers follow the ministry guidelines, or whether most teachers have received training to follow the national curriculum. It is not my wish to defend or promote CLT, but to recount what has happened within the context and also to show the realities of public school EFL teachers.

These observations stem from my expectations as an American, who passed through the United States public school systems; and they are certainly different from the reality of the Mexican public school system. Ideally, national curricula and classroom practice should be directly linked. Yet, Mexican classrooms offer limited space for a typical class of 50 students. Direct personal contact in the Mexican public school system, I feel, is limited, compared to my own early education. Classes in Mexico begin early, at eight in the morning, and end at one in the afternoon. Frequently, the same grounds and facilities are used by another school in the afternoon, disallowing for extracurricular activities.

## Why CLT is not Followed

The abovementioned realities show us what Mexican teachers face within their social context and now I offer my perspectives, as to why CLT is not carried out in the public school system. This information is given to show the actuality of the context. Including this relates to the previous description of EFL in the National Educational Program and shows a view of EFL teachers in Mexico.

I have come about these observations because I frequently have contact with English teachers throughout the State of Guanajuato in various ways. First, this has been via the teacher training programs offered by the University of Guanajuato. Second, I meet teachers at the local and national EFL conferences I attend. Third, I proctor entrance exams and give interviews for the national program, SEPA Inglés (see SEPA Inglés web page, accessed Feb. 26, 2006). This program, funded by the Mexican Ministry of Education and supported by the British Council, Latin American Institute for Educational Communication (ILCE - Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and UCLES, was initiated to elevate the level of English for students and teachers offered throughout Mexico and is still in operation. Learners receive input in the English language and other middle school subjects via distance and self-directed learning. EFL teachers, who desire to become learning counselors, aid the learners. Final teacher evaluations are carried out via a written exam and a short interview.

For several years, I bi-annually evaluated possible EFL teachers throughout the State of Guanajuato who were candidates for the positions of learning counselors. One exam question asked teachers to describe a communicative activity. From their responses, I realized most of these teachers were not familiar with CLT, yet they frequently held degrees from a national teachers' college with a specialization in language teaching.

During the interviews, I spoke with EFL teachers whose English did not meet the COTE course requirements; yet, they had taught classes in the public school system. Some individuals could not defend themselves in the English language; others had adequate command-of-language, but minimal formal EFL training. Again they represent people who have ‘fallen into’ the job as a teacher.

Based on this experience, I question whether many English teachers in the public school system use CLT, and, as a concerned parent of public school children, and a professional in the EFL field, I can surmise why. English, as a subject matter, receives little emphasis in public schools. Frequently EFL teachers do not have a good command-of-language. They are often assigned English classes to teach, as a supplement to the courses they must teach, such as Spanish, Math and Science. They ‘fell into’ teaching English largely because they were available, and needed subjects to fill their total number of hours.

The Mexican Ministry of Education has incorporated CLT within its curriculum in theory; yet, for the above reasons CLT is not uniformly practiced. More time, effort and training programs could resolve these problems until ultimately the gap between theory and practice narrows. Or the national EFL curriculum needs to be adjusted to realistically portray the context of Mexican public schools. While CLT may look good on paper, one should be careful to not impose a specific methodology onto a context that can not meet these needs.

### **Public School System and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)**

This section elucidates briefly how English is taught in the Guanajuato public school system at all levels: preschool, primary, middle school, and high school. Both the State of Guanajuato and Mexico in general serve as reference points.

I shall begin with an English program called START for public school children at the primary level. According to Eu-

genia Saldaña (2002), Operative Coordinator of the START program for the State of Aguascalientes, the main objective for offering English classes to primary public school students is to help them learn English before they reach middle school. The states of Nuevo León, Aguascalientes, Colima, and Michoacán to name a few, have piloted the START program. While the START program is not a norm yet, it does show concern for the continuence of English throughout the public school system. For many years, English has been taught in the Mexican middle school system and recently English has been given at primary level in the public schools. What may be an obstacle to carrying out this program nationwide in the future is the lack of qualified teachers.

One of the first COTE course tutors in Mexico, Davies (2001) identifies primary school English classes as one positive starting point to promote more effective language learning, as is taking place in some Mexican states. Yet for nationwide advancement middle school EFL curriculum must improve by ensuring the continuity from one level of education to another, along with a reassessment of the required studies for middle school teachers. At this time, the Ministry of Education in Guanajuato does not offer the START program.

### **Public School System in the State of Guanajuato**

To understand EFL teaching issues, within the public school system and in the State of Guanajuato, I offer a brief academic overview. Because my research is positioned in Guanajuato, it is essential to address this public school system. This also refers back to the Research Issues concerning the specific problems of teacher-learners within their own context (Chapter 1). Again, I offer this information in order to explain the realities of the social context. The linear progression of student advancement, through grades and levels, looks like this: 1) Three years of preschool, covering the age bracket four-to-six years; 2) Six years of primary

instruction; 3) Three years of middle school, frequently referred to as secondary school; and 4) Three years of high school.

Students in the Guanajuato public school system usually begin their exposure to English in middle school. They use a textbook, specifically correlated to the Mexican Ministry of Education's national English curriculum. Levels are organized with a time schedule for each level. Content includes: functions and examples, communicative activities, grammatical structures, vocabulary and learning strategies. Learners start with a typical first lesson like, 'What is your name?' and 'Where are you from?'; followed by the verb 'to be' with adjectives; next come the tenses: present simple, past tense, and present perfect.

### ***'Start All Over Again'***

Interestingly enough, after three years of middle school English, students enter high school. They begin the process again, essentially with the same structures. Or alternatively, they can study high school English for two semesters of 136 hours approximately at the University of Guanajuato.

From a scholarly point of view, Davies (2001), in regard to future university students, reiterates that,

*most school-learners take little English with them into higher education and usually 'start all over again' in 'common core' courses...common core English in higher education was introduced some years ago as a wide-spread response to the continuing failure of school ELT. (p. 44)*

Certainly, this has been the case for years in the State of Guanajuato. Students eventually arrive at the Language School of the University of Guanajuato, and they 'do it again' for the third time. Perhaps for the first time, they are exposed to CLT and tested on speaking and listening skills. By now, they have amassed approximately 400 hours of English instruction over four years. These successive false starts and repetitions can only

discourage students, and impede their language development in the public school system.

### **EFL: Private Sector versus Public School**

Having discussed how EFL is carried out in the public school system, it is of interest to compare EFL in the public sector to EFL in the private sector to better understand all contexts. Historically in the private sector, primary-through-high school, English language study holds a marked presence. Bilingual schools can be found in larger cities that cater to elevated social classes. Certainly, this contrasts with the public school system, where English language study receives minor attention. In the State of Guanajuato, English is frequently considered an option, not a necessity in the public sector. Classes may be offered once or twice a week after school in primary schools, and are considered extra-curricular classes. Students pay for the classes. As an EFL teacher, I have observed an increasing interest in learning English through private classes, which shows how English has evolved throughout the years.

### **Native Speakerhood as Entry into the Profession**

A common myth once associated with the EFL profession read like this: ‘if you spoke the language, you could teach the language’ (Freeman, 2000, p. 2). Scholarly opinion bore this out:

*there is no standard entry procedure into the profession [ELT profession, my addition] (Howard, 1997, p.267)*

In this section, I outline how individuals have typically entered the EFL profession in Mexico, and worldwide. Hughes (1996) elaborates on these circumstances:

*In virtually every developing country, and in many developed countries as well, being a native speaker was*

*enough to get you employed as a TEFL teacher. Now employers are much more discriminating and will only look at teachers who have the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes to teach English effectively. (p. 22)*

Hughes takes a position that the preference for native speakers in the EFL job market has changed and at present more than one's language ability is required to obtain an EFL position. According to him, employers also consider teacher qualities and the content knowledge in future teachers.

Freeman (2000) mentions the consequences of native speakerhood as entry into the profession in the following:

*We have long suffered from the myth that if you can speak English, you can teach it. Thus, the value of professional knowledge about English language as content is severely downplayed, and competent, knowledgeable non-native-English-speaking teachers are often overlooked in favor of people who speak the language as their mother-tongue. Seen as a product, knowledge of English can be gained by accident of birth rather than by professional education. (p. 2)*

Freeman criticizes the knowledge as a product view because it gives preference to native speakers for teaching positions due to their birth in an English speaking country instead of their professional knowledge. Competent non-native speakers are disregarded because of their native birth country and their competence as a teacher is often ignored (MJ-14-16 – Martha's Journal, entries 14-16; see Chapter 4). According to this perspective, language is owned solely by native speakers and not by non-native speakers (see Norton, 1997).

Certainly, this was the case when I began EFL teaching twenty-seven years ago. Native speakers received job offers based on their command-of-the-language, irrespective of their teaching skills, or qualifications (Duff, 1997). So the myth -'if



you speak, you can teach' (Freeman, 2000, p. 2) - ran rampant in Mexico. Frequently, these native speakers taught briefly at the University of Guanajuato, then returned to their native country. Their aims were to learn Spanish while travelling under the auspices of the EFL teaching support system.

Williams (1995), an ex-English Language Officer at the British Council in Mexico, also directs attention to the status of untrained EFL teachers in Mexico:

*In some ways Mexico is a special case. Although it is not uncommon worldwide for a large number of ELT teachers to be untrained, this situation in Mexico was exceptional. More than in most countries there was a need for mass ELT training. Teacher training for English teachers was almost non-existent before 1990, with the exception of a few excellent courses. (p. 86)*

In recent years, the native speakerism phenomenon, as entry into the profession, has declined (MJ-14-16 – Martha's Journal, entries 14-16; see Chapter 4). More-and-more, an EFL certificate now represents the minimum for entry into the field. Massive training has followed, making the COTE course a benchmark for the profession; also the primary reason was due to the fact that the Ministry of Education, and the British Council validated, and recognized the COTE course in 2000. In the future this minimum will perhaps be raised to a BA in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Within public universities, the push has been toward teacher accountability. Degrees are now essential. At present, the profession seeks individuals with both language competency, and good teaching skills. All the factors above have helped EFL to become a more respected profession in Mexico.

At this point, I would like to discuss the two terms 'native' and 'non-native'. Holliday (2005) characterizes native speakerism as:

*an established belief that 'native speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology. (p. 6)*

Holliday (2005) criticizes the use of 'non-native' as carrying connotations of 'disadvantage or deficit' (p. 4). As it stands these two terms offer an image of binary opposition and do not allow for other variations. Traditionally one is either non-native or native based upon one's birth country. What is not taken into account is multilingual people who have not acquired the English language in the English speaking birth country (see Holliday, 2005). As with the case of the teacher-learners, there were a number who were born in Mexico, but lived many years in the United States. I considered them bilingual and native speakers. These individuals use both languages of English and Spanish without difficulty. As well I considered them bicultural due to their lived experiences in the United States. Concerning native and non-native speakerism, this is where the issues blur. Questions to be asked are how they see themselves and how others in each context of Mexico and the United States see them. Because of their language command, they were offered EFL jobs in Mexico, the same as native speakers. Within this research, I have mentioned how native speakers have received preference in job entry into the EFL profession over non-native speakers (MJ-14-16 – Martha's Journal, entries 14-16; see Chapter 4).

Holliday (2005) situates the complexities of these two terms in relationship to ideology within the TESOL profession. For many years, the two terms have been seen as binary opposites. Examples of such are: 'us' - 'them', 'western' - 'non-western', 'knowledgeable' - 'non-knowledgeable', and 'in' - 'out' of the TESOL profession. Holliday shows how bilinguals question their positions within this narrow classification of native and non-native.

Finally Holliday (2005) presents a summary of current elements of native speakerism and a change in position towards

a 'more mutually inclusive identity' (pp. 11-13). In the inclusive position, the power struggle of who owns the English language is open and more rights are given to EFL teachers working in their local contexts. Less preference is given to the native speaker and native speakers are asked to examine their positions as holders of the native language. Again the 'reduced images' of native and non-speaker are given more room for flexibility of identification. Holliday implies that this change has taken place, but more still needs to be done. In a world where there are more non-native speakers of English than native speakers, we can see how the idea of ownership has changed. Norton (1997) also makes reference to the fact that the ownership of the English language is not limited to native speakers but is open to any speakers of English.

In Mexico the gap between non-native and native speakers has decreased in the years that I have taught in Mexico, but I concur with Holiday that more still needs to be done in order for the profession to move ahead (MJ-14-16 – Martha's Journal, entries 14-16; see Chapter 4). EFL positions in Mexico are given to both non-native and native speakers. More and more non-native speakers are gaining force in the Mexican job market because of their expertise knowledge of the context and Mexican students, command of the language, and the increased demand for EFL classes.

### **Changes in EFL Training in Mexico**

Having discussed the foundations of EFL in Mexico and how native speakers have historically had preference in securing EFL positions, I now would like to look at the evolution of EFL training in Mexico. Scholarly inquiry commends these advancements. I include here comments by Davies (2001) concerning his view of Mexican EFL teacher training in recent years:

*Only a decade ago there was little available in ELT training apart from very short courses in language in-*

*stitutions, usually for prospective teachers with a fair command of English, and very long degree courses in universities, usually for school-leavers with false-beginner English. The former tended to condition trainees to follow a set method, while the latter tended to form them to wrestle with theory while failing to teach many of them enough English and practical techniques for the classroom. That has changed radically over recent years. (p. 44)*

Davies (2001) continues with observations on the COTE course and higher education:

*Language institute courses are generally less rigid, 'reflective' in-service courses available (in Mexico there were more than 3,000 graduates of COTE alone), and university degree courses are much better at actually teaching the trainees English and practical techniques. Apart from that, the number of degree courses has risen greatly, with almost all thirty-four state universities offering a first degree in ELT compared to only a few just five years ago, and many offering postgraduate courses. (p. 44)*

Davies mentions how Mexico has taken a more proactive stance in the EFL profession by offering more and more degree programs. I, myself, am a witness to this change. In light of the above quotes, it is evident English teachers are now becoming better educated, and prepared to meet the Mexican demand.

### **Change of Needs at the University of Guanajuato**

Having looked at changes in EFL training, I examine how EFL in higher education, specifically at the University of Guanajuato, has also made changes. This also represents public educa-

tion. This information outlines the evolution of EFL in Mexico and a dramatic change of status of English, in consideration of a growing world context.

Certainly in the past twenty-seven years, student motivation to study English at the University of Guanajuato has changed. Originally, students came for personal reasons. They wanted to learn English for an upcoming trip to Disneyland or, they felt a strong allegiance with the literature or ideas of English-speaking countries. Others were attracted by sounds, and wanted to understand the words in English-language movies or songs.

With the passage of time, globalization has fueled an exchange of world cultures. International business forms an integral part of most local economies. And, second-language learning represents the norm. From a scholarly point of view, as Howatt (1997) has noted:

*Any movement from one language community to another will have an impact on language learning. (p. 263)*

Due to the sociopolitical and economical movement between the United States and Mexico, English has grown in demand.

I present here two more-recent student motivations for the study of English. The first comes from the push for student participation in national or international university exchange programs. In 2001, the Institutional Committee for the Internationalization of the University of Guanajuato examined ways to foster world-diversity. The final document - *Instructional Plan for Internationalization 2001-2003* - endorses language learning:

*The number of students willing to participate in international programs depends largely on their ability in a foreign language. It is therefore vital to set ourselves the goal of convincing students of the importance of learning another language as an integral part of their international academic profile. (p. 13)*

Based on committee findings, the University of Guanajuato urges students to study a foreign language, in order to broaden their future international perspective. This factor has had a strong effect on language learning, specifically English, within our school.

The second concerns the North American Free Trade Agreement, commonly known as NAFTA. With a command of the English language, gained from exchange programs, students are better equipped as future international jobholders (MJ-31- Martha's Journal, entry 31; see Chapter 4).

Interestingly enough, as an EFL teacher, I find students strongly motivated to learn English, largely because they recognize the correlation between language acquisition and future job offers, yet university professors, firmly established in their fields, remain disinclined.

In this section I have presented the Mexican Ministry of Education's view of EFL teaching and the status of EFL in Mexico and Guanajuato (Research Issue B, Chapter 1). I offered my perspectives of the realities of public school English teachers in Guanajuato. I also take into account how native speakers have been given a preference in securing jobs in the past and how this has changed due to the COTE. Finally I consider how EFL training has evolved in Mexico and in Guanajuato. In the next section the COTE course shall be looked at in-depth.

### **The Evolving Story of COTE**

In the previous two sections I gave a broad view of teacher education from a sociocultural perspective and then narrowed the focus to teaching English and teacher education in Mexico. In the third section, I outline the COTE course: its function and evolution, its history in Mexico, and significance worldwide. In this section I shall also show how the COTE in Guanajuato has gained a sense of ownership of this imported program and what this represents from a sociocultural perspective. This in-

formation sheds light on what the course consists of and also sets the stage for the data analysis and interpretation of Chapters 5-7.

### **COTE Framework**

The COTE course is an international in-service program; one of many courses offered by UCLES. The COTE course represents an accepted credential for EFL teachers worldwide. In the classroom, the COTE course is presented in 150 contact hours. Program content includes: 1) Four practicals - observations by course tutors; 2) Six peer observations; and 3) Several written essays or tasks (UCLES, 2000). The course syllabus lists a wide-range of practical topics, such as: 1) Error correction; 2) Four basic skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing; 3) Course design; 4) Book selection; 5) Learner autonomy; 6) Testing, and more (see Appendix 4 for complete syllabus).

Regarding the history of the COTE course, Elaine Brown, the Subject Officer responsible for COTE by UCLES, comments on course evolution:

*COTE was introduced by the RSA (Royal Society of Arts) in 1979-80, but was taken over by UCLES in 1988, along with the other Teachers' Awards. The largest number of candidates comes from Mexico, and Brazil, but there are centres in many other countries, including Hungary, Spain, Turkey, Argentina, Greece, Peru, and Pakistan. (I-Brown - Interview of Brown, Sept. 7, 2001; see Chapter 4)*

Brown continues with the main objective of the course:

*The intentions of the COTE are to provide sound practical teacher training for teachers with a limited amount of previous experiences and/or training. An important point is that it provides professional development for*

*teachers working in their local context, so, for example, teaching practice is generally done with the teachers' own classes. (I-Brown - Interview of Brown, Sept. 7, 2001; see Chapter 4)*

The focus above centers on limited previous experience or training. UCLES has targeted the COTE course for teachers, new-to-the-profession. A total of only 300 hours of classroom teaching experience are required for course- entry (UCLES, 2002, p. 48).

Certainly, the teachers who currently sign-up for the COTE course fit this pattern. Frequently, they may have years of classroom teaching experience; yet, their TEFL training might consist of a three-hour seminar from a textbook publisher.

### **COTE Beginnings in Mexico**

Moving from a brief description of what makes up the COTE, I cover the evolution of the COTE course in Mexico, by examining the original project framework, in order to more clearly see the rationale for course initiation. I shall look at how and why this course was started in Mexico. This part offers the reader an understanding of how this course was implemented. My focus centers on the course's impact on Mexican teachers and the EFL profession. This information specifically refers to the Research Issues, concerning the status of English language teaching and EFL teachers outlined in Chapter 1.

Paul Davies, one of the first COTE course tutors in Mexico, shares his perspectives on the course history, specifically its relationship to the British Council in Mexico:

*Because the Instituto Anglo Mexicano had a long tradition of running RSA/Cambridge teacher training courses, I ran the first DipTEFLA - originally CertTEFLA - in 1974-5, with Richard Rossner running a concurrent one. Many DipTEFLAs and DOTEs [Diploma for Overseas*



*Teachers of English] were run over the years. When Cambridge brought out the COTE, the Anglo [Instituto Anglo Mexicano de Culutra – Anglo Mexican Institute of Culture] naturally took it up. The very first one was an Anglo/BC pilot course, in 1989 or 1990, with Julian Edge doing some of the teaching (it was actually more like a DipTEFLA than a COTE, with very high-level trainees). (I-Davies - Interview of Paul Davies, Nov. 5, 2002; see Appendix 3 and Chapter 4)*

Davies continues to explain how the original COTE was managed:

*The Council [British Council] started running COTEs in universities for the DGES (Dirección General de Educación Superior - Department of Higher Education) of the SEP [Secretaría de Educación Pública - Mexican Ministry of Education] in 1992 because many university English teachers were not up to the BAs being offered and the DGES wanted something for those weaker teachers also. (I-Davies - Interview of Paul Davies, Nov. 5, 2002; see Appendix 3 and Chapter 4)*

In the early 1990s, the British Council in Mexico began to pilot the COTE course, in collaboration with the Mexican Ministry of Education. The work was divided equally. The Ministry of Education funded the courses and the British Council organized and implemented the courses. Positive outcomes followed, resulting in the start-up of more COTE courses.

By 1994, the COTE course was implemented widely throughout Mexico, with the aim of training a mass of EFL teachers (I-Aramayo - Interview of Anamaria Aramayo, Aug. 17, 2001; see Chapter 4). By 1995, thirty-two Mexican public universities hosted the COTE course.

Subsequently, the Sub-Secretary of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Subsecretaría de Educación Superior

e Investigación Científica - SESIC) of the Mexican Ministry of Education approached an external evaluator to scrutinize the course effectiveness (I-Aramayo - Interview of Anamaria Aramayo, April 16, 2002; see Appendix 2 and Chapter 4). Reviews came up positive. Victor Machuca, the evaluator, asserted that the COTE course had a good level of impact of effectiveness and also represented an EFL innovation in Mexico. This evaluation also included SACs (Self-Access Centers). Machuca explains the various roles of those involved in these two programs - COTEs and SACs:

*The Ministry of Education invested a good amount of money for administrating COTE courses and developing SACs nationwide. It obtained the support of the public universities for offering the input for SAC centers and for getting human resources for the COTE program; and the British Council offered all the know how. (I-Machuca - Interview of Machuca, July 12, 2002; see Chapter 4)*

These numerous roles aided in the promotion of the two programs of COTEs and SAC centers throughout Mexico. In the next section, I will explain how these abovementioned programs were connected to each other under a larger umbrella of professional development in Mexico.

### **Mexican Advanced Professional Programme (MAPP)**

In addition to the Ministry of Education's evaluation, another evaluation was carried out by the United Kingdom government, specifically by the Latin America, Caribbean and Atlantic Department (LACAD) of the Department for International Development (DFID). I include this information because it elucidates how COTE made an impact on the EFL profession and also how the Mexican government set standards in this profession. Both also shed light on the context of Mexico.

The Ministry of Education and the British Council initiated the COTE under the umbrella of the MAPP in the early 1990s. Also part of the MAPP was the development of Self-Access Centers and upgrading of public university professors via Master's studies from the United Kingdom carried out in Mexico. According to Treffgarne (1999), the purpose of the MAPP was to raise standards:

*It is part of the Mexican Government's commitment to raising standards in English teaching. In consequence the programme builds on the Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) scheme, introduced by the SEP in collaboration with the British Council. It is also linked to the complementary SEP/British Council programme for developing Self-Access Centres (SACs) for language teachers and students. (p. 2)*

The University of Guanajuato participated in the three programs: offering of the COTE, development of a SAC and seven professors from the University of Guanajuato taking part in Master's studies from the University of London, Institute of Education. Of the six professors, three were awarded a Master's degree; yet at present, only one of the three works at the University of Guanajuato.

According to Treffgarne (1999), the global impact was positive and there was evidence of success in terms of scale concerning the MAPP. Treffgrave comments that:

*a 75% success rate...represents a significant success in terms of cost/effectiveness and cost/benefit. (p. 2)*

More teachers were educated in a program that was carried outside of the United Kingdom than if the teachers had studied in Britain. I mention the MAPP because of its link to the COTE, and it also shows the projects the British Council in Mexico carried out at that period of time. The MAPP echos the ideas of Aramayo to massively train teachers in Mexico.

## Motives for COTE Implementation

Some motivational ambiguity underlies the rationale of the British Council, and the Mexican Ministry of Education, in the implementation of the COTE course. Anamaria Aramayo, Assistant Director ELT at the British Council states it this way:

*We offered it to the Ministry because they requested a course of that nature and those were the times when there were lots of people teaching English, people who knew English but did not know how to teach so they lacked the training... The Ministry wanted university teachers to be qualified in teaching English. Up to that point what many universities had were people that spoke English, and had a BA. - some qualification in another area - but not in ELT. (I-Aramayo - Interview of Anamaria Aramayo, April 16, 2002; see Appendix 2 and Chapter 4).*

Interestingly enough, the COTE course was originally targeted for university teachers; yet, most participants came from the non-university, public sector. And now, through intervening years and evolution, most participants come from the private school system. As an EFL professional, I question whether teachers, at-or-below the middle school level, were ever considered in the original plan.

Despite these opening ambiguities, the COTE course has developed a successful relationship between the British Council and Ministry of Education. In 1991 the British Council began the necessary work to validate the COTE course with the Ministry of Education. By July 2000, the Ministry of Education moved to recognize the COTE course as an 'international standard that measures and accredits the ability for teaching English' (see British Council in Mexico web page, accessed Aug. 31, 2001). By September 2000, the Ministry of Education officially celebrated the announcement.

By 2004, the COTE course was replaced by the ICELT (see Chapter 2 and Cambridge ESOL web page, accessed Jan. 11, 2006). And by 2005, the British Council in Mexico announced that approximately 5,000 teachers have taken the COTE or ICELT courses since initiation (I-Aramayo - Interview of Anamaria Aramayo, Aug. 12, 2005; see Chapter 4).

### **COTE Impact in Mexico and Guanajuato**

By 1993, the British Council in Mexico began to offer the COTE course each consecutive year. This single initiative helped to transform EFL throughout Mexico from a job into a profession. Anamaria Aramayo, Assistant Director ELT at the British Council in Mexico, offers her views:

*It's difficult to tell about the personal impact COTE has had on people, but at least my feeling is that it had had a national impact on EFL teaching becoming a profession and the authorities recognize that. There are many institutions in Mexico now that have made the COTE a minimum requirement for their teachers and in that sense it has made an impact in knowing what kind of person you're getting... I also think that individually teachers do feel that they become more of a professional and they need more training such as COTE. (I-Aramayo - Interview of Anamaria Aramayo, April 16, 2002; see Appendix 2 and Chapter 4)*

Following the national trend, the Language School at the University of Guanajuato, began to offer the COTE course each consecutive year. The objective of the incumbent Director, Patricia Begne Ruiz Esparza, was to improve the methodologies of EFL teachers in Guanajuato:

*I arrived to the Centro de Idiomas [Language Center], and I realized that some of the teachers there had no idea*

*about how to teach. I mean just because they were bilingual, they could teach. We had to start with the 'professionalizacion' [teacher development] first to start with... I went to other secundarias and preparatorias [secondary and high schools]. The people who were teaching English had no idea... just because they could say two or three words in English, they could teach, and that was our reality here in centro [central] Mexico, especially here in Guanajuato. (I-Begne Ruiz Esparza- Interview of Begne Ruiz Esparza, March 11, 2002; see Chapter 4, Data Collection: Interviews)*

Begne continues to express her opinion of the above:

*that concept is totally wrong. You need to have the abilities, the skills of how to teach with certain methodologies...you need all the academic background...COTE was just the first step for them in their preparation...it was a big, a huge step... (I-Begne Ruiz Esparza - Interview of Begne Ruiz Esparza, March 11, 2002; see Chapter 4, Data Collection: Interviews)*

The administration responded favorably and considered the implementation 'a huge step' toward professionalism. According to Begne Ruiz Esparza, the teachers lacked skills and methodologies and even language in some cases.

From a practical point of view, the initiative established a local base of teacher trainers and observers for the University of Guanajuato. Several of these individuals went on to work in the COTE course and other university programs. Two course tutors were COTE graduates and later one of the two went on to do the DOTE (Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English). One of the observers was a DOTE graduate. DOTE is a more advanced course offered by UCLES, now known as the DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults). These three were non-native EFL teachers. Within the local context,

this represents a shift from the preferences of native speaker teacher to include more non-native speaker teachers.

After the initial six-year-run of the COTE course at the University of Guanajuato, and in light of rapidly changing credential requirements, the Language School introduced two new programs: 1) TEFL Diploma; and 2) BA in TEFL. The Diploma, a pre-service course, targets individuals with minimal or no teaching experience who want to improve their language competency. Participants frequently refer to the Diploma, in a 'Pre-COTE' context, with hopes that they can enter the COTE course after finishing the Diploma. The BA, a weekend study-as-you-work program, lets practicing teachers advance their formal education.

Out of reciprocity, the University of Guanajuato validates two-eight credit first-year courses for BA students who have successfully completed the COTE course. This incentive has attracted COTE graduates to the university who want to continue their formal education.

### **Sense of Ownership**

Interestingly enough, the COTE course represents an import to Mexico from Britain. Yet, through its long Mexican evolution and dramatically gained stature as an EFL teaching credential, the program has garnered a strong sense of Mexican ownership. Establishing a group of teacher trainers in Guanajuato gave us this sense of ownership within the program and within the context. This ownership also let us construct meanings and identity of teacher education for our context. In Chapter 3, I will examine these tutors and observers in more detail (see Chapter 3).

In 1994, I was trained as a local tutor in the second COTE course. The rationale behind my participation centered on economics. In the long run, it was cheaper for me to become a tutor, rather than bring in a British Council tutor from Mexico City. Initiatives such as this again attached a strong sense of 'local ownership' to the course.

My preparation included attending 150 course contact hours and trainee observations under the guidance of a British Council trainer. Eventually, I was called on to give some one-hour input sessions. From my very first course experience, I observed teachers and their responses. They would intuit realizations about teaching or their delivery style, and make changes from within.

After my initial training, I became regularly involved in the COTE course. My responsibilities slowly escalated. I moved through the roles: observer, local tutor, and administrator. I also attended the COTE course training sessions, offered by the British Council in Mexico. As I worked with a new group of trainees, I observed the acceptance or rejection of the COTE course.

And each year, I continued to wonder what the trainees were thinking. For myself, I wanted to understand the process they were going through and how they had become teachers. I also questioned if the COTE course made a difference in the trainees' lives. I also questioned why some individuals barely passed the course, others succeeded, and others attended the classes, but did not finish the written essays. I was determined to understand better the process they were going through, as well as their identification formation.

### **Imposed Ideas from a Foreign Country**

At this point I would like to pause and consider the following question within the teacher education discussion. One might ask how an imported course from Britain was viewed in Mexico at that time. Was this course seen as an imposed idea or product onto the Mexican education system?

On a personal note, trainees often refer to this course as getting the 'paper'. People are somewhat in awe at having a paper from a prestigious British organization. They proudly say they are studying in a British program. It sounds nice and prestigious just saying that. Some people do not think farther than



the 'paper' idea and may not question if this course is bringing imposed ideas into their context or if this course answers the real needs of Mexico.

When COTEs were started in Mexico, there were few options for teachers to study in this area at any level. As an example, I left Mexico to go to back to my native country to pursue a Master's in TESOL. Anamaria Aramayo (2002), Patricia Begne Ruiz Esparza (2001) and Paul Davies (2002) all mention how COTE was an answer to a problem in a context where there were few options offered for EFL education.

Because of that, teachers were happy to find that there was anything out there for them. And even then, it was from Britain. This carried all sorts of ideas of quality and seriousness. It was an internationally accepted certificate. Just the mention of this was seductive to a teacher where there were so few options.

The COTE was a beginning point for Mexico to offer EFL teacher education programs in collaboration with two foreign organizations (UCLES and the British Council). After a few years, state universities began their design of BA programs, and at the moment universities offer EFL Master's programs. In a sense, the implementation of COTEs jump-started the creation of degrees within Mexico (MJ-30, 31 – Martha's Journal, entries 30 and 31; see Chapter 4).

Because more choices exist than before and at higher levels (BA and Master's), more and more people have to decide if they want to take the COTE/ICELT or to go for a BA. Depending on the person, some opt for the BA because they want and need a BA. A side point is that taking the BA is more economical. On the other hand, others have a BA in another area of expertise; they choose a shorter program such as the COTE/ICELT instead of a four-year program.

Yes, COTE brings imposed ideas from another country that may not take into full consideration the context of where it is being carried out. This baggage comes with the course, but I would defend that the implementation of COTE nationwide in Mexico offered well-needed educational opportunities for EFL

teachers in Mexico and in turn this promoted EFL teachers to take a more solid position in the EFL profession. In essence, it made the EFL profession take more ownership of its future.

In the future, I wonder if the COTE/ICELT will be as popular or revered as in the past. It did what it had to do for the EFL profession in Mexico. It made EFL more professional and it was a starting point. It massively trained EFL teachers in Mexico (Aramayo, 2002). It made teachers want more and the Mexican government and Mexican universities responded to that task. The Mexican government has taken a more proactive role in attending to the needs of EFL teachers and Mexican universities have designed BA and MA programs in TESOL. As well, entry qualifications for jobs have been raised throughout Mexico. The COTE has offered more options for the teacher who has 'fallen into' job and the teacher who wants more development. Finally, more research is needed to answer this question. In Chapter 7, this aspect is touched upon again in the analysis of my data.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have explored the complexities of EFL teacher education based upon a sociocultural perspective. Teacher education has moved from the idea of 'knowledge as a transferable product' to where knowledge is socially constructed within a context. Both identity and emotion should be more firmly placed within the sociocultural perspective.

Later, I looked at how EFL teacher education has evolved in Mexico at the time of this research. I outlined the role of English within the National Curriculum of the Mexican Ministry of Education and how it is carried out in the public school system. I mapped out the realities of public school EFL teachers and how the majority of them had 'fallen into' the job in Mexico. I analyzed the problems of the public school system, specifically in Guanajuato, and also how the changes of the context and the University of Guanajuato have influenced EFL teach-

ing and learning. As well, I looked at how native speakers have traditionally had a preference in the job market in Mexico, how the COTE has influenced a change in this preference, and how COTE has also brought about a change in the EFL profession in Mexico.

Finally, I offered a framework of the COTE and its history in Mexico in relationship to the MAPP scheme. The reasons for implementing the COTE were given and its evolution through the years to the current ICELT course. I also showed how the COTE in Guanajuato has taken on a sense of ownership due to its use of local tutors in the course. Lastly I addressed the issue of the COTE being an imposed product from Britain and how the COTE has been a starting point for Mexico to take ownership of its EFL profession. In Chapter 3, I will explore the location of the COTE course in Guanajuato and its protagonists.

Table 2 18 teacher-learners in COTE Guanajuato. August 2002-August 2003

TRAINEE NUMBER	NATIONALITY	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS EFL TEACHER (Aug. 2002)	QUALIFICATION ACCORDING TO TRAINEE	WORK	NOTES
1	Mexican - American	4	Native speaker of English, prior experience	Private religious secondary and high school, coordinator	Bilingual, attended American public school, lived 34 yrs. in U.S. from ages 4 - 38
2	Mexican	6	One teacher training course	Public technical institute	Degree in hotel management, coordinator
3	Mexican	2	Diploma course, good level of English	Private classes, part time	Mainly works as translator, BA in business administration
4	Mexican	11	Primary education studies from national teachers' college, teachers' diploma from private language institute	Private primary school	Coordinator

5	Mexican	8	Past teaching experiences at a prestigious language school, past living experience in the U.S., Teachers' diploma from <i>Fast English</i>	Public technical institute	Lived 4 years in the U.S. as a Mormon
6	Mexican	9	None, only experience teaching children	Private institution	Worked for American companies in Mexico
7	Mexican	10	None, only seminars	SEPa Inglés tutor and extension program of public university	Lived 8 years in the U.S. and worked as a social worker
8	American - Dominican Republican	2	Experience as an English literature teacher, EFL teacher at <i>Inglés Individual</i> (national language institute), Spanish speaker	Public university	BA English Literature, Master's in Literature and Creative Writing, lived 31 years in the U.S.

9	Mexican	1	Majored in EFL from Mexican public university, courses from the Ministry of Education, the British Council in Mexico, and MEXTESOL (Mexican Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)	Private language institute and private university	Coordinator
10	Mexican	11	Diploma course (Pre-COTE)	Private primary school	National teachers' degree for primary teachers
11	Mexican	3	None	Accounting school of a public university	Lived in the States and Canada for 6 years, also works in another school doing administrative work, BA Business Administration

12	Mexican - American	4	None	Private religious-middle and high schools	Father is American, lived in the U.S. for 10 years, attended K-12 in U.S.
13	Mexican	20	Mainly because the trainee knows the language, training courses and experience	Public technical institute	Lawyer, lived in U.S. for 19 years, attended American schools
14	Mexican	5	Studied 1 ½ yrs. English in London, England, certificate of language	Public technical institute	Degree in philosophy and theology, worked in Ghana as a volunteer
15	Mexican	9	Ministry of Education - technician	Extension program of a public university	Visited the U.S.
16	Mexican	8	None	Public technical institute	BS Agricultural Engineering, lived 7 months in the U.S. studying English and working at a gas station

17	Mexican	3	None	Music school of a public university	Architect
18	Mexican	$\frac{1}{2}$	None	City culture department	Studying to be a lawyer, studied in Canada for one year, the youngest in the class



## CHAPTER 3

# CONTEXTUALIZING THE STORY:

## *Contexts and Protagonists*

*For stories exist in history – they are, in fact, deeply located in time and space... Stories then should not only be narrated but also located. (Goodson, 2003, p. 25)*

An important key word ‘located’ appears twice in the quotation above. Personal accounts and stories have a natural narrative quality to them; by this I mean, they are anchored in the time-space continuum. As listeners, we enjoy narrative presentations, for they allow us to relive the experience vicariously. In Chapter 1 I used the phrase ‘a story of stories’ to refer to the use of narrative as a way to represent the voices within this discourse and now I pursue this concept briefly.

As previously stated, in my research I am constructing a narrative involving the voices of teacher-learners who participated in the 2002-2003 COTE course. My intentions in this chapter are to set the stage as well as to identify key contexts and protagonists. In Chapter 2 the sociocultural perspective was outlined where knowledge is socially constructed within a context. Including information about the contexts and the social beings who are all part of the COTE helps us understand the sociocultural forces.

Recent trends in qualitative inquiry have promoted a ‘located’ or ‘interpretive’ telling. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have voiced some fascinating comments on this topic:

*Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.*

*These practices transform the world. (p. 3)*

Interestingly enough, we encounter above the keywords 'locates' and 'situated'. A gloss of this passage suggests qualitative inquiry represents an interpretive vehicle for investigating real world human conditions, rather than arguments or abstractions.

One of the reasons I present contexts and protagonists in this chapter is to create a more complete picture of the interconnectedness of the COTE (see Chapter 1). The emphasis here is on verisimilitude and holistic reporting. The researcher probes beyond surface data into underlying suppositions. The intent is to provide enough background and support material to reconstruct the research phenomena, so the reader can vicariously enter the experience and form their own unique conclusion. I now go about setting the stage.

First, the time reference for this narrative includes the specific dates of August 2002 to August 2003 and I will be examining events and circumstances leading-up to this bracket and course outcomes. Second, I require settings, specifically, the University of Guanajuato, situated in the City and State of Guanajuato. I will focus on the social-political-economic issues that have recently spiked the local demand for English speakers and EFL training. Third, I require a cast of characters; by this, I mean the key participants in the 2002-2003 COTE course. This presents some problems. As previously stated, I am a key player and participant narrator. Since my own EFL background echoes and parallels the lives of many COTE course participants, I present my own educational evolution in Appendix 1 along with an account of my feminist ideology, largely as a case for comparison and contrast.

### **The Contexts of Guanajuato: State, City and University**

I begin examining contexts by looking at the social-economic milieu within the State of Guanajuato. In recent years, the

growth of international business and worker migration to the United States has profoundly influenced the prevalence of English. And as a result, the demand for EFL teaching at the University of Guanajuato has increased, as it has worldwide.

Within the State of Guanajuato are located the City of Guanajuato and the University of Guanajuato. As state capital, the City of Guanajuato seats provincial administrative offices and agencies. The city relies heavily on tourism, local government, and the University of Guanajuato for jobs. The University of Guanajuato, a large public institution, offers academic programs including: bachelor, master's, and doctorate, yet job opportunities remain scarce.

Traditionally, the economy of the State of Guanajuato revolves around agriculture. Working-class families gain modest incomes, and lead subsistence lifestyles. In recent years, many natives have left the State of Guanajuato in search of migrant labor positions in the United States. Frequently, women remain behind, to care for family, while male counterparts go off to work.

Small communities of Guanajuato natives have sprouted up in California, Texas, Illinois, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Alabama, to name a few. Within these micro-cultures, workers have formed mutual-aid associations - 'Casa Guanajuato' or 'Club de Guanajuatenese' - whose main objective is to help Guanajuato natives during their state-side residency (personal communication with Directorio Estatal de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Guanajuato, Sept. 8. 2003). Some natives remain in the United States, while others return home to Guanajuato with earnings. With these funds, many families build homes, or buy necessities once considered unaffordable.

Recently, the Mexican economy has experienced strong industrial growth, largely due to the political-economic impact of the NAFTA. International firms have come to the country, and set up manufacturing facilities, employing inexpensive Mexican labor.

Following this trend, the city outskirts of Guanajuato have expanded comprehensively with international factories like: Gen-

eral Motors, Oxford Motors, American Axle and Manufacturing, Aventec, Continental Teves, Case Mexico Weyerhaeuser, etc. (personal communication with Directorio Estatal de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Guanajuato, Sept. 8. 2003).

English remains the dominant day-to-day business language. Companies seek to hire recent graduates from the University of Guanajuato with good English skills. Such organizations also want to offer language programs for their employees or executives. This industrial transformation has directly influenced language learning and the EFL profession.

In this light, future job prospects for university students, at any level, increasingly require a good command of English. The University of Guanajuato encourages students to participate in international exchange programs and believes that such activities, combined with formal language learning, prepare graduates as future jobholders. Consequently, the Language School at the University has grown tremendously (see Appendix 14, Photograph 2). Yet, as an EFL professional, I question if the University can follow through with the teaching of English at all levels.

In summary, this section outlines the local and regional Guanajuato contexts, in regard to social-economics, and the expanding EFL profession. As stated in Chapter 2, the COTE course has played a significant role in setting professional EFL standards throughout Mexico and worldwide.

### **Protagonists of the Story: Trainers, Observers, and Teacher-Learners**

Now I turn to protagonists, specifically the participants of the 2002-2003 COTE course. This information refers back to the Research Issues (Chapter 1) concerning the process of becoming an EFL teacher within the Mexican context. First, I present arguments as to why I included myself in this research and my ideology. Second, I incorporate support staff: observers, local tutors, and a British Council external tutor. Last, I offer a brief analysis of the 18 teacher-learners.

## Inclusion of Self within One's Research

My decision to include myself, as a narrator and voice, in this research, is influenced by the multiple roles I have within this research. I am, myself, a long-term participant as a tutor, observer and administrator in the COTE course within Mexico. And as stated in Chapter 1, two primary issues that this research focuses on include: 1) Status of EFL in Mexico; and 2) How one becomes an EFL teacher in Mexico. It would be impossible to speak of, or deal with, the COTE course in which I am involved, without making some references to myself.

Qualitative research, by its very nature, concerns that which cannot be fully measured. My intent in this essay is to present and analyze fragments of the mirror that reflect the COTE course experience. The inclusion of my own narrative establishes who I am, particularly in regard to the thread of identity, outlined in Research Question 3, Chapter 1. Narrative inclusion simultaneously reflects what I share with others in this collective story. In recent years, inclusion of the researcher as a trend has gained favor (Butt and Raymond, 1989; Coffey, 1995; Denzin, 1998; Goodson, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Huberman, 1993a, 1993b).

Such an approach ultimately implies confessionalism. Linguistic confessionalism might be defined as mining one's own life for subject matter or drawing on personal history for inspiration. Coffey (1999) elaborates from an academic perspective:

*There have been attempts to locate the self more centrally as part of the subject and context of the research, by treating the self as a unit of analysis. (p. 123)*

The academic community may twinge at this - Existential Confessionalism. Objectivity represents the traditional research preference, yet Coffey (1999) counters this position, by mentioning the responsibility and value of the author's visibility:

*At the very least, I am acknowledging that as we are part of the field, so we are involved in its authorship and representation. To remain silent is to deny our existence and our biographical place. Charmaz and Mitchell (1997) challenge the myth of silent authorship in ethnographic writing. They argue that as there is merit in humility and deference to subjects' views, and reasoned, systematic discourse, so too there is merit in 'a visible authorship'. (p. 126)*

In light of the comments above, inclusion of my autobiography (see Appendix 1) represents one successful way to conduct ethnographic research. From a practical perspective, via this venue, I can present my vocational observations. My own evolution as an educator exemplifies the professional development stages of EFL teachers in Mexico.

Finally, relating my own story may promote credibility and texture for the story of others, which I present later. Writing of my 'self' creates a sense of authenticity (Coffey, 1999, p. 123) and shows my involvement and engagement in this course. Including my 'self' within this narration shows how I saw what happened and how I see those that I am researching. It represents what meaning I have made of these experiences because of my roles within the course. The use of my autobiography (see Appendix 1) is also a communication tool to show the reader how I make sense of the trainees' experiences.

Early on I decided to include my own voice, along with the voices of many former COTE course participants. This stance counters traditional inquiry; whereby, the writer-researcher remains objective, speaks in a single voice, and does not intrude into the text (Coffey, 1999; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Reed-Dannahay, 2004).

The importance of voice cannot be underestimated. Gilbert (1992) outlines the significance of 'voice' from an educational perspective:

*The desire by educators to hear and locate a personal voice in a piece of writing can be read as a manifestation of the desire to identify a human presence in the words of the page, to locate a shadowy 'person' standing in the wings behind the text, to be convinced that a human will generated the production of the work in question. (p. 68)*

The passage above suggests that voice reveals character, probably via several vocal attributes, and most readers need to identify voice to help them imaginatively 'recreate' the text. Voice provides the central framework for the reader-listener dialogue.

In light of this, Bakhtin offers the following comment, '... there are no voiceless words that belong to no one' (cited in Prior, 1986, p. 55). Graves (2003) specifically elaborates on how 'selection' creates voice, and thus reveals character:

*Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing...that part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process. Take the voice away and the writing collapses of its own weight. There is no writing, just words following words... The voice shows how I choose information, organize it, select the words, all in relation to what I want to say and how I want to say it. The reader says, "Someone is here. I know the person. I've been there too". (p. 227)*

According to Graves, voice represents the writer within the writing process and is essential for the writing to live. As well, the construction of the writer's voice is what the reader associates with. Going beyond the definitions above, an entirely different view regarding the origins of voice and its nature are offered in the following:

*we need to begin with the idea that our culture speaks to us through many competing voices, among them*

*those of the home, school, neighborhood, and places of worship, of work and leisure, childhood and parenting, youth and age, friendship and love, individualism and community, of nation, gender, class, and race, as well as those of the various fields and methods that make up our ways of knowing. We need to think, that is, of a voice as a way of speaking that lies outside a writer, and which she must struggle to appropriate or control. Her voice as a writer will come out of the stance she takes toward these other social codes and voices, in the ways she makes use of the languages and methods of her field and culture. (Prior, 2001, p. 57, citing Harris)*

The selection above emphasizes the cultural influence on voice situated within social activities. This is reminiscent of the construction of knowledge and identity in Chapter 2. The writer's self interacts with culture, and constructs the writer's identity. A schema of experiences affects how the writer represents his or her voice. Because I am the storyteller of the trainees, who I am and my life experiences influence how I interpret the trainees' lives.

In this inquiry, as stated in my introduction, I will be presenting a narrative, told through my own voice, and the voices of others. As affirmed in Chapter 1, I am constructing a multifaceted mirror, a picture, or glimpse (Holliday, 2002) of events using a research interpretation of the COTE course.

My autobiography (see Appendix 1) is included in this composition because it represents my identity - who I am - within this research. Using my autobiography sheds light on how my identity was constructed and how this identity is related to how I interpret the teacher-learners' stories, voices, and experiences as well as the key issues of this research. This also embodies how I have come about to understand their processes, emotions, and identity formation throughout this course. The use of my autobiography also gives voice to my feminist beliefs and 'womanist' ideology (see Chapter 3).



Coffey and Delamont (2000) make reference to this in the following:

*The feminist concern with documenting the lives and voices of women can then be seen as part of a broader trend towards contextualizing social life through an appreciation of individual experience and biographies. (p. 61)*

I include my individual experiences and autobiography in Appendix 1 along with those of the COTE participants as a way to contextualize the teachers' lives. Relating my autobiography to the identity and emotions of the teacher-learners creates a sense of empathy for me as the story teller and allows me to delve more deeply into their lived experiences as teachers and individuals.

Selections from my autobiography demonstrate how a foreigner 'fell into' an EFL job in Mexico. Key points include how I eventually began to question my American perceptions of education, and subsequently entered the EFL profession. This material references the Chapter 1 Research Issues: What is the developmental status of EFL in Mexico? and What is the process of becoming an EFL teacher within this context?

### **Ideology and its Relationship to Research**

As previously stated, I am conducting qualitative research. So, my ideas, opinions, and thought patterns - better-termed ideology, an abstract construct - may shed light on my identity, and perhaps influence my outcomes. A formal statement of research ideology offers the reader an insight on how to interpret the study material.

Janesick (2000) has described the qualitative research phenomena this way:

*research is ideologically driven. There is no value-free or bias-free design. Early on, the qualitative researcher iden-*

*tifies his or her own biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study. By identifying one's biases, one can see easily where the questions that guide the study are crafted. The researcher owns up to his or her perspective on the study and may even track its evolution by keeping a critical reflective journal on the entire research process and the particular role of the researcher. (p. 385)*

In a very curious light, ideology may also have an influence upon the more practical aspects of research methods. By this, I mean the procedures for conducting inquiry. When a decision is made, an interview conducted, a personal history taken, ideology may become evident.

While the academic community has traditionally revered objective research, in support of deductive rationalism; in recent years, there has been a growing acceptance of qualitative research, as equally sound. Gergen and Gergen (2000) have commented on this phenomenon:

*as the postmodern critiques of validity have become more sophisticated, it has become increasingly clear that there is no simple means of separating method from ideology. (p. 1036)*

In this study, I assume the position of participant observer. Some of my ideology is documented via reflections in journal entries (MJ-14, 15, 16, 18, 29, 31, 30, 45 - Martha's Journal, see Chapter 4).

### ***Martha's Ideology***

In this section I will explore my ideology as a person in order that the reader can see how I identify myself and what this brings to the research process. This information also makes sense of my interpretation of what happens. Including this

information brings the reader into my sphere of thinking and understanding.

Like many of my contemporaries, I hesitate to call myself a feminist. I feel the movement should represent all women, and not marginalize any particular group. At this time, the term feminism carries lots of historical detritus. I shall now explain how I see myself as a feminist and what are pivotal issues in my ideology.

Prior to my TESOL studies at West Virginia University, I participated in several women's groups in art production and reflection in Guanajuato. Then, in place of a scheduled English literature class for my master's, I designed a special projects course on contemporary Afro-American women writers. During a survey of the material, I came across Alice Walker's (1984) definition of 'womanist':

*Womanist* 1. From womanish, (Opp. of "girlish", i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious. 2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow and our cousins are white, beige, and black?" Ans.: "Well, you

*know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time." 3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless. 4. Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender. (pp. xi-xii)*

The final definition - number 4 - strikes me most. 'Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender'. I will analyze this metaphor, as an exploration of my feelings toward feminism. I do not consider myself a radical feminist; rather, a woman in a man's world. And within this sphere, I am one of many women whose position is similar. I do not feel my rank is one of equality, but one of constant negotiation.

Lavender, as a shade, represents a variation on the color purple; lavender comes from purple. In essence then, womanism grew from feminism. Womanism represents a variation on feminism. Afro-American women introduced the term 'womanist', in hopes of applying the feminist concept, to all women on their continent (*Feminist vs. Womanist Discussion*, Mar.-April 1997; Feifer and Mayer, date unknown).

Historically, this term evolved because feminism was considered the exclusive privilege of white, middle-class women. 'Black feminists or feminists of color' derived the term womanism, to include all women, regardless of color, age or class. The term was meant to counter 'mainstream' feminism; and simultaneously expand upon it and perhaps, make it stonger (*Feminist vs. Womanist Discussion*, Mar.-April 1997; Feifer and Mayer, date unknown).

As a Caucasian woman living in Mexico, I feel the 'womanist' term best describes my ideology. To counter the criticism; how can a white, middle-class woman legitimately assume the mantle of Afro-American women; I would respond this way: the 'wom-

anist' term is open to all, and does not marginalize race, gender or age. In closing, I would say; I am a shade of a feminist.

My ideology influences how I see and interpret the teacher-trainers during the COTE year. These views create a sense of empathy that I have with the 18 teacher-learners. From a 'womanist' perspective, I do not want to think that anyone of the 18 teacher-learners is marginalized in this research, but each has a voice to share in this research. Because the trainees all encounter struggles within and outside of the COTE, I decided to look at how they survive and make sense of who they are and the knowledge they construct. I also decided to look at both genders and not one, which refers to Walker's (1984) definition 2 - 'committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female' (p. xi). Based on a sociocultural perspective, each trainee constructs his or her meanings of knowledge and identity. Due to the social situatedness of feminist and sociocultural perspectives, the power struggles of knowledge are lowered and the trainees take ownership of the knowledge (Coffey and Delamont, 2000). From here, I shall look at the support staff - trainers and observers - of the COTE.

***Support Staff:  
Protagonists of COTE Guanajuato***

Drawing upon the Chapter 1 Research Issues concerning EFL developmental status and the process of becoming an EFL teacher, I introduce key COTE support staff who have been involved in this course during my research. I analyze the evolution and educational background of these individuals. These materials probe more deeply into the COTE course history and personalities in Guanajuato. In addition, this material represents other social players within the context and the evolution of EFL teachers in Mexico.

My first year with the COTE course in Guanajuato proved stressful and demanding. As a result, for subsequent courses

I prepared auxiliary trainers to help me. The lineage of support staff consisted of four women and one man. Everyone was trained as a COTE observer for course practicals, and three of the five, as tutors. Training for the tutors included British Council (Mexico) workshops, sitting in on classes, and guided training tasks for input sessions. Additional instruction covered grading teacher-learner essays, and completing COTE course paperwork which was forwarded to UCLES at class end. Training for the observers consisted of videos and live observations with a British Council trainer or myself. The necessary paperwork to have these people be approved was done with the British Council in Mexico.

### ***Multicultural Trainers and Observers***

The first person trained was a Mexican woman, a participant of the first COTE course offered in Guanajuato. Originally, she lived in Cambridge, England, while her husband pursued his Doctorate. She studied natural science for several years, but failed to finish. Subsequently, she took the Certificate of Advanced English and Proficiency Exams from UCLES, and began to teach English. Upon her arrival in Guanajuato, she continued teaching English until finally she was offered a full time position. After completing the first COTE as a student, she was trained to serve in the course. She eventually went on to further her education: A BA in EFL offered in a distance-learning program by a Mexican public university, a MA (Distance) in TESOL from a British university, and a British doctorate. This woman represents an example of a non-native speaker who began with the COTE course and went on to further her formal education.

The second person trained was an American woman, who initially received a BBA from the prestigious Wharton School of Business, at the University of Pennsylvania. Subsequently, she went on to study for a Master's in TESOL, from the Institute of Education of the University of London, offered in Mexico in 1994, as part of the MAPP program (see Chapter

2). She completed her course work, but never her thesis. She received training to participate in the COTE course in 1997. Several times she expressed her disenchantment with the Master's program. She claimed to have learned more about teaching in the tutor-observer training for COTE than her academic classes.

The third person trained was a German woman, who came to live in Guanajuato in 1985. She taught her native language for ten years, and then matriculated in the first COTE course in Guanajuato. She eventually completed the DOTE. In 1998, she was trained to become part of the local tutors and observers for the COTE. Subsequently, she studied for her master's in TESOL from the Institute of Education at the University of London and later began her doctoral studies. This woman exemplifies again a non-native speaker who initiated her professional development with the COTE and advanced her formal education. The three abovementioned people were trained as observers and tutors.

The fourth person trained was a Mexican woman who lived in Chicago for twelve years, where she attended junior and senior high school. Upon her return to Mexico, she began to teach English in Guanajuato when the discovery was made that she was fluent in English, and had once lived in the States. This gained her entry into the profession. First she instructed several classes, and then eventually went on to teach full time. In 1999, she began training as a COTE course observer. Her formal education began with the DOTE course. Subsequently, she completed the course work for a Master's in TESOL, offered in Mexico, by the Institute of Education of the University of London, but never finished her thesis. She holds the Certificate of Advanced English from UCLES.

The fifth person trained was an American man, who held an undergraduate degree in Spanish, and two Master's in Business and Administration. Since 1984, he had taught English classes in Mexico. In 1996, he matriculated with a Master's in TESOL, from the Institute of Education, at the University of

London, here in Mexico. Subsequently, he was trained for the COTE in 2000, primarily as a traveling observer throughout the State of Guanajuato. He went on with his formal education for a doctorate.

In retrospect, all these individuals, like myself years earlier, ‘fell into’ the job, due to their command of the English language. They became English teachers with no formal EFL background. Perhaps these individuals empathized and related to the COTE trainees who also ‘fell into’ the job. Eventually, all of the COTE support staff went on for advanced training in the field. Four of the above took part in the MAPP program (see Chapter 2) funded by the Mexican Ministry of Education, and carried out via the British Council in Mexico. Interestingly enough, this reflects the trend, in Mexico and throughout the world, during the 1980s and 1990s. Large quantities of people who began as English teachers were later formally educated in the field.

### **External British Council Tutor**

I close this section on support staff by introducing an external British Council tutor who formed part of the COTE 2002-2003 team. I shall now describe her participation. By 1998, we were simultaneously presenting three weekend programs - BA in EFL, Pre-COTE, and COTE course. The scheduling conflicts proved daunting for the Language School staff at the University of Guanajuato. To solve this problem, we began to invite British Council external tutors to Guanajuato. In subsequent years, they co-presented 50 hours of the 150-hour annual COTE course. This approach benefited everyone.

I present here a brief character sketch of the third British Council external tutor, who taught during the 2002-2003 COTE course. This individual was a British expatriate woman, who held a Master’s in TESOL from her native country. She came to Mexico to work freelance, and took up residence in Guadalajara, Jalisco, a western mid-sized city, five hours away from Guanajuato by bus. In Guadalajara, she taught part-time at a



local university. In her remaining time, she traveled throughout central and western Mexico giving COTE courses. Curiously enough, this tutor did not ‘fall into’ the job as the others.

To summarize this section, I have presented a range of personalities and backgrounds of the individuals who participated in the COTE course offered in Guanajuato. This information sets the stage for the Research Questions that will be dealt with in Chapters 5-7. These portrayals give us the necessary backdrop information and processes of EFL teachers in Mexico.

### **Eighteen Teacher-Learners: A Small Piece of Their Lives**

I now turn to the 18 teacher-learners who participated in the 2002-2003 COTE course (see Appendix 14, Photographs 3-6). The following material briefly sketches their identities and backgrounds. The group consisted of ten women and eight men, ranging in age from twenty to forty-five years.

Following the recent ten-year trend, most teacher-learners had ‘fallen into’ the job. Their English competency proved good; yet, the majority lacked formal EFL training. Formal educational backgrounds varied widely. A lawyer taught English part-time. An architect earned supplementary income as an English teacher. One teacher-learner held a BA in TESOL from a large Mexican public university. Another held a MA in English literature from an American university. The youngest trainee offered English classes to finance his law studies. As for classroom teaching, one trainee had six months experience; the rest varied from three to twenty years.

The trainees worked in a wide range of educational settings: public universities, technological institutes, extension programs, private language institutes, private religious schools, and city municipal programs. The trainees taught at diverse levels: primary, middle school, high school, and university.

Most trainees were Mexicans. Of the 18 trainees, three were from Guanajuato; the rest came from outlying areas. The

longest commute was 90 minutes. In the minority, one man was a native speaker, an American citizen, whose parents had immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic. Another man was a native speaker, an American citizen of Mexican parents. Another woman grew up in the United States, with a Mexican mother, and American father.

At some point in their lives, the majority of teacher-learners had international experience mostly in the United States, or possibly Canada or Britain. Some went to the States to live with parents. Others attended American public schools. Another went for religious reasons. Some went to work. Others went simply for a cultural experience.

In Table 2, I present teacher-learner information - personal and professional - taken from questionnaires (see Appendix 5) and informal interviews. At the onset, I asked each trainee if they wanted to participate in this research. All agreed, and signed a consent form (see Appendix 6). Most teacher-learners gave me permission to use their names. Yet, I decided to randomly assign each one a number, as an identification tag, throughout this essay. These numbers are used to categorize the data I collected from the trainees in journals and Post COTE Interviews. I wanted to make them anonymous to the reader. Duranti (1997) cautions the researcher to be aware of that the informant, in this case the teacher-learner, may feel a sense of loss when information is taken from them. In this case, the information taken from the trainees refers to their journal entries. Knowing this document would pass into public domain, I wanted to prevent any teacher-learner from feeling a 'sense of loss' for exchanging their personal information for research (Duranti, 1997, p. 104).

### *Summary*

My focus in this chapter was to set the stage for the 18 teacher-learners who participated in the 2002-2003 COTE course. I described the related contexts and key personalities. I in-

troduced myself as participant narrator with a background of 'falling into' the job. Including this information provides the multi-layered interconnectedness of the contexts and course participants.

In Chapters 5-7, I will be constructing a narrative based on my interpretation of the COTE course experience. Again, my intentions will be to examine the emotions and cognitive domains of COTE participants to see how course experience influences the formation of their personal and professional identities. Next, in Chapter 4 I shall outline why I am conducting qualitative research and the methods I have chosen to use for this research.



## CHAPTER 4

### BRICOLAGE:

### *Piecing Together the Research Methods*

Chapter 3 described the contexts and protagonists within this research. I included my autobiography in Appendix 1 as a way to show my relationship to the COTE participants and to show how I interpret their experiences. In this chapter, I focus on two areas. First, I present a rationale for why I am conducting qualitative research. Second, I focus on methodology, with reasons for choosing each technique, the principles and features of each technique, and issues that arose.

#### **Reasons for a Broad Qualitative Approach**

My inquiry is based on several concepts applicable to the qualitative research field, specifically: 1) Voices (see Chapter 3); 2) Reflexivity, as defined by Foley (2002); and 3) *Bricolage*, as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2000). Again, my approach is to investigate the emotions and identity formation of teacher-learners during the COTE course. In the following sections, I will show how voices in a narrative, and reflexivity when combined under the auspices of *bricolage* form a unique qualitative research methodology, offering a strong interpretive focus for ethnographic studies. This research deals with the lives of teachers which relates directly to ethnography.

As stated in Chapter 1, when I discussed ‘falling into’ the job, there are no simple answers to the question - How does one become an EFL teacher? Such teachers may follow their instincts and use a trial-and-error approach to teaching. This is similar to the ‘craft model’ (Wallace, 1991, pp. 6-7) where an

apprentice or trainee works under the master, reduplicating the craft. Yet in essence, there is no master to follow but only the repeated experiences that the teacher has accumulated and does instinctively. The apprentice teachers may form their conceptual pedagogy and identity themselves as educators from these repeated experiences (see Chapter 2). The encounter is more experimental and supported by survivor instincts rather than a theoretical basis. This process and final product can be interpreted, but hardly ever evaluated quantitatively. Before presenting my qualitative research methodology, I examine the phenomenon of ‘critical incident’.

### **Growing Fascination and Critical Incident**

As mentioned in Chapters 1-2, in subsequent years, I experienced a growing fascination with my COTE teacher-learners. At course-end, students returned to the classroom with their family members for a final ceremony. Student-learners received diplomas. I gave a short speech summarizing the COTE year. What repeatedly struck me were the emotions - relief, joy, gratitude, nervousness, happiness - on the faces of the teacher-learners and their family members (MJ-21 - Martha’s Journal, entry 21; see Chapter 4).

Measor (1985) characterizes such moments as ‘critical incidents’ as:

*key events in the individual’s life, and around which pivotal decisions revolve. These events provoke the individual into selecting particular kinds of actions, they in turn lead them in particular directions, and they end up having implications for identity...they reveal, like a flashbulb, the major choice and change times in people’s lives...it becomes apparent that ‘critical incidents’ are most likely to occur at particular times in the individual’s life. These are the ‘periods of strain’... (pp. 61-62)*

These moments can have a positive or negative effect upon the individual. They have a lasting impact on individuals because they are memorable and forceful. My observations and informal conversations concur with this; the course had a strong impact on most teacher-learners. In subsequent years, I received emails of gratitude from COTE graduates, expressing how the course had affected them as teachers and as individuals. Frequently, the COTE course initiated these teacher-learners in their formal education. Several of our own local tutors went on for a bachelor's, a master's and then a doctorate. Word passed around; and they encouraged their contemporaries to take the course.

Applying Measor's observations to the COTE course, critical incidents are related to the strain or struggles of teacher-learners - juggling work, personal life and study at the same time (see Chapter 6). These 'stress periods' are directly linked to two of my Research Questions: 1) What emotions and cognitive processes do teacher-learners go through during COTE? and 2) What are the problems and struggles of the trainees throughout the course?

The key words above are 'work' and 'personal life'. In light of the previous existential argument, it is impossible to speak of the COTE course, without referring to myself because I am a long-term participant; it is unfeasible to research the identity processes and emotions of teacher-learners without considering their personal lives and emotions.

Consequently, I have adopted a broad qualitative framework; and as stated in the closing of Chapter 1, I have decided on the critical research focus of the teachers' lives - their emotions, identities, and personal experiences. In Chapter 3 I discussed the use of my voice in this research and now I shall turn to the other two concepts - reflexivity, and *bricolage* - which make up the basis of my qualitative approach.

## **Reflexivity**

Traditionally, ethnography and many social sciences have focused on objective reporting of events (Denzin and Lincoln,

1994; Silverman, 2001; Vidich and Lyman, 1994). The researcher goes out into the field, studies social interactions of others, and gives voice to observations.

Yet in recent years, reflexivity, as a postmodern qualitative research trend has gained favor (Vidich and Lyman, 1994). The researcher, in the act of observing others, simultaneously investigates oneself. Reflexivity, in other words, combines a component of semiconscious inquiry, with objective, social-behavior reporting. Such a concept acknowledges the constant mutuality between the fieldworker and informant.

Foley (2002) has successfully articulated the reflexivity component from a scholarly point of view:

*For Babcock, reflexivity is the capacity of language and of thought - of any system of signification - to turn or bend back upon itself, thus becoming an object to itself. Directing one's gaze at one's own experience makes it possible to regard oneself as "other". Through a constant mirroring of the self, one eventually becomes reflexive about the situated, socially constructed nature of the self, and by extension, the other. (p. 473)*

The pivotal mechanism here regards the mirroring of self which is the ability to change places, whereby oneself becomes the 'other', in order to examine the 'socially constructed nature of self'. This may seem to border on narcissism or self-indulgence. Such observations are not intended to examine the researcher's self, but rather, his or her research knowledge. The use of my autobiography in Appendix 1 represents this. Constant reflexivity aids the researcher in deciding what to include and why.

Yet, the outcome of reflexivity in an ethnographic study is evident. In the field, the researcher studies the behavior of others, as well as his or her own self. Ultimately, this leads to a better understanding of how the fieldworker relates to the informants and a better representation of all involved. As an ethnographer, I am studying a society of teachers, of which I am



also a constituent. I write about teacher-learners, trying to articulate who they are, and the process they are going through.

### **Bricolage and Bricoleur: ‘Piecing Together’**

The French term *bricolage* derives from the word *bricole*. Claude Levi-Strauss, a French structural anthropologist, popularized the term *bricolage* in the social sciences. A *bricoleur* constructs a *bricolage*, via trial-and-error, using materials-at-hand. Frequently, the final product is much larger than the sum of the integral parts; and the integral parts are frequently used for other than their intended purpose.

*Bricolage* best articulates my conceptual agenda for this research. As outlined in Chapter 1, my intent is to construct a narrative of collected voices or a fragmented mirror that offers a glimpse into the encounters and identities of COTE course participants. I am trying to approach, as closely as possible, an interpretation of their experience.

The crucial word above is interpretation. The term interpretive *bricoleur* best describes my role here. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have articulated this concept from an academic point of view:

*The interpretive bricoleur produces a bricolage - that is, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation. “The solution [bricolage] - that is the result of the bricoleur’s method is an [emergent] construction” (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p. 191) that changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques of representation and interpretation are added to the puzzle. (p. 4)*

And now for a quantum leap or major revision - *bricolage* represents the central pivotal point. The term outlined above - reflexivity - takes on new meaning, when interpreted in the light of *bricolage*. Again, I refer to Denzin and Lincoln (2000):

*The interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting, (p. 6)*

Likewise, the term outlined above - voice, as in a narrative - takes on new meaning, when interpreted in the light of *bricolage*. The above quote backs the reason why I have decided to include my autobiography, my 'womanist' ideology, and snapshots of the COTE participants - tutors and trainees - in Chapter 3. This information represents the interconnectiveness we share as a collective group. Once more, I quote Denzin and Lincoln (2000):

*So we are now the ultimate bricoleurs, trying to cobble together a story that we are beginning to suspect will never enjoy the unity, the smoothness, the wholeness that the Old Story had. As we assemble different pieces of the Story, our bricolage begins to take not one, but many shapes. (p. 1060)*

As concluded in the voice section above, this exactly represents my intention. As stated in my introduction, I am constructing a multi-faceted mirror which represents an interpretation of the COTE course experience.

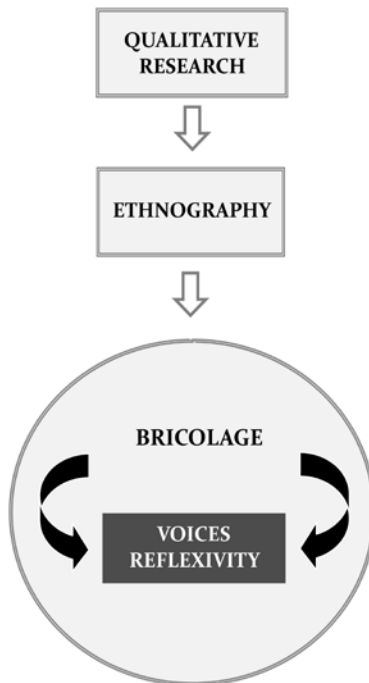
In this light, voice, reflexivity and *bricolage* form a basis that strongly enriches qualitative research for ethnographic inquiry. Qualitative research offers an interpretive advantage, unknown to quantitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) make reference to this:

*The methods of qualitative research thereby become the "invention", and the telling of the tales-- the representation --becomes the art, even though, as bricoleurs, we know we are not working with the standard-issue parts, and we have come to suspect that there are no longer any 'standard-issue parts' made (if ever there were). And*

*so we cobble. We cobble together stories that we may tell each other, some to share our profoundest links with those whom we studied; some to help us see how we can right a wrong or relieve oppression; some to help us and others to understand how and why we did what we did, and how it all went very wrong; and some simply to sing of difference. (p. 1061)*

To close this section, I outlined why I used qualitative research and ethnography for the study of teachers' lives. Qualitative research offers a distinct interpretive advantage for ethnographic investigations. Within my research I use three concepts – voices, reflexivity and *bricolage* – as a basis for inquiry (see Figure 2). Next, I will put these concepts to practice.

**Figure 2 Conceptual Framework for Ethnographic Bricolage of Voices**



## **Ethnographic Bricolage of Voices: Methodology**

I turn now to formal methodological issues as they apply to qualitative research, specifically, data collection, coding and analysis. I follow the ‘multiple methods’ outlined by Silverman (2000, pp. 48-50, 98-99) to give a ‘fuller picture’ (ibid, p. 50).

Broadly speaking, I am examining the emotions and identity formation of COTE course teacher-learners. What exactly happens to them represents my interpretation. Considering that I have conducted the COTE course for some years now, I am discovering in-depth the strata layers of what I have observed for many years.

### ***Data Collection***

The first step in my methodology was to systematically gather information. Conforming to qualitative research, my materials were traditionally non-numerical: people’s words, actions and biographies.

Considerable time and effort was spent, trying to gain access, rapport, and an ‘insider’ perspective. Interviews proved to be the most difficult sources to get right in detail. At various points in this research, I collected material from natural and ‘human-as-instrument’ settings (Guba and Lincoln, 2005, p. 201; Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 39-40; Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p. 174; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, pp. 26-30). Lincoln and Guba (1985) make reference to ‘human-as-instrument’ as the human researcher:

*as well as other humans as primary data-gathering instruments...because of the understanding that all instruments interact with respondents and objects but that only the human instrument is capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of that differential interaction; because the intrusion of instruments intervenes in the mutual shaping*

*of other elements and that shaping can be appreciated and evaluated only by a human; and because all instruments are value-based and interact with local values but only the human is in a position to identify and take into account (to some extent) those resulting biases. (pp. 39-40)*

According to the 'human-as-instrument' concept, individuals can also be a source of data collection and analysis within the research process. They bring to the research process abilities, previous knowledge, experiences, and their own prejudices or baggage (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 26). To do qualitative research is to acknowledge what one brings to the process. In this case, the roles I hold, who I am, my feminist ideology and my personal life story (see Appendix 1) bear relevance to the data collection and analysis. These aspects throw light on what I see, how I see it and how I interpret the data.

To continue, the primary sources included:

- Journals: Trainees' Journals, Shared Journal, Martha's Journal and Martha's Field Notes.
- Interviews: person-to-person, telephone, email.
- Focus Group Discussion: four local tutors (questionnaire and discussion) and one external British Council tutor (questionnaire).
- Observations (class): teacher-learners, three local tutors, and one external tutor.

In addition, at various research points, I collected secondary source documents - Internet and hard copy - from: the Mexican Ministry of Education, the University of Guanajuato, UCLES, and the British Council in Mexico.

### ***Data Collection: Ethics***

In my research, certain ethical problems arose, in regards to the data collection phase. I was simultaneously studying a group of COTE course participants, for a class in which I was

also primary instructor, observer, coordinator, and the Director of the Language School at the University of Guanajuato. These positions held power and could not be ignored. A feeling of confidentiality was essential for investigation beyond superficial layers, so it became absolutely imperative to be honest with course participants about my research and their involvement. I did not want to abuse the power associated with my roles listed above.

A key consideration was how to introduce the research idea to teacher-learners in August 2002. During the first course input session, I clarified my roles as a tutor, coordinator, school director and researcher to the teacher-learners. I explained my research topic, my motivation, and methods to be used with them. I offered my story, how I became an EFL teacher; and in turn, I asked the teacher-learners how they became teachers, and their motivation for taking the course (see Chapter 5).

My intent in this first contact was to open a dialogue and establish rapport, so participants would understand my position, and why I wanted to study them. Several times during the year, I made reference to my research, as a reminder to them of my on-going efforts. In time, some of them began to refer to my studies as: 'that thing you are doing', or 'your master's research project'.

As auxiliary ethical backups: first, I asked teacher-learners if they wanted to participate in my research. Second, I asked them to sign a research consent form (see Appendix 6). Finally, it should be mentioned that four BA students received a university research scholarship for the translation and transcription of interviews and journals during this research.

### ***Data Collection via Journals***

Diaries, journals, logs, personal notes, and learners' diaries - to make it simple, I use the word 'journal'. Journals represent a significant data collection method in this study. From a scholarly

point of view, Krishnan and Hoon (2002) consider diary entries as ‘first-person observations of learning experiences which are recorded over a period of time’ (p. 227). Holly (1989) describes journals as a personal document with usually the writer as the audience (p. xii). Journals or diaries have been used for years in ELT research and practice (Bailey, 1991; Bailey and Ochsner, 1983; Gaies, 1983; Howell-Richarson and Parkinson, 1988; Krishnan and Hoon, 2002; Lowe, 1987; Murphy-O’Dwyer, 1985; Numrich, 1996; Palmer, 1992; Rivers, 1979; Shumann, 1980; Shumann and Shumann, 1977; Whitfield and Pollard, 1998). Based upon the scholarly studies, I decided to use journals to probe more deeply into the lives and emotions of teacher-learners. In addition, journals served as an important venue to document trainee reflections and experiences along with my observations.

Based upon the sociocultural perspective, journals are a tool for reflection to better understand the developmental process the teacher-learners are going through during the course. Johnson and Golombek (2003) comment that a journal is the physical tool and the writing in the journal is a symbolic tool (p. 731). Both the writing and journals are tools used for the trainees’ internalization (see Vygotsky, 1978, p. 56) of the COTE experience. Internalization refers to the trainees mediating their progress and eventually making sense of this experience via tools such as journals, social dialogue with peers, tutors, or activities within the COTE course (Johnson and Golombek, 2003, p. 731). Concerning journals, Verity (2000) makes references to how she used journals as a mediation tool to narrate her internal self-restructurization as a visiting teacher in Japan. Another example of this internalization is found in Chapter 6.

I begin by examining journals in my personal life, and later in my professional life. I was exposed to diary writing early on. My mother believed in recording one’s life events. Traditionally, she gave her children a diary at Christmas to fill-in over the year. In addition, our family kept - and still keeps - travel

journals on vacations. These materials are filled with opinions, descriptions and experiences. After I began a journal, as part of my formal research efforts, these memories came back to me. I began to appreciate what my mother passed down to her children and grandchildren.

Interestingly enough, in the summer of 2002, my mother gave me one of my early journals; a cheap composition notebook of approximately 30 pages. At first glance, I hardly recognized my own childish scrawl. The pages recorded my first trip to Mexico, at the age of 11 years. The entries described our family trip from Iowa to Mexico City in a station wagon: what we did each day, where we stayed, and my observations of the country.

In my professional life, I have used journals in my classes for ten years now. Sometimes students are required to keep a personal journal as a reflective tool. Sometimes a Shared Journal is passed around in class. Students are invited to write spontaneously; entries are open ended - no restrictions on content or length. Errors remain uncorrected.

This group format takes on some interesting variations. Several students may write consecutively in the journal. Students may read whatever has been written. Students may address other classmates, or myself. In both cases above, writing offers students the time and space to reflect, and fosters critical thinking skills (see Appendix 7).

Within this study several journals are used; their individual classifications appear below:

- ◆ Martha's Journal (MJ)
- ◆ Martha's Field Notes (FN)
- ◆ Trainee Journal (TJ)
- ◆ Shared Journal (ShJ)

In December 2001, I began a research journal - Martha's Journal (MJ) - a series of reflections on topics and readings. The entries were largely stream-of-consciousness. I moved on from topic-to-topic and included my reflections during this COTE year. Upon re-reading entries, I frequently included comments,



identified as ‘added reflection - AR’. These represented my first formal steps in analysis (see Appendix 8 and Appendix 14; Photograph 7).

At course beginning, I found I needed to document mental messages from informal conversations, tutorial meetings and informal observations that I came across during the COTE year. At that point I wrote up this information quickly in note form in a small journal, which I named Field Notes (FN). The aim of these notes was to document anything that I observed so as not to forget this information (see Appendix 14; Photograph 8). Both MJ and FN entries were numbered chronologically.

In August 2002, at the first input session, the COTE course teacher-learners were introduced to the Trainee Journal (TJ), and Shared Journal (ShJ) components of my research. Individuals received a small notebook for their personal reflections and observations. Simultaneously, the classroom interworking of the Shared Journal was introduced. Their first Shared Journal entry was left open to any topic. Their first Trainee Journal assignment was to document how they became teachers – their stories.

Teacher-learners were encouraged to make TJ and ShJ entries during each COTE course session. They were invited to write TJ entries, whenever they wanted in or outside of class. As always, writing was left open-ended. Teacher-learners could make entries in either Spanish or English. Errors were not corrected. Occasional guidance was offered as to writing themes.

At mid-course, journals were collected. I examined them, and offered supportive feedback, concerning entries and content. Approaches like this are well documented in the formal literature (Bray and Harsch, 1996; Howell-Richardson and Parkinson, 1988; Krishnan and Hoon, 2002; Surbeck, Park Han, and Moyer, 1991; Todd, Mills, Palard, and Khamcharoen, 2001). In Appendix 9, I have included examples of my feedback to the trainees.

In regard to TJ materials, entries were made chronologically, and numbered by code, to insure privacy. For example,

TJ<sub>3-1</sub> refers to: Trainee Journal, trainee number 3, and entry 1. The trainee number relates back to Table 2 (see Chapter 3). Examples of TJ materials are found in Appendix 9 (see Appendix 14, Photographs 9, 10). Table 3 records the number of TJ entries for each of the 18 teacher-learners. There are a total of 241 entries. I have also removed any names of the tutors from the entries.

**Table 3 Number of entries from Trainee Journals**

TRAINEE	ENTRIES
1	10
2	8
3	7
4	48
5	13
6	7
7	9
8	8
9	26
10	17
11	14
12	14
13	10
14	7
15	9
16	13
17	11
18	9

In regard to ShJ materials, 116 total entries were made during the 2002-2003 COTE course. Not all teacher-learners signed

their names to entries or dated the entry; therefore, names and dates were not preserved. I photocopied all of the journals and each entry was numbered chronologically. At course-end, teacher-learners kept their own personal journals. I retained the Shared Journal.

### ***Reaction to ShJ and TJ Journals***

I include here several excerpts to reveal how teacher-learners viewed their journalistic participation in my research. In general, journal entries offered me glimpses of the COTE course participants' professional and personal lives. Some individuals responded to such activities negatively; others were more accepting.

In the first example of their responses, a teacher-learner expresses insecurity regarding the relationship between their writing and my research:

*It's a little bit strange not knowing what the research is exactly - whether what we write in these journals is relevant or not at all to the study, or what aspect of our "journeys" through the COTE program is being examined. It doesn't bother me; it's kind of strange, like sending your thoughts and feelings out into some sort of void! (TJ8-6)*

The teacher-learner above does not see journal writing as a dialogue between respondent and investigator. Perhaps, expressing personal material, for this individual seems threatening.

The next two excerpts indicate how teacher-learners' reluctance to write eventually turned to acceptance:

*At the beginning I saw writing in this notebook a "task". But as days go by, I really feel the need to write in it. Changes in me have been occurring. Now I write personal stuff! When I hate doing that, I'm scared someone might*

*find my journal and will know my very private stuff. I have a pen inside it. So if something good happens or I have to write, I don't stop doing it just because I have no pen. I'm changing...I guess it is because I'm improving. Thank you. (TJ4-35)*

*I'm not very good at writing a journal, I'm not very good at expressing my feelings by writing them down, but I'm glad you have us writing in our own journal. At first I said to myself "What are you going to write about?, What are you going to say". At first I got nervous, but as I'm going along, I really like this. I'm really enjoying it. I don't get nervous anymore. This is fun and a way to express myself. I think I should have done this a long time ago; it makes me feel good inside. Now I feel that I want to express myself. I feel like I want to say things about myself to other people. Thank you Martha for encouraging me to write in a journal. (TJ13-9)*

Initially, both teacher-learners above considered journal writing as a loathsome requirement, even an intrusion into their personal space. Interestingly enough, the first teacher-learner mentioned a fear of privacy invasion; yet, she quickly learned to appreciate spontaneous writing. The second teacher-learner discovered journal writing as a format to identify and clarify internal feelings.

The next two excerpts express the benefits of journal writing, largely in lieu of previous experience. Entries serve as a barometer of personal growth - a way to reflect on previous experience:

*Writing a journal has been something fascinating since I started 6 years ago. I read what I wrote and I can notice the changes in my own personality. I can remember the feelings, the mistakes, the people that were with me at a certain moment. It also works to see how I have been*

*improving myself, as a son, as a friend, as a boyfriend, as a person, as a teacher. For me it helps me. I read about my feelings at the beginning of the class and I say, "It was not that bad". (TJ18-7)*

Finally a teacher-learner, experienced in writing, expresses her post COTE plans to continue language study. This individual recognizes the therapeutic nature of journal writing:

*I'll write a lot...and I'll take French classes, among other things...thank u [you] Martha. This journal has been useful for me, kind of therapy. I know I only write crazy, trivial stuff, but I think you should know how much better I feel after doing it. You just sometimes need to let it go, in order to get it over with...every time I feel bad/sad/angry, first of all I accept it...sorry 'bout [about] all this, pure 'stream of consciousness' as some writers call it. Once I get pen and paper, I'm dangerous, but I love the feeling (You shouldn't read all this crap, you know). (ShJ-106)*

In conclusion, while the teacher-learners above varied in their acceptance of journal writing, they were all capable of doing it. And, while some of the individuals made entries strictly covering their academic-teaching lives, others covered more personal topics.

### ***Data Collection: Interviews***

Another method of data collection was interviews. Traditionally an interview has been considered a dialogue involving the respondent and the researcher. The researcher's role is to ask predetermined questions and listen to the respondent in hopes of gaining information. Nowadays interviews have expanded to use the telephone, informal conversation and email. The interview process is complex and filled with issues such as interview recording (audio or video), transcription, response to the interviewee, and interview analysis.

In data collection for this research, I interviewed a wide range of COTE course participants, via face-to-face contact, telephone and email. One group of interviewees consisted of the 18 teacher-learners as well as the trainers and the observers of the COTE Guanajuato course. The other group consisted of people who did not directly work in the COTE Guanajuato at that moment. A number of these individuals are also well-known in the EFL profession in Mexico and internationally. For the first group I did not use their names and for the second group I used their names. Due to the power relationship I held as the course administrator and Director of the Language School, I decided to not use the names of the first group. The information I gained from this group was at times personal in nature and I did not want to cause any harm to them while the information from the second group came from public figures and was concerned mostly with the history of COTE in Mexico. Table 4 outlines the specifics of the interviews.

At this point I would like to address the question of how I decided to handle the interviews. The first two interviews - Patricia Begne Ruiz Esparza, Ex-Director of the Language Center (now the Language School) of the University of Guanajuato, and Anamaria Aramayo, Assistant Director of ELT for the British Council, Mexico - were conducted in an unstructured format. The reason for this choice is based upon Nunan's (1992) range for interview formality; unstructured - semi-structured - structured (p. 149). Nunan describes (1992) the unstructured interview as:

*guided by the responses of the interviewee, rather than the agenda of the researcher. The researcher exercises little or no control, and the direction of the interview is relatively unpredictable. (p. 149)*

Prior to the interviews above, I prepared several topics. Yet, during the actual events, the exchange followed its own course.

**Table 4 Interview: interviewees, dates and method of interview**

INTERVIEWEE AND POSITION	DATE AND METHOD OF INTERVIEW
PATRICIA BEGNE RUIZ ESPARZA Ex- Director of Language Center University of Guanajuato	March 11, 2001 - person to person
ANAMARIA ARAMAYO Assistant Director ELT British Council Mexico	Aug. 17, 2001 - telephone April 16, 2002 - person to person Aug. 15, 2005 - email
VICTOR MACHUCA External evaluator of COTE programs at national level for Subsecretary of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Subsecretaría de Educación Superior e Investigación Científica - SESIIC)	June 10, 2002 - email July 12, 2002 - email July 15, 2002 - email
PAUL DAVIES Founding COTE trainer - national level	June 5, 2002 - email Nov. 5, 2002 - email Nov. 12, 2002 - email
EUGENIA SALDAÑA Operative Coordinator of START program of the Ministry of Education - State of Aguascalientes	Aug. 21, 2002 - telephone
ELAINE BROWN Subject Officer responsible for COTE of UCLES	Sept. 7, 2001 - email
Teacher-learners	Feb. 2003 - person to person tutorials (18 teacher-learners) Feb. 2004 - via email - Post COTE interview (10 teacher - learners)
PILAR ARAMAYO PRUDENCIO Sub-Director of Foreign Languages of Primary Education of the Mexican Ministry of Education (Subdirectora de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Subsecretaría de Educación Básica)	June 19, 2006 - email June 20, 2006 - email

I avoided my own agenda. Once the interview closed, I invited the interviewee to ask me questions.

I chose an unstructured interview in light of my close associations with these two people. Patricia Begne Ruiz Esparza had been my EFL student four times and my former director for five years. As for Anamaria Aramayo, we have held a long-standing professional relationship since the early 1990s. My objective was to seek out a rich personal conversation with these two women contemporaries. I arrived at this decision, based on the following observations on interviewing as being a:

*masculine paradigm, embedded in a masculine culture and stressing masculine traits while at the same time excluding traits such as sensitivity, emotionality, and others that are culturally viewed as feminine traits. (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 658, citing Oakley)*

One should be careful though to not perceive interviewing in such a 'black and white' perspective - 'male versus female'. Instead, I would suggest that interviewing as what Oakley terms a 'masculine paradigm' is better described as 'traditional'.

In essence, the reference above articulates traditional, objective interviewing. With the addition of an invitation for questions at the close of the interview, I surmounted Oakley's (1981) remonstrance; 'no intimacy without reciprocity' (p. 49). This technique bestowed a personal touch to my qualitative research interviews. Interestingly enough, several recent critics have promoted the unstructured interview format. For example, Hertz encourages spontaneity and presence of 'self' in the exchange. Implications for the interviewer are given in the following:

*make the self of the researcher visible and suggests that it is only one of many selves the researcher takes to the field...the interviewers need to be reflexive; that is, they need "to have an ongoing conversation about experience*



*while simultaneously living in the moment". (Fontana and Frey 2000, p. 659, citing Hertz)*

In addition, Fontana and Frey (2000) advocate the importance of empathy:

*Because the goal of unstructured interviewing is understanding, it is paramount that the researcher establish rapport with respondents; that is the researcher must be able to take the role of the respondent and attempt to see the situation from their viewpoint, rather than superimpose his or her world of academia and preconceptions upon them. (p. 655)*

Within this research, my diverse COTE roles as well as my lived experiences as an EFL teacher and trainer have allowed me to empathize with those I am researching. Finally, Fontana and Frey (2000) promote the value of recognizing the respondent's identity:

*Clearly, gender, sexuality, and race cannot be considered in isolation; race, class, hierarchy, status and age (Seidman, 1991) are all part of the complex, yet often ignored, elements that shape interviewing. (p. 660)*

From the above quote, one can see that interviewing takes into consideration a wide range of aspects and is more than just a conversation between two people.

In regard to the remaining interviews conducted during my research; where time and distance represented vital considerations, particularly outside my immediate area, inquiry was conducted via email or telephone.

As for teacher-learners, I held 10-minute interviews with each of them, midway through the course. In March 2003 I also sent out inquiries for basic trainee information (such as years of teaching experience, job location, etc.) in order to double-

check this data (see Appendix 5). In February 2004, after course close, I sent out follow-up inquiries (see Appendix 10 - Post COTE Interview - PCI, Feb. 2004). Ten out of eighteen teacher-learners responded.

For all interviews, I wrote up notes during and after the events. As for face-to-face interviews, research assistants transcribed the audio, and I final-checked the transcript. Once the interviews were on paper, I began coding and analyzing the text. In conclusion, I did not interview according to any rigid scheme. Interview decisions were made based on specific needs and realities.

***Data Collection:***  
***Focus Group Discussion***

Focus groups represent another significant data collection method used in my research. Journals were a large source of data from the trainees and I wanted to also collect data from the trainers to get another perspective of what the trainees were going through. Marczak and Sewell (no date) characterize such meetings as:

*a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses a group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue. (p. 1)*

Madriz (2000) articulates the compliant nature of such groups:

*the focus group is a collectivistic rather than an individualistic research method that focuses on the multivocality of participants' attitudes, experiences, and beliefs. (p. 836)*

Based upon this collectivistic nature, I chose this data collection method to dialogue with four women (myself included),

who held common interests. I chose to call this dialogue a Focus Group Discussion. I had trained the three local tutors; they had worked together as a group in the COTE course for several years. They all understood the program well and were mutual friends, as well as professionals. Of the four, two had participated in the first COTE course offered in Guanajuato. Two were native English speakers: myself and another American. Two were non-native speakers: one Mexican and a German. I chose only the tutors for the Focus Group Discussion because of their years of experience in the course.

My objective for the Focus Group Discussion was to create a positive atmosphere, where these women could interact, and listen to the thoughts and opinions of contemporaries - a collective enterprise. Due to the logistics of videotaping or audio recording, the events were held in my own home. The intimacy and relaxed informality far outweighed minor interruptions, like phone calls or family members.

Prior to the group meeting, I prepared a list of questions (Focus Group Questions - Appendix 11). I also gave this list to the external British Council tutor to answer, although she was unable to attend the Focus Group Discussion. Before the participants arrived, I had them sign consent forms, and distributed the questions. The participants were offered the time they needed to reflect and formulate their answers. The questions were returned prior to interview. This initial sampling offered a way to 'sync' everyone to the same starting point. I was also able to preview upcoming issues.

During the event, we recalled former trainees, incidents, and ideas collectively, frequently triggered by the words: 'Do you remember...?'. Fontana and Fey (2000) have documented this mechanism from an academic perspective:

*group interviews can also be used successfully to aid respondents' recall of specific events or to stimulate embellished descriptions of events (e.g., a disaster or a celebration) or experiences shared by members of a group. (p. 651)*

Upon completion of the Focus Group Discussion, I read the transcripts, and began the coding.

Interestingly enough, critical views toward focus groups have changed in recent years. The trend of modernism promotes objectivity, and recommends the interviewer avoid participation in a focus group, to prevent contamination of group ideas and opinions. As a strong proponent of postmodernism, I decided, due to my central role in this research and my relationship with the individuals, to participate in the collective conversation.

Madriz (2000) supports this position. For the ethnographic researcher, such a plan reduces remoteness, so as to:

*remain as close as possible to accounts of everyday life while trying to minimize that distance between themselves and their research participants. It is believed that the group situation may reduce the influence of interviewer on research subjects by tilting the balance of power toward the group (p. 838)*

Madriz (2000) also points out that rational postmodernists and feminists criticize traditional research methods for privileging the researcher's agenda at the expense of participants, claiming that such methods are:

*inappropriate to recover the voices of members of marginalized groups because, among other reasons, those methods force upon participants an agenda that is not their own but of the researchers. (p. 838)*

As previously stated, my professional and personal agendas fall along these lines (Chapter 3).

### **Data Collection: Observations**

Observation represents another significant data collection meth-

od. The researcher enters the field and takes notes, as a participant viewer. Richards (2003) has described a range -from open to closed - for this type of information gathering. I followed the open observation. Richards describes the continuum this way:

*open observation, which might characterize the early stages of participant observation where the observer tries to get a general sense of the setting and activities associated with it, and closed observation, where the observer is strictly coding behaviour on a low-inference schedule, or instrument (the former is the term usually employed to describe what is actually used). (p. 144)*

While the COTE course typically includes ‘closed observations’ as part of participant evaluation (these are referred to as practicals; see Chapters 2 and 6), I chose ‘open observations’. I wanted to put aside my roles as school director, administrator, course observer, and main tutor; I wanted to distance myself from these roles of power. The following describes the choices I had made prior to observation:

*I had made some decisions as how to handle the observation. First of all, I decided to quietly enter the classroom after the class had begun so as not to draw attention to my presence in the class. I sat in the back of the classroom next to the door. I hoped that because the class had already begun and the trainees were working on a task they would not notice me as much. I also wanted to be as unobtrusive as possible. My students have had a lot of contact with me as a tutor and administrator before this observation. (Transcript and reflection, ObT-1a - Observation of Tutor One, first of two observations)*

My objective was to understand the general classroom ambiance - to observe classes without a predetermined plan of action. The following refers to my position within the observation:

*I found my presence as an observer noticed by the trainees naturally. I have had a lot of contact with these trainees because of my roles. We email back and forth from their hometowns and Guanajuato... I also know a lot of their personal problems that they have confided with me. I have been with this group every weekend that they have had class so my presence is very marked. My initial idea was to sit quietly and watch what was going on, but during the time I was there, I found this was impossible because of who I am within this course. Little by little during the observation students would stop by and say hi to me, ask me what I was doing, smile, or joke with me naturally. I am the insider trying to be the outsider while I am observing them. Trying to be the outsider is impossible because of time together during this course. (Transcript and reflection for ObT-1a - Observation of Tutor One, first of two observations)*

My original intention for my observation role was to distance myself from the trainees. Quickly I found that this preconceived idea of how I would conduct the interview was not realistic.

I conducted five class observations of teacher-learners and trainers - both local and external. The breakdown below lists dates, and coding references.

- ◆ Trainer 1 - March 5, 2003 (ObT-1a)
- ◆ Trainer 1 - May 31, 2003 (ObT-1b)
- ◆ Trainer 2 - June 20, 2003 (ObT-2)
- ◆ Trainer 3 - July 4, 2003 (ObT-3)
- ◆ Trainer 4 - July 4, 2003 (ObT-4)

For both Focus Group Discussion and Observations, I identified the trainers via numbers (1-4) for the three local tutors, and one external British Council tutor.

Initially, I asked permission from trainers, and then scheduled individual classroom observations. When I entered the classroom, many teacher-learners wondered why I was there (ObT-1a). At first, they made eye contact with me, or whispered

a greeting (ObT-1a, 1b). Some inquired about my presence. I was frank, and told them I was observing the class for my research (ObT-1a, 1b). This next section illustrates this point:

*A trainee smiles at me, saying 'Hi, Martha'. Another then asks me about a lost notebook and I tell her to look for it in the office. The tutor now announces, 'OK, folks finish up and go around looking at everyone's work'. Everyone does so and there is more movement and talking going on. Yet another walks by me and says 'Hola, Marta'. Two trainees chitchat across the room. One comes back and says, 'I found it [the lost notebook]'. Still another finally notices me and says 'Martha, what are you doing?'; 'I am observing you all.' One goes by me and has a cartoon and says to me, 'Did you see this?', 'Yeah, funny.' Now the tutor asks for feedback on what the students observed from the posters. There is playful joking among the trainees... A teacher-learner comes by me and says, 'You cannot participate?' I imagine it is a question and I reply that I cannot. I can imagine that they see me doing something different than what they are accustomed to. I also realize that they feel very comfortable with me in the room observing them. (Transcript and reflection for ObT-1a)*

After being with this class for approximately seven months, they were at ease with me in the classroom. The above reflection also represents the social atmosphere as well as the social interaction of the trainees in the observed class. Their relaxed attitude towards me showed their acceptance of me in their classroom where I was not the teacher at that moment. I also realized I could not get rid of the numerous roles I had in the course as is illustrated in the following:

*The trainees include me in their social talk. A teacher from our school walks by and notices me sitting down*

*and says there is no electricity in the SAC (Self-Access Center)... At this point everyone knows that I have been in the class observing them and we are all laughing. It seems to me that they know that I am trying to take on a passive role and naturally it is very difficult to achieve this because I am part of this COTE. From my point of view I find it interesting that the students are very comfortable with me observing them. (Transcript and reflection for ObT-1a)*

The other observations followed the same pattern.

During the observation, I took extensive notes such as the above, and immediately wrote them up freeform style on the computer. My intentions were to approximate 'written-photography' (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995). An example observation appears in Appendix 12. Furthermore, I added my analysis of the observations to the notes. Upon writing up two observations, the task turned easier. This process approximates ethnographic note taking (Brewer, 2000; Emerson et al., 1995; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Surprisingly enough, when I interpreted the observations, I noticed a strong sense of social activity within the classroom (ObT-1a, 1b, 2, 3, 4). The above examples reflect this aspect. Each trainer reflected on a preferred way of teaching (ObT-1a), and relating to their peers; something that had escaped me previously, when I was too busy teaching. This next excerpt represents this idea of noticing the little things that might be overlooked by the teacher trainer:

*I had taught many hours of input sessions for the last nine months but as an observer I had the time to see how they react with each other. As a teacher, I think we have a general idea of who our students are in the class but during an observation there is more time to observe the little things that might go unnoticed by the teacher who is deciding what task to do next, how to go about the tasks, and the lesson logistics. As an observer, I could*



*appreciate the finer points of my students because I had the time available for this. (Transcript and reflection for ObT-1a)*

A few last choices that I made concerning the observation were: 1) Whether to tell the trainees that I was going to observe them prior to observation and 2) The use of video. I present the next to show my thought process for these concerns:

*I wonder if I should have told them that I was going to observe them, but I feel it was better not to have told them. At one moment, I was debating whether to video tape the class but the camera would have been more intimidating than a person observing the class. Because they know me quite well, I decided against video. I also feel video might be intrusive to certain students and also for the tutor. What is interesting is the thought process of the observer deciding what to do without knowing what will happen before the observation. Again, I felt I made decisions according to my instincts and my knowledge of these trainees. (Transcript and reflection for ObT-1a)*

I close with a brief personal note. Richards (2003) refers to Dingwell's 'hierarchy of consent' in the 'process of consultation', when trying to 'access the research site' (p. 121). Negotiation represents the key concept here. Interestingly enough, I was the main teacher and administrator for the COTE course, as well as Director of the Language School; essentially, I was my own gatekeeper. Yet, I realized the importance of not taking advantages of these privileges. I had to remain sensitive to those being researched.

In the sections above, I covered the data collection methods used within my research; specifically: journals, interviews, focus group and observations. The rationale and procedure of each was presented. I now turn to the next stage of formal inquiry.

## *Data Coding and Analysis*

After information had been systematically gathered, the next step concerned how to code and analyze it. Yet, in lots of practical qualitative research, the distinction blurs, as collection and analysis in qualitative research represent ongoing interconnected processes (Holliday, 2002, p. 98). It is not a linear process but intricate and multifaceted.

The key questions of the coding and analysis phase center on how to organize and dissect the information. At this point, research in this area (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) traditionally raises questions like: What is a unit of meaning? How are oral and written texts interpreted? What are the structures of patterned regularities? What do these regularities infer?

I devised my approach as follows, drawing to some extent on the constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) make reference to Goertz and LeCompte's idea of qualitative research following an inductive approach to data analysis where issues 'emerge from the data itself, out of process of inductive reasoning' (p.127). Raw data is reviewed to find 'chunks' or 'units of meaning'. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define a 'unit of meaning' as having two attributes:

- 1) *aimed at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have or to take,*
- 2) *the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself, that is, it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out. (p. 345)*

Having defined a unit of meaning, Makut and Morehouse (1994) briefly describe how to use a unit of meaning within the process of the constant comparative method in the following:

*As each new unit of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared to all other units of meaning and subsequently grouped (categorized and coded) with similar units of meaning. If there are not similar units of meaning, a new category is formed. In this process there is room for continuous refinement; initial categories are changed, merged, or omitted; new categories are generated; and new relationships can be discovered (Goertz and LeCompte, 1981). (p. 134)*

Maykut and Morehouse's description seems easy and quite straightforward, yet I found this process chaotic due to the massive amount of raw data collected via journals, interviews and a focus group. The piecing together of the data into the written text was 'messy' as Holliday describes (2002, pp. 98-100). Here the data guides the researcher in the analysis and the researcher lets the 'data speak for itself' (Holliday, 2002). I found I had to be careful to not have a predetermined plan of what I thought the data represented but to listen carefully to the participants' voices.

At this point, I offer an outline of my approach, which will be exemplified more fully below:

1. I read through the collected data various times, looking for recurring topics or unexpected issues or points that stood out. Each point was considered a 'unit of meaning' (see Appendix 14, Photograph 11).
2. Each 'unit of meaning' was written on an index card, as well as a whiteboard. This represented the coding stage.
3. The 'unit of meaning' index cards were sorted through, looking for related concepts - 'look-alike' or 'feel-alike' concepts (see Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 342).
4. I compared sources of data; I rechecked these same idea groups with other data, and found what emerged from the data.

5. I used quotes and observations from the data sources that represented the same idea groups, within this research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994)

It should be mentioned that constant revisiting of the data was carried out to 'sift through' the collected data and to view the data from different perspectives in different spaces of time. This process of revisiting the data forced me to probe deeper into the multi-layers of the teacher-learners. I have outlined the approach I used for the analysis of the data, and now I shall give an example of this.

### ***Process Example***

I present here an in-depth illustration of the research process, taken from my journal entry (MJ-21). Data collection, for me, turned into an on-going process. Early on, issues emerged, and continued to emerge, as new data was introduced. Again, to some extent I drew on the constant comparative method, suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). I began by reading through the primary data source, categorizing and coding each fragment. I searched for 'units of meaning' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). A number of examples are given shortly. Once identified, the units were transcribed onto index cards, with reference to their original location. The end result was: 1) A collection of index cards; and 2) One unit of meaning per card.

At this point, the massive data collection seemed overwhelming. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) recommend a 'wall-paper approach' (p. 131), which is represented as 'a visual display of the data' using rolls of paper to write the units of meaning on. So for visual reference, I transcribed the information onto a whiteboard. This let me compare units of meaning, and make data connections, at a glance. The whiteboard helped me to see the project in a non-threatening way. I include the following as an illustration (see Photograph 1).

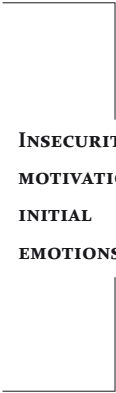
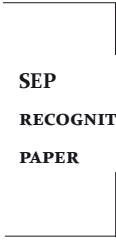


do with 'stress'. Often units of stress blurred and referred to other categories such as: time management, academic writing, personal upheavals, professional conflicts at work, work responsibilities, and emotions. The units of meaning for stress could be placed under a variety of these other groupings. In the end, I realized that the writing of the data had to show this richness of interconnectedness, intricacies and complexities (Holliday, 2002). In Chapter 6 I show how the unit of meaning for stress was meshed together in a number of the subsections.

Index cards proved a versatile method for sorting information, and identifying emerging issues (Lincoln and Guba, 1984; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Cards were compared to others. Cards with similar ideas were placed in stacks. Once I analyzed the data, issues clarified. Some I anticipated; others became obvious, as their regularity increased. In several cases, single units of meaning appeared, that failed to fall under the main issue. At this point I had to decide whether to put aside the single units of meaning or incorporate them in a similar issue. Another problem that arose was the time consuming task of classifying all the data and being as consistent as possible. I had a large number of journals to read and classify.

Now I shall include a journal entry (MJ-21) that represents the coding and categorization processes of raw data. The raw data was read and coded by underlining or highlighting units of meaning. Next, each unit was compared with other units and given an emerging issue category according to the 'look-alike' or 'feel-alike' concept. I have marked the units of meaning to illustrate the process of coding and categorizing in Table 5.

Table 5 Coding and categorization of raw data

JOURNAL ENTRY - MJ-21	EMERGING ISSUES
<p>Emotionally to see how the trainees go through the COTE is very interesting. During the summer we send out promotion and answer basic questions about the course by telephone or email. Sometimes people will come in person. At this point the information the people want is: How much is the course?, How long does the course last?, When does it begin?, etc. <b><i>At this point the trainees are unsure of themselves and motivated.</i></b> At the next step, they come for the entrance exam. They take a written exam that has a cloze exercise, restatement section and a composition. During the time they are taking the written exam they are called one by one for the interview. In the last four years, we have not made the decision of who gets accepted or not. This is done by the tutor from Guadalajara. We do help this person monitor the group. At this point the trainees are <b><i>still motivated and curious. It is like a door opening</i></b> for them and on the other side all is pleasant. During this time, we also talk about the responsibilities of the trainees. They are told about the academic writing and observations. The importance of attendance is also mentioned. The rules are laid out quite clearly but I wonder how much the trainees realize what they will have to do in this course.</p> <p>The course is prestigious and <b><i>SEP (Ministry of Education) recognizes it.</i></b> They have heard about this course from their peers. They do have some background knowledge of the COTE but in reality it is not a lot in my opinion. They know they have to <b><i>continue on with their education. It somewhat happened to me with my master's. The university here was</i></b></p>	<p>   INSECURITY, MOTIVATION, INITIAL EMOTIONS </p> <p>   SEP RECOGNITION, PAPER </p>

***pushing people to get more education. I entered into the Master's but I really never knew what it was going to be like.*** For most of us this is the case.

The next step seems to be a couple of months of input sessions. Most of the input is new and they can relate it to what they are teaching. It is attractive because they are students and teachers at the same time. Their ***first academic essay is due soon. They have had input on academic writing before the first assignment is due. Another assignment is given and eventually they get the first back with the comments from the grader. Some are happy and relieved to have gotten a passing grade. The others are trying to understand what they have to do in order to rewrite the essay. Some of the trainees will openly tell others what their grade is and others will not.***

More assignments are given and the vacation (Christmas) has come and gone. During these months the trainees are giving their classes and meeting the demands of their students and school. Whatever problems or responsibilities they have at home, life goes on.

Around January ***some get behind in the writing and they begin to teach again. The pressure is building up. More observations and peer observations are done. The trainees are at a different stage in February and March. Some still feel insecure and question what they are doing. Didn't I feel that way doing my master's?***

***There is much more tension for the rest of the months. From June to August the trainees are busy with the new assignments, rewrites if necessary, observations, and then the final paper in August. At the end the trainees are exhausted trying to get everything done along with their workload at school.***

ACADEMIC  
WRITING,  
GRADES

STRUGGLES-  
ACADEMIC  
WRITING,  
OBSERVATIONS,  
EMOTIONS



Once they have handed everything in, they rest and push aside everything they have done before. Then, the tutor in Guadalajara fills in the large number of forms from Cambridge.

I wonder once they are through, *if they put to use the concepts that were seen in COTE or do they just stop after so much pressure.*

Last week I saw a trainee from the last course. She commented on what she was doing and how relaxed she felt. *She needed her certificate so that she could hand it in to the SEP. There was pressure for her to hand it in. The time that it takes for the trainees to receive final feedback on the course is between five to six months. This is time waiting for the tutor to hand in all the forms and for Cambridge to process these forms. During this time the trainees contact me for a paper saying that they have finished the COTE and they are waiting for the results.* This is another patience test for them.

Once I get the certificates, I contact the trainees and a date is set for the handing out of the certificates. *The trainees come with their family members all dressed up for the COTE graduation. The mother and/or father of the trainee will come along with the trainee's children. There are greetings of hugs and kisses. Finally the whole process is coming to an end. At this point they are quite happy and satisfied, even emotional with relief and accomplishment.*

*I usually give a short speech that is about this process. When I mention the 150 contact hours, the observations, the peer observations, and all of the essays, all of the trainees laugh nervously but happily because they remember too quickly what they went through.*

It is an interesting point here to see the trainees because as a group we went through a

POST COTE

CREDENTIAL  
REQUIREMENTS-  
PAPER

EMOTIONS,  
CRITICAL  
INCIDENT

lot that involved a number of emotions. At this point they are happy, satisfied with themselves and relieved. The whole process takes between 1 year to 1½ year.	
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This process was carried out for: the three types of journals (Martha's Journal of 51 entries, 18 individual Trainee Journals with a total of 241 entries and the collective Shared Journal of 119 entries), 49 entries of Field Notes, 42 different Interviews (Interviews and Post COTE Interview), the Focus Group Questions and Discussion and five Observations (class) (transcriptions and reflections). Table 6 shows the data sources, coding systems and quantity of data sources gathered.

**Table 6 Data sources, coding, and quantity of sources**

Data	Coding	Quantity
Trainee Journal	TJ	18 trainees - 241 entries in total
Shared Journal	ShJ	119 entries
Martha's Journal	MJ	51 entries
Field Notes	FN	49 entries
Interviews	I	32 interviews (person to person - 20, telephone - 2, email - 10)
Post COTE Interview	PCI	10 trainees
Focus Group Questions	FGQ	4 tutors - 3 local tutors and 1 external tutor
Focus Group Discussion	FGD	1 focus group discussion of 4 local tutors (myself included)
Observations (class)	ObT	5 observations - transcripts and reflections for each observation

The object of the interpretive phase concerns how to make sense of the information, particularly as a text analogue. In Chapter 1, I introduced my Research Questions. Table 7 shows a preliminary cross-correlation between the data, the emerging issues, and my Research Questions and Issues (see at the end of this chapter, page 181).

From the emerging issues, I then placed the data into a chronological order of events. Headings for these events were assigned as: the reasons why the teacher-learners became EFL teachers - pre-COTE considerations, the driving force from them to matriculate in the COTE, the going-through process of the COTE, and finally the course-end realizations. I chose this chronological order because I use the metaphor of stories throughout the book and this represents a traditional view of how stories are related. For example, I placed data that had been analyzed and coded as 'falling into the job' under 'reasons why the teacher-learners became EFL teachers - pre-COTE considerations'. Chronologically this refers to prior to the COTE course. Another example is placing data such as 'academic writing' 'absorbing new material' and 'observation' under 'academic struggles'. This was not a straightforward task where all the cards fell into a neat order. At times I had to make decisions as to where to place a piece of data because it could have been used in a number of places. As the storyteller this is where I decided where and when to introduce information.

Due to the multiplicity of voices, and lengthy passages, the arc of the narrative extends over three chapters: Chapters 5-7. I have grouped the data chronologically to reflect the COTE as a developmental process experienced by teacher-learners. The specific chapter breakdowns within my research look like this.

Within the arc of Chapters 5-7, I will study 18 COTE participants using narratives from their own personal and professional lives as well as the tutors' voices. My primary goal in these chapters is to examine three key areas: personal development, professional development, and professional EFL identity. The-

se previously mentioned issues correspond to the Research Questions, presented in Chapter 1.

### Summary

In this chapter, I first examined the analytical basis for my methodology, particularly in regard to qualitative research and ethnography. I showed how voices, reflexivity and *bricolage* formed a unique qualitative research methodology. Second, I extensively covered the data collection phase, describing the methods I used. And finally, I set the stage for data analysis. I begin ‘piecing together’ the collected data. Again, I will be constructing a narrative of voices; a multi-faceted mirror that reflects the COTE course experience.

I turn here to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), who figuratively describe this process, and its end-product:

*Like crystals, Eisenstein’s montage, the jazz solo, or the pieces that make up the quilt, the mixed genre text, as Richardson notes, “combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations... Crystals grow, change, alter... Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different directions.” (p. 5)*

One further point: I am conducting qualitative research in the post-modernistic era. I myself appear as a participant narrator in this composition. This challenges the traditional objective dogma regarding voice. Hertz (1997) outlines the dichotomous nature of voice in the contemporary research vehicle:

*a struggle to figure out how to present the author’s self while simultaneously writing the respondents’ accounts and representing their selves. Voice has multiple dimensions: First, there is the voice of the author. Second, there*

*is the presentation of the voices of one's respondents within the text. A third dimension appears when the self is the subject of the inquiry... Voice is how authors express themselves within an ethnography. (p. xi-xii)*

My voice is used to give voice to the 18 teacher-learners and in addition my voice is the representation of my self within this research. Including these voices aids in the culling or 'piecing

Table 7 Research Questions and Issues, sources, dates, and emerging issues

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES	DATES	EMERGING ISSUES
1. What emotions and cognitive processes do teacher-learners go through during COTE?	Trainees' Journals	Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003	Insecurity or fear of failure, time management and stress, personal upheavals, non-native speaker's identity and empathy, academic writing (grades, redo), absorbing new material, observation nerves, impediments to change, professional image and commitment
	Shared Journal	Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003	
	Martha's Journal	Dec. 2001 - Sept. 2005	
	Focus Group	Dec. 2002	
	Discussion and Questions		
	Observations (class)	Mar. - July 2003	
	Mid-course Trainee Interviews	Feb. 2003	
	Post COTE Interviews	Feb. 2004	
	Field Notes	Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003	
	2. What problems and struggles do trainees encounter throughout the course?	Trainees' Journals	
Shared Journal		Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003	
Martha's Journal		Dec. 2001 - Sept. 2005	
Focus Group		Dec. 2002	
Discussion and Questions			
Observations (class)		Mar. - July 2003	
Mid-course trainee		Feb. 2003	

foreign course, professional image and commitment, professional struggles-teacher versus institution, power struggles-coordinator versus co-workers

Interviews  
Post COTE Interviews  
Field Notes

Feb. 2004

Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003

3. How does this teacher training impact the teachers' sense of identity?

Trainees' Journals

Shared Journal

Martha's Journal

Focus Group

Discussion and

Questions

Observations (class)

Mid-course Trainee

Interviews

Post COTE Interviews

Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003

Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003

Dec. 2001 - Sept. 2005

Dec. 2002

Mar. - July 2003

Feb. 2003

Feb. 2004

Acquired skills and values (gratitude, increased confidence gained, self-improvement, critical thinking skills, empathy, supportive social environment), identity shaping (epiphany, impediments to change, resistant to foreign course, professional image and commitment), COTE course closure, post COTE course plans, impact on trainers, language command, 'falling into' the job

RESEARCH ISSUES OF THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF TEACHER-LEARNERS WITHIN CONTEXT	DATA SOURCES	DATES	EMERGING ISSUES
A. What is the background of trainees before coming to the training course?	Trainees' Journals Shared Journal Martha's Journal Focus Group Discussion and Questions Mid-course Trainee Interviews Post COTE Interviews Interviews Questionnaire	Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003 Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003 Dec. 2001 - Sept. 2005 Dec. 2002 Feb. 2003 Feb. 04 Sept. 7, 01, Mar. 11, 01, Aug. 17, 01, April 16, 02, June 10, 12, 15, 02, June 5, 02, Nov. 5, 12, 02 Aug.- Dec. 2002	'Falling into' the job, language command, family expectations, insecurity or fear of failure, lived experiences outside of Mexico



<p>B. What is the developmental status of ELT in Mexico?</p>	<p>Trainees' Journals                  Shared Journal                  Martha's Journal                  Focus Group                  Discussion and Questions                  Interviews</p>	<p>Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003                  Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003                  Dec. 2001 - Sept. 20 05                  Dec. 2002                    Sept. 7, 2001, Mar. 11, 2001, Aug. 17, 2001,                  April 16, 2002, June 10, 12, 15, 2002, June 5, 2002, Nov. 5, 12, 2002, June 19, 20, 2006                  June 30, 2002</p>	<p>'Falling into' the job, language command, credential requirements, professional advancements, lived experiences outside of Mexico, SEP/BC validation of COTE, SEP programs</p>
	<p>Ministry of Education web page                  British Council web page</p>	<p>Aug. 31, 2001                  April 30, 2003</p>	

C. What is the process of becoming an EFL teacher within this context?	<p>Trainees' Journals</p> <p>Shared Journal</p> <p>Martha's Journal</p> <p>Focus Group</p> <p>Discussion and Questions</p> <p>Observations (class)</p> <p>Mid-course Trainee Interviews</p> <p>Post COTE Interviews</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003</p> <p>Aug. 2002 - Aug. 2003</p> <p>Dec. 2001 - Sept. 2005</p> <p>Dec. 2002</p> <p>Mar. - July 2003</p> <p>Feb. 2003</p> <p>Feb. 2004</p> <p>Sept. 7, 2001, Mar. 11, 2001, Aug. 17, 2001,</p> <p>April 16, 2002, June 10, 12, 15, 2002, June 5, 2002, Nov. 5, 12, 2002</p>	<p>'Falling into' the job, credential requirements, language command, insecurity, professional advancement, family expectations, non-native speaker's identity and empathy, lived experiences outside of Mexico</p>
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Table 8 Chapter breakdowns for Chapters 5-7

CHAPTER TITLE	CATEGORIES	ISSUES
Chapter 5: The Beginning	Pre-COTE Considerations	Language Command Family Expectations 'Falling into' the Job
	COTE Motivation	English Language Contact Credential Requirements Professional Advancements Non-Native Speaker's Identity and Empathy
Chapter 6: Struggles during the Story	Emotions	Insecurity at Course Onset Low Self-Confidence - 'Like a Baby Beginning to Walk' 'No Pain. No Gain.' Rookie Trainee
	Time Management and Stress	On the Road to Time Management 'Playing Catch Up' 'A Nine to Five Job' Envisioning the Future Becoming a Father during the Course Tutors' Viewpoint on Stress and Time Management

Personal Upheavals

Academic Conflicts

Professional Conflicts

Academic Writing Requirement  
(Cultural Difference of Grades,  
Pleasing UCLES)  
Absorbing New Material  
Observation Nerves  
Power Struggles - Coordinators versus  
Co-workers  
Professional Struggles - Teacher versus  
Institution  
Case Study: Teacher versus Institution

#### Chapter 7: Course Outcomes

Acquired Skills and Values

Critical Thinking Skills  
Empathy  
Improved Self-Confidence  
'Supportive Social Environment'  
Self-Improvement  
Gratitude

Identity Shaping

Epiphany  
Impediments to Change  
Resistant to a Foreign Course  
Professional Image and Commitment

COTE Course Closure

Call for a Post COTE Course  
COTE Impact upon the Trainers

together' of the multi-faced mirror in Chapters 5-7.

## CHAPTER 5

# DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: *The Beginning*

*In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching it is critical that we know about the person the teacher is. Our paucity of knowledge in this area is a manifest indictment of the range of our sociological imagination. The life historian pursues the job from his [sic] own perspective, a perspective which emphasizes the value of the person's own story. (Goodson, 1981, p. 69)*

I open the data analysis and interpretation section of my dissertation with this quote from the formal literature in Chapter 2. Two key phrases are embedded above: 'understanding something so intensely personal as teaching' and 'the value of the person's own story'.

Over the next three chapters, I will be examining personal accounts from journal entries, observations, a focus group, interviews and conversations with COTE course participants – those studying the COTE and tutors. My intentions are to construct a narrative of voices, from these teacher-learner episodes, via the *bricolage* method. The end product will form a multi-faceted mirror that reflects my interpretation of the COTE course experience. As previously stated, my research focuses on the identity formation and emotions of COTE participants. Due to the large amount of data that is presented in Chapters 5-7, I shall recap the main themes during the text

and at the end of each chapter in order to assist the reader. In Chapter 8 I shall refer back to these numbered themes.

The organization of Chapter 5 proceeds along two lines: 1) How and why the teacher-learners became EFL teachers and 2) What the motivating force was for them to take the COTE in Guanajuato. I now begin with the construction of the narrative.

### **Pre-COTE Considerations**

In this section I explore the earliest glimmers of teacher socialization in regards to the COTE course. I will specifically examine how trainees entered the EFL profession within the Mexican context, which will eventually lead to how they decided to take the COTE course. This refers to the Research Issues presented in Chapter 1. Because this section looks at the teacher-learners before taking the course, I would like to briefly touch on socialization. Zeichner and Gore (1990) have described teacher socialization as ‘the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers’ (p. 329). Becoming a member of the EFL profession is also connected to teacher identity (see Chapter 2).

As previously stated, in Mexico ‘falling into’ the job represents the primary EFL career entry path (MJ-10, 15). Few teachers begin in the classroom with any formal EFL training. This is not mentioned to demean these individuals, but rather as a statement of fact. Of the 18 individuals who came to the COTE course, most had no formal teacher training: one held a teacher’s degree in a related area; one held a Master’s in English literature; and another held a BA in TESOL.

Unfledged entry into the EFL profession carries a psychological burden. Based upon the Focus Group Discussion (FGD-2-4 and FGQ-1-4), TJ and ShJ journal entries, tutorials, and informal conversations, at COTE course onset, most trainees suffered from low self-confidence. They did not consider themselves qualified to teach (MJ-18, 19). So it seems inevitable that

these individuals would eventually find the COTE course, and decide to take it.

At this point I would like to describe the feeling of low self-confidence because it appears repeatedly in the data collected. I shall use my own observations and journal entries (MJ-19, 20) as a backdrop to explain how I interpret this feeling from the data and the years of experience observing COTE teacher-learners. I will later use the data to back up and complement my observations in Chapters 5-7. Teacher-trainers are in awe of the COTE because it represents a prestigious international course from Britain with the seal of approval from the Mexican Ministry of Education. Many hear about the program before entering or they are required to take this course for job security. Due to their lack of formal training in this area, they often feel a lack of competence and view themselves with a negative attitude of low self-confidence. When taking risks such as the COTE, they seem afraid of the challenge and even doubt if they are good enough to be in the course. In addition, they have low opinions of who they are and have qualms if they can live up to the course's expectations.

It is often the case for individuals to feel insecure when starting something new in their lives such as the COTE course. Yet what interests me is that many trainees have years of experience (see Table 2 in Chapter 3) and they still feel low self-confidence when beginning this course. Related to this, Lortie (1975) makes reference to beginning teachers having low self-esteem and experiencing anxiety during their induction years. Similarly low self-esteem and anxiety are noted in the first stage of Fuller and Bowen's (1975) teacher development scheme (see Chapter 2) when beginning teachers are trying to survive their initial years of teaching. Self-esteem relates to one's self-worth and competencies developed during one's life. In the discussion of the course trainees, I use the word 'self-confidence' which best represents the trainees' feelings instead of self-esteem. The relationship between self-confidence and identity is what I shall address in the next chapters. I now turn to construction of the narrative, following the issues

mentioned above.

### Language Command

I begin analysis and interpretation of the collected data by looking at case histories where language command influenced trainees to enter the EFL profession. Some individuals simply had an innate ability for language learning. Others acquired English language skills during an extended stay in a host country.

In the following narrative, a teacher-learner, who began speaking English at an early age, linked an interest in the liberal arts - law, philosophy, and history - to the desire to teach English:

*When I was about six years old my father and mother moved to the State of California...I did all my school years there...that's why I know English. When I finished high school, I came to Guanajuato to study law... My friends and colleagues are lawyers; in their free time, they give law, philosophy or history classes, but not me. I like to teach English. At first, schools hired me because of my English, but I said to myself, 'You know English, but now you have to learn how to teach it' so I began to take training courses here and there. (TJ13-1, 7)*

This trainee has an excellent grasp of English due to his years growing up in the United States. He is offered an EFL position due to his command of the language, but he is aware he needs to know more than the language in order to teach. Language command opened the door for this individual when a teaching job came knocking (FGQ-2-4; FGD-2-4; MJ-10). This trend, also mentioned in Chapter 2, has dominated Mexico for years. Native speakerhood frequently represented the primary qualification for professional entry, as was my own case.

A strong, positive association with English may serve as



a long-term motivator. Enjoyment of foreign language learning prompted some individuals to continue with their studies and pursue a career in the field (FGQ-2-4). The following two teacher-learners identified strongly with the language:

*I have loved English since I was a child. I know that as a teacher I need to be better day-by-day and that there are also new things coming up. I really want to feel like a fish in the water when teaching English... I'm a person who always liked English: pronunciation, people, songs, seeing or living among Americans in order to learn exactly how they communicate, how they live and how they feel. That became a goal and a dream and this dream became true when I was thirty-three years old. I had been married for twelve years and my three children were already born. We went to live in the U.S.A. in order that the whole family could learn the language... (TJ5-1, 10)*

*I was 14 years old when I had the opportunity to travel to USA...a special trip...given to me for my 15 years [quince años - fifteenth birthday rite of passage party or gift for Latino women]...so my relatives in California took me to Disneyland, Universal Studios, Great America, San Francisco. At the end, they asked me if I wanted to stay. My answer was totally positive. I was sent to learn English in a high school...a great experience...2 years later I returned to Mexico. My parents did not want me to go back, so I started to study to be a social worker. I finished and I went back to the States because I liked all the opportunities there. I worked but I had to return to Mexico. I started to work as an EFL teacher. Then, I decided to begin preparing myself for what I believe is the activity I enjoy most and this is being an English teacher. (TJ7-1)*

In the first excerpt the trainee associated learning English to fulfilling the American dream of living there with her family.

In the second entry, the trainee was given a trip to the United States instead of the traditional fifteenth birthday celebration dating back to Aztec and Mayan history for Latino women and stayed on to learn English. Both experiences proved to be positive influences on her life and prompted her to return for more American opportunities - to work. Upon returning to Mexico she made a career move from social work to teaching English.

In regard to the two trainees above, I now pursue the thread of the positive influence of a prolonged stay in the United States upon them (MJ-45, TJ5-8). Frequently, the social-political dynamics between bordering countries posit a lasting impression on Mexicans, who live out-of-country, and later sway decisions in the personal and professional arena (FGD-3, 4). Such teachers may retain a deeply imbedded lifelong, interest in English (Richards, 1998; Williams and Burden, 1997).

One teacher-learner with a strong language tie held a BA degree in TESOL, but did not want to work as a teacher. I include this narrative in two sections because it represents a young person who wavered and who initially rejected the idea of being a teacher:

*How did I become a teacher? I don't know. I didn't plan it. I didn't want to at first either...I chose it cause I like English...I went through the career easily; I'm good at learning languages. I got excellent grades most of the time...when I graduated I didn't think of becoming a teacher. Actually, the mere idea scared me to death, well, not scared really, it was STH [something] not like me? A teacher? No way! I want STH [something] else, STH [something] better... (TJ9-1)*

The trainee continues on her search for what she considers 'something better':

*I thought I would get a job in an administrative, tourism or pedagogical area. It never crossed my mind I would*

*end up teaching. I used to say I would never be a teacher because I always thought teachers were boring, miserable, badly paid and not glamorous...but, once I got a job (sooner than expected because I hadn't finished the career yet) I wasn't looking for, I said: OK, why not, I'll take it up while I finish my career, extra \$, then I'll do STH [something] else. (PCI-9)*

This phenomenon occurs frequently. Young people complete degree programs, yet fail to enter the target profession. The teacher-learner above seems to imply she was expected to receive a degree, simply to have one. Language learning initially interested her more than the profession. Her preconceived view - wanting to do 'something better' than teaching - expresses a survival mentality or a low value view of EFL teaching. It would suffice until she found something more attractive. In the EFL profession people frequently view teaching this way; something to do - to travel and earn money - while waiting for new horizons.

A key question: why would this individual have taken the COTE course if she held a TESOL degree, a higher qualification? During informal conversations, she mentioned she was seeking additional training to feel more comfortable as a teacher, and heard positive comments about the course. Interestingly enough, this individual is now an EFL teacher, pursuing an MA in TESOL.

To summarize this section, in the excerpts above a strong identification with the English language influenced teacher-learners to eventually study EFL, enter the profession, and receive job offers. Extended stays in a target language country such as the United States were powerful experiences. Many constructed their identities from these out-of-country experiences (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3). To help the reader with identifying this thread and others I shall classify it as a 'theme' for reference at this point in the text and at the end of this chapter. Later these themes will be used in Chapter 8. The first theme is:

*Theme 1: Language command often learned from out-of-country experiences in English speaking countries or formal language learning seemed to influence the teacher-learners in making career decisions and identity formation.*

I now turn to how family expectations influence teacher-learners.

**Family Expectations:  
'Ease my Pain and Contain some Anger'**

In many middle-class households, higher education represents a family tradition. Young people are expected to pursue advanced training or degrees, but they do so grudgingly. Parental-influence scenarios frequently reveal some important aspect of family motivation, tangible objectives, or dynamics. I present here excerpts from three teacher-learners, who describe parental influence on their career decisions.

One held a MA in Literature, and taught several years in small American colleges. This individual held two nationalities: American and Dominican Republican:

*My father being a doctor it was tacitly assumed by some in my family that I too would become one...at college, however, it became clear to me that I excelled in English...my mother, that eminently practical person, insisted that I get a teaching certificate while I pursued my major in English...was accepted at the University of Washington's Master's program... I came to Mexico because I was dating a girl who was half Chicana, and wanted to leave and experience another culture. So we decided to come to Mexico...since I loved it here, I ended up staying! And, yes, I sort of fell into ESL teaching, but I moved up enjoying it... (TJ8-1)*

English literature might seem such a background that would be

related to teaching EFL. Interestingly enough, this individual expressed the feeling that he too ‘fell into’ an EFL teaching job. His family, especially his mother, influenced his educational decision.

Another teacher-learner expressed anguish in regard to her parents’ expectations, for her. Their educational standards for the young woman did not coincide with her own. They advised her to give up law studies for something more suitable. Frustrated, she turned to language learning. Later she settled on education, and identified herself as a teacher. I present her narrative below in two parts:

*My first idea was to finish high school and take an exam for the law school in Guanajuato. At home my parents said it wasn’t appropriate for me and that I should take some time to think. I did but during that year I took more English classes in order to ‘ease my pains’ and ‘contain some anger’. I decided to look for a job; at that point the law school was in the past. (TJ4-46)*

She goes through a number of jobs and decides to try to be an English teacher:

*So I went looking for a job as a secretary, as a receptionist, and a credit card seller. I felt empty in those jobs, and I thought...that with the knowledge I’ve got from English, I could teach... It was hard to find a job because of my age (19)...I never thought I’d be an English teacher. If you’d said that 11 years ago, I would’ve burst out laughing...at first, I was not hired because of my young age, but 3 weeks later after being “refused”, they called me to be in charge of 2 groups! I had to face terrible things and no one supported me...but, one year of teaching kids was enough to make me get rid of my plans of studying law... (TJ4-1, 41, 46)*

After a few unsuccessful attempts at different jobs, the teacher-learner falls back on English for a job. Once teaching, she does not regret that she did not study law based upon her parents' recommendation.

Finally, a teacher-learner, the youngest in the course, was seeking acceptance and approval from his parents. This represents a common occurrence in family influence scenarios. Young people pursue advanced training not for themselves, or to prepare for employment, but simply to gain favor:

*The only thing that I wanted was to show my parents that I could be a great son and a great person. When I got here, I knew about the COTE from my cousin and I said to myself 'Why not' after all, my English wasn't that bad. (TJ18-1)*

These individuals above were strongly influenced by their parents in regard to career choices. They also had English skills. They represent young people who negotiated the direction of their own lives, in light of family expectations.

Another key point in the family-influence scenario occurred when parents decided to send their children to the United States. Whether young people travel attended or unattended frequently revealed something important about family motivation and tangible objectives. Due to the social, economical and political relations between these two bordering countries, children often accompanied their parents to the United States or they were sent for varying lengths of time to experience the American way of life with relatives. Some were sent to learn English, to work, or to attend the American public school system. The aim of these decisions was to provide the children with more opportunities for their future. The force of learning English had an effect upon the children's identity formation. The above section refers to the second theme:

*Theme 2: Families had an impact upon some teacher-*

*learners in making decisions and identity formation.*

### **‘Falling into’ the Job**

As previously mentioned, ‘falling into’ the job represents a key issue within my research. For years individuals in the Mexican context have entered the EFL profession without any formal qualifications (see Chapter 1). In the excerpts that follow, COTE participants present their unique narratives and personal insights. The first teacher-learner expresses a common pattern - a career change to EFL, based on a chance job offer. This narrative is presented in two sections:

*I was born here in Mexico. My dad is from Gary, Indiana USA. My mother is Mexican...I went to the States at twelve...for three years...came back to Mexico with my mother...for only 6 months. I went back to the States, finished high school when I was 17 and got married when I was 18... three kids: two girls and a boy...I’m divorced now. (TJ12-1)*

The woman returned to Mexico with her children and had to find a job:

*I was a hairdresser in the States (Chicago)...and I was very frustrated to find out that hairstyling is not well paid here as it is in the States, so I decided not to work in a beauty salon anymore. When I went to enroll one of my daughters for secondary school, they saw that my daughter was American and the principal asked if I spoke English. I said yes! He then asked me, if I was interested in working as an English teacher. I told him that I was not a teacher but he asked me for an interview with the English Coordinator, and he hired me. That’s exactly how I became or fell in this field... (TJ12-5, 12)*

The above narrative illustrates how an unplanned pivotal moment happened while this trainee registered her child at school. She was at the right place and at the right moment; she was offered a job due to her command of English. She began teaching EFL instead of looking for a job in the area of her previous vocation due to her economic situation as the sole breadwinner of the family. This excerpt also represents how the teacher-learner did not follow a linear sequence of teacher development such as the ones by Fuller and Bowen (1975) and Maynard and Furlong (cited in Farrell, 2003) (see Chapter 2).

The next excerpt describes a native English speaker who ‘fell into’ the job, and subsequently decided to remain in Mexico. Like the previous teacher-learner, this individual’s command of English influenced the job offer. Eventually, he realized he needed documentation to keep the teaching door open:

*I started my profession at the later part of my life at the age of 37...without a clue of what I was going to do, or how long I was going to stay. Destiny answered those questions. Just as I was going to return to the States, I got offered a job teaching...I really enjoyed it. That was when I decided to make that my profession. Consequently that’s why I’m here, to get the papers I need to remain teaching... (TJ1-1)*

Again by chance this trainee was offered a job on the spur of the moment and decided to stay in Mexico. Despite the ‘speakerhood’ sentiment expressed in both of the above TJ entries, all of this has changed. In recent years, the EFL profession has to promote accountability. A ‘certificate’ or ‘diploma’ now represents the required documentation for professional entry (MJ-6, 7).

The next narrative portrays a young man’s need to earn money as a way to finance his formal education. He fell back on his early language studies in English and French to find a job. Again, this occurs routinely within the profession. Individuals teach EFL, while they wait for better prospects. I also classify



this as 'falling into' the job:

*I was in a French school... One of my classes was English as a second language. The funny part is that if I didn't understand something the teacher tried to explain it IN FRENCH!! Can you imagine the problems I had in my mind...a regular Mexican 15 year old boy learning English from a French teacher...I went to study 'Industrial Engineering'...dropped out of school and went to work... But then I realized that I wouldn't get far without any professional studies...and I went back to school...my father paid for tuition, and everything was OK. Then he couldn't afford it anymore so I had to find a job. Like 3 blocks from my university there was a little language school...asking for teachers so I applied...they had to teach me a lot of things... (TJ2-1)*

Due to economic problems, he found work as an EFL teacher. In the excerpt above, long years of language study may have influenced the teacher-learner's decision to enter the EFL profession. Lortie (1975) has commented on such cases in his study of teachers. The long 'apprenticeship of observation' undertaken as a pupil at school has equipped them with a knowledge of what teachers' work is like. Several researchers have suggested that these formative impressions of teaching can be a powerful influence in shaping the beginning teacher's classroom practice (see, Calderhead, 1988).

The next excerpt - presented in two sections - illustrates how a casual conversation in English led to a classroom invitation, and eventually resulted in a chain-reaction of life-changing events. Again, language proficiency served as the primary qualification for professional entry:

*I had to live in Acapulco...working as a supervisor for a bus company...I remember that Friday very well (1996)... It was a hot day and I was the only Mexican person in*

*the pool...a person from England named Stephen is the reason why I am an English teacher...I had to say I always liked to study English and I continued studying it for many years...Stephen asked me about my English and I answered that...my English was 'dusty'... He asked: Have you taught English before? He said that he needed a teacher for the next following Monday. I said, 'Don't look at me'. He tried to explain to me how easy it was. I gave him a negative answer. (TJ16-1, 2)*

The trainee is convinced to give his first English class:

*I had just two days to try to prepare something...I couldn't sleep that Friday, Saturday and Sunday.... My legs were shaking when I went to the classroom...I don't remember how come but after five minutes I was teaching...I looked at my watch. I couldn't believe how the time had gone by so fast...I left the classroom with my best smile. Stephen was waiting for me and he congratulated me.... He said that I did it well. That day I reflected about the class and just could conclude that teaching was something I enjoyed extremely. (TJ16-2)*

The excerpt above illustrates an example of social constructivism (Roberts, 1998, p.7; Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky, 1986; Williams and Burden, 1997, pp. 42-4, 119-120), whereby an experienced professional served as motivator and facilitator for a novice. Negotiation took place, as Stephen convinced the teacher-learner to give a class. Of keen interest are the displayed emotions. At first, the teacher-learner felt gratitude and nervousness, but in the end, self-satisfaction and pride.

Finally, I present the narrative of a woman, who returned to the workforce after raising her small children. Her childhood love of ballet and a resulting need to learn English served as positive motivating factors in making a subsequent career choice. Eventually she became an EFL teacher:

*When I was a child I decided to take ballet lessons...and a teacher from the Royal Academy of Dancing was going to come here. How was I going to understand my teacher? The ballet terms were in French, I speak Spanish and that teacher speaks English!! That's what motivated me!! So 4 years ago I decided to work as a teacher.... But one year ago. I felt something wrong was happening to me. I was falling in the routine in my class, my sources were ended, I felt like I was missing something. I did not know what, but I felt it. My bosses were happy with my work but I still felt that what I knew was not enough. I didn't have ideas so I decided to do something... (TJ6-1, 2, PCI-6)*

The key phrase above is: 'I felt like I was missing something'. After several years in the classroom, this individual experienced an ambiguity or self-doubt. Eventually she discovered the COTE course on the university web page. The woman signed up in hopes of improving her EFL classroom skills and techniques. The COTE course represented her first formal teacher training efforts.

In a highly fascinating confessional moment, another teacher-learner articulates the same sense of missing something. This revelation came out in a Post-Course Interview. So in retrospect this individual was able to correctly identify the specific blame: lack of methodology and techniques:

*I felt lost in every class I taught. Without any methodology and techniques, it was difficult for me to teach, and I also felt dishonest with my students because they didn't learn the language effectively. (PCI- 5)*

Looking for something missing was the formal educational background for both of the above trainees. Because they were looking for something more in their teaching, this represents

how they view their positions as EFL teachers – more professional. Based upon de Sonneville's (2007) scheme of transformative learning process (see Chapter 2), the above mentioned trainees may be considered at phase 2 where they realize they need something more in their teacher development – the COTE.

As previously stated, many individuals in the Mexican context have 'fallen into' the job without formal teaching preparation. So this type of anguish or indescribable void is a fairly common one. Related to this, Huberman (1995) suggests:

*that teachers make the most energetic attempts to revise their instructional practices during the first six to eight years of the career cycle. (p.194)*

Both teacher-learners instinctively felt they needed more in their professional lives to carry on.

In summary, excerpts in this section illustrate a range of entry methods into the EFL profession and a range of educational backgrounds. 'Falling into' the job represents the common key. We can therefore encapsulate these findings as follows:

*Theme 3: Teacher socialization of EFL teachers in Mexico has often relied heavily upon the phenomenon of 'falling into' the job due to their command of English and not due to training or experience.*

Teacher-learners expressed in their narratives insecurity and self-doubt regarding their professional standing. The COTE course offered a way to improve their qualifications and teaching techniques - a way to construct their identities as EFL teachers.

### **COTE Motivation**

'Falling into' the job represented the primary EFL career entry

path in Mexico (see Chapters 1 and 2), with few teachers having any formal EFL training, so inevitably many individuals would eventually find a course like the COTE and consider taking it. In this section I specifically explore motivation - the driving force behind teacher-learners' desires and decisions to take the COTE course. This refers to the Research Issues presented in Chapter 1. I begin with the English language contact as a motivating factor for taking the COTE.

### **English Language Contact**

One motivation for taking the COTE course centers on language acquisition and personal growth. A strong positive association with English may foster a deeply embedded lifelong interest in language learning. Frequently this comes about via a prolonged stay in the United States or an English-speaking host country at an early age. Frequently such individuals show an innate ability for language learning. These individuals are drawn to the language contact opportunities of the COTE course. They want to continue their language use, or improve their fluency.

In the following excerpts two trainees express a strong personal interest in learning English. Entry into the EFL profession verges on a secondary consideration - an afterthought:

*I didn't know anything about COTE. I just enrolled in it just to have kind of contact with English language. (TJ16-3)*

*The reason of being here is because I really want to improve my English level. I want to get to know more about all the teaching experiences that are marvelous. I want to grow. I'm a little afraid of failing; I've always seen my way as a battle I have to fight. (TJ4-20)*

Both voice how they want to continue on with the improvement of their English. The second trainee is anxious and in-

secure concerning her ability to pass the course and sees this experience as an obstacle to overcome. Improvement of the trainees' English was actually noticed by trainees themselves and trainers (FGD-2-4; PCI-15; ShJ 25, 72; TJ7-6, TJ10-11, TJ4-20; and informal conversations).

Frequently, local trainers (FGD-2-4) comment on the power of English - how the language enables individuals to attract and receive jobs (see Chapter 2). One trainer mentioned the power-broker relationship between English and the United States (FGD-3). Quite ironically, the COTE course is in fact British in origin, implemented in Mexico. I summarize these findings for the fourth theme:

*Theme 4: Most trainees identified strongly with the English language and often this command of language was a motivation for becoming an EFL teacher and for taking the course.*

### ***Credential Requirements***

A traditional motivation for advanced training and higher education has always been credentials, which loosely may translate into 'jobs'. Many trainees require credentials to continue their employment. Such individuals may be more pragmatic in their world approach than the previously mentioned individuals who focused on personal growth and language learning. An official certificate ensures entry-level qualification and job security. Several local schools regularly send their teachers to the COTE course, which makes the program a norm for their institutions. The following teacher-learner expresses a typical desire regarding credentials:

*I started teaching adults and young children...I really enjoyed it. That was when I decided to make that my profession. Consequently that's why I'm here. I need to get the papers to remain teaching. (TJ1-1)*

The above trainee knows that EFL teaching is his call of profession now. Once he decided this, he also knew what he had to do - get a paper in order to continue teaching. He associates the paper with a sign of his commitment to his profession.

At course-end, trainees wait anxiously for their certificates. Curiously enough, more than a year passes before the documents arrive from UCLES. During the interim, most recent graduates request proxy letters stating they finished the course and are waiting the official certificate. In turn, this letter provides collateral evidence, so they can continue teaching, or secure another job.

One local tutor offers some interesting comments regarding the COTE as a minimum requirement, and its future influence on the local EFL environment in Guanajuato:

*In many private schools of the State of Guanajuato, it has become the minimum requirement for teachers. Probably as more teachers are trained, the impact will become tangible as learners leave junior high school or high school with a better level of English. (FGD-4)*

Despite any criticism concerning the bourgeois 'job-emphasis' nature of certificates, they often ensure teacher uniformity, which improves classroom presentation for students, the end-product recipients of education.

In the following excerpt, a local tutor recognizes the credential-shortage within the EFL profession in Mexico, and sees the COTE course as a solution to the dilemma. As a side issue, her comments regarding COTE 'expense' are echoed throughout journal entries (FN-6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21; MJ-5, 9, 42; ShJ-49, 66; TJ5-7, 12-9, 10, 15-2), Focus Group Discussion (FGD-2-4), and interviews and informal conversations with teacher-learners:

*I think the COTE is a starting point for teachers inter-*

*ested in developing themselves as English teachers. I also feel that it is an important course for a country like Mexico where a large proportion of English teachers do not have formal training. However, it is an expensive course if one thinks of teachers' salaries. In this sense, it has become elitist and does not cater for all the needs. (FGQ-4)*

Obviously more opportunities are needed for teachers to get a teaching credential that is economically accessible for EFL teachers.

Paul Davies (2002), national-level founding COTE trainer, acknowledged criticisms like this during an email interview. He attributed the cost problem to a chronic funding shortfall, common to higher education. So inevitably, the COTE program is plagued by a cost-quality tradeoff. The burden is placed on hosting institutions, participating staff, and teacher-learners. Without this consideration, course costs for teacher-learners would be unaffordable:

*One weakness...is the space between desired quality and high cost (which trainees or institutions have to bridge from their pockets, or course instructors from their lives and souls)...the financing of all this has not grown and COTEs require capable and conscientious instructor-administrators who are prepared to put in considerably more time and work than they are adequately paid for, or alternatively, very high fees for trainees (or costs for institutions). COTEs stretch the cost-quality relationship: the full quality desired by Cambridge costs too much for most instructors, teachers and institutions, at least in countries like Mexico today. (I-Davies)*

Teacher-learners have a difficult time meeting the costs based upon their salaries as EFL teachers in Mexico. Some educational institutions give complete or partial economic support



to their teachers to take this course. Yet, others do not receive any monetary aid.

Finally, I present the narrative of a translator who moved into the EFL arena. Her motivation for taking the COTE course seems to be mostly commercial; the need was to 'offer a better service for her customers'. An international certificate such as the COTE was an added plus or was an advantage to her translation business:

*I studied business administration and got a degree in 1982. I worked in that area for more than 20 years, and a year ago I left a British company and I decided to start my own business. After working in the company for all these years, I found there was a need to teach English to executives as well as a good market for translations. I did two 'diplomados' [certificate courses] in translation in 1999 and now I'm teaching in companies early in the morning from 7 to 9 and working on translations the rest of the day. But I have the great need to learn to teach in order to offer a better service for my customers. (TJ3-1)*

Her previous studies in business administration help her decide on her new professional move - to take the COTE - as a way to be better prepared as an EFL teacher for future clients and as a way to expand her business. Her decision is geared to provide a more competitive service.

I have described how teachers 'fell into' the job within the Mexican context, based on their language command (*Themes 1 and 2*). And eventually, they came to require credentials to ensure job opportunities and security. A recap of the findings on motivation is the following:

*Themes: Motivation of most teacher-learners to take the COTE course included a need for an official credential, contact with the English language, and professional advancement for practical and personal reasons.*

This recent development illustrates the evolution of the EFL profession toward a new admittance standard. In this light, I now turn to issues of professional advancement.

### **Professional Advancement**

We cannot deny that students seek out higher education as a guide to professional advancement. Program completion may translate into jobs, changing social status, and entry into desired fields. But the subtle motivation behind this powerful driving force needs to be examined carefully.

I begin by looking at one of the practical reasons participants take the COTE course. I previously mentioned the common scenario where untrained teachers with several years of experience often felt they were missing something, began to question their classroom strategy, and subsequently decided to take the COTE course.

Frequently at course enrollment, they could not exactly articulate their dilemma, but they knew they had reached a plateau, and their previous manner of working - based on instinct, early language learning, and 'transmission of knowledge' - no longer held up. They wanted more. This may relate to de Sonneville's (2007) phase 1 which is characterized by a low level of competence (see Chapter 2). These individuals were motivated to become better classroom teachers in order to help their students.

In the following brief retrospective excerpt, a teacher-learner makes a frank confession, and recognizes what is missing - sound methodology:

*Teaching was very difficult for me because I started teaching without any preparation or knowledge about teaching a foreign language. (TJ5-3)*

One of the important professional advancements gained by

teacher-learners who successfully complete the COTE course is an exposure to methodology. The program might be described as a field course on how to teach in the EFL classroom. In Chapter 2, I mentioned the ‘banking concept’. Prior to the COTE course, many teachers practiced what might be termed the ‘transmission of knowledge’ via memorization or rote methods. In Chapter 6 I include teacher-learners’ perspectives of absorbing course material and Chapter 7 contains data from the trainers concerning resistance to teacher-learners making a change.

Late in the COTE course, some teacher-learners experience an epiphany; they have covered enough formal content knowledge of education and seem to formulate their own unique methodological strategy. Most of these beliefs focus on empowering students to take charge of their own learning.

In the following excerpt, a teacher-learner demonstrates a methodology change. This individual is motivated to accommodate his students’ learning styles and needs:

*Because I have been a teacher since 1984, and because I have never attended a training course for teachers, I think, I have been teaching following a traditional methodology: transmission of knowledge from teacher to student but I didn’t create conditions in which students learn from themselves. When I had the opportunity of teaching English, my vision of being a teacher changed because the students didn’t accept from me only transmission of ideas, but how to put them in real conditions... (TJ14-1)*

In the above excerpt, the trainee essentially verbalizes Schön’s reflection-on-action (see Moon, 2000; Williams and Burden, 1997), an after-event occurrence, where he makes sense of his thinking and actions. The key phrases in the passage above are: ‘my vision of being a teacher changed’ and ‘how to put them (ideas) into real conditions’. This individual appears to have ac-

cepted being a professional teacher. His change may mean moving away from the 'knowledge as a product' view (Freeman, 1995; Freeman, 2001a; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; 2006) towards a new focus on critical thinking, learning process, and application of ideas. This is one motivator for professional advancement.

Another more abstract motivation for career advancement is presented in an entirely different narrative. The following teacher-learner seeks the traditional goals of becoming a better teacher, or knowing more about the EFL profession. But for her, professional advancement also means becoming a better person for her family. She is motivated by the personal enrichment offered by the COTE course; she expresses it this way:

*I was born in Mexico City. I studied in a catholic school until high school, then, I got married before starting the university when only 18. I had a baby a year later, and when I was 21... I decided to continue my studies and I became a teacher, but I didn't like it and I did not at all agree with our [Mexican] education system, so I started teaching English 11 years ago...first at the secondary level and then in primary, and nowadays in kindergarten. I really enjoy my job. I divorced 2 years ago, so I came to live here, then I wanted to improve my teaching, and last year I was in the COTE but I got sick, and I was in hospital for 43 days, so I didn't continue the course. But, I took the Diploma course this year and I finished it. Then I'm again in the COTE and I hope I'll finish it. I feel happy with my children and I'd like to do many things in order to be a good mother, good sister, good daughter and good teacher. (TJ10-1)*

This teacher-learner faces a number of challenges to overcome while pursuing an education. She takes the pre-COTE course and then continues on with the COTE, which shows true dedication and a positive will to get ahead. Others might have given up under the circumstances she was in.

In this section, I have examined two contrasting motiva-

tions for professional advancement. The first case is highly practical - professional advancement as methodological sophistication in the classroom. The second case is more personal - professional advancement as self-examination and improvement. Again these findings refer to motivation in the following:

*Theme 5: Motivation of most teacher-learners to take the COTE course included a need for an official credential, contact with the English language, and professional advancement for practical or personal reasons.*

I now turn to a motivation for second language study concerning the theme of non-native speakerism.

### **Non-Native Speaker's Identity and Empathy**

During the process of data analysis and coding of journal entries, I came across two Mexican teacher-learners who commented on unfair treatment they previously encountered while learning English. The data passages carried strong undercurrents of alienation, yet prestige for second language learning.

It is not unusual for second language learners to express a strong interest in the language they are studying, or an association with its mother culture. Nor is it unusual for native speakers to not fully understand, appreciate or reciprocate his or her enthusiasm. This may lead to conflict.

I interpreted the following two passages as verging on injustice or prejudice. The two Mexican teacher-learners were motivated to take the COTE course as a venue to continue their contact with English, and learn the language in a supportive environment. They were also motivated to enter the EFL profession in order to make a difference in the lives of others - their students.

The first teacher-learner voiced past struggles encountered by non-native speakers within her native country. She viewed the COTE course as way to improve her own skills, and those

of Mexican EFL teachers:

*As a Mexican teacher, I feel sometimes we have to fight with discrimination, with native speakers, but at these moments I feel the situation has changed, the Mexican teacher has the recognition they deserve. We are trying to do things better, to learn new methodologies, and that's the reason why I decided to take COTE course. (TJ6-2)*

The teacher-learner opines that as a non-native speaker she can make a difference in the EFL profession. Her part in this difference shows that she feels the profession has not been fair in the past to non-native speaker teachers. Only until recently has the topic of racial discrimination been addressed in TESOL. Kubota (2004) makes reference to racial discrimination as 'color blindness of TESOL' and cautions the profession to not evade this issue and approach the diversities of all people - students and teachers - in TESOL openly.

In the following excerpt, the second teacher-learner reported the unfair treatment she encountered while living in the United States. In light of the positive consideration discovered in an ESL environment, she felt empathy for future English students, and decided to become part of the solution to the problem - a teacher:

*I quit working... Actually I got fired. I took the adventure going to the States...lived with some relatives...I tried to learn as much as I could but I got very confused...a tremendous headache. I had to listen to English all day and didn't understand a word...I decided to take some courses in ESL for immigrants. I met people from different countries...I was in love with the warmth, care and guidance that teachers gave us. I wanted to become independent, so I started being myself in the market, mall and gym...working in a restaurant to find out how the language in the*

*workplace was. I struggled a lot...and I wanted to express my non-agreement for the unfair situation. I wanted to talk like everybody else, express my anger and make them understand that there was abuse and racism towards me. Since then I understand when people can't communicate, how desperate and frustrated can be. I would like to help others to learn this language. (TJ11-2, 3, 4)*

At first glance, I did not pay much attention to these excerpts, but after closer consideration, I found that their writing represented a proclamation of their beliefs about injustice. I realized I did not want to silence or avoid their voices but I needed to give support to them and this theme. Both excerpts capture how they viewed social injustice of non-native speakers. In turn this motivated them to choose the profession. Based upon their previous experiences they wanted to contribute to making the profession more just for all. In the above quote this individual realizes how important language is for her emotionally; she also identifies strongly with the language which in turn pushes her on to learn the language.

I include these excerpts because they capture non-native sentiments of speakerhood within the EFL profession (MJ-14-16). In the passages above, despite social conflict, both non-native speakers eventually became EFL professionals. The important point here: language ownership is not exclusively limited to native speakers. Norton (1997) makes reference to this ownership in the following:

*Finally, because the mandate of TESOL is the teaching of English, I suggest that if English belongs to the people who speak it whether native or nonnative, whether ESL or EFL, whether standard or nonstandard, then the expansion of English in this era of rapid globalization may possibly be for the better rather than for the worse. (p .427)*

According to her, the boundaries of English ownership are open to all speakers – native and non-native in the world. Concern-

ing this topic, the following is a summary of these findings:

*Theme 6: Due to unfair treatment of non-native speakers, two trainees were motivated to become EFL teachers in order to make a difference in relation to this social injustice.*

## Summary

In closing this chapter, I recap several key points. I have examined people, places and events in order to set up a narrative. The excerpts above reveal that individuals entered the EFL profession for many reasons. Some ‘fell into’ the job with no formal teaching background. Some had early language learning experiences that profoundly influenced later professional decisions. Sometimes the trainees’ family made a strong impact upon their decisions.

The excerpts above also reveal that individuals were motivated to take the COTE course for various reasons. Some felt insecure and wanted more contact with the language. Some needed credentials to acquire or keep a job. Some felt they were missing content knowledge as teachers. Some non-native speakers wanted to be a part of the EFL profession in order to make a difference.

The above is quite predictable for a training course, yet insights of non-native speakers’ experiences and how these experiences influenced their careers reveal candid emotions. Out-of country extended stays were powerful events in their lives and had lasting effects upon them. Another insight was how intensely many trainees voiced personal matters to me via journals. There were moments of confessionalism in their writing. At first I found these disclosures unusual, yet later I realized they wanted their voices to be heard.

Due to the large amount of data that is presented in Chapters 5-7, I shall provide the reader with a list of the themes numerically at the end of each chapter:



Theme 1: Language command often learned from out-of-country experiences in English speaking countries or formal language learning seemed to influence the teacher-learners in making career decisions and identity formation.

Theme 2: Families had an impact upon some teacher-learners in making decisions and identity formation.

Theme 3: Teacher socialization of EFL teachers in Mexico has often relied heavily upon the phenomenon of 'falling into' the job due to their command of English and not due to training or experience.

Theme 4: Most trainees identified strongly with the English language and often this command of language was a motivation for becoming an EFL teacher and for taking the course.

Theme 5: Motivation of most teacher-learners to take the COTE course included a need for an official credential, contact with the English language, and professional advancement for practical or personal reasons.

Theme 6: Due to unfair treatment of non-native speakers, two trainees were motivated to become EFL teachers in order to make a difference in relation to this social injustice.

These themes will be used to answer the Research Questions in Chapter 8. In Chapter 6, I will begin examining identity and emotions of the teacher-learners during the process of the COTE course.



## CHAPTER 6

# DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: *Struggles During the Story*

*I went through many stages. First I felt that I was isolated, then I felt scared with all the tasks and obligations. I had never been required to work at that rhythm... then I thought I was not good enough to be there, but I would give it a shot. Then I felt stupid, because when I thought I had done something good, it was not. I felt that I did not fit... I knew I was not the only one feeling bad. I started feeling more accepted and my COTE peers helped me to investigate and correct some of my tasks. (PCI-4)*

I continue the data analysis and interpretation phase of my research with this teacher-learner quote from a Post COTE Interview. This trainee articulates reflectively on the previous COTE experience. The phrase - 'I felt' - represents an important grammatical operator. Faced with classroom conflict, this individual experiences a series of negative emotions: 'isolated', 'scared', 'stupid', 'not good enough', and 'did not fit'. Yet, when this teacher-learner identifies with other COTE course participants forming a social community, a 'turn' is experienced.

Based upon the sociocultural perspective, the trainee's progression from one stage to another is reminiscent of Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) zone of proximal development. This advancement is usually achieved, in Vygotsky's analysis, through the help of someone else. In this case, the trainee progresses through the social interaction and support of her peers. She herself recognizes how she has moved to a higher stage. I subsequently investigate many episodes like this.

In this chapter, I will be looking at trainee struggles as well as emotions. I will be examining teacher-learner journal entries, interviews and a focus group (discussion) in light of their changing course experiences. Knowing how the teacher-learners attitudes, feelings, and values develop as a reflection of their learning process and identity will be examined. Chapter 5 examined why teacher-learners became EFL teachers and their motivation for taking the course. The formal basis for investigating emotions within the data analysis and interpretation phase was presented in Chapter 2. Again in the text of this chapter and at the end of this chapter I will offer the main themes numerically which will be referred back to in Chapter 8. I now continue with the construction of the narrative with emotions.

## **Emotions**

COTE course participants face a number of struggles in the emotional arena. I refer to these as the psycho-emotional strategies required for course survival. A primary nexus regards motivation and self-confidence at course onset. COTE participants must have enough self-trust so that they are not overwhelmed by the task ahead. Specifically, they must overcome fear and self-doubt and learn to take risks. A secondary nexus regards stability during the course. COTE trainees must have enough fortitude so that they can master course material and see the task to completion. Specifically, they must successfully manage time, stress and their personal lives. I now turn to insecurity under the heading of emotions because it emerged as a prevalent emotion from course commencement.

## **Insecurity at Course Onset**

Insecurity represents the number one recurring emotion in MJ (MJ-18, 19), ShJ and TJ entries, and in the five Observations (ObT-1-4). People frequently feel insecure when embarking on large projects or new ventures in their lives, such as the COTE.

The unknown initially seems scary. Most trainees came to the COTE course with limited EFL foundations. So they voiced emotions such as this early on, until they understood the steps and measures needed to complete the course. This insecurity takes on many forms. I shall now offer some examples:

*I wasn't even going to enter this course this year, because of fear of failure and not being knowledgeable enough. (TJ1-6)*

*I feel fine. I said that but, I can notice that the other sts [students] in COTE are very good teachers and I hope some day I will be better. The other sts [students] in COTE are doing well, I know. Some of them are very clear in the sessions and I don't want to be less than average, I know I can, but I'm a little tired...and all I have to do is push myself to do it, but do it better. (TJ17-4)*

*After all the information I received from the COTE course I felt kind of scared... (TJ4-2)*

In the first case above, the trainee feels insecure due to a fear of failure. In the second case a trainee feels insecure due to competition with classmates. She declares she does 'not want to be less than average' meaning she does not want to fail the course. In the third case a trainee feels insecure due to the overwhelming immensity of the COTE task. Interestingly enough, the COTE course is meant to challenge teacher-learners, but not defeat them. So by mid-course, most teacher-learners were well established in their learning paths. Several individuals began to show glimmers of confidence. Most participants displayed significant improvement by course-end.

**Low Self-Confidence:  
'Like a Baby Beginning to Walk'**

In the following excerpt, a teacher-learner expresses insecurity

based on an unusual motivational dilemma. This individual strongly desires to take the COTE course and she mentions that change does not trouble her. She is eager to start. But, she faces a predicament - low self-confidence (see Chapter 5). The prospect that she lacks the intellectual acuity to pass the course haunts her:

*COTE is day a day a battle to fight and to win at I'm sure it will provide me with the tools I need to fight my ignorance back. I'm not afraid of change; I'm afraid of me. I'm afraid my brain ain't fast and "wrinkled" enough to acquire all the information. I'm eager to start...but a little scared to fail. I feel like a baby who's about to start walking. Problems...they're always there...one I got now is the pressure of time... (TJ4-20)*

A fascinating aspect in the excerpt above regards the teacher-learner's complex thought process expressed metaphorically. Several key illusions are listed below. The COTE course represents a battle to win as well as a battle against her 'ignorance'. The end products are tools or knowledge. The trainee's brain appears as gray matter, and an infant struggling to walk stands for a new start. Again, this voice represents how one would feel when initiating something innovative in one's life. The closing line in this excerpt resonates strongly. This teacher-learner realizes problems are part of life - a natural part of the COTE course. In the end, the deadline pressure of the COTE course keeps her on-track.

### **'No Pain. No Gain.'**

Insecurity echoes cryptically from the simplistic slogan - No pain. No gain - taken from the following excerpt. This trainee holds strong convictions and he deeply seeks success. Also he recognizes that any activity of value requires work and commitment. The slogan associates with the perception of a stress-

ful learning process with progress. Prior to arrival in Mexico, this teacher-learner served in the U.S. Marine Corps. During the COTE course, he always showed up for class on time:

*Being a native speaker, I thought all I needed was to work as a teacher, but I found out that this wasn't true... It (the course) is difficult but anything worth your time is difficult. "No pain. No gain."... I still don't know if I passed, but regardless, I feel I am a much better teacher, but I still want the certificate. (TJ1-10)*

The excerpt above expresses insecurity via two common misconceptions: 1) Native speakerhood represents the only requirement for professional EFL entry, and 2) Holding a certificate - a piece of paper - guarantees job security. Another interesting point regards how this individual's former occupational service as a Marine remains deeply embedded at the present moment. Chapter 2 mentions how past experiences may provoke lasting influence, enough so to reshape present identities. One's lived experiences such as being a Marine may be connected to Johnston et al.'s focal points - life stories and identity - of their theoretical framework for professional development (see Chapter 2). The trainee's punctuality is a carry-over from his Marine days and is engrained in who he is.

### **Rookie Trainee**

One teacher-learner expressed insecurity by referring to himself as the 'rookie' in both ShJ and TJ entries. This individual was only 19 years old, and had taught English for less than one year. Insecurity in this case came from comparing himself with others who often had many years of experiences:

*Now I can say that it was not a mistake because at the beginning I felt strange being the youngest one. I used to ask myself what I am doing here... (TJ18-3)*

Throughout the year he referred to his inexperience and young age in class, journals and conversations. At times I wondered if he used this to justify his insecurity to the rest of us. Yet, in the end he passed the course. Interestingly enough, the excerpt above bears out the old adage: No one is ever too young or old to learn something. Academic success is not age-dependent. To recap the emotions that were found from the above data, I now offer the next theme:

*Theme 7: A variety of emotions such as insecurity, frustration, gratitude, relief, anger, happiness, etc. were a part of teacher development and identity formation beginning with insecurity due to a fear of failure or limited EFL training and progressing to security by course-end.*

I now turn to time management and stress.

## **Time Management and Stress**

Time management problems represent the second reoccurring thread in ShJ and TJ entries and also in informal interviews. To successfully navigate the COTE course, teacher-learners must balance multiple tasks and activities. They are simultaneously required to complete COTE course tasks, meet work responsibilities, and continue their private lives. Traditional wisdom in education often demands that classroom obligations take precedence. So the relationship between time management and stress verges on cause and effect. Time represents the critical element. Any surpluses in the classroom usually come from deficits in the personal arena. So for trainees, a lot of the compromise lies in their personal life. Much of the stress lies there too.

## **On the Road to Time Management**

For many teacher-learners time management represents an acquired skill; something they learn along the way - a strategy



for COTE course survival. In the following excerpts, teacher-learners articulate negative ideas regarding stress and lack of time, yet the passages suggest a wavering. These individuals recognize how time management is critical for completing the course:

*I need time! I promise myself I'll organize stuff up... Martha (today) asked us to write about what motivated us to be teachers. In my case, I never wanted to be a teacher. Even right now I'm not sure I completely like it. (TJ9-2)*

*I was thinking the other day that it is hard and it takes time, and I have my daughter, my husband, my family, and that sometimes we have to sacrifice party time, family time, spare time, to come to COTE... (TJ7-4)*

*Friday, thank God! We're really tired! The paper work, the averages, the monthly exams, the objectives, the daily reports, the awards, all the things we need are almost ready.... I have to say that I'm feeling a little much more stressed now, it could be because at the beginning I didn't know what to expect exactly, but now that I know my peers, my teachers and the quality everybody has. I'm pressed to do better now...got one paper returned and I have to do it over. I'm sad. I want to quit. Lots of errors. Damn. (TJ4-26, 40, 44)*

In the first excerpt above, a trainee questions herself as to why she is a teacher, and if she really enjoys teaching. In the second excerpt, a woman must cope with her family obligations while working and studying. In the third excerpt the trainee did not fully understand what the course entailed at onset, and now feels pressured to achieve.

By mid-course, most teacher-learners begin to master the art of time management and understand what needs to be done. While the COTE task may have initially appeared insurmountable,

it now seems realizable. Trainees learn to successfully balance academics, work, and personal life. Stress becomes bearable.

Also in the Observations (ObT-1a, 1b), I could see how the trainees had to deal with the pressure of participating in two five-hour input sessions on the weekend, while tackling their personal responsibilities. Each trainee learned strategies to help him or her through these long weekends. In the following journal entries, trainees begin to notice improvements:

*Seeing some lights at the end of the tunnel here at session 21, with only 9 more sessions to go...yet I still have a lot of work to do. (ShJ-78)*

*Paperwork is piling up. I really need a 29-hour day, so I can finish on time some activities. I'm working on my COTE tasks, doing my activities at school and I'm fine at home with my family. But I feel something strange. Something's in the air. (TJ4-30)*

Despite any negative regard, these individuals are well on the road to course completion. The excerpts above suggest that time management as a learned developmental skill forms under a unique nexus, that of having to be organized, when faced by deadline pressure. I now present specific personal episodes regarding time management and stress.

### **'Playing Catch Up'**

In the next excerpt I consider holistically the subtle relationship between time management and stress. In the first excerpt, the trainee writes about his problems of managing time at work, in the COTE and in his personal life. All of these problems cause stress:

*I'm a little stressed because as soon as I turn in semester grades on Monday, I have to "play catch up" with*

*a few assignments that I haven't done yet... Balancing work, COTE studies and my personal life have proven to be quite difficult!! It's very demanding plus time-eating-work to design well-planned classes every day in a responsible way. (TJ4-5)*

The COTE trainee feels stress when multi-tasking between trainee and teacher roles. But the real conflict comes from balancing heavy, time-consuming classroom responsibilities with personal life. Now we see how time management and stress affect his private life:

*The weekend came and I wanted to catch up on my things: my music and song writing, my reading, spending time with people and developing friendships and so on. With the COTE and its assignments hanging over my head and feeling underpaid for the amount of work I put in, they have made me feel kind of stressed out and harried. Over-coming this? Surviving until vacation so I can catch up on COTE work, reading and rest. (TJ4-5)*

In the excerpt above, the same COTE participant feels stress on the home front due the deadline pressure of COTE assignments. As in many teaching positions, successful classroom presentation means unpaid preparation time at night. This is a common sentiment heard in the teachers' lounge and in the educational world.

Two key points come out of the two journal excerpts above. The first regards the fundamental words: 'Hanging over my head'. The deadline pressure of the COTE course strongly motivates individuals to learn and put to practice EFL content and methodology as rapidly, efficiently and emphatically as possible. And second, time management, learned for educational survival, frequently becomes a transferable skill in the post-academic environment. The next episode shows a trainee's struggle with time in relation to his previous experiences in the United States.

### **‘A Nine to Five Job’**

The following excerpt runs counter-intuitive to time management. A teacher-learner expresses a strong American working-class ethic. Factory workers do their job, clock time, shoulder no responsibility, get paid, and go home. Apparently this individual is not aware of the professional demands faced by teachers in regards to time:

*At this moment I am very happy because I'm learning. I love to learn new and interesting things and especially if they are useful for me. When I get home, I have a mountain of work that has to be done. I miss the American way. Go home and not worry about work, relax on weekends. (ShJ-69)*

The interesting point expressed above centers on the associational linkage of love of learning with the time commitment needed to acquire new expertise or skills. This represents the mark of a professional. Learning is an ongoing process; it is life long. This trainee spent 34 years in the United States. He was born in Mexico, and at the age of four his parents migrated to the U.S. The amount of time he spent in the United States, and the developmental growing up years were influential as to how he identifies himself within cultures and nations. Offering a more positive outlook on this thread, the next trainee finds solutions for her problems of time management.

### **Envisioning the Future**

In the previous sections, we have seen how trainees balance COTE course demands with their personal lives and how this represented a prevalent trainee struggle. The following excerpt expresses a more intuitive, a subtler, a more holistic approach to time management. While this teacher-learner obliquely mentions time-constraint problems, she also recog-

nizes positive outcomes by envisioning what the future holds for her:

*I've been kinda out-space minded...even though I took a whole-week vacation...I spent time with my family, I had been really lookin' forward to it...but now I'm back & I realize there are still some things I need to figure out, like how to get rid of all this mental stuff that's wearing me out, I need a break, like when you would like to sleep for 5 days in a row...and then wake up and feel good again...doesn't matter, I was just a little depressed... But I don't have any more pending assignments to submit, so that is soothing. I'm already planning what I'll do once COTE's finished, I'll read a lot. I'll write a lot...and I'll take French classes, among other things. (ShJ-106)*

The intriguing point here is that this individual has come to terms with stress, or handles stress in a different way - in a more successful way than previous trainees. Perhaps this comes via visualization and foresight. For this individual, planning for the future offers a way to contend with immediate problems.

### **Becoming a Father during the Course**

Based upon the arrival of newborns in the trainees' lives, the following excerpts show the relationship between time management and stress. Because of this, stress is magnified even more in the personal arena and this has an affect upon the trainees' professional lives. Two trainees, also coordinators, became fathers during the COTE course. This certainly intensified the stress factor in their home lives. One was a first-time father; the other was a first-time father in his second marriage:

*I am very busy, even overworked. COTE is almost over and I'm missing lots of homework. I'm afraid not being able to finish. Help me, Martha. I must pass this*

*course. My baby is very time consuming; my afternoons are spent taking care of him. I love doing this, but I need to do my COTE work. What to do! What to do... (ShJ-85)*

*Hello, Saturday morning and the baby is crying. He has really changed things in my life. I'm very happy, but he does make my job more challenging. COTE is a must for me. I'm having trouble finding the time to study or to do the homework. My job as Coordinator has really been very demanding. Looks like the school [private religious school where the trainee works] will re-contract me for the next school year. I don't think I did a good job, but I'll be there. (ShJ-82)*

Both excerpts above express how the arrival of a new family member curtails the time available for completing COTE tasks. Sentiment towards formal academic learning verges on a love-hate relationship. The first entry shows a father who works full time as a teacher and coordinator and takes care of his son while his wife works. The teacher-learner in the second excerpt offers some fascinating insights. This trainee seeks academic success, yet faces intense outside pressure on multi-fronts: 1) Family obligations as a new father; 2) English coordinator responsibilities at school; and 3) Pressure to get the 'paper'. During informal conversations, this individual reported pressure from co-workers who already held the COTE certificate and the school administration. Because he held a position of power -the English Coordinator - he felt more strain to succeed. A unique key phrase echoes out of the second excerpt:

*My work that I turn in is not my best...I hate not being able to turn in something that truly reflects my abilities. (ShJ-82)*

This 'new father' under heavy personal stress regrets not being

able to live up to his full potential as a coordinator and teacher-learner.

### **Tutors' Viewpoint on Stress and Time Management**

Finally, I introduce here the comments of three tutors primarily for contrasting viewpoints. Their observations offer some unique insights. This material specifically enlarges the stress picture in regard to the classroom. As well, the tutors echo the standard comment regarding the balancing of academic, work and personal lives that was mentioned in the previous sections by the trainees:

*The problems I see are that many COTE trainees have problems with organizing their time (daily work, family, COTE course, assignments, etc.). Some of them also are not used to reading and writing in English, which puts an extra amount of stress on them. (FGQ-3)*

*As most of the participants are full time teachers, they feel stressed out with the deadlines and the workload. Some have problems with the language: spoken and written. Some participants feel stressed out by the observations and others seem not to consider them very seriously. The five-hour class is sometimes difficult for some participants because they have to come after having worked all morning. (FGQ-4)*

*For many practicing teachers here in Mexico a COTE course may be the first formal training of any kind they have received, which makes it exciting, though at times difficult... It is also challenging for them in terms of the commitment involved. It is a big time commitment; involves a lot of reading and hard work, which is difficult as many participants work full time and have families and other responsibilities. (FGQ-1)*

In the first excerpt, a tutor pinpoints reading and writing problems coupled with trainee private and professional obligations as major stress sources. In the second excerpt, a tutor attributes classroom stress to deadlines and workload as previously mentioned. This same tutor identifies observation and language - speaking and writing - as other stress sources. Academic writing and observations are addressed more in-depth later in this chapter (see Chapter 6). The third excerpt offers a fascinating comment regarding motivation in regard to time management and stress. For many teacher-learners, the COTE course represents their first venture into higher education. And they sometimes underestimate the scope of the COTE course, or the commitment required to complete the COTE tasks.

The tutors recognize the work of the trainees and how they have to juggle work responsibilities, academic challenges, and their personal lives during the COTE. The tutor voices are empathetic as to what the trainees go through. All three mention trainee problems dealing with language use such as reading, writing, and speaking. We can therefore condense these findings into the next theme:

*Theme 8: Time management and stress seemed to be related to each other and perhaps caused problems at school, in the course work, in the classroom and in the trainees' personal lives during the course. Most trainees appeared to balance time management and stress by course-end by using survival skills and/or strategies to overcome their problems.*

In continuance, the third thread to emerge from the data was personal upheavals.

### **Personal Upheavals**

Under the deadline pressures of the COTE course, ordinary day-to-day living problems can become highly magnified, and be-



come major stress sources for the trainees. COTE participants frequently mentioned such struggles in TJ and ShJ entries, during mid-course tutorials, in conversations and in Post COTE Interviews. Also they were found in Martha's Journal (MJ-20, 25) and Field Notes (FN-4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20, 21). This represents an extremely broad category of events, and includes: breakup with a boyfriend, miscarriage, minor surgery, marital problems, a teacher-learner as the sole bread winner of the family, legal troubles, identity fraud, home break-in, stomachaches, lingering colds, frequent headaches, lack of sleep, poor eating habits, nervousness, economic problems, and child security issues.

Research Question 2 (Chapter 1) asked: What are the problems and struggles of trainees during the course? In a larger context, this comprises any phenomenon that impedes the teacher development of COTE course participants. While none of these issues may prevent trainees from completing the COTE course, they remain significant stress inducing factors. I offer the following example:

*There have been times, specially this month that I've thought of quitting the COTE and many other things. I've been through a lot of pressure. My daughter was kicked out of school. But, I'm going to send her to my sister's in Orlando, Florida, so she can finish high school in the States. I've been having problems at school with my coordinator, really serious problems. (TJ12-10)*

In the excerpt above, a teacher-learner faces conflict with a coordinator and also a child discipline problem. While neither seems insurmountable, under COTE course deadline pressures, this individual has at least considered leaving the program. These personal upheavals are part of the trainees' lives whether they are taking the course or not. Some were more serious than others. Yet, one can see how these personal problems add to the whole picture of what the trainees go through during this year of COTE.

In summary, excerpts in this section illustrate two well-defined, prevalent affective conflicts; specifically: 1) Insecurity and fear of failure; and 2) Time management and stress. If improperly managed at the student level, either one could result in failure to complete the COTE course. The excerpt in this section likewise illustrates personal upheavals, which might create stress for a COTE participant, but would probably not result in failure to compete the COTE course. Again this section refers back to Theme 8:

*Theme 8: Time management and stress seemed to be related to each other and perhaps caused problems at school, in the course work, in the classroom and in the trainees' personal lives during the course. Most trainees appeared to balance time management and stress by course-end by using survival skills and/or strategies to overcome their problems.*

## **Academic Conflicts**

I now turn to struggles COTE course participants face regarding academic issues. Traditionally this concerns skills needed to comprehend classroom materials, and complete related tasks. The list might include: reading, note-taking, studying, absorbing information, and writing. Before going on, I cover how this material was collected. Midway through the COTE course, I met each trainee in a tutorial, where they could voice their opinions and problems. At this point I also collected the Trainee Journals to read for the first time and give feedback. Eventually this information was collected and coded. The data generated three themes: academic writing, absorbing new material and observation nerves.

## **Academic Writing Requirement**

Most teacher-learners considered the formal essay requirement the most difficult aspect of the COTE course. Essay assign-

ments were made on a per-task basis, related to input sessions, and carried out under time deadline. If writings did not meet course standards, teacher-learners were asked to redo them.

Throughout my inquiry, the academic writing requirement resonated as a pervasive - painful and frustrating - trainee issue. In the mid-course tutorials, eleven out of eighteen trainees mentioned academic writing difficulties as the most difficult aspect of the course. These struggles specifically included: failure to understand academic writing, problems expressing one's self in words, writing for the task, writer's block, ordering of ideas, accuracy, mistakes, demotivation due to grades and re-writes. Writing problems also emerged in my journal entries (MJ-9, 20, 21, 26). In addition, they appeared in Focus Group Discussion and Questions (FGQ-1-4 and FGD), and in ShJ and TJ entries. Course tutors describe the problem this way:

*For many of them this may be their first experience of any kind of formal training, they may not have a university background or it may have been a long time since they have studied. The requirements for academic work for a British university seem to me to be quite different from the requirements of Mexican universities. It is quite a different system in terms of what academic writing involves and the grading system. The trainees therefore have to adapt to the expectations of a different education system as well as adapting to doing academic work. (FGQ-1)*

*The biggest problem seems to be with the written assignments. Some trainees do not have the ability to write English at the academic level that is expected (this applies to both native and non-native speakers). Others, no matter how much they read and/or get feedback from the tutors, just cannot change the way they teach. Sometimes, no amount of training will change certain teachers. (FGQ-2)*

In the first excerpt a tutor offers comments on COTE participants who may arrive at the course inexperienced in further education, particularly academic writing. As an additional challenge, teacher-learners must adapt to British standards in writing and grading. This is addressed more in-depth shortly in this chapter.

The comments offered by the tutor in the second excerpt prove more disturbing. This tutor admits some trainees - non-native and native speakers - cannot write English at the academic level. According to her, other teacher-learners may remain highly resistant to change, despite classroom readings or tutoring.

For contrast with the material above, I examine the trainees' views on academic writing. The following three excerpts express the complexity of writing for teacher-learners. Frequently writing is linked to other issues such as time constraint, job insecurity, identity, and a need for credentials:

*Son definitivamente los ensayos [The written essays are definitely the hardest.] ...I've got a little behind y es por eso que empiezo a desesperarme [and for that reason I am starting to get desperate]. I just can't seem to find time to sit down, focus, and start writing, 'cause I've already read a little, but anyway... Today I'm having a bad day, I don't know why, I've got a headache, or something like that...maybe it's just that I haven't been sleeping enough, eating well, and now I think I need some help to control stress...and I don't even feel like writing in English... (TJ9-10)*

*Undoubtedly the most difficult part of it is the pressure, you know time is running and that you have to beat it (clock). The writing (essays) God! There is a pain in the deepest and softest part of my body! Each time I receive a task I'm shaking; and saying: "Please, no redo, no redo." ... I had to say that at the beginning it didn't seem to be that*

*hard, but now... I've been considering (for brief periods) quitting the COTE. Now my pride and self-respect won't let me do it, but it's hard, really hard...uff... (TJ4-45)*

*The most difficult part of the COTE is the homework. It's not cause they are boring, but because I have such a busy lifestyle that I haven't done any of the essays. That scares me cause it's damn if I do them, or damn if I don't. My current job as a coordinator really has consumed all my time, with such things as surveys, pilot program, teacher problems, student problems, and personal problems... And this is making me fall behind with COTE. If I don't do my job, I'll get fired. If I don't complete COTE, I get fired... All of the above is stressing me out in a big way. "Help!" (TJ1-8)*

All three teacher-learners above consider essay writing one of the most loathsome aspects of the COTE course. And each expresses negative sentiments: desperation, fear or stress. In the first excerpt, a trainee cannot focus on the writing task, and blames it on health issues. This individual seeks help to alleviate pressure. In the second excerpt, a trainee feels shaky when writing under deadline pressure. Pride and self-respect keep this individual from leaving the course. In the third excerpt, a trainee faces a dilemma. Work demands as a coordinator do not provide sufficient time to write essays. If this individual fails at work, termination will follow. If this individual does not complete the COTE course, termination will follow. The only option he has is to finish the course successfully, but he lacks time.

Six months following course-end, I held Post COTE Interviews. One of my questions asked: What was the most difficult part of the COTE in retrospect? The writing topic reappeared. Having finished the course, teacher-learners tend to see the course more clearly in hindsight. The following excerpts pinpoint the problem sources according to the trainees:

*The written essays, the way that we had to write was difficult. I had clear ideas and I knew what I had to write but to do it was so difficult. (PCI-6)*

*At the beginning for me the first essay was difficult, part of my culture is being around the things without landing, but I had to order my ideas and I did it. For me the main thing was the time, I had a lot of work that I sometimes thought I was going to quit, but I could cope with my timetable. (PCI-16)*

*Academic writing. The academic writing was something to work on and also understanding the COTE is a process and that improvement takes place little by little. Getting the correct books, the time to choose them and read them was difficult Understanding what the tutor wanted from me in each paper was difficult, too. As I am not a native speaker, what I was taught in Spanish about academic writing was different as I was expected to know English writing. Simple things as paragraphs, long sentences, and even not writing with contractions were details I had to learn well. (PCI-15)*

Before going further I need to clarify one point; these above quotes are all from non-native speakers. Writing in English represents a daunting task for them. The words 'difficult' or 'difficulty' appear five times in three passages. In the first excerpt, a trainee identifies a problem expressing ideas in words as a major writing block. In the second excerpt, a trainee describes being frustrated by the slowness of the writing process. In the third excerpt, a trainee finds learning about the writing process intellectually challenging, yet she experiences problems with grammatical constructions and mechanics. For this trainee, academic writing in Spanish was not a transferable skill to English and she had to learn the specific mechanics of English. As a side issue of academic writing, the British grading system was mentioned.

### *Cultural Difference of Grades*

One of the disagreeable cultural differences faced by COTE participants concerned the rigorous standards used in British education to grade essays. For COTE course writing, a C was considered a 'good grade'; while in Mexican education, a C was mediocre, ordinary, or average.

From my own point of view, I do not believe there was any intent to deceive trainees, or hide something. The grading curve was clearly evident from COTE course onset. According to the *COTE Administration Handbook for Centres, Course Tutors & Moderators* (UCLES, 2000) the C letter grade is described as:

*Pass - this is sound 'middle of the road work' and may rely on only one of two sources in addition to lecture input and personal experience. (p. 11)*

This point was ascertained early on in British Council (Mexico) training sessions for COTE tutors. Presenters reiterated: a C was considered a solid mark. I myself, as a grader, had to become accustomed to this standard.

As for teacher-learners, the topic of essay grading dissatisfaction came up in Trainee Journals, Field Notes (FN-30) and input sessions. COTE participants frequently felt demotivated, as if the marks they received did not reflect their effort levels or garnered improvements. The following voices this opinion:

*Grades - I felt disappointed. I had always been a good student and a C plus [for written essays] was not the grade of my dreams. (PCI-15)*

In the excerpt above, a trainee complains about her British passing letter grade of C+, compared to her higher previous marks in her native country. Comments like this came up many times. Trainees did not want to be seen as average or 'middle of the road'; they wanted to be seen in a better light. This may

seem trivial, but it is an example of cultural differences between Mexico and Britain.

### *Pleasing UCLES*

I now turn to a subversive topic regarding COTE course essay writing. Trainees who submitted unacceptable papers were required to ‘redo’ them. And sometimes these individuals, caught between upcoming assignments and ‘redo’ projects, felt overwhelmed by a pile of papers to hand in.

When one trainee was asked to rewrite her essay, out of extreme frustration, she addressed her comments directly to UCLES/Cambridge, via a TJ entry. Her entry is in the following section:

*First, I'd like to say that COTE has a lot to do with feelings...at the beginning it made me feel strange among my peers but "safe" in the homework and tasks, later on I started feeling more secure with my participation and my classmates... My mood goes down. Why? I thought I would be done by now with my papers and assignments and I have 3 papers waiting for me and I am expecting to receive more, based on the ones I have received to redo... (TJ4-47)*

The opening excerpt above reveals a developmental unfolding. At course onset, this trainee felt more comfortable with writing tasks than working with her peers. Then with the passage of time, her peer-relationship and classroom participation grew which in turn made her feel accepted in the social community of COTE. Here we see another example of how the trainee’s colleagues support her in feeling more secure in a positive environment (see Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, 1978, 1986). At the point that her self-confidence begins to take off, she plummets when she remembers the pile of papers that are awaiting to be finished. The second



section requires some ‘reading between the lines’ of her response:

*I don't consider myself dumb...I feel sad, angry, and desperate really considering if I was good enough to be there? I read...the explanation it was not good...comments that somehow say "you understood", "you have good ideas" but at the end it is a redo please. Sometimes I think I know what you (Cambridge) want to read from our essays, but I'm afraid that some of them just want to be "pleased" by receiving "exactly what they requested". (TJ4-47)*

The emotion in the closing excerpt above is hard to pinpoint. This trainee perhaps feels intimidated or patronized by the editorial comments asking for a ‘redo’. But her intellectual interpretation rings out clearly. She believes UCLES/Cambridge is more interested in the correct conditioned response to a writing assignment, than in original work.

At this point, I can only offer my own observations. Certainly a ‘redo’ policy gives teacher-learners the benefit of the doubt, and helps them discover the ‘process’ of writing. In addition, the policy offers teacher-learners more opportunity to finish the course successfully. But in the long term, I think COTE participants with writing problems quickly mirror what goes on in education generally. Individuals become grade conscious and end up writing papers to please tutors, advisors or professors, rather than for their own personal academic-intellectual gain. In the end they write for an audience, which is UCLES.

For contrast, I present the passage of a trainee who describes how he buckled-down to essay writing, and felt exhilarated on completion:

*So I climbed the old tower to the English office & started working on Methodology Assignment B2. I worked for about four hours straight, then gave a conversation*

*class. I thought I might make it, just possible I'd completed B2 in time to hand it in today. I worked from one to two and "Lo! It was finished. And it was good" (I hope so, anyway!) And don't you know I feel lighter now? (ShJ-89)*

Despite any negative criticisms above, once trainees realized how to complete their essays, they went about the task. Frequently this did not occur overnight, but came to pass after six months, or by course-end. Some trainees never understood the writing requirement; they did not finish their essays. Academic writing remains the main reason participants did not complete the COTE course.

### ***Absorbing New Material***

COTE participants were frequently challenged by the complex process of acquiring new teaching principles or theories. This goes beyond the 'knowledge as transferable product' view and moves towards a social constructivism of knowledge view (Johnson, 2006, see Chapter 2).

My first formal opportunity to sample this issue occurred in a Trainee Journal at mid-course. By this point, trainees were well established in their learning curves, but had not reached their zenith or highest trajectory. Teacher-learner success in assimilating new material varied widely. I examine first a negative-case scenario:

*obviously one of the most difficult things in the COTE is to assimilate every class. Time is one of the obstacles I have found to absorb all the theory I am receiving... We need to read several books about the topic...in order to strengthen our knowledge of the topic and try to reflect in the way we can transfer it into practice in our classroom. I am so busy every day with difficult activities. (TJ14-7)*

In the excerpt above, this individual separates theory and practice in his worldview. The deadline pressure of the COTE course represents the primary impediment, according to this teacher-learner, for assimilating new material. Selection may be the problem here. Determining what is important, rather than trying to assimilate everything, is the key. Another problem may be how to make sense of the knowledge and how the knowledge fits into his world and context. This refers back to the sociocultural perspective in Chapter 2. This trainee seems to be over-challenged, if not overwhelmed, by the mountain of information. In addition, this same teacher-learner proclaimed, during the mid-course interviews (FN-37), that absorbing information was the greatest challenge of the course.

Another teacher-learner expressed an assimilation problem in an entirely different way in the mid-course interviews. Based on classroom material, she realized she had to change her teaching style (FN-27) in order to put to practice the learned input, but she could not imagine how to implement the modifications. This represents an analyzing, reformatting or application problem. According to her, this was the most difficult part of the COTE course. This trainee may not be fully processing or reflecting on course material or it may be a matter of time. This is reminiscent of de Sonneville's (2007) phase 2 where the trainee is conscious of what he or she is able to achieve (see Chapter 2).

In contrast, the next presents a positive case scenario. By this I mean a teacher-learner who successfully assimilates classroom information; applies the concepts; and experiences a change in teacher identity, perhaps even an epiphany:

*I think I started to practice some practical ideas that I learned from the two past sessions. I really have tried to practice the bunch of ideas you gave us. It's kind of difficult to bring the techniques to the classroom, the conditions sometimes are completely different than what you*

*expected and you have to change your lesson plan, even the activity. Some other times it's difficult to modify your old way - how you used to teach. In COTE course we have seen many concepts about how to teach and sometimes it's complicated to conjugate to one context the whole bunch of concepts... (TJ16-4)*

Several key points appear in the excerpt above. First, this individual is trying to apply COTE learned concepts in his classroom. The application of theory in a practical setting requires some selective creativity. Also this teacher-learner may be on the road to behavior self-modification; and tends to bifurcate between the 'old-self' and 'new-self'. In effect, a new teacher identity is being formed via the COTE course. Lastly, the application of teaching theory is probably more an art form than a science. It should be pointed out that the trainee shows analytical reasoning skills and critical thinking skills, which are both important for professional survival. Chapter 2 discussed knowledge as a 'product' and how knowledge is socially constructed within a context (see Freeman, 2000; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 1996; 2002; Johnson and Golombek, 2003). This trainee does not simply take COTE knowledge and dogmatically lay it down in a classroom. This trainee has learned concepts, can evaluate them critically, and apply them selectively into a specific classroom context. The above excerpt may represent de Sonneville's (2007) phase 3 as mentioned in Chapter 2 where a change in one's behavior takes place consciously. This definitely goes beyond the 'knowledge as a product' view.

In a subsequent passage, this same individual acknowledged and commented on his changing teacher identity. This represents an excellent example of a COTE participant who wants to succeed, someone who significantly improves in teaching style, and finally, someone who arrives at an important self-realization:

*In my opinion, I consider the initial reaction of COTE is*

*the reflection 'to be an English teacher' and how we had been teaching before COTE and now... The summary of this is not always, in my case, 'I was bad', but rather I think 'It's better to do it this way'. (TJ16-4)*

Again we see bifurcation in the excerpt above. The trainee refers to 'before COTE' and 'now'. Interestingly enough, he does not seem to categorize himself as a bad teacher in the past. He specifically identifies informed decision making as the key to his new plan. This may be similar to Vygotsky's (1978) internalization - 'the internal reconstruction of an external operation' (p. 56). The trainee's articulation of this process may show how he has moved from one level of thinking to another level

One last thought emerged from the ideas expressed in the above journal entries. One could also look at the 'before COTE' and 'now' identities as levels related to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978, 1986). The positive transgression from the 'before COTE' level to the 'now' level is accomplished with the help of COTE which represents the knowledge gained through social interaction with his peers and tutors during the course. This trainee also used a number of tools which may have aided him in this process. These include journal writing, social discussion, personal reflection and/or the social environment of the course.

Having examined a range of responses regarding absorbing materials, I shall examine some possible reasons why teacher-learners experience problems in this area. Pinpointing the exact location remains rather foggy. I will investigate several viewpoints to gain a perspective.

I begin by examining formal views on the problem of absorbing new material. Lamb (1995) designed and taught an INSET (In-service training) course. One year later, he returned to investigate course effect on former trainees. In regard to absorbing new material, conclusions were 'less salutary' (p.72) and Lamb expresses the dilemma this way:

*A great deal of our original 'input' had simply been lost, and what was taken up was reinterpreted by teachers to fit their own beliefs and their own concerns about what was important to them and their students. (pp. 78-79)*

The excerpt above suggests that something is missing or awry. Trainees were successful in assimilating and applying only a small part of the formally presented classroom theory and concepts. The modus operandi for material survival was largely based on self-interest. In the next passage, Lamb (1995) tries to pinpoint the problem:

*other new ideas that teachers put into practice had not worked so well, and in many cases were rejected by them. This is because, when implemented, they did not satisfy teachers' basic concerns. Often ideas had been implemented in a way designed to satisfy those concerns rather than the ones assumed by the INSET instructors, with the result that new and unexpected problems were created. (p. 76)*

The excerpt above represents a fascinating comment from a formal critic. Lamb seems to suggest that the conceptual framework presented by the academy does not fit the real world needs of teacher-learners. And thus, much of the material was lost, forgotten or misinterpreted. Lamb places the blame on the academy, for not serving the needs of its teacher-clients and not taking into consideration their 'well-developed mental constructs of teaching and beliefs' (p. 79).

For contrast, we can look at tutor perspectives on the problem of absorbing new material. These are individuals who work directly with trainees in the classroom. They do not formulate the conceptual framework, but they take what is given and apply it. They offer some diverse and pragmatic comments.

One individual, a local tutor, took the first COTE course offered in Guanajuato. She presented her own unique viewpoint in

a course-by-course comparison. The INSET course mentioned below was one month; the COTE Guanajuato course duration was one year. In regard to material absorption, she says:

*Well, I can think of my own experience. I took a course that is similar to COTE and it was given in a month and I would say that it gave me mental indigestion. I did not absorb anything. I think the time is very important. (FGD-4)*

In the excerpt above, the absorption of new material was severely inhibited by a short time frame. In the one-month long course, teacher-learners did not have enough time span to apprehend new concepts, reflect on them, and incorporate the material into their world view. Rushing through information resulted in overload or as the tutor says ‘mental indigestion’.

Another local tutor, who also took the first COTE course in Guanajuato, offered an entirely different view in regard to absorbing new material. She articulated the ‘delayed effect’ approach. Deciphering new material does not occur spontaneously, but sinks-in much later, during a *deja vu*-like experience:

*There were a lot of things that fell into place but much, much later. It’s much later. Suddenly it makes sense and you know what they were talking about and I think that the more concentrated it is the less time you use it and the less chance you let the ideas settle in. (FGD-3)*

The fascinating point in the excerpt above regards the closing lines. The problem of absorbing material is not simply a case of hearing it, or seeing it - rote methods. New concepts or materials must be ‘used’ in some way before they settle in. They become lived experiences or otherwise it is just ‘knowledge as a product’. This refers back to the construction of meaning (Chapter 2). Concept apprehension needs to be combined with

physiological movement, or intellectual action, for effective retention.

The same local tutor expands on her opinion. She suggests that in order to assimilate new material, trainees need to remain open to the learning process offered within the COTE course. She expresses herself this way:

*COTE trainees many times are presented with a teaching approach they have not experienced as students and which is not commonly used in their school. During the period of the COTE course they have to liberate themselves from their old ideas of teaching in order to be open to new approaches. (FGQ-3)*

It is not clear what the tutor means exactly. Here the local tutor may be saying that the trainees need to clear their teaching slates completely of their old ideas or she may be saying they need to be more open-minded in accepting the new ideas which may include adapting the 'old ideas' with the 'new approaches' and constructing new meanings to both. I would like to think that this last interpretation of her adaptation model is more realistic to the sociocultural perspective and the trainees' contexts.

I close this theme with my own observations on the COTE course, in regards to absorbing material. It was not clear that all trainees could absorb the COTE course material because of the large amount of material that is given. Next, I question if we can expect teacher-learners to practice everything we present in the classroom. Teacher-learners need to see how they can experiment with material through reflection and confidence to meet the needs of the teachers, the students and the context. This experimentation may be related to de Sonneville's (2007) term of acknowledgement (see Chapter 2) which provides teacher-learners with the space that they need to gain self-awareness through reflection. Lastly, trainees may not be aware of their own unique learning style, or how to capitalize on it to have with material assimilation. This possibility



coincides with the sociocultural perspective where the learner makes sense of the knowledge within his or her own context.

### ***Observation Nerves***

Besides academic writing and absorbing input, another significant academic theme reported by trainees regarded classroom observations. According to the UCLES plan, candidates must be evaluated for their classroom teaching style. Observations significantly contribute to the grades that determine if a trainee will pass at course-end. The exact specifications, procedures and paperwork, appear in the document *COTE Administration Handbook for Centres*, under the section of 'Assessment of Candidates: Practical Work' (UCLES, 2000, pp. 4-9). The evaluation scheme includes:

- 1) Six peer observations. Trainees were given a series of reflective questions (see Appendix 13) and were asked to observe a colleague, preferably another COTE trainee. This strategy was meant to create opportunities for social interaction between COTE colleagues. Then they wrote reflection based on the questions and the observed class. In essence, such observations served as trial runs for the tutor-evaluated practicals and provided space for dialogue between the two colleagues. These sessions helped trainees anticipate future observations within the COTE course, and the teaching profession.
- 2) Four practicals. COTE tutors, experts in the field, observed trainees in their teaching contexts. The tutors filled out the instrument - Form COTE/3. (UCLES, 2000, pp. 4-9) for evaluative purposes.
- 3) At course-end, an UCLES moderator observed five trainees or 15% of the number of trainee candidates to ensure program quality (UCLES, 2000, p.14).

Many trainees, at COTE course onset, complained of observation nerves for the practicals (FN-21; MJ-18; ShJ-31, 45, 63,

65, 66, 91; TJ1-3, 3-5, 4-42, 44, 45, 5-3, 11, 6-2, 3, 7-4, 9-5, 10-2, 3, 7, 13, 12-10, 16-6, 17-5). This perhaps may reflect the grade-dependent nature of COTE observation-practicals and trainees' initial insecurity. Yet, in comparison to essay writing, the frequency of this complaint ranked lower. By mid-course many individuals had grown used to the observation scheme. During mid-course interviews, six trainees mentioned this topic in relation to observation nerves. Yet, not one trainee referred to observations as the most difficult aspect of the course. The majority of trainees considered academic writing as the most difficult aspect of the course. The following two trainees voice their observation nerves in journal segments:

*Being observed has been basically a "shock". I've been observed lots of times, but this one was different... I felt so nervous. (TJ15-5)*

*I have been observed twice before and to be honest it made me very nervous. I got shocked and lost in some parts. My first peer observation in the COTE went much better because I could handle the parts of the lesson much better. I think I wasn't nervous at that time, just at the grammar explanation. (TJ5-3)*

Both teacher-learners above had undergone observations prior to the COTE course. Both individuals found the COTE observation scheme unusually nerve-racking and repeated the words 'shock' and 'nervous' in their journals. Again, this reflects on the intense nature of COTE observations.

In the second excerpt, nervous tension causes the trainee to get 'lost in some parts' of her lesson plan. Yet, she is in-control. She is well established on the 'rehearsal' track, whereby peer observations prepare her for subsequent tutor evaluated practical observations.

I turn now to segments that illustrate the 'rehearsal' track. In each of the following examples, I will show variations on the

observation theme. We will see nervous trainees in observation scenarios, and investigate the strategies for controlling the situation. Each new example will ‘raise the bar’ or ‘go a step further’, and reveal some new control method or aspect. My intent is show that observations foster, in the long run, strong professional survival skills:

*I felt OK being observed. After we had the peer observations, we had chances to fix some things that we did badly. At the beginning, I felt kind of nervous but in the meantime the class was going on. I had almost forgotten that I was being observed. The feedback was the important point for me. You pointed the good and bad things we did. (TJ16-6)*

In the excerpt above, this trainee initially feels nervous, verging on stage fright. This quickly wears off. The teacher-learner continues classroom teaching without undue self-consciousness. Interestingly enough, this COTE participant finds the feedback and correction cycle helpful. Changes in classroom style and presentation can be made in a non-threatening, non-intimidating environment:

*On the other hand, something strange happened when my observer arrived, I got confidence and enthusiasm. Jitters faded and I started to teach my children the way I wanted and they responded in a very nice way... That was great indeed. Sometimes we don't appreciate the power of willingness. Attitude can get rid of boredom, fear, tiredness, and lack of confidence...I can tell. (TJ15-5)*

In the excerpt above, a trainee initially feels stage fright when faced with an observation. Then she turns enthusiastic and confident largely due to good classroom presentation style and responsive students. This teacher-learner pinpoints good attitude as the key to surviving observation nerves.

Again, the next segment shows another level. Here a trainee experiences significant stress during an observation, yet she pulls through:

*I would like to write about peer observations, because I was worried...because I'd never been observed and I never observed another teacher. The day I was going to be observed I was nervous. I had some problems with my coordinator; she didn't give me all the support I needed. For example, she didn't want to let me out of my class time. At the last moment I had to change my class, so the class I prepared was lost, and I had to take another class, with other students and of course, another level. (TJ6-3)*

In the excerpt above, the trainee has never experienced a peer observation or practical. This individual faces several unexpected conflicts: uncooperative administrator, borrowed class, and double preparation. In the following section, we see how this COTE participant fares once the observation begins:

*When I started my class, I feel motivated with my students because they felt happy that someone was observing me. At the end of my class, I felt so happy even though I didn't know how I taught my class. I was happy because I had to deal with all those problems, and I thought I made a big effort and a great job. (TJ6-3)*

In the above, the trainee concentrates on the teacher-learner relationship. The observer's presence is nearly forgotten. This COTE participant identifies so closely with the classroom task, she hardly notes the passage of time. In the end she pulls through, and feels a strong sense of confidence and accomplishment. We shall raise the bar one more time in the next segment. A trainee reveals the solid attributes of a good teacher in the following:

*Being observed was not as bad as I thought. Because of a change in my school's schedule I didn't know when or what time my observation would be. So I was expecting a hard time. The day before my observation I found out the date and the time. I quickly started working on the lesson plan and activities. I worked late at night and early the next morning. I finished and made copies. (TJ1-5)*

Not having an exact date or location, the trainee anticipates a difficult observation. Once specifics are set, this individual sets about the class preparation task. Good time management and prioritization of tasks ensures that deadline pressure does not turn unbearable. In the following, the observation date and time arrive for the trainee:

*I took a deep breath and pretended that it was just another day. It worked out fine! The students enjoyed the activities and I enjoyed it too. But the most important thing was that the observer seemed to have enjoyed it too. Being observed was not as bad as I had thought. (TJ1-5)*

In the previous journal entry, the trainee psychologically prepares for the upcoming observation. His approach is to treat this event like 'it was just another day'. In the end, this COTE teacher-learner flies through the observation. The difficulties were much less than expected.

To briefly summarize my look at the 'rehearsal track', frustration and insecurity can be curbed in order to endure observations. Strategies learned in the COTE course apply for professional survival. Concerning observation, it is natural to have stage fright or observation nerves. During observations, the observee needs to focus on the classroom task and manage time carefully. Finally, one trainee treated the observation as though it was just another day and got on with the task of teaching.

This closes the section on academic conflicts, which refers to the struggles teacher-learners face in completing COTE course requirements. Teacher-learners encountered problems with academic writing throughout the COTE year. According to the data, this represents the number one reason why individuals did not finish the course. Another academic conflict concerned trainee difficulties in absorbing new concepts and materials. Pinpointing exact causes for this problem proved inconclusive. Finally, teacher-learners complained about observation nerves, yet they adapted to the UCLES observation scheme, and developed important skills for professional survival. To summarize the above data, the following theme is:

*Theme 9: Academic writing appeared to be the most difficult task for the majority of trainees in comparison to absorbing material and observation nerves. Trainees often struggled with the writing tasks, writing for a British audience, and cultural differences of writing and grades. Most trainees learned to overcome their observation nerves using survival skills to do so.*

The next category deals with professional conflicts.

### **Professional Conflicts**

COTE participants face political strife in both the classroom and workplace. By politics, I mean struggles with authority figures. The COTE classroom subset involves teacher-learners versus coordinators. The workplace subset involves teachers versus institutions and bosses in their contexts. The struggles in these two arenas differ in regard to antagonistic enmity, what is at stake, and possible resolutions. In the following sections I will examine these factors respectively.

Before going on, I shall cover how this material was collected. Frequently clandestine conflicts are reported only via gossip or hearsay, or within backroom confines. While COTE

participants rarely approached me directly concerning problems, they sometimes left barbed journal entries for me to stumble upon later. Eventually this information was collected and coded. I shall begin with the power struggles of coordinators and co-workers in the COTE.

***Power Struggles:  
Coordinators versus Co-workers***

Within the COTE course, teacher-learners face interpersonal struggles with coordinators. This is primarily low-stake, peer-to-peer conflict and has little affect upon the trainees in the COTE course. The finite time duration of the COTE course means hostilities will abate quickly; outcomes are usually benign or pushed aside.

As previously stated, documenting politics in the educational arena can prove challenging. During my data collection - Observations (ObT-1b, ObT-2), Trainee Journal entries (TJ18-10), Field Notes, Post COTE Interviews, and informal conversations with trainees - I noticed furtive dynamics between teacher-learners and coordinators. Three coordinator-co-worker groups emerged from the data and are given as examples.

My first example narrates the relationship between a co-worker who successfully finished the COTE, and her coordinator who did not. At course initiation, coordinators registered with their respective co-workers. One coordinator established a positive collaboration with his colleague. Three months later, a nationwide language institute offered him a coordinator position, which meant extensive training and time commitments. He now held two coordinator positions, at two different schools. Almost immediately, he began to incur tardies or absences at the COTE course. He struggled to keep up with class work, homework and essays. Subsequently, he decided to drop the program, and his co-worker remained behind and stuck-out the course for the long haul. Consequently, she experienced difficulties in leaving work early to come to class on time. Previously he had supported her;

now there was friction. Since he was no longer part of the COTE course, their relationship had changed; she felt a resistance. Interestingly enough, once the formally imposed relationship between these individuals dissolved, a power struggle began.

Based upon the above example of power struggles, I would like to explore literature on this theme in order to better represent it. Norton (2000) comments on the nature of power and social structures from an academic perspective:

*Language teaching is not a neutral practice but a highly political one... I use the term 'power' to reference the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities, through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated. (p. 7)*

In the abovementioned example, the relation is between a coordinator and the co-worker who had hopes to take the COTE together. The relation extends from the workplace of the two and moves to where the COTE course is given. Norton (2000) also clarifies the origins of power:

*that power is neither possessed, but a relation, which always implies social exchange on a particular set of terms. (p. 7)*

*As well, Tollefson (1995) also locates the source of conflict within social affinities:*

*power resides not in individuals or groups, but rather within relationships in which struggles over power are won or lost. (p. 2)*

Besides won or lost, power struggles can be negotiated. In both academic references above, power lies within the interconnectedness of people.



My second example refers to another coordinator-co-worker pair who experienced friction. Eventually, both trainees commented to me privately and separately about their conflict. In the classroom, I also observed minor problems (ObT-1b). In journal entries, the coordinator expressed doubts and uncertainties about management responsibilities. Nothing more was said.

Concerning the coordinator's role in the above example, Dunham (1992, p. 41) describes how individuals in management positions experience stress due to role ambiguity. Who they are and what they have to do are not clearly defined. They avoid expressing difficulties, because it might reflect negatively on their leadership capability. In the example above, peer friction occurred, yet mutual containment thwarted direct conflict. The unwritten rule prevails; you cannot win friends or influence people by airing dirty laundry in public.

My third example relates to another coordinator and three co-workers who came from a neighboring city and traveled back and forth together. In the mid-course interviews, they mentioned how the academic discussions continued on, from class to the drive home. From beginning to end, they appeared as a unified group, supporting and cooperating with each other. While the previous two examples encountered conflict, this group did not. Taking a course with your immediate supervisor could present incredible disadvantages; yet, the experience might cast members into unaccustomed roles. Sometimes this proves beneficial to understand the different hierarchies within the workplace.

The examples above reiterate the fact that for teacher-learners, the classroom represents a fairly safe political arena: an environment that fosters personal growth, learning and change. I now turn to the second theme of professional struggles - the teacher versus institution.

### ***Professional Struggles: Teacher versus Institution***

Within the workplace, COTE participants face daunting strug-

gles with institutions, and their representatives - the bosses. This is high-stake, individual-versus-organization conflict. A volatile workplace environment does not offer positive room for teachers to develop. Teachers have little recourse and the prospects for long-term hostility resolution are low. Hence, outcomes may turn dramatic.

Before going on, I would like to locate a formal demarcation point for reference in this section. Recent academic research (Bell, 1995; Huberman, 1995; Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985) has delineated the individual phases within educators' professional careers. Huberman (1992) outlines the stages this way:

- 1) Discovery and survival. Novitiates express enthusiasm towards teaching, and struggle to manage day-to-day problems (p. 123).
- 2) Stabilization. Teachers make a teaching commitment, and posit their own unique methodology (p. 124).
- 3) Experimentation-activism. Teachers assume an active role, and make systematic agenda professions (p. 124).

Concerning these stages, they seem to be rigid in comparison to what the trainees experienced in the COTE. I also wonder if these stages are based upon teachers who follow a linear path in development somewhat as how I had been educated in the American educational system (see Chapter 3). By contrast in the EFL profession where teachers 'fall into' the job, these stages may not coincide with Huberman's stages.

Stabilization represents the point where professional commitments are made, where teacher identities are assumed, and where political conflict begins. Applying Huberman's analysis to the COTE course participants, a few were in the *discovery and survival* stage; most were in the *stabilization* stage, and several were in the *experimentation-activism* stage.

I begin with a segment from a COTE participant, who describes the politics at the institution where he teaches. In this case, 'institution' represents an abstract entity. The school was

a lucrative, prestigious, private religious organization, with a middle-class student body:

*The school expects a lot from its teachers but it doesn't give back to the teacher. It's very hard to understand how a school like them cannot pay their teachers more, or give them more benefits. We have more paperwork than an average government school, but we don't nearly have enough benefits as the government teacher. There has to be some sort of reward other than the fact that we are part of the best profession in the world. (TJ1-4)*

The interesting point above is that he voices a strong dedication to the EFL profession, marking Huberman's (1992) *stabilization* stage as a teacher. He criticizes his host institution due to their low pay, few benefits, and failure to recognize teachers' time expenditure.

Turning to more specific examples, the following COTE participants talk about struggles with their 'bosses'. The antagonists in these cases are concrete; personified perpetrators in the individual versus institution conflict:

*My boss wants me to do and give more and more (my classes are over at 2.30). He wants me to leave...around 5 (without anything important to do). Another problem I've got they give me a little extra amount but I'm still fighting them to help me finish the COTE in black numbers... In the course I'm feeling better. At the beginning I was a little afraid of speaking (I am not like that!!!! REALLY) but now I am feeling better, I've made new friends and I feel more comfortable. (TJ4-20)*

*My problems: getting the time to work on my assignments and combining my mother and teacher roles with my responsibilities as a student. Pressures and stress at my jobs obstructed my will to work on my assignments*

*on many occasions. At work, my bosses were not very understanding about leaving early on Fridays to go to Guanajuato. That is why I was late sometimes. Once I had to lose one day of pay to prepare my assignments and it was taken from my check. They did not care I was trying to be a better teacher. They just wanted to have me there the hours they hired me to work for. I thought they would appreciate my desire to be better and would be understanding, but they were not. (PCI-15)*

Again these two trainees represent Huberman's (1992) *stabilization* stage. Both trainee entries show conflict with their superiors. More is demanded from them than they consider fair. According to the trainees, they are being squeezed for more work, and the administration does not support them in furthering their education - the COTE course. In the last quote the teacher sees her furthering education as a sign of professionalism; yet, her superior's refusal to support her represents a lack of concern for the profession. To better herself as a teacher costs her time and money. The trainees depict the struggles as being top-down and not negotiable.

A passing observation to conclude this theme: teachers have always held the underdog position regarding institutional conflict. A strong identity and professional image may be the only recourse for survival. Dealing with problems like the ones above is part of the profession. Such incidents sometimes turn conflictive because teaching is emotional and personal (Day, 2004a).

***Case Study:***  
***Teacher versus Institution***

In light of the previous comment, a teacher's strong identity may be the only long-term safeguard for resisting the buffets of conflict. The following multi-scene narrative shows a COTE participant's professional image is questioned by the institution where she works. Ultimately, this individual's strong iden-

tity helps her survive. In the first excerpt, the trainee expresses her confusion regarding school politics and teaching children. Her frustration has boiled over, and she questions whether to continue teaching, or seek a better-suited job. She suggests that the root of her confusion may be the school:

*I haven't been (morally) well/good since I'm not sure anymore whether I like working with kids or not. It's difficult, and I'm also starting to get desperate because of all the school's [upper-middle class private institution] shit. I need to find a new job, so probably I'll start handing in copies of my curriculum vitae by November...to find a job that really makes me happy...and once again, I'm feeling like I don't like being a teacher maybe it's just that I hate the school but what am I gonna do? I need the money, I love kids but it's just I don't think I've got what it takes to be a teacher. (TJ9-3)*

Twice she questions if she likes teaching in the above excerpt. She doubts her ability to be a teacher. Over the ensuing weeks and months, the conflict escalated. She felt marginalized in her position; she saw no room for advancement, and decided to look for another job. I came across this confessional journal entry:

*Martha: I've something to confess and it's that I've been a little stressed out lately, the reason is that I'm quitting my job – my job as a primary teacher. It's not because of the teaching-kids-stuff actually, but rather the school and people that's driving me crazy. (ShJ-46)*

Here she defines that the motive for resigning has to do with the administration, and not the teaching or the children. She continues to give an account of the work environment and justification for her resignation:

*I just can't work surrounded by such a mean and nega-*

*tive environment. So I don't know yet what I'm gonna do. I can't keep that job that makes me anxious and doesn't really give me the chance to make progress. I'll still have my job at Inglés Individual [nationwide language institute specializing in individualized learning], but it's not a very well paid option... Merci & au revoir! (ShJ-46)*

Subsequently, she was fired from her EFL job. Moreover, prior to her termination, she felt the need to find another job. So effectively, she knew what she had to do. This represents a secure teacher who can decide for herself. In the following excerpt, she describes: 1) How she felt about dismissal and 2) How she felt, about her identity as a teacher, with respect to the school's objectives:

*And I am happy for it. I hated that school, but I didn't want it to be me the one that quit. I knew this would happen since they told me all the time I was not a 'normalista' teacher. But why did they hire me then in the first place... One can imagine the nightmare I went through these last days, before being fired. I miss the children a lot. But I just couldn't stand it anymore teaching them all the subjects (besides English) and also being in charge of their physical education class. But one thing was not fair; they should have told me I was to be fired beforehand... (TJ9-9)*

The term 'normalista', in the excerpt above, refers to individuals educated in the nationwide college for public school teachers (see Chapter 2). According to the trainee, her own self and professional image ran counter to the 'normalista' model. She and the school administration were frustrated by conflicting expectations on both sides.

Furthermore, this individual was the most qualified EFL teacher in the COTE course, and in her school. She holds a degree in TEFL from a large public Mexican university. She also

wrote extensively in journal entries concerning her problems. Writing offered an emotional outlet (see Chapter 4) where she could voice her manifestations, which in turn, helped her internalize the situation. One can see, through her thought processes, an identity challenge. In the final analysis, her strong commitment to teaching helped her make the right choice to stay in the profession. Therefore from this data, we can summarize the main point in the following:

*Theme 10: Power struggles that teacher-learners had with coordinators and their institutions were part of their teacher careers and caused added stress when taking the COTE.*

This closes the section on professional conflicts, which refers to the struggles COTE trainees face in the classroom and workplace, specifically, political strife with authority figures. Within the COTE course, teacher learners faced benign, low-stake struggles with coordinators. Within the work place, COTE trainees faced dramatic, high-stake conflicts with institutions or bosses that could potentially result in job loss.

Documenting politics in the education arena raises some fascinating research challenges, particularly objectivity. This area needs to be addressed more thoroughly, in order to better understand the conflicting aspects of teachers' lives.

## Summary

In closing this chapter, my primary focus has been emotions and identity formation during the process teacher-learners go through the COTE course. Three broad areas were covered: emotions, academic conflicts and professional conflicts.

Concerning emotions, teacher-learners voiced insecurity as individuals and teachers. These are common feelings when starting a new course. Time management represents another significant issue - one that created stress in the academic and

personal lives of teacher-learners. Finally I examined personal upheavals which were minor problems that complicate or aggravate the lives of COTE participants.

In the academic arena, many teacher-learners experienced difficulties absorbing new materials and concepts. The exact reason remains inconclusive. As for other themes, by course-end, most teacher-learners had successfully developed strategies to overcome observation nerves. And by far, teacher-learners considered academic writing the most difficult and loathsome part of the COTE course.

In the professional arena, COTE course participants frequently experienced power struggles with their coordinators. And during the course, they also encountered professional struggles with institutional authority figures.

To reiterate the themes that were found in Chapter 6, I present them below in numerical order in continuation from Chapter 5.

*Theme 7: A variety of emotions such as insecurity, frustration, gratitude, relief, anger, happiness, etc. were a part of teacher development and identity formation beginning with insecurity due to a fear of failure or limited EFL training and progressing to security by course-end.*

*Theme 8: Time management and stress seemed to be related to each other and perhaps caused problems at school, in the course work, in the classroom and in the trainees' personal lives during the course. Most trainees appeared to balance time management and stress by course-end by using survival skills and/or strategies to overcome their problems.*

*Theme 9: Academic writing appeared to be the most difficult task for the majority of trainees in comparison to absorbing material and observation nerves. Trainees often struggled with the writing tasks, writing for a British*



*audience, and cultural differences of writing and grades. Most trainees learned to overcome their observation nerves using survival skills to do so.*

*Theme 10: Power struggles that teacher-learners had with coordinators and their institutions were part of their teacher careers and caused added stress when taking the COTE.*

Again these numbered themes will be used to answer the Research Questions in Chapter 8.

In Chapter 6 I examined an array of problems to show that personal and professional lives are intertwined (Goodson, 1981). I also revealed, in light of these struggles, how some trainees' prior identities began to shift or reshape. In Chapter 7, I will begin examining course-end issues, and realizations made by teacher-learners.



## CHAPTER 7

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

#### *Course Outcomes*

*At the end I felt free, I felt relief...I thought I would not make it till the end, but I also felt during and at the end of the course that I was more capable than before, that I had more tools to make my students interested in my class and at the same time to make them understand and use English. I felt proud I finished it even though I was not sure I had passed. (PCI-4)*

I continue the data analysis and interpretation phase of my research with this teacher-learner quote from a Post COTE Interview. This individual articulates reflectively on what it means to complete the program. We see a trainee who perhaps suffers minor self-doubt, yet expresses liberation. This COTE participant simultaneously feels more proficient as a teacher, more motivated to teach, and lastly proud. A strong sense of accomplishment is voiced at the end.

Final observations, exams, and course essays frequently represent the dramatic climax of the educational process. At this zenith, trainees discovered important self-realizations, and amassed skill sets that carried them beyond the course. In this chapter, I address teacher-learner outcomes at COTE course-end, which relates to Research Questions 1 and 3, and Chapter 1, regarding professional development. I will be examining teacher-learner responses in light of their course experiences, with information from journal entries, Focus Group Discussion, Observations and Post COTE Interviews.

Again, my intentions in this phase of my research are to construct a narrative of voices, from these teacher-learner ep-

isodes, via the *bricolage* method. The end-product will form a multi-faceted mirror that reflects my interpretation of the COTE course experience. Throughout this chapter and at the end I present the main themes as a summary due to a large amount of material that is offered. The themes are numbered in continuation from Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 8 I shall make reference to these numbered themes. I now continue with the construction of the narrative, beginning with the skills and values acquired at course-end.

### **Acquired Skills and Values**

Skills and values represent a pragmatic way to examine COTE course outcomes. This might be posed as the before-and-after question. One of the functions of the COTE course is to provide an environment where teacher-learners can make personal or professional changes and then refine them.

Skills generally refer to knowledge, understanding, and judgments: better termed, how teacher-learners think about issues in abstract terms. Traditional educational skills include: research, skepticism and problem solving. De Sonneville (2007) makes reference to skills as competence in her transformative learning process (see Chapter 2). Values, on the other hand, refer to how teacher-learners react with others. Traditional educational values include: honesty, competency, responsibility, and fairness.

Many of the skills acquired by COTE participants were previously covered in Chapter 6, specifically, academic writing and time management. In opening this section, critical thinking is analyzed. This perhaps is the premier enduring skill, learned in the formal academic environment. Then I will focus attention on course promoted values.

### ***Critical Thinking Skills***

Critical thinking might be described as the intellectual discipline of skepticism. The emphasis here is on the evaluation of

information, rather than simple acquisition and retention. Key attributes include fair-mindedness and intellectual integrity. Key outcomes strive to avoid biased, distorted or prejudicial thought process. In pragmatic applications, critical thinking means raising vital questions, formulating them clearly and precisely, and anticipating problems.

I present here two excerpts, from teacher-learners who viewed themselves as more analytical and reflective due to the COTE course. Yet, these individuals apply critical thinking skills in vastly different arenas of their lives:

*I have noticed that now I'm a little more critical. I tend to analyze more what teaching means and should mean...I'm enjoying this COTE because I really think I'm learning how to teach now. It's easy for me to read even in English. I have learnt a lot of vocabulary, methods, strategies but what I consider the most important thing is that I have discovered that I really like to teach another language, in this case it is English, but it can also be French. I know I still have to make a bigger effort in order to be an excellent teacher, but at least now I know I want to be a better teacher, and I can be. (ShJ-72)*

*I can see that the COTE will affect my future in a very positive way, because it is already affecting different aspects of my life and not only in the professional field. Taking the COTE, as well as doing other things in my life, tells me a lot of me. To tell you the truth, I was going to take COTE two years ago, but I was not sure how a course could help me in my job. I now know that all of what I learned gives me new tools to teach and not only that, but to keep my job. Well, I think that's it for now. Thank you! (TJ12-11)*

In the first excerpt above, a COTE participant senses a greater nuance in critical thinking, but limits its application largely to

the teaching profession. This individual dissects the nature of teaching, in order to function more effectively in the classroom. Critical thinking skills seem to peak this teacher-learner's interest in acquiring new classroom methods and strategies. As this trainee grows in critical thinking skills, he becomes more conscious of teaching as an enjoyable profession. This individual appears to have moved from the stage of 'teaching as a job' to 'teaching as a passion' (see Day, 2004a).

In the second excerpt above, we encounter a more holistic worldview. This individual initially signed-up for the COTE course motivated by job security issues. New teaching skills and classroom methods were learned. Then, strangely enough, analysis and reflection facilitated significant personal discoveries and insights. Now, this trainee intuitively realizes that critical thinking skills learned in the COTE course also apply to the personal arena. This teacher-learner gained more from the course than she originally anticipated. In the end, she voices gratitude.

As a closing note, the two cases above represent concrete, personified examples of critical thinking. They do not reflect the prevalence or pre-eminence of this theme. During course observations (see ObT-1-4) teacher-learners discussed academic issues and demonstrated critical thinking skills. In addition, interviewees frequently made references to greater nuances in critical thinking skills. I now turn to course-promoted values.

### ***Empathy: Looking from the Other Side of the Fence***

Empathy has been defined as the ability to project one's own personality into the personality of another, in order to better understand them. The topic here is education -not the dramatic arts or psychiatry. In the classroom, the word 'projection' might refer to the conscious act or process of transmitting thoughts and ideas to others. I follow the more idiomatic association of empathy as a 'feeling based' personality trait.

To clarify this point, I turn for a moment to a scholarly view.

Rogers (1983) defines three teacher attributes necessary to create a positive learning environment: 1) Empathy; 2) Genuineness; and 3) Acceptance. Empathy represents the primary 'conduit' whereby teachers relate to students, in order to communicate with, counsel, and direct them. The ability of teachers to project themselves in this way helps to create intimacy, and foster learning or change. Genuineness and acceptance represent values that define the quality of the student-teacher relationship.

Empathy emerged as a significant topic in the collected and coded data. A key point for developing this value came when the trainees returned to the student mode. During the COTE course, they once again assumed the student role for an extended revisit. At first, this seemed odd; yet eventually, most trainees enjoyed the experience (see ObT-1-4). Inevitably, this experience helped them better understand students in during and after the COTE. In the following excerpts, three teacher-learners place a high value on empathy and offer some interesting personal insights:

*It is strange to be a student, but it is a good way of being aware of what our students might feel. (ShJ-25)*

*I want to write to you that during this time I behaved and felt again as a pupil. In some sessions we were laughing a lot and we behaved as if we were children, even when some of the teachers were angry with us it made me feel good. And with this, now I can think and feel like a student again. I learned what empathy means and how to use it with my own students. (TJ10-14)*

*I was very happy to start being a student again. I have left this position since 1985. At the beginning, it was difficult for me to realize this, but slowly I am becoming conscious of this. I was so passive in my time of being a student; I was mainly a receptor. Now, I am invited to be very active, creative and I am invited to do it my*

*own way, challenging myself to study deeper. I am being autonomous and I am questioning my other face - to be a teacher. As a student, I am questioning my job and my vocation as a teacher. As when I was a son, I am a new father, and for that I try to understand my son remembering that he needs time to be listened to... to share his problems. I'm the same way with the students... (ShJ-26)*

In the first and second excerpts above, COTE participants comment on their strange, sometimes humorous return to the student role. Both individuals reiterate the insight that empathy with students represents an experiential, speculative, tentative encounter.

The third excerpt above offers a fascinating study in empathy. A teacher-trainee returns to the student role after a long absence. Via projection, this individual compares his previous student experience with his presently assumed role. The word string 'passive', 'receptor' versus 'active' and 'creative' suggests a significant then-and-now difference. In addition, this refers back to Freire's (2000) 'banking concept' and 'filling the vessel' motif presented in Chapter 2. Subsequently, this same COTE participant uses projection from his current student persona to analyze, dissect and contrast his own teaching presentation. This individual seems to be asking the hypothetical question: 'How would I react, if I were a student in my own class?' Finally, this same COTE participant uses empathy in the personal arena to establish rapport with his newborn son.

In summary, empathy affirms the experiential nature of education. Perhaps the only way to understand the process students are going through is to have gone through the process yourself.

### ***Improved Self-Confidence***

Chapter 6 explored the lack of self-confidence held by COTE trainees at course-start. I consider self-confidence to be a val-



ue. In a broad general context, it helps COTE participants to react more effectively with students in the classroom. In addition, trainees may find it valuable for establishing professional contacts, or as a valued asset in the personal arena. In this section, self-confidence is presented from several points of view for comparison and contrast. In the following excerpts, three course tutors offer their insights into improved self-confidence for COTE course participants:

*Most participants that I have had contact with feel much more secure in the classroom after taking the course. (FGQ-4)*

*At the beginning of the course, most trainees find the course quite challenging, principally in terms of the assignments and the amount of reading that they need to do, but during the course in most cases you can see great improvement in their work and their ability to do academic work. It is also noticeable in most cases that there is improvement in their teaching practice; this is observable from the supervised teaching practices. In most cases, teachers begin to start using the techniques and ideas that they have seen in the sessions or that they have read about. (FGQ-1)*

*It [COTE] allows them to improve their teaching and to feel more confident as a teacher as well as a person. It also helps them to secure their position in the school they work at or to find another teaching position. It opens their eyes that there is much more behind teaching than they thought. (FGQ-3)*

The first two excerpts above reiterate that most COTE participants achieve significant self-confidence improvements during the course. The second excerpt begins to isolate how these improvements came about. The first significant factor for train-

ees includes completing challenging, but realizable academic tasks. This establishes confidence. The second significant factor includes putting into practice ideas and techniques learned in the classroom. Again, this reinforces confidence. The third excerpt summarizes the arenas where improved self-confidence can play an important role, specifically in the classroom, professional life and personal life.

Before going on I would like to add more information. The three cases above represent concrete, personified examples of improved self-confidence observed by tutors. They do not reflect the prevalence of this theme. During course observations (see ObT-1-4), I noticed trainees with gained self-confidence during input sessions. They became more active in class interaction and voiced their opinions more easily using the professional language they had acquired. Trainees felt comfortable and had 'gelled as a group' (see FN-6 and ObT-1a). These all represent cases of improved self-confidence. I now examine how COTE participants view their own improvements in self-confidence.

In the following excerpts, two teacher-learners notice changes in their classroom or academic presentation in light of the COTE course. The realization is dramatic. These individuals are slightly set back. They seem to teeter on the verge of something new, and struggle to determine the implications. The mood suggests newly found optimism for teaching lives and futures. Both individuals express high self-confidence:

*Martha! ...I did some comparison between my classes from this week that just has finished vs. my classes from other semesters. The point here is the COTE is in between and that is the difference. Now my classes are better at least I have an idea what I'm doing badly or well, why not. I know I have to learn more about teaching, but nowadays I feel good! (ShJ-53)*

The teacher-learner above reflects on his classroom presentation style, and senses a new beginning. Interestingly enough,

the analysis of past and present reveals critical thinking on his part. This individual can pinpoint and qualify his own teaching improvement.

In the second excerpt, a teacher-learner makes a new academic start after recent struggles. This individual finds self-confidence, in light of learning a lot. This COTE participant is probably closer to the verge of change than the previous example. How this individual might fares in six months or a year would be an interesting question:

*I'm back...well I feel like reborn, a new year, and I hope a better one. Last year was a learning year for me. My first six months as a coordinator were a disaster. I did everything wrong. The teachers were angry at me. My wife was angry at me. My inner self was even upset at me! But boy did I learn a lot... (ShJ-57)*

An interesting point in the excerpt above regards the confessional nature of journal writing. You have permission to reveal intimate thoughts. The teacher-learner appears to speak of two separate selves: the 'persona self' and the 'inner self'. The binary opposition of these two entities seems to be in conflict. The 'persona self' made errors. Other people such as his co-workers and wife grew angry with the 'persona self'. Even his 'inner self' was annoyed with the 'persona self'. This is reminiscent of Vygotsky's concept of private speech where the 'I' and 'Me' are speaking together within the person (Lantolf, 2003, p. 351).

In the following excerpts, two teacher-learners notice change in the professional arena, in light of their COTE course experience. This material came from post-course interviews, so these individuals are slightly distanced from the course. They have had an opportunity to analyze, reflect-on, and digest their previous experiences. Based upon de Sonneville's (2007) transformative learning process (see Chapter 2) these trainees have moved from the 'passive assimilation' to 'transformation and awareness'. These COTE participants are well-established on

the road to self-confidence. A strong teacher identity has replaced previous lack of self-confidence:

*I couldn't believe it. I felt more secure to teach any point of the language. When anybody knows that I took the course, they seem interested in being one of my students. My boss has considered giving many courses and projects to me. (PCI-5)*

In the excerpt above, the trainee feels self-confident, due to the ability to teach language effectively in the classroom. She is not afraid to approach any element of language. Being a COTE graduate has also brought her self-confidence and prestige. People in the force field might pick up on it, including her boss.

The next excerpt offers some fascinating insights. This individual feels self-confident after the COTE course, but also frightened by the vast quantity of knowledge. This information may be an overload after course closure, or all the bits and pieces are coming into practice. Despite uncertainties, this COTE participant now finds teaching more satisfying and challenging:

*After the course, I felt more self-confident, more capable, more responsible and more scared because the more I knew, learned and read about teaching English the more frightened it was because after the course every time I was in front of a class a lot of information blurred in my mind...like I found myself picturing things like: set context, lesson plan, elicit answers, communicative language teaching, give instructions as clearly as possible, link your class activities, TTT [teacher talking time], homework, how should I correct mistakes, and so on. But I think teaching is much more challenging now, much more satisfying as well. Like you have to combine both the heart and head to teach the best way you can. You don't just do things because you feel they feel right but because you know they are right. (PCI-9)*

She uses adjectives such as ‘confident’, ‘capable’, ‘responsible’, and ‘scared’ to describe how she feels after course completion. The closing comment in the excerpt above is most telling. We see the echoes of a holistic approach. The words ‘combining both the heart and head to teach’ reflects Day’s (2004a, p.1) perspective of teaching. The mark of a dedicated professional is the ability to make complex decisions, hard rational decisions, and decisions that are well-integrated emotionally and intellectually.

In the following excerpt, a teacher-learner makes an important realization regarding improved self-confidence in the personal arena. By course-end, she feels more secure, more at ease, and less fearful of observation. While the COTE course traditionally focuses on teaching and professional life, she values the personal improvements. She recognizes herself as a better person:

*Now that we are ‘almost’ finishing I feel more and more secure than when we started the course... About the observations, I feel very happy because I think they have been good observations. I’m not afraid anymore and now I know that it is the end of a long way and I know too that the best is coming. I feel that I’m a better teacher and why not? A better person, mother and wife. Thanks for everything. (ShJ-91)*

The excerpt above expresses bell hooks’ (1994, 2003) assertion that teaching goes beyond content knowledge, and includes helping students become better-rounded individuals holistically. Again, this teacher-learner feels obligated to voice gratitude for this experience.

The final excerpt shows how the trainee tends to integrate three areas holistically in regards to self-confidence. The three areas can be seen in the phrases: ‘personal life’, ‘professional life’ and ‘classroom’. This individual speaks positively regarding all three arenas:

*The COTE made a big change in my personal life...being more organized and doing the things at the right moment. In my professional life COTE changed my concept of teaching English. I feel self confident in my development as an English teacher. The best thing is I am sharing my experiences and doing my best in the classroom. (PCI-16)*

In the excerpt above, this teacher-learner recognizes time management and organization as the primary benefits of improved self-confidence in the personal arena. Teacher development represents the primary benefit of improved self-confidence in the professional arena. Effectively classroom presentation represents the primary benefit of improved self-confidence in the classroom arena.

Having mentioned trainee insecurity at course onset (*Theme 7*) as well as how time management and stress were related in both their personal and professional arenas (*Theme 8*), the following encapsulates the above data:

*Theme 11: A number of skills and values that were suggested to be gained at course-end included content knowledge, critical thinking skills (analytical and reflective), empathy for students, improved self-confidence, and gratitude. These skills and values also seem to represent holistic learning.*

### **‘Supportive Social Environment’**

I consider a supportive social environment as a value. In a broad general context, it helps COTE participants react more effectively with each other in the classroom. Teacher-learners are social creatures, learning EFL methodology, within a community of professional colleagues. A positive-caring environment is needed to promote mutual instruction, character-change, and social interaction. In this section, I will examine this theme

by analyzing observations and journal entries via key phrases. My intentions are to pinpoint attributes of the supportive social environment within the COTE course. The investigation will cover several points of view - my own, the trainees, and the tutors - to create a broad comparative perspective.

To begin, I offer the following excerpt, which represents one of my own classroom observations (see ObT-1b). In this entry we can sample the setting of a COTE classroom. At first, the environment seems chaotic; yet this represents a social community, or a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998):

*During the next observation, I sat down near the door and decided again to come in after the class had begun. Overnight bags, stuffed briefcases, handbags, and backpacks litter the floor besides the students' chairs or by the blackboard. A couple of the trainees stay overnight on Friday and bring in their bags to take back home after the Saturday session is over at two... evidence of library books, their large notebooks with the copies that have been handed out through out the COTE year, water bottles, pop cans, potato chip bags, sandwiches, fruit and the remains of whatever they have brought as food. At first sight the room looks messy, but one can see that everyone has brought what he or she thinks is necessary in order to sit through the five-hour sessions. The tutor has her duffle bag placed behind the door, out of the way. She leaves around 1:30 when I take over with journal writing. (Transcript and reflection for ObT-1b)*

Several important points appear in key phrases within the excerpt above. First, the phrase - 'one can see that everyone has brought what he or she thinks is necessary in order to sit through the five-hour sessions' - suggest that COTE participants work as a group to complete the course, but each follows their own unique path. Second, the words - 'She leaves around

1:30 when I take over with journal writing' - suggest that tutor and observer work in tight coordination. A summary of the parameters above suggest the social structure revealed here requires individuals to adapt to the situation at hand. It also tolerates personal differences.

Before going on, I examine for a moment how formal academic contributors view the supportive social environment issue. Nias (1989), in research on school cultures, has referred to the positive value of socialization, and the setting required to sustain it. While the following quote is aimed at teachers, the teacher-learners are under the same conditions. Again, a socially fluid environment promotes group interaction, professional development and personal change:

*[Teachers] are happiest in a social environment characterized by mutual dependence in which 'sharing' is the norm and individuals do not feel ashamed to admit to failure or a sense of inadequacy...relationships between staff who can and do help each other, provide one another with oases of calm in a long and frenetic day, set one another high but attainable standards for professional performance and provide a mutually supportive social environment, are characterized by: personal accessibility; plenty of opportunity for discussion; laughter; praise and recognition. (pp. 152-153)*

The environment described above verges on social idealism; the colloquial term 'ivory tower' might apply. Two key phrases are present: 1) 'Individuals do not feel ashamed to admit to failure or a sense of inadequacy' and 2) 'High but attainable standards'. I interpret the first phrase as the 'no guilt or intimidation' term. I interpret the second phrase as the 'social expectation or responsibility' term. The two terms lean toward a strong social democratic position - an altruistic, egalitarian position. Although the environment described above might seem alien and protected compared to the world of business, government



or politics, it confirms the idea that successful learning flourishes in a socially fluid setting.

Now that I have established the line of inquiry for this section, I return to my own observations concerning COTE course participants. As a COTE administrator, I have a unique opportunity to see and influence the program setting. Again, my intentions here are to probe more deeply into key aspects of a supportive social environment. In classroom observations (see ObT-1-4) I viewed trainees in their native setting. They openly joked, laughed, agreed, disagreed, questioned, and communicated. This social context is reminiscent of Vygotsky's (1978, see Johnson and Golombek, 2003) idea of how the trainees make sense of the knowledge they learn and of their identity formation through social interaction with their colleagues. The trainees interacted with each other, worked together and shared experiences within the classroom and outside of the classroom. Each teacher-learner had his or her own identity as a teacher and person (see ObT-3, 4); yet, they identified themselves within a group of professional colleagues. I offer here selected written excerpts from these observations for analysis:

*there is movement in and out of the classroom. The trainees get up naturally to do whatever is needed to be done. There is a lot of social chitchat and greetings throughout the class, which demonstrate the integration of the group. At this point, my reflection is that this group has jelled. This process takes a period of time to happen. In the past groups we have had groups who have not gotten along as well as this group. (ObT-1a)*

*the trainees feel very comfortable in the classroom environment and with their fellow trainees. Each of the trainees has their preferred styles of learning and working together. They have mutual respect for each other, but at the same time they have their small social groups*

*in which they identify themselves with. Some trainees are more verbal and others are listening and watching. (ObT-1a)*

Several important points appear in key phrases within the first excerpt. First, the words - 'trainees get up naturally to do whatever is needed to be done' - suggest that COTE participants can exercise freewill in an unrestricted environment. Second, the words - 'this group has jelled' - imply that group interaction varies widely. Third, the words - 'This process takes a period of time to happen' - propose that COTE participants must learn group interaction.

Concerning the second excerpt, the words - 'Each of the trainees has their preferred styles of learning and working together' - suggest that COTE participants must function simultaneously as individuals, and as a group. Second, the words - 'They have mutual respect for each other' - imply that COTE participants must recognize each other as peers and equals. Third, the words - 'they have their small social groups in which they identify themselves' - propose that COTE participants can not survive the course in isolation and that the COTE environment must accommodate extroverts and introverts alike.

A summary of the above suggests it is my responsibility as an administrator and tutor to help create an environment: 1) Where COTE participants can follow their own free will; 2) That fosters diversity and peer equality; and 3) That encourages individual and group growth.

For comparison and contrast, I turn now to how COTE course participants view their own setting. Many ShJ and TJ entries echo a strong sense of shared-mutual environment. The following excerpts represent cases-in-point:

*How are we doing??? Well, so far I am missing some assignments, but there are days...after reading a lot, I've had a different perspective about what I have learned and what I expected at the very beginning of COTE. I've*

*gotten a nice bunch of friends (my classmates). I'm very happy I have had the opportunity to meet these wonderful people... Really!!! (ShJ-86)*

*I feel happy I have cleared doubts, reinforced skills, increased abilities, suffered for doing my best and most of all I have found people that do the same thing I do and that have enriched my way of seeing teaching. (TJ15-6)*

*It was nice to see all my classmates. They were so nice... everybody said something about me not coming. It was so great to hear things like "Hey! I missed you last session!"... Now everything seems better in my life... (ShJ-66)*

*Meeting people and sharing are also learning processes that enrich and nurture our lives: professional and personal ones. I identify with everyone. I like being with them and they have given me part of their experience, which is the best. I've also given part of me, which is great for me...knowing I have something to give and to share about my teaching experience. (TJ15-8)*

*But, regarding the COTE, I consider, we (learners) know each other. That is a great advantage. In my case I have had good friends and now we have the opportunity to share material, knowledge, ideas, websites, books, etcetera. We don't have much time and chance to have sort of meetings, but we can email each other. (TJ16-5)*

In the above excerpts we see how the supportive social environment created within the COTE course provides a unique setting to meet other EFL colleagues. The COTE participants come from very diverse backgrounds, but the common working objective of taking the course unites them. They appreciate a social environment free of criticism, derision, strife, con-

tentions, altercations, and bickering. It is also suggested that COTE participants may learn as much from each other, as from formal classroom presentation. And, these gains may appear in both professional and personal arenas. Finally, the social fabric created within the COTE course is tenuous. From the above excerpts, we can appreciate how the social ambiance is vital for the teacher-learners.

A summary of the parameters above suggests COTE course participants thrive in an environment free of strife and open to social contacts and an environment where they can follow their own path, yet participate as a group. Teacher-learners recognize they may learn as much from each other, professionally and personally, as they do from formal classroom instruction.

To expand on the theme introduced in the fourth student excerpt above with 'learning from others', I introduce a tutor's point of view. So far, we have examined primarily a supportive social environment in light of the classroom. I reiterate how it contributes to growth in the personal sphere among peers. I refer to this as holistic learning which involves the entire individual: professional, personal, and private (Day, 2004a; hooks, 1994). This echoes the concepts in Chapter 2, which see knowledge as the outcome of social interaction, rather than as an academic 'product'. In the following excerpt, one tutor offers fascinating comments that encapsulate the classroom versus personal dichotomy:

*For me the COTE is an opportunity for teachers to share experiences with each other, and to have access to material and ideas from publications and tutors which they might not otherwise have access to. It is a course, which gives teachers the chance to stop and think about their own teaching, and confirms ideas that they already have about teaching and their own practice and exposes them to new ideas. It is also a challenging academic opportunity. I think in most cases they learn a lot from the ex-*

*perience, not only from what they receive in input from the sessions, but from each other and from themselves as they become more aware of their own teaching. (FGQ-1)*

Several important points appear in the above excerpt. COTE participants grow professionally via classroom contact with tutors and peers. In addition, COTE participants grow personally via peer contact. COTE offers trainees social interaction and contact, which helps them make sense of the knowledge from input sessions. This interaction also provides space and opportunities for them to articulate their sense making and beliefs. A summary of the above suggests that although we tend to focus on teacher development, we cannot separate or negate the personal growth learned by COTE participants during the course.

Turning now to an entirely different theme for closing this section, participants often mention how they miss their classmates and supportive social environment once the COTE course ends. This corroborates the lasting impact of peer influence on COTE course participants. Teacher-learners in the real-world work environment may not have other EFL colleagues, or they may not have colleagues with whom they feel comfortable. I offer here a teacher-learner's comments from a post-course interview:

*When I finished the course...first relieved, then sad. Working shoulder to shoulder with my classmates has been something I will never forget. Meeting those wonderful people has been a wonderful thing for me and I had the time of my life with them. Finding someone with ideals similar to yours is very difficult, so having 17 people in a room with these characteristics was fantastic. (PCI-15)*

Again we see how group interaction directed toward a common goal promotes strong peer bonding within the COTE course. The words - 'finding someone with ideals similar to yours is

very difficult' - imply that teacher-learners may not encounter supportive social environments in their own context. The social fabric created within the COTE course is fragile and may not be easily duplicated outside the formal academic classroom.

To close this section I shall tie together key points concerning a supportive social environment and the COTE course. As suggested in several analyses above, learning flourishes in a socially fluid setting that fosters diversity and peer equality. Trainees need enough 'room' to follow their own unique educational path; yet, group participation strongly enhances this experience. This supportive social environment also is reminiscent of the sociocultural perspective where a positive environment enhances learning. In the end, trainees may learn as much personally via the COTE course, as they do professionally. As a review of the above data, the following is:

*Theme 12: A supportive social environment consisting of social interaction and contact enhanced the learning process.*

I now focus attention on self-improvement.

### ***Self-Improvement***

As the COTE course nears an end, I often hear teacher-learners' closure markers. These deeply buried psychological signposts tell me if all is going well or if there are problems. Trainees are finishing up the course. Inevitably they will leave, make their way in the world, and continue on with their teaching. One of the first indicators I encounter is teacher-learners who express a strong sense of self-improvement. In the following excerpts, two teacher-learners notice significant changes in light of their COTE course experience:

*We are getting close to the end of the COTE. It's hard to believe that it's been almost a year. I have learned a lot. I*

*feel that now I can actually teach effectively. (ShJ-98)*

*but something that motivates me is that I feel better as a teacher. I think my classes have improved...it is worth every effort we make...realized that I'm improving as a teacher, as a student and as a speaker of the language. (TJ7-4, 6)*

Trainees remark how time for the course is coming to an end and how they positively assess the effort they have invested in the course. Frequently late in the course, most teacher-learners make startling self-discoveries; they have changed. And despite sacrifices, they feel it has been worthwhile.

This may seem strange, humorous or ironic. But teacher-learners who are highly involved in the learning process cannot interpret the meaning of their experience until after the fact or at the end. So the realization that they have changed comes as a surprise.

The following narrative passage captures that moment of discovery. In the ShJ entry that follows, a trainee describes her terrible nervousness during a classroom observation. At a critical moment, she assumes she has failed her own lesson plan. Emotions flood her. Surprisingly enough, the negative experience turns around, when her young students respond emphatically in her observed class:

*As time goes by, I realize that I don't have to stick to some rules. I had the great experience that when I knew that I screwed up a good lesson plan, but the expression that I saw on my kids! The participation and the response were AWESOME! I'm happy, very happy. My kids were happy! And they were eager to participate actively; they were helping each other and working in teams. I can't deny that the observation was a terrible experience, when it finished, I really wanted to cry, but with the memory of my kids saying: 'Are you proud of*

*us, teacher?’ and ‘Why don’t you do all the classes like this?’ Little by little, I have incorporated new elements to my class, and, even if I fail, I don’t care that much. COTE is great, really, but achieving my students’ needs and improving their English is the best of all. Thank you. (ShJ-65)*

With the passage of time she realizes what she is capable of as a teacher; she can make decisions as what to do as a teacher. My own observations closely follow these lines. Self-improvement for most COTE participants comes slowly, usually at the point where trainees begin to experiment with, and improve on the teaching methods they have learned in the classroom.

### **Gratitude**

As the COTE course ends, the second most common closure marker I encounter in teacher-learners is gratitude. Trainees have been strongly influenced professionally and personally. They feel overwhelmingly obligated to express their appreciation. I am usually the COTE course focal point because of my roles as administrator, observer and tutor, so many of these comments are directed towards me. I frequently encounter remarks in MJ (MJ-21), ShJ, and TJ entries, interviews, emails, and informal conversations.

In the following entry, a trainee expresses an incredible sense of completion at course-end. And a haunting sense of time discontinuity; this is not unusual:

*COTE is almost over, I feel so glad because I already handed all the papers in. I remember that time ago I was about to quit. Thankfully I didn’t do it. (TJ18-8)*

The interesting point in the excerpt above concerned the trainee’s conflicting emotions. This individual, who once considered



leaving the COTE course, now represents a strong survivor. A teacher identity has been shaped.

In the next entry, a teacher-learner writes an enthusiastic journal entry; and, simultaneously, announces the upcoming birth of his first child. Interestingly enough, this individual came from a background unrelated to EFL. Taking this course marks a transition into the profession:

*First of all I want to tell you that I'm the happiest man on earth. You know why? Because I'm going to be a FATHER!! On the other hand, I'm tired, but I know that now I feel more confident. I know coming to the COTE has given me a lot of experience, knowledge and stuff. I also want to thank you and tell you that everything you are teaching me (at least) is useful. Now I think different and now I have more ideas for my classes and for my life because now I'm sure I love my job! Thanks for everything and I appreciate your time. (ShJ-56)*

Near the close of this excerpt, this trainee experiences the usual uplift in self-confidence and attests to the broadening nature of higher education. The phrase - 'now I think different and now I have more ideas for my classes and for my life' - represents a highly resonant, multi-layered statement. This individual seems to have experienced a change event, and integrated the permutations into both classroom and personal lives.

In the next entry, a non-native teacher-learner justifies her decision to take the COTE course, despite holding a BA in TESOL from a Mexican university. In the end, she remains confident her choice was a good one. She also experiences the usual haunting sense of time discontinuity:

*It still surprises me how fast time goes by. As far as I know, there are only eight weekends left before COTE end. Even though there are a lot of things I already saw*

*during the licenciatura [BA], I still find it interesting and very useful and refreshing. Sometimes I sort of reinforce some aspects about teaching; sometimes I just learn completely new things. I'm glad I made the decision to take this course, even though I'm so busy all the time with it and my two jobs and the papers and tasks, but it's really worth it. (TJ9-7)*

In this excerpt above, this teacher-learner offers an interesting comment on taking the COTE and her BA studies. This trainee voices usefulness of the COTE course and how she can apply the knowledge in her teaching practice even though some material was repeated from her previous studies. I concur with this position and offer my own observations: Aside from credentials, certificates and degrees, continuing education in the EFL profession remains an ongoing project. Holding a BA in TESOL and the COTE certificate, this non-native teacher represents a different type of EFL teacher than those that I encountered when I began teaching in Mexico. This shows how EFL has changed in Mexico.

To confirm a personal belief as a COTE tutor and course administrator, I always appreciate these compliments from trainees. Such responses affirm the usefulness of the COTE course and success of my teaching.

To summarize this section, the trainees gained a variety of skills and values at the course end. These consisted of content knowledge, analytical and reflective thinking skills, an empathy for students, and a stronger sense of self-confidence than at course beginning. A supportive social environment influenced the trainees, creating a cohesive group of individuals who aided each other through social interaction. Additionally, trainees felt the need to voice gratitude and a self-improvement at the course-end. These skills and values also crossed the boundaries of their personal and professional lives, which represented holistic learning for the trainees. Again this data is summed up in the following theme:

*Theme 11: A number of skills and values that were suggested to be gained at course-end included content knowledge, critical thinking skills (analytical and reflective), empathy for students, improved self-confidence, and gratitude. These skills and values also seem to represent holistic learning.*

Having explored the skills and values that were found, we will look at issues regarding identity formation in the next section.

### **Identity Shaping**

Throughout this inquiry, one of my central questions has been how teacher-learners form their identities as educators within the developmental process offered by the COTE course. Identity shaping perhaps represents a more descriptive term. As mentioned in Chapters 5 and 6, at course onset trainees frequently voiced low self-confidence in TJ and ShJ entries, in tutorials, and during informal conversations. Tutors commented on this trend during Focus Group Discussion (see FGD-2-4 and FGQ-1-4). I documented the same trend in my journal (see MJ-18, 19).

As the course progressed, teacher-learners took on tasks, projects and assignments. They studied formal EFL methodology and theory. They entered an evolutionary stage; and slowly they began to grow in confidence. What happens next is hard to describe.

Throughout the many years I have worked the COTE course, at some point beyond midterm I usually see an indication that most trainees have experienced an awakening, an enlightenment, or an epiphany. These trainees begin to make positive changes academically and personally. They realize what they must do. They accept the mantle of 'a real teacher' - an EFL professional.

In a classroom observation (see ObT-1b), I described the change in the following. My own experience serves as an analogy or model for COTE participants.

*I think that the COTE for many trainees is one of the beginning stages where the teacher-learner begins to question what he/she feels. It is somewhat like an academic awakening. I myself had gone through something like this when I began my master's. I began to absorb academic information because I felt a thirst for it. There can be a void as professionals and when we have this academic awakening, some trainees progress in this development and others fossilize. While some may see this as a conflict, I would like to see it as a starting point in their academic education. (ObT-1b)*

I empathize with the COTE trainees' 'academic awakening' based upon my own lived experiences (see Chapter 3). A genesis starts with a willingness to learn academic information and immersion into the subject matter. 'Absorbing academic information' is similar to the metaphor of a sponge absorbing water. Here I hint as to whether trainees accept or reject the academic information. This will be covered more in-depth later in this chapter. Lastly, the trainees' questioning of themselves may suggest recognition of changes in their thought, reflection and analysis processes.

During the data analysis and interpretation phase, I described this turning as an 'academic awakening', or a trainee's 'mid-life crisis'. In the Focus Group Discussion, I referred to the recognition point as 'clicking' (see FGD-2-4, Martha). I will continue to use 'clicking' terminology throughout this section.

How this change occurs, when this occurs, and if this occurs vary widely among COTE course participants. No two individuals are exactly alike. During the Focus Group Discussion, I articulated on the vague, uncertain nature of self-realization. The key point in the following passage concerns the relationship between 'process' and 'clicking'.

*I see it as a process...and some [trainees] don't click. Trainees click at certain time - it could be later or right*

*away...there are people who have no problems to 'click' and then sometimes it's half way...sometimes there is not a click, but it's a whole process... (FGD-Martha)*

In the excerpt above, the word 'click' appears four times in different contexts. The word 'process' appears twice within close proximity of 'click'. Although these two terms are linked, the exact casual relationship between them cannot be defined. Despite a play on semantics, the most to be said is that teacher-learners are unique in their individual learning paths and recognition points.

Concerning this phenomenon, we should consider the student perspective. Curiously enough, COTE participants hesitate to admit they have 'changed' in their journal entries. Most individuals realize they are passing through an educational and evolutionary process. Specifically, they detect and voice improved self-confidence as teachers. As for the 'click' and recognition, it comes as a surprise to most teacher-learners. COTE participants remain skeptical of their new status, and look to contemporaries, peers, tutors, or myself for confirmation.

Before going on, I offer the views of formal critics on this issue. Based upon the ideas mentioned above, Goodson and Cole (1994) researched the socialization process of individuals who became community college teachers in Canada after leaving productive careers in non-teaching jobs within their expertise area. In an interview, a teacher describes her identity shaping as to when she saw herself 'as a teacher'. She also used the word 'click'. According to the teacher, it was not clear exactly when this process took place, but later, after the fact, she realized she felt more like a teacher. Similarly this 'clicking' may refer to de Sonneville's (2007) progress from 'passive assimilation' to 'transformation and awareness' (see Chapter 2).

In summary, the previously presented ideas such as identity shaping, process, and 'clicking' are certainly not new. However, the exact relationship between 'process' and 'clicking' has

not been fully documented and I call for future research projects to investigate this area.

In order to understand the ‘click’ theme, we will analyze several example cases. The following passages came from Post COTE Interviews. These matriculated teacher-learners have already ‘clicked’, entered the profession, and now reflected on their previous classroom experience:

*You have no idea how much teaching has taught me, how much I have learned about myself. (PCI-9)*

*At the end I felt very very good because I had the idea I had missed the beginning of my career as an English teacher. I know I need more, but the COTE helped me to realize that I need to be a better teacher now. (PCI-16)*

Both individuals in the excerpts above express strong self-realization; they have changed. In the first excerpt, identity shaping during the course, and subsequent professional development appears to foster personal growth. In the second excerpt, identity shaping during the course motivated the teacher-learner to make improved classroom presentations, and realize that professional entry probably implies continued education.

To summarize the key points encountered in this section thus far, trainees probably follow a ‘click-recognition-confirmation’ model within the COTE course. First, teacher-learners must change; this is usually evident via improved self-confidence. Second, they need to consciously recognize their change; this is usually via reflection and analysis. Third, they require peer confirmation of their change. Now I examine the realization moment.

***Epiphany:  
‘Now a Real Teacher’***

In order to analyze the ‘click’ point, we move back in time, via teacher-learner journal entries. My intentions are to pinpoint

the details of COTE participants who are on the verge of awakening. I will analyze these passages via key phrases, and summarize at section end. In the following passage, a trainee describes his own recognition and confirmation points:

*Many things have changed since the last course. Now I'm a real English teacher. At the very beginning I was very surprised, because I didn't expect being accepted...as an English teacher... (TJ18-2)*

Interestingly enough, the excerpt above opens with the word 'changed'. This individual's self-realization arrived unexpectedly. Proof of awakening is implied via group recognition or acceptance. In the following passage we shall see a more concrete, detailed, specific example and we will begin to see underlying assumptions behind recognition and confirmation:

*From one day to another, I opened my eyes to keep a sense of my position as an English teacher and a father, and I am aware now, that my students are different as my two sons, and they need to be approached differently by me. I am aware that my decisions can affect them positively or negatively... (TJ14-3)*

This trainee experiences holistic learning in the professional and personal spheres. He makes a self-realization when he can identify and differentiate his students individually. Lastly he realizes that a real teacher must be sensitive to people around him. He relates his role as a teacher to his role as a father.

Finally, an example that reaffirms the peer confirmation theme follows. This trainee finds intense pleasure and satisfaction upon arriving at course-end. Self-confidence increases. In a surprising self-realization, this teacher-learner recognizes her own identity shaping:

*Well! This time I would like to talk about how I feel almost at the end of the course. I cannot believe it is almost over. I don't want it to end! It's incredible but I really enjoyed going back to school. I felt very comfortable; all of my classmates are great! I know I'm going to miss them all. I'm also very happy because I'm catching up with all of the essays I had behind. Well among other things, I want to tell you how I felt being a teacher. When you asked me that, I wasn't sure what to answer though... I've found out, that everyone else knew I was a teacher, but me. (TJ12-12)*

Several important points appear within the excerpt above. The teacher-learner does not know how to respond to my posed question of identity - How do you feel about being a teacher? She is close to the realization point. Her reply shows us her previous lack of self-confidence and reaffirms the strong peer-recognition component to identity shaping. Previously, everyone else identified her as a teacher except herself. Yet, at the end of the course, she recognizes who she has become in the eyes of her peers and in her eyes.

Again, we see the 'click-recognition-confirmation' model. Interestingly enough, self-realizations do not appear as a 'lightening strike' episode. Peer confirmation seems to play an important role in identity shaping. The 'click-recognition-confirmation' model may also be connected to the teacher development schemes presented in Chapter 2 where trainees move to a higher stage in their professional growth where they feel more professional, more confident and more prepared as teachers. I now examine cases where trainees do not 'click'.

### ***Impediments to Change***

As previously stated, not all teacher-learners experience 'academic awakening'. I will look at focus group observations, offered by course tutors, as to why some trainees are slow to



change, resist change, or cannot change. In the following passages, course tutors reflect on their previous experience with COTE participants over the years. These excerpts represent reflective generalizations and this material is not specifically aimed at COTE course trainees, 2002-2003.

In the first excerpt, a tutor comments on trainees who are slow to change due to issues of skills. These individuals are strongly motivated to learn, but may be academically challenged in the classroom. We will look at their case in a moment. As a side issue the opening line, referring to some students as ‘sponges’ and others not, is one I commonly hear in the language arts world. We will encounter the ‘sponge’ theme again:

*Some trainees are very open to new things and pick them up like sponges. Other COTE trainees have more difficulties to assimilate the ideas they hear about in the COTE course. Generally all of them reflect on and discuss their teaching. They learn new techniques and start to read and reflect more on the theory behind teaching. (FGQ-3)*

The excerpt above suggests that all COTE participants discuss or reflect on teaching theory or technique during the course. Each teacher-learner varies widely in learning skills and styles.

From the ‘sponge’ theme I turn now to cases where trainees resist change due to attitude issues. These individuals have skills for classroom success, but remain unmotivated to learn. This represents a conscious choice. One local tutor offered this observation concerning well-seasoned teacher-learners, who do not want to leave their ‘comfortable easy chair’ of education:

*Some of them have not been able to finish or get credit for their course [COTE]. They have expressed that coming to terms with the need to change is one of the most difficult things to accept when one has a lot of teaching*

*experience. On the other hand, there have been participants who do not have any problems adjusting to changes in their teaching. These people are usually quite open to different approaches and feel happy implementing new things and trying out new activities. (FGQ-4)*

The excerpt above reiterates the ‘sponge’ philosophy; some are able to make changes in their practice. According to the above, stagnation is pinpointed as a significant occupational hazard for long-term teacher survival.

Another tutor used the phrase ‘old’, in regard to long-term, psychological burdens carried by trainees. Again, these individuals have skills for classroom success, but remain unmotivated to learn. This represents an unconscious choice. Less experienced teacher-learners may not have accumulated attitudes or assumptions that reject new theories or techniques:

*new teachers don’t have the problem of carrying around old baggage. They are much more open. Whereas old teachers with more experience aren’t open and more than anything else the way they learned influences them a lot. (FGD-3)*

The excerpt above also reiterates the ‘sponge’ philosophy; ‘New teachers don’t have the problem of carrying around old baggage’. The trainer pinpoints faulty educational development as a significant occupational hazard for long-term teacher survival.

Having looked at new teachers, I now offer the case of veteran teacher-learners who remain highly resistant to change. In subsequent Focus Group Discussion, local tutors characterized such individuals. Important terms in the following excerpts include: ‘open resistance’ and ‘closed resistance’. Concerning their significance, the first term refers to trainees who resist change, but remain open to learning something new. One tutor considered individuals covered by the second term as ‘closed to

learning anything new' (see FGD-2). Another tutor described such teacher-learners as 'unconscious resistant' in the below excerpt:

*a kind of resistance but it is not an open resistance...it's not something that they really want to do. It is just unconscious. (FGD-3)*

Similarly, de Sonneville (2007) makes reference to the word 'unconscious' when describing how teacher-learners are in a passive assimilation stage with 'little change of perceptions or interpretation' (p. 57).

In short, cases such as this present the greatest teaching challenge for the COTE staff. During Focus Group Discussion, I myself characterized such cases this way:

*They were not committed...it's sort of almost like they gave up before they even began. (FGD-Martha)*

To close this section, a tutor makes an observation regarding teacher-learners who cannot change:

*Others, no matter how much they read and/or get feedback from the tutors just cannot change the way they teach. Sometimes, no amount of training will change certain teachers. (FGQ-2)*

Again I would like to mention that these views are generalizations based upon the tutors' experiences and do not necessarily represent this COTE group.

Another trainer goes one step further. She hints that resistance may be related to teachers who are more experienced in years and an 'imposed agenda' that is foreign to the teachers:

*I was even thinking that maybe the resistance of those teachers who have been teaching for many years and*

*they don't want to change their old ways of teaching is because we are imposing something that's too foreign. (FGD-4)*

In the excerpt above, the phrase - 'because we are imposing something that's too foreign' represents a forceful statement. Teacher-learners may resist consciously or unconsciously the COTE ideas; however, we cannot force them to learn. The moment teachers try to intimidate their way through the classroom, students are lost. The topic of COTE as an imposed course will be continued in the next section.

### ***Resistant to a Foreign Course***

I offer here an interesting sideline. One tutor raised the issue that the foreign origins of the COTE course might inhibit the desire for change. Some teacher-learners might resist the COTE course, based on the culture or cultures it represents. She argued her point this way:

*An imported course could mean imposing foreign views that may clash with our culture [Mexican culture]. On the other hand, it is an opportunity for trainees to learn more about the culture of the language we are teaching. (FGQ-4)*

This represents a difficult argument to evaluate, in light of the current world economy and emphasis on multiculturalism. I am not certain the COTE course is really that intimidating. The scholarly work of Canagarajah (1999) and Phillipson (1992) explored this topic extensively, and questioned if foreign programs can ever meet the needs of the receiving country. Phillipson remains adamant that foreign programs imposed upon other countries are hegemonic in nature. In Chapter 2, I argued my views as to whether or not COTE is viewed as an imposed course in Mexico (MJ-30, 31). COTE gave the neces-

sary impulse to Mexico to train EFL teachers who had little or no formal education in the area. As a result of this, more and more Mexican universities have created their own teacher education programs.

### ***Professional Image and Commitment***

By course-end, tutors frequently commented on the improved professional image of COTE participants. Tutors hold a unique position; their frequent contact with trainees offered them the opportunity to see incrementally small changes in educational development and personal advancement.

Yet, the views expressed in the following excerpts vary widely; the materials need to be examined in detail to arrive at an interpretation:

*Most of them change. They see themselves as professional teachers. Their self-esteem and their teaching improve. Their confidence grows and they become more tolerant with their students. Some of the participants realize that COTE does not provide them with all the knowledge necessary to cater for all their needs as teachers and those of their students. (FGQ-4)*

*Thanks to COTE and the fact that more and more English teachers are interested in taking this or another training course and that SEP [Mexican Ministry of Education] recognizes the COTE course, English teaching is becoming more and more a profession. Being a teacher nowadays means much more than just speaking the language but dominating teaching techniques and also having the knowledge of methodology and theoretical background of teaching... (FGQ-3)*

*I think that COTE courses in Mexico have helped English teaching become more professional and hopefully more*

*effective. I believe having practitioners with an internationally recognized qualification is positive for any profession. And having better qualified teachers should ultimately be reflected in the students as they receive more effective English teaching. (FGQ-1)*

One of the problems here is defining what exactly constitutes professionalism. The first two excerpts associate professionalism with improved methodology. The last excerpt links professionalism with credentials. These factors represent the traditional benchmarks of educational excellence. The first excerpt offers a more radical perspective. It associates an indirect connection between improved personal achievement such as self-worth, confidence, and tolerance, as well as professionalism.

For a contrasting point of view, I offer an excerpt from a trainee. This individual integrates many of the previous concepts into a more global definition of professionalism:

*I have learned a lot and also applied most of what I have learned here. I always wanted to be in this course and get a certificate from a university abroad. COTE has motivated me to be more creative and professional as a teacher. Being part of the COTE I think that I'm helping the English teaching to be more professional in Mexico and I'm searching one of my most important goals in my life. I feel more confident teaching English at any level or any place or people. (TJ5-6)*

Several important points appear concerning professionalism. First, the words -'I have learned a lot and also applied most of what I have learned' - suggest a methodological component to professionalism. Second, she suggests a credentials component to professionalism with 'a certificate from a university abroad'. Third, she mentions being a group member of COTE, which represents a strong professional affiliation. Fourth, the words - 'I feel more confident teaching English'- represent a strong

personal component to professionalism. We can see how she completely expresses her success.

What exactly constitutes professionalism represents an incredibly delicate question. So to close, I offer an observation raised by a tutor. This individual acknowledged the observed improvements in teacher-learner professionalism. As for what happens after the course, we cannot say. The comment was expressed this way:

*The majority of the trainees who have dedicated time to the input sessions, reading and self-reflection have improved as teachers. I have seen this happen in the practical teaching observations. However, once the COTE is over, we really don't know what the impact is. (FGQ-2)*

Another trainer (see FGQ-1) also voiced these same concerns about trainees after the course has finished. Due to the limited breadth of this research, I was unable to pursue this avenue. This represents a prime topic for future research. I now turn to course closure issues.

A principal point for the above section includes the identity shaping of the teacher-learners at course-end. Most teacher-learners would often make comments as to how they felt like 'real teachers' who were better qualified and confident as professional teachers. I described this shaping of identity as an 'academic awakening' or 'clicking'. Tutors commented on generalizations as to why they felt some trainees did not 'click'. These generalizations were concerned with trainees' years of experience, attitudes, or a possible resistance to a foreign course.

### ***The Trainees who were not Awarded a Passing Grade***

In Chapters 5-7 I included the voices of all of the teacher-learners whether they had been awarded a pass at course end or not. Because I am researching the process of the teacher-learners

during this course, it is of interest to look at all trainees. Having looked at those who made changes in their development as teachers, I will now briefly examine the teacher-learners who were not awarded a pass at course end. In this section I will try to explore possible reasons as to why these teacher-learners did not succeed.

To shed light on why or why not a teacher did not make a change in his or her teaching and development, I include what is necessary for this development according to Pennington (1995) in the following:

*Teacher change and development require an awareness of the need for change - or at least of the desirability of experimentation - and of available alternatives. A teacher's awareness and knowledge of alternatives is colored by that teacher's experience and philosophy of teaching, which act as a psychological barrier, frame or selective filtering mechanism. Some alternatives may not be noticed or assimilated, while others are perceived, attended to, and incorporated into practice. In a negative case, the psychological frame or filter acts to discourage new information offered by others or by the teaching context from becoming intake to their personal teaching system. (pp. 705-706)*

Similarly, Head and Taylor (1995) mention that self-awareness is essential for teacher development. A teacher must be conscious of the need to change his or her teaching as well as wanting to try out different options. De Sonneville (2007) also uses the word 'conscious' when describing the 'transformative learning process' (p. 57). This consciousness is influenced by a teacher's beliefs and lived experiences. Concerning the options, the teacher makes choices. Not all options are used or adapted to the teacher's repertoire depending upon the teacher's psychological filter. Such filters may not allow for the absorption of new material. Based upon this idea, I wonder if the seven teacher-learners who did not



receive a passing grade had this self-awareness or if they lacked the ability to reflect and make decisions. In addition, they may have lacked options to choose from in their teaching repertoire.

Of the 18 people who attended regularly until course end, eleven received the COTE certificate and seven were not awarded a pass from UCLES. The seven participated in class and were also observed in their teaching contexts. What seemed to be evident of these trainees is that they did not finish all the essay assignments which were a large part of the course evaluation scheme. One of the seven handed in the required essays, yet this person was not awarded a pass. Others attempted some essays and a few did not hand in any essays. Because the majority cited academic writing as the most difficult part of the course at midcourse tutorials (see Chapter 6), I believe that academic writing may have been the most complicated obstacle for them as teacher-learners.

If this is the case, then more needs to be done to aid the teacher-learners in the writing process. Time was given to academic writing during the input sessions, however more could be given as well as more individual tutoring. In retrospect, I wondered if the course syllabus provided enough time and space for academic writing. Perhaps the course did not provide enough groundwork or strategies for them to carry out the writing. Those who did not pass might have been afraid to acknowledge their feelings of failure. As they were experienced teachers, they may have felt somewhat embarrassed to mention why they had not finished the written essays.

Besides the writing struggles, some of the seven may have rejected the content presented during the COTE input sessions, as the tutors during the Focus Group Discussion had generalized that experienced trainees tended to resist course input more than trainees with fewer years of experience (see Chapter 7). Possibly the course went against their established teacher philosophies. Another doubt is whether the COTE is flexible enough to meet the demands of those who may need more time to digest the material and experiment with the input.

Still another uncertainty to consider is the cognitive activity of reflection needed for the teacher-learners to make changes in their teaching. The seven teacher-learners may not have acquired or had the necessary skills for reflection. Understanding reflection and the roles it plays within the course and teacher development may be an area for further research.

Having made reference to teacher-learners who ‘clicked’ during the course in Chapter 7, it may be possible that those who did not pass followed a different path of teacher development to the others. A number of scenarios could be pointed out concerning these possibilities. For unknown personal reasons some may have rejected completely or partially what was being offered during the input sessions. Others may have clicked after the course had ended or perhaps some had progressed even though they were not awarded the pass. I would like to think that even though the seven teacher-learners did not receive a pass, they had constructed knowledge and made some changes in their teaching.

Regarding motivation, four of the seven took the course because their schools wanted them to get a paper certification. A question to be asked is if the COTE certificate was needed for these trainees to continue working at their jobs. What were the repercussions for those who did not pass? Was the course then seen as an imposed idea? Of the four one is still at the same educational institution and the rest have changed institutions for various reasons. Nonetheless, the majority of the seven are still EFL teachers.

The personal life of each may have played some part in what happened. Two of the seven had plans that took them to other places in the world. One trainee mentioned she did not finish because she had an upcoming international trip. Another got married and moved to the United States. Academically the course may have failed to offer them enough opportunities to succeed or perhaps the teacher-learners found it impossible for them to juggle their professional, personal and academic lives.

To summarize what happened to the seven teacher-learners is complex and suppositional. Each of the seven seems to have individual reasons for his or her failure to achieve certification as well as other aspects they may have in common. On a positive note, of the seven, I have seen at least three at international and regional professional conferences, which leads me to believe that they might have moved on in their professional development. Having discussed the various reasons as to why I deduct why the seven did not pass, I will offer a conceptual framework of teacher development based upon the research data.

### Teacher Development Model for COTE Teacher-Learners

In Chapter 2, I outlined different schemes of teacher development and now I would like to present my framework based upon the collected data from this research. This framework represents more closely what happened to the 18 teacher-learners. This conceptualization is represented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3 Conceptual Framework of Teacher Development for COTE Teacher-Learners**



The above framework consists of five possible stages and attempts to represent the teacher-learners' growth based upon the data. The first stage – pre-socialization - refers to lived experiences such as out-of-country extended stays in the United States that individuals may have had before entering into the profession. Also included are the periods of time that the future teacher-learners were in the classroom passively observing the teaching-learning process (see Lortie, 1975 and Chapter 2) as well as critical incidents (see Measor, 1985 and Chapter 4)

that seemed to be pivotal in one's life. Teacher-learners also voiced how they identified strongly with the English language (see Chapter 5). These actions may have had an influence on career decisions when entering the profession.

Concerning the next stage of socialization, the majority of the 18 teacher-learners 'fell into' the job (see Chapters 2 and 5). They entered the profession with personal theories constructed from previous lived experiences (see Maldrez and Bodoczky, 1999, p. 13). Each teacher-learner varied in the range of years as to when they decided to be professionally trained in ELT. By this time, they had constructed personal beliefs and identities as teachers. Before entering the COTE, the teacher-learners had constructed a personal theory, which guided them to make decisions and interpret what to do in their classrooms. What they may not have had was a repertoire of skills and techniques to choose from prior to the COTE. They may have relied heavily on what they had done for periods of time previously. Their scope of practical knowledge was limited to what they had used repeatedly for a number of years and may have been influenced by prior learning experiences as students.

The next stage, named Exposure, refers to when the trainees began the COTE. They were exposed to a variety of techniques and skills offered as course input. Trainees were also given time for reflection and social contact with other EFL colleagues in a supportive environment. This 'community of practice' environment aided them in making decisions and in constructing their own meaning from the presented knowledge of the training course. Part of this process included identity shaping and emotions. In addition, struggles - in the professional, academic and personal arenas - were part of this stage (see Chapter 6).

At this point, each trainee may have accepted or rejected what was part of the COTE. Those who made changes in their teaching seemed to have become more consolidated and focused as teachers. They voiced how they felt more secure as teachers. I refer to this change as 'clicking' (see Chapter 7).

Teacher-learners who did not follow the same path may have rejected the previous stage of exposure for a variety of reasons such as a lack of reflection, or a resistance to change. Trainees may have also made changes at a later date.

Why a teacher-learner did not move from the exposure to the clicking stage may have been influenced by reflection. In the previous section, I provided some possible reasons as to why I felt seven out of eighteen did not pass the course. Another reason may be a lack of reflection. According to Beijaard, Meijer and Verlop (2004), reflection is essential for the teacher self to develop (p. 114). This is reminiscent of the extensive work of Schön and Dewey. Similarly, Kullman (1998) comments on the necessity of reflection for teacher development in the following:

*Reflection, it is argued, will lead to a greater awareness among student teachers of what constitutes appropriate pedagogic practice and will lay the foundations for development, a process which will be ongoing throughout their teaching careers. (pp. 471-472)*

Reflection paves the way to teacher awareness of what is suitable in the teaching learning process and in turn this provides the basics for teacher development. The teacher-learners who taught for a number of years and ‘fell into’ the job with little or no formal EFL training may have relied on limited skills and techniques to continue ‘the flow of instruction and classroom order’ as mentioned by Pennington and Richards (1997, p. 152) rather than implementing new ways to encourage learning. These teacher-learners may have lacked the reflective ability and awareness and this may have influenced how they saw themselves and ultimately how they progressed as teachers.

To summarize the above framework of teacher development based upon the collected data from the COTE course attempts to represent the trainees’ professional progress before becoming an EFL teacher until the COTE course end. Due to their individual differences, each trainee followed a unique path

of development. Having given a teacher development model for this research, I shall now summarize the course closure.

### ***COTE Course Closure***

At course-end, I always like to look at trainees to see what the future holds for them beyond the course. Essays, classroom practicals and final exams lie behind them. Frequently they feel tired and stressed. Yet, they move on, with a strong sense of accomplishment, and renewed self-image. How teacher-learners view their COTE course experience, and what they plan to do with it varies widely. I present here four excerpts from teacher-learners and tutors:

*I'm looking forward to starting another stage in my preparation to be a professional, now I want to continue, I'm enjoying this process, I think I'm a little more mature than when I was a teenager, so sometimes I regret for what I chose to study before, but I also believe there is time, and I want to become old, take a quick look at my past and say: I did and accomplished what I wanted to, and all that I could. (TJ7-8)*

*...back from vacation. I really missed COTE. That's funny, but it's true. I've learnt so many things. This year is going so fast, I don't want to finish. I was thinking of studying something else; maybe the Diplomado [certificate course] or Licenciatura [BA program]...I got some new ideas in mind... (ShJ-79)*

*Some COTE participants have already realized that they need to continue developing; some have even joined BA programs. I would like to think that in the long run, the level of English would improve in general; by the time people finish their studies they will be able to get better jobs due to their ability to use English. (FGQ-4)*

*COTE gave me the opportunity to become an English teacher. It was the starting point of a career in teaching and the entrance to further studies and to open up and to expand my field of action as a professional. (FGQ-3)*

A common theme runs through the excerpts above; all of these individuals hunger for more - more education. The course was part of the process of life-long learning. One of the enduring goals of higher education is to instill a love of learning and a desire to continue learning, whether formal or informal. Beyond the above comment, the excerpts also show a drastic change of what is needed for the EFL teachers in Mexico. Besides wanting to learn more, these individuals also realize the need for higher degrees in the EFL profession and the possibilities that are available. A synopsis of the above data follows:

*Theme 13: Identity shaping appeared to take the name of an 'academic awakening', 'clicking' or an epiphany where some trainees made reference to feeling more like 'a real teacher' near course-end. These trainees seemed to be more confident as to who they were as teachers and individuals which might represent a holistic fluid co-constructed identity shaping. At course-end they also appeared to feel more professional and more committed to the EFL profession.*

### **Call for a Post COTE Course**

One of the last trainees I spoke to, after her final observation, expressed anxiety regarding a potential regression to a prior stage of professional development. She expressed herself this way:

*I am missing COTE already and I wish it were longer so that I will not lose practice or the academic connection that we have had during this last year. This connection keeps you going...keeps you energized but if we don't*

*have the COTE I am afraid I will loose my information or expertise. (informal conversation on Sept. 1, 2003)*

At this point, I mentioned our weekend BA program. Due to personal matters, she felt it was impossible. While the EFL profession in Mexico has improved tremendously in recent years, largely due to the COTE course, clearly, more needs to be done in light of the concerns expressed by the individual above. In other parts of the world, advanced training courses are common, perhaps even required. This is still not the case in Mexico.

### ***COTE Impact on Trainers***

Now that I have explored the journey of COTE teacher-learners during 2002-2003, I would like to look briefly at COTE tutors. Based upon Focus Group Questions and Discussion, I have discovered that this experience had a profound influence on individuals who held trainer positions (see Chapter 3).

Of four local tutors, two successfully passed the COTE course, and went on to master's programs, and eventually a doctoral program (see Chapter 3). I begin with these two trainers:

*I think that the COTE for me was like an eye opener because you've been doing this for many years and not everything that you've been doing is fine. You need to change lots of things... I think...it had a big, big impact on me. (FGD-4)*

*it's made me an English teacher to start with. For me it was the start of the whole thing that I am doing now... going from the COTE to the licenciatura (BA level) to the advanced diploma and etc. And for me definitely it was a door opener...the COTE is one of the most positive things we are now looking at for the trainee...it really makes*



*English teaching much more professional than it was and the fact that, it is recognized by SEP [Mexican Ministry of Education] and internationally. I was thinking more regionally because internationally English teaching is a respectable profession. It's just the situation in Mexico. (FGD-3)*

Both excerpts above use the words; 'open', 'door opener' and 'eye opener'. In the first excerpt, the COTE course forces this trainer to discover and question herself and then improve her teaching. In the second excerpt, the COTE course represented the beginning of her EFL education. She quickly advanced up the academic ladder.

Another trainer shows how she gained valuable experience from her trainer work in the following excerpt:

*huge impact on me personally...absolutely no training in this area when I started 12 years ago...undergraduate was in Business Administration...my incomplete master's studies gave me lots of theory, but very little practical experience...a trainer-in-training for a year, and then moved on to giving complete input sessions...learned a lot from self-reflection, research, reading, and teacher observations. From observing the best to the worst teachers, I have always been thinking about what goes on in my own classroom, and trying to constantly change and improve my own teaching. (FGD-2)*

In the excerpt above, this trainer reflects on her unfinished master's studies as too theoretical, not grounded in the real world. She slowly learns teaching methodology by trial-and-error. The interesting point here is that her observation experience ended up directly influencing her teaching style. She feels compelled to constantly improve her classroom presentation. Another trainer voices the influence of the course on her:

*teaching COTE courses here in Mexico for almost two years...extremely rewarding...motivating to work with teachers who are concerned about learning more and improving their practice...very rewarding to see the teachers working together and learning from each other, and growing as the course progresses...enjoy being involved in the COTE courses and feel that it is a learning process for me too. I learn from the teachers I work with...helps me keep up to date with developments in EFL. (FGD-1)*

In the excerpt above, this tutor describes how she became a better teacher due to her contact with students. This relates to the sociocultural perspective (see Chapter 2) where learning is constructed between trainers and trainees. The boundaries of learning are open to both the trainees and trainers. To summarize the above data, the following closes with the final theme:

*Theme 14: COTE also influenced the course tutors enhancing their professional development as teachers and trainers as well as promoting a sense of empathy with the teacher-learners. Two of five course tutors were former COTE graduates.*

## **Chapter Summary**

I began this chapter by looking at skills and values acquired during this course. COTE course participants showed marked improvements in four areas by course end, specifically: 1) Critical thinking; 2) Empathy; 3) Self-confidence; and 4) Supportive social environment. They also showed a desire to improve themselves and a strong sense of gratitude.

I examined identity shaping which was one of the central questions of my research. This topic needs more research attention. I went through extensive interpretation, and determined that some teacher-learners experienced an epiphany, probably based on a 'click-recognition-confirmation' model. I

also examined how some teacher-learners are slow to change, or resist change. Finally, I examined several COTE course closure issues, specifically how teacher-learners and tutors see their experience.

At this point, I include the complete list of themes that were found from the data for Chapters 5-7 in the following:

*Theme 1:* Language command often learned from out-of-country experiences in English speaking countries or formal language learning seemed to influence the teacher-learners in making career decisions and identity formation.

*Theme 2:* Families had an impact upon some teacher-learners in making decisions and identity formation.

*Theme 3:* Teacher socialization of EFL teachers in Mexico has often relied heavily upon the phenomenon of 'falling into' the job due to their command of English and not due to training or experience.

*Theme 4:* Most trainees identified strongly with the English language and often this command of language was a motivation for becoming an EFL teacher and for taking the course.

*Theme 5:* Motivation of most teacher-learners to take the COTE course included a need for an official credential, contact with the English language, and professional advancement for practical or personal reasons.

*Theme 6:* Due to unfair treatment of non-native speakers, two trainees were motivated to become EFL teachers in order to make a difference in relation to this social injustice.

*Theme 7:* A variety of emotions such as insecurity, frustration, gratitude, relief, anger, happiness, etc. were a part of teacher development and identity formation beginning with insecurity due to a fear of failure or limited EFL training and progressing to security by course-end.

*Theme 8:* Time management and stress seemed to be related to each other and perhaps caused problems at

school, in the course work, in the classroom and in the trainees' personal lives during the course. Most trainees appeared to balance time management and stress by course-end by using survival skills and/or strategies to overcome their problems.

*Theme 9:* Academic writing appeared to be the most difficult task for the majority of trainees in comparison to absorbing material and observation nerves. Trainees often struggled with the writing tasks, writing for a British audience, and cultural differences of writing and grades. Most trainees learned to overcome their observation nerves using survival skills to do so.

*Theme 10:* Power struggles that teacher-learners had with coordinators and their institutions were part of their teacher careers and caused added stress when taking the COTE.

*Theme 11:* A number of skills and values that were suggested to be gained at course-end included content knowledge, critical thinking skills (analytical and reflective), empathy for students, improved self-confidence, and gratitude. These skills and values also seem to represent holistic learning.

*Theme 12:* A supportive social environment consisting of social interaction and contact enhanced the learning process.

*Theme 13:* Identity shaping appeared to take the name of an 'academic awakening', 'clicking' or an epiphany where some trainees made reference to feeling more like 'a real teacher' near course-end. These trainees seemed to be more confident as to who they were as teachers and individuals which might represent a holistic fluid co-constructed identity shaping. At course-end they also appeared to feel more professional and more committed to the EFL profession.

*Theme 14:* COTE also influenced the course tutors, enhancing their professional development as teachers and

trainers as well as promoting a sense of empathy with the teacher-learners. Two of five course tutors were former COTE graduates.

From the abovementioned themes I will now provide a gloss of the words or phrases that are found in each theme to further explore any connections or similarities in the following:

*Theme 1:* language command, out-of-country experiences, formal language learning, career decisions, identity formation

*Theme 2:* family impact, decision, identity formation

*Theme 3:* teacher socialization, 'fall into' the job, language command

*Theme 4:* identification with language, career decisions

*Theme 5:* motivation, official credential, language contact, professional advancement

*Theme 6:* unfair treatment of non-native speakers, motivation, social justice

*Theme 7:* emotions, teacher development, identity formation, insecure to secure

*Theme 8:* time management, stress, personal and work problems, survival skills

*Theme 9:* academic problems, writing, absorbing material, observation nerves

*Theme 10:* power struggles, coordinators, institutions, added stress

*Theme 11:* skill and values gained, content knowledge, thinking skills, empathy, self-confidence, holistic learning

*Theme 12:* supportive social environment, social interaction, contact

*Theme 13:* identity shaping, 'academic awakening', 'clicking', 'a real teacher', stronger commitment, professional

*Theme 14:* tutors influenced by course, teacher development, former graduates

The above gloss of words helps the reader to see at a glance the topics that are found in the themes. Having provided the reader

with the themes from the data and the condensed glosses, I will now present the 14 themes in Table 8 (Chapter 4) as an alternative way of viewing the themes. This shows the relationships between the themes. These themes have been categorized into sub-headings and also cross-referenced in order to show how some themes are linked to more than one category. Having analyzed the themes for commonalities, an example is given to represent this cross-referencing. The word 'language' is noticed in the categories: out-of-country experiences, formal learning of English in a classroom setting, teachers who 'fell into' the job and gained entry into the profession because of their command of the language and finally the contact of English. All of these represent the trainees' motivation for career decisions and course entry found in the data of this study. The categorized themes of 'emotions and struggles' and 'identity formation' also shared similar themes, which represents a link between emotion and identity.

**Table 9 Cross-referencing and theme categorization of data**

SUB-HEADING	THEMES CATEGORIZED	THEME NUMBER
1	Trainee motivation for career decisions and course entry	Themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
	1) Language (out-of-country experiences, formal learning, 'fall into' the EFL job, English contact)	Themes 1, 3, 4, 5
	2) Family	Theme 2
	3) Official credential	Theme 5
	4) Professional advancement	Theme 5
	5) Social injustice of non-native speakers	Theme 6
2	Emotions and struggles	Themes 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
3	Course outcomes	Themes 8, 11, 12, 13, 14
4	Identity formation	Themes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13
5	Course impact on tutors	Theme 14

In Chapter 8 I shall refer back to each of the numbered themes that were found in Chapters 5-7.

### ***Research Summary***

The objective of Chapters 5-7 was to create a narrative of voices that explored the identity of COTE course participants. The following paragraph summarizes the content of each respective chapter.

Chapter 5 illustrated how teacher-learners entered the EFL profession, and their motivation for taking the COTE course. Chapter 6 examined personal and professional struggles faced by COTE course participants. Chapter 7 covered COTE course outcomes, and teacher-learner realizations.

Unfortunately, I have to report at course-end that seven of eighteen trainees did not finish their observations or essays successfully. They came to classes, paid for the course, and wrote the final exam paper. While the observations did not seem such a problem, the essays were the major problem as to why the trainees did not finish the course (informal conversations). As a COTE course administrator and tutor, it is always my hope and desire that all participants will finish successfully

Chapter 8 will bring to an end the 'story of stories' with a discussion of answers to the Research Questions from Chapter 1 based upon the data collected. I shall offer research findings of the journey of the 18 teacher-learners at the end of the COTE course year. I will also offer the implications for Mexico and for the wider context of L2 TEEd. As well, the limitations of this research will be discussed. I conclude this essay with suggestions of possible areas for future research in teacher education. The final aim of this research is to better understand the complexity of teachers' lives and teacher education by using the voices of the teacher-learners and others who have participated in the COTE course.





## CHAPTER 8

# CONCLUDING THE STORY:

## *Implications and Future Research*

*Alongside this recognition of the complexity of the teachers' task and the importance of the interplay between initiating and responsive acts in the classroom greater attention has been directed to teachers as human beings, as rounded social actors with their own problems and perspectives, making careers, struggling to achieve their ideals or just struggling to 'survive'... Researchers have begun to focus on the careers (subjective and objective) of teachers (Lortie, 1975; Woods, 1981; Lyons, 1981) and to examine more closely their motivations, experiences and strategies as workers in the education system. (Ball and Goodson, 1985, p. 8)*

The above quote makes use of words such as 'struggling to survive', 'motivations', 'careers', 'problems', and 'teachers as human beings' and 'rounded social actors'. These words portray the essence of identity formation and emotions within this research. The teacher-learners in this research carried out their roles of social actors within this story - my book.

The story that I set out to tell in Chapter 1 was a '*bricolage*' of stories - theirs and mine. As the narrator and interpreter I will now try to pull the threads together, by weaving them into the conclusions of this research. Chapter 8 is the *finale* of this 'story of stories'.

Chapters 5-7 presented the data collected from the eighteen teacher-learners and the course tutors as well as the analysis of the data. At the end of Chapter 7 I summarized the central themes which emerged from my analysis and presented a

conceptual framework of teacher development based upon the collected data (see Chapter 7). In this chapter these themes will be pieced together with the findings and implications. Before doing so, I will address the limitations of this research and then attempt to answer the Research Questions. After that, I shall offer my interpretation of the implications based upon the research findings and give suggestions for possible future research for Mexico and the world context of second language teacher education.

### **Limitations of Research**

I shall address the limitations of this research in order to fully and critically look at the research process. These limitations consist of: limited time, messiness of a vast amount of data to be analysed, my multiple roles of power within the course, and my predetermined idea of the course based on past experiences.

While researching teacher identity and emotion - layers of teacher education - a vast breadth of issues surfaced, such as teacher motivation, beliefs, thinking and attitudes. Due to limited time and space, it was difficult to explore these issues in-depth. I was working full time at the time of the study and I was the tutor, observer, administrator and Director of the Language School. The course clock followed its schedule and I could not spend the time I wanted to collect the data. The majority of the teacher-learners came from nearby cities, so their time was also restricted in Guanajuato. Limited time caused constraints during the research process.

Secondly, due to the vastness of data that was collected, I felt overwhelmed by this quantity. I read and gave written feedback to all of the Trainee Journal entries as well as reading the Shared Journal entries and my own journal. I conducted mid-course interviews with the trainees and the Focus Group Discussion with the local tutors. I created and received a number of questionnaires from the trainees and tutors. I also ob-

served the four tutors. This data collection process was chaotic and messy as I mentioned in Chapter 4. Focusing on this vastness and analysing it in an orderly fashion was a problem I had to deal with.

Thirdly, because I played an active role in this research, I found at times that this closeness, which created a unique interpretation of what I was researching, also created a limitation. On the positive side, my closeness made me delve into who I was in order to understand who the trainees were and their processes through the course. The roles of power that I held had to be checked and reflected upon, so as not to abuse them. I did not want the trainees to 'please me' in their journal entries because of my positions of power. All trainees wrote extensively and freely in the journals about themselves. Because of my roles, I question if they wrote positively in order to not cause any problems. Also, I did not want my roles to obscure my vision as a researcher. My multiple positions of power within this research created limitations as to how I could go about the process.

Lastly, I had given this course for many years and observed a good number of groups and seen what happened to them during the COTE process and at course-end. I knew the process well. I wondered if these years of working on the course had given me a preconceived idea about what this specific group was experiencing. I questioned if I already knew what was going to happen to the group that I was researching and if I would let the trainees' voices speak for themselves. My past experiences restricted and at times clouded my view as to how I saw this specific group.

Nevertheless, the information that was gathered from this study went beyond my expectations as to what I thought I knew about this course. As a tutor and administrator in previous courses, I had been more concerned with imparting the class and getting things done. While during this research, I was able to see more specifically what the teacher-learners were going through. In retrospect I viewed this course at a deeper level and this proved to be useful in understanding the complexities

of teacher education and teachers' lives. Later in this chapter, I shall offer suggestions for future research which are meant to overcome these shortcomings.

### **Revisiting Research Questions in Relation to Findings**

At this point, I would like to revisit the Research Questions from Chapter 1 in order to remind the reader of the basis of this research inquiry:

1. - What emotions and cognitive processes do teacher-learners go through during COTE?
2. - What problems and struggles do trainees encounter throughout the course?
3. - How does this teacher training impact the teachers' sense of identity?

As I attempt to offer answers to each of these questions, I shall present the findings based upon what the data revealed under each question. I will also make reference to the themes that were presented at the end of Chapter 7.

#### *1. – What emotions and cognitive processes do teacher-learners go through during COTE?*

The data revealed how some of the teacher-learners transformed themselves from beginning to course-end. I called this transformation an 'academic awakening' or a 'clicking' process (Chapter 7; *Theme 13*). This process was complex and varied from one teacher-learner to another.

Prior to this transformation, trainees were often offered jobs because of their command of English (Chapters 1, 2 and 5; *Theme 4*). Experiences with the English language differed for each inside and outside of Mexico – specifically the United States (Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5; *Theme 1*). The extended stays in the United States consisted of ESL courses, time in the public school system, or periods of work (see Chapter 3, Table

1). Trainees who acquired English in Mexico also made connections and identified strongly with the language in Mexico (Chapter 5; *Theme 1*). The data suggested that each teacher-learner constructed meaning from these experiences (Chapter 5; *Theme 1*). Trainees taught with whatever survival skills they had. Because of this, the data revealed that the trainees frequently voiced insecurity as teachers and individuals at course beginning (Chapter 6; *Theme 7*). For many this course was one of the first steps of professionalism as English teachers and I refer to them as ‘falling into’ the job (Chapters 1, 2 and 5; *Theme 3*). Even teachers who were qualified expressed professional insecurity. They worked in a profession where little was needed or offered and they made their best effort, relying on instincts or whatever experiences they had from their past.

During the year, they had the chance to share opinions and feelings with tutors and fellow trainees, creating a positive social environment (Chapter 7; *Theme 12*). The data in my research pointed to the importance of creating a cohesive group of people with whom the teacher-learners could talk to about their teaching and their lives. The sociocultural perspective is based upon learning as a ‘socially mediated activity’ (Johnson, 2006, p. 238). Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (1978, 1986) relates to the social ambiance created by the trainees (Chapters 6 and 7; *Theme 12*). The trainees felt comfortable to experiment and to explore the practical skills of their profession due to the social environment the trainees created (e.g. ObT-1-4). Microteaching, group work, academic discussion and presentations gave the trainees opportunities to put to use theory and practice of the course syllabus and COTE philosophy. They gained security through these activities and often voiced epiphanies or ‘academic awakening’ in their journal entries (Chapter 7; *Theme 13*).

At the end, some were granted the international certificate. If they did not pass, many would comment in informal conversations at course-end and at conferences that they felt they had gained security and professional knowledge. They did

not seem to regret or feel bitter because they had not passed. COTE trainees also had high expectations of wanting to do more professionally in the future (e.g. FGQ-3, 4; ShJ-79; TJ7-8). They acquired skills and techniques, and a social community of colleagues and self-realizations. But what happened to them once they returned to their own reality, where they may not have had this support? This is a question for further research.

2. - *What problems and struggles do trainees encounter during the course?*

In terms of the second research question, naturally, trainees encountered problems - personal and professional - during the course year. The findings demonstrated that the majority of trainees at course beginning voiced feelings of low self-confidence (Chapters 5 and 6; *Theme 7*). This feeling stemmed from a fear of failure of the course, which is common for individuals starting a course such as the COTE. According to the findings, the trainees constantly articulated opinions on lack of time, which in turn caused stress (Chapter 6; *Theme 8*). Time constraints caused other problems in their personal and professional lives. Yet, in the findings, most of the teacher-learners had learned how to manage stress and the lack of time by course-end (Chapter 6; *Theme 8*).

The data demonstrated that personal struggles pertained to: family problems, the births of babies, a miscarriage, a break up with a boyfriend, a woman as the sole breadwinner in the family, money problems, and health issues, to name a few (Chapter 6; *Theme 8*). These problems were grounded mostly in their families. While trainees had family problems, they also voiced the support and influence of their families (Chapters 5 and 6; *Theme 2*). Trainees also struggled with the course payment (e.g. FGD-2-4; FN; I-Davies; MJ-5, 9, 42; ShJ-49, 66; TJ5-7, 12-9, 10, 15-2). All of these struggles varied from one person to another. It was noted in the data in Chapter 6 that personal struggles were part of life and these struggles also affected the

teaching and learning processes. The personal and professional blurred together (Chapters 6 and 7; *Theme 8*). In Table 8 in Chapter 4, one can see how the two categories - 1) Emotions and struggles and 2) Identity formation - blur together in that the themes are shared in the cross-referencing process.

Data from Chapter 6 demonstrated that academic conflicts dealt with academic writing, lack of study habits, observation nerves, putting to practice course input, and digesting the content knowledge (*Theme 9*). These points will be referred back to later on in this chapter when I offer recommendations for practice. Emotionally, the trainees felt insecure and frustrated with the requirements of the academic writing based upon their limited experiences of academic writing and writing for a foreign audience - UCLES (Chapter 6; *Theme 9*). Even after the course had ended, trainees still mentioned academic writing as the most difficult aspect in Post COTE Interviews (e.g. PCI-6, 15, 16).

According to the course tutorials and journals, many trainees were studying the content knowledge of their profession for the first time. Some absorbed the information easily and others rejected it (Chapters 6 and 7; *Theme 9*). Tutors generalized that trainees with long years of teaching experiences often resisted making changes in their profession while trainees with fewer years were more open to change (e.g. Chapter 7). Although teacher-learners complained about observation nerves, they were worked out by course-end (Chapter 6; *Theme 9*).

Professional problems included power relationships between coordinators and co-workers and conflicts within the work place (Chapter 6; *Theme 10*). Some trainees did not have support from their administrators to take the course and another lost her job because she did not fit her institution's teacher identity. Minor problems included dealing with the multiple tasks that teachers normally have such as grading exams, grade calculations, extracurricular activities, and student conduct, to name a few.

In short, taking the COTE was a process that included dealing with problems that took their course and added

strain. Many found strategies or survival skills to help them with their problems (Chapters 6; *Theme 8*). In the end, all eighteen trainees finished the course work and observations, but seven did not pass because of the academic writing (informal conversations). Some of the abovementioned points will be taken up when I consider how we can improve our work as teacher educators.

### 3. - *How does this teacher training impact the teachers' sense of identity?*

In regard to the third research question, the journal data showed in particular how the trainees' identity transformed during the course. Emotions were linked repeatedly with identity (see Table 8, Chapter 7). According to the journal data, teacher-learners seemed to feel insecure at course beginning (Chapter 5; *Theme 7*), yet, highly motivated to take the course to become a more professional teacher (Chapter 5; *Theme 5*). They may have doubted themselves as to who they were as professionals and individuals. One confessed feelings of shame, because she did not have the necessary skills to teach with and she felt she was doing an injustice to her students (e.g. PCI-5). Others needed an official paper (e.g. FGD-4; TJ1-1, 3-1, 5-3).

As for the 'transformation of identity', most trainees grew to be more analytical as teachers and people, questioning their beliefs and practices (Chapter 7; *Themes 11 and 13*). Chapters 5-7 showed this transformation from insecurity to self-assurance at course-end (*Theme 7*). They seemed to have constructed meanings of who they were as more professional teachers.

The research showed that most trainees identified strongly with the English language (Chapter 5; *Themes 1 and 4*). Data taken from journal entries showed that English appeared to be a powerful motivation for them to take the course and a deciding factor for career choice (Chapter 5; *Themes 1 and 4*). The out-of-country experiences that they had had mostly in the United States seemed to be influential experiences - linguisti-



cally, educationally and culturally – and empowered them as to how the trainees saw themselves (*Theme 1*).

During the course, their English skills improved (e.g. FGD-2-4; PC1-15; ShJ-25, 72; TJ4-20, 7-6, 10-11; informal conversations) as well as the professional metalanguage or professional discourse. The majority knew how to use this language to navigate themselves through their profession and to better verbalize their past knowledge - what they had known as teachers prior to the COTE course but had found difficult to express (e.g. ObT-1-4). With this metalanguage many of the trainees generated new meanings of knowledge. They now spoke another language - one of their profession which in turn seemed to make them feel more secure and more of a member of the profession.

At course conclusion, the trainees mentioned they had a repertoire of current skills, techniques, and theory. This also affected how they saw themselves emotionally (Chapter 7; *Theme 11*). This would suggest that they felt they had the skills to legitimise their positions in their profession. More importantly than the gained content knowledge, the trainers gained self-assurance that directly affected how they viewed their individual identity and occupational identity (Chapter 7; *Themes 7, 11, and 13*).

Upon finishing, they began to feel that they were finally teachers. Repeatedly they referred to themselves as ‘real teachers’ at course-end in journal entries and informal conversations (Chapter 7; *Theme 13*; also see Prudencio Bilbao, 1995). This represents a change from how they saw themselves before the COTE - not real teachers - and then as qualified teachers. Before the COTE, there were few opportunities for education in the EFL area in the Mexican context (e.g. Chapter 2). I would also go as far as to say that their profession had failed to acknowledge or address their needs for many years, and only recently has this been done. During the course and by course-end, the trainees repeatedly voiced opinions of having gained more confidence as teachers and people (Chapter 7; *Theme 7*). They felt accomplishment and improvement as well as grati-

tude (Chapter 7; *Theme 7*). The discursive construction of the teacher-learners' identity varied from one person to another, yet the majority voiced the above emotions.

Their sense of identity was strongly associated to the EFL profession to which they felt a strong affiliation at course-end (Chapter 7). They became more active as professionals by attending and presenting at local, regional and national EFL conventions. In addition, they wanted to continue on with higher studies (FGQ-3, 4; ObT-1b; ShJ-79; TJ7-8, 9). This means they may have overcome the marginalized boundaries of the EFL terrain and rooted themselves more firmly in the EFL profession .

In short, their professional identities seemed to be constructed through the collective experiences, the knowledge they acquired and through the transitions they went through. Their identities appeared to be co-constructed with other course colleagues (Chapter 7: *Theme 13*). These trainees seemed also to have constructed meaning of their past identities related to their present and future identities - what they wanted to become.

In the above I have attempted to answer the three Research Questions that guided me during my inquiry of the evolving process of the eighteen teacher-learners in the COTE course. I have drawn upon the data that was collected for this research in order to best represent their lived experiences and emotions. From this point I will look at what significance this research has for L2 TEd based upon the data.

### **Implications of the Research**

Having attempted to answer the Research Questions using the data that was generated from the teacher-learners, I will now offer my interpretation of what these findings mean for teacher education. In doing so, I have grouped the implications of the findings under two headings: 1) Implications for Mexico; and 2) Wider implications for L2 TEd.

### *Implications for Mexico*

Because my research was carried out in Mexico, I shall offer my suggestions for the contexts of Mexico. Here I would like to make connections between the data and what this could imply for teacher educators or administrators. Even though the following implications are meant for the contexts of Mexico, they will be of interest to other teacher education contexts both similar and different to Mexico.

1. *The identity of EFL teachers in Mexico is constructed socially, historically, culturally and professionally.*

The complexities of how EFL teachers in Mexico see themselves is made up from how EFL teachers have 'fallen into' the job for many years with few opportunities for formal education in this area (*Theme 3*). Because of an increased demand for language learning due to NAFTA, the global economy, multiculturalism and the sociocultural politics between the United States and Mexico, as discussed in Chapter 3, the identity of the EFL teacher has evolved and changed.

In order for EFL teachers in Mexico to better understand their identities as teachers, I suggest a number of tools for teacher training such as journals, dialogue, classroom activities, and reflection. With such tools, teacher-learners can give voice to: 1) Who they are; 2) The emotions they bring to their teaching and learning; and 3) The sense they make of lived experiences, beliefs and attitudes to themselves as teachers and individuals. Using life stories and experiences of teachers from a variety of contexts will help trainees to see the evolution and struggles of other EFL teachers. Providing opportunities to articulate their thoughts and beliefs (Freeman, 1996) will be of use so that trainees can make sense of their identities and also the appropriation process of knowledge (Johnson, 2006; see Chapter 2). Based upon my research, these suggestions are good activities for teacher education. When planning and

designing training programs, time and space should be dedicated for reflection (Johnson, 2006). Again many of the previously mentioned tools such as journals, classroom discussion, role-plays, and problem solving activities can be used to promote reflection.

Based upon the sociocultural perspective, content knowledge is not the only part of what teacher education refers to. Creating environments where teachers may voice their beliefs, questions, or theories is essential in order that they may reflect on what they need. Often this means that the trainer needs to have attitudes and skills such as openness, cultural sensitivity, supportiveness, good listening skills, a capacity for critical thinking, and academic engagement, to name a few. I would suggest 'training the trainers' sessions where trainers come to understand the reflection process and what is needed of them in order to promote reflection within their classrooms. Putting to practice the abovementioned ideas would also help teachers to understand the identity of EFL teachers in Mexico, which in turn would promote their awareness of, and hopefully their position within the EFL profession.

*2. Because occupational induction in the Mexican EFL profession has relied heavily upon the command of English, standards for occupational entry should be set.*

For many years, a command of the English language has been the door opener for teachers when entering into the profession instead of occupational knowledge or pedagogical skills (e.g. MJ-10, 15; *Theme 3*). As I mentioned in Chapter 2, this is the case especially for native speakers who have had preferential treatment in securing jobs in the profession (Duff, 1987; Freeman, 2000; Williams, 1995) over non-native speakers. Some non-native speakers who had extended stays in the United States were offered job opportunities due to their good command of the language (*Theme 1*), yet both groups lacked the necessary professional knowledge. Initiating COTE was a

much-needed step in professionalism for EFL teachers in Mexico (e.g. Chapter 2) and more teachers were required to take the course. In retrospect, these actions allowed non-native speakers to gain more equal opportunities for occupational entry and invigorated the creation of Mexican educational degrees in TESOL, which are increasingly offered in Mexico.

From the above, I would suggest that standards for the EFL profession should be set for teachers to enter the EFL job force nationwide. Setting standards would require EFL teachers to continue developing as teachers. Based upon COTE's recognition by the Ministry of Education in 2000, COTE could be considered as a possible goal for job entry at a future date.

After analyzing the educational and social needs of current EFL teachers, a flexible scheme of support programs for teacher education would be needed so that EFL teachers could eventually take the COTE. This will be discussed as part of the next implication. I would also recommend that other viable options be opened to set this standard in Mexico so that teachers have a variety of options to choose from.

*3. Provide a more inclusive plan of teacher education for EFL teachers in Mexico.*

EFL teachers in Mexico have a strong desire to legitimize their position within their context and profession because their affiliation with the profession has been marginal. Many of the EFL teachers 'fell into' their jobs and did not have a document or a stamp of approval to show they were professional teachers, causing them to feel insecure as teachers (Chapters 5 and 6; MJ-10, 15, 21, *Theme 3*). They voiced in their journals or in informal conversation that they needed to obtain a paper that justified their position as a teacher or to get a better job (e.g. TJ1-1, 3-1, 5-3 and also FGD-4). The COTE 'paper' was heavily valued because it came from UCLES and because of its recognition by the Mexican Ministry of Education and the British Council of Mexico as I have mentioned in Chapter 2. In turn this repre-

sented a change towards a more legitimate profession. As well, the EFL teachers had little contact with professional EFL organizations. This suggests that EFL teachers in Mexico felt marginalized within their profession.

Programs such as the COTE provided a viable solution for EFL teachers in Mexico. They worked and studied at the same time with the hopes of obtaining an international paper. Yet, more is still needed.

As mentioned in the previous section, one implication is the need to set standards for occupation entry and now I would like to consider the implications for teacher education. I would like to recommend that a plan for teacher education be implemented for practicing EFL teachers as well as future teachers. This teacher education program would be implemented to systematically provide currently practicing EFL teachers with support to improve their command of the language as well as providing a sound basis of methodology where the teachers' context and belief systems are part of the program. Such a teacher education program would call for flexibility and life long education. This would allow the EFL teacher to study and work at the same time. Providing time and space for self-examination of personal knowledge and dialogue would be beneficial as well as networking for teachers (Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 2002; Johnson, 2006; Chapter 2). I would also suggest providing out-of-country experiences for teachers to improve their level of English. At the moment the Ministry of Education is in the process of analyzing and piloting a scheme of teacher education programs, which include possible exchange programs of Mexican EFL teachers to go to the United States in order to provide the teachers a variety of options for language development and teacher methodology (Aramayo Prudencio, June 19, 20, 2006).

While this scheme is in progress, I would also look at future EFL teachers. This means revising the EFL curriculum of the national teachers' colleges throughout Mexico. The majority of EFL teachers in the public school system graduate from

the teachers' colleges. Looking at this EFL curriculum and revising it in light of the actual context would also improve the quality of teachers in the future.

As a side issue related to teacher education, the trainers voiced how the COTE had been influential on them as EFL teachers, teacher trainers and individuals. Two of the five trainers were COTE graduates and this course prompted them down their road to teacher development (Chapter 7; *Theme 14*). Others remarked how the course gave them empathy for their learners and made them more reflective as teachers. This shows how COTE has influenced others and this also could be the story for other EFL teachers through Mexico.

#### *4. Analysis and revision of EFL curriculum for EFL students*

Based on the two previous implications for the context of Mexico, I would also add that for the future a more inclusive plan at all levels is required concerning teaching EFL in the Mexican public school system (Chapter 2). This comprehensive plan would map out an EFL curriculum beginning at the preschool level up to the university level. Each educational level would complement the other and provide a solid progression of learning instead of what Davies (2001) makes reference to as 'start all over again' and again (see Chapter 2). Doing so would allow EFL students to start learning English at an earlier age and hopefully provide more successful learning opportunities (Davies, 2001; Chapter 2). While some of these suggestions are in progress, such as the START program for primary schools in different states of Mexico, this action should be extended to the whole country in order to have a lasting effect (see Chapter 2). Endorsing a more comprehensive EFL curriculum in the public school system would also create a stronger position for EFL teachers and the EFL profession. Lastly I would suggest that the three implications be linked together in order to create a more cohesive change throughout Mexico.

### *Implications for the Wider Context of L2 TE*

The aim of this section is twofold. I shall present how I see the findings in relation to implications as principles for second language teacher education, and later I will consider some practical implications.

#### *Principles*

As I noted in Chapter 2, scholars such as Freeman (2001a; Freeman and Johnson, 1998), Johnson (1996, 2002, 2006) and Golombek (Johnson and Golombek, 2003) have argued the need to look at teacher education from a sociocultural perspective where knowledge is socially constructed within contexts and not solely a transmission of technical skills from the expert to the teacher-learner (Chapter 2). Teacher education has in general moved from a relatively positivistic view of technical knowledge transmitted to the teacher-learner from the authority, to a constructivist view that recognizes the knowledge teacher-learners bring with them to a course such as the COTE (Johnson, 2006).

Related to the sociocultural perspective, the data from the trainees linked their emotions (Chapters 5, 6 and 7; *Themes 3, 6-13*) with identity formation (Chapters 5, 6 and 7; *Themes 1, 2, 4, 13*) from course beginning to course-end. As well, the trainees voiced how they became EFL teachers (Chapter 5; *Themes 1-4, 6*) and their motivations for taking the COTE through the data (Chapter 5; *Themes 4-6*). Throughout the data the personal and professional aspects were intertwined to show how trainees felt and how they identified as teachers and individuals within a variety of sociocultural contexts (*Themes 1, 2, 4, 6-8, 10, 13*).

Before entering a course such as COTE, the teacher-learners' knowledge was based upon prior experiences relying heavily on instincts or survival skills. Once they were introduced to content knowledge from the course, they acquired and made



sense of it through language in social interaction and discussion. They took ownership of this knowledge and related it to their teaching practice, their prior experiences, their identity, and their emotions situated within their contexts. This acquired knowledge was adapted to meet their needs - of the context, teacher and student - or rejected. Without this ownership, this knowledge would be static - just knowledge of 'how-tos'. According to the data from both ShJ and TJ entries, the COTE provided the teacher-learners with knowledge that expanded their prior repertoire (e.g. ObT-1-4; ShJ-25, 26, 55, 72; TJ10-14, 12-11) and brought about a reshaping of their identities and emotions (Chapter 7; *Themes 11-13*).

In order to gain ownership of the knowledge, the teacher-learners needed to relate it to their identities: personal, professional and social. This process of owning the knowledge seemed to empower them as individuals and teachers and gave them more confidence (*Theme 13*). Professionally, they felt more secure and also felt a stronger sense of belongingness (e.g. FGQ-1-4; PCI-5; TJ5-6). In light of the sociocultural perspective, understanding teacher identity in this way allows us to see the core of the teacher, their emotions, how they see their positions as teachers, their professional struggles and stages. The trainees' identities appeared to be deeply rooted within their images of who they were and what they wanted to be as teachers (*Themes 11-13*).

Besides the abovementioned emotions, the teacher-learners experienced a variety of emotions from their personal and professional lives during the course year (Chapters 6 and 7; *Themes 7, 8*). The emotions taken from the generated data included frustration, stress, gratitude, fear of failure, satisfaction, tiredness and unhappiness, to name only a few. Teacher-learners seemed happy to be accepted into the internationally recognized program (e.g. TJ5-6) and relieved to finish the year course (e.g. MJ-21; PCI-15; ShJ-89, 98, 109; TJ12-12, 18-8). They appeared to be motivated to learn about their profession, yet anxious to be students again. They were nervous during practi-

cal observations (Chapter 6; *Theme 9*). Stress, annoyance, inadequacy and frustration were emotions felt in the process of academic writing (Chapter 6; *Theme 9*). They dealt with personal problems (Chapter 6; *Theme 8*), which in turn caused problems with time and stress (*Theme 8*) and affected their professional lives (e.g. Chapter 6). During the course, trainees found strategies to help them overcome their problems (*Theme 8*).

After waiting for more than a year and a half after course-end to receive their COTE certificates, the teacher-learners still experienced more emotions. They felt: grateful, pleased, competent, joy, and proud to have finished (Chapter 7; *Theme 7*). The boundaries of these emotions were distorted in that the emotions affected both their personal and professional lives (e.g. PCI-16; ShJ-26, 47, 57, 69, 82, 85, 91, 106; TJ4-5, 7-4 9-3, 9, 14-3).

Based upon the above data revealed, I concur with the sociocultural perspective, yet in the light of my research I would seek to stress even more the importance of identity and emotions within this view of teacher education. Because the sociocultural perspective deals with 'lived practices, not just accumulated information, and the processes of learning are negotiated with people' (Johnson, 2006, p. 237), understanding who the individuals are in their profession and in their personal lives may shed light upon the problems and future of teacher education. In the area of teacher education both identity and emotions are, relatively speaking, often overlooked and have only recently been addressed. Scholars (e.g. Duff and Uchida, 1997; Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton Pierce, 1995) have researched identity. And others (e.g. Day, 2004a; Nias, 1989, 1996; Zemblyas, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2005) have done work on the relationship between emotions and teaching. Interestingly enough, Zemblyas (2003d) links emotions, identity and teaching.

What these three - the sociocultural perspective, identity and emotions - have in common is the connection they have to each other as well as the dynamic processes that they take on. Reviewing the literature on the sociocultural perspective

and identity in Chapter 2, key words found are: construction, negotiation, prior experience, existing knowledge, social interaction, emerging, and process. Johnson and Golombek (2003) define teacher learning as:

*[emerging] from a process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers (Johnson and Golombek, 2002). (p. 730)*

In the above quote the phrase ‘a process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices’ is found and I would also add identity and emotions to this list. Identity and emotions are important concepts in the complex construct of teacher education, which is constantly evolving, moving, adapting and non-ending. This construct is an on-going transformational process, which allows teacher-learners to make sense of their identity, beliefs, lived experiences, learning and emotions through articulation and social interaction. This social interaction is a dialogue of the trainees making sense of the knowledge in relationship with their contexts (*Theme 12*). Within this dialogue the participants’ voices carry emotions (*Theme 7*). This process empowers teacher-learners to feel more secure as teachers and individuals by providing tools, space, and opportunities to articulate their identity and emotions (*Themes 7, 11-13*).

Teacher education is not solely concerned with teachers who can replicate techniques and skills only. Teacher education should be concerned with a variety of aspects and such aspects include how teachers may build their own professional knowledge based upon their individual realities of who they are and who they want to be. This refers to identity and emotions. Understanding who the teacher is and what emotions are brought to the teaching-learning process amplifies the sociocultural perspective of teacher education and certainly makes it even richer.

### ***Practical Implications***

Having discussed the implications for Mexico, I would now like to consider practical implications for the context of L2 TED:

1. *Imported programs need to take into consideration the trainees and their contexts by being sensitive to the contexts and by creating a 'sense of local ownership'.*

Trainees often viewed a foreign born course such as the COTE with awe because it came from a prestigious organization from Britain (also see Chapter 2 and Prudencio Bilbao, 1995). Yet, an imported program cannot solely survive on these superficial images and the COTE did not. Understanding the context of where the training course is being given is needed in order to go beyond the 'filling of the trainees' cup or mug of knowledge' (see Chapter 2). When implementing a teacher training course such as the COTE, the complexities of the contexts should be considered to ensure course success, the overall course planning, and the representation of the trainees' reality.

In order to address the local context and to represent the locality of this course, the use of local tutors could be implemented in future teacher education programs (Chapters 2 and 3; *Theme 14*) to promote a strong sense of ownership, or even authorship. This echoes Holliday's (1992) conclusions on the prevention or minimalization of 'tissue rejection' of ELT projects and as well as the promotion of innovative projects which are 'in the long term meaningful and acceptable to the host institution' (p. 403) or context sensitive. Johnson (2002) also emphasizes the need for taking into consideration the local needs of teacher education programs (p.1; see Chapter 2). Also the creation of a diverse group of local tutors - both non-native and native as well as multicultural - could be an option to be put into action throughout Mexico and other parts of the world. This would possibly create more context sensitive

courses in the future. This refers back to the data from the tutors (Chapter 7; *Theme 14*) concerning the impact the course had upon them.

This also means designing programs or schemes to train future trainers within the local context. Successful graduates from previous training programs who have natural training abilities or the desire to become tutors could be educated for these future programs.

In order to understand the trainees' context better, training programs could use strategies such as context visits or questionnaires about trainees' needs and/or context description prior to training programs. During a training course, trainees should be given time to make sense of the knowledge presented by exploring how this knowledge relates to their own context. Strategies to understand the trainees' context could include analysis of trainees' contexts, brainstorming activities, peer observations of trainees' work place, and journal writing on the trainees' contexts. Exploring topics concerned with cultural issues - the cultural differences of grades and writing standards for a British audience (see Chapter 6) - within an imported program would also be of use.

*2. Creating a social environment that responds to the needs of the teacher-learners in a teacher education program as well as providing opportunities to promote social interaction.*

There is a necessity for teacher education courses and for trainers to create an environment adequate for dialogue and reflection along with opportunities for collaboration within and outside the course (Pennington, 1995), or what Nias (1996) calls a 'mutually supportive social environment' (p.153). This environment should also create spaces for trainees to make sense of their teaching based upon the sociocultural perspective, and critically question their practices (*Theme 12*). Tools for reflection include trainee journals, shared journals, class discussions,

peer observations, and activities that promote dialogue and analysis. Furthermore, creating this environment should allow teacher-learners to share knowledge and experiences as well as to process new material from input sessions (see Chapter 2). This refers back to the problems that trainees encountered when absorbing new material (Chapter 6; *Theme 9*). The implication points to the necessity of providing scheduled time for reflection and processing. This supportive environment should act as a sounding board for ideas and create communities of professional people in and outside of the classroom. These implications are reminiscent of hooks' (1994, 2003) idea of holistic learning (see Chapter 2).

Specifically for teacher-learners whose contexts do not allow them time and space for dialogue and reflection, teacher training courses need to create these opportunities through teacher support groups or via e-mail or electronic discussion groups (see Chapter 2). Mentoring or on-going support systems could be implemented to further provide an ambiance enhancing social interaction after course-end through the use of e-mail or informal meetings, or professional organizations. This could be a task for the National Association of Mexican English Teachers (MEXTESOL) or each state Ministry of Education could provide networking or mentoring opportunities.

*3. Inclusion of the researcher's self within the research process opens ways of presenting a multi-perspective of voices.*

We can now turn to consider ways in which my research might suggest changes not only in teacher education, but also in researching teacher education. Historically the researcher did not include himself or herself within the research process in order to look objectively at those being researched. This previous perspective of distancing the researcher from those being researched was thought to be neutral and unbiased, not letting the researcher's values and ideology taint or cloud the

research process. Yet, from an ethnographic point of view the richness of including the researcher within the research process allows for a closer look at the lives, identity and emotions of those being researched (Chapter 3) as well as creating a sense of empathy. These issues are also at the forefront of feminist approaches.

I suggest that acknowledging the researcher's ideology in order to create an arena for more in-depth exploration of the research topic and more openness to the representation of voices would be valuable. This view also implies that reflexivity would be needed in the process to understand the ideology which the researcher brings to the research process. The inclusion of the researcher's self within the research process would also help the researcher to understand the commonalities or differences of those that are being researched. In future I suggest that teacher education programs - where action research, fieldwork or research-based projects are part of the curriculum - could usefully explore the researcher's identity and ideology in relation to the research theme, in greater depth if possible.

*4. Emotions and identity need to be more firmly placed within teacher education discourse and practice.*

The findings from the trainees were rich in emotions and 'emerging' identity formation in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. I argued above that these themes are fundamental to the understanding of the current teacher education discourse and I have drawn attention to the need to give identity and emotion more importance in teacher education. As mentioned above in Chapter 8, the data generated from this study showed how these two themes were part of the trainees' learning process and shed light on the complexities of what they went through during this course. As well, Table 8 in Chapter 7 shows how the cross-referenced themes of identity and emotion linked together.

Another implication is to provide opportunities to attend to these two themes within the curriculum of teacher education

programs, both in-service and pre-service. Possible strategies again include journal writing, use of narratives, mind-maps, in-class collaborative discussion, and activities dealing with teacher/trainee autobiographies, which may include time lines of trainees' lives, future professional and life goals, critical incidents, teacher images, teacher desires, and influential lived experiences related to the trainees' teaching careers. Reflection in writing and dialogue could be used to link these two themes to teacher development. I also suggest creating conscious awareness activities that tap into the trainees' beliefs, values, emotions and identity formation. Lastly I recommend providing an atmosphere conducive to social interaction where trainees will be able to solve problems, collaborate, share ideas, and voice themselves. These suggestions are meant to raise awareness of teacher identity and emotion.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Having explored the implication of this research for Mexico and then for the wider context for L2 TEd, I shall now turn to suggestions for future research and how they are linked to this research. Again I place the suggestions under the headings of: 1) Suggestions for the context of Mexico and 2) Suggestions for the wider world of second language teacher education.

#### ***Suggestions for the Context of Mexico***

Even though I offer suggestions for the context of Mexico, these suggestions may be of use for other contexts outside of Mexico.

1. *Defining the future of EFL teaching and teacher education programs for Mexico.*

COTE has been a beginning step for more professional EFL; yet, more venues of opportunities are essential. The re-



search shows that EFL teachers in Mexico have begun to claim ownership of the EFL profession. Taking on a more proactive role in their profession demonstrates their concern for it.

In other world contexts, teachers are required to have formal education in the area before they take a job in the EFL/ESL profession. What does this say about the EFL profession in Mexico? It is a profession that is still changing to meet the needs of the country. This course has become a benchmark which has legitimized the EFL profession and achieved its goal. Mexican BA programs have slowly cropped up and may eventually replace the COTE.

In this light, a suggested area of research could be what the future holds for a course such as COTE/ICELT in Mexico. Researching the phenomenon of EFL teachers 'falling into' the job requires more attention. Understanding this phenomena in relationship to training courses would be of interest for Mexico and other countries with the same problem

An attempt to better identify and understand the needs of EFL teachers in the diverse contexts of Mexico would shed light on what should be done at various levels of the public education system as mentioned in the section of the Implications for Mexico in this chapter. Future research in Mexico needs to be carried out to: 1) Raise the standards of EFL job entry, 2) Re-conceptualize teacher education for EFL teachers, and 3) Unify a national EFL curriculum from preschool to university. I recommend researching the above three topics together in order to find solutions that will complement each other and provide viable solutions for the future.

*2. What effect does this course have upon the teacher learners once they are finished and have returned to their contexts?*

This research looked at teacher-learners while they went through a course and immediately after they had finished the course. What happens to these teacher-learners once they

have settled back into their contexts? Do they maintain a strong sense of security or do they regress back to insecurity? What are their problems at this stage in their profession? What happens to the skills and techniques that they learned? Have any of the trainees gone on in their quest for more education? These are a few questions that could be researched in the future. While this study was concerned with in-service teacher-learners, inquiry of teachers at different career stages could be a point of exploration. These stages could be at initial entry into the profession, mid-career or career end. Duplicating Lamb's (1995) study of course effectiveness of a teacher training course in Indonesia one year after the course was given is another option for Mexico. Comparing other groups of COTE trainees in the same or different contexts is another possible area for analysis. To this I would add that future research on the teacher-learners who did not pass or finish the course would be valuable and of interest to trainers and course administrators, the Mexican Ministry of Education, and the British Council in Mexico.

### ***Suggestions for the Wider Context of L2 TEd***

Having presented the suggestions for the context of Mexico, I now broaden the suggestions for the context of L2 TEd.

1. *Strategies for creating a local sense of ownership of an imported course.*

This imported program was run by local tutors and observers which created a sense of local ownership. A further study of ways to promote local ownership and strategies to create a more context sensitive management of imported programs could help future programs to be more successful. A comparative analysis of an imported course versus one that is created within the context would also be worthwhile research for course designers and teacher educators.

*2. Contextualize teacher education - take into consideration the context for teacher training.*

The inclusion of the context is of vital importance in that it opens the door to an understanding of the teacher and the teaching/learning process. Considering the context has a direct link to the sociocultural perspective where teaching and learning are situated practices (Johnson, 2006). Understanding the context also sheds light upon the phenomenon of teachers who 'fall into' the job. Did the context of the EFL profession support or limit the teacher-learner in becoming more professional? Within Mexico, one context may be similar or different. Hayes (2004) makes reference to the importance of researching the context with the following quote:

*Examination of the context of training and its implementation and the perceptions of trainers and teachers is usually absent from the discussion. Perhaps this is unsurprising given that the context of the teacher-learning of English is itself something that has only recently begun to receive serious attention with TESOL as a whole (see, for example, Holliday, 1994; Coleman, 1996; Canagarajah, 1999). (p. 64)*

I suggest that exploring the context of a training program would provide possible insights as to what role it plays when implementing the program. How the demands of teacher-learners are met when planning a course and when giving the course are possible research areas for the future. Researching the local context before a training program is implemented would be of use. This could be used by trainers and course administrators.

*3. Environment for dialogue and reflection within teacher education (Chapter 7).*

Researching how individuals reflect professionally and within their personal lives could help us understand the processes of reflection. This information could then be put to use in training programs. Studying the advantages and problems of reflection for trainees such as the ones in this study, who had little formal training in the ELT area, would be of use to understand their needs and learning process. Discovering why trainees may be resistant to reflection is another area of research (see Chapter 2). Also can we expect all trainees to reflect at the same level? Lastly looking into strategies and ways of promoting reflection would be beneficial for teacher trainers.

*4. Academic writing needs to be more fully addressed and explored taking into consideration cultural aspects of an imported teacher education program (Chapter 6).*

Repeatedly a large majority of the trainees expressed frustrations concerning the academic writing during and after the course. The evidence concerning academic writing in this study showed an imperative need to understand how non-native speakers approach academic writing within their cultures and what their problems are. Both would be possible areas for research, and this information would aid teacher-learners to be more successful in academic writing and benefit course trainers as well. Also an exploration of the cultural boundaries of writing from both sides - the writer and the audience - is of interest for additional study. Providing strategies concerning writing would be instrumental for future training programs. Because of the trainees' constant mention of academic writing as the most difficult part of the course, research in this area would benefit future teacher-learners and help them be better prepared to deal with academic writing, which in turn would allow more to finish the course successfully. Furthermore, researching this topic would create more rewarding opportunities for the trainees writing within their profession after course-end.

*5. Critical pedagogy of teacher training concerning issues such as power, identity, emotions, politics, social problems, sexuality, gender, class, etc. (Chapters 6 and 7).*

For many years teacher research has been marginalized (Goodson, 1992, p.15). Ball and Goodson (1985, p. 6) refer to teachers as the 'shadowy figures on the educational landscape'. Hence, this type of study has direct relation to teachers who construct knowledge and are not passive receivers of knowledge. Applying the principles of critical pedagogy (Pennycook, 2001), the preceding issues could be approached to better meet the diverse needs of all trainees and students. Understanding power relations would help to empower those in marginal positions and overcome the power-based problems (see Chapter 6). Inquiry into power relations on both sides would be a possible research topic. Researching the above issues also provides agency to those involved, which in turn gives them control over their own learning and teaching. This questioning also gives voice and representation to individuals who are in marginal positions. This research would encompass the complexities of teacher education by involving more of the marginal.

*6. Further research on aspects of identity: formation and negotiation of identity in relationship to teacher stages, cultural identity, identity linked with emotions, the effect of ideology and identity on research, and the researcher's identity and position linked to those being researched within the research process (Chapters 5-7).*

More research on how teacher-learners reshape and negotiate their identity while in a teacher training program should be conducted more extensively. Given that this research was directed specifically at in-service teachers, identity formation of teachers at different career stages should be looked at. Are Huberman's (1992) career stages the same for those who 'fell

into' the job? Another topic for future research is to look at non-native speakers' identity (see Chapter 2). The research showed that many trainees had educational and lived experiences outside of Mexico in an English speaking country such as the United States. In turn these experiences gave the trainees a bicultural identity (Norton, 1997), which could be another topic of further research (see Chapter 2). Taking into account the social, economic, political and historical aspects of teacher identity also merits consideration for future research. Inquiry into teacher identity serves as an understanding of what teachers are and how they see the teaching/learning process. This understanding will provide insights and answers for future teacher education programs.

Another possible area for more study is how the researcher's position and ideology connect with those who are being researched. The role of the researcher's identity and beliefs should be expanded, and the effect they have upon those who are being researched and the research process could be looked at.

### *7. Emotions as part of teacher education (Chapters 5-7).*

Casting more light on emotions in research would broaden the outlook of teacher education. Relating the two concepts of emotions and identity to the in-service and pre-service training would help trainers to comprehend how teacher-learners go about making sense of new knowledge. Looking more closely at emotions within the process of teacher training broadens the knowledge of who teachers are as well as clarifying the teaching and learning process. Emotions have not held a large role in the mainstream literature of teacher education and I suggest they warrant more attention and further research in order to respond to the complexities of teacher education (see Day, 2004a).

Teaching and emotions are intimately connected. My data showed how teacher-learners voiced their emotions when talking about their teaching. Understanding more in-depth how

teacher emotions are voiced and what this brings to teaching and learning is of interest for future study of teacher education. Analysis of teacher emotion would also shed light upon the teachers' lives as well as their professional stages.

Understanding and taking into consideration identity and emotion will serve as snapshots of the realities of EFL teachers. This in turn is valuable when planning and designing programs and teacher training sessions. Studying these two themes enables us to see how teachers think, believe, feel and identify as teachers, learners and individuals.

Having offered suggestions for future research, both for Mexico and the wider context, based on the findings, the story is now coming to an end.

## **Conclusions**

The objective of Chapter 8 is to bring to a conclusion my findings from this research. Firstly, the implications considered above are meant to be applied to training programs throughout Mexico and possibly the world. Secondly, while specifically looking at EFL training, this research is also relevant to other areas of training in education. I have argued the importance of looking beyond the contents of teacher education programs and to take on a sociocultural perspective and to examine the teachers' emotions and teacher identity more in-depth. Including both of these themes within the sociocultural perspective provides a more ample view of the teaching learning process. Emotions and identity are linked to the cognitive processes of teacher learning (see Verity, 2000, p. 181). Even though this study is situated in the context of Mexico, and specifically central Mexico, the implications have links to other world contexts. What happens in Mexico may as well be the case for other contexts and areas.

This research is, I suggest, of interest and benefit for teachers, trainers, course designers, directors and administrators in the EFL/ESL profession and education.

In Chapter 1, I began this book by explaining how I was the storyteller of many stories. I listened to individual stories, but more importantly I heard a collective voice that said: ‘We never knew we were teachers’ or ‘We are real teachers now’. Their learning included the skills and techniques that helped the trainees survive the day-to-day teaching, but above all learning had extended beyond the technical knowledge to include identity and emotions. So the collective story I present is connected to a wider story of teachers: the story of EFL teachers in Mexico and perhaps of EFL or ESL teachers throughout the world. West (2001) makes reference to ‘the good story’ in research having such connections:

*The good story, and valid research, is a product of making connections across disparate, often disconnected parts of a life, and seeing this with new eyes, and from diverse perspectives and creating more of a whole in the process. Such ‘wholes’ can speak to others in similar conditions, and may empower them to reenvision their experience too in more diverse and challenging ways. That, in essence, is the purpose of the study, and the basis of its claim to validity. (p. 40)*

Hopefully this story of stories that was ‘pieced together’ as *bricolage* speaks to other EFL/ESL teachers. The multifaceted nature of this study represents my research struggles with how to write about these experiences and express my own identity and those of the teacher-learners. The methodology I used was a narrative ‘pieced together’ of multiple voices. It was not until research-end did I truly understand what I was trying to express. My writing unfolded, developed and opened up to tell a story that finally made sense of the many voices I heard in the journals, interviews and discussion group.



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# Appendices





## APPENDIX 1

### Autobiography: Martha's Herstory

This selection outlines how I became an EFL teacher, my educational journey, and my professional involvements, particularly in regards to the COTE course. This material has been included in this research, as a backdrop of support for presenting and interpreting the voices of teacher-learners. Including my autobiography shows my positions and how I make sense of the teacher-learners' experiences. Parts of my life journey resonate with those of the teacher-learners. This relationship allows me to empathize with them and the processes they went through during the COTE year.

I originally grew up in a small rural community, located in Iowa - on the Midwestern agricultural plains of the United States. My parents were farmers, as were their parents. Despite rural seclusion, my mother was determined that her children would experience international cultures and languages.

In the late 1950s, my parents invited a visiting Mexican priest - studying for his MA in Sociology at a nearby land grant university - to their home for Sunday dinner. With the passage of time, he began to call regularly. The visits turned more frequent and cordial. Out of this developed a long-term friendship with his family in Guanajuato. Subsequently, his sister came to Iowa to live for several years. Later, seven nieces, nephews, and cousins came one-by-one for a year, to live with my family, and to study in public schools. Eventually this family came to be considered as an extension of my own. By the time I had finished high school, I had visited Mexico several times on short family vacations and lived two summers in Mexico with my extended family. In addition I spent a summer in Soria, Spain studying Spanish.

Throughout my high school years, and continuing into my undergraduate studies, I studied Spanish formally. In high school, I was one of a handful of students taking Spanish as a foreign language. As an undergraduate student, I took Spanish classes. I found them easy at the lower levels, due to my previous language exposure. Eventually they became more difficult. The Audiolingual Method, based on repetition and substitution drills, represented the favored approach at that time. Reflecting on myself as a language learner, I absorbed some Spanish, but I would say I was not a successful learner. I did not enjoy the learning experience, and found it stressful.

After high school graduation, I began an art education degree program at a nearby large state university. At that time, I had considered an international studies major, yet no such programs were offered by universities in the State of Iowa. During my studies, I attended the necessary education classes in theory and methodology. Specific instruction included: art production techniques, art history, art education, and general humanities. The program required practice teaching experience at several possible levels - preschool, middle high, high school, or extra curricular. I worked for a semester as a student teacher in a rural community school. By the end of four years, I was granted a degree in art education. I felt that I was an art teacher, and I was.

My first job was teaching art, in a K-12 (kindergarten through high school twelfth grade) public rural school. I gained valuable experience during my two years there. I present the sketch to demonstrate how one becomes a teacher in the American public education system. Certainly, this will contrast with how one enters the field in the Mexican public system.

### **Change of Profession and Country: 'Falling into' the Job**

In 1980, I headed south, seeking a change in my life. My extended family played a pivotal role in my choice of Mexico,

specifically Guanajuato. Within a month, I received a job as an English teacher, at the Language Center of the University of Guanajuato. Within a year, I was offered tenure, when another teacher left suddenly. In short, I was at the right place at the right moment.

Certainly, this contrasted with my native educational upbringing. As an American, I had been led to believe that to become a teacher you needed an undergraduate degree in education, within your discipline, along with supervised teaching experience. In Mexico, if you spoke English, you could become a teacher (Freeman, 1989, p. 27; Freeman and Johnson, 1998), and if you were a non-native speaker, with basic English competency, you could give classes. No questions arose as to credentials, teaching experience, or background. The only qualification was to speak the language. Certainly, this represents an example of 'native-speakerhood' serving as entry into the profession (see Chapter 2).

As I began to conduct classes, my contemporaries frequently remarked: 'you really are a teacher'. I attributed this to my art education background. One day, the Director of the Language Center took me aside, 'You are the first true teacher that we have had'. I was bewildered. In honest retrospect, English represented my mother tongue, but I did not really consider myself an English teacher. Lost and insecure, I frequently wondered why I was in a foreign country teaching English. A good rhetorical question follows; if I felt this way, why did I stay?

As a novice teacher, I found Mexican students easier to please and handle than the American high school art students who often had disciplinary problems. The new culture I was immersed in seemed more receptive to my teaching. Students were involved, willing, and interested in my classes. My teaching had an effect and received a response. That I might have something to offer my students was gratifying to me as a young teacher.

While I experienced doubts about techniques and methodology, my professional relationship with students remained

rewarding. Compared to my previous existence in rural communities, living in a foreign country was exciting. I took pleasure in being a foreigner in the new culture that surrounded me.

During the first two years of living in Mexico, my Spanish language competency improved dramatically. I represented an example of integrative motivation. I met my future husband, a Mexican architect and restorer of old buildings, during my first year. I was determined to become part of Mexican life.

My Spanish proficiency continued to improve through the mid 1980s until - upon the births of my two older children - I began to speak more English. I wanted to raise them as bilingual children, and today they are. My direct-immersion Spanish learning experiences proved much more enjoyable than my earlier formal classes. By this time, I was an English teacher, and could relate my own personal language learning to my classroom teaching experiences. I recognized a definite need to learn and use Spanish.

### **Beginning EFL Teacher**

I began teaching English at the Language Center, soon after its initial inception and organization. As an entry-level teacher, I taught a wide range of English classes. Soon I was offering workshops for Language Center teachers, and schools within the State of Guanajuato. Eventually I went on to local and national conferences.

Working as a teacher-trainer gave me satisfaction. Yet, like many untrained individuals, who 'fell into' the job, my approach was intuitive or instinctual. I knew what I was doing, but I did not know why. In time, I accepted the responsibility of coordinating beginning and intermediate level classes for eight years. One thing led to another.

And now, at the writing of this essay, I am a trained EFL professional, former Director of the Language School, and hold

the unique position as its most-senior, long-term member. How I arrived at this position requires some backtracking. In 1993, I received a scholarship to study for a Master's in TESOL at West Virginia University in the United States. The Mexican government funded the scholarship, as part of the Teacher Development Program (Programa de Superación Académica) at the University of Guanajuato. After years of classroom teaching, I formally entered the EFL profession. During my MA studies at West Virginia University, I taught classes in ESL (English as a Second Language) and Spanish.

Now in retrospect, I am certain many EFL teachers in Mexico could relate a similar story. Until the early 1990s, Mexico offered few EFL training or educational opportunities (Davies, 2001). There was no linear progression of actions to qualify an individual as a teacher. Very few four-year degree programs in a specific language-based content area existed, and neither did student teaching, or apprenticeship.

### **Swaying between Cultures**

In this section I shall describe one of my lived experiences dealing with cross-cultural issues. I include this experience because it helped me to empathize with teacher-learners' identity struggles, especially those who are non-native speakers learning English.

I began the Master's program in TESOL at West Virginia University on a high note. Yet, studying in my home country, after living in Mexico, was truly an eye opener. Initially, I went through culture shock in my own native country. I kept asking myself; why are you in 'this country'?, and who are 'these Americans'? I realized I was caught between two different cultures; and after fifteen years of living abroad, Mexico was more comfortable for me. My cultural identity was being questioned by my own self.

Grearson and Smith (1995) use the term 'swaying', when referring to people caught in intercultural relationships:

*a blending between different realities, different worlds, movement that is graceful but suggests uncertainty, insecurity, even trouble...the kind of multiple movement that the renegotiation of boundaries requires-- both swaying and being swayed, the ability to be flexible while remaining rooted in our own cultural identities. (p. xv)*

From a personal perspective, I have encountered 'swaying' many times in my life. The term reminds me of cultural blurring. A common misconception is that this represents a decay of cultures. I would say it is more a richly complex blending. Borders of the conflicting cultures are not clearly distinguishable. Thus, aspects of cultures can be taken on or adapted, according to one's personality or identity. So 'swaying between cultures' ultimately influences one's sense of identity.

Interestingly enough, many COTE course trainees have had previous experiences in the United States. This may, in effect, influence how they constructed their identities as teachers and individuals. Perhaps they too have experienced this same feeling of being between two cultures.

### **Martha as COTE Teacher Trainer**

My experiences at West Virginia University proved academically fulfilling. I enjoyed taking-on the role of student in my thirties, discovering the theory behind the teaching I had done for so many years. Formal classes helped me grow more focused as an educator and more confident as a professional.

Upon my return to Mexico, I was trained as a COTE tutor by a British Council (Mexico) COTE trainer. Whenever I conducted a course with teacher-learners, I enquired why they were participating. Surprisingly enough, their answers reflected my own story. Specific narratives varied among individuals. Most trainees admitted they had never been trained formally as English teachers, because there were few opportunities in the State of Guanajuato, or Mexico, for EFL training.

## Foreigner within an Imported Course

From my first involvement with the COTE course, I could not shake a haunting feeling; one that I call triple alienation. Initially, I was excited to participate in the COTE course for teachers. I was even somewhat in awe of the British culture and support organizations, specifically the British Council and UCLES. As my role grew more active, at times I felt peripheral due to my nationality. I was an American; a foreigner in Mexico, and simultaneously, a foreigner within a British teacher training course imported to Mexico.

As a side question, I frequently wondered why the United States did not take a stronger position in Mexican teacher training (MJ-45). My native country bordered Mexico; so to me, the strong British influence in Mexico seemed odd. Being practical, I decided to associate myself professionally with the British, due to increased language-based job opportunities in Mexico, than in my native country.

Certainly now, years later, I feel more at ease working in this imported British course (MJ-48). My responsibilities and stature have grown. I also served, as tutor and observer, for another British EFL training program - 'Certificate in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages' - offered by Trinity College, London.

In my personal sphere, native residents of the City of Guanajuato accept me as their own or as adopted. I am bilingual, married to a Mexican, with three sons born in Mexico. I have worked twenty-seven years at the Language School, at the University of Guanajuato. Interestingly enough, Mexico represents my adopted home. Whenever I return to the United States, I am the 'foreigner'.

Said (1999) has offered interesting academic comments regarding individuals in absentia:

*Identity - who we are, where we come from, what we are - is difficult to maintain in exile... we are the 'other', an*

## APPENDICES

*opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement, an exodus. Silence and discretion veil the hurt, slow the body searches, soothe the sting of loss. (pp. 16-17)*

I disagree with the correlation that the 'other' represents the 'opposite'; for me, the 'other' imaginary boundaries have been expanded. At this time, I am an American doing research in Mexico, for doctoral studies in the Britain. These three contexts have created boundaries as well as opportunities. This is my evolving story.



## APPENDIX 2

### Interview of the Assistant ELT Director of the British Council in Mexico

(8:30 a.m. April 16, 2002, British Council in Mexico City)

#### **Topics for discussion/interview**

COTE for Mexico

Impact on EFL profession

History of COTE in Mexico

Why started

Documents and who

Impressions and experiences

**NOTE:** BC refers to Anamaria Aramayo, Assistant ELT Director of the British Council in Mexico.

Martha: It's going. It is...OK. Great...one, two, three. How's your re...research going?

BC: Oh, well, I felt better yesterday, when I, especially when I had the tutorial with Adrian. I thought I had told you that I was stuck with the proposal really and I, oh my Lord, but I...I had done a few things, sometimes you do things and think is this right or not? I need somebody to tell me whether I'm going crazy or not.

Martha: ...and Adrian said it was fine so far?

BC: Well, I have a few deadlines to comply with.

Martha: Okay, well um I'll tell you what my uh topic's about. It's umm about change of attitudes with trainees and an in-service program which is COTE in central Mexico and umm, first of all thank you for letting me do this I know...

BC: It's no problem. It's a pleasure... if I can be of help.

Martha: Umm so, and this is I do this all the time...this is for my Ph.D. so it's all confidential. Uhm, what I'd like to ask you is...a...little bit of the history...I guess where and where, when and why were the first COTEs offered in Mexico?

BC: OK, the first COTE ever was a joint course between the Anglo and the British Council; it was a private course where we had people from private universities, from public universities, from schools in Mexico in 1991. We offered it to the Ministry [Ministry of Education in Mexico] because they requested a course of that nature and those were the times when there were lots of people teaching English, people who knew English but did not know how to teach so they lacked the training [partially inaudible]...the Ministry wanted to have a sort of link between...so we piloted there and then the COTE and then with the blessing of the Ministry of Education...we um... we came back with six different venues all over Mexico, to see if it would work. I can't remember the exact places, north, south, east, all over, there were six. That was in 1992. We started to launch 12 with three in north. No four in the north, four in the south and three in the center and then the Ministry said in 93, between 93 and 94, they said that they wanted every single university wanted COTE classes going all over the state, all throughout the republic and there were a couple of industries.

Martha: OK, why was the COTE offered? What were the main reasons?

BC: The main thing what I had explained to you that the Ministry wanted university teachers to be qualified in teaching English. Up to that point what many universities had were people that spoke English, and had a BA, some qualification in another area but not in ELT. So although there were programs to train

teachers at the BA or MA levels, there was a need to train. And the COTE seemed to suit that need.

Martha: And what was the initial impact of the COTE?

BC: I did my MA dissertation on the impact of the first COTE course...the impact of the first COTE course ever and I worked with six of the twelve candidates we had at that time training and followed them and saw what happened four years after the course had finished and from that, which was a small sample if you want, I got my results that there were four teachers who could be called COTE teachers. Due to institution reasons, they could not put people in pairs. Or they had just a reading program, not a four skills and things like that. So that was one thing I did that and then the SEP [Secretaría de Educación Pública - Ministry of Education in Mexico] also did an initial intern research on COTE on the first 35 COTE courses and were there changes and they also felt the teachers' need to become more qualified and I think that was the main impact that the COTE had and has had...

Martha: So the SEP has something out there, about the results? Do you know?

BC: Victor Machuca is the person who did that. You might find him on the Internet? OK, Victor Machuca, OK.

Martha: And so that's interesting about your master's.

BC: I can, I could give you a copy if you wanted.

Martha: Sure, I think, I think it would be great. There is something there about the history.

BC: I haven't got it here and...

Martha: I'll send you a note though, by email.

BC: Do so, and I will send it on email, or diskette, or send you a copy.

Martha: I really appreciate it. Great. Now through the years, we looked at what the initial impact was, through the years what do you think the impact has been?

BC: It's difficult to tell about the personal impact COTE has had on people but at least my feeling is that it has had a national impact on becoming a profession and the authorities recognize that. There are many institutions in Mexico now that do or have made the COTE a minimum requirement for their teachers and in that sense it has made an impact in knowing what kind of person you're getting so I think that so far that's what has been done. I'm glad to hear you're doing this kind of work because there is a big need to know exactly, to have an idea what has happened and as I said before I also think that individually teachers do feel that they become more of a professional and they need more training such as COTE.

Martha: What do you think will happen in the future about the COTE...in the future?

BC: Look that depends...that's an interesting question. I thought that for example the agreement with the Ministry of Education, in one of the agreements that came to an end in 2000, came to an end, the agreements...I thought it would be very difficult to get another one or I thought that there was not going to be interest in doing work with it as universities we took the next two courses that are going to end in the next three years.

Martha: How many?

BC: 32. It's difficult to really tell what's going to happen. When I really thought it was coming to an end, we've done what we had to do and that's it...perhaps what will happen now is that

universities will start their own team, they will become you know like you, yourself. You became a full tutor and COTEs will be run by universities but that there is this need to train teachers I think there still is.

Martha: Now remember the estimate that I had yesterday about 20 hundred people, no 35...3,500 people?

BC: We have, our figures up to last year, was we had, in our records we had more than 3,500 teachers up to the beginning of last year. But last year we I haven't done the statistics so I could easily say that at least 5,000 teachers have been trained through the British Council course. There are other courses. A few other institutions have offered the course.

Martha: 5,000 teachers, which is something.

BC: Very significant. I think so this is a very big country, but nevertheless I think about that number of teachers at university level, when you're talking about a solid number and that means in terms of at least having a uniform level of education for teachers, a minimal level for teacher. It is something.

Martha: Have there been any changes of the COTE?

BC: Not so far, but they are forthcoming. I went to a meeting last...um...month in Cambridge in fact and well, I don't want it to change because I don't know what that would mean in terms of the recognition we got from the SEP from...

Martha: or all the work you have done to get that.

BC: Yeah to get that...and there are some changes, which I think they will be good. I mean there is a change of the COTE course itself, for example they will make the language component a module so people can take, for example, the language

component alone and get a certificate for which will count. So they are becoming more flexible in that sense, which is good... but they're not implemented as yet...they're being piloted.

Martha: Uh, are there any questions you would like to ask me about what I am doing?

BC: Yeah, how many, how many courses are you looking at or are you just looking at a general one?

Martha: Just Guanajuato, I decided to do a very small one and I thought it would be the best for the University of Guanajuato. I also thought there was something a little bit different about the University of Guanajuato how we did it. I think Patricia Begne when she started it was looking ahead and I thought that was different than...

BC: In what sense?

Martha: That she saw we needed to do it every year. And that they had me trained instead of having someone, err depend on someone coming outside. We still have someone come from outside.

BC: But that was good, wasn't it?

Martha: And so I thought that was interesting and that we would do it every year...we still depend on having, coming from outside

BC: And that's what I feel that they need to be dependable and have to have the training from one year to the next...there are people in the universities...[Inaudible]

Martha: I think the other reason I did it was because I saw it made such a strong impact on the State of Guanajuato and at

that time I didn't realize what it would mean for the future but everyone from the State of Guanajuato comes to the University of Guanajuato right and so umm that's why I thought it would be interesting to look at our context.

BC: Sure, sure, sure. [Inaudible] And how are you in terms of your...how's the first year?

Martha: ...umm first year...so now when we finish I'm gonna start writing, hopefully I never knew I had all the data [laughter] in my journal [laughter] isn't that interesting and I'm getting data right here [laughter], so I feel better like you said. I just have to...I either get up earlier or set a time late at night where I can do some writing on the computer, uh but it's helped to have someone like Adrian come here.

BC: Yeah.

Martha: We have like our MA...which we're doing with, yes, so that's helped that we have contact with them uh, but it's been very good to have Adrian here.

BC: Yeah, it's been great. I had an afternoon tutorial yesterday [inaudible]. In fact I found some things that I wanted to include [inaudible].

Martha: I mean like the journals. I had no idea that there was so much there. I thought it was good, but I felt a little bit embarrassed about showing my writing to someone, to everyone.

BC: That's right, you were very courageous.

Martha: He said that I should do it [laughter].

BC: But there you are, there you are.

APPENDICES

Martha: And so I felt better and I said, well this could be used [coughing], I would like that...[Inaudible] OK, I think this is it and then what I'll do is I'll analysis this and then we'll do it by email.

BC: Fine. You just ask me whatever and with pleasure Martha I'll help you.

Martha: OK, stop, there...



## APPENDIX 3

### Interview of Paul Davies, founding COTE trainer in Mexico

(Via email, November 5, 2002)

**At 23:25 05/11/02, you wrote:**

Here are my preliminary responses, Martha. Just ask if you want clarification or more detail. All the best. Paul

1. Describe your role in relationship with the COTE program and teacher training in Mexico.

I was among the first British Council COTE instructors, giving the first generation (1992-3) courses at the UABC Mexicali, the UV Xalapa, the UA Puebla, the UAEH Pachuca and the UAEG Chilpancingo. I had previously given one of the early COTE courses in Mexico (1990-91) at the Instituto AngloMexicano, Puebla. My teacher training course experience began in 1971 at the IAM in Mexico City, I was head of teacher training there in 1973-5, and have regularly been involved in teacher training ever since.

2. What were your impressions of the first COTE courses given in Mexico?

The IAM Puebla COTE course was a learning experience, working with an assistant trainer, and navigating our way through all the guidelines and paperwork. That, along with BC COTE meetings, provided a good basis for the first BC COTEs, which were run by single instructors (because assistants weren't available in most universities at that time, because of the cost of travel, etc. - and also because Cambridge didn't insist on assistant instructors, double-marking, etc. as they do now). The basic design, with integrated theory and practice, seemed good from the start,

and also the way that new trends were quickly incorporated into the programme (via assignment questions, etc.). At the same time, I was local tutor and a teacher on one of the British BAs for university teachers (TVU), and some of the teachers doing the BA chose to also do the COTEs I was running at their universities (Puebla, Tlaxcala, Hidalgo and Guerrero); they found the integration of theory and practice, and the strong classroom teaching element very useful, and the COTE actually helped them understand the more theoretical BA better. What's more, two of the COTE Joint Chief Moderators (Anne Frankel and Alex Teasdale) were TVU teachers, so I discussed COTE with them, especially Anne, who visited two of my courses. I could see the congruence between the BA and COTE, with the latter obviously more practical and with slightly simplified theory, but also taking a research-like, reflective approach. The double moderation system was also good, forcing everyone to be evaluated, local moderators and instructors as well as trainees.

3. What are your impressions now?

Much the same - good integration of theory and practice, with regular up-dating, flexible enough to response to most trainees' real needs, and fairly reliable because of the moderation system. One problem, however, maybe that, while the standardizing bureaucracy has grown round the COTE system (obligatory assistant instructors, double-marking, tutorials, moderation, extensive paperwork, etc.), the financing of all this has not grown and COTEs require capable and conscientious instructor-administrators who are prepared to put in considerably more time and work than they are adequately paid for, or alternatively, very high fees for trainees (or costs for institutions). COTEs stretch the cost-quality relationship: the full quality desired by Cambridge costs too much for most instructors, teachers and institutions, at least in countries like Mexico today.

4. What impact do you think the COTE has had on the ELT profession in Mexico?

Significant, but largely limited to certain institutions - universities and other teaching centres where a body of COTE graduates has been built up. Where individual graduates have gone back to teaching among non-COTE teachers, and especially among untrained or poorly trained teachers, most of them have slipped back into “survival teaching”. However, I believe there are well over 3,000 graduates of the BC COTEs alone, and many of these work with other COTE graduates. For example, many university CELEs have improved enormously over the past 10 years, and COTE graduates have contributed a lot to that improvement, I believe.

5. What impact do you think the COTE has had on individual teachers?

Usually a lot initially, but as I say above, that may often wear off quite fast if they do not have colleagues to maintain their ongoing development, and particularly colleagues that are themselves COTE graduates or similar.

6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the COTE?

I think I've mentioned the main strengths above (good integration of theory and practice, regular up-dating, flexible response to most trainees' real needs, fairly reliable because of the moderation system). One weakness I've suggested is the space between desired quality and high cost (which trainees or institutions have to bridge from their pockets, or course instructors from their lives and souls). Another strength AND weakness might relate to global vs. local - a standardized “world-wide” ELT qualification might be seen as a good thing, but at the same time it can never respond very fully to local conditions. Even the cost is perhaps an aspect of that weakness - it is high for local conditions (e.g. for Mexico) because the course is developed in and administered from Cambridge, and the arm of the law (bureaucratic controls) costs more the longer it has to stretch.

7. Do you think the COTE was an innovation? Why or why not?

Yes. It put what was coming out of teacher development research and literature into an integrated package that continued (continues, will continue) to develop with the research and the literature. It was also a “product innovation” put onto the world market.

8. Has the COTE evolved through the years? If so, please explain?

Yes. See above. Also see the revised COTE (ICELT?) that has just come out (being piloted in Brazil).

9. Why was the COTE started in Mexico?

Because the Instituto AngloMexicano had a long tradition of running RSA/Cambridge teacher training courses. I ran the first DipTEFLA - originally CertTEFLA - in 1974-5, with Richard Rossner running a concurrent one, and many DipTEFLAs and DOTEs were run over the years. When Cambridge brought out the COTE, the Anglo naturally took it up. The very first one was an Anglo/BC pilot course, in 1989 or 1990, with Julian Edge doing some of the teaching (it was actually more like a DipTEFLA than a COTE, with very high-level trainees). The Council started running COTEs in universities for the DGES of the SEP in 1992 because many university English teachers were not up to the BAs being offered and the DGES wanted something for those weaker teachers also.

10. What do you see as the future of ELT in Mexico?

Wow! Big question! Er...gradual improvement in most areas, much faster in some than in others (e.g. in universities vs. public secondary schools). Probably a high degree of bilingualism in some sectors of the population before long (as in Europe), but many people, including professionals, may opt out of bilingualism and rely on increasing supplies of information in Span-

## APPENDICES

ish (Internet, publications, including professional journals, etc.  
- most of it coming out of the USA for its internal market of  
30, 40, 50...million Spanish speakers plus the 200-300 million  
Latin American market, i.e. selling Spanish language products  
to Spanish-speaking populations along with Coca Cola, Nike,  
etc.).

# APPENDIX 4

## COTE SYLLABUS 2002-2003

SESSION DATE	TOPICS <i>PRE-READING</i>	ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN	DUE DATES
SESSION 1 AUG. 23	INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS SELF-ASSESSMENT - A REFLECTION OF OUR TEACHING GIVING INSTRUCTIONS		
SESSION 2 AUG. 24	INTRODUCTION TO WRITING FOR COTE USE OF SOURCES	<b>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 6</b>	<b>OCT. 4/5</b>
SESSION 3 SEPT. 12	PRESENTING NEW LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES, COMMUNICATION CONTINUUM MOTIVATION/GROUPING OF STUDENTS <i>HARMER: PAGES 84-86, CHAPTERS 8, 11</i>		
SESSION 4 SEPT. 13	ROLES OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OBSERVING CLASSES <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 3, 4</i>	<b>METHODOLOGY B8</b> <b>PEER OBSERVATIONS 1 &amp; 2</b>	<b>NOV. 8/9</b> <b>OCT. 4/5</b>
SESSION 5 OCT. 3	LESSON PLANNING 1 <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 22</i>		

APPENDICES

SESSION 6 OCT. 4	USING THE BLACKBOARD, VIDEO ACADEMIC WRITING <i>HARMER CHAPTERS 10 A,B,C, 20</i> <b>PEER OBSERVATIONS 3 &amp; 4</b> NOV. 22/23
SESSION 7 NOV. 7	LESSON PLANNING 2 GAMES, SONGS, AND DRAMA <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 22</i>
SESSION 8 NOV. 8	ERRORS AND MISTAKES CORRECTION OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORK <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 7</i> <b>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 4</b> DEC. 6/7
SESSION 9 NOV. 21	LANGUAGE: FORM, MEANING AND FUNCTION USE OF STORIES <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 2, 12</i>
SESSION 10 NOV. 22	LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DICTATION <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 5</i>
SESSION 11 DEC. 5	LANGUAGE AWARENESS 1
SESSION 12 DEC. 6	TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 14, 16</i>
SESSION 13 JAN. 9	COMMUNICATING ORALLY TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 17, 19</i>
SESSION 14 JAN. 10	TEACHING READING SKILLS <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 14, 15</i> <b>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 3</b> FEB. 7/8

APPENDICES

SESSION 15 FEB. 6	TEACHING WRITING SKILLS <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 17, 18</i>	
SESSION 16 FEB. 7	VOCABULARY EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 2B, 10F</i>	
	<b>LANGUAGE AWARENESS A<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>APR. 4/5</b>
SESSION 17 MAR. 5	GIVING HOMEWORK TASK BASED LEARNING, TASK DESIGN <i>HARMER: PAGES 86-88</i>	
SESSION 18 MAR. 6	TUTORIALS HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 1, 6</i>	
	<b>PEER OBSERVATIONS 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>APR. 4/5</b>
	<b>METHODOLOGY B<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>MAY 16/17</b>
SESSION 19 MAR. 16	LANGUAGE AWARENESS 2 LEARNING STYLES/MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE THEORY <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 3</i>	
SESSION 20 MAR. 27	PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 2D, 13</i>	
SESSION 21 APRIL 23	LARGE AND MIXED ABILITY CLASSES USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN CLASS/DISCIPLINE <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 9</i>	
SESSION 22 APRIL 24	LEARNER AUTONOMY SELF ACCESS CENTER <i>HARMER: CHAPTERS 10E, 24A</i>	
	<b>METHODOLOGY B<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>JUNE 20/21</b>



## APPENDICES

SESSION 23 MAY 21	TEXTBOOK EVALUATION <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 21</i>
SESSION 24 MAY 22	TESTING <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 23</i> LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 5    JULY 4/5
SESSION 25 JUNE 18	MATERIAL DESIGN AND ADAPTATION AUTHENTIC MATERIALS SHORT 5 MINUTE ACTIVITES <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 10 D,G</i>
SESSION 26 JUNE 19	ACTION RESEARCH TEACHER DEVELOPMENT VS. TEACHER TRAINING <i>HARMER: CHAPTER 24B</i>
SESSION 27 JULY 2	ESP/TEST PREPARATION CLASSES COURSE DESIGN
SESSION 28 JULY 3	PRESENTATION
SESSION 29 AUG. 6	PRESENTATIONS
SESSION 30 AUG. 6	FINAL PAPER AND FEEDBACK

THE PRE-READING CHAPTERS REFER TO *THE PRACTICE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING*, THIRD EDITION, 2001 BY JEREMY HARMER.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TASKS 1 & 2 ARE ASSESSED IN THE COURSE OF A LESSON DURING ANY OF THE 4 CLASS OBSERVATIONS. THE TASKS MUST FORM PART OF THE LESSON PLAN AND BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE WITHIN THAT PLAN.

## APPENDIX 5

### Questionnaire for Trainees

In May, 2003 I realized that there was some basic information of each trainee that I was not sure of. Many times I had been told this information but I felt I needed to get the specifics from them. So I decided to give out the following questionnaire to gather the missing information.

Questionnaire for COTE trainees 2002-2003

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions:

1. *How long have you been an EFL teacher?*
2. *Where do you work presently?*  
*How long have you worked there?*
3. *Are you a full time teacher?* \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
4. *If you are a part time teacher, do you do anything else for a living?* \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no  
*If yes, what do you do?*
5. *Why do you think you were hired for your job as an EFL teacher?*
6. *Are you an EFL coordinator?* \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no  
*If you are an EFL coordinator, do you also teach?*  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
7. *Did you have any qualifications as an EFL teacher prior to the COTE?*
8. *Do you have a degree in anything?* \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no  
*If yes, what is your degree in?*

APPENDICES

9. *How did you learn English?*

10. *Have you lived in an English speaking country?*

\_\_\_\_\_ *yes*      \_\_\_\_\_ *no*

*If yes, where and for how long?*

*What did you do during your stay in this English speaking country?*

Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX 6

### Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my permission to M. Martha Lengeling to use information that has been gathered from interviews, journals, or observations for research use in her doctoral studies at Canterbury Christ Church University College. I have also been notified that this information will be used purely for research and is confidential. Ms. Lengeling's research is concerned with teacher-learners in the COTE (Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English from the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate), an in-service teacher training course offered at the University of Guanajuato through the British Council in Mexico. If I prefer to remain anonymous, I will check the below statement for this. I have also been informed that this information may be published in the future. If this is the case, I give my consent.

Name and signature

Date

I would like to remain anonymous.

## APPENDIX 7

### Selected Excerpts of Shared Journal (ShJ)

**Note:** I have removed the names of the trainees and tutors/observers.

ShJ-1

Dear Students,

This journal is for us. I will ask you a number of times to write in it. You may write about anything. You can ask the whole group or me a question. Feel free to write what you want. In this journal I will look only at your ideas. I will not correct any of your errors. Also feel free to read what others have written. Most of all reflect and enjoy.

Martha

ShJ-14

Hello! I'm not very good at writing but I'll try. The first thing I honestly want to tell you is that I was so afraid of taking this COTE. I've heard a lot of things about it. Not good not bad, but I don't know why I thought I wasn't ready to take this course. But now that I finally decided to do it, I feel OK! I'm confident. I know I can do it all the way. The course is very interesting, but above all it is very useful. I hope I can write more next time!

Thanks for everything.

ShJ-16

Hi there, it's me - the rookie teacher. Well, I started two weeks ago giving classes, and the first one was horrible. I was so nervous. I couldn't remember anything about my preparation. I

was, in fact, frozen. By the time, I started to gain confidence in myself, my classes started to be better and now almost everything is OK. (I still have problems with discipline). Well, now I can tell that I have improved so much, but definitely I have a lot of things to learn. I felt great this session when many people told me about the email I sent them. I think it is a good way to have friends and also to let them forget about stress. It is good for them and for me. I am enjoying this COTE course a lot. It is hard, but nobody said the opposite. I will send a lot of encouragement by emailing them.

Thank you.  
Warmly

ShJ-19

Today I'm very happy. The reason is my younger son's birthday. With this enthusiasm I am coming to Guanajuato to attend my COTE class. My son gives me the motivation to start everyday new challenges and opportunities as he is living and experiencing while he's growing, facing everyday events that life gives us. Coming to Guanajuato is an occasion to be born for learning new things and for knowing new people. I want to share my happiness and my motivation for attending COTE and because of my son's birthday.

ShJ-25

Dear Martha:

It is strange to be a student but it is a good way to be aware of what our students might feel. My COTE writing is a little hard. I had some troubles when doing it. It's easier to write in this journal. Sometimes ideas and writing come very easy. But I am very positive and enthusiastic even if it's difficult because I want to do my best as a teacher. I really want to improve my skills as an English teacher and I am sure that now I am doing

the right thing (here in COTE). I also want to thank you for being patient with all of us. I hope to accomplish my goal.

Sincerely

ShJ-30

I'm just so happy 'cause I was returned my 1<sup>st</sup> COTE paper and I got a **B** mark so I do not have to do it again! I'm a little bit nervous too 'coz the observation is near and I'm just so busy and we need to prepare a lesson plan and all that stuff. But I'm sure it'll all be OK.

See ya next time.

ShJ-37

Hello! This weekend has been a little bit more boring. Maybe it's because I've been working a lot at school, and I just moved to a new house, so I've done a lot of things lately. I'm really tired today. But anyways I've learned a lot. The class with the tutor was fun. I really love to work and to be studying and doing research on the subjects we're looking at.

See you next time.

Thanks for everything.

ShJ-43

Dear Martha:

I have to admit that I'm a bad journal writer. That my journal is full of very little notes, but, that at least I've been trying harder, 'cause it's the only way I have to record all the things I've been through. This month has been a riot, but I was able to handle all the things that just popped in my life.

A couple of hours ago I was talking to a tutor. She is so nice and polite! I was talking and saying that COTE has set a huge line to follow in my life. I am aware of my errors and mistakes. I am learning and I can apply it with my students. I could see that the things I've learnt here really moved something in my

mind. I'm eager to get more information so I can keep on practicing and, of course, enjoying what learning evolves.

Now even when I've had a little problem while doing some tasks I know I'll do fine 'cause I know I can get close to you or my classmates and get the help I need. Now I value much more the things I have like friends, family, job, even my problems. I try to solve them in a different way. Everything can be "managed" but death. I have grown as a human being, as a woman, as a teacher, I've gained some weight too and this growth was in part because of COTE, because of Guanajuato, because of you and all these guys around!

Thank you!

ShJ-44

Dear Martha,

Yes, in effect I have seen a change, although I know that it is only the beginning. To be honest I do feel very much under pressure. The reason is because in my case I have so many things to do. I have to take care of starting my career as an engineer, continuing my other career as a teacher and taking COTE. I feel very motivated to finish this course because even though I am starting another career. I love my job as a teacher and I want to learn as much as I can with this. I am learning many new things and many questions are being answered. In addition, I feel very comfortable with my classmates and with all of you as our tutors. Thanks.

ShJ-49

Dear Martha,

Hi! How are you doing? I hope very well. I am not so happy, because I've had some problems at home...money ones!! Big deal. But, nothing could have ever made me feel happier than coming to class today. I've liked it a lot because I've gotten some strategies and will use them with my students soon. On the



other hand, German class was cool!! I loved it. I received my essay. I am so sad about that but, I hope to get better little by little. S.O.S. Help me, please. Give me hints. I want to learn really.

ShJ-61

Hey, Martha, good to write again in your diary. Today you gave the class, and it was today that you realized that I was studying law (I'm sorry if I didn't tell you). I am in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, and I love it. I used to work in a legal firm. Now I am looking for a job in "Poder Judicial" [Judicial Power]. There is the place where the "Amparos" [appeals] are made. I really want to work there. It is hard, but I think I can do it (curious, I said the same for this course). On the other hand, I think I never told you that I love medieval weapons. My favorite movie is *Brave Heart*. I even have a sword gallery. I love everything that has to do with medieval times. I went two times to that show called "Medieval Times" in Orlando. It is fabulous. I can't wait to go again. Well, got to pay attention. Bye.

ShJ-62

Hi Martha

These last three months have been so hard for me. I have had so much work in translation and haven't found some time for my work for COTE, and I feel so worried about that. I hope that in the following week I'll find the time I need for my work with COTE because I feel happy with what I'm learning about teaching. Maybe I won't have a group for a couple of months to teach but I'm not worried about that because I'm on the way to prepare myself to teach better when I'll be able to teach again.

ShJ-64

Qué onda Martha! [What's up Martha!]

Today is not a good day. I fell out (or "off"?) and I fell on my big fat but...asi que mi [because of that my] coxis is killing me.

I went to the doctor yesterday. He gave me a shot & some pills. He said I'd better stay home & rest, but I didn't really want to miss my COTE session, so I came (yesterday). But, I had to leave during the break because of the pain. Besides the doctor said the medicine would make me feel sleepy. I'm not feeling any better this morning, but here I am. And it's very difficult for me to be sitting for long periods of time. And to top it off, I feel rather sleepy and a little bit dizzy too. But I'll stay thru the whole session. And I'll rest afterwards. Remember I told you I'd been tired and worried? Well, now I'm the coordinator at Inglés Individual!! They chose me. This happened last week and I'm very happy 'cause I love my job and also I'll be making more money!!! Thanks for your comments on my journal. I'm glad u liked it.

Have a nice weekend!

ShJ-66

Hi Martha: I'm so happy today to come back to COTE. It was nice to see all my classmates. They were so nice everybody said something about me not coming. It was so great to hear things like "Hey! I missed you last session!" Thank God, I could make the payments now. I really appreciate you waiting for me, to do the payments. Well, doing the observation here in Guanajuato was quite an experience. I was so frightened! But it was great! Thank you again for the feedback you gave on my observation. It kept me thinking for days. Now everything seems better in my life the only thing I am missing is a boyfriend! Just kidding. At home and at work I am still having the same situations the big difference is that at home I can control and do something about what ever comes up!

Bye! See you next time.

ShJ-73

Dear Martha:

Months have passed flying and now, here I am, finding out my way to learn and teach people. By the way, Happy Teacher's

Day. I've had some problems along this path called COTE, but nice people have helped me out. Thank you for being part of that bunch of people and for your support. I want to make it. I think I will. I want it badly. Students are the best part of it. They teach us as well and show us how to teach them in many occasions. I hope you are happy with what we have done and if you are not; teach us how to get through it.

ShJ-74

Dear Martha,

Time is going by. We are almost finished and I think I haven't had the time to think just till now. I hope to finish everything on time - all the paper work. I know I'm worrying a lot about this matter. Last time you wrote me you asked if you did my interview for SEPA Inglés and guess what? You did! You were the one who talked to me and asked me a few things! Thank you. I thought I was going to fail but I see now I'm in COTE; I heard about COTE in the SEPA Inglés training seminar. People from the British Council told me to ask for it. I did it. I called and you answered and gave me the info. Actually the test was three days after I called, so I was just about to lose it. Thank you so much! I got a very nice opportunity here!!!

ShJ-81

— — — I hadn't felt this good in a long time. You know. As if in relief. With nothing to worry about. Without any pending work. I started to get this feeling just last night, as I was walking home after work. I didn't have plans to go out, even though some friends invited me. I could have gone to Café Dada & read for a while. I could have rented a movie, I could have gone home, fixed something to eat and watch some silly program before going to bed early. But I didn't. Somehow, I wanted just to keep on walking to nowhere. Mostly 'cause this is my favorite part of a day, when it is about to finish. Mostly 'cause it was one of those precious moments when all you wanna do is be with yourself. 'Cause you've learnt how to enjoy that. I've sometimes

wondered whether this is what death feels like: being able to get away from it all, floating like a feather, like you're now just kind of an old branch of an old tree and can let yourself go just by watching people pass you by. Like you know you're dead, but still there. But as I was trying to make up my mind, my mom sent me a message telling me there was an eclipse and I shouldn't miss it. I didn't. I went home. Grabbed an old blanket and my cushion and climbed to the roof. I don't know how long I lied there on Teachers' Day. With this moment as the best (and only) present I got. But it was more than I had expected.

ShJ-91

Hi Martha:

Now that we are "almost" finishing I feel more and more secure than when we started the course, but I'm a little worried because I have a lot of "redo" work. I just don't know if I have to make a big effort, or what I need to do? About the observations I feel very happy because I think they have been good observations. I'm not afraid anymore and now I know that it is the end of a long way and I know too that the best is coming. I feel that I'm a better teacher and why not? A better person, mother and wife. Thanks for everything.

ShJ-94

Hi Martha!

Uff! I'm behind in my papers and that really makes me feel worried. These coming weeks will be very very busy. I just hope I don't have to re-do any of them. You know? Redoing a paper is hard. You don't know where to start. Re-read and then when you go to the paper. Some parts make sense to you but well I think I'll do that at last.

I have lots of new experiences:

My 3<sup>rd</sup> observation with the observer!!!

He's a nice guy; he actually smiles.

I think I've improved, but he did not have the chance to give me the feedback; I did my best at that moment, but I have to wait until June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Going out with my COTE friends?

I got surprised!

Lots of problems at school and every time I listen to the tutor or you I realize I have to make changes - real changes. I'm surprised that the course is almost over. I'm kind of frightened. Oh yes! I'm very very scared and anxious. I'm little (much) afraid of not getting to the end. I'll try hard and let's see how it goes.

Wish me luck!

ShJ-95

Hi!

We're in a new school this weekend. I don't like it. Well, the only thing I like is that we don't have to go up so many stairs. On the other hand, I'm sad because COTE is almost over. But anyways, I've done almost all of the papers. When I started the COTE, I was hoping that this year would go as fast as possible, but now that is almost over. I just don't want it to end. Well, see you next time. I feel just better now. I hope I get all the papers right and have a good grade. See you!

ShJ-96

Hi Martha.

I'm very happy to be here in this new school, but we are finishing the COTE. I'm a little confused about my essays. I feel nervous about my final exam, but you know Martha, I'm very happy because the goal that I decided to do is finishing too. It doesn't matter all the work I have to do, all the problems I have to face. On the other hand, I know that the best is coming! To get better opportunities, and to be a better teacher for all my students.

Thanks for everything!

ShJ97

Martha:

I can't believe this course is about to end, at this point I wish it were over, (you know essays!) but, sometimes I wouldn't like it to end. I have learned so much! And I'm starting to get to know some of my peers! They are nice and polite people that I thought I would never get along with. They are becoming nice and friendly. Right now I'm in a rush. I'm having my spelling bee contest this week as well as six open classes at my school, besides that I'm missing some essays, but I'm sure they'll be done before the up- coming session.

Martha, I'd like to tell you that this COTE has gone for beyond my expectations. Thank you for being and doing all you do, all you are. All your teachers, their attitude and the topics, there are so many things to be thankful for. I've just received the feedback of my third observation. I think I did it fine, that I've improved a lot and, if perhaps I'm not doing everything you guys think I should do. What I'm doing has helped me to explore new areas in my job as a teacher, as coordinator and as a professional. Time is running and, there's nothing we can do to stop it or bringing it back. My best wishes for you. I hope I see you soon and that I can have another chance to meet in a course or even together (that would be great for me)

ShJ-103

Hi there:

COTE has been a very sacrifice for my pocket, but a great benefit for my life. I need to submit some homework that I've not finished yet. On the other hand, I'm happy because I've finished my duties at school. We are still in class, but grading or planning will not take much time as they did and I'll be able to give more attention to my COTE essays. I'm not very inspired this morning. I feel sick...sorry. Really hope to be with my batteries charged next July 5<sup>th</sup> and I "must" definitely be energetic and inspired next August 9<sup>th</sup>. I will have the topic "Teaching

Reading” next July 5th or August 8<sup>th</sup>...really need to prepare it.  
Hugs and kisses.

ShJ-104

“Happy Independence Day!”

I wish I was back in California watching the fireworks show by the Queen Mary! I’ve been here for four years, but I still miss some of the cultural activities. COTE is almost over. I have mixed feelings. I feel happy that I have lasted the whole year, but I feel sad that I will miss all my compadres & comadres [friends]. I hope to continue on with my education; but that will be next year. I have to decide whether to do it here in Gto. or in León. So, Martha, how are you? You know that our high school director is a woman named Martha, but she is nothing like you. She is a very hard person to understand. She is cold. I wish I had you as my boss rather than my Martha. It was great working with you.

ShJ-105

Hi!

We are in the session before the last one of this COTE course and today I did my last presentation. I think I got the methodology to improve my teaching. I know I need more that’s why I’m concerned about investigating (from now on). I mean continuing investigating on the language. I’m so exited applying all the good techniques and methodology in my classes. I don’t focus my attention on me as a teacher only, but on my students’ learning when planning my lessons. Until now, I haven’t missed a single session. I hope to be in the last session; well, I better not miss it because we’re getting our final paper! I’m reaching one of my big goals. I’m so happy for that.

ShJ-109

Hello Martha:

Well, I just want you to know that I am very excited about finishing COTE but at the same time very sad because of it. And

also very happy and proud of what I have done. I can see myself much better as a teacher now than before. As you can see there are so many emotions going on. I just have to prepare for my exam and hope that I can get the certificate. I also want to tell you that I am very motivated to continue preparing as an English teacher. I am planning to go further on with this, because I have to develop all my abilities and skills as a person and as a teacher. I want to go as far as I can. Thank you for giving me the chance to be here in COTE, and maybe I will be around keep on studying something else (Diplomado, etc.).

Sincerely

ShJ-110

Dear all,

This COTE year is coming to an end! It has gone by so quickly. I have enjoyed reading your thoughts so much. Thanks for sharing your ideas with me. I also invite you to still write us all after this is over. Whenever you can, please send me an email. Now that this course is coming to an end I would like you to think about a few things. Please continue on with your education. Don't stop here. Your education should be life long learning. Yes, we are never too old to continue on with another level of education. Try to put to use what you have learned this year. Talk and share your ideas with others. Go to book presentations, MEXTESOL [Mexican Association of Teachers of Other Languages] chapter conventions, MEXTESOL national conventions, etc. Read about things in your profession. Reflect about who you are and why you are in this profession. Enjoy your students and love teaching. I have enjoyed getting to know you all and most of all you help me be a better teacher. Thank you for being my students.

Martha



## APPENDIX 8

### Selected Journal Entry of Martha's Journal (MJ-1) with Added Reflection (AR)

The reason why COTE was started was to solve a problem. The problem was there were many EFL teachers in Mexico who had no formal education or little education in EFL. Many had lots of experience in teaching. John Haycraft (1988) writes 'training is most effective when urgently needed and when the reasons for this urgency are clear' (p.1) ("The first International House preparatory course: A historical overview" in Duff, T. (ed.) *Explorations in Teacher Training Problems and Issues*, Essex: Longman).

This seems to sum up what happened in Mexico. For years professional people complained of this problem and teacher education was mentioned. But it was only mentioned. So when COTEs were opened by the SEP and the British Council, it seemed to answer the problem quickly and uniformly. It was a quick and easy answer to a large problem here in Mexico. Overall I think it works. I know it works in Guanajuato but I am sure it has its problems in different States of Mexico. Is the quality the same throughout Mexico? Has the implementation of COTE been successful in all of the states? How often has the COTE been offered in Mexico? Has it been only once or has the COTE been offered continuously? Have the SEP and the British Council evaluated the COTE throughout Mexico? How often has the COTE been evaluated?

The COTE was accepted readily because it came from a prestigious organization and it was offered through the British Council. Because COTE had been offered worldwide it was accepted easily.

## APPENDICES

### **AR**

COTE was an innovation at the time it was started. Throughout the years it has also become a norm for a lot of teachers in the public school system.

### **AR**

This goes with Anamaria's observation of a problem in Mexico.

## APPENDIX 9

### Selected Trainee Journal Entries (TJ) and Feedback

**Note:** I have removed all names of trainees and tutors/observers.

#### Trainee Journal –TJ5

TJ5-1

My story

I'm a person who always liked English: pronunciation, people, songs, seeing or living among Americans in order to learn exactly how they communicate, how they live, and how they feel. That became a goal and a dream and this dream became true when I was thirty-three years old. I was twelve years married and my three children were already born. We went to live to the U.S.A. in order the whole family to learn the language. This wasn't my first experience learning English. Actually I started studying English when I was ten years old, my father sent my older sister and me to an institute. I couldn't learn too much because this school closed and five years went by until I continued my English studies. When I was studying to be an executive secretary, English was one of my subjects. I studied English for two years then. I finished that short career and I also stopped my English studies. Twenty-two years later...

TJ5-2

How I feel this second week in the COTE is that I'm concern about my activities. I got late these 2 days. I think I forgot that I have to focus my life on the COTE. I arrived half an hour late. I felt bad when Martha saw the clock on the wall when I was coming in. On the break in the hall I asked Martha that I wanted to talk to her. I told her the reason why I was late for the

session that day and she told me “Organize your time”. That made me rethink about what was happening to me seriously. Then I decided to arrange everything and my activities, but I was late for the session the next day. At this moment, I was very worried about it and I decided to fix this problem immediately. What I’ve decided to do is to plan my activities before and communicate with my family what it is about. I measure my time very carefully and I decided to be ready enough time before in order to be 10 minutes before the time. I’m very excited about improving my punctuality and my teaching, attitudes, my self-security, trust in me more, not to be worried about what people think, but concentrate myself on me and what I do, observe more about the things I have to change and feel more comfortable with me about what I do.

TJ5-3

After 20 hours in the COTE I feel more confident, because I have applied the ideas, methodologies, and the techniques with my students. Now I know now how to do my teaching better and why I do everything in my classes. COTE is wonderful! I could see in my student’s faces that they understood my explanation better; they did the activities correctly, without further explanations. COTE also helped me to get the ideas and the procedures for my classes and be conscious what students need and what I have to do in order to be a better teacher. I always wanted to have tools like this. Teaching was very difficult for me because I started teaching without any preparation or knowledge of teaching a foreign language. I have been observed two times before and to be honest it made me very nervous, I got shocked and lost in some parts. My first peer observation in the COTE went much better because I could handle the parts of the lesson much better. I think I wasn’t nervous at the time for the grammar explanation: “How, why and when” to use the grammar point of the lesson. I wanted to take more time to clarify it in my mind, maybe practice it at home before coming to class, and also need to organize my ideas or maybe take a

look at my notes but they are not written big enough so I can see them, because I wrote them on a little piece of paper that I even couldn't see them.

TJ5-4

This was a very important session for me because six years ago I had to develop a project in order to open the Video Lab in my work and I only had some videos and I had to design activities for this. I really appreciate having this session because now I have the tools to have a successful video session with my students. COTE is giving me a lot.

TJ5-5

About my school and profession

The school that I work for is a university of the state. It's not expensive. Students pay only \$1,000.00 per semester. Students from many places in the state come to study here. The installations are new and very comfortable. We have anything we need to work with. The university has been there since 1996. Seven generations of students have graduated. One of the problems the English teachers have there is that we don't have the necessary classrooms to paste information on or anything that could help students to remember or review what they learn in class. I'd really like to have classrooms with a TV, VCR and a tape recorder available any time I need them because I think that with all of these resources I can give my students more chances to practice the language.

TJ5-6

After I have been in the COTE for about 6 months, I can say that COTE is what I expected it to be. I have learned a lot and also applied most of what I have learned here. I always wanted to be in this course and get a certificate from a university abroad. COTE has motivated me to be more creative and professional as a teacher. Being part of the COTE I think that I'm helping the English teaching to be more professional in Mexico and I'm searching for one of my most important goals in my life. I feel

more confident teaching English at any level or any place or people.

TJ5-7

Now I'm in the middle of the COTE course. I have had some problems with the time to do the tasks well. The problem is that my husband doesn't have work and I had to take six groups in order to earn more money. Next quarter is going to be better for me, and I'm planning to do what I couldn't finish and read the assignments in time.

### Feedback

1. Where did you go to in the States? How long were you there? Where do you teach now? You have goals in your life that you want to achieve! Tell me more about your story.
2. Now in Feb., I see that you haven't missed one class; this is great and I know it requires a lot on your part. I also see a person who has objectives in your life and really works towards those objectives.
3. It is very natural to feel nervous while being observed. Did you feel you have gotten anything else besides 'the tools & the procedures' from COTE? I am also glad to see you feel more secure.
4. How did you feel about creating this project many years ago and now that you have some tools?
5. What is the name of your university?
6. How do you feel about taking the COTE, which is from Britain? Does it meet your needs even though it is from another country? I feel you have made a good

point on ELT being more professional.

7. I really feel for you with what you and your family are going through. Keep your head clear & stay focused for the rest of the course. I'm sure you will finish.

Best of luck,  
Martha

TJ5-8

Martha: The information you want to know about me is as follows: I went to live to Utah for 8 months I'm member of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) and you know the 70% of the population are members of this church so we have many Mexican and American friends there. Then we went to live to Houston, Tx for 2 more years. After that we returned to Mexico, because the objective was the whole family to learn English. I teach at the Technological University of León. One of my goals that I wanted to achieve the most is to study the Bachelor in Education because I think it matches with what I do with English and I think I'll get it. As the matter of fact I'm starting in September after the COTE. I always wanted to not stop studying but because of some problems that we had in our family I couldn't, but I think that we have to study all our life.

TJ5-9

COTE has been a wonderful time for me but the most difficult part for me is having no time for doing things for the COTE such as reading more before the session and reviewing the material I receive from every session. The essays have become less difficult because I've really tried to correct every part the tutor suggested to me. I've got one C and two Bs. I feel I'm getting better about this matter. That makes me feel happy. The COTE is affecting my life now.

TJ5-10

I've been writing this journal and I think it's a very good idea to record my experiences, feelings about the COTE, which I always wanted to be in, because I have loved English since I was a child. I know that as a teacher I need to be better day-by-day and that there are also new things coming up. I really want to feel like a fish in the water when teaching English. It has been difficult for me to do everything, because I don't have all the resources, e.g. money to pay somebody to help me to clean my house or to have my own car, but I know that when we focus on our goal, we get it.

TJ5-11

I am at the end of my COTE! I can believe it! It's been a wonderful experience learning how to teach and how to be a better teacher. My tutors are really good and the observations from people of the British Council have given me useful feedback. I'm more confident now when teaching or when being observed. Working on my essays has been precious moments investigating and writing about applying the methodology in my classes. Nothing is the same after taking the COTE course.

TJ5-12

This is the beginning to become a better teacher. I seriously think of continuing achieving more knowledge and applying it but it couldn't be possible without the COTE.

TJ5-13

I'm working on my essay about "collocation" and when not knowing what activity to use I decided to open the *Interchange 2* and when I opened the book, it was exactly on a unit where "collocation" is practiced. It's been quite difficult for me to develop this essay; I have prayed to my heavenly father to understand this technique and find the way to apply it with my students I right now feel, so grateful for this blessing! I know my heavenly father listens to me.



## Feedback

8. Thanks for answering my questions especially why you went to the States.
9. What a great idea to get your BA after this program. I'm glad you have decided to continue with your education. This has been a hard year but you have finished it. The more you write the better you get and the easier it becomes. You made a good point as far as taking into consideration tutor's points concerning the writing.
10. You seem more focused now. Keep up the good work.
11. After the COTE, there is always something else, like your idea of the BA in education.
12. You have probably the reason for these changes.

Best of luck  
Martha

## Trainee Journal -TJ7

TJ7-1

My name is .... I was born in 1969 in Salvatierra, Guanajuato, Mexico. I was 14 years old when I had the opportunity to travel to USA. It was a special trip for me, because it was given to me for my 15 years, as a gift, so my relatives in California took me to Disneyland Universal Studios, Great America, San Francisco. At the end of my trip, they asked me if I wanted to stay. My answer was totally positive. I was sent to learn English as a second language in a high school. It was a great experience. I met people from all over the world. This trip helped me in many

ways. I learned English. I became a little more aware of the chance I had in my hands; 2 years later I returned to Mexico. My parents did not want me to go back, so I started to study to be a social worker. I finished and I went back to the States because I like all the opportunities you may have there. I worked for Marriot Hotels. I was an inspectress, desk clerk and sales coordinator, but I had to return to Mexico. Here in Mexico I started to work at Harmon Hall Celaya. It was nice. Actually I met my husband there. He was a student. We got married and we have a beautiful daughter. She is 6 years old. After I gave birth to my daughter, I changed my job. I started to work as a social worker, little by little, at the junior high I worked; I noticed that English teachers needed to give more. We need to be updated. We must be prepared well to do that activity not only to be satisfied but to be successful. Then, I decided to begin preparing myself for what I believe is the activity I enjoy most and this is being an English teacher. I know I have to improve many things, but I am willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish it. I know it won't be easy but I will try to do it. I really want to succeed in this wonderful occupation. This is the main reason I am here, to be better as an English teacher.

TJ7-2

Peer observations

A week ago I went to observe 2 of my COTE classmates' classes. It was nice because some of the activities they had in class were very nice, and some, I believe went right. I got some ideas and the important thing also is that we got to know each other better, in order to share experiences. After the class was done, we had a lot in common but we still have to fix how to do it better according to principles. We have a long way to go, also techniques to learn, but I am very enthusiastic about it. It is not easy for me because of my job, my family. I am sure I have to do my best to accomplish what is good for me as a teacher. I am learning a lot and I realized that there's a lot more. I like it. It is a real challenge for me. I want to do it. I want to become a better teacher; I want to end up improving my own style of

teaching. I am worrying about it, but I really want to accomplish it.

TJ7-3

Well, the school I teach in is not exactly a school, actually I am working for SEPA Inglés and this is a program that has some arrangements with the state government so SEPA Inglés counsellors can work in CEDEs [Centro de Maestros – Centers for Teachers] in each city that is interested to have this benefit. CEDEs let us work in their classroom because they received the signal. As I am letting you know, I always have thought that this is what I like, I really enjoy teaching in this case English because I used to teach also Formación Cívica [Civil Development] y ética [Ethics] for teenagers but I have believed that I have this passion about teaching English in my best way when I first started. I have been teaching English for almost 9 years. I received training then. Very often we get training seminars and I found they were giving us advice to be better teachers and teach the best way.

TJ7-4

First observation

My observation has happened and I feel release, well, I have to say that it was a nice experience. I thought at the beginning that it was going to be difficult but it was not so hard. I just have to mention that I was feeling I little bit uncomfortable, nervous, excited, etc. Why? Because it was not my class, I mean I borrowed these students from another teacher. I did my best. I tried; I don't think I did so bad, maybe it was my nervousness. Actually I see it as a good experience because I have the chance to correct my mistakes and do it better little by little. I also want to say that I really like COTE because I think it is helping me to develop many skills as a teacher and why not as a learner and I have the opportunity to share our experiences as teachers and it is a very rich experience. I was thinking the other day that it is hard and it takes time, and I have my daughter, my husband, my family and that sometimes we have to sacrifice

party, family time, spare time, to come to COTE, but something that motivates me. I feel better as a teacher, I think my classes have improved so; it is worth every effort we make!

### Feedback

1. What a great story you have as to how you learned English, lived in the States and became an English teacher. Thanks for sharing this story with me.
2. Peer observation is a great way to share with others. I hope you will continue to do this even after COTE ends. It is important to be open to ideas of other people.
3. I am glad to hear you work on the SEPA Inglés program. I probably did an interview of you! How did you hear about the COTE?
4. Being nervous for an observation is often the case but you survived it! You made a good point about having to make sacrifices during the COTE. It is a difficult year for all of you with work, studies and your family. Try to imagine yourself if you had not had the training you are getting now or even what your life would have been like without these rich experiences that you described in your entries.

Best of luck,  
Martha

TJ7-5

Thank you for your comments! And yes, you did my interview for SEPA Inglés program. When I did my SEPA Inglés training seminar in Mexico, the instructor talked about COTE, so I called the Centro de Idiomas [Language Center] and you an-

swered my phone call and gave me all the information I needed. Actually the test to select us was going to be that weekend so I was just in time. Thank you again! I am here.

TJ7-6

Most difficult thing doing COTE

How will COTE affect me in the future

Well, you know by now that I have a family and that's difficult for me but on the other hand it's been very satisfactory for me being here, because I have learned many, many useful tools to experience in the classroom with my students. I have become more aware of all the aspects we have to take into account when teaching, so that students learn; of course these will affect me a lot. First in the way I teach, activities, techniques, etc. Also I realized that I'm improving as a teacher, as a student and as a speaker of the language.

TJ7-7

Hello, I just want you to know that I feel very enthusiastic about being here, making some good, wonderful changes as a teacher. Being better as a teacher makes me feel better as a person. I'm kind of a happy person, but suddenly I felt stuck (estancada) but not now. I'm becoming myself again. I like what I'm doing and I really enjoy myself being more confident as a teacher because now I know I'm developing my skills. So I'm very happy!!!

TJ7-8

Martha:

Well, as I just wrote the last time, I'm very enthusiastic about all of this. I'm looking forward to starting another stage in my preparation to be a professional. Now I want to continue. I'm enjoying this process. I think I'm a little more mature than when I was a teenager, so, sometimes I regret what I chose to study before, but I also believe there is time, and I when I become old, take a quick look to my past and say: I did and accomplished what I wanted to, and all that I could. I don't want

to waste any of my abilities I might have. So thank you. I hope to be accepted in another diplomado [certificate course], licenciatura [BA program], and Master's, whatever. Thank you.

TJ7-9

Dear Martha:

I would like to say that I'm very positive of entering something else. I'm very excited about it. I talked to the person you told us to for the Master's and he send some information. I hope to be accepted in it. Thank you.

### Feedback

5. You can see that I forgot about your SEPA Inglés interview. I am glad I told you about the COTE though.
6. I did not realize you had a family. I wish we had talked about our families. I am also glad you have improved in your English.
7. It is very important to like what you are doing.
8. This often happens that when we are young we make decisions and then later we want to do something else. I am so glad you want to go on with your education.
9. Best luck with your future studies! And also for becoming a coordinator for the University of Guanajuato's Extension Program in Celaya.

Martha

Trainee Journal -TJ13

TJ13-1

My name is... right now I'm at the Language School of the University of Guanajuato taking the COTE course. I was born in

the city of Irapuato, and when I was about six years old; my father and mother moved to the State of California, so I was raised in a city named Garden Grove. I did all my school years there. I went to elementary school, junior high school and high school there. I have a high school diploma. That's why I know English. When I finished high school, I came to Guanajuato to study law at this University; I graduated from the Law School here and I have a law office in the city of Irapuato. I practice law. I'm what you call an attorney at law. And since I know English, I like to teach English in my spare time. This is all for now. Until next time, bye!

TJ13-2

Today my COTE class was very interesting, not only today, but yesterday too. I think all the classes are going to be very good. At first I thought this course was going to be like all the other training courses I had taken, boring and nothing new to learn. Now I'm glad I'm taking this course, because I'm really learning something new, like new methods and new techniques. I'm also meeting new English teachers from other cities and making new friends. I like this very much because they are all very nice people. They all presented themselves to me, and we all get along very well. We help each other and give us good advice. Well, I guess this is all for today. Until the next time, bye.

TJ13-3

I'm really enjoying the COTE. Today the tutor got us doing some fun exercises, but not only that, we learn about how to motivate students using the video. We talked about the advantages and disadvantages of video. In the class before, we talked about lesson planning and all that kind of stuff, but very interesting. I'm applying all of these things in my classes over at the Superior Institute (ITESI) and it is really worthwhile. The students get more motivated, and want to go to class. So, I'm glad I'm taking this course. If my friends and I arrive sometimes about ten or fifteen minutes late, it's because we get off at work

at two o'clock and have a little trouble getting here, mostly because of finding a parking space.

TJ13-4

Today we had class with the teacher. She talked to us about lesson planning and about how to play games with the students in class, so by these means, they could have fun and learn English at the same time. We also talked about role-play and drama and to use music in class. After class my friends drove back to the city of Irapuato. It's only about a forty minute drive and we always talk about what we learned in the COTE and that it is a very interesting course. One of them said that he is going to miss the course when we finish, and we all agree on that.

TJ13-5

Teacher Martha Lengeling talked to us about the difference between errors and mistakes; she had us doing some exercises about errors and mistakes. She taught us about how to look for errors or mistakes in the students' exercises or written work.

### **Feedback**

1. I did not realize that you are a lawyer!! How did you feel about coming back to Mexico after spending so many years in the States? How do you think these experiences in the US affected you? What do you enjoy about teaching English compared to law? Another trainee, I think, is studying law now
2. What makes this training course (COTE) different than the others? This course, as you mentioned, is also about meeting new people and sharing experiences with them.
3. I am glad that you are motivated to teach because of the COTE. That motivates me to motivate you, which



in turn motivates your students!

4. It is interesting to see you three taking the course. You all work together and one person is the coordinator. I hope you will continue sharing your experiences after this course.
5. How do you feel about writing this journal? How do you feel about being a part of my studies? How do you feel about being a part of my research where I am observing you?

Thanks for your ideas.  
Best of luck,  
Martha

TJ13-6

Well, I just finished classes over at the ITESI and the next semester will begin in August, so I have a little more time, I mean some free time. Like I said before, I went to school back at the States and my life as a kid was just like all the other kids over in the States. I had a lot of friends from school and from the neighborhood and we all had fun together. Then came junior high school, where I met new friends, but I still had my old friends from elementary school, and we didn't play kids stuff anymore, because we were starting to feel like teenagers. And we just went to school and tried to get good grades and have fun, but I guess we were in a hurry to get to high school. Then came high school, where I met new friends, but I still had my old friends and we all looked oldies now. We were definitely teenagers and in a hurry to drive, so we all took driver education in school. By this time, we wanted to work, so we could save more money to buy a car, not a new one, but a cheap used one, something that could move us around, so that we didn't have to use our dad's car. We wanted our own car by then. Most of us went to wash cars at a car wash; others went to work in grocery stores. The idea was to make money. At this

time we didn't think about our future, we just wanted to buy a car, go to school and have fun, and we did. But before we knew it, there came graduation day, and everyone started to worry, I guess we weren't going to be teenagers anymore. Some of my friends said they were going to find a good job and get married. Others said that they were going to join the Army, the Air Force, or the Navy. Others didn't know what they were going to do. I talked to my dad and he encouraged me to study law here at the University of Guanajuato, but that's a new story.

TJ13-7

My friends and colleague, lawyers, in their free time, they give law, philosophy or history classes, but not me. I like to teach English. At first schools hired me because of my English, but I said to myself, "You know English, but now you have to learn how to teach it" so I began to take training courses here and there, and that helped me a lot. I also enjoy and have fun teaching, but most of all, I feel good helping students learn English.

TJ13-8

The COTE course is different from the other training courses I have taken, because it teaches us to enjoy and have fun teaching and how to motivate students to learn English in a fun way, not just grammar and repeating exercises. Students hate this. We still teach grammar, but in a fun way, like playing games, using the TV etc. and we all have fun. Teachers teach and students learn. I'm glad I'm taking the COTE course.

TJ13-9

I'm not very good at writing a journal. I'm not very good at expressing my feelings by writing them down, but I'm glad you have us writing in our own journals. At first I said to myself "What are you going to write about, What are you going to say". At first I got nervous, but as I'm going along, I really like this. I'm really enjoying it. I don't get nervous anymore. This is fun and a way to express myself. I think, I should have done this a long time ago. It

makes me feel good inside. Now I feel that I want to express myself. I feel like I want to say things about myself to other people. Thank you Martha for encouraging me to write in a journal.

TJ13-10

When I came down to Mexico to study law, at first I kind of missed my mom and dad and my brother and sisters, also my friends. I almost went back, but I met new friends down here and I started to have fun with them and this encouraged me to stay and finish law school. Sometimes we have to move to another place; we have to start a different life. We have to grow up and have responsibilities. I know that we all want to be teenagers forever, but we can't. But this is all that life is all about. We have to grow up and go our own way. Oh, I still visit my mom and dad, my brother and sisters back in the States, and they come down and visit me too.

### Feedback

6. What a great story of you growing up in the States (car washes and all!) and then coming back to Mexico to study law.
7. What an interesting combination of law and English classes!
8. It was a pleasure to meet you in this course.
9. I'm glad you enjoy writing your journal. You are so right; writing in a journal is a way of self-expression. Thank you for continuing to write in it.
10. Your parents are still in the States. Your friends are very important for you in your life.

Take care,  
Martha

## APPENDIX 10

### Post COTE Interview Questions of Trainees (PCI)

The following are questions that I would like you to answer as fully as possible. You may answer in Spanish or English. Take the necessary time to fully answer the questions and please send the information back once you have finished. Again all of the information will be used for my research in my doctoral studies. I greatly appreciate your honesty and time in this matter.

1. Name
2. How did you become and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher? Please describe in detail how you started to be a teacher?
3. What influenced you to become an EFL teacher?
4. As a teacher, how did you feel before you took the COTE course?
5. How did you feel during the course?
6. What were the difficult aspects of this course and why?
7. What were your struggles during the course and why?
8. How did you cope with these struggles?
9. How did you feel after you finished the course?
10. Has the COTE made any difference in your personal and profession life? If so, please include a number of examples. Please be as specific as possible.
11. What effect has the COTE training had on your life and why?

Thanks again for your cooperation.

## APPENDIX 11

### Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Focus Group Questions (FGQ) and Selected Excerpts

Please reflect on the below questions before meeting as a group. I would also like to suggest that you write down your observations and opinions and bring them along. All of your input will be used for my doctoral research. I greatly appreciate your time and honesty. I also thank you for your valuable participation.

1. How would you describe the COTE?
2. Do you consider the COTE an innovation? Why or why not?
3. What impact has the COTE had on you personally?
4. What impact has the COTE had on the trainees that you have had?
5. What impact has the COTE had on ELT teaching in Mexico and the State of Guanajuato?
6. What problems do you see that COTE trainees have?
7. What happens to trainees who go through this process?
8. What has been your experience as trainers?
9. As active participants of this program, what would you like to improve in the COTE?
10. How do you feel about an imported U.K. course that is carried out here in Mexico?
11. What has been your experience as trainees who later became trainers?
12. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

Write any other observations that you may have.

## Focus Group Discussion Excerpts

**Note:** All names of the tutors have been substituted with a code number (see Chapter 4).

### *Excerpt number 1*

FGD-4: I think there are reactions for people who are new to the profession. It is easy to...to take in information. It is difficult to digest the information but they easily take the information in an effective way; however, for those who have a long time...have been teaching for a long time, they have a real...very hard time uhh, coming to terms with uhh, with new ideas, I think.

FGD-3: I think she is right. One comment I made on this question is the fact that the new teachers don't have the problem to carry around old baggage. They are much more open. Whereas old teachers with more experience aren't and more than anything else the way they learned influences them a lot. I don't think, not only the way they digest, but also the way they think of the sort of things from the COTE course.

(Phone interruption)

FGD-2: Well, some of the ones who seem to be teaching for a long time just didn't even understand what we were trying to say, I think. Not, not that many, but I can think of a few examples that they just were like you can tell them and tell them, you know, what is pair work, what is a communicative activity, what is, you know, a teacher centered class and they, they're like yeah, yeah, yeah but they just don't do it. Are they getting it or maybe they just don't understand what it is? I don't know.

Martha: So people who have, teachers who have been teaching for awhile, they can't, it's hard...

(Interruption)

FGD-2: They just, they're just closed to learning anything new and I don't know what we could do to, you know, have them see that...you know in peer observation some of the people must be doing those things that we are trying to get across but they just don't make the connection.

Martha: Um humm

FGD-3: I think that it is a kind of resistance but it is not an open resistance...it's not something that they really want to do. It is just unconscious.

Martha: Okay, unconscious...

FGD-3: And I definitely think that it has to do with the training, they were, or the lack of, the lack of training and I think it has a lot to do with what they learned that they were taught (as a foreign language, such as English). That it's coming really from a time back.

FGD-4: I often think that they don't feel secure enough to try something new and they are used to something that, that is not being addressed as positive, as something positive that it is something that you should do in class like teacher centeredness...

Martha: So they don't feel secure?

FGD-4: I think they don't feel secure. I just remember Jose who was really insecure about his teaching but then after the COTE he was even more insecure.

Martha: Really, so maybe he was questioning what he had been doing?

FGD-4: Probably.

FGD-3: And I mean that is also one reason I also put on paper a kind of, sometimes the instruction is a lot of confusion, a contradiction to what they are used to and what they are now... uhh, hearing or what they learn about.

(Interruption- audio tape stopped)

Martha: Okay, okay, so would you, all of you then would say that new teachers accept input in a different way than teachers that have more experience and that people that have more experience sometimes are resisting to, hum...change. (FGD-4: Yes, okay.) Okay and one, hum, FGD-4 gave, um, an example, that he was questioning is that right? (FGD-4: Yeah.) Jose that he started even questioning what he was doing. (FGD-4: Yes.)

Martha: Okay.

### ***Escerpt number 2***

FGD-3: I think sometimes some people need just much more time (uh huh) and they would probably...would need much more observations, really much more time to talk about, yeah to talk about what they are doing and, I also have the feeling when I listened to what you were saying that crossed my mind, FGD-B, that they're following. They are not really thinking they are just seeing the COTE sometimes as a recipe book and they are just following what they are supposed to do kind of...not even reflecting, I don't know.

Martha: Yeah, uh huh. What about the difference between time because sometimes the COTE is offered one month and we offer it in a year.

FGD-4: Well I can, I can think of my own experience. I took a



course which is similar to COTE and it was given in a month and I, I would say that it gave me mental indigestion. I did not absorb anything.

Martha: Okay, so you think that the time is important?

FGD-4: I think the time is very important.

FGD-3: I think also that the year or the way it is done...because they need the time to...to take in what's really going on in the session, then they will need really time or time available to even try it out.

FGD-2: We talked about this when we were doing the syllabus that what's important for the observations. Well, everything is... (Martha: Umm hum.) and it was like what can we move towards the back, that you know, is not as important as things they gotta know when we are observing them: classroom management, pair work, communicative activities, listening, speaking, reading, writing. We can't do all of that (Martha: Um hum.) that fast with everything they have to show it in their observations. And I think you know we ought to be really more careful you know the first time for example right now that we did our first observation, what did we really expect to see from that? What input did they have? For example lesson planning, they didn't do it well. That's not good. We did communicative activities. They should be doing some of those in the first observation (Martha: Umm hum.) and maybe really point out more to them what we expect them to do.

FGD-3: I mean FGD-4 was pointing out about her own experience and I think that in the COTE course myself there were a lot of things that fell into place but much, much later. (Martha: Much later.) It's much later, suddenly it makes sense and you know what they were talking about, and I think that the more concentrated it is the less time you use for it the less chance

## APPENDICES

you have really to get the ideas settled in. (Martha: Uh huh.)

Martha: So we can't expect things to fall into place all the time for every single person. (FGD-2: Especially things that they haven't seen yet.) (FGD-3: And not immediately.) Well also then everyone is going to be different because like one trainee as you said, you know, why didn't she click and why did other people click?

FGD-4: I also think you...they start questioning, questioning what they have been doing for years that they feel threatened, and they tend to build a value and not to. (Martha: Uh huh.)

## APPENDIX 12

### Selected Excerpts of Observation of Tutors and Trainees (ObT)

**Excerpt number 1: Observation of Tutor 1 (ObT-1a), March 5, 2003, 9:25 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Room Two, Language School, University of Guanajuato**

**Note:** All the names of trainees and tutors have been removed. The words 'tutor' and 'teacher' are used interchangeably.

...I asked for the tutor's permission to observe her on Saturday and she readily accepted. Before going in to observe the class, I had made some decisions as how to handle the observation. First of all, I decided to quietly enter the classroom after the class had begun so as not to cause attention to my presence in the class. I sat in the back of the classroom next to the door. I hoped that because the class had already begun and the trainees were working on a task they would not notice me as much. I also wanted to be as unobtrusive as possible. The teacher-learners have had a lot of contact with me as a tutor and administrator before this observation. I have observed some of them in their practicals which consist of a planned visit to their school to observe a lesson. I had been in the classroom many times in the past with the tutor, but it was always obvious what my roles were (tutor or administrator) during those visits. Trainees have class on Fridays from 3 to 8 and Saturdays from 9 to 2. The class I am observing is on Saturday at 9:30. As I begin to observe this class, the teacher is monitoring groups who are working on a twofold task of multiple intelligences. The instructions are clearly written on the blackboard as to what the trainees have to do. They are given two options to choose

from. In the class before this on Friday, the tutor had begun to talk about multiple intelligences and this class on Saturday is a continuation of this topic. Using a chart, trainees are to choose one of the intelligences and think of another activity for each of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) or choose one of the skills and think of another activity for each intelligence. The next part is to draw a chart of their activities and post it on the wall for the rest of the class to see. She has given them thirty minutes to work on the task.

When I began to observe, there were five groups of two already working on the task. One of the groups had already posted their chart on the wall to the right of the blackboard and the two women were quietly talking together and adding more information to their chart. The other four groups were sitting down and working on the assignment. While they are working, others arrive late to class. She gives them the handout and brief instructions as what they should do. There is light laughter and playfulness in the groups. As time goes by, other groups put their charts on the wall next to the blackboard. These groups also talk with other groups while they are standing up by their posters. T<sub>12</sub> comes in and the tutor greets T<sub>12</sub> and gives her the handout. T<sub>12</sub> notices me and says “hi” to me. T<sub>1</sub>, who is next to me, turns around and places the poster on the wall facing the blackboard. T<sub>1</sub> continues to work on the poster. Teacher announces, “Ten more minutes, people”. Again people mill around the room working and observing what the rest are doing. One group moves to the floor to work on their poster (T<sub>8</sub> and T<sub>9</sub>). T<sub>11</sub> begins to work with T<sub>13</sub>. T<sub>11</sub> asks T<sub>13</sub> a question. T<sub>13</sub> begins to dictate what T<sub>11</sub> is to write on the poster. Another group puts their poster on the wall. Teacher moves around the classroom and stops at the groups and watches. She does not talk a lot unless a student asks her a question. Next she takes roll. There is still movement of people getting up, sitting down, moving around the class and leaving the class for a drink of water. T<sub>2</sub> likes to observe most of the time. T<sub>2</sub> is sociable if

someone initiates a conversation. T<sub>2</sub> and T<sub>15</sub> joke together. T<sub>4</sub> comes in and smiles at me, saying “Hi, Martha”. T<sub>12</sub> then asks me about a lost notebook and I tell T<sub>12</sub> to look for it in the office. The tutor now announces, “OK, folks finish up and go around looking at everyone’s work”. Everyone does so and there is more movement and talking going on. T<sub>5</sub> walks by me and says “Hola, Marta”. T<sub>16</sub> and T<sub>8</sub> chitchat across the room. T<sub>12</sub> comes back and says “I found it”. T<sub>5</sub> is at times quiet. T<sub>9</sub> finally notices me and says, “Martha, what are you doing?” “I am observing you all.” T<sub>16</sub> goes by me and has a cartoon and says to me “Did you see this?” “Yeah, funny”. Now the tutor asks for feedback on what the trainees observed of the posters. T<sub>8</sub> says that T<sub>8</sub> thinks the poster on nature is beautiful and T<sub>12</sub> playfully replies that it belongs to this person and finishes the comment with “any time”. At this point everyone is laughing aloud. T<sub>1</sub> continues to give opinion of multiple intelligences and then another four people give their overall opinion. During this time the tutor mediates the opinions. She is in the middle of the classroom with her back to the blackboard while the trainees are sitting down. T<sub>14</sub> asks her if it is possible for a person to have all intelligences and she gives a brief description of how the intelligences work. This last part gives some sense of closure for the task and is a natural transition for the next stage of the class. Someone sneezes and about six people say “God bless you”.

The tutor begins a section of the class on language awareness explaining the importance of this for teachers. T<sub>17</sub> hands out the worksheets to each of the teacher-learners. They work in groups of two finding the person closest to them in the class. She gives a time limit of two minutes. T<sub>4</sub> does not work with anyone; T<sub>4</sub> reads the task. Everyone starts to integrate themselves with the person closest to them. Finally T<sub>4</sub> moves with a group of two next to her. T<sub>17</sub> gets up and closes the curtains when T<sub>17</sub> sees that the tutor is testing out the overhead projector with a transparency. She now raises her hand as a signal for

them to quiet down and the trainees also raise their hands. It is obvious that this is a technique that the tutor has used before with the group. This simple technique is used as a pause in her class, and a signal for a change of activity, and also a sign for them to pay attention to her. She elicits questions from the group and then shows the answers to the task on the overhead projector. She continues with a short description of tenses in English. The majority of the trainees are looking at the overhead projector and writing down notes. They continue with the next task. After a few minutes the tutor jokingly says, "This is very serious and there is no laughing". The class continues with other tasks in the same way where the trainees work in groups, feedback to the answers, and clarification of any of the ideas presented. She tries to use the overhead projector and for some reason it is not working properly. It is impossible to read clearly the writing projected on the wall. She asks me "Is there another one, Martha?" I answer, "Let me see or I can make copies". The electricity is down so the tutor writes on the blackboard the examples explaining the point. It is now 10:30 and I take a break.

At 11:07 the room has warmed up because of the time of day. Trainees continue with the tasks and then the tutor asks what the implication of language awareness is for teachers closing this stage. They go on break, leaving the classroom. During this time, trainees go to the bathroom, go for a smoke on the terrace, run down two flights of steps to the school library, buy a soft drink from the soda machine in the lobby or go down the 215 steps to buy something to eat. Many bring their own refreshments to class. It is common for them to eat and drink during the class because they are coming from their work on Friday afternoon after working the morning. Eating and drinking is also a way for the trainees to keep alert for the long hours of class.

At 11:40 the tutor begins the next section of the lesson on phonology. She has written on the board eight words of ter-

minology (phonology, phonetics, phonemes, stress, vowel, rhythm, sound system, and intonation) during break. She gives the teacher-learners a 'walk and talk' activity which consists of questions concerning the beliefs of the trainees of phonology. They are to ask the questions to their fellow classmates and note down their names and opinions moving around to a different classmate for each question. At first some are not moving around to other classmates. She shouts out, "Different person for each statement". A few more are coming back from break. There is more movement around the classroom. The trainees are giving their opinions and there is a lot of participation. This is the highest participation I have seen in this day's observation. T<sub>13</sub> has not gotten up, but the trainees go to T<sub>13</sub> to get opinion. T<sub>12</sub> comes up to me and says "You are very serious today, Martha." I tell T<sub>12</sub> I am observing. I have tried to have a very passive role in the classroom and the trainees see me doing something that is different than what they have seen of me. Previously they have seen me in a more active role: teacher, administrator, and organizer. The activity continues to generate more noise from the trainees talking about their opinions. The tutor is organizing her papers and also observing them working "Two more minutes". T<sub>11</sub> comes by me and says "You cannot participate?" I imagine it is a question and I reply that I cannot. I also realize that they feel very comfortable with me in the room observing them. They include me in their social talk. A teacher from our school walks by and notices me sitting down and says there is no electricity in the SAC (Self-Access Center). Teacher tells the teacher-learners to finish up the activity and to sit down. There is still movement in the classroom and T<sub>5</sub> bumps the cookie tray in the middle of the room causing most of cookies to fall on the floor. T<sub>5</sub> picks them up. Teacher now asks the trainees for their opinions. There is discussion on their opinions and T<sub>11</sub> mentions a time when they had talked about a similar topic in one of "Martha's classes". T<sub>4</sub> also makes reference to an article that Martha (T<sub>4</sub> is referring to me) had given to them in a past class. At this point, everyone knows

that I have been in the class observing them and we are all laughing. It seems to me that they know that I am trying to take on a passive role and naturally it is very difficult to achieve this because I am part of this COTE. From my point of view, I find it interesting that the trainees are very comfortable with me observing them. They continue to talk to me and work in the classroom.

The tutor brings together some of their ideas and moves on to the next activities. She makes them feel comfortable with some of the ideas that they are not familiar with. She assures them not to worry about understanding everything and that this is just a short introduction to the topic. The class continues with more activities that go through the vowel and constant sounds, places of articulation, etc. The class reminds me somewhat of similar classes that I have given in this area. Her choices of activities are some of my choices also. For me this was a reconfirming feeling to see that what I do for this topic is treated similarly by another teacher trainer. Teacher trainers usually are not trained to do what they do; they are usually experienced teachers who have fallen into the job of teacher training.

At the end of the observation, I concluded a number of things. First of all I found my presence as an observer noticed by the trainees naturally. I have had a lot of contact with these trainees because of my roles. We email back and forth from their hometowns and Guanajuato. There is constant chitchat which creates a very social atmosphere. I also know a lot of their personal problems which they have confided with me. I have been with this group every weekend that they have had class, so my presence is very marked. My initial idea was to sit quietly and watch what was going on, but during the time I was there, I found this was impossible because of who I am within this course. Little by little during the observation trainees would stop by and say hi to me, ask me what I was doing, smile, or



joke with me naturally. I am the insider trying to be the outsider while I am observing them. Trying to be the outsider is impossible because of time together during this course.

Another observation is that the trainees feel very comfortable in the classroom environment with their fellow trainees. Each trainee has his or her preferred styles of learning and working together. They have mutual respect for each other but at the same time they have small social groups in which they identify themselves with. Some trainees are more verbal and others are listening and watching. During the time I was in the classroom, there was movement in and out of the classroom. The trainees get up naturally to do whatever is needed to be done. There is a lot of social chitchat and greetings through out the class which demonstrate the integration of the group. At this point, my reflection is that this group has jelled. This process takes a period of time to happen. In the past groups we have had groups who have not gotten along as well as this group.

I had taught many hours of input sessions with them for the last nine months but as an observer I had the time to really see how they react with each other. As a teacher, I think we have a general idea of who our teacher-learners are in the class while teaching, but during an observation there is more time to observe the little things that might go unnoticed by the teacher who is deciding what task to do next, how to go about the tasks, and the logistics of the lesson. I could appreciate the finer points of my trainees because I had the time available for this during the observation.

Lastly, I wonder if I should have told them that I was going to observe them but I feel it was better not to have told them. At one time I was debating whether to video tape the class, but I considered that the camera would have been more intimidating than a person observing the class. Because they know me quite well, I decided against the use of the video. I also felt the

video might be intrusive for certain trainees and also for the teacher. What is interesting is the observer's thought process, deciding what to do without knowing what will happen before the observation. This is different than the practical observations that I do of the trainee. Again, I felt I made decisions according to my instincts and my knowledge of these trainees.

**Excerpt number 2: Observation of Tutor 1 (ObT-1b), May 31, 2003, 9:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Room Two, Language School, University of Guanajuato**

I observed the external tutor again to see if my previous observation of her and her class were consistent with this class. We have constant contact with each other through email that makes communication easier and faster. I asked for permission about a week before she was to come and she readily accepted again. Today she has her long hair pulled back in a ponytail. She is wearing black slacks, black sandals, and a deep blue short-sleeved blouse over a black top.

I sat down near the door and decided again to come in after the class had begun. The room is classroom number one, which is basically similar to the classroom I had described in the previous observation of the tutor. Overnight bags, stuffed briefcases, handbags, and backpacks litter the floor besides the trainees' chairs or by the blackboard. A couple stay overnight on Friday and bring in their bags to take back home after the Saturday session is over at two. There is evidence of library books, their large notebooks with the copies that have been handed out through out the COTE year, water bottles, pop cans, potato chip bags, sandwiches, fruit and the remains of whatever they have brought as food. At first sight the room looks messy but one can see that everyone has brought what he or she thinks is necessary in order to sit through the five-hour sessions. The tutor has her duffle bag placed behind the door, out of the way. She leaves around 1:30 when I take over with journal writing,

feedback, and administration matters. She gets on a bus back home at 2:30. Because I take over the last ½ hour, she has time to take a taxi to the bus station that is on the outskirts of the city.

This session deals with testing and evaluation. There are sixteen teacher-learners with two missing (T16 and T9). On Friday T9 left a message in my office saying she could not attend class on today. I also found a potted flower with a caterpillar that someone made from art materials. There was not a message of who it was from, but it was next to the trainees' note so I assumed it was from her. I notice there is one near the tutor's duffel bag. She is by the overhead projector and eliciting responses to questions being projected on the wall next to the blackboard. T5 and T4 are sitting in the front row and often work together. I have often seen T5 many times in the front row. I imagine she likes to sit in the front row so that she cannot miss anything that is being done by the teacher. The middle row consists of T11, T3, T15, T18, and T6. T13, T2, T12, T14, T10, T17, T8, and T7 sit in the back row. T1 is next to the door and I sit between T7 and T1. The room is cramped.

According to the topic, T1 gives out his opinion as a coordinator. He mentions how in the past he has made exams without really knowing how to do so, but now he has a better idea. The tutor tells the trainees the importance of remembering what it was like to be a student, how they feel about exams, and the problems students have. T14 brings up the point of oral testing and how students are very nervous. The tutor responds to his comment and I notice how she uses her hands when she is talking. She is very verbal using her hands a lot to express her ideas. More teacher-learners continue to give their points of views. Someone mentions that music can be used during an exam as a way to relax the students. Jokingly she suggests that Ememin could be a possible person. Everyone laughs at her joke. She has a natural ability to add small comments while she

is talking in class to add humor to her teaching. T<sub>5</sub> asks how much advance notice we should give our students about an upcoming exam. She mentions the importance of letting students know in advance about exams and what they will be tested on. The tutor begins to cough and T<sub>10</sub> gives her a cough drop. The rest of the class notices this and many begin to cough. The class begins to laugh at if saying give us a cough drop also.

The class continues with different tasks concerning testing. T<sub>1</sub> moves to the front row and I wonder if T<sub>1</sub> feels strange sitting next to me while I am writing my notes on this class. A number get up at different intervals and leave the classroom to get something to drink, go to the bathroom, or get materials they need. T<sub>6</sub> also has a cold and gets up a number of times to get kleenex. The tutor asks her if she would like an aspirin and she gets one from her bag. Teacher also monitors the groups asking for conclusions on the task they are doing.

The class continues with more overhead projections and trainees contribute their beliefs on this topic. Many who are in positions as coordinators voice their preoccupations of testing, wanting to hear answers that will solve their doubts. She answers these doubts and also mentions that they know who their teachers and students are and probably have the answers themselves. This seems to be the advice that a trainer often gives. Some of the trainees want explicit answers to their questions but I know that as a trainer this is sometimes impossible to give. I also feel it is important for the trainees to make their own decisions. It might be that trainees have the answers and that they want to voice their opinions. Yet, as a coordinator they might find it difficult to bring up doubts with the teachers they work with. Opening up with their teachers might not be in accordance with what the coordinators feel their roles are. T<sub>1</sub> brings up a problem T<sub>1</sub> experienced in the United States where students are passed on because the system does not want to hurt the students psychologically. During this time I

reflect that the trainees seem comfortable with me observing the class.

The next task requires the teacher-learners to scan a chapter on testing. The class is divided into groups of four and each group is given a number of terms to look for. The tutor mentions that these terms were looked at briefly the day before. She also checks understanding of instructions. At 10:20 the trainees are working quietly with the chapters and using high lighters to look for the terms they were given. Every so often there are a few people talking, but mostly they are working quietly. I hear less outside noise this weekend because the BA classes have moved to the new school. The Diplomado and the COTE are the two groups here. The tutor asks me a couple of questions concerning the schedule for the next year of COTE and she gives me a piece of paper that has the trainees' names and the written essays that have been handed in. She is concerned with a couple of people who have not handed in anything. She also mentions that she has talked with these people but they say they have everything under control. She gives a time limit of five minutes for the teacher-learners to finish up scanning activity and then they will have to share their findings with the other members of the groups. During my last observation of her class, I noticed that she often does this. It seems to be a way for her to set limits for the trainees and to keep them focused. They are now talking more about what they have found. T5 moves T5's chair around to create more of a circle. The tutor moves around the groups and listens to them making a few clarifications of the terms. She raises her hand and then the trainees raise their hands as a sign to stop what they are doing and to move on the next task. One person from each group moves to another group so that there is a student from group a, b, c, and d now together. Each person has had to look at different terms so now in the new groups each will tell the others what they have found. In each group one of the trainees begins to explain what he or she has found. It is interesting to

see how each uses their hands to explain what they have read about. Around 11:05 things are getting quieter and eventually the tutor tells them that we will be going on break soon. T7 who is sitting next to me asks me about what else T7 can do after the COTE, future studies. I tell T7 that I will give out some handouts on this at the end. T7 says thanks.

After couple of minutes of feedback, the teacher-learners go on break and I go to my office. At noon the group begins again with a review of terms: reliability and validity. She has an overhead projection up on the wall and they are writing down the information. The teacher-learners are also asking questions or giving their comments. T15 turns around and we make eye contact and T15 smiles at me. Around the 12:30 the trainees are getting tired and the tutor mentions it to the class. They are working in groups of two on two questions and she sits down for a minute and then gets up to monitor the groups. A section of discussion of the questions begins. After a couple have given their opinions, T1 makes a comment on how T1 feels that students need to have a basis of grammar, spelling and then later listening. T12 jumps in and says that students want to speak. When T12 says this, T1's eyes go up and it is obvious that T1 does not like T12's comment. T1 is T12's coordinator and I know that both of them have not gotten along with each other lately. Both have written or told me that there is friction between the two. At the beginning of this course in August of 2002, they would sit together, but halfway through the course they started to sit by other people.

This reminds me of other times when coordinators have taken the course and how their relationship with their fellow workers changes. Sometimes the relationship strengthens or there are conflicts. It is also a time for reflection for both sides because different aspects come up in discussion and both sides begin to defend their point of view. I also think that for some this is maybe a start for academic discussion that may never have

happened before. This academic discussion can be problematic because at times one side or both may attach personal issues and not be able to accept criticism. I think that the COTE for many of the trainees is one of the beginning stages where the trainee begins to question what he or she feels. It is somewhat like an academic awakening for many. I myself had gone through something like this when I began my master's. I began to absorb academic information because I felt a thirst for it. There can be a void as professionals and when we have this academic awakening, some progress in this development and others fossilize. While some may see this as a conflict, I would like to see it as a starting point in their academic education. I also found this academic discussion in the focus group of our local tutors. At the end of the group interview, all of us were quite happy to have the time for this discussion.

From here the discussion goes to how children can be tested in reading. Some of the trainees mention that teachers can check reading with students by reading aloud a passage and intonation, speed, and pronunciation can be used to test reading. At this point the tutor asks if they are testing reading or something else. She tries to make them realize that testing reading is looking at the comprehension of ideas. T7's telephone rings and many groan and look at T7 because of this interruption. T7 quickly leaves the room. There is some snickering from the trainees because of the telephone ringing.

## APPENDIX 13

### Peer Observation Reflection Forms

(written by author, 2001)

#### COTE - PEER OBSERVATION FORM 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher observed \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sts \_\_\_\_\_  
Level of course \_\_\_\_\_ Average age of sts \_\_\_\_\_

*The following observation form is for you to reflect on learner centeredness, communicative activities, and the roles of teacher and the students within a class. Please observe a fellow EFL teacher and hand in this form with the observed teacher's lesson plan to Martha for the next input session. Thanks.*

1. Did the teacher try to promote a learner centeredness class? How was it done? If the teacher did not promote it, how could it have been done?
2. Comment on the roles of the teacher and the students. Add any reflection of these roles.
3. Were there any communicative activities in the lesson? What made these activities communicative? Were they successful? Why or why not? If there were not any communicative activities, what could have been changed?
4. Write about one aspect that you saw in this class that you enjoyed seeing and would like to use in your class. How could it be used in your program?



5. What are your initial reactions to peer-observations?

6. Additional comments.

### COTE - PEER OBSERVATION FORM 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher observed \_\_\_\_\_

Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sts \_\_\_\_\_

Level of course \_\_\_\_\_ Average age of sts \_\_\_\_\_

*The following observation form is for you to reflect on the relationship of the teacher and students, the teacher's command of English, and instructions. When you observe this teacher, please take into consideration what has been seen in the input sessions concerning this information. Please observe a fellow EFL teacher and hand in this form with the observed teacher's lesson plan to the Martha for the next input session. Thanks.*

1. While you are observing the teacher, notice how the teacher relates to his/her students. Comment on the relationship.
2. Now imagine what you would say to this teacher about his or her presence as a teacher. Write exactly what you would say.
3. Reflect and comment on the command of English this teacher has. What areas do you think this teacher needs improvement in and what would you suggest that this teacher do to improve his/her English?
4. How did the teacher give instructions? Were they given successfully? Why or why not?
5. How did the teacher try to motivate his or her students

during this class? Do you think it was effective? Why or why not?

6. Additional comments.

### COTE - PEER OBSERVATION FORM 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher observed \_\_\_\_\_

Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sts \_\_\_\_\_

Level of course \_\_\_\_\_ Average age of sts \_\_\_\_\_

*The following observation form is for you to reflect on the lesson plan, how the lesson went and the interaction in the class. Please observe a fellow EFL teacher and hand in this form with the observed teacher's lesson plan to Martha for the next input session. Thanks.*

1. What do you think of the teacher's lesson plan? Was it clear to you? Would you have changed anything to make it better? What was something that you liked about this lesson plan?
2. What are the stages in the class?
3. Within these stages what activities are used?
4. What language and skills are practiced? Do you think the activities made the students practice the language?
5. Once you have observed this teacher, do you think this teacher has achieved his or her goals? Why or why not?
6. Observe the interaction in the classroom. Was the inter-

action observed effective? Would you have changed anything and why?

7. What is the relationship of the teacher with the students? Comment on these observations.

8. Additional comments.

### COTE - PEER OBSERVATION FORM 4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher observed \_\_\_\_\_

Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sts \_\_\_\_\_

Level of course \_\_\_\_\_ Average age of sts \_\_\_\_\_

*The following observation form is for you to reflect on error correction and communicative activities. Keep in mind the information that we have seen in the input sessions in these two areas. Please observe a fellow EFL teacher and hand in this form with the observed teacher's lesson plan to Martha for the next input session. Thanks.*

1. What kind of errors did student make during the class?
2. How did the teacher handle the correction of errors?
3. Reflect on the correction you observed and decide if you think this correction was appropriate. Take into consideration if the objective was for fluency or accuracy. Can you think of any other ways that these errors could have been corrected?
4. Did this teacher use a communicative activity? If yes, why was this activity communicative in your opinion? If no, how could this teacher have incorporated one?

5. Write about one positive thing that you observed in this class and tell why you think it was positive.
6. Additional comments.

### COTE - PEER OBSERVATION FORM 5

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher observed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_  
 School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sts \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of course \_\_\_\_\_ Average age of sts \_\_\_\_\_

*The following observation form is for you to reflect on the use of materials and the textbook. Keep in mind the information that we have seen in the input sessions. Please observe a fellow EFL teacher and hand in this form with the observed teacher's lesson plan to Martha for the next input session. Thanks.*

1. Observe and reflect on how the teacher used the textbook. Write about these observations. Do you think the teacher used the book appropriately? Why or why not?
2. Describe what other materials the teacher used during the class and comment again on their appropriacy? Why were they suitable or not?
3. Consider what we saw with textbook exploitation during the input sessions. Could you think of other ways the teacher could have exploited the use of the textbook? Explain one way.
4. Imagine that you would like to give the teacher a compliment on one aspect of this class. Write about what you would like to compliment the teacher on? (You can give this teacher the compliment and tell us how the teacher reacted to this compliment.)

## 5. Additional comments.

**COTE - PEER OBSERVATION FORM 6**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher observed \_\_\_\_\_

Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sts \_\_\_\_\_

Level of course \_\_\_\_\_ Average age of sts \_\_\_\_\_

*The following observation form is for you to reflect on the use of grammar presentation and vocabulary. Keep in mind the information that we have seen in the input sessions. Please observe a fellow EFL teacher and hand in this form with the observed teacher's lesson plan to Martha for the next input session. Thanks.*

1. How did the teacher present grammar or use grammar in this class? Do you think it was appropriate and why?
2. How is grammar treated through out the lesson? What terminology does the teacher use? Do you think it is appropriate and why?
3. After observing this teacher, how do you think he/she views grammar in the classroom? Support your ideas with examples.
4. How did the teacher present vocabulary? Do you think it was effective? Why or why not?
5. Write about your opinion of these peer observations. Have they been helpful? Why or why not? What have you learned?
6. Observe the groupings (lockstep, pair, whole group, etc.) the teacher used in the lesson. Note down the stages that the

## APPENDICES

teacher used and then write the groupings that were used. Were they successful or not?

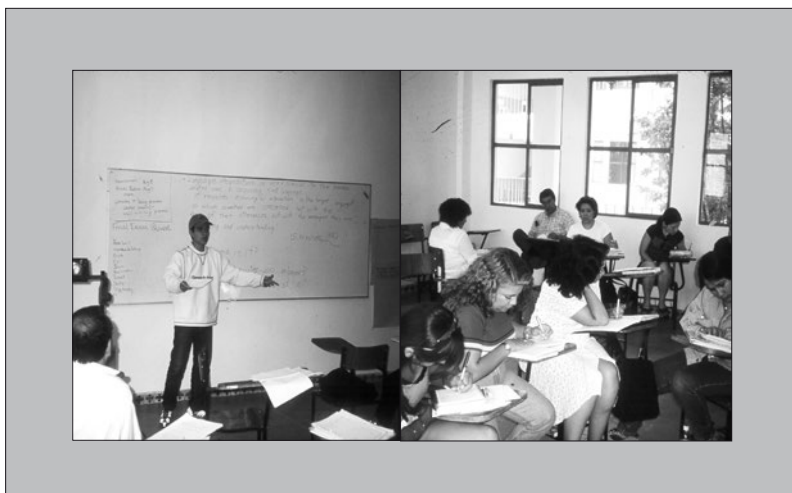
7. Additional comments.

APPENDIX 14  
Selected Photographs of COTE



**Photograph 2 The Language School  
(taken by author, 2003)**

APPENDICES



**Photograph 3 Trainees in the classroom**  
(taken by author, 2003)



**Photograph 4 Trainee giving end-of-year presentation**  
(taken by author, 2003)



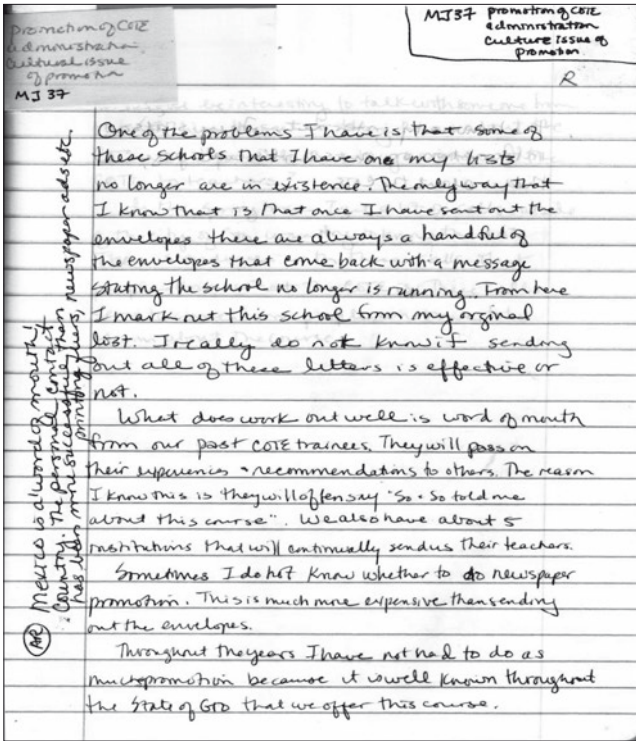
APPENDICES



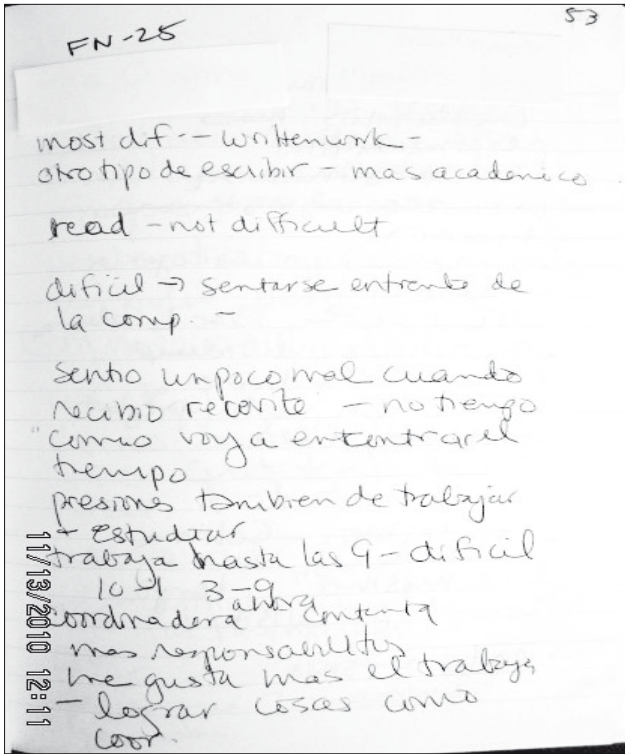
**Photograph 5** Trainees during input sessions  
(taken by author, 2003)



**Photograph 6** Trainees working in groups  
(taken by author, 2003)



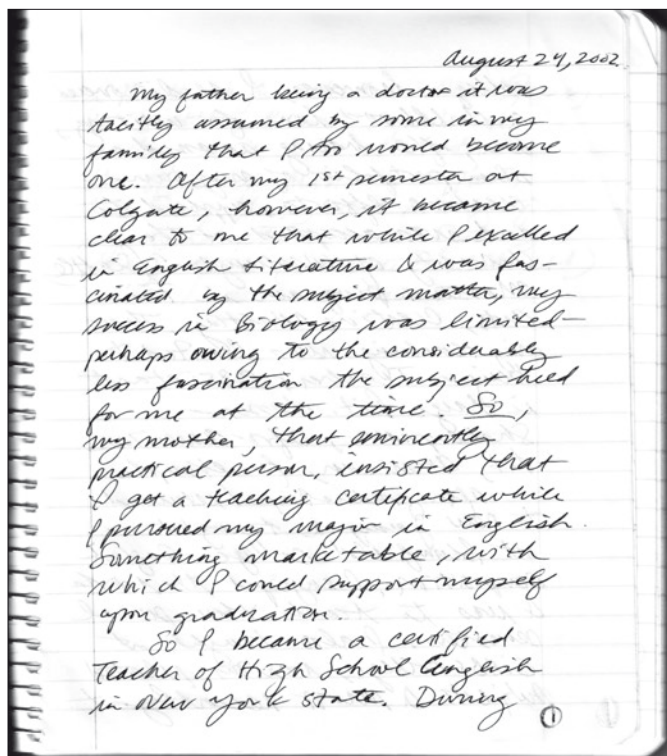
Photograph 7 Martha's Journal (MJ-37)  
 (taken by author, 2006)



**Photograph 8 Field Notes (FN-25)**  
**(taken by author, 2003)**



Photograph 9 Trainee Journal (TJ9)  
(taken by author, 2003)



**Photograph 10 Trainee Journal entry (TJ8-1)  
(taken by author, 2003)**

APPENDICES

	<u>Nopain nogain</u>	
	<p>starting profession at 37 later part of life time</p> <p>9</p> <p>give up things in life feels a sense of obligation + hard to say no to other people peer observation of a colleague - he is coordinator / anger low pay of school, few benefits fear of failure + not being knowledgeable enough</p> <p>* Damn if I do them (essays) or damn if I don't</p> <p>COTE is required of him as a paper</p> <p>* more needed than just being a native speaker Wants The Paper</p>	
10	<p>Knowing English is not enough hard to express his feelings + thoughts in writing preconceived idea of teaching training program arrives sat. 12pm - traffic, getting to CU, parking fill with things learn how to teach</p>	
11	<p>Scenes, arrive late (concern) arrange / organize l.p. talk to family, lack of tools, knowledge</p>	

**Photograph 11 Initial Coding of Data  
(taken by author, 2003)**

## Tables, Figures and Photographs

### TABLES

Table 1	Transformative learning process	70
Table 2	18 teacher-learners in COTE Guanajuato. August 2002-August 2003	116
Table 3	Number of entries from Trainee Journals	154
Table 4	Interview: interviewees, dates and method of interview	159
Table 5	Coding and categorization of raw data	175
Table 6	Data sources, coding, and quantity of sources	178
Table 7	Research Questions and Issues, sources, dates, and emerging issues	182
Table 8	Chapter breakdowns for Chapters 5-7	187
Table 9	Cross-referencing and theme categorization of data	318

### FIGURES

Figure 1	Teacher professional development	71
Figure 2	Conceptual Framework for Ethnographic	147
Figure 3	Conceptual Framework of Teacher Development for COTE Teacher-Learners	307

### PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1	Data on whiteboard	173
Photograph 2	The Language School	471
Photograph 3	Trainees in the classroom	472

## APPENDICES

Photograph 4	Trainee giving end-of-year presentation	472
Photograph 5	Trainees during input sessions	473
Photograph 6	Trainees working in groups	473
Photograph 7	Martha's Journal (MJ-37)	474
Photograph 8	Field Notes (FN-25)	475
Photograph 9	Trainee Journal (TJ9)	476
Photograph 10	Trainee Journal entry (TJ8-1)	477
Photograph 11	Initial Coding of Data	478



## About the author

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**Guanajuato, Gto. Autumn, 2018**



This book examines the identity formation of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers who went through a one-year in-service training course - Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) from the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES). The COTE course was offered through the British Council in Mexico at a public university, the University of Guanajuato, in central Mexico. In addition, it looks at trainees' emotions, problems and struggles during the course, and finally it explores the impact this training had upon their identity as teachers. The book explores a sociocultural perspective of teacher education and how it applies to the Mexican context. In general terms it adopts a broad qualitative ethnographic approach using three concepts as a basis for inquiry: voices, reflexivity and *bricolage*. The sources of its data are journals, observations, interviews, and focus group discussion of tutors, trying to explore the multifaceted layers of teacher education in Mexico.



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