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COLLABORATIVE MENTORING SESSIONS:
SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING EXPERTISE

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ABSTRACT

Teacher mentoring is the most common way that novice teachers are initiated into the teaching profession. Though the literature on teacher mentoring suggests that mentors and mentees should engage in collaborative mentoring sessions, few studies have looked at what actually happens or what is actually learned as a result of mentoring (Harvey, 2011). For the purposes of my study, I created mentoring protocols based on what the mentoring literature (Easton, 2008; Jonson, 2008) suggests mentors and pre-service teachers should do. Then, I implemented the protocols with three mentor–mentee (mentor–pre-service teacher) pairs during a 15-week MA TESOL practicum. Based on my observations, I examined the quality and character of the interactions between the members of each pair and considered the impact of the mentoring on the pre-service teachers’ teaching.

The data were analyzed from a sociocultural theory perspective on teacher learning (Johnson, 2009) in order to capture the dynamic nature of the dialogic mediation created by engagement in the collaborative mentoring sessions and to trace the extent to which such meditational means were taken up and internalized by pre-service teachers as they engaged in their initial teaching experience. The results indicate that the mentoring sessions served as mediational spaces wherein the pre-service teachers expressed their ideas and feelings in relation to the classes they taught. The results also indicate that the mentoring protocols helped guide the participants’ interactions during the mentoring sessions. In addition, the analysis of the mentor–pre-service teachers’ interactions during the mentoring sessions shows that the mentors adapted the mentoring protocols provided in order to better meet the pre-service teachers’ developmental level. The mentors were also found to provide the pre-service teachers with significant emotional support, apparently recognizing the challenges that the latter faced in the classroom. Lastly, the study shows that the pre-service teachers learned from conversing with their mentors and applied
what they learned (emerging conceptions of teaching) to their own teaching. In one of the pairs, reciprocal mentoring (Wink & Putney, 2002) took place whereby the pre-service teacher, a more capable other (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), guided the mentor in regard to creating an instructional tool for teaching English grammar.

The study demonstrates the importance of providing mentoring experiences that create spaces in which pre-service teachers can externalize their thoughts and feelings about their teaching. In addition, it highlights the significance of the emotional and professional support provided by mentors and the critical role that extended mentoring experiences can have on the development of pre-service teachers’ teaching expertise.
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“If you don't like someone's story, write your own.”
— Chinua Achebe

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Chapter 1

Conceptions of Mentoring

1.1 Introduction

Teacher mentoring is an important issue in much recent research on general teacher education (e.g., Bradbury, 2010; Orland-Barak, 2010; Wang & Odell, 2007). Historically, teacher mentoring stems from the model of clinical supervision proposed in the context of general teacher education by Goldhammer (1969) and Cogan (1973), which focuses on a growth-oriented rather than an evaluative component in teacher supervision. In this context, several other approaches have also been proposed, such as a humanistic perspective (Varney, 2009), a situated learning model of teacher mentoring (e.g., Maynard, 2001), mentoring as an educative experience (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001), and mentoring as co-teaching (Roth & Tobin, 2004).

However, recently, humanistic perspectives on teacher learning (Varney, 2009) have been criticized for failing to attend to the professional needs of teachers (Wang & Odell, 2007). Another conceptual model of teacher mentoring—the situated learning model—based on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) has also been criticized in the context of general teacher education for (1) failing to address complex issues related to power and identity (Maynard, 2001) and (2) failing to pay sufficient attention to promoting educational change (Wang & Odell, 2007). But it should be noted here, at least as the theory is articulated by Lave and Wenger (1991), that neither of these criticisms is warranted.
This chapter starts with a historical overview of teacher mentoring. In addition, the more recent approaches to the practice of teacher mentoring in the context of general teacher education research are described and critiqued.

### 1.2 A Historical Overview

As mentioned above, the idea of teacher mentoring is closely related to the work of Goldhammer (1969) and Cogan (1973) who proposed the model of clinical supervision which differed from the more traditional approaches to teacher supervision by focusing on promoting teacher learning from practice rather than solely evaluating teacher performance. In educational research, mentoring is thus defined as a process “supportive of the transformation or development of the mentee and of their acceptance into a professional community” of educators (Malderez, 2009, p. 260). Supervision, in comparison, was traditionally concerned with the “maintenance of standards within an organization” (Malderez, 2009, p. 260).

However, following the publication of the works by Goldhammer (1969) and Cogan (1973), the supervisor’s role has ceased to be associated with evaluating the teachers’ competency to teach (Malderez, 2009; Nolan & Hoover, 2007). Instead, the main function of teacher supervision is today seen as allowing “teachers to grow in ways that are personally meaningful and compatible with their career stages, learning cycles, and general life circumstances” (Nolan & Hoover, 2007, p. 15). Consequently, both teacher mentoring and supervision share the common goal of promoting teachers’ professional development.

Another model of teacher learning that is related to the practice of teacher mentoring is the Cognitive Coaching model (Costa & Garmston, 1993, 1994). Historically, the Cognitive Coaching model (Costa & Garmston 1993, 1994) is rooted in the premises of clinical supervision.
(Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969) and, therefore, addresses the very process of learning-to-teach. It proposes to engage mentors and teachers in a series of collaborative activities, also known as coaching cycles. Each coaching cycle involves a planning conference, an observation, and a reflecting conference. In addition, proponents of the Cognitive Coaching model encourage mentors to ask open-ended and clarifying questions, to make indirect suggestions, and to use paraphrases in their interactions with teachers (Costa & Garmston, 1994; Strong & Baron, 2004).

A more recent version of the Cognitive Coaching model also recognizes direct teaching, i.e., more explicit assistance on the part of a mentor (Costa & Kallick, 2000; Strong & Baron, 2004). The Cognitive Coaching model aims to engage teachers’ higher cognitive functions and to develop teachers’ autonomy (Strong & Baron, 2004). However, it appears that this model relies on the cognitivistic theories of learning that view learning as happening inside a learner’s (in this case, a teacher’s) head. In contrast, more recent, sociocultural perspectives of teacher learning conceptualize teacher cognition as arising from teachers’ participation in the actual activities and contexts of teaching (Johnson, 2009).

The subsequent subsections of this chapter address and critique other more recent conceptual approaches to teacher mentoring.

### 1.3 A Humanistic Perspective on Teacher Mentoring

In response to the recent critiques in the general teacher education literature of different approaches to teacher mentoring (e.g., Bradbury, 2010; Orland-Barak, 2010; Wang & Odell, 2007), Varney (2009) put forward the idea of humanistic mentoring. This conception is based on the work of the American psychologist Carl Rogers who proposed that a genuine helping relationship is a major factor in facilitating an individual’s growth, change, and personal development. According to Rogers (1961), relationships “that can be lived on a real basis” (p.
A genuine helping relationship is characterized by transparency, acceptance, and empathetic understanding. By transparency, Rogers (1961) meant the ability of both the psychotherapist and the patient to be aware of and to express real feelings and attitudes rather than to “present an outward façade of one attitude, while actually holding another attitude at a deeper or unconscious level” (p. 33). By acceptance, he meant the psychotherapist’s readiness to accept the patient as a whole person who experiences both negative and positive emotions, which are changeable by nature and may often contradict those the patient has experienced previously. Finally, empathetic understanding refers to the psychotherapist’s ability to see the world through the patient’s eyes. Rogers (1961) also notes that such a relationship is developmental; i.e., it is a process of constant change on the part of both the psychotherapist and, especially, the patient. In the end, a genuine helping relationship facilitates the patient’s personal growth, which means that the patient becomes more self-directed, more accepting of others, and more open to experience, i.e., he or she starts to accept himself or herself and his or her life as a process rather than as fixed.

Based on these premises, Varney (2009) suggested adopting a humanistic perspective on teacher mentoring. In order to implement the idea of humanistic teacher mentoring, it is necessary for a mentor to show a genuine interest in the novice teacher as a person. In this way, the process of mentoring becomes more relationship-oriented and less task-oriented (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). A mentor’s personal interest in the novice teacher and care for him or her foster the professional growth of the latter. Varney (2009) described how this could work in the following passage:

If the relationship is between a first-year teacher and veteran 25-year mentor in a pre-K-12 school setting, Humanistic Mentoring makes connections with the mentee on aspects
of his or her life both within and outside the classroom. In addition to providing advice on classroom management, pedagogy, or parent conferences, Humanistic Mentoring involves relating to the mentee about his or her personal life. Examples include asking the mentee about his or her residence, how that person’s car is running, or whether he or she is thinking of going back to school. (p. 130)

Thus, humanistic mentoring treats a trusting relationship between a mentor and a novice teacher as a component of utmost importance. Indeed, empirical studies in the context of teacher mentoring demonstrate the importance of a trustworthy relationship between a mentor and a novice teacher. Stanulis and Russel (2000), for example, examined the nature of the relationship between two pairs of mentors and novice teachers during a school-based teaching practicum. They found that trust and communication were perceived as the major factors of a successful mentoring relationship by both the teachers and their mentors. One of the participants, a novice teacher, Julie, reported what she saw as the essential characteristics of a trusting relationship between a mentor and herself, “As long as we keep the dialogue open with each other, then that’s what’s going to make the trust in the relationship grow stronger…” (p. 71). In addition, though the relationship in the other teacher–mentor pair was considered successful in regard to trust, the relationship between Julie and her mentor did not meet this criterion. For example, during their third meeting, Julie’s mentor (Andrea) did not look at her and talked about Julie in the third person. In order to improve the relationship between the two, the researchers asked them to talk about trust and communication in their mentoring relationship at a subsequent meeting. The researchers also found that Julie had tried several times to express opinions that differed from her mentor’s and that such efforts had met with little success. As a result, Julie had become afraid to express any opinions that she felt might contradict her mentor’s views and, in fact, was no longer willing to do so. Furthermore, in the researchers’ opinion, Andrea was not open to acknowledging
approaches to teaching that differed from her own. And, given Julie’s withdrawal, Andrea had little idea of how Julie was progressing or what she was thinking.

Through the lens of the humanistic perspective (Rogers, 1961), it appears that the lack of an open relationship between the mentor (Andrea) and the novice teacher (Julie) inhibited the growth of both participants. Neither was able to share her real feelings, to accept the other’s strengths and weaknesses, or to achieve empathetic understanding in the context of their mentoring relationship.

Overall, according to the humanistic perspective on teacher mentoring, mentors are expected to attend to the affective needs of pre-service teachers and mentors’ emotional support is assumed to ease novices into actual teaching (Gold, 1996). However, critics of the humanistic perspective on mentoring note that this approach foregrounds the “relating” function of mentoring (Portner, 2008), but does not account for the content and processes inhering in learning-to-teach (Wang & Odell, 2007).

1.4 A Situated Learning Model of Teacher Mentoring

The situated learning model is grounded in social constructivist perspectives on learning and draws on the work of Rogoff (1984) and Lave and Wenger (1991). In this model, the mentor is conceptualized as an expert, whereas the novice teacher is conceptualized as an apprentice who learns to teach through participating in activities related to teaching and whose participation patterns change from peripheral to full (Wang & Odell, 2007).

Within this theoretical framework, learning cannot be separated from the social contexts in which it occurs. According to Rogoff (1984), most psychological research has been carried out in laboratory settings and learning was assumed to occur within the mind of each individual
person. However, Rogoff (1984) argues that learning also constitutes an integral part of everyday life and that it depends on social interactions with more experienced others (e.g., child–adult interactions) and various tools and resources. In other words, learning and human cognition are socially situated and distributed.

On a more general plane, learning is viewed as participation in the social activities of a given community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Situated learning involves learning ways of doing certain things in certain contexts and appropriating the discourse and values of a given community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Similar to Rogoff (1984), Lave and Wenger (1991) showed that learning was not restricted to formal contexts, e.g., classrooms. Among the examples they discussed, Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to learning in a Yucatan community (see also Jordan, 1989). They noted that Yucatan Mayan girls who were taught midwifery by their mothers and grandmothers who were practicing midwives were not formally recognized as apprentices. There was no clear distinction between learning to become a midwife and the girls’ everyday lives. Instead, learning was integrated into the other aspects of their lives. As children, Mayan girls learned midwifery initially by observing and listening to the consultations between their mothers, grandmothers, and the women who visited them. Mayan girls also ran simple errands and obtained supplies, e.g., herbs. Gradually, they were able to undertake more complicated tasks, e.g., prenatal massage. Jordan (1989) described the process by which the Mayan girls moved from peripheral to full participation, “As time goes on, the apprentice takes over more and more of the work load, starting with the routine and tedious parts, and ending with what is in Yucatan the culturally most significant, the birth of the placenta” (pp. 932–934).

At the same time, gaining legitimacy in a given community of practice is not necessarily easy. In this regard, Lave and Wenger (1991) showed that what meat cutters learned at trade schools was not related to their actual tasks in many supermarkets (see also Marshall, 1972), or at least, not to the tasks they undertook initially. In order to maintain efficiency, when novice meat
cutters started work in this context, they were often permitted to perform only the most basic tasks, such as wrapping. They were not actually allowed to perform the more complex tasks for which they were trained, e.g., meat cutting. In addition, they were often denied contact and communication with more experienced meat cutters. Overall, these factors inhibited the professional growth of novice meat cutters. In other words, their participation remained peripheral rather than full.

Lave and Wenger (1991) also proposed that situated learning involved a process of identity re-construction on the part of learners. By providing an analysis of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings, Lave and Wenger (1991) showed the primary role of discourse in the identity construction of new members of the given community of practice. Through listening to the stories of other AA members and then sharing their own life stories, new members learned to re-interpret their life experiences and to construct more realistic and powerful identities for themselves (see also Cain, 1991).

According to Wang and Odell (2007), when applied to the context of teacher mentoring, the situated learning model suggests that teaching is a craft that can be learned through doing. Wang and Odell (2007) argue further that according to the situated learning model, the goal of teacher learning is understood as replicating rather than transforming existing educational practices. That is, a novice teacher is required to simply replicate the practices of a more expert teacher (a mentor) without necessarily developing a critical or reflective stance in regard to teaching (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996). And, such limited expectations of the novice teacher may actually serve as a barrier to the development of innovative teaching practices. However, such an interpretation does not accurately represent Lave and Wenger’s (1991) work. In fact, Lave and Wenger (1991) do recognize that communities of practice are not only reproduced but also transformed. For example, they state that “learning is never simply a process of transfer or assimilation: Learning, transformation, and change are always implicated in one another, and the
status quo needs as much explanation as change” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 57). Wang and Odell’s (2007) misinterpretation appears to stem from their reliance on the notion of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), which is one of the major notions in the context of general teacher education. Given that teachers’ apprenticeship of observation (as students in schools) enables their functioning in the classroom even at the beginning of their teaching careers, the move beyond this apprenticeship is an important one in the developmental process of learning to teach (Johnson, 1999). Yet, the institutional context of schools often limits individual teachers in terms of their efforts to implement innovative educational practices (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1991).

Similarly, Maynard (2001) argues that “learning as participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) does not always reflect the complexities of the process of becoming a teacher or the nature of the relationship between mentors and novice teachers. In Maynard’s (2001) study, for example, during a school-based teaching practicum student-teachers felt that they needed to “fit in”; i.e., they imitated the mentors’ practices in an effort to get the children to respond to them. At the same time, the student-teachers did not want to give up their own idealistic notions about teaching or “being themselves” in the classroom. In other words, they wanted the children and the mentors to see them as competent educators, but they also “wanted their own personalities to come out” (p. 45). The novices tended to see these two outcomes as mutually exclusive or at least in tension with each other. Thus, many of the student-teachers experienced an inner conflict on this basis. In regard to the identity development of novice teachers, according to Bullough and Knowles (1991), it is necessary for each novice teacher to develop an identity that is “personally satisfying as well as institutionally fitting and productive” (p. 123).

Moreover, Maynard (2001) found the process of learning the discourse and values of the given school community to be far from straightforward. For example, at the beginning of the practicum, even though the mentors and student-teachers all referred to the concept of active
learning, they voiced different interpretations of it. For the mentors, active learning meant children engaging with the subject matter, reacting to it, using and transforming ideas, and linking new ideas to their present understanding. Overall, they felt this concept reflected the children seeing the activities as purposeful. For the novice teachers, active learning meant children being involved and being physically active with little interference from the teacher. Thus, even though both groups used the term, the underlying conceptions differed. With time, however, the student-teachers’ understandings became less differentiated from those of the mentors and the teaching practices of the former likewise began to look less traditional and more student-centered.

Yet, it seems that Maynard (2001) as well misinterprets Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory. Lave and Wenger (1991) do recognize the complex processes inherent in a newcomer’s identity formation. For example, they write that “these cycles [the cycles of learning and social reproduction] emerge in the contradictions and struggles inherent in social practice and the formation of identities” (p. 57). In addition, Lave and Wenger (1991) describe the ways in which newcomers (e.g., meat cutters) are often denied access to interactions with their more expert colleagues and are prevented from performing certain more complex tasks due to the store owner’s concerns about the profitability and efficiency of the business.

Overall, then, even though the situated learning model of teacher mentoring reflects certain aspects of the process of becoming a teacher, it also features limitations. Though we may conceive of the process of teacher learning and mentoring as the process of moving from the periphery to full participation in the contexts and activities of teaching, the theory fails to provide us with the concrete conceptual tools necessary to trace teacher learning in the context of teacher mentoring.
1.5 Mentoring as an Educative Experience

Teacher mentoring as an educative experience (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001) has had a tremendous impact on recent research in teacher mentoring in the context of general teacher education (e.g., Bradbury, 2010; Schwille, 2008). This conception is rooted in the work of Dewey (1938) who argued that “every learning experience” should be “a moving force” (p. 39). According to Feiman-Nemser (2001), the premises of this approach to mentoring require mentors to promote novices’ inquiry into and reflection on their teaching practices and encourage novices to attend to the students’ understanding (Bradbury, 2010). The role of a mentor can be best described as that of “a co-thinker,” given that mentor–novice interactions focus on fostering an inquiring stance towards teaching and cultivating novices’ “skills and habits … such that they learn in and from their practice” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 18).

This approach to teacher mentoring is based on the ideas of Dewey (1933/1998) who proposed to distinguish between traditional education, which is primarily focused on transmitting to students the knowledge of the past, i.e., facts, and a more progressive education that is less preoccupied with teaching children facts or skills and instead fosters the development of thinking ability. Dewey (1933/1998) argued that from the beginning, children are curious and active learners eager to discover the world around them. However, in traditional schools children turn into passive learners, due to the persistence in schools of the knowledge transmission model of education. According to Dewey (1933/1998), education should allow children to pursue their own interests. This is because significant learning can only occur when the learner is self-directed and intrinsically interested or motivated. The basis for such progressive education should be practical activities, as it is only through experience that people learn. In addition, Dewey (1933/1998) emphasized that the quality of the educational experience matters much more than the content of the educational experience does.
In relation to the nature of knowledge, Dewey (1961) explained that science is not based on dogmatic knowledge or fixed truths, but is characterized by constant inquiry into various phenomena, generating hypotheses, testing theories in controlled experiments, and finding solutions. Children’s learning in schools should resemble scientists’ search for truth. In other words, Dewey (1961) argued for inquiry-oriented and experience-based learning, which promotes children’s cognitive growth.

In accordance with the ideas of Dewey (1961), Feiman-Nemser (1998) characterized educative mentoring as a process based on “growth-producing experiences” (p. 17). Feiman-Nemser (1998) illustrated this claim by reporting on the various strategies that an experienced teacher and teacher educator, Pete Frazer, uses to mentor his student-teachers. In his conversations with novice teachers, Frazer finds openings; i.e., he responds to issues that novice teachers themselves bring to the table and specifically focuses on those that he considers most important to the novices’ development. In addition, Frazer assists novices in pinpointing problems in their practices and, in this way, he probes the novice teachers’ thinking about teaching. This strategy aligns with Deweyan ideas. Thus, Dewey (1961) argued that reality does not present people with ready-made problems, but that humans constantly need to make sense out of their chaotic reality by dissecting problems in it and finding solutions. In addition, Dewey (1961) stated that a person’s established beliefs are similar to dogma in that both are hard to challenge. Nonetheless, it is a purpose of education to develop students’ thinking ability, which starts with questioning established beliefs and conceptions of reality. Pete Frazer also models the practice of “wondering about teaching” (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, p. 25), e.g., he encourages novice teachers to think about the consequences of their teaching practices for the children and about ways to improve teaching in order to facilitate student learning. In other words, he encourages novices to learn from their own practice.
Nonetheless, despite the impact of this conception of teacher mentoring on teacher education, this more recent approach does not seem to provide researchers with the conceptual tools to investigate the cognitive processes of mentors and novices’ development, as it occurs in the context of the professional practice of teacher mentoring.

1.6 Mentoring as Co-Teaching

Proponents of the co-teaching model of teacher mentoring emphasize the collaborative nature of the re-structured mentoring experience (Roth & Tobin 2004; Tobin & Roth, 2005; Tobin, 2006). In this model, a teacher in his or her induction period engages with a number of more experienced co-teachers in a school and with educational researchers in the collaborative activities of co-planning and co-teaching. During these activities, all the co-teachers and researchers share the responsibility for student learning (Roth & Tobin, 2004; Tobin, 2006). In addition, this model engages co-teachers and a small number of students from the class in co-generative post-class dialogues, during which participants refer to direct evidence from a recent class in the form of videos and student work and co-generate possible solutions to various instructional problems that any of the participants experienced during a particular class (Tobin, 2006).

At the core of this approach to mentoring novice teachers lie the concepts of being-in (Dreyfus, 1991) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, 1997). Roth and Tobin (2004) characterize being-in as a “fundamental condition of all knowing” (p. 9). This is because the social is grasped through day-to-day experience and, therefore, being-in can be defined as “non-thematic, unreflective, but
concerned absorption in everyday activity” (Roth & Tobin, 2004, p. 10). Habitus, in its turn, refers to “dispositions that we acquire for perceiving and interacting with the world” (Roth & Tobin, 2004, p. 10). It is also important to note that habitus is not accessible to our consciousness and that it generates “the patterned ways [in which] we interact with the world, that is, our practices that embody actions, perceptions and expectations” (Roth & Tobin, 2004, p. 10). Roth and Tobin (2004) argue further that there is a reflexive relationship between habitus and the world. Thus, on the one hand, our habitus is structured by the world, while on the other hand, as habitus generates our actions and perceptions, habitus structures our world. In other words, our dispositions are always “historical and biographical products”; the past is constituted in the present (Roth & Tobin, 2004, p. 10).

It is also important to remember that habitus is not abstract but always situation-specific. Thus, to acquire habitus, it is necessary to co-participate in situations with those who have already acquired habitus. The condition of habitus, therefore, requires being-in situations and being-with others. Roth and Tobin (2004, p. 10) emphasize that “being-in/with is the central underpinning of the co- in co-teaching.” Further, habitus is not static, but influenced by experience, such that any given experience either reinforces or modifies existing structures of habitus. At the same time, habitus can be modified via self-work, when an individual gets a handle on his or her dispositions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Based on these ideas, Roth and Tobin (2004) propose that becoming a teacher can only happen through experience and co-participation. In addition, they argue that a teacher does not present a stable self; instead, the construction of teacher is a continuous process that arises from interactions in the classroom. As an illustration, we can turn to the story of Ken, an experienced white chemistry teacher, who struggled in his work teaching African-American children in an urban school (Roth & Tobin, 2004). His struggle can be explained by his own middle-class schooling and previous experience teaching in a white middle-class suburban school. Thus, it can
be argued that Ken’s habitus generated dispositions and practices that were not appropriate to this specific African-American urban context. For example, Ken wanted to introduce the children to hands-on and lab experiences to help them develop into autonomous learners. However, he soon found out that resources were scarce and that the students were resistant to learning. According to Ken, “The students did not know the basics and did not have the tools to build the networks of understanding that are at the base of the types of scientific understanding that characterize knowing and doing science in high-grade levels” (Roth & Tobin, 2004, p. 15). The causes of the conflict were evident: the children were accustomed to teacher-controlled classrooms, whereas Ken wanted to introduce a learner-centered approach. The students needed structure, whereas Ken wanted them to be more autonomous and responsible learners.

In addition, Ken noted that the disparity between his age and his students coupled with their different cultural backgrounds meant that he could not always relate to them easily. In order to become a more effective teacher in this particular context, Ken spent time learning from two teachers, a classroom teacher and a student-teacher, both of whom were younger than him. Ken noted that the student-teacher, Cam, was able to connect with students and over time Ken found himself acting like Cam. In this case, the more experienced teacher, Ken, took lessons from Cam, a less experienced teacher.

Roth and Tobin (2004) propose an additional explanation for Ken’s initial lack of success in the new context: they speculate that the students may not have constructed him as a teacher. As noted earlier, this construction arises from teacher–student interactions, but the students were not motivated to learn, a fact that was at least partly responsible for Ken’s struggle. In order to become more effective in this new context, Ken talked with his colleagues and also asked the students to prepare a presentation called “How to Teach Students Like Us.” In this way, he was able to gain a better understanding of how his students viewed the world. In addition, Ken and a
A co-generative co-dialogue following a tenth-grade biology class taught by four teachers, Michael, Stephanie, Ken, and Bert (the classroom teacher), can serve as an example. After the lesson, all four teachers participated in the discussion, along with two students, Natasia and Shawan. The most important question that came up during the discussion was that of how to deal with students who had learning problems. Stephanie said that she had experience using a tutoring system whereby stronger students helped weaker students. However, the two students offered another approach: they recommended separating students into groups and teaching them in those groups during their classes. The students’ suggestion was further elaborated and discussed by the other co-teachers. Roth and Tobin (2004) explain that the basis for such dialogues lies in common experience and that this common experience also serves as a foundation for participation. Thus, Roth and Tobin (2004) write, “everybody needs to be active, contributive to the dialogue … and participants’ experience must be treated as legitimate…” (p. 263). The
authors also argue that teacher educators should not come up with a priori topics for discussion during these co-generative dialogues, but refer to those that emerge during the discussions.

In addition, Roth and Tobin (2004) note that during co-generative dialogues no-one leads the conversation, but each can contribute, including students. All the participants learn from each other. Thus, participation in the teaching/learning process is a necessary but insufficient condition to improve teaching and student learning. Roth and Tobin (2004) emphasize that it is also necessary that students and teachers both serve as co-producers of knowledge, e.g., during co-generative dialogues. As noted earlier, this claim is based on activity theory (Leont’ev, 1978), which is interventionalist in its nature and which sees humans as creators of their learning environments. In other words, the theory aims to assist humans in re-constructing their environments, so that people become not mere objects or subordinate parts, but re-gain their roles as creators (Kuutti, 1999). Thus, through co-generative dialogues, teachers, researchers, and students can all construct environments that are more conducive to learning than their current environments are.

Despite its benefits, however, one of the possible critiques of this approach lies in the proponents’ lack of attention to specific meditational tools, e.g., scientific concepts related to teaching, that potentially emerge during co-generative dialogues and that mediate teachers’ learning.

1.7 Conclusion

Overall, the various approaches to teacher mentoring each highlight different aspects of this professional activity. Nonetheless, none of these approaches to teacher mentoring provides
researchers with the conceptual tools to investigate the cognitive processes of mentors and novices’ development, as they occur in the context of the professional practice of teacher mentoring. However, sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which is explored in the next chapter, has great potential in this regard.
Chapter 2

Sociocultural Perspective on Teacher Mentoring

2.1 Introduction

Vygotskyan sociocultural theory holds that all human cognitive development is mediated by human engagement in the social activities of a given society (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1981). Vygotsky wrote that “all higher mental functions are internalized social relationships” (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 164). In other words, human cognition develops through concrete social contexts and interactions among people.

In relation to teacher education research, this perspective suggests that the activities and contexts of teaching represent a potential locus of a teacher’s cognitive development (Cross, 2010; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Johnson, 2009). In other words, a sociocultural perspective of teacher learning proposes that a teacher’s cognition and behavior develop interdependently in the social, historical, and cultural contexts of teaching (Cross, 2010; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Johnson, 2009). From this perspective, it can be argued that teacher mentoring is a socially mediated activity that serves as a locus for the potential development of both mentors and novice teachers. Both mentors and novice teachers’ learning and/or development are mediated by the concrete teaching activities a mentor and a novice participate in, by symbolic (e.g., concepts from teaching-related literature) and physical tools (e.g., journals, e-portfolios), and social interactions (among themselves, with peers). Following Johnson and Golombek’s (2003) proposal that suggests a Vygotskyan sociocultural perspective as a theoretical lens to “see” teacher learning, this work extends it to the context of teacher mentoring. In order to understand how a perspective grounded in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) can provide researchers with concrete
conceptual tools to support an investigation of “the internal cognitive activity of teacher development” (Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 309) that occurs during teacher mentoring, the following theoretical concepts of the sociocultural theory will be reviewed: mediation, development, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), imitation, internalization, and praxis.

### 2.2.1 Mediation

The concept of mediation is defined as “the process through which humans deploy culturally constructed artifacts, concepts, and activities to regulate (i.e., gain voluntary control and transform) the material world or their own and each other’s social and mental activity” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 79). In other words, humans do not interact directly with the world; instead, they use culturally constructed artifacts that include both physical and symbolic tools (Lantolf, 1994). Physical tools enhance human physical abilities (e.g., driving a car to a given destination), whereas symbolic tools, such as language, mnemonics, mathematics, and other symbolic systems allow humans to organize and gain control over their mental activity (Lantolf, 1994). Lantolf (2007) states that human intellectual development is mediated “by others, whether they are immediately present as in the case of parents guiding children or teachers guiding students, or displaced in time and place, as when we read texts produced by others or participate in activities, such as work, organized in specific ways by a culture” (p. 32). In other words, development of human cognition is mediated by the sociocultural environments in which people are involved.

In the context of formal education, the goal of mediation inheres in promoting learners’ cognitive development. Haywood and Lidz (2007) explain that “mediation is what good parents and teachers do when they want to promote high levels of mental functioning in their children
From a sociocultural perspective, learners’ cognitive development is understood as a process through which learners appropriate (or make their own) symbolic mediational means that become the psychological constructs guiding their thinking and activities (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In regard to symbolic mediation, Wertsch (2007) states that “the inclusion of signs into human action does not simply lead to quantitative improvements in terms of speed or efficiency … the focus is on how the inclusion of tools and signs leads to qualitative transformation [i.e., development]” (p. 179).

Learners’ everyday and scientific concepts illustrate symbolic meditational means that mediate an educational experience. Vygotsky (1963) explained that everyday concepts are formed during practical activities and they are less systematic or generalizable and are open to conscious inspection (see also Johnson, 2009). In contrast, scientific concepts are defined as “the generalizations of the experience of the humankind that is fixed in science, understood in the broadest sense of the term to include both natural and social science as well as humanities” (Karpov, 2003, p. 66). People enter schools with everyday conceptions of the world and are introduced to scientific concepts through education (Karpov, 2003). To illustrate this distinction, the following example may be useful. A child’s response to the request to define “uncle” offers an example of an everyday understanding of the term “uncle”: “My uncle Fred.” However, a more scientific definition would be the following: “the male sibling of my mother or father” (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007). From a sociocultural perspective, education should aim at developing learners’ conceptual understanding of subject knowledge (Karpov, 2003; Vygotsky, 1963). This thinking in concepts is achieved through learners’ integration of their everyday concepts with scientific concepts in the backdrop of concrete activities (Karpov, 2003; Vygotsky, 1963).

When applied to the context of teacher mentoring, the concept of mediation allows us to re-conceptualize the practice of teacher mentoring as a socially mediated activity. Engagement in this activity serves as a locus for potential cognitive development of both mentors and novices. In
order for us to “see” how this cognitive development occurs, attention should be paid to the particular symbolic mediational means that mediate this experience and how these mediational means become appropriated by participants of this learning activity. Vygotsky considered language to be one of the primary mediational tools in fostering human cognitive development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In all the principal teacher mentoring activities, such as learning conversations with a mentor or peers and the use of portfolios, journals, and guided observation tasks, symbolic mediational means play a major role.

Among the symbolic mediational means that mediate participants’ learning during teacher mentoring, both everyday and scientific concepts play a particularly important role. In regard to the purposes of teacher education, a sociocultural perspective suggests that teacher education programs should help teacher candidates develop a conceptual understanding of teaching, or thinking in concepts (Karpov, 2003). This can be achieved by teacher candidates’ externalizing their everyday concepts of teaching, which then should be connected to research-based (scientific) concepts (Johnson, 2009). Further, it is important that these research-based concepts be grounded in the actual activities of teaching (Johnson, 2009). In the context of teacher education research, Kennedy (1999) made a similar distinction in defining teacher expertise as a synthesis of expert, i.e., propositional knowledge “found in encyclopedias, textbooks, how-to manuals, guidebooks and handbooks” (p. 31) with craft (or experiential) knowledge.

In regard to the practice of teacher mentoring, it can be argued that this professional activity represents the very locus, in which a novice teacher develops his or her thinking in concepts (Karpov, 2003). This is because during this activity, novices are engaged in actual teaching (during their practicums or induction periods) and also engage in teaching-related discussions with a more expert other (a mentor). During these discussions, a novice teacher externalizes his or her understanding of teaching and thus opens it for social mediation from a
mentor. During these conversations, both mentors and teachers may also appeal to expert knowledge (Kennedy, 1999) in order to enhance their current understandings of teaching or make a better sense of them (Kinginger, 1997). In addition, a mentor, by externalizing his or her more expert ways of thinking about teaching, makes them visible to a novice, but also to himself or herself. This conscious awareness of one’s activity (of teaching), or of “what and why one is doing what one is doing”, is an important first step for further development (Ferreira, 2005, p. 55). In this way, a novice teacher serves as a temporary other (Golombek & Johnson, 2004) mediating the mentor’s development.

A number of research studies in the fields of literacy and language teacher education illustrate how teachers can mediate their thinking about teaching through engagement with expert knowledge (Kennedy, 1999) (e.g., Ball, 2000; Johnson, 2009; Sharkey, 2003; Reis, 2011; Yoshida, 2011). For example, Sharkey (2003) tells about her emerging understanding of the theoretical constructs of subjectivity and subject positioning (Norton, 1995) and how these new understandings allowed her to re-conceptualize an ESL student’s situation and induced her to question her own teaching (see also Johnson, 2009). Sharkey (2003) describes the following situation: A 15-year-old ESL high school student is asked to participate in a school Christmas celebration. Ivan (the student) is expected to recite a Christmas poem from the stage and is provided with a picture of Santa Clause to accompany his recital. Outside the school community, Ivan is involved in community service, contributes financially to his family, and plans to become a jet pilot. Thus, Ivan’s role in the Christmas celebration (his subject position) does not agree with his self-image, which he constructs outside the school. Ivan expresses his resistance by painting the picture of Santa Clause in fluorescent, Las Vegas-like colors, for which he is reprimanded by his teachers who interpret his behavior as proceeding from a negative attitude to learning English. The concepts of subjectivity and subject positioning allow Sharkey (2003) to understand the causes of the student’s resistance and also make her think about the subject positions that she
allows her students to have in her own ESL classes. Here, it can be seen how the scientific concepts of subjectivity and subject positioning become the psychological tools that a teacher can use to think about her students and her teaching in a new way (Johnson, 2009).

Within the frames of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, social interaction is also considered an important mediational means. The following example from the context of L2 teacher education research can illustrate this claim. Through conversations with a colleague (a temporary other), a fifth-grade teacher in a bilingual elementary Spanish-English school in Spain had an opportunity to externalize his concerns related to teaching (some children remained silent in his classes), explore reasons for this phenomenon, and develop new ways of interacting with the children, all of which contributed to more interaction on the students’ part in this teacher’s subsequent classes (Boshell, 2002; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson 2009). The dialogues between this teacher and his colleague are based on the principles of Cooperative Development (Edge, 1992), which also mediate this activity. According to these principles, an Understaner (in this case, the teacher’s colleague) needs to avoid any judgmental or evaluative comments while listening to a Speaker’s (in this case, the fifth-grade teacher’s) concerns and guide him or her in elaborating previous thoughts, making connections between them, and deciding on a plan of action that addresses the specific issues the Speaker wants to resolve. In a similar vein, interactions between a mentor and a novice teacher provide opportunities for both the mentor and the teacher to externalize their thoughts about teaching decisions and practices. In this way, these dialogues can allow a novice teacher to externalize his or her thoughts related to teaching and open them for social mediation from a more expert other (a mentor). On the other hand, a novice teacher can serve as a temporary other for the mentor. In other words, interactions between a mentor and a novice teacher can serve as “a mediational space” (Wertsch, 1985) where both the mentor’s and teacher’s thoughts can become subject to social mediation.
Moreover, within a sociocultural theory framework, special attention is paid to the quality of mediation (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In the context of EFL teacher mentoring, Ahn (2009) reports on the experiences of an EFL mentor and a pair of pre-service EFL teachers assigned to her. In Ahn’s account, the pre-service teachers are initially willing to teach English in more communicative ways; however, the mentor is more focused on accuracy, repetition, and structure in her teaching, which has a major impact on how the two pre-service teachers begin to think about and practice teaching. Thus, Ahn’s (2009) research shows the important role mentors play in constructing pre-service teachers’ conceptions of good teaching and their actual teaching practices. A sociocultural perspective, however, also argues that with proper mediation, such contradictory experiences can promote the development of both participants. For example, according to this perspective, after-class discussions, which may involve co-teachers (or, a mentor and a novice teacher) and students from a particular class, can serve as a place where perceived contradictions are articulated and participants can work collaboratively to find solutions to problems (Roth & Tobin, 2004).

Finally, understanding of teacher mentoring as a socially mediated activity leads us to conceptualize it as a locus for potential development of all its participants. Recent research in the area does not feature many attempts at this investigation (i.e., research studies examining both mentors and teachers’ learning and/or development during a mentored learning-to-teach experience) (e.g., Caruso 1998, 2000). In one of such rare investigations, Caruso (2000) identifies six various phases in the process of pre-service teacher mentoring and shows that both mentors and teachers’ perceptions of this experience are interdependent. For example, phase 5 is characterized as “a co-teacher/a solo teacher” for mentors and “more confidence/greater inadequacy” for pre-service teachers. During this phase, if a mentor perceives a pre-service teacher as a “co-teacher,” it implies that the pre-service teacher feels more confidence while teaching. At the same time, if the mentor perceives himself or herself as “a solo teacher,” it means
that the pre-service teacher also feels his or her inadequacy as a teacher (i.e., he or she cannot contribute to the teaching/learning process). However, Caruso’s (2000) study mainly relies on the perceptions and emotions of both mentors and teachers and does not show what mentors and teachers actually learn as a result of their participation in the mentoring process.

In fact, this line of research has been recently undertaken in the context of technology teacher mentoring (e.g., Grove, Odell, & Strudler, 2006; Margerum-Leys & Marx, 2004). Grove, Odell, and Strudler’s (2006) study is a case study of a mentor and a pre-service teacher focused on integrating technology to support student learning in an eighth-grade geography class. On the basis of this study, Grove, Odell, and Strudler (2006) emphasize “that mentoring toward technology use involves more than just showing the equipment or software and how it operates [to a novice]. It also involves the development of conceptual perspectives … to teaching and learning activities” (p. 91). Grove, Odell, and Strudler (2006) also report on an instance of reciprocal mentoring (Wink & Putney, 2002), where the pre-service teacher was a more capable other who mentored the mentor in the use of PowerPoint. Margerum-Leys and Marx (2004) concede that “educational technology is an area in which mentor teachers are eager to access content knowledge held by student-teachers” (p. 423).

Overall, the concept of mediation allows us to re-conceptualize the teacher mentoring experience as a socially mediated process. According to a sociocultural theory perspective, cognitive development occurs as people engage in sociocultural activities (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the practice of teacher mentoring can be conceptualized as a space in which both mentors and teachers develop. However, in order to foster and “see” this development, attention should be paid to how the participants make use of symbolic mediational means during this experience. Here, opportunities to externalize one’s understanding of teaching (everyday concepts), reflect on this understanding and examine it in a process of social mediation with an expert other (a mentor), peers or expert knowledge (Kennedy, 1999) are crucial. In these
“mediational spaces” (Wertsch, 1985), certain contradictions can be also articulated, which serves, in turn, as a way to foster future development.

2.2.2 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

From a sociocultural theoretical perspective, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is defined as “an interaction during which, through mediation, an individual achieves more than she could have achieved if she had been working alone. During the ZPD, learning leads development” (Swain, Kinner, & Steinman, 2011, p. 153). The ZPD can be also explained as “the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else and/or cultural artifacts” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 17). Vygotsky (1978) distinguished between the actual level of a child’s development, i.e., the child’s independent performance on a certain task and the potential level of the child’s development, which can be revealed in child–adult collaboration over the task. In other words, the concept of ZPD includes learners’ maturing abilities. Vygotsky (1978) also argued that education should aim at the potential and not at the actual level of learners’ development.

The ZPD also involves an important affective (or, emotional) aspect based on the Vygotskyan notion of the unity of affect and cognition (Vygotsky, 1987). Vygotsky (1994) observed that “the emotional experience arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child” (p. 339). Importantly, Belopolskaya (1997) notes that most of the research has focused on learners’ cognitive development, whereas the affective dimension of the ZPD has received much less attention. Thus, research that examines learners’ development in the ZPD must account for the relationship between emotions and cognition.
Another important aspect of the ZPD construct has to do with the idea of transformation. Kinginger (2002) stated that this aspect of the ZPD has been also overlooked by many researchers. According to Kinginger (2002), “the ZPD … represents a potential capacity for transformative growth and performance that is only realized through mediated interaction with expert discourses” (p. 249). Moreover, she argued that the ZPD should be regarded as a “process of dialectical synthesis, where both participants and semiotic tools are transformed in fundamentally unpredictable ways” (p. 250). Thus, a sociocultural perspective of learning suggests that novice teachers do not merely copy experts, but transform what experts offer them (Lantolf, 2000; Johnson, 2009). Moreover, engagement in a certain activity is transformative for all its participants, for the tools used in the activity, and for the activity itself.

The idea of transformation is closely related to the idea of development. Within the frames of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, cognitive development is understood as a process through which a child collaborates with adults and more capable peers and thereby appropriates human cultural experience and cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1978). In their collaboration with adults, children are often involved in imitation, which Vygotsky (1998) considered one of the major factors in fostering mental development. By imitation, Vygotsky (1998) did not mean a “mindless, copious activity” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 176), but a “sensible imitation based on understanding” (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 203). Vygotsky (1987) also indicated that “a child can imitate only what lies within the zone of his intellectual potential” (p. 209). As Vygotsky (1987, pp. 209–210) explained it, once problems become too difficult for the child, he or she fails to resolve them, even in collaboration with adults and/or more capable peers. In addition, from a Vygotskian sociocultural perspective, the process of development is not seen as linear, but uneven, hectic, and dynamic. Development is understood as both a forward and backward movement that is ultimately progressive (Wink & Putney, 2002). Zebroski (1994) explained that “apparent failure and backward development … nonetheless foreshadow the reorganization and
restructuring of experience and prepare for the developmental leap that follows” (p. 162). In other words, even if there is a period of regression, it still contributes to the general movement forward, i.e., to learners’ development (Ableeva, 2010).

The concept of ZPD is particularly relevant in the context of the present study, as it allows us to better understand the ultimate goals of teacher mentoring as a sociocultural practice, i.e., it implies the transformation of not only the learner (a teacher), but also of the mentor, the mediating tools, and the activity itself. The following two examples from the context of L2 teacher education research illustrate how engagement in the activity of teaching and social mediation from peers and from expert discourse can lead to the transformation of teachers, teaching practices, and mediational means.

The first example deals with a teacher’s transformation of her teaching activity (Herndon, 2002; see also Johnson 2007, 2009). This teacher’s narrative starts with a description of teaching a literature class to immigrant ESL students that “just didn’t feel right” (Herndon, 2002, p. 35). This teacher’s emotional dissonance (Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Olson, 1995) is rooted in the teacher’s awareness of a certain cognitive contradiction: her beliefs about teaching (that students should have ownership over their writing and reading) did not match her actual teaching practices (she dominated the discussions and did not let the students’ ideas be heard). Based on a Vygotskian premise of the unity of affect and cognition, emotional dissonance is regarded as a source for further development (Golombek & Johnson, 2004). In what follows, the ESL teacher appeals to the means of social mediation, such as co-working with a colleague and reading relevant research to address her dissatisfaction with teaching of literature to ESL students. In the end, she does not only re-conceptualize her teaching of the literature to the ESL students, but she also initiates a change (or, transforms) in her teaching practices, in view of her new understandings. These different teaching practices, in which greater agency in working with literary texts is given over to students, induce students to engage more with the texts and also
foster this teacher’s greater satisfaction with her teaching. In this account, we also see student learning as a mediational means that influences this teacher’s transformation and her transformation of the teaching practices. From a sociocultural perspective, attention to the relationship between teaching and student learning is important in understanding the overall process of teacher learning and/or development.

The second example illustrates how a teacher (Anna) re-purposes an existing mediational tool from the context of her professional development to the context of her teaching. The teacher (Anna) draws on protocols from the meetings of the Critical Friends Group in which she participated in order to re-organize the writing activities of her Language Arts students, which leads to greater student engagement with writing (Poehner, 2011). These two examples demonstrate that teachers do not simply copy expert practices, concepts, and tools; instead, teachers creatively adapt them to the contexts of their work. However, in order for this to happen, teachers should be provided an opportunity to appropriate, or internalize, new symbolic mediational means.

Internalization can be defined as “a process through which a person’s activity is initially mediated by other people or cultural artifacts but later comes to be controlled by the person as he or she appropriates and reconstructs resources to regulate his or her own activities” (Johnson, 2009, p. 33). In the context of teacher mentoring, an application of this concept implies that in the beginning, a novice teacher’s activity will mainly depend on the available mediational means, such as the mentor’s mediation. However, by the end of a mentored learning-to-teach experience, a teacher will be capable of greater self-regulation. Moreover, the initial stages of this process can be characterized as acts of imitation. The following example from the context of L2 teacher education provides some support for this claim: a study by Johnson and Arshavskaya (2011) traces pre-service teachers’ emergent understanding of pedagogical and subject concepts in the context of a microteaching simulation in an MA TESOL program. This study shows that at the
beginning of this experience, prospective teachers relied heavily on such cultural artifacts as lesson plans and materials from the Internet (object-regulation), as well as the mediation they received from their peers and the course instructor (other-regulation). The pre-service teachers also “re-voiced” the ESL methods course instructor’s language in their teaching and reflection papers that they wrote at the end of their microteaching experience (Bakhtin, 1982). However, it should also be noted that the process of moving from other- and object-regulation to self-regulation reflects a dynamic Vygotskyan view of human cognitive development; that is, the process is not linear. Specifically, by halfway through the microteaching simulation experience, one of the pre-service teachers was already evincing some signs of self-regulation. For example, in the course of his practice teaching, following some prompting from the ESL methods course instructor, he suddenly began to doubt the usefulness of his presentation materials for ESL students and started to think of alternative ways to present the topic.

Application of the concept of internalization to the context of teacher mentoring also has implications for empirical research in this field. The need to examine novice teachers’ practices, to determine the extent to which the process of internalization takes place, seems particularly evident. In the existing research, attempts analyzing the actual practices of mentored teachers have not been numerous (see also Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). For example, in one of such rare examinations, Wang and Paine (2001), drawing on the sociocultural perspectives of teacher learning, examine the process of mentoring a new elementary school mathematics teacher in China. The analysis of this teacher’s lesson plans and classroom teaching shows her movement from a skill-oriented to a concept-oriented understanding of mathematics, the latter being promoted by her mentor. Wang and Paine (2001) argue that this novice teacher’s transformation was mainly fostered by her mentor’s explicit explanations of a concept-oriented approach to teaching mathematics.
Overall, the concept of ZPD is important in allowing us to better understand how teacher development occurs during the activity of teacher mentoring. First, this concept allows us to re-conceptualize the goals of teacher mentoring. Instead of reproducing existing teaching practices, e.g., the situated apprenticeship model of mentoring, teacher mentoring as a practice should be seen as an opportunity for both the mentors and novice teachers’ cognitive transformation, or development. Such a transformation will also involve the transformation of tools and existing teaching activities. Second, the construct of ZPD allows us to recognize both the emotional and professional needs of mentors and novice teachers, thus allowing us to conceptualize emotional dissonance rooted in the awareness of cognitive contradictions as a catalyst for further development (Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Olson, 1995). Third, it leads us to recognize the process of development as hectic and uneven. Finally, the concepts of ZPD and internalization emphasize the need to examine the actual practices of novice teachers in an attempt to find out whether the mediational means available to novice teachers during the mentoring experience have become the psychological tools (Kozulin, 1998) guiding not only these teachers’ thinking but also their teaching practices.

2.2.3 Praxis

In order to achieve the goal of teacher change (or transformation) during a professional development experience, researchers adopting a sociocultural perspective argue for the relevance of the concept of praxis to address this issue (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Lantolf, 2000). This concept has its roots in the works of Karl Marx and Paolo Freire and can be defined as the integration of practice and theory. Glass (2001) defined praxis as follows: “Reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it…. The praxis that defines human existence is marked by its historicity; this dialectical interplay between the way in which history and culture make people
even while people are making that history and culture” (p. 16). Praxis can also be defined as learning in and from practice, e.g., learning from the actual activities of teaching and mentoring. In what follows, the concept of praxis is illustrated by examples of the existing research in the field.

In a study of a pre-service teacher learning in the context of an MA TESOL internship, an MA TESOL dialogic blog was found to serve as an important “mediational space” (Wertsch, 1985). In this space, the pre-service teacher externalized her conceptualization of teaching and opened it for social mediation, i.e., the supervisor’s assistance, during her teaching practicum experience (Arshavskaya, 2011). In this way, the pre-service teacher had an opportunity to reflect on her experiences related to her teaching in the blog, whereas the supervisor could see the teacher’s thinking and provide the pre-service teacher with relevant assistance. The pre-service teacher then had an opportunity to draw on her new conceptualizations of teaching in her actual teaching. This integration of conceptual knowledge into actual teaching exemplifies the idea of praxis in the context of pre-service teacher learning.

In the context of mentor learning, the following two examples are illustrative. In Clarke’s (2006) study, a mentor teacher (Garry) was first asked to explain his understanding of mentoring to a researcher. In responding, Garry showed that he based his understanding of mentoring on the concept/skill of “active listening skills,” according to which a mentor takes a non-directive approach to mentoring. Therefore, in his actual mentoring practice, Garry typically held back his judgmental ideas about Elaine’s (the pre-service teacher’s) teaching ideas and practices. However, towards the middle of the experience of his continued interactions with the researcher, Garry began to feel that this approach had its limitations and that the pre-service teacher was in need of more guidance. Garry’s engagement in the actual activity of mentoring and externalization of his experience (in conversations with the researcher) allowed him to better understand the concept/skill of “active listening skills” and define its relevance to the actual
practice of mentoring. From the perspective of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), such an experience represents an example of praxis, inasmuch as the mentor learned from actually engaging in mentoring activity and conversations with the researcher.

The second example supports the idea that in order for praxis to occur, learners (in this case, teacher educators) should be provided with appropriate mediational means and that sometimes mentors’ self-mediation may not be sufficient. The experience of a supervising professor responsible for placing pre-service teachers in mentors’ classrooms is related by Orland-Barak (2010) to support exactly this point. Two pre-service teachers whom the professor had placed with the same mentor in a school asked to be reassigned. They felt that they were not learning anything from the mentor with whom they had been placed. This mentor had mentored teachers before and had a good professional reputation. On the basis of these latter two factors, the supervisor decided not to reassign the pre-service teachers. However, the pre-service teachers both eventually made a second request for a different placement, and at this point the supervisor acceded. She decided to meet the teachers’ needs; she moved them to the classroom of a different mentor, with whom they were very happy. The supervisor’s journal shows that she struggled with the problem before becoming satisfied with her final decision to move the pre-service teachers to another school:

I am completely fine with my decision: our first duty is towards the students—to provide them with the best kind of training possible—so if there is a bad experience or connection between the cooperating teacher and the student, no matter when, we should do everything in our power to protect the student-teacher. I don’t care if everybody in the school tries to convince me otherwise (the supervisor’s reflection, Orland-Barak, 2010, p. 69).

In regard to this narrative, Orland-Barak (2010) argued that this supervisor overlooks other important mediational means, such as initiating a mutual meeting with the mentor and the
two pre-service teachers or asking the pre-service teachers to reflect on their experiences. Here, it appears that the supervisor conceptualizes her work as primarily attending to the emotional needs of pre-service teachers (protecting the student-teachers); whereas from the more recent perspectives of teacher mentoring (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001), the goal of a teacher educator also lies in creating learning experiences for new teachers.

Overall, from the examples above, we see the importance of opening teachers and mentors’ current ideas for social mediation (Arshavskaya, 2011; Clarke, 2006). Lack of thereof (e.g., Orland-Barak, 2010) may not lead to qualitative changes, to learners’ (in this case, mentors and teachers’) cognitive development. Integration of conceptual knowledge and actual practical activity is known as praxis (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Lantolf, 2000) and should be seen as a necessary condition for development to occur (Lantolf, 2000; Johnson, 2009).

The following section reviews recent empirical investigations with regard to teacher mentoring in the context of general and L2 teacher education.

2.3 Empirical Studies on Mentor and Novice Teacher Learning: Overview and Gaps

The literature on mentoring pre-service teachers is expansive (Nolan & Mark, 2010). A number of researchers have analyzed mentors’ perspectives on their engagement in mentoring pre-service teachers through surveys and interviews. In general, this research has found that mentors view mentoring as an opportunity for professional development and perceive it as more relevant and enriching than, for example, university-based professional development workshops (Ariav & Clinard, 1996; Clarke, 2006; Ganser, 1997; Spencer, 2008). In discussing the benefits of participating in mentoring activities, mentors reference increased opportunities to discuss their
professional work with a colleague (a novice teacher), to learn about new ideas, and to co-reflect on teaching practices (Ganser, 1997).

At the same time, there have been few investigations of actual mentor–pre-service teachers’ interactions, particularly in the context of L2 teacher education research (Hyland & Lo, 2008). In terms of general teacher education, Feiman-Nemser (1996) noted that research on mentoring has been mainly represented by “program descriptions, survey-based evaluations, definitions of mentoring, and general discussions of mentors’ roles and responsibilities” (n.p.). She argued that “we need more direct studies of mentoring and its effects on teaching and teacher retention” (n.p.).

In one such recent investigation, Boreen and Niday (2000) explored email interaction between a pre-service ESL teacher and her mentor over the period of one semester and outlined the strategies that the experienced mentor used in this context. However, the study was limited to analyzing the mentor’s mentoring strategies; it did not explore the pre-service teacher’s responses to that assistance. John and Gilchrist (1999) explored post-observation discussions between a mentor and each of two pre-service teachers and found that the mentor was able to vary the kind of assistance she rendered based on the developmental readiness of each. For example, one of the pre-service teachers required more assistance than did the other, and the mentor was still able to help this teacher develop an inquiring stance towards teaching rather than simply resolve his teaching dilemmas for him. However, this study was limited to an analysis of two sessions with each pre-service teacher and, therefore, did not explore the development of mentors’ strategies and/or changes in the pre-service teachers’ responses to those strategies longitudinally.

Similarly, Golombek (2011) showed how an L2 teacher educator shifted her mediation (from implicit to explicit) in response to a pre-service teacher’s needs in their interaction in regard to the video recording of a class the latter had taught. Through analysis of the transcripts of her conversation with the MA TESOL pre-service teacher, Golombek (2011) explored the quality
and character of this interaction. In particular, she showed how the teacher educator’s and the pre-service teacher’s engagement in this dialogic activity had enabled the former to understand the latter’s thinking and modify mediation accordingly. In this interaction, the teacher educator fostered the novice’s ability to think about why she had made certain choices in the classroom. In this way, the teacher educator afforded the novice an opportunity to demonstrate her ability to engage in reasoning teaching (Johnson, 1999) and to articulate alternative instructional solutions to various classroom situations. However, this study was limited to an investigation of a single discussion between the teacher educator and the pre-service L2 teacher.

In regard to novice teacher learning, it was found that novices primarily rely on their pre-existing beliefs about teaching and previous learning experiences (as students in schools) rather than on conceptions of teaching that are based on university coursework in making instructional decisions during teaching practicums and during induction periods (Kagan, 1992). Furthermore, pre-service teachers’ self-reports show that they perceive a disconnect between their practicum experiences and university coursework (Kagan, 1992). In relation to teachers in their induction periods, they experience a need to develop effective approaches to teaching subject matter knowledge to their students, to learn about their instructional contexts, classroom management, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and etc. (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). At the same time, it was found that mentors tend to provide emotional support and attend to technical needs of novice teachers, rather than focusing on the issues related to teaching (Wang & Odell, 2002).

Consequently, researchers argue that teacher educators (mentors) should adopt approaches to mentoring novices that aim to intervene in novices’ thinking about teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Freeman, 1990). This proposal also agrees with a sociocultural perspective of teacher education that proposes that a teacher educator should play a major role in mediating a novice’s learning-to-teach (Johnson, 2009). Other alternative solutions that have been proposed in order to
address the needs of novice teachers during their mentored learning-to-teach experiences are discussed in the following paragraph.

A partner (or peer) teaching model of mentoring has been recently implemented and examined in the context of general teacher education (Bullough et al., 2003). A traditional model of mentoring requires a single mentor to work with a single pre-service teacher, whereas a partner (or peer) teaching model places two pre-service teachers with one mentor. This alternative mentoring arrangement has been found to have a positive impact on learners (school children), to offer increased support for participating pre-service teachers, and to provide more opportunities for teaching-related discussions among all members of the triad (Bullough et al., 2003). Similarly, proponents of the co-teaching model of teacher mentoring emphasize the collaborative nature of the re-structured mentoring experience (Roth & Tobin 2004; Tobin & Roth, 2005; Tobin, 2006). This model engages a teacher in his or her induction period and a number of more experienced co-teachers in a school in the collaborative activities of co-planning and co-teaching. During these activities, all co-teachers share the responsibility for student learning (Roth & Tobin, 2004; Tobin, 2006). In addition, this model engages co-teachers and a small number of students from the class in co-generative after-class dialogues, during which participants refer to direct evidence from a recent class in the form of videos and student work and co-generate possible solutions to various instructional problems that either of the participants experienced during a particular class (Tobin, 2006). From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), increased opportunities for collaborative dialogue and activity are viewed as potential loci for participants’ (e.g., co-teachers’) learning.

In regard to recent research related to mentors’ learning during teacher mentoring, it has been found that mentors view their participation in the activities of teacher mentoring as an opportunity for professional development and perceive this form of professional development as more relevant and enriching than, for example, university-based professional development.
workshops (Ariav & Clinard, 1996; Clarke, 2006; Ganser, 1997; Spencer, 2008). In discussing the benefits of participating in mentoring activities, mentors reference increased opportunities to discuss their professional work with a colleague (a novice teacher), to learn about new ideas, and to co-reflect on teaching practices (Ganser, 1997). In addition, researchers recognize that within the context of mentoring teachers, mentors should be provided with greater opportunities to learn in and from their practice (Arnold, 2002; Clarke, 2006).

Clarke (2006) engaged several mentors in stimulated recall sessions during which they watched videos of their interactions with pre-service teachers and reflected on the content. This study found that by reflecting on their work in this way mentors began to re-conceptualize many of their experiences related to mentoring. For example, before participating in the study, the mentors tended not to connect their own insufficient guidance to pre-service teachers’ unsuccessful experiences in the classroom. However, during their participation in Clarke’s (2006) study, the mentors started to develop a greater sense of responsibility for the pre-service teachers’ learning. The mentors began to understand that their feedback was not always explicit enough for the pre-service teachers. In addition, the mentors started to realize the importance of knowing more about the pre-service teachers’ backgrounds (or, histories) and to understand that this factor is important in accounting for the kinds of instructional decisions these teachers make. Mentors also became aware that many of the pre-service teachers had poor subject knowledge, which prevented the latter from connecting with students (Clarke, 2006).

Other researchers report on the benefits that mentors gain from participating in collegial mentor study groups as well as through reflecting on their experiences in individual journals (Arnold, 2002; Carroll, 2006). Carroll (2006) reported on a voluntary mentor study group, where mentors analyze their own accounts of mentoring practice and artifacts of teachers’ learning (during an induction period). Towards the end of one academic year, the group developed a curriculum for learning-to-teach that offered specific suggestions for prospective mentors.
working with new teachers in their school. Carroll (2006) also considered such a collective inquiry as a way to construct the identity of a teacher educator (a mentor). From a sociocultural perspective, collegial mentor study groups, reflective journals, and other opportunities to analyze and reflect on mentoring practices are important mediational means through which mentors can achieve a better understanding of their roles.

2.4 Conclusion

Overall, despite a growing interest in the various aspects of teacher mentoring in general teacher education research (e.g., Feiman-Nemser 1998, 2001; Killian & Wilkins, 2009; Margerum-Leys & Marx, 2004; Nolan & Mark, 2010; Wang & Paine, 2001), some facets of this professional practice remain under-researched. First, there have been few studies that address the impact of mentors on the actual practices of novice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), possible changes that occur in novices’ teaching as a result of their participation in a mentored learning-to-teach experience are considered an important step for novices’ development. Second, few studies examine a mentored learning-to-teach experience as a process of both novices and mentors’ learning and/or development1 (e.g., Grove, Odell, & Strudler, 2006; Margerum-Leys & Marx, 2004). From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), participation in an activity (in this case, the practices of teacher mentoring) serves as a locus for potential development of all its participants. Finally, there has been little attention to the impact of both mentors and novices’ learning and/or development through teacher mentoring on student learning (Arnold, 2002; Bullough et al., 2003; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). From a sociocultural perspective,

1 Vygotsky (1997) defines learning as happening during mediated activities, whereas development is understood as the learner’s ability to transfer the new knowledge and/or skills to different contexts and/or more complex activities.
teachers’ re-conceptualizations of their teaching practices and actual changes in their teaching activities influence “what and how students learn” (Johnson, 2009, p. 56). Yet, studies in these areas remain scarce.
Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Participants

Two groups of participants were involved in this project. The first group comprised three pre-service teachers (Amber, Sergey, and Madhu) enrolled in an MA TESOL teaching practicum at a large northeastern U.S. university. The second group comprised their mentors, one of whom (Konstantin) was a doctoral student in the university’s applied linguistics program and the other two (Samantha and Lisa) were full-time ESL instructors for the university’s intensive English program.

Out of the pool of pre-service teachers and mentors who volunteered to participate in this project, these participants were selected because they differed greatly in regard to the nature and the extent of their experience and their level of expertise in ESL teaching and mentoring. It was important that the sample be diverse because one of the goals of the present study is to capture the diverse character of learning-to-teach experiences during a mentored teaching practicum. For example, Amber had practically no experience in L2 teaching, whereas Sergey had 19 years’ teaching experience (adult education context) to draw on. Similarly, Lisa and Konstantin were fairly new to mentoring, in contrast with Samantha, who had mentored over twenty mentees before participating in the project. Other distinctive factors included the participants’ respective cultural and educational backgrounds: Konstantin, Lisa, and Amber self-identified as non-native speaking ESL instructors, and Samantha, Madhu, and Sergey spoke English as their first language. With their consent, the participants are referred to by pseudonyms in the present study.
3.1.1 Amber

Amber started school in South Korea where she lived until the age of twelve when she and her family moved to Canada. After graduating from a Canadian high school, Amber decided to continue her education in the United States. At the time the MA TESOL practicum started, Amber was in her last semester of studies obtaining a bachelor of arts in English and a master of arts in TESOL. In addition to being enrolled in the TESOL teaching practicum, Amber was taking several other courses and working on her master’s thesis.

At the time of the data collection, Amber reported having had no formal classroom teaching experience. However, prior to starting the teaching practicum Amber had had some volunteer English tutoring experience. In addition, she had been assisting a classroom teacher in a Korean language course during a two-semester period in the same university. Her responsibilities included providing additional instructional support to students both inside and outside the class and helping the teacher with maintaining student records.

3.1.2 Samantha

Samantha is an experienced ESL teacher working in the intensive English program as an ESL instructor and a coordinator for students’ affairs. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English and a master’s degree in TESOL. At the time of the data collection, Samantha reported having worked for fifteen years as an ESL/EFL teacher. She taught English both abroad and in the United States.

In addition, Samantha has extensive experience mentoring beginning ESL teachers. When Samantha was enrolled in the master’s degree program in TESOL she mentored ten to twenty mentees during a three-year period. Prior to becoming a mentor, Samantha participated in
a mentor training workshop in the same university. According to Samantha, Samantha’s mentor teacher from the ESL program where she taught upon completing her master’s degree also impacted her mentoring conception and practices. In her own words, “Often here when I talk with my mentees I hear her [the mentor teacher’s] voice saying things…. And so it did impact me a lot” (Samantha’s pre-semester interview, January 17th 2012).

3.1.3 Sergey

When the teaching practicum started, Sergey was enrolled as a part-time student in an MA TESOL program. By that time, Sergey had already earned a bachelor’s degree in agronomy and a master’s degree in agriculture.

During the pre-semester interview (January 12th 2012), Sergey reported that he did not have any public school teaching experience. However, he did have extensive teaching experience at other kinds of educational institutions. In total, Sergey had 19 years’ teaching experience. For example, as a graduate student, he had taught a soils laboratory class to college students. In addition, Sergey had led seminars for farmers and homeowners for five years as a company agronomist, and he had taught a short course on computer networking to adult learners.

3.1.4 Konstantin

When the teaching practicum started, Konstantin was a second-year doctoral student in applied linguistics at the same university. Before starting his doctoral program, Konstantin had already earned a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in English education from a non-US university.
Konstantin’s overall language teaching experience comprised two years teaching in the ESL writing program at the university where he was working towards his doctoral degree, a short-term teaching experience at a public school in his home country (a teaching practicum), and some tutoring. Speaking of his professional goals for the upcoming semester during the pre-semester interview (January 14th 2012), Konstantin expressed a desire to prepare more in-class activities for his students with the goal of more fully engaging them with the class content. In addition, he stated the need to find more time to prepare for his classes, to learn from the other more experienced ESL writing instructors in the program, and to revise the course schedule in a way that would allow him more flexibility in his teaching.

3.1.5 Madhu

By the time the teaching practicum started, Madhu had earned a bachelor’s degree in music from an Ivy League music school. In addition, having received her bachelor’s degree, Madhu became certified in TESOL through a series of seminars.

In terms of her teaching experience, at the beginning of the teaching practicum, Madhu reported having a one-year teaching experience in a parent–child participatory program designed to help parents develop their children’s awareness of sounds, gestures, pitch, rhythm, and genre styles through music. In addition, Madhu had worked for five years as a trainer in retail management, teaching other managers how, for example, to operate registers and how to deal with difficult customers.
3.1.6 Lisa

At the time of the data collection, Lisa had been teaching for approximately ten years in an intensive English program. Lisa’s first language is Mandarin Chinese, and she learned English via immersion as a child by attending international schools in Malaysia and Vietnam. She had started teaching in the intensive English program as a part-time instructor while still enrolled as an MA TESOL student at the same university. In addition, before starting her teaching career in the intensive English program, Lisa had taught EFL for one year in her home country and had extensively tutored students in that context.

In terms of experience as a mentor, before the practicum Lisa had mentored a colleague and a mentee in the same intensive English program.

3.2 Educational Context

The MA TESOL teaching practicum lasted 15 weeks (one academic semester) and required pre-service teachers to observe their mentors’ ESL classes and complete several assignments through their personal blogs, e.g., reflections on the classes they observed. In addition, during the course of the teaching practicum, the pre-service teachers were required to teach at least two classes in the ESL course that they were observing.

The mentoring sessions that were proposed as part of this doctoral dissertation were placed to supplement other activities in the practicum.

3.2.1 Amber’s Teaching Practicum Settings

Amber’s teaching practicum took place in an intensive English program offering ESL classes to international students many of whom intend to attend a university in the US. The ESL
courses are designed for students with various levels of English proficiency (from beginner to advanced) and aim to develop students’ skills in speaking and listening, reading, writing, and grammar. Most of the instructors in this program have earned master’s degree, taught English oversees, and studied other languages.

As her teaching practicum placement, Amber was assigned to Samantha’s ESL reading level-2 (intermediate) course. The goals of this course are to help students improve their abilities in academic reading comprehension and enrich their vocabulary. During the course, the students learn critical reading skills, such as identifying the main and supporting ideas, making inferences, and locating evidence in texts to support claims. The course assignments include quizzes, tests, extensive reading projects, and presentations.

3.2.2 Sergey’s Teaching Practicum Settings

The ESL academic writing course is designed to teach international first-year undergraduate students common practices associated with academic writing, such as how to summarize an academic text, how to paraphrase and quote from sources, how to organize textual and other kinds of evidence, how to choose research topics, conduct library research, and use the APA citation style. In addition, the students engage in pre-writing activities and in-class peer reviews, and learn how to revise their academic essays and how to edit their own writing for common grammatical errors. The coursework includes brief in-class written assignments, journal entries, a critique essay, a compare-and-contrast essay, an analytical essay, and an argumentative essay.

The required course textbooks are *The Blair Reader: Exploring Issues and Ideas* (2008) and *In Focus: Strategies for Academic Writers* (2005). The course is also supplemented by video
and online resources, exercises addressing academic vocabulary development, and other materials.

3.2.3 Madhu’s Teaching Practicum Settings

Madhu’s teaching practicum took place in the ESL high-beginner grammar course in the intensive English program. The goal of the high-beginner ESL grammar course is to raise students’ grammar level from high-beginner to intermediate level. By the end of the course, the students are expected to be proficient in the most common uses of the present, past, and future tenses in addition to other structures such as the modal verbs.

The required textbook for the course is *Grammar in Context 1* by Sandra N. Elbaum.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Timeline for the Collaborative Mentoring Sessions

The timeline for the sessions is shown in Table 1. Each collaborative mentoring session was followed by an interview with the participants, asking them to share their perspectives in relation to a specific mentoring session. The interview questions are presented in the appendices for each of the mentoring sessions.
Table 1-1. Timeline for the Collaborative Mentoring Sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012, January</td>
<td>Pre-Semester Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012, January</td>
<td>Mentor-Pre-service Teacher Background Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation to the Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012, February</td>
<td>Cycle I: Co-Plan, Co-Teach, and Co-Reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012, March</td>
<td>Cycle II: Solo Plan 1, Solo Teach 1, and Co-Reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012, April</td>
<td>Looking Together at Student Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle III: Solo Plan 2, Solo Teach 2, and Co-reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Co-Reflection on the Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012, May</td>
<td>Post-Semester Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2 Collaborative Mentoring Sessions

3.3.2.1 Pre-Semester Interviews

Pre-semester interviews provided the researcher (me) with an initial understanding of the mentors and pre-service teachers’ professional histories as well as their beliefs regarding L2 learning and teaching.

During the interviews, participants were asked to reflect on their language learning and teaching experiences up to this point. In addition, the participants were requested to share any experience they had had with mentoring and their expectations of the prospective mentoring experience (see appendix B for the questions for the pre-semester interviews).
3.3.2.2 Mentor–Pre-Service Teacher Background Session

Researchers hold the view that a trusting and open relationship between a mentor and a novice teacher is an important factor in promoting effective mentoring (Jonson, 2008; Portner, 2008; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007). Other researchers have suggested that when mentors are well-informed about pre-service teachers’ backgrounds (or, professional histories) it helps them to better understand the instructional decisions these teachers make during their teaching practicums (e.g., Clarke, 2006).

The mentor–pre-service teacher background session was thus aimed to allow both the mentor and the pre-service teacher to share their professional histories, beliefs about L2 learning and teaching, and expectations of the prospective mentoring experience with each other (see appendix C for the protocol).

3.3.2.3 Orientation to the Course

Pre-service teachers are often unaware of the teaching context in which they are expected to teach during their teaching practicum (Jonson, 2008; Nolan & Mark, 2010). An orientation to the course session was thus aimed to help pre-service teachers gain an initial understanding of the teaching context in which the practicum took place.

During this session, a mentor introduced a pre-service teacher to his or her ESL course by sharing the syllabus, course materials, and/or previous student work. In addition, the mentor shared with the pre-service teacher his or her ideas and beliefs on the design of the particular ESL course, while the pre-service teacher was encouraged to ask questions related to the course. Both
participants received a handout (based on Graves 1996, 2000), which served as a mediating artifact in facilitating their discussion during this session (see appendix D).

3.3.2.4 Cycle I: Co-Plan, Co-Teach, and Co-Reflect

This cycle comprised three stages: collaborative lesson planning, collaborative teaching, and collaborative reflection on the lesson (see appendix E).

3.3.2.4.1 Co-Plan

Research has shown that among beginning teachers’ many concerns, day-to-day planning emerges as one of the most frequent (Fuller, 1969; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Nolan & Hoover, 2007). Thus, during collaborative lesson planning, the mentor shared his or her lesson-planning materials for a particular class, presented his or her rationale for the selected classroom activities, and encouraged the pre-service teacher to offer his or her insights on planning of the particular lesson (based on Tomlinson, 1995).

3.3.2.4.2 Co-Teach

The mentor and the pre-service teacher co-taught the co-planned ESL lesson. The class was video recorded.

3.3.2.4.3 Co-Reflect

During the discussion of the co-planned class taught by the mentor and the pre-service teacher, the participants were encouraged to adopt a reflective approach to teaching, e.g., discuss what happened during the class, why the class proceeded as it did, what given actions resulted in, etc.
A video record of the class served as data for the collaborative analysis (based on Tomlinson, 1995, pp. 179-180).

3.3.2.5 Cycle II: Solo Plan 1, Solo Teach 1, and Co-Reflect

This cycle comprised three stages: solo lesson planning, a lesson taught by the pre-service teacher, and a collaborative co-reflection session. However, unlike cycle I, during this cycle’s stages, the pre-service teacher was responsible for both planning and teaching the lesson.

In addition, the co-reflection session was followed by an interview with the researcher which aimed at investigating whether the previous co-planning, co-teaching, and co-reflecting experience had any impact on the pre-service teacher’s subsequent teaching (see appendix F).

3.3.2.5.1 Solo Plan 1

During this stage, the pre-service teacher planned a solo lesson. Research has shown that pre-service teachers benefit from additional guidance by their mentors on lesson planning (Tomlinson, 1995). Furthermore, by talking through their lesson plans with an expert other, pre-service teachers learn to teach from their own teaching-related experiences (Tomlinson, 1995).

During this session, the mentor listened to the pre-service teacher’s lesson plan and made suggestions as necessary. Additionally, the mentor explored the pre-service teacher’s ideas and intentions, i.e., the former did the listening, letting the latter do the talking and explaining. The mentor also prompted the pre-service teacher to explain what he or she intended to do and why, how he or she saw different class activities as working, and what he or she saw as alternatives (Tomlinson, 1995).
3.3.2.5.2 Solo Teach 1

The pre-service teacher taught the solo lesson, and the mentor observed this collaboratively planned lesson. The class was video recorded.

3.3.2.5.3 Co-Reflect

During this session, the mentor prompted the pre-service teacher to reflect on and analyze his or her teaching; i.e., the mentor provided hypotheses, information, alternatives, and especially evidence (from the observation). The mentor was also encouraged to promote a proactive approach to teaching by assisting the pre-service teacher in planning for further changes in his or her teaching (Tomlinson, 1995). A video record of the class taught by the pre-service teacher served as data for the collaborative analysis.

3.3.2.6 Looking Together at Student Work

Research has shown that beginning teachers often feel apprehensive about assessing student work (Fuller, 1969; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Nolan & Hoover, 2007). Thus, a session during which the mentor shared his or her insights into assessing student work had the potential to promote the pre-service teacher’s understanding of this aspect of teaching.

During this session, the mentor shared his or her rubrics for a certain assignment, discussed the benefits and possible limitations of the assignment, and commented on student work samples. The mentor also invited the pre-service teacher’s input and feedback (see appendix G for the protocol).
3.3.2.7 Cycle III: Solo Plan 2, Solo Teach 2, and Co-Reflect

The stages of this cycle repeated the stages of cycle II.

3.3.2.8 Final Co-Reflection on the Course

As part of the work on course design, the mentor and the pre-service teacher engaged in a final co-reflection on the course. Both the mentor and the pre-service teacher received a protocol to serve as a mediating artifact in the discussion (see appendix H for the protocol).

3.3.2.9 Post-Semester Interviews

The goal of these interviews was to trace possible changes in the mentors and pre-service teachers’ conceptualizations of L2 teaching and the practice of teacher mentoring. Thus, both the mentors and pre-service teachers were asked to participate in post-semester semi-structured interviews with the researcher (see appendix I).

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Data Collection

The data collection period was based on one academic semester (a 15-week MA TESOL teaching practicum) and consisted of the following:

1. Pre- and post-semester interviews (audio recorded)
2. Seven collaborative mentoring sessions between each mentor and pre-service teacher pair (video recorded), each followed by an interview with the mentors and the pre-service teachers (audio recorded)

3. Lesson plans and supporting materials for one co-taught class and two pre-service teachers’ solo taught classes (typed/written)

4. A mentors and pre-service teachers’ co-taught class and pre-service teachers’ two solo classes (video recorded)

3.4.2 Transcription Conventions

All recorded data was transcribed using transcription conventions adapted from Jefferson (1979), as cited in Schiffrin (1994, pp. 424-431). Jefferson’s conventions address various issues (e.g., pause lengths, emphasis) that may occur during face-to-face interactions between the participants (see appendix J for the transcription conventions).

3.4.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed according to the following procedures. First, the pre- and post-semester interviews of the mentors and the pre-service teachers were transcribed and analyzed in accordance with the grounded content analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Specifically, major themes in the data were identified in order to trace the development of how both mentors and pre-service teachers conceptualized language teaching and such teaching-related activities as course design, lesson planning, assessment of student work, and the practice of teacher mentoring. In
addition, interviews that took place after each of the mentoring sessions were analyzed in regard to the participants’ perspectives on these sessions.

Second, mentors–pre-service teachers’ interactions during all mentoring sessions were transcribed and analyzed with the use of two a priori categories: mentors’ mediational moves (Golombek, 2011) and pre-service teachers’ responsive moves (Ableeva, 2010; Poehner, 2005). In the context of the present study, a mentor’s mediational move was defined as an instance in which the mentor provided assistance to the pre-service teacher in order to promote the latter’s development as a teacher, while the teacher’s responsive move was defined as the teacher’s response to the mentor’s mediation. Overall, the primary focus of the analysis was on the quality and character of interactions during the mentoring sessions.

Third, the class taught collaboratively by the mentor and the pre-service teacher and the two solo classes taught by the pre-service teachers alone were video recorded and transcribed. The interviews between the participants and the researcher which took place after each of the mentoring sessions served as additional data.
Chapter 4

Amber and Samantha

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the quality and the character of the interactions that took place between Amber, a pre-service MA TESOL teacher, and Samantha, her mentor, during Amber’s teaching practicum experience in an intensive English program.

As the teaching practicum unfolded, Samantha was found to shift her mediation from an implicit to a more explicit level in response to Amber’s expression of emotional insecurities, lack of confidence, and struggle with getting through her first lesson. In addition, during the practicum experience, Samantha provided Amber with a lot of emotional support and continuously drew Amber’s attention to how she could best support student learning. During the mentoring sessions, Samantha did not only provide Amber with instructional techniques for carrying out the new vocabulary instruction, but also modeled her own instructional talk for this section of the class. And seeing Amber’s difficulty with providing answers to the questions from the mentoring protocols, Samantha was found to modify the protocols by asking Amber more specific questions. While the mentoring protocols created spaces for Amber to externalize her thoughts and feelings about the lessons that she taught, they also allowed Samantha to see and mediate the novice’s learning.

As Samantha and Amber engaged in the mentoring sessions, a pattern emerged. Samantha started the sessions with an open-ended question from the mentoring protocols, which allowed Amber to direct the content of their discussions. If Amber struggled with providing an adequate response, Samantha followed with a more specific question, thus facilitating Amber’s
reflection on her part of the lesson. However, if Amber was able to identify an instructional dilemma, Samantha tried to get Amber to articulate an alternative instructional response and in case Amber struggled to provide it, Samantha suggested to Amber her own instructional strategies which Amber could rely on as she re-taught the lesson. In a few instances, Samantha even modeled her own instructional talk to help Amber carry out the new vocabulary instruction.

As for Amber, she was able to shift the focus of her attention from a predominant concern with self-presentation to considering the impact of her instructional practices on the students’ learning of new vocabulary. Additionally, while Amber struggled with providing the students with more examples for the new vocabulary as she taught her first lesson, she was able to improve her teaching practices by relying on Samantha’s suggestions during her second lesson. Put it in other words, she was able to imitate some of Samantha’s instructional practices as well as Samantha’s instructional talk as she re-taught the vocabulary section of the class.

However, it then also became evident that teaching new vocabulary from a required textbook stood in opposition to Amber’s teaching beliefs, i.e., that teaching new vocabulary needed to proceed from the students’ exposure to coherent texts rather than separate examples from a course textbook. To cope with this discrepancy, Amber created PowerPoint slides with additional examples from an online dictionary for her third lesson (to provide the students with more linguistic context). Even though the PowerPoint provided Amber with additional examples, i.e., she did not have to come up with those examples on the spot (as she taught), the use of the PowerPoint actually stifled student participation and the additional examples that Amber had prepared proved to be too difficult for the students, which in the end left Amber unsatisfied with how this lesson went. At the same time, it was after her third lesson that Amber was able to turn her attention to the consequences of her teaching on the students’ learning of the new words.

Overall, towards the end of her teaching practicum experience, Amber remained unconfident as to what kind of instruction (her own or Samantha’s) was more beneficial for the
students. Thus, it can be argued that even though the mentoring protocols allowed Amber to externalize her thoughts and feelings about her teaching and Samantha was able to respond to Amber’s emergent concerns, they did not allow either Samantha or Amber to discuss the nature of the task (the new vocabulary instruction) or to externalize and align their views on teaching new vocabulary. At the same time, it can be also argued that as a result of her teaching practicum experience, Amber was able to develop her teaching expertise by relying on Samantha’s instructional practices from their mentoring sessions (especially during her second lesson) and shift the focus of her attention from the self to the impact of her instruction on the students’ learning of new words.

In the sub-sections that follow, I trace Samantha’s mediational strategies and Amber’s responsive moves, as they engaged in the collaborative mentoring sessions during Amber’s teaching practicum.

4.2 Samantha’s Shift from Implicit to Explicit Mediation

During the co-planning session that preceded Amber’s first lesson, Samantha mentioned to Amber the kinds of challenges that she might experience as she taught her first lesson, without, however, making it explicit how Amber might address those challenges.

Samantha: … The thing about it is that ah- it runs pretty easily, but they have a lot of questions and some of them are pretty hard. I mean they really come up with good questions, especially orally, they really wanna hear examples and that kind of thing.

(1st co-planning session, 08.40-9.30, February 17th 2012)

However, in a post-session interview Amber admitted that she still felt unconfident as to being able to carry out the vocabulary instruction, which implicates that Samantha’s implicit
mediation might not have been sufficient for Amber, at least at this point in her teaching practicum experience.

Amber: ... the only thing is that just students ask a lot of questions and I have to come up with like examples and very quickly and Samantha, of course, she gives a lot of good examples and that would be the only thing that I would be worried about, but I think I will be okay- . (Post-session interview, February 17th 2012)

Indeed, as Amber taught her first lesson, she struggled with providing the students with adequate explanations of the new words and relied on the textbook examples as well as Samantha’s contribution to help her accomplish the goal of this section of the lesson.

Amber: “Yield”? Ah, let’s see examples here ((glances through the textbook)). Ah, okay. When I think of “yield”, the first thing that comes to my mind is the traffic sign. Have you guys ever seen like a triangle-shaped, it says “yield” ((shows a triangle with gestures))? Do you guys know-?

Student 1: Yield on green?

Amber: Huh?

Student 1: Yield on green.

Amber: Yeah, kinda like “slow down.” And then another word is ((looks through the textbook)), like as the example it provides ah- is something that you can, you know, get in return by producing, like, especially on the farm. Like, when you actually furnish the farm, you get, let’s say, like, agricultural products, like potatoes or corns. Or, ah- another example would be like- not example, but another definition would be like “give up something”, if I am correct ((looks at Samantha)).

Student 2: Give up?

Amber: Give up or like give over something. That’s what I can think of, ah- ((looks at Samantha)).
Samantha: *And that’s the traffic sign symbol.*

Amber: Yeah.

Samantha: *Because basically when you are yielding, you kinda are giving the right to somebody else to go.*

Student 2: So, you first.

Samantha: Yeah. Right.

Amber: Yeah. Was it clear ((smiles))? (Amber’s 1st lesson, 3.47-5.01, February 20th 2012)

In the classroom transcript, we see that even though Amber explained both senses of the verb “to yield”, her intuitive sense of the word was completely unrelated to the definition given in the textbook, and likely the cause of the students’ confusion.

In a subsequent co-reflection session, Amber referred to one of the reasons for the difficulties that she experienced while teaching her first lesson, which had to do with her lack of experience learning new vocabulary from a textbook. However, unfortunately, this issue was not taken up by Samantha.

Amber: … *I don’t know. Vocabulary? I guess … it was sort of new to me … because I never learned vocabulary explicitly, that way.*

Samantha: *Uh-hm.*

Amber: *I was just- keep trying to think of other ways you can teach vocabulary... ah, the fact that the students, they are actually finding the evidence and they are actually doing- working on the transparencies, they are actually sharing them with the classmates-. I think that really prepares them ... I think that’s a good practice-*

Samantha: Yeah, they seem to do a good job with that-. (1st co-reflection session, 58.51-59.41, February 21st 2012)

In a subsequent post-session interview, Amber explained that teaching new vocabulary from a required textbook stood in opposition with her teaching beliefs.
Amber: I mean knowing that I have a textbook and then if I wanna show them a text, then I have to literally create ... because it’s the opposite way, you start with these lexical items and you try to expand from them, which is very difficult. (Amber’s clarification interview, April 20th 2012)

At the same time, as a mentor, Samantha did show her responsiveness to Amber’s emergent concerns as a novice non-native ESL teacher by shifting her mediation from an implicit to a more explicit level. For example, during their second co-planning session Samantha went through the new vocabulary items for Amber’s second lesson together with Amber. In addition, she explicitly pointed out a particular new vocabulary item (“liberty”) that might cause student difficulty and modeled her own instructional talk to explain the meaning of this word to the students. Importantly, Samantha’s shift from an implicit to a much more explicit level of mediation reflects the dynamic nature of the ZPD as it is created through mentor–novice interactions and the engagement of both the mentor and the novice in the social tasks related to teaching.

Samantha: Any words that you think may be the ones that will come out?

Amber: Ah, “weave.”

Samantha: Uh-hm. Yeah.

Amber: Maybe “boundary”?

Samantha: Uh-hm. Definitely ((points to the word “liberty” in the textbook)).

Amber: Yeah, “liberty.”

Samantha: Yeah, “liberty” is gonna be like- that’s a confusing one. I always bring up, for example, like the Statue of Liberty. What does it stand for? ... Because that’s just a really weird word ((laughs)). It is not the one that is that commonly used. (2nd co-planning session, 24.29-25.13, February 21st 2012)
And finally, when Amber expressed her concerns about adequately preparing the students for an upcoming quiz, Samantha offered her both personal and emotional support, insisting that Amber had something unique to offer to these students.

Amber: But the only problem with me doing the vocabulary tomorrow is just because it would be right before the quiz, I think, students will feel more ah- they would prefer you going over a review. ... I guess because I am so conscious of what like their expectation is, of what they want because I was also an ESL student, they really want you. ...

Samantha: Ah, I don’t really think that they see you as an ESL student because you don’t really sound as an ESL student to them and that’s what they take, you know. ...

Because I don’t think they even notice that, because they always see you in the class as something positive to them because you can sympathize with them-. (2nd co-planning session, 23.15-30.15, February 21st 2012)

As the classroom transcript shows, during her second lesson, Amber was indeed able to imitate some of Samantha’s instructional practices, which indicates that Samantha’s explicit mediation was facilitative for Amber’s development of her teaching expertise, at least in the context of the intensive English program.

Amber: What about “liberty” ((looks around the classroom))?

Student 1: Freedom.

Amber: Freedom. Ah. But did you guys have trouble understanding the examples? I thought the second example was ah-. I don’t think we normally use it. But just for the sake of the definition, ah- freedom. So, freedom from ah- freedom from what? So, the first example. It’s talking about how Brazil became free from Portugal in the 19th century. So, ah- Can you guys elaborate on that more? Just ah, try to define-. If you have to define “liberty” in your own words, how would you define it? Or, if you have to use an example. Different way, other than the textbook. Because when I first learned “liberty,” I had
trouble understanding it. Because all I could think about was ah- the Statue of Liberty in New York. Have you guys all seen the statue?

Student 2: (Have we seen the statue?)

Amber: Yeah, a large copper statue of a woman holding a torch in New York harbor, I think. So, I think, it’s freedom from any kind of obligation. (Amber’s 2nd lesson, 10.32–12.20, February 22nd 2012)

In the classroom transcript, we see Amber drawing the students’ attention to the word “liberty” (as Samantha suggested to her earlier) and her relying on Samantha’s example with the Statue of Liberty.

However, despite Samantha’s shift to a more explicit level of mediation and Amber’s ability to imitate her mentor’s instructional practices during her second lesson, Amber still remained unsatisfied with her teaching, which led her to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the third lesson that she taught.

### 4.3 Amber’s Shift from Self-Presentation to the Consequences of her Teaching on Student Learning

Upon Amber’s teaching her third lesson, Samantha and Amber met for a co-reflection session, during which Amber was able to externalize her thoughts and feelings about her third lesson. Despite Amber’s disappointment with this lesson, unlike the other co-reflection sessions where Amber focused mostly on herself, in this session she shifted her attention to how the students were experiencing her lesson. By realizing that relying on the PowerPoint actually inhibited student participation and too many examples, and in particular rarely used examples, actually confused the students, she seemed to be focusing more on student learning rather than her own self-presentation.
Samantha ((reads from the protocol)): Okay, so, what do you think went well and why?

Amber: Ah.

Samantha: Well, how do think in general- the use of the PowerPoint went? Since this was a new thing.

Amber: Well, using the PowerPoint for me ah- for me, it was helpful.

Samantha: Uh-hm.

Amber: Because I really wanted to show them different examples. But ah. ((A student interrupts.)) But again, because you gave me a lot of room I ended up talking a lot and ah- I gave ah- I know like for “judge” and for “rank,” I gave a lot of examples and the students might have been confused. Especially, I think like ah- there was a question when ah- “rank.” [A student’s name] asked, “Oh, I was confused with the adjective-“

Samantha: Uh-hm.

Amber: So, I- and obviously it wasn’t my intention to confuse-. I just wanted to show them parts of speech, to help them grammatically and (how they are used in context) because that’s what they (wanted) to do in the- earlier in the semester-. (3rd co-reflection session, 26.30-28.00, April 20th 2012)

As the transcript above shows, Amber’s attention shifted to the consequences of her instruction on the students’ learning of the new vocabulary, while Samantha modified the existing meditational tool (the mentoring protocol) by asking Amber a more specific question about her use of the PowerPoint. This indicates that Samantha’s mentoring practices were not entirely regulated by the protocols. Rather, Samantha, as an experienced mentor, was able to adapt the protocol to better suit Amber’s needs.

The shift in Amber’s attention is remarkable since according to the research on pre-service and novice teacher learning (e.g., Nolan & Hoover, 2007), such a change represents an important stage in the novices’ development of greater teaching expertise. In contrast, the
transcript below demonstrates Amber’s predominant concern with her self-presentation at the
beginning of her teaching practicum as well as Samantha’s attempt to re-direct Amber’s attention
from the self to the aim of her part of the lesson.

*Samantha:* Okay, so, what do you think? What’s your initial reaction?

*Amber:* Well, I remember everything, so it was more painful to watch ((both laugh)) and I
knew that was coming ((both continue to laugh)). Hm? Initial reaction? *I feel like I am
not confident enough to ah- I am not- I wasn’t really loud. I was mumbling towards
the end of every sentence, almost every sentence. ... I don’t know ah- just in just the
way I guess I present myself, I don’t really sound or look reassuring.*

*Samantha:* Well, let’s start kinda backwards a little bit. *What do you think this section is
really the objective of? ... What do you think is the main objective that they- that we are
tyling to get through to them with this section?* (1st co-reflection session, 08.50-10.35,
February 21st 2012)

While at the beginning of their teaching careers novices’ attention predominantly rests on
themselves, it is advised that teacher educators attempt to draw their mentees’ attention to the
issues related to student learning (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001). And indeed, during the teaching
practicum, Samantha, as an experienced mentor, carried out numerous attempts to attract
Amber’s attention to the impact her instructional practices had on student learning.

*Samantha:* And how did you feel about the board work? Did you feel- did it help you to
feel more comfortable?

*Amber:* Yeah, for sure, like, I didn’t want to stand there, like, in one spot.

*Samantha:* Yeah, and they wanna see it, too. So, it’s really, I mean it’s good to use the
board, especially when writing down the word for ah- [a student’s name], when he
wanted to know that word and to write it down. *So, that he could kind of- because
sometimes the students will have these words that they really think it’s the same word*
and so they really need to visually see it and see whether it’s the same word or a different word.

Amber: Yeah. (2nd co-reflection session, 25.01–26.08, February 24th 2012)

Importantly, the shift in Amber’s attention from the self to student learning was accompanied by a strong emotional response, which she shared with the researcher in a post-session interview following her and Samantha’s co-reflection session on her third lesson.

Amber: So, it wasn’t very good. It turned out that there are a lot of things that I need to adjust. Well, not to adjust but like, I shouldn’t- Well, after the lecture I was like, “Wow, this didn’t go well.” I didn’t like how it went. I guess, obviously-. (Post-session interview, April 20th 2012)

This finding agrees with research on L2 teacher learning, which argues that teachers’ development of teaching expertise is oftentimes accompanied by their experience of emotional dissonance (Golombek & Johnson, 2004) and that this emotional discomfort often drives teachers to re-examine and re-invent their teaching practices.

Similarly to the third co-reflection session, in the post-semester interview, Amber’s attention was also predominantly focused on the impact of her instruction on the students.

Amber: … But I don’t know how the students saw that. How the students thought I taught, “Is Amber just being there trying to pretend she is the teacher?” I just really wish that I had ah- like how they see me, what was my role to them. Was I being helpful? I really ah- I still wanna know. (Amber’s post-semester interview, April 27th 2012)

At the same time, upon her teaching of her third lesson, Amber still lacked confidence in regard to which method of teaching the new vocabulary was more beneficial for the students, i.e., that of relying on Samantha’s instructional practices (her first and second lessons) or her own,
with the use of extended examples and the PowerPoint slides, which made her turn her attention to the students’ perspectives on her teaching.

Amber: *So, I kinda wanted something that can be different, but effective at the same time. … Throughout the semester, well, I tried two different ways of teaching, one was going over the questions and the other one was like PowerPoint. But I wish that I knew what they [the students] thought about- … I wish I heard more from the students.*

(Amber’s post-semester interview, April 27th 2012)

Overall, in this sub-section we saw that despite the shift in Amber’s attention from self-presentation to the consequences of her teaching on the students’ learning of the new vocabulary, towards the end of the teaching practicum Amber still was unsure as to what method of vocabulary instruction was more beneficial for the students. As a result, she turned her attention to the students’ perspective on her teaching.

### 4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be argued that the mentoring protocols that were introduced into this teaching practicum experience created mediational spaces, which allowed Amber to externalize her thinking and feelings about the lessons that she taught, while Samantha was provided with opportunities to respond to Amber’s emergent concerns and re-calibrate (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) her mediation in response to Amber’s difficulties. Furthermore, such a shift reflects the dynamic nature of the ZPD as it emerged in the mentor–novice interactions and the engagement of both the mentor and the novice in the tasks of teaching. Equally important was how Samantha used the protocols. In order to better meet Amber’s needs and match her developmental level,
Samantha oftentimes adapted the questions from the mentoring protocols, especially upon seeing Amber’s struggle with providing an adequate response. In addition, the data support the notion that teacher learning is an emotion-loaded process (Golombek & Johnson, 2004) and that mentors need to be able to cater to teachers’ emotional and professional concerns (Nolan & Hoover, 2007).

Finally, it can be argued that the mediational spaces and the actual experience of teaching facilitated a shift in Amber’s thinking, i.e., the change in her attention from self-presentation to the impact of her instruction on the students’ learning of the new vocabulary. At the same time, however, the mentoring protocols did not allow either Samantha or Amber to negotiate their different views on how to carry out vocabulary instruction. Thus, even though Amber was provided with an opportunity to teach on her own (her third lesson), towards the end of the practicum she still remained unsure as to which instructional method (her own or Samantha’s) was more beneficial for the students. However, as Lampert (1985) noted, a teacher’s dilemmas are rarely resolved, instead they are managed—a point that has various consequences for student learning. Therefore, it is unreasonable to suggest that Amber’s conflict could have been easily resolved during her teaching practicum. Yet, greater attention to the mentees’ instructional histories and the necessity of articulating beliefs about and rationales for teaching and for teaching practices seem important issues to be considered by mentors and teacher educators.
Chapter 5

Sergey and Konstantin

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the quality and the character of the interactions between Sergey, a native English-speaking pre-service MA TESOL teacher, and Konstantin, a non-native English-speaking Sergey’s mentor in an ESL first-year academic writing course, as they engaged in a series of collaborative mentoring sessions. As a result of Sergey’s participation in the collaborative mentoring sessions, he was able to develop his professional expertise in teaching by re-voicing Konstantin’s instructional talk as well as by demonstrating a considerable level of agency (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

At the same time, an instructional dilemma that Sergey identified at the start of the practicum having to do with evaluating student writing remained a continuous source of frustration and concern throughout his practicum experience. From the very beginning of the practicum experience, Sergey expressed concerns about fairly grading ESL students’ written assignments. As the semester unfolded, both Konstantin and the researcher (I) attempted to address Sergey’s concerns in relation to grading; however, at the end of the practicum, Sergey still did not completely resolve this issue for himself. That continued issue was partly due to Konstantin’s own discomfort with not being able to evaluate the extent of student improvement in the ESL writing course he was teaching. As a result, he could not provide Sergey with the sort of mediation that might be helpful for the latter. In addition, even though the researcher attempted to address Sergey’s other concern about grading, i.e., whether it is reasonable to compare non-native
and native students’ writing, unfortunately, this issue was only probed, but not discussed to an extent that would have allowed Sergey to resolve this matter for himself.

As for Konstantin’s conception of mentoring, during his pre-semester interview, Konstantin described his approach to mentoring as, “I’m gonna try to be positive in general and encouraging...” (Konstantin’s pre-semester interview, January 14th 2012) And indeed, Konstantin started the mentoring experience by highlighting Sergey’s strengths as a native English-speaking ESL teacher (the 1st co-planning session). In addition, in order to better prepare Sergey for teaching in the ESL undergraduate writing course, Konstantin modeled his own instructional talk as he talked about specific lessons. Konstantin’s mediation can also be characterized as responsive to Sergey’s own concerns, i.e., in his interactions with Sergey, he would return to the issues that Sergey himself had initiated. And, upon being prompted by the mentoring protocol, Konstantin demonstrated an awareness of students’ disengagement during a pair-work class activity and subsequently modeled for his mentee a kind of attentiveness that Sergey might also want to develop. Indeed, as the practicum experience unfolded, Sergey was found to shift his attention to disengaged students, as was previously demonstrated by his mentor in a co-reflection session.

As for the mentoring protocols introduced into the teaching practicum, they served as a mediational artifact helping Sergey to externalize his thoughts and feelings about his teaching. During the mentoring sessions, Konstantin oftentimes acted as a temporary other (Golombek & Johnson, 2004), whilst Sergey provided his responses to the questions from the protocols. As the practicum unfolded, the following pattern emerged in the interactions between Sergey and Konstantin: first, Konstantin allowed Sergey to externalize his thoughts and feelings about a particular lesson or an aspect of his teaching, which he then followed with explicit suggestions related to Sergey’s teaching or reflections. Importantly, Konstantin’s mentoring practices were mediated, but not regulated by the mentoring protocols. For example, he often addressed Sergey’s
concerns about a particular lesson or certain instructional dilemmas with his own suggestions on how Sergey could improve his instructional practices. These additional comments were not prescribed by the mentoring protocols.

In the sub-sections that follow, I analyze the quality and the character of Konstantin and Sergey’s interactions during their mentoring sessions by paying particular attention to Konstantin’s mediational strategies and Sergey’s responsive moves.

5.2 Konstantin’s Mediation: “I’m gonna try to be positive in general and encouraging …”

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Konstantin defined the mentor’s role as that of being “positive in general and encouraging” (Konstantin’s pre-semester interview, January 14th 2012). And indeed, as, for example, we see in the excerpt below, prior to Sergey’s teaching in the ESL writing course, Konstantin first highlighted Sergey’s strength as a native-speaking ESL teacher. In addition, he modeled his own instructional talk to help Sergey better prepare for teaching the lesson.

Konstantin: So, when you look at those sentences you can point out some points. It can be a grammar issue, or some vocabulary issue. So, if you ah- I think this is a strength that you can have as a native speaker. So, if you see ah- “I suggest that you use this word in ah- this place because this word is more accurate in delivering this meaning.” So, you can kinda give some sorta feedback. (1st co-planning session, 24.45-25.09, February 2nd 2012)

The fact that Konstantin started with some positive remarks supports the research on pre-service teacher learning that argues that beginning teachers oftentimes feel insecure about their initial teaching experience and, therefore, mentors’ positive feedback is crucial in helping these
teachers succeed (Nolan & Hoover, 2007). A sociocultural theory perspective also foregrounds the primary role that affect plays in human cognition (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Another characteristic of Konstantin’s mediation was his modeling of, for example, his awareness of disengaged students. Importantly, this reflection was prompted by the mentoring protocol, which points to the important role that the mentoring protocols played during this mentoring experience. In other words, it is unclear whether Konstantin would have paid attention to the issue related to student disengagement had he not been prompted by the protocol. Additionally, the fact that Konstantin first elicited Sergey’s response to the question from the protocol (about student disengagement) and then provided his response allowed Sergey to externalize his own thoughts first.

*Konstantin* ((reads from the protocol)): *How effectively do you think the lesson involved the students?*

*Sergey*: Well, they did most of the work, so ah-

*Konstantin*: … *So, did you not see any kind of ah- disengagement?*

*Sergey*: *Not a whole lot. Sometimes just a little but ah-…*

*Konstantin*: *Well, so I was standing in front and they were in the middle, so I looked at them occasionally, and they didn’t talk as much as other pairs did, just individually they were looking at ah- even if other pairs- you know, most pairs kinda had some time to read the sentences on their own, right? … But even then, the pair that I just mentioned, they were not really talking. … and they didn’t talk or discuss a lot the sentences…*

*Sergey*: *And I did not see.* (1st co-reflection session, 23.03-27.00, February 9th 2012)

Even more importantly, Konstantin followed this move by providing a possible rationale for the students’ lack of engagement.

Konstantin: *Maybe or ah- since this is random pairing, and well, not all the students are close or comfortable with each other. That could be one of the reasons-* (1st co-reflection session, 27.47-27.58, February 9th 2012)

And, as we will see in the next sub-section of this chapter, Sergey indeed shifted his attention to a disengaged student as he and Konstantin engaged in a co-reflection session on the second lesson that Sergey had taught.

Yet another feature of Konstantin’s mediational strategies was his being attentive to Sergey’s own concerns, i.e., the issues that Sergey himself raised during their discussions. For example, in the excerpt below, we see how Konstantin attempted to address Sergey’s recurrent concern about grading ESL students’ written work by sharing his own experience on this point.

**Sergey** ((reads from the protocol)): *How do you assess what the students have learned? Now, this is something what I’ve wondered about. And, I also wondered about grading. How do you grade them? Do you grade them based on what a native American speaker does or ah-?*

**Konstantin:** ... *I basically follow the rubric I have in the syllabus. So, there are four or five main categories, so content, the ideas ah- content, organization ... and so coherence and cohesion, that’s another- and the last thing is form. So, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, the formal aspect. So, I try to look at all of them. ...*

**Sergey:** Okay. (Orientation to the course session, 07.46-10.37, January 17th 2012)

Interestingly, while Sergey frames his question about grading in terms of how non-native students’ written work compares to native English students’ writing, Konstantin responds by saying that he “basically follows the rubric”, without directly addressing Sergey’s concern, i.e., whether non-native student writing should be evaluated based on the native-speaker norms. This concern remained with Sergey throughout the practicum and seems to have been at the root of Sergey’s failure to develop a clear sense of fair grading of ESL students’ essays.
In fact, in his pre-semester interview, Sergey articulated the same concern about being able to fairly evaluate ESL student work.

Sergey ((repeats the interviewer’s question)): What should or do I consider when assessing L2 student work? ... I’m not sure about that. I wondered about that. If I’m teaching them an L2 writing class, do I hold them to native-speaker standards? Because I want them to learn ah- how to write as a native speaker would write. Or, do I base my grades on ah- the fact that they are in an L2 language? And so, do I give a higher grade to someone who ah- than I would give to a native speaker that presents the same quality of work? I don’t quite know how to do the grading. (Sergey’s pre-semester interview, January 12th 2012)

When probed by the researcher as to whether it is fair to have the same expectations for ESL students as their native-speaking counterparts (the ESL students’ language might often be defined as a kind of hybrid English), Sergey explained that since the students would be evaluated by native-speaking English professors in their other courses, this would be only fair.

Sergey: ... Do I hand a paper back (to) who is best in the class? And if you go by “best in the class” being an A, do I give that person an A or do I look at it from the standpoint of a native speaker and (I say that) “this is really a C paper” and I give that grade? I don’t- I don’t understand that idea.

Katya: I think this is a dilemma. ... So, they [L2 students] are creating a hybrid, not really English, so it’s a mix-…

Sergey: ... but still I have a hard time there. I (came in into this program as a definite prescriptionist) and it’s difficult for me to drop that. And become a descriptionist. … And I think in order to succeed in an American university, or an American job, or ah- as an American professor, you do need to have a certain level of proficiency. ...
((Repeats the interviewer’s question)). What do I hope to learn? I hope to learn how to grade… (Sergey’s pre-semester interview, January 12th 2012)

Overall, it can be argued that part of Sergey’s lack of comfort with the issue related to grading came from his lack of understanding of how harshly he should evaluate ESL students’ written work and how closely ESL students’ writing should resemble native-speaker norms. Unfortunately, these issues were not directly addressed by his mentor and only probed by the researcher. From a sociocultural theory perspective, internal contradictions represent a locus for development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Roth & Tobin, 2002); however, unfortunately, in this case, Sergey’s internal struggle was not fully attended. At the same time, as Lampert (1985) noted, “it is possible for teachers to work in ways that suggest that some classroom problems are better managed than resolved” (p. 194). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Sergey’s dilemma could not have been resolved in an immediate and straightforward way, at least not during his teaching practicum.

As the practicum experience unfolded, Sergey again returned to his persistent concern over grading, this time, however, raising the issue of evaluating students’ improvement in writing. In his reply, Konstantin shared his own professional experience related to grading.

Sergey: Okay, I have another question. In your grading, do you look at the improvement they make during the course of the semester? ...

Konstantin: No. I am just adding up all the grades for all the assignments. That’s what I do. It’s hard to do because we have various assignments which are not necessarily connected. … I think that’s perfectly legitimate, but I just can’t do it. Well, on that note, at the last instructors’ meeting … so, one of the suggestions was ah-, “Why don’t we do it as a course project?” So, at the end of the semester, the students can produce a lengthy essay…. So, if the syllabus is like this, then it would be easier for the teacher to see the improvement- . (Looking together at student work, 2.33-4.36, April 27th 2012)
The excerpt above clearly shows Konstantin’s own lack of satisfaction with not being able to assess students’ improvement in writing. In fact, he mentions that this was also an issue for his fellow instructors. Thus, despite being provided with an additional mediational space (a separate session devoted to assessment), Konstantin was unable to fully address Sergey’s pre-occupation due to his own inability to evaluate the extent of student improvement in the writing course they co-taught.

However, as the session unfolded, Konstantin shared his other similar experience on this point (from his home country). Thus, even though Konstantin felt unsatisfied with not being able to evaluate the extent of student improvement in the ESL writing course, he still ventured to share a relevant experience he had previously, apparently pursuing the goal of helping Sergey resolve his concern.

Konstantin: Do you have anything to talk about ah- the student improvement? I mean in the beginning you mentioned that ah- if I take student improvement overtime? ... So, let’s talk more about this.

Sergey: ... I am still confused.... I still don’t know what exactly I would do.

Konstantin: ... So, let me just tell you. This is one of the examples that I had when I was working at a teacher education center in [home country], just before I got here… so, the students are basically the English teachers … and the assessment we used was an English test. … It was like pre-test and post-test. … So, the issue [teachers’ various extents of improvement] was brought up. But we cannot just look at the improvement only. … So, we kinda made a compromise. We averaged the two scores … and then we also calculated the improvement. … We kinda mixed them and produced the new score.

Sergey: Okay. (Looking together at student work, 12.33-21.20, April 27th 2012)
However, even despite these numerous attempts at helping Sergey come to terms with evaluating student writing, as the next sub-section will demonstrate, at the end of the practicum, Sergey still lacked a clear sense of how to evaluate student work.

Overall, Konstantin’s attention to Sergey’s both emotional and professional concerns, modeling of his own instructional talk, and his responsiveness to the concerns Sergey himself initiated during their discussions characterize Konstantin’s mediation as responsive to Sergey’s emergent needs. In fact, as the following sub-section will show, Sergey was oftentimes able to re-voice Konstantin’s instructional talk and even demonstrated awareness of student disengagement, as it was previously modeled by Konstantin.

5.3 Sergey: “I am still up in the air about how to grade foreign students …”

As the teaching practicum unfolded, Sergey was not only able to re-voice some of the instructional talk that Konstantin modeled for him in order to better prepare him for teaching in the ESL writing course, but also demonstrated a great deal of self-regulation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) with the mentoring protocols being facilitative of this self-regulating activity. In terms of his self-regulating activity, Sergey was able to reflect on his teaching practices, self-critique, propose, and actually implement certain modifications in his subsequent lessons.

One of the examples of Sergey’s self-regulation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) was his ability to point to certain moments in his lessons that did not go as he had planned them. In the classroom transcript below, we see that during Sergey’s first solo lesson, even though he directed the students to form groups, several of them chose to work separately.

Sergey: Okay, we have an activity now. We are going to find out if you can tell whether these [the texts on a handout] are plagiarized or not ((Sergey counts the students)).
Okay. I want you four on the front row to read the first one. At the top, there is the original article and then there are four different versions there. So, this group has version number one, the first four people- the first four people here have version two. You two and you two have version three. And the five of you have version four. I give you five minutes, three with the original version, which is at the top. So, get together and talk about it, and we’ll see what you will come up with ((Several of the students start to work individually with the handouts, despite the directions)). (Sergey’s solo lesson 1, 06.13-07.38, March 14th 2012)

In a subsequent co-reflection session, Sergey was able to point to his failure to provide the students with clear directions at the beginning of his first solo taught lesson, while Konstantin’s backchanelling allowed Sergey to further externalize his thoughts. Sergey’s awareness of his lack of clear directions shows his ability to evaluate his own teaching.

Sergey: And I also didn’t anticipate how in the beginning the students kinda just sat there and didn’t really interact…. Yeah. And I hadn’t anticipated and I don’t think I did a very good job of saying ah-, “You need to get together as a group.” I just said, you know, “You first four” and I should have specifically said, “Now, you need to get together.”

Konstantin: Right.

Sergey: And I didn’t. So, they started working separately. …

Konstantin: Right. … Yeah. While I was observing, I felt the same thing. You could have ah- maybe you could have said more specifically, “Would you get together and discuss”? 

Sergey: Yeah, that was the problem. (2nd co-reflection session, 03.30-05.13, March 14th 2012)
Responding to Sergey, Konstantin modeled his own instructional talk to deal with this teaching dilemma (“Would you get together and discuss”?). And, as the session proceeded, Konstantin returned to the issue related to unclear directions, suggesting that Sergey might approach the students who did not want to participate in the pair-work and repeat his directions. Konstantin also provided Sergey with emotional support, which, as the literature suggests (e.g., Nolan & Hoover, 2007), is particularly crucial for novices’ success.

Konstantin: So, the first group activity ah- I agree that you could have said or you could have more actively engaged them and gathered them. … I understand, so first time you are a little nervous there, but ah- so, “You are group one,” they don’t really engage and then you can go there and “Okay, you do that.” You know, as teachers, we can always do that. (2nd co-reflection session, 21.49-22.30, March 14th 2012)

Another example of Sergey’s self-regulation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) as a teacher was his ability to propose modifications and actually implement them in his own subsequent solo teaching. For example, in his response to a prompt from the protocol during the co-reflection session on his first solo lesson, Sergey expressed a desire to prepare more interesting and hands-on activities for the students and to experiment with organizing the students’ group-work in different ways.

Sergey ((reads from the protocol)): How do I plan to increase student engagement?

Well, I need to think how to make boring stuff more interesting or give them some hands-on activities or something better than what I had prepared for plagiarism.

((Continues to read from the protocol)): What if you could change something about the class? … You can change the arrangement of the seats. … I can try something like that.

(2nd co-reflection session, 18.53-19.56, March 14th 2012)

From the transcript above, we can see that the mentoring protocol helped direct Sergey’s reflection on his lesson. Even more importantly, in a subsequent interview with the researcher
Sergey was also able to provide a rationale for his decision to use an instructional video about constructing an argument in his second solo lesson with the goal of increasing student engagement.

*Katya:* _So, you think with using the video you’ll keep them more engaged?_

*Sergey:* _I think so. And I hope so. …_

*Katya:* _So, you think it’s helpful.

*Sergey:* _Well, it changes things up. And each time you change the way you present something ah-so you start out with an interest and as you keep doing the same thing, then you change something._ (Sergey’s clarification interview, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012)

Subsequently, during their third co-planning session, after watching the video together, Konstantin expressed concern that the video might be difficult for the students and suggested that Sergey prepare the students by briefly describing to them the content of the video first. Konstantin then modeled his own instructional talk for how he might do this, which Sergey then re-voiced.

*Konstantin:* _I mean the British video may be difficult for them … because of the accent… Well, I personally found it difficult to understand the previous one [the British video] but … at first the students may not understand what, you know, what they are talking about… Maybe just briefly explain the situation. … So, you just briefly give the content. “So, there is gonna be this man, he is going somewhere to do something.”_ (3<sup>rd</sup> co-planning session, 14.50-18.00, March 14<sup>th</sup> 2012)

Importantly, Konstantin did not only model his own instructional talk for this part of the lesson, but also explained his rationale for introducing this kind of talk, i.e., the ESL students’ proficiency level. The classroom transcript shows that Sergey indeed incorporated Konstantin’s suggestion by re-voicing his instructional talk. According to a sociocultural perspective, imitation constitutes an initial stage in development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) and, therefore, Sergey’s re-
voicing of Konstantin’s instructional talk serves as an initial sign of Sergey’s development of his expertise in teaching.

Sergey: *Okay, so let me tell you a little bit about that video. It is in British English. So, it may be more difficult to understand than American English. What it is ah- it is about a man going into an office, he wants to buy an argument. So, he goes to the receptionist. He is gonna go (to the wrong door) and then he will find the right one.*

*And there are four parts and what I want you to do is...* (Sergey’s Solo Lesson 2, 11.00-12.20, April 5th 2012)

Among other of Konstantin’s practices that Sergey imitated was his attention to a disengaged student, as previously demonstrated by his mentor (1st co-reflection session). Not only did Sergey notice the student, but he also attempted to articulate an alternative way to deal with this issue in the future.

Sergey (*reads from the protocol*): *Did I fulfill the goal of the lesson? Hm. For some of the students, yes. For some of them, no. And the variables were ah- whether they paid attention or not, whether they were sleepy or not. I went over to ah- [a student’s name] a couple of times. And first time she stopped playing with her cell phone and the second time she just kept on going… Ah- so the phones were barriers to a certain extent. And I’m not sure how I feel about those yet. … So, I will probably wind up that I don’t ban them, but I may ask them not to play with them. It’s okay to use it as a dictionary or ah- but not play games or post something on the Internet.* (3rd co-reflection session, 4.40-7.14, April 5th 2012)

Sergey’s ability to articulate an alternative instructional response to student disengagement indicates that he has already achieved a certain level of self-regulation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) as a teacher. For example, in this case, Sergey did not necessarily require Konstantin’s feedback in dealing with the dilemma of student disengagement, but was even able
to produce an alternative instructional solution on his own. Importantly, Sergey’s reflection was facilitated by the mentoring protocol.

Sergey’s ability to articulate and actually implement desired changes in his teaching practices seems to have been aided by his extensive teaching experience prior to the start of his MA TESOL practicum. Even though throughout the practicum, Sergey did not explicitly refer to his years of experience as a teacher, in the pre-semester questionnaire he did highlight his confidence in relation to being able to lead a class.

*Sergey: I feel confident that I have the knowledge, but I will have to study and outline my presentations. I know that I can stand in front of a group of students and teach because I have done it most of my adult life.* (Sergey’s pre-semester questionnaire, January 2012)

However, interestingly, even despite Sergey’s extensive experience with teaching, he still felt that TESOL was a new field for him.

*Sergey: … so, I am not yet able to easily and quickly bring the knowledge I gained in those [MA TESOL] classes to bear in teaching. Because of that, I think my teaching will take a lot of preparation on my part (whereas, in agriculture, I could just stand up and teach many classes without any–or very little–preparation).* (Sergey’s pre-semester questionnaire, January 2012)

Finally, in his post-semester interview, Sergey again re-voiced some of the ideas that Konstantin modeled for him throughout the semester. For example, one idea had to do with the necessity of creating coherence between the lessons.

*Sergey: ... you can work in things that make it flow a little bit better and make one lesson follow more closely what they learned before. ... So, you may need to take things from previous lessons and tie that into this lesson, so that they see this continuity and then they draw on the prior knowledge that they have and doing that will reinforce the
prior knowledge as well as let them use that in order to learn the new knowledge that they are told. (Sergey’s post-semester interview, April 25th 2012)

Previously, Konstantin had modeled the idea of creating continuity between the lessons by sharing with Sergey how he could build on what Sergey had taught the students in a subsequent lesson.

Konstantin: So, in the following class, I am gonna re-cap these [citation] rules, and we gonna get some more- sources and other types of sources and try to see how to do that. And more detailed, like more sophisticated rules with multiple authors, and so I’m gonna cover those more specifically. (2nd co-planning session, 27.06-27.27, March 14th 2012)

In addition to emphasizing the necessity of creating continuity between the lessons, in the post-semester interview, Sergey also talked about the importance of providing the students with activities through which they could use their new knowledge. This was another issue to which Konstantin had referred to earlier in the semester.

Sergey: I think you also can’t teach things one time and expect them to learn it and you need to plan activities that will help them to use what you teach. (Sergey’s post-semester interview, April 25th 2012)

Konstantin had previously modeled the importance of greater student involvement in the lesson by sharing his rationale for why he had come up with an activity on paraphrasing (the 1st co-taught lesson).

Konstantin: Well, I first came up with this task [an activity on paraphrasing] in the previous semester because at that point I felt like I needed to involve students more and not just delivering what I had to them but ah—… (1st co-reflection session, 4.10-4.20, February 9th 2012)
By re-voicing his mentor’s instructional ideas, Sergey demonstrated his ability to learn from his mentor. At the same time, however, by the end of the teaching practicum, Sergey stated that he was still “up in the air” (his own words) in regard to how to grade ESL students’ essays. In addition, this dilemma was compounded because of Sergey’s concern about how to evaluate student improvement.

Sergey: *I am still up in the air about how to grade foreign students. Should I grade them like ah- an American, a native-speaker student? On the one hand, they probably should be. They gonna be going to an American university and the grade is ah- they gonna be graded by a lot more- a lot more people in different classes and they are not gonna be given an easy ride just because they are non-native speakers. … And the other side is ah- another part is whether you grade them strictly on what they do or do you grade them on the improvement that they make. … So, I don’t know ah- I probably will go with strict grading, but if they make a lot of progress, I probably will take that into account.* (Sergey’s post-semester interview, April 25th 2012)

Overall, it can be argued that as the practicum unfolded, Sergey was able to develop his teaching expertise by relying on Konstantin’s suggestions from the collaborative mentoring sessions and by re-voicing some of Konstantin’s instructional talk and ideas. The mentoring protocols served as a tool to help Sergey express his thoughts and feelings about the lessons, while Konstantin served as a temporary other (Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Yet, at the same time, towards the end of the practicum, Sergey was still left undecided in relation to how harshly he should grade ESL students’ writing. Thus, even though the mentoring protocols and the mentoring sessions did allow both participants to have more discussion about the issues related to grading, the mentor’s own lack of satisfaction with the grading policies and the failure to address the root of Sergey’s struggle (native-speaker norms) by either the mentor or the researcher did not enable Sergey to completely resolve his persistent dilemma.
In conclusion, it was found that the mentoring protocols created spaces that enabled Konstantin to share and model instructional ideas and practices that Sergey subsequently imitated. In addition, Konstantin was found to model his own instructional talk in order to prepare Sergey for teaching the ESL classes, which Sergey subsequently re-voiced. Importantly, Konstantin’s mentoring practices were not regulated, but mediated by the mentoring protocols in the sense that he frequently shared his own thoughts and feedback with Sergey upon the latter’s externalizing his thoughts and feelings about the classes that he taught. Konstantin’s ability to expand the mentoring protocols points to his attentiveness to Sergey’s level of professional expertise, i.e., Konstantin was not restrained by the mentoring protocols. In addition, it was found that Sergey demonstrated a great amount of self-regulation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), which was also facilitated by the mentoring protocols.

However, the fact that Sergey’s concerns about grading ESL students’ written work were not completely resolved suggests that mentors need to be more aware of this novices’ concern. In fact, prior literature on novice teacher learning (Jonson, 2008; Tomlinson, 1995) suggests that grading is among the many prominent concerns that novice teachers often find it hard to grapple with.

Sergey’s status as a native-speaking ESL teacher might have also been one of the reasons that contributed to his struggle over evaluating ESL students’ writing. In comparison, his
mentor’s status as a non-native English teacher must have allowed him to be more aware of the students’ level of writing. Thus, when evaluating ESL students’ written work Konstantin followed the grading rubric without comparing ESL students’ writing to their native English-speaking counterparts. Thus, even though native and non-native English-speaking teacher collaboration is a potentially fruitful area for professional development of both participants, in this case, we witness a lack of shared understanding of the issues related to grading on the part of the mentor and the mentee. As this finding implies, mentors should be more attentive to the concerns (in this case, grading) that pre-service teachers bring with them to their mentoring experiences. Perhaps, addressing the root of Sergey’s struggle (native-speaker norms) as well as his mentor’s greater satisfaction with how he himself evaluated the extent of student improvement in the ESL writing course might have enabled Sergey to have developed a better understanding of this aspect of teaching. At the same time, following Lampert’s (1975) ideas, it can be suggested that a teacher’s dilemmas are better managed rather than resolved. However, this is a point that has different consequences for student learning. Even though it may be unreasonable to expect Sergey to resolve his contradictions related to grading during his teaching practicum, raising mentors’ awareness in regard to the potential challenges that mentees may confront related to grading ESL students’ work is an important issue to consider in the context of teacher mentoring.
Chapter 6

**Madhu and Lisa**

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the quality and the character of the interactions between Madhu, a pre-service native English-speaking MA TESOL teacher, and Lisa, her non-native English-speaking mentor in an ESL high-beginner grammar course in an intensive English program, as they participated in a series of collaborative mentoring sessions. In the case of Madhu and Lisa, we witness what is known as reciprocal mentoring (Grove, Odell, & Strudler, 2006; Wink & Putney, 2002), wherein both the mentor and the mentee contributed to and expanded each other’s professional expertise. Wink and Putney (2002) explained the concept of reciprocal mentoring as “the notion of the more experienced or capable other can alternate depending on the situations and setting” (p. 161). In this chapter, Lisa was a more capable other (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) who mentored Madhu in relation to how she could best teach a grammar unit, while Madhu was a more capable other as she suggested additional class activities and materials.

As a mentor, Lisa provided Madhu with very explicit mediation, especially upon seeing Madhu’s lack of confidence about how to teach grammar (a unit on adjective clauses) to the ESL students, the material which Madhu, being a native English speaker, knew, but only intuitively. Lisa’s explicit mediation throughout the course of the practicum stemmed from her own conception of her role as a mentor, which she articulated at the start of the semester: “…it’s [being a mentor] about giving instructions and explaining things…” (Pre-semester interview, January 13th 2012) Throughout the practicum, Lisa was also found to provide Madhu with balanced feedback. For example, upon sharing with Madhu her critical comments on how Madhu
could improve her teaching practices, she would highlight Madhu’s strengths as a teacher, which shows Lisa’s attention to Madhu’s potential emotional insecurities. Yet another characteristic of Lisa’s mediation was her readiness to discuss Madhu’s own concerns (e.g., how to plan lessons); in other words, Lisa allowed Madhu to direct the content of their discussions.

As for Madhu, she was able to develop her teaching expertise by imitating Lisa’s instructional practices. From a sociocultural perspective, imitation is considered an important first step in development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In addition, by contributing her own instructional ideas and materials to Lisa’s classes, Madhu demonstrated her agency as a teacher (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In a sense, Madhu was not an absolute beginner in teaching, i.e., during several mentoring sessions and post-session interviews Madhu referred to her prior experiences as a teacher of music. This prior experience in teaching music seems to be an important factor contributing to Madhu’s ability to exhibit a certain level of self-regulation as a teacher (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Despite certain success, however, towards the end of the practicum Madhu remained object-regulated, i.e., for the grammar lesson that she taught at the end of the semester Madhu created her own meditational tool (a cheat sheet) helping her get through the lesson.

As for the mentoring protocols, the spaces which they created for Madhu allowed her to contribute to Lisa’s classes by bringing in additional instructional ideas and materials as well as to elicit Lisa’s assistance in relation to how she could best implement her instructional ideas. In the case of Lisa, the spaces created by the protocols allowed her to provide Madhu with very explicit mediation. In addition, the mentoring protocols helped Lisa externalize her thoughts on how she could improve her instructional practices in the future.

In the sub-sections that follow, I focus on the quality and the character of Lisa and Madhu’s interactions, paying particular attention to Lisa’s explicit mediational strategies and Madhu’s responsive moves.
6.2 Lisa’s Mediation Strategies: “… it’s [being a mentor] about giving instructions and explaining things…”

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the most striking characteristics of Lisa’s mediation was her providing Madhu with very explicit mediation on how she could best implement her instructional ideas. Thus, while preparing Madhu to teach a segment of her class for the first time, Lisa highlighted for Madhu the specific grammar features and vocabulary items that Madhu would need to explain to the students, as she reviewed the Present Simple and Present Progressive tenses by using a contemporary American song. While Lisa herself was familiar with the instructional strategy of using songs to teach grammar, Madhu’s choice of particular songs was new to Lisa (email exchange, March 4th 2013).

Lisa ((Looks through the list of the songs Madhu prepared and chooses one)): This is good. I was thinking we should have the song that has both [Present Simple and Present Progressive Tenses].

Madhu: Oh, that’s right...

Lisa: So, that you could pull out, for example, what’s the difference between this [Present Simple] and this [Present Progressive]? … So, you would pick out sentences to show them the differences [between the two tenses]. Well, ask them the difference. … What you could also do is (space this out) and make it like a listening exercise and see whether they can fill in…. So, words like “love, not tragedy.” So, you would go through the lyrics and like you would have to explain what a “tragedy” is. … And there are some idioms that I am sure they would be very interested in knowing. … We will probably listen to it at least 2 times. (1st co-planning session, 4.56-7.20, February 6th 2012)

Lisa’s explicit mediation, i.e., choosing the songs and explaining to Madhu how she could approach teaching them is in accord with her own conception of mentoring.
Lisa: I think mentoring—by mentoring you are also learning. Because once over again, it’s about giving instructions and explaining things and I need a lot—I need to practice more [giving instructions and explaining]… (Pre-semester interview, January 13th, 2012)

Indeed, the classroom transcript from the first co-taught lesson shows that Madhu was able to imitate Lisa’s instructional practices and drew the students’ attention to a new vocabulary item and an idiom.

Madhu: … So, in the second line, “It doesn’t have to end in tragedy.” Do you guys know what a “tragedy” is (glances over the classroom)?

Students: .

Madhu: “Tragedy” is something that is sad. So if it ends badly, it could be seen as a tragedy, something that is sad. … Ah. The second line ah—line four ( ) “you are one in a million.” Have you guys ever heard the phrase “one in a million”? Can you guess what that might mean? …

Student 1: Only one.

Madhu: Only one time? Kind of. “One in a million” means that it’s rare, it’s special.

Students: Yeah. (1st co-taught lesson, 14.00-16.00, February 8th, 2012)

In addition, by relying on Lisa’s suggestions, Madhu was also able to highlight the difference between the Present Simple and the Present Progressive tenses to the students.

Madhu: Why don’t we compare some of these since we’ve been working with the different tenses? For the line one, if we say … “love doesn’t come so easily,” which tense is that that we’ve been working on? Simple Present or Continuous?

Students: Simple Present.

Madhu: Simple. Why?

Students: It’s true.
Madhu: It’s a general truth, right? “Love doesn’t come so easily.” We think that’s true.

Now skip down to the middle, “I’m waiting, waiting for nothing.” Which tense would that be?

Student 1: Present ah-

Madhu: The continuous. Why?

Students: Because of the “-ing.”

Student 2: Now.

Madhu: So, you know the form ((laughs)), right. So, because it is something that is happening now or recently. (1st co-taught lesson, 22.15-23.52, February 8th 2012)

As the transcripts above show, Madhu extensively relied on her mentor’s suggestions while teaching the first co-taught lesson. It can be argued that without having her mentor’s prior explicit assistance, it is unclear whether Madhu would have been able to successfully implement her instructional ideas into actual practice.

Another characteristic of Lisa’s mediation was her allowing Madhu to direct the content of their interactions. For example, when Madhu sought Lisa’s advice with regard to lesson planning, a common concern among pre-service teachers (Tomlinson, 1995), Lisa shared her professional expertise on this aspect of teaching. According to Lisa, a lesson plan serves her as a tool to make her instructional goals explicit to the students and herself, which is critical to keeping her and the students on task.

Madhu: I don’t feel uncomfortable doing lesson plans because we’ve done them so much in my other classes. It’s just that we’ve always had like make-believe- like you never had like an actual class to give it to, you know what I mean? So I guess it’s my only ah- I guess if I am worried about anything, that’s my only worry. Oh, now I have to actually use this ((laughs)).
Lisa: But every teacher is different. I rely on a lesson plan the way ah-like this is the first document I would open up () when I come to the office, that gives me a sense of purpose ((Madhu laughs)). You know, it gives me a sense of direction. ... That’s my teaching philosophy, I can’t teach that way. Otherwise, I would be lost, my students would be lost. So, I need my lesson plans for me. (1st co-planning session, 13.21-14.00, February 6th 2012)

In addition, Lisa followed this explanation by modeling planning a segment of the first co-taught lesson which Madhu was expected to teach, thus again providing Madhu with her very explicit mediation.

Lisa: What you can do for your own planning. Like okay. I have this song ((writes on a piece of paper)). And then they will fill in the blanks. And then we would go through the song. This song. And then we would- so you would explain the idioms, the vocabulary, reductions. And then you would play the song again and look at the grammar. (1st co-planning session, 16.30-17.00, February 6th 2012)

Yet another characteristic of Lisa’s mediation was her reliance on the mentoring protocols in order to externalize her own thoughts on how she might improve her instructional practices in the future. For example, in her response to the first prompt from the mentoring protocol (“What went well and why”?), Lisa reflected on her own segment of the first co-taught lesson, noting what went well as well as sharing her thoughts in relation to how she could improve the lesson. In particular, Lisa articulated a change in teacher and students’ roles that she would want to implement, which, however, did not transfer to Madhu’s subsequent talk about teaching or her instructional practices.

Lisa: And then we did this, which is identifying the uses, it (went good), they could identify the questions. The questions were pretty funny, the speaking part.... One thing I
would probably do differently next time, though, is ah- I would let them ask the question to whoever they want to ask. ... Like instead of me formulating the question.

Madhu: Uhu....

Lisa: The whole point would be them forming the question. (1st co-reflection session, 2.48-3.30, February 8th 2012)

Interestingly, during the same session, Madhu admitted that, in comparison with Lisa, she lacked sufficient experience to talk about what she would do differently if she were to re-teach her part of the lesson. In the excerpt below, Madhu also referred to her prior experience as a music teacher.

Madhu: I guess I don’t have enough experience to say what I would do differently on my part- . I know at one point I kinda zoned and I had to literally think because- and you know what, I had it written down, too, my little hand outline. And typically like when I taught music I always kept it nearby, so that just if I am trying to transition, I would look at it very quickly and like okay, “This is what we are doing next.” And I didn’t have it, and I remember at one point I just kinda zoned, okay, let’s do this- ((both laugh)). (1st co-reflection session, 06.17-7.08, February 8th 2012)

The transcript above suggests that Madhu has, in the past, used lesson plans as a tool to mediate her teaching activity, yet, in this co-taught lesson she did not have this tool and thus “zoned”, indicating Madhu’s lack of sufficient self-regulation as an ESL teacher.

In response to this, Lisa suggested that Madhu could indeed use her notes as a mediational tool, thus, acknowledging Madhu’s need for this kind of object-regulation as a novice ESL teacher. In addition, Lisa demonstrated her attentiveness to Madhu’s potential emotional insecurities by supplementing her critical comment (about the need to slow down the rate of her speech when teaching a lower-level ESL class) with some positive feedback on Madhu’s unique strengths as a native English-speaking ESL instructor.
Lisa: *I mean I didn’t see- I mean I saw a little bit like you were thinking what you were gonna do next, but I mean you had it all planned, that’s the most important thing. Even if you have to go back and look at your notes, I think that would be fine… One thing I noticed though… I think it’s because and this happened to me the first time that I taught level one. I would talk like I would normally talk, and they would be like, “Yeah, what are you talking about”?…*

Madhu: … *I did want to say something just to kinda point out that if you don’t get what I am saying, let me know…* So even when we first sat down, I was like, I don’t know what their proficiency level is…

Lisa: … *Because what you can bring to the table is good, I mean my English is still, you know, English is still my second language. Like some of the terms that you are using, I don’t use them. So I think they would appreciate that natural English versus ESL.* (1st co-reflection session, 7.08-10.34, February 8th 2012)

Importantly, even during her pre-semester interview Madhu articulated the same concern with being able to adjust her speech to beginning-level ESL students. Such awareness of her own limitations as an ESL teacher serves as additional evidence of Madhu’s considerable extent of self-regulation as a teacher (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Madhu: I think one of my biggest challenges, it’s probably kinda a worry and a concern, too. *And something that I’ve already been faced with is- kind of understanding where my students are, as far as their proficiency level…* But as far as concerns, I still always have had this lack of confidence, you know, in the back of my mind I don’t know if my students are really gonna get this. (Pre-semester interview, January 13th 2012)

Even more importantly, upon teaching her second lesson, Madhu indeed reported on being able to pay more attention to the rate and the amount of her talk, suggesting her
responsiveness to the mentor’s explicit mediational move, i.e., paying more attention to the rate of her speech.

_Madhu: I guess for me personally, I felt a lot calmer being there this time. And like one of my biggest things was to watch how much I’m talking, because sometimes I just talk and talk and talk. And I realize they may not follow upon what I am saying. It’s too much for them at this level. So I was really trying to still kinda re-iterate and speak a little slower, and if I did have a word I tried as much to explain it._ (Post-session interview, February 22nd 2012)

In the transcript above, Madhu talks about incorporating Lisa’s suggestion of monitoring her speech with beginning-level students during her second lesson. From a sociocultural theoretical perspective, Lisa’s recommendation, i.e., to slow down her speech as she taught beginning-level ESL students became a psychological tool (Kozulin, 1998, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) on which Madhu was able to rely while teaching her second lesson. Lisa’s directive was transferred from the social level (interpsychological) to the intrapsychological, i.e., when Madhu was consciously monitoring her own speech during her second lesson. In other words, Lisa’s suggestion became a symbolic means of mediation which Madhu used while teaching her second lesson, allowing her to improve her instructional practices.

Overall, Lisa’s mediation can be characterized as very explicit, which, in fact, is consistent with her own views about the role of a mentor. Lisa was also found to provide Madhu with balanced feedback by supplementing her critical suggestion with comments about Madhu’s strengths as a teacher. Finally, Lisa showed her responsiveness to Madhu’s own concerns by explaining how she herself used lesson plans. And as we will see in the next sub-section of this chapter, Lisa’s mediational strategies were indeed facilitative of Madhu’s learning-to-teach as a novice ESL teacher.
6.3 Madhu: “So it was kinda a mutual relationship…”

From the very start of her teaching practicum experience, Madhu demonstrated her agency (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) as a teacher by contributing new instructional ideas and materials to the class, of which Lisa was appreciative.

Lisa ((looks through the list of the songs Madhu prepared and chooses one)): This is good. I was thinking we should have the song that has both [Present Simple and Present Progressive Tenses].

Madhu: Oh, that’s right. (1st co-planning session, 4.56-5.02, February 6th 2012)

In addition, from the very beginning of her teaching practicum experience, Madhu demonstrated her awareness of the students’ “thought processes” (her own words). The literature on teacher learning contends that demonstration of attention to the students’ thought processes is characteristic of more experienced rather than novice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Nolan & Hoover, 2007).

Madhu: I was telling her [Lisa] how hard it [new vocabulary] can be to explain. That can be so hard … trying to describe what it is like. But they were throwing stuff back at me, like okay, “I can see where your thought processes are going.” You know the one with “treat.” And [a student’s name] was coming up “treatment” and I was like, “Okay, that sounds different, but I see where you are coming from.” Like, yeah, they were really great, like that interaction to help me out. (Post-session interview, February 8th 2012)

Apparently, Madhu’s ability to pay attention to the students’ thought processes stemmed from her prior teaching experiences as a music teacher. Even though Madhu did not explicitly
refer to those experiences this time, it seems highly possible that throughout the course of the
practicum they served as an important resource on which she could draw.

However, as the teaching practicum unfolded, despite her initial success, Madhu
encountered a teaching situation which created a great amount of difficulty for her.

*Madhu:* I don’t think honestly even I know the difference between “who” and “whom”
((Lisa laughs)). ... So as I was going through these ((looks through the textbook
exercises)) I was like, “I don’t even know if it’s whom or ah-” because it’s not like a
teacher book with like- the answers. (3rd co-planning session, 4.38-5.02, April 7th 2012)

In addition, during the post-session interview Madhu explicitly referred to a strong
emotional response that she experienced while preparing to teach the lesson on adjective clauses.

*Madhu:* Well, I didn’t know what this even was. The adjective clauses. I didn’t know what
they were and so that (). And so for me, sometimes I get kinda like anxious
explain something and it might not be very clear. ... Because I don’t know how to explain
it. Because ah- and I can’t say, “Well, it’s just that way.” So, I need to give them a
reason, and that’s a difficult part for me. Because I never like explicitly studied
grammar. I just know it from growing up and speaking it and it’s unconscious. And so
sometimes, I get more anxious just because I don’t know even what a subject is...

(Post-session interview, April 7th 2012)

In the post-session interview, Lisa similarly referred to Madhu’s strong emotional
response to having to teach a unit on adjective clauses.

*Lisa:* Yeah, she was unfamiliar with adjective clauses. It’s something that native speakers
do naturally and so that for some of them she felt like, “I don’t know how to explain
certain things, why ah- when you use who, when you use whom”... she has her intuition
and she is worried that if a student asks her a question and she might not know how to
explain it just because it’s so natural for her- ... yeah, she doesn’t know the explicit rules,
but she knows how to use them, definitely. **She is worried. I don’t think that she will have a problem though.** (Post-session interview, April 7th 2012)

Madhu’s difficulty with explaining grammar explicitly is, in fact, a common experience among novice native-speaking ESL teachers (e.g., Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Seeing Madhu’s lack of confidence with teaching the grammar unit on adjective clauses, Lisa was able to provide her with both professional and critical emotional support. In the excerpts below, we see how Lisa first gave Madhu explicit suggestions in relation to how she could approach teaching the two grammar points (the use of “who” vs. “whom”). Lisa then went through the textbook examples together with Madhu and even offered a good amount of empathy saying that explaining this unit might be more difficult for native speakers.

**Lisa:** Yes, but you would need to stay here longer. They may not get it all at once. So, like you would explain “who” and then do practice. Explain “whom,” and then do practice. Make sure they know the difference between “who” and “whom.” And then you have that… But then the key is don’t go too fast. And the chances are that they are not gonna be able to go fast, too. Like ((looks through the textbook examples))- this one ((reads from the textbook)), “The police officer was friendly. She gave me directions.”

**Madhu:** So, the police officer who was- oh wait ((re-reads the sentences from the textbook)). So, the police officer who gave me directions was friendly.

**Lisa:** Right. …

**Madhu:** Okay. …

**Lisa:** I think this is harder for native speakers to teach because you guys use it just so naturally-. But for me, I need to think about it, too, so I know- I know the rules. **Okay, this is an object and I need to use “whom.”** (3rd co-planning session, 4.12-7.55, April 7th 2012)
In the post-session interview, Lisa confirmed that Madhu was indeed overwhelmed with having to teach points of this grammar lesson.

Lisa: *I think she is a little bit overwhelmed by the idea of teaching adjective clauses.*

*But I also think that once she has the PowerPoint and everything figured out, it’s gonna be fine. I mean adjective clauses is never easy for any teacher to teach. Because the structure is so complicated… It’s gonna take a lot of practice from the students.*

(Post-session interview, April 7th 2012)

Overall, during this session, Lisa provided critical assistance to Madhu by explaining the grammatical point that Madhu was expected to teach (the adjective clauses) and empathizing with Madhu’s difficulty with having to teach English grammar explicitly. In fact, in a subsequent post-semester interview, Lisa highlighted Madhu’s emotional insecurities and her own critical role in helping Madhu overcome her fear about teaching the unit on adjective clauses.

Lisa: *Like that first class that she taught, with adjective clauses and she was freaking out and I showed her what I would do. So, I think that I am like a resource for her.*

(Post-semester interview, April 29th 2012)

After teaching this grammar unit, Madhu felt very positive, while in the follow-up co-reflection session Lisa continued to probe her thinking by drawing her attention to the issue of whether the students actually were able to understand the grammatical concept (the use of “who” vs. “whom”).

Lisa ((reads from the protocol)): What went well?

Madhu: *Actually, the whole thing went surprisingly well ((laughs)). I am happy. I am happy with how it went…*

Lisa: *Do you think the students (understood)?*

Madhu: *This class, yeah. Because I know when I say something and it doesn’t process, like [a student’s name] or [another student’s name] would ask me a question, or even*
[a student’s name] (laughs). ... So it’s when I get questions from them, then I know that maybe I need to go over this. Or, when I say, like I try to ask, “Are there any questions? How d’you feel about this? Do you understand this? Are you feeling comfortable with this”? You know, those kinds of questions. (3rd co-reflection session, 0.00-2.00, April 9th, 2012)

Lisa’s ability to ask Madhu an additional question that was not prescribed by the mentoring protocol shows that her mentoring practices were mediated, but not completely regulated by the protocol. Lisa’s being able to go beyond what the mentoring protocol offered suggests that in order to be an effective mentor, mentors do not necessarily need to solely rely on the protocols, but be ready to adapt their mentoring practices to the particular mentee’s ZPD. While Madhu thought that the lesson went well, in her subsequent question Lisa pushed Madhu to also consider the students’ learning of the concept, to which Madhu was able to provide an adequate response. By having Madhu articulate her understanding of student learning, an issue to which more experienced teachers pay most attention (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), Lisa was able to probe and extend Madhu’s ZPD. In other words, with Lisa’s assistance (the prompt), Madhu expressed her understanding of student learning, an important issue which otherwise might have remained unnoticed by her. Importantly, Lisa’s mediational move (i.e., prompting Madhu to pay attention to whether the students understood the content of her class) also reflects the dynamic nature of the ZPD. Thus, after being prompted by Lisa, Madhu shifted her attention to the consequences of her teaching for student learning. This shows how the ZPD can be created via the mentor’s and the mentee’s engagement in the immediate tasks of teaching as well as through their collaborative after-class dialogues about their shared experiences in the classroom.

Another important point in relation to Madhu’s grammar lesson was her creation and use of a cheat sheet to support her teaching. In a subsequent email exchange, Madhu explained that in creating the cheat sheet she was drawing on her own experiences as a learner, i.e., preparing
for this class by reviewing the textbook grammar explanations and filling out the exercises herself. She then was able to use this tool in order to help regulate her teaching activity during the lesson.

Madhu: The cheat sheet was actually something that I had made for my own reference, since I wasn't sure how well I understood adjective clauses myself. I hadn't planned on presenting it in class. But once I saw the confusion, I thought I would take a chance and told them that this is what I made to help me remember. It was a risk and unplanned, but had a successful and positive outcome. That’s why I continued to use it for the second class, too, and build on the chart. (Email exchange, October 11th 2012)

Additionally, even though Madhu’s teaching activities in her third lesson were regulated by the mediational tool that she created based on her experiences as a learner, it turned out to be a useful instructional artifact that her mentor both recognized and appreciated.

Lisa: I was just thinking that your cheat sheet would be a really good review for [the missing students’ names].

Madhu: Yeah, because literally when you see that pronoun, you can just put that word in and eliminate that and you’ve got it, so-

Lisa: … It would be nice if you could make it into a PowerPoint slide. (3rd co-reflection session, 2.00-3.00, April 9th 2012)

In her post-semester interview, Madhu also highlighted her mentor’s overall positive feedback throughout the practicum and characterized the mentoring project as a learning experience for both herself and the mentor.

Madhu: … And then some of the feedback was different than what I originally expected, too. Like I got a lot of positive feedback. … But I got a lot of positive, which I think in turn kinda helped her [Lisa] reflect a little bit, too. So, I think having me there helped her, you know, with her own teaching as well. So it was kinda a mutual relationship
because there were times like when I did that first activity. I just threw out an idea, with the song, it would be kinda fun. She totally went with it, you know. She was like, “I would have never thought of something like that, I would have never done something like that.” So, to kinda be able to play off from each other and learn from each other, too. I wasn’t really expecting to have that depth of, you know, interaction and relationship that we had…. She gave me a lot of confidence boosts throughout. (Post-semester interview, April 29th 2012)

Madhu’s description of the mentoring experience as a learning experience for both herself and the mentor suggests that this experience was indeed a case of reciprocal mentoring (Wink & Putney, 2002) or at least perceived as such by the participants.

Similarly, in her post-semester interview, Lisa expressed her appreciation of Madhu’s help, noticing that the students were also grateful for Madhu’s assistance.

Lisa: And I really think that they felt like they had two teachers. Like you were a resource, and they were really happy about that. (Final co-reflection on the course, 5.20-5.26, April 26th 2012)

In addition, Lisa admitted that having Madhu as a temporary other helped her reflect on her teaching more and think about why she did certain activities with the students.

Lisa: I learned a lot in terms of articulating what I am thinking and analyzing what I do in class… And it’s different when you think- when you are thinking by yourself. When you are thinking by yourself, you are just- it just goes by…. Just saying it out loud would help you to think, you hear it yourself and you know how bad or good that is…

Because after teaching for a while everything became implicit. … So, when you are planning, you don’t really think of why of each ah- of every little activity that you do. You sort of rush because you have other classes to plan. (Post-semester interview, April 29th 2012)
Overall, while Madhu demonstrated a good deal of agency (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) during the practicum, at the same time she was found to imitate the mentor’s instructional practices, which constitutes a first step in her development of greater teaching expertise. Importantly, towards the end of the practicum, Lisa and Madhu referred to the mentoring experience as a learning experience for both of them.

6.4 Conclusion

To conclude, both Madhu and Lisa expressed perceived benefits from the mentoring experience as being able to contribute to and expand each other’s teaching expertise. While Lisa was enabled to articulate why she was doing what she was doing and reflect on how she might improve her instructional practices in the future, Madhu was pushed to consider student learning in ways that more experienced teachers are able to do. The mentoring sessions and the mentoring protocols created spaces wherein such processes could take place.

In addition, the fact that Lisa paid attention to the issues that Madhu herself brought up (e.g., how to plan lessons) indicates the importance of mentors’ being particularly attentive to the concerns that the pre-service teachers themselves raise during the discussions, rather than, for example, only relying on the issues reflected in the mentoring protocols. As was evident in the data, another difficulty that Madhu experienced had to do with her having to teach a grammar unit to the ESL students. Being a native speaker, Madhu did not have adequate knowledge of the certain grammatical rules (adjective clauses) in English and despite the coursework during her MA TESOL program felt insecure in her ability to do so. Lisa, being a non-native speaker of English, was able assist Madhu, thus enabling her to do more than what she could do on her own. Therefore, mentors working with native English-speaking ESL pre-service teachers should be
aware of the difficulties that these pre-service teachers may potentially encounter while explicitly teaching grammatical points to the students.

Finally, throughout the course of the practicum, Lisa’s recommendations served as psychological tools (Kozulin, 1998, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) on which Madhu was able to rely as she taught on her own. One such example is Madhu’s monitoring of her own speech as she re-taught a segment of Lisa’s class. Other examples include Lisa’s suggestions for how to approach teaching one of the songs that Madhu had prepared and how to teach a grammar unit on adjective clauses. However, according to the proponents of the sociocultural theory (Gal’perin, 1977; Leont’ev, 1992), development would only be evident if Madhu were able to use the same tools, but in a different instructional context. Unfortunately, the time constraints of the practicum did not allow the researcher to investigate this scenario.
Teacher educators have long argued for the mentoring experience as a legitimate site for pre-service teachers’ professional development and have argued that mentors should intervene in pre-service teachers’ thinking about teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Freeman, 1990). Yet, a recent critical review of studies on teacher mentoring reveals that mentors tend not to regard mentoring as a professional development activity and mainly provide emotional and technical support related to teaching (Wang & Odell, 2002). In addition, due to the isolated nature of teaching, mentors often lack the skills necessary to observe and discuss teaching with others (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Little, 1990). As for the pre-service teachers’ learning, even though this has been the subject of considerable research, especially in the context of second language teacher education (Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson, 2009), issues relating to the impact of teacher mentoring on pre-service teachers’ learning-to-teach, particularly in regard to pre-service teachers’ engagement in mentoring sessions, have received little attention (Harvey, 2011).

In this context, it is necessary to understand how teacher mentoring is actually carried out and whether and to what extent the additional mediational tools (mentoring protocols) and spaces (mentoring sessions) can support pre-service teachers’ development of professional expertise in L2 teaching and mentors’ development of mentoring skills. Because mentoring sessions were set up for the present study, it was possible to gain information about the processes through which pre-service teachers’ learning actually unfolded. Thus, the present study provides a foundation based on which teacher educators can design better learning-to-teach experiences for L2 pre-service teachers.
This study is grounded in recent literature on teacher mentoring in the field of general teacher education, and as such it draws on the concrete recommendations made in this body of literature (Easton, 2008; Jonson, 2008). In particular, in accord with this literature, a series of mentoring sessions were set up and both the mentors and the mentees were provided with mediational tools (mentoring protocols) to facilitate the processes related to teacher mentoring in the context of an MA TESOL practicum.

Although each mentor–pre-service teacher pair followed its own unique professional development path, several themes were present in the experiences of all three pairs during the practicum: the mentors’ modeling of expert teacher thinking, the pre-service teachers’ internal conflicts as areas for growth, mediational spaces as a means through which to “see” the pre-service teachers’ learning, and the mentors’ strategic use of the protocols provided as part of this research study. Individually and collectively, these themes suggest ways to think about and conduct both meaningful professional development for language teachers and research related to L2 teacher learning.

7.1.1 Mentors’ Modeling of Expert Teacher Thinking

Learning to teach is a highly complex, non-linear, and individualized process (Johnson, 2009). Therefore, it is essential to tailor mentoring in order to take into account what a novice teacher already knows, any key information and skills he or she lacks, and his or her strengths and weaknesses. That is, pre-service teachers should be understood in regard to the specific ZPD of each, and in the present study the mentors made every effort to do this by calibrating the extent and timing of their modeling of expert teacher thinking and their interventions.
During the mentoring sessions, the mentors in all three pairs modeled expert teacher thinking, and the mentoring protocols created spaces that facilitated this modeling. The ways in which the mentors modeled expert teacher thinking depended on their assessment of the ZPD of the particular pre-service teacher. In addition, some mentors (e.g., Samantha) re-calibrated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) their mediation in order to match the pre-service teachers’ ZPD, but other mentors were explicit from the very start of the practicum (e.g., Lisa), which appeared to be related to how well the mentors knew where the pre-service teachers were developmentally. For example, Samantha adjusted her mediation over time, whereas Lisa was explicit from the very beginning, probably in response to Madhu’s immediate request for mediation in relation to implementing her idea of teaching English grammar through songs.

Sensitivity to the pre-service teachers’ ZPD was a precondition of the mentors’ efforts to provide appropriate strategic mediation (Wertsch, 1985). For instance, sometimes the mentors did a lot of telling, but at other times their modeling of expert teacher thinking was more implicit. In terms of explicit modeling, the mentors demonstrated how an expert teacher might think about teaching a certain part of a class or what an expert teacher might do at a certain point in a class. For example, Amber found it difficult to teach new vocabulary from a restricted context (the textbook examples); therefore, Samantha offered her a number of teaching strategies to consider and try out. In addition, Samantha modeled her own instructional talk, which Amber subsequently re-voiced as she taught on her own. The case of Konstantin and Sergey, though, shows expert teacher thinking modeled in a less explicit way. During their collaborative mentoring sessions, Konstantin consistently took the approach of first allowing Sergey to provide his own answers to the prompts from the mentoring protocols. Then, Konstantin would share his thoughts about Sergey’s teaching. These observations also agree with the recommendations outlined in the literature on teacher mentoring. For example, Nolan and Hoover (2007) emphasize that mentoring should accord with the developmental level of a particular teacher with the ultimate goal of
reducing the novice’s dependence on the mentor by helping the latter “acquire the ability to analyze … [his or her] own teaching” (p. 71). Samantha and Konstantin acted exactly in accord with Nolan and Hoover’s statement and by so doing each met the specific developmental needs of the pre-service teachers with whom they were paired. The study also showed that the mentors engaged in the activity of creating the mentees’ ZPD through co-participating in the teaching tasks and after-class discussions with the mentees about their mutual experiences in the classroom. For example, Madhu began the second co-reflection session by focusing on her own performance in a lesson on adjectival clauses and she reflected on the class in its entirety. However, Lisa shifted the focus of Madhu’s attention to the impact of her instruction on student learning; i.e., she prompted Madhu to consider whether the students were able to understand the content of the lesson. Overall, then, the study provided evidence for both the more static (i.e., in terms of how the mentors shifted their mediation to meet the pre-service teachers where they were developmentally) and dynamic aspects (i.e., via prompting and/or pushing the pre-service teachers’ development of teaching expertise) of the ZPD.

In regard to the kind of mentoring needed, the mentors generally recognized instances that called for more explicit mediation. For instance, Samantha started the teaching practicum experience by giving Amber implicit directions regarding carrying out new vocabulary instruction. However, as the practicum unfolded, she re-calibrated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) her mediation in order to make it more explicit. Similarly, in Clarke’s (2006) study of mentors’ developing understandings of their work with pre-service teachers, over time the mentors developed a greater sense of responsibility for the pre-service teachers’ learning. That is, the mentors realized that their feedback was not always explicit enough for the pre-service teachers to succeed in the classroom and made it more explicit for exactly this purpose. Furthermore, Nolan and Hoover (2007) point out that pre-service teachers represent a special case in teacher education because they typically require more feedback from their mentors than either teachers
during their induction periods or in-service teachers do. Therefore, Samantha’s realization that Amber required more explicit mediation is not surprising; however, Samantha’s ability to re-calibrate (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) her mediation in response to Amber’s needs is noteworthy.

Likewise, the mentors’ mediation was responsive to the novices’ emergent needs. In other words, the mentors provided mediation only when there was a clear need to do so or when the pre-service teachers seemed ready for it, i.e., when the mentors saw opportunities to help the pre-service teachers extend themselves significantly. For example, in the case of Lisa and Madhu, Lisa offered very explicit mediation in relation to teaching a grammar unit only on seeing Madhu’s lack of confidence in regard to teaching this material to the students. This kind of mediation on the part of the mentors is particularly important, as it opens a space in which the pre-service teachers can first try to plan a lesson or even actually teach it on their own. Then, if the pre-service teacher encounters some difficulty while planning or teaching on his or her own, the mentor can step in to offer mediation and thus help the novice to succeed in the immediate future.

In one of the pairs (Lisa and Madhu), mediation turned out to be reciprocal (Wink & Putney, 2002): just as Madhu benefitted from Lisa’s ideas in relation to teaching grammar, Lisa appreciated Madhu’s new instructional ideas. Grove, Odell, and Strudler (2006) also report an instance of reciprocal mentoring (Wink & Putney, 2002) in which the pre-service teacher was a more capable other in some regards such that he guided the mentor in regard to using PowerPoint. In such pairs, the notion of the more capable other (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) shifts depending on the nature of the teaching task in which the participants are engaged.

According to the sociocultural theory perspective, development first occurs as a result of social interaction with more expert others (interpersonal level), which could then lead to internal development (intrapersonal level) (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of the present study, the interactions between the mentors and the pre-service teachers served as mediational spaces
wherein the members of each pair engaged in a social sense on the basis of which they articulated and attempted to resolve issues related to their collaborative teaching experiences. In addition, when the mentors modeled their expert teacher thinking or strategies in order to deal with certain teaching situations in the classroom, the pre-service teachers re-voiced this instructional talk and imitated their instructional strategies as they taught on their own.

Overall, from a sociocultural perspective, this re-voicing and imitation can be considered as constituting the first steps in the novices’ development of professional expertise in L2 teaching. Additionally, the study showed that the mentors were quite strategic in modeling expert teacher thinking, which differed in terms of how explicit the mentors were and when and how they provided modeling to the pre-service teachers.

7.1.2 Pre-Service Teachers’ Internal Conflicts as Areas for Growth

According to the proponents of sociocultural theory, teachers’ internal conflicts represent areas for professional growth (Roth & Tobin, 2004). This is because a perceived contradiction between a teacher’s beliefs and practices, i.e., emotional dissonance (Golombek & Johnson, 2004) can drive teachers to re-examine their current teaching beliefs and practices, search for alternative modes of engagement in the classroom, and finally embrace and implement alternative views and practices in their own teaching. However, in the context of the present study, it was found that the mentors did not always effectively address the pre-service teachers’ inner conflicts. For example, in the case of Konstantin and Sergey, even toward the end of the practicum, Sergey was still struggling with the issue of defining fair grading, whereas Amber was still hesitant as to which method of vocabulary instruction was more beneficial for the students.
The reasons for the mentors’ failure to effectively deal with the pre-service teachers’ concerns varied: Konstantin had not completely resolved the issue related to evaluating the extent of student improvement in writing for himself, while Samantha did not see anything problematic in her own strategies for teaching vocabulary. Due to the mentors’ inability to resolve the pre-service teachers’ inner conflicts, it became evident that teaching experience in and of itself does not necessarily translate to pre-service teachers’ becoming more expert teachers. In addition to their engagement in the actual activities of teaching, pre-service teachers need opportunities to fully articulate their teaching beliefs and understand the rationale behind teaching practices. In addition, both professional and emotional support provided by teacher educators (in this case, the mentors) is crucial in helping the novices articulate and attempt to resolve their emergent conflicts. Likewise, Golombek and Johnson (2004) note that “Teacher educators can play a key role … by serving as expert others. As expert others, teacher educators can recommend ‘expert knowledge’ that may enable teachers to name their understandings, as well as expose them to other mediational tools that can be used to externally mediate their understandings of themselves and their teaching activities” (p. 324).

At the same time, as previously noted, Lampert (1985, p. 192) proposed the image of a teacher as a “dilemma manager” and suggested that conflicts were “endemic [in] and even useful” to the teacher’s work. Likewise, Roth and Tobin (2004) showed that in the face of certain contradictions inherent in the educational system (e.g., a lack of necessary instructional resources in an urban African-American school), an individual teacher’s efforts make only a small difference for these students’ educational success. Perhaps, one of the solutions to, for example, Sergey’s concern over grading and evaluating ESL students’ work might be mainstreaming the ESL students with their native-speaking counterparts as already practiced in some of U.S. schools, which allows the ESL students greater access to the samples of native-speaker writing as
well as greater interactional opportunities in English in the classroom (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2012).

Interestingly, in one of the participating pairs (Lisa and Madhu), the pre-service teacher (Madhu) was not found to experience any contradictory feelings in relation to her teaching experiences during the practicum. At the same time, however, Madhu’s learning-to-teach experience evoked in her a strong emotional response when she was required to teach a unit on grammar. However, her mentor Lisa addressed Madhu’s feelings of distress by offering her both professional and emotional support, thus helping Madhu develop professional expertise in regard to explicit grammar instruction. This incident shows that even though Lisa did not need to attend to Madhu’s inner conflict related to teaching, she did provide Madhu with both professional and emotional support to help her overcome her experience of emotional dissonance—something for which Madhu expressed great appreciation in both her post-session and post-semester interviews.

Overall, even though inner conflicts often serve as a driving force in teachers’ development of professional expertise, in the present study, the mentors were not successful in their efforts to help the novices resolve their inner conflicts. At the same time, however, in one of the pairs the mentor (Lisa) did help one of the pre-service teachers (Madhu) to overcome her emotional dissonance by providing the novice with support such that led to Madhu’s development of greater expertise in relation to explicit grammar instruction. The different developmental paths that each pre-service teacher and each mentor followed during the practicum again point to the highly idiosyncratic and individualized nature of the learning-to-teach experience.
7.1.3 Mediational Spaces as a Means to “See” Teacher Learning

The data collected during the mentoring sessions showed how the pre-service teachers’ learning actually unfolded. According to Vygotsky (1978), “it is only in movement that a body shows what it is” (pp. 64–66). Similarly, it is through the mentors–pre-service teachers’ interactions that we can see and analyze how the pre-service teachers’ learning unfolded, especially through tracing the mentors’ mediational moves (or, strategies) and the pre-service teachers’ responsive moves to that mediation.

By considering the role of the mentoring sessions in this study for all three participating pairs, we were able to see teacher learning as it actually occurred. In particular, when pre-service teachers externalized their thoughts and feelings about teaching, they also became open to “dialogic mediation that can promote reorganization and refinement” (Johnson, 2009, p. 66). For example, as Madhu struggled with translating her theoretical knowledge of English grammar to pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), Lisa offered critical mediation. Kagan (1992) reported similar observations on the nature of pre-service teachers’ experiences during a practicum wherein the pre-service teachers often reported on a disconnect between their theoretical coursework and their experiences in the classroom during the practicum. However, whereas Kagan (1992) predominantly relied on the pre-service teachers’ perceptions regarding and feelings about the practicum experience, the present study reveals the nature of the disconnect (Madhu’s example) and how crucial the role of the mentor teacher is in that respect. More recent research (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003) likewise suggests that teachers do not fully internalize the concepts they learn in their teacher education programs and that pseudo-concepts that the teachers do develop are washed away by the experiences these teachers have in the institutions where they eventually teach. Therefore, Smagorinsky, Cook, and Johnson (2003) argue for a full internalization of concepts during teacher education programs, and they state that
this can be achieved by connecting the content knowledge that the pre-service teachers are exposed to with the actual activities of teaching.

Importantly, the data for the co-reflective sessions for both the mentors and the pre-service teachers came from their shared experiences in the classroom. According to Roth and Tobin (2004), the “value that comes from learning by doing, especially if others are able to co-teach and participate collaboratively” is of the utmost significance for the development of teaching expertise (p. 44). Further, they argue that “lived experience [in the classroom] provides the starting points for professional interrogation and development of understanding through critical and informed analysis” (p. 45). Thus, even though in the context of this study, the mentors and pre-service teachers were not expected to exactly enact the co-teaching practices articulated by Roth and Tobin (2004), they still shared the “lived experience” of teaching in the same classroom.

Overall, theoretical courses are often front-loaded in teacher education programs, and it is during their experiences in a teaching practicum that pre-service teachers must start to make sense of their theoretical knowledge and translate it into pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) that their students can understand. Because of the mentoring sessions included in the design of the present study, we were able to see how pre-service teachers (especially, Madhu) made sense of the theoretical knowledge (English grammar) she was previously exposed to in a course on discourse-functional grammar and how crucial was her mentor’s assistance in that regard.

7.1.4 Mentors’ Strategic Use of the Protocols
Finally, across the three participating mentor–pre-service teacher pairs, the mentors’ use of the protocols was found to be strategic. This was much more important than the availability of the protocols themselves, as these were intended to foster externalization and reflection on the part of both the mentors and the pre-service teachers. However, how the mentors actually used the protocols was key to the extent to which the pre-service teachers actually developed teaching expertise.

For example, Konstantin allowed Sergey to demonstrate considerable agency as a teacher by letting him handle the prompts from the protocols by himself, whereas Amber needed much more support from her mentor Samantha. In fact, Samantha simplified the prompts from the mentoring protocols in order to help Amber articulate her responses. Such strategic use of the prompts from the protocols helped Amber articulate her responses and engage in a reflective discussion about her teaching with a more expert other (Samantha). At the same time, however, the availability of the protocols did not always allow the mentors to address the concerns that the pre-service teachers struggled with the most. Even toward the end of her practicum, Amber was still hesitant regarding which method of vocabulary instruction was more beneficial for ESL students, and Sergey “was up in the air” (his own words) as to how ESL students’ essays could be graded fairly.

In addition to using the protocols in order to facilitate the pre-service teachers’ externalization of their thoughts and feelings about the classes they taught, both Konstantin and Lisa used the protocols as a basis for reflecting on their own teaching practices and considered modifying their respective approaches to teaching accordingly. However, this was not the case with Samantha, which was probably because she had more experience than the other two mentors and was more confident because of this. In fact, Childs (2011) reported similar findings whereby a participating teacher with considerable teaching experience did not engage in reflective practice via a teaching journal in contrast with two other participants who were not as experienced.
To summarize, the mentoring protocols facilitated both the mentors and the pre-service teachers’ externalization of thoughts and feelings in relation to their teaching experiences during the practicum. The mentors’ strategic use of the protocols was connected to their adaptation of the protocols to better suit the pre-service teachers’ developmental readiness. However, the protocols did not always allow the participants to have the most productive discussions such that would facilitate the pre-service teachers’ resolution of their inner conflicts.

7.2 Implications for Teacher Education Theory, Research, and Practice

The most salient themes across the three participating pairs’ experiences during the practicum can be used as a guide for researchers in the field of L2 teacher education in regard to how they think about and conduct research in the areas of L2 pre-service teacher mentoring and learning. Of particular importance here is the issue of unresolved contradictions. Previous research has reported how pre-service teachers’ inner conflicts can be resolved during co-generative dialogues with more expert others and with students (Roth & Tobin, 2004). However, in the present study, the mentoring sessions did not lead to the resolution of the pre-service teachers’ inner conflicts. Consequently, it can be suggested that researchers in the field of teacher education and mentoring should pay more attention to the unresolved conflicts that novices have even as they complete their practicum experiences and attend to those concerns. At the same time, as suggested earlier (Lampert, 1985), teachers’ dilemmas are rarely completely resolved, but they can usually be managed. Further, the various consequences of a teacher’s decisions for student learning should be discussed among the co-teachers.
This observation is particularly important as it supports the importance of agency (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) on the part of the pre-service teachers, who instead of simply replicating their mentors’ practices prefer to draw on their own views on teaching and teaching-related issues, which may differ from those held by their mentors. For example, in the context of the present study in two of the three pairs the mentors and pre-service teachers disagreed on certain points in regard to the practice of teaching. Ideally, mentoring should foster innovation in teaching practices. The mentoring relationship should not be about simply teaching the mentees to replicate their mentors’ instructional practices. And, in many ways, the mentoring protocols were designed to foster innovation. Yet, at the end of the practicum the pre-service teachers’ thinking and practices reflected little in the way of substantive change. It is likely that this lack of change was due in a large part to two factors: (1) the mentors did not have the same view of teacher learning or mentoring (i.e., that which is associated with educational innovations), and (2) the mentors did not know how to recognize and deal with complex, socially situated tensions (i.e., in regard to grading) or with philosophies of teaching (i.e., in regard to vocabulary instruction) that conflicted with their own. Consequently, the mentors needed more than the protocols provided in the present study to support them in working with novice teachers in ways that would lead to change rather than transmission.

This finding has important implications for mentoring program coordinators and teacher educators. It is evident that well-designed protocols though useful aids to mentoring are not sufficient as a support to the practice of mentoring. Attention, therefore, should be paid to how mentors conceptualize mentoring as well as to whether both the mentors and the pre-service teachers are provided with opportunities to articulate and negotiate their views on teaching, grading, and other salient aspects related to teaching.

In addition, this study’s findings confirm sociocultural theory’s position that social interaction can constitute an important means of mediation. In particular, within the context of the
present study, the mentoring sessions became a social space in which the modeling of expert teacher thinking took place. The mentoring sessions also served as a social space (intermental level) that created the potential for facilitating the individual (intramental) level of functioning. In fact, similar findings have been reported in earlier studies (Boshell, 2002; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson 2009). For example, through conversations with a colleague (a temporary other), a fifth-grade teacher in a bilingual elementary Spanish–English school in Spain had an opportunity to externalize his concerns related to teaching (some children remained silent in his classes), explore reasons for this phenomenon, and develop new ways of interacting with the children—all of which contributed to more interaction on the students’ part in this teacher’s subsequent classes (Boshell, 2002; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson 2009). Thus, seeing the interactions between the members of each mentor-pre-service pair as a mediational space for the learning of both the novice and the mentor teacher offers another theoretical direction for future research on teacher learning.

Overall, among the important theoretical implications that the present study brought to the surface were the pre-service teachers’ inner conflicts along with the mentoring sessions serving as mediational spaces for both the mentors and pre-service teachers’ learning. Such observations have important implications for the design of teacher education programs.

In view of the theoretical implications outlined above, professionals with oversight of teacher education programs should think critically about the activities in which the pre-service teachers engage during the practicum and create a mentoring experience that would allow both the mentors and the pre-service teachers to externalize their thinking about teaching and reflect on their teaching practices in great depth. Greater reflection can be facilitated by mentoring protocols, such as those used in the present study. For example, in the context of this study, the mentoring protocols facilitated articulation and reflection on the part of both the pre-service teachers and their mentors. Yet, as the data showed, mentors cannot solely rely on the mentoring
protocols, as it is often necessary to adapt such materials in order to better match the pre-service teachers’ developmental level.

Yet another issue has to do with the difficulty of translating theoretical knowledge into pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). This is in fact one of the persistent quandaries in teacher education programs, in both general and L2 educational contexts, in which the subject matter knowledge (what is taught) is separated from pedagogical knowledge (how it is taught) (Ball, 2000; Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008). From a sociocultural perspective, however, this dualism becomes blurred, as human cognition is understood as originating in and as being fundamentally shaped by humans’ engagement in social activities. In the future, it would be worthwhile to integrate a practical teaching component into the theoretical courses that pre-service teachers take. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to connect theory to practice instead of being exposed to each only in separate courses, e.g., a course on grammar and a practicum experience. This suggestion is also in agreement with the idea of praxis (Freire, 1970; Johnson, 2006), i.e., providing opportunities to connect the theory to which teachers are exposed in their teacher education programs to the actual activities of teaching.

Finally, this study suggests that if internalized, the prompts from the mentoring protocols can become psychological tools (Kozulin, 1998) capable of facilitating both the mentors and pre-service teachers’ reflections on their teaching practices in the future. In the context of general teacher education, according to Nolan and Hoover (2007), “given the opportunity to analyze data, to frame problems, and to search for solutions in collaboration with a supervisor or colleague teachers will be far more likely to internalize self-inquiry and reflectiveness” (p. 71). This idea agrees with the Vygotskyan statement about the use of the tools for the development of higher-order psychological functions. According to Vygotsky (1978), tools “provide learners with ways to become more efficient in their adaptive and problem-solving efforts” (p. 127). In a similar vein, the mentoring protocols can serve as tools that help teachers learn in and from their teaching
practices. Importantly, teachers’ reflections on their instructional practices should stem from their engagement with the students in the classroom as well as from recognizing and sharing (with other co-teachers and/or mentors) the responsibility for the consequences of their instruction for student learning.

According to Roth and Tobin (2004), co-teaching is a way for novices to see and to feel what it is like to teach “at the elbow” of an expert, to gain insights from engaging in the activity of teaching with an expert, and to discuss and reflect on those experiences after the fact (which, according to a sociocultural perspective, leads to novices’ conscious awareness in regard to teaching). Further, as Roth and Tobin (2004) also note, these processes are critical to the novices’ ability to make informed decisions about future teaching. Overall, then, learning through teaching “at the elbow” of an expert helps novices to understand the practices and consequences of teaching, whereas reflecting on these experiences helps them attain conscious awareness in regard to teaching, which leads to novices’ developing the ability to make pedagogically sound decisions in the classroom. Roth and Tobin (2004) point out that “co-teaching provides an ideal setting in which habitus reveals itself as it generates situationally appropriate action” (p. 47). Even though in the context of the present study the mentors and mentees did not strictly engage in what Roth and Tobin (2004) define as co-teaching, their shared experiences in the same classroom did serve as the data for reflecting on and planning alternative courses of action in the classroom.

Overall, among its many implications, the present study establishes the importance of providing mentoring experiences that create opportunities for pre-service teachers to enact teaching “at the elbow” of a more expert educator as well as spaces for novice teachers to externalize their thoughts and feelings about their teaching and open them up to the social mediation of a mentor. It also highlights the significance of the emotional and professional support provided by the mentors and the critical role that extended mentoring experiences can have on the development of pre-service teachers’ teaching expertise.
7.3 Limitations

As with most investigations, this study has several limitations. First, in regard to the mentors’ learning about mentoring, it is unclear whether more opportunities for reflection (e.g., journaling) would have caused the mentors to show a greater degree of reflexivity. To find out more on this point, it would be worthwhile to make this question a focus of future research.

Secondly, in regard to both my own social and physical role in the study, I was a colleague of Konstantin’s. During my doctoral studies, I had taught classes in the same ESL writing program as Konstantin was working in, although I did not share either the classes nor taught the students in the classes observed. Thus, I had a deeper understanding of Konstantin’s situation than I did of either Lisa’s or Samantha’s. It can be argued that it must have been impossible for me to remain non-judgmental and avoid imposing personal and societal expectations as I analyzed the participants’ words and behaviors during the practicum. However, in my view, the similarity between my background and Konstantin’s only meant that I had a stronger understanding of his experience and could, therefore, offer a more elaborate account of his and Sergey’s experiences as compared to the respective experiences of the other mentor-pre-service teacher pairs.

7.4 Conclusion
In concluding this dissertation, I realize that the pre-service teachers and their mentors undertook a very challenging journey together. I feel grateful that I played a role in their professional development experiences, witnessing both the obstacles that the pre-service teachers encountered and the assistance provided by their mentors in overcoming those obstacles. At the same time, I feel concerned about the emotional struggles that the pre-service teachers experienced. I was particularly moved by Amber’s frequent feelings of frustration due to the incompatibility of her own conception of teaching and the way the vocabulary instruction was actually carried out in her mentor’s class.

In the future, I hope to continue to be part of the beginning teachers’ journey by facilitating the process of their socialization into the teaching profession.
Appendix A
Recruiting Participants

Email to the Pre-Service MA TESOL Teachers

Dear Pre-Service MA TESOL Teachers,

I am a PhD student in the department of applied linguistics here at Penn State. For the purposes of my PhD dissertation, I am interested in studying how your participation in a series of collaborative mentoring sessions with your mentor (within the APLNG 500 teaching practicum course offered in spring 2012) influences the way you think about yourself as an L2 teacher and how you think about L2 teaching in general.

You will be asked to read and sign an informed consent form before the study begins. It is expected that the study will offer opportunities for you to reflect meaningfully on your teaching, thus enabling you to grow as a professional. Upon completion of the study, you will be also offered monetary compensation for participation ($100).

Your participation in the study would entail the following: (1) participation in two semi-structured audio recorded interviews with the researcher at the beginning and end of your teaching practicum, and (2) participation in seven collaborative video recorded mentoring sessions with your mentor. Each collaborative mentoring session will be followed by a short interview with the researcher in relation to your perspective on a certain mentoring session.

I hope very much that you will be interested in participating. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. It is also confidential. I will not use your real name in any presentations or publications that come out of this study. The video and audio recordings that come out of this project will be used in presentations only upon your consent.

If you would like to participate, please respond to me by email.
If you agree to participate, please also provide your answers to the following set of questions:

1. What is your educational background?
2. How many years (if any) have you been teaching?
3. If you taught before, where? In what context?
4. How prepared do you feel to teach in this new context (during the MA TESOL practicum)? What do you feel confident about? What are your concerns?

I would really appreciate your help. Thank you.

Ekaterina Arshavskaya,
PhD Candidate, Department of Applied Linguistics
Pennsylvania State University
Email: eza110@psu.edu

Email to the Mentors

Dear Mentors of Pre-Service MA TESOL Teachers,

I am a PhD student in the department of applied linguistics here at Penn State. For the purposes of my PhD dissertation, I am interested in studying how your participation in a series of collaborative mentoring sessions with a pre-service teacher (within the APLNG 500 teaching practicum course offered in spring 2012) influences the way you think about yourself as an L2 teacher and how you think about pre-service teacher mentoring.

You will be asked to read and sign an informed consent form before the study begins. Upon completion of the study, you will be also offered monetary compensation for participation ($100).

Your participation in the study would entail the following: (1) participation in two semi-structured audio recorded interviews with the researcher at the beginning and end of the teaching
practicum, and (2) participation in seven collaborative video recorded mentoring sessions with a pre-service teacher. Each collaborative mentoring session will be followed by an interview with the researcher in relation to your perspective on a certain mentoring session.

I hope very much that you will be interested in participating. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. It is also confidential. I will not use your real name in any presentations or publications that come out of this study. The video and audio recordings that come out of this project will be used in any presentations only upon your consent.

If you would like to participate, please respond to me by email. Also, please let me know if you have any questions.

If you agree to participate, please also provide your answers to the following set of questions:

1. How many years have you been teaching? Where? In what context?

2. How prepared do you feel to serve as a mentor in this new context? What are your experiences with being a mentor? What do you feel confident about? What are your concerns?

I would really appreciate your help. Thank you.

Ekaterina Arshavskaya,
PhD Candidate, Department of Applied Linguistics
Pennsylvania State University

Email: eza110@psu.edu
Appendix B
Pre-Semester Interviews

Questions for Pre-Service Teachers

Professional History

1. How many years (if any) have you been teaching? Where? In what context?

Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

1. What are your experiences with learning an L2? What impact do you think these experiences have had on your teaching beliefs and practices?

2. Can you recall some significant people and/or critical incidents that influenced your understanding of ESL teaching and/or teachers?

3. How do you think second languages are learned?

4. How would you define an effective ESL teacher?

Critical Reflection on Your Teaching (if the participant had teaching experience)

1. What aspects of your teaching do you like and wish to maintain?

2. What do you wish to change about your teaching?

3. What are the challenges you face as an ESL teacher?

For All Pre-Service Teachers:

4. What do you hope to accomplish as an ESL teacher? What are your professional goals?

5. How prepared do you feel to teach in this new context? What do you feel confident about? What are your concerns?

Language Teaching and Teaching-Related Activities

1. What are the most important aspects of teaching ESL?

2. What do/should you consider when planning an L2 course?

2 Questions in this section were partially adopted from Childs (2011), Johnson (1999), and Smolcic (2009).
3. What do/should you consider when planning an L2 lesson?

4. What do/should you consider when assessing L2 student work?

Prospective Mentoring Experience

1. What do you hope to learn from your mentor?

2. When observing your mentor’s classes, what will you pay attention to, e.g., time management, communication with students, presentation of new material?

3. How do you feel about your participation in the collaborative mentoring sessions?

Questions for Mentors

Professional History

1. How many years have you been teaching? Where? In what context?

Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

1. What are your experiences with learning an L2? What impact do you think these experiences have had on your teaching beliefs and practices?

2. Can you recall some significant people and/or critical incidents that influenced your understanding of ESL teaching and/or teachers?

3. How do you think second languages are learned?

4. How would you define an effective ESL teacher?

Critical Reflection on Your Teaching

1. What aspects of your teaching do you like and wish to maintain?

2. What do you wish to change about your teaching?

3. What are the challenges you face as an ESL teacher?

4. What do you hope to accomplish as an ESL teacher? What are your professional goals?

5. How prepared do you feel to teach in this new context? What do you feel confident about? What are your concerns?
Language Teaching and Teaching-Related Activities

1. What are the most important aspects in teaching ESL?
2. What do you consider when planning an L2 course?
3. What do you consider when planning an L2 lesson?
4. What do you consider when assessing L2 student work?

Prospective Mentoring Experience

1. How would you define mentoring and the relationship between a mentor and a pre-service teacher?
2. Do you feel confident about sharing your teaching experience with a pre-service teacher?
3. Did you have a mentor yourself? If no, do you feel that you would have benefited from such a relationship? Why (not)? If yes, what impact do you think this experience has had on your own mentoring practices?

If the participant had previous experience as a mentor:

4. How many pre-service teachers have you worked with before this semester?
5. Please provide a general description of your previous mentoring practices.
6. How did you learn how to be a mentor? Has the way you mentor changed over time? If so, what factors have influenced you to change your practices?
7. What type of relationship do you aim to develop with pre-service teachers? Are you always successful at developing this kind of relationship? Why (not)?
8. What kinds of conversations do you usually have with pre-service teachers?
9. What do you like about being a mentor?
10. What do you dislike about being a mentor?

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3 The questions in this sub-section were partially adopted from Nolan and Mark (2010).
Appendix C
Mentor–Pre-Service Teacher Background Session

Protocol for Mentors and Pre-Service Teachers

For the comfortable and productive mentor-pre-service teacher relationship, trust and communication are important. The purpose of this session is to build trust, rapport, and dialogue between two professionals working together.

Please select from the questions below, add to them, or make up your own. Then, take turns answering the questions.

1) What inspired you to enter the teaching profession?

2) Tell me about a teacher who made a significant impact on your life. Who was it? What did he or she do?

3) What have been some high and low points in your educational career?

4) What is your vision of the ideal classroom?

5) What are your professional growth goals this year?

6) Question to be asked by mentors. How might I (mentor) best support you (pre-service teacher)?

7) Tell me something you’d like me to know about you.

8) Question to be asked by mentors. Describe how you (pre-service teacher) feel about feedback: “It’s best when…” and/or “It’s best delivered in the form of…”

9) Question to be asked by mentors. What “pushes your (pre-service teacher’s) buttons”?

The questions in this section were adopted from Easton (2008).
10) How would you describe the ideal mentor/newcomer relationship?

11) Is there anything else I should know about you that would facilitate our working relationship?

Post-Session Interview Questions

Questions for the Mentors

1. How did you use the protocol for this mentoring session? Why?
2. How did you feel about this session?
3. If you participate in this mentoring session next time, do you think you will do anything differently? Why (not)?

Question for the pre-service teachers

1. How did you feel about this session?
Appendix D
Orientation to the Course

Protocol for the Participants

Pre-service teachers are often unaware of the teaching context in which they are expected to teach during their teaching practicums. Thus, an orientation to the course can help pre-service teachers gain some initial understanding of the teaching context in which the practicum takes place.

Please select from the questions below, add to them, or make up your own. Then, take turns answering the questions.

Course Development Process

Figure 1-1. Process of Course Development (based on Graves, 1996).

Questions to Discuss

1. Do you agree with this view of course design/development?

2. Question for mentors. If this is not the first time you have taught this course, have you made any changes in the course design? Why (not)?
3. *Question for mentors.* What kind of course evaluation procedures (if any) will you undertake this semester in order to evaluate the course?

![Course Development Framework Diagram]

*Figure 1-2. A Framework of Course Development (based on Graves, 2000).*

Questions to Discuss

1. What do you think the cyclic flow chart suggests about the process of course design?
2. Graves (2000) places the components defining the context and articulating beliefs at
the bottom of the flowchart, thus indicating that these components are of the greatest
or primary importance in the process of course design. Do you agree? Why (not)?

3. Questions (b-h) below address the specific course you both will be involved in during
the practicum (The mentor may answer the questions in relation to the specific ESL
course, while the pre-service teacher can ask additional (e.g., clarifying) questions in
relation to the mentor’s responses and/or raise other questions he or she might have).

   a) **Articulating Beliefs:** How is an L2 learnt? How important is the social
context for L2 learning and teaching, e.g., sociolinguistic, sociocultural,
and/or sociopolitical issues in language teaching? How would you define
an effective L2 teacher? What is the role of the teacher and students in an
L2 classroom?

   b) **Defining the Context:** What are the givens of your situation? What is the
students’ level? How long is the course? Where is it taking place?

   c) **Assessing Needs:** What are the students’ needs? How do you assess and
address them?

   d) **Conceptualizing the Content:** What is the backbone of what you teach?
What do you include in your syllabus and why?

   e) **Formulating Goals and Objectives:** What are the purposes and intended
outcomes of the course? What do your students need to do or learn to
achieve these goals?

   f) **Organizing the Course:** How do you organize the content and activities in
this course?

   g) **Developing Materials:** How and with what do you teach the course? What
is your role? What is the students’ role?
h) **Designing an Assessment Plan:** How do you assess what your students have learned? How do you assess the effectiveness of the course?

Post-Session Interview Questions

Questions for the Mentors

1. How did you use the protocol for this mentoring session? Why?
2. How did you feel about this session?
3. If you participate in this mentoring session next time, do you think you will do anything differently? Why (not)?

Question for the Pre-Service Teachers

1. How did you feel about this session?
Appendix E
Cycle I: Co-plan, Co-teach, and Co-reflect

Protocol for the Participants

This cycle comprises three stages: collaborative lesson planning, collaborative teaching, and collaborative reflection on the lesson.

Stage 1: Co-Planning

Research has shown that among beginning teachers’ many concerns, day-to-day planning emerges as one of the most frequent (Fuller, 1969; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Nolan & Hoover, 2007). Thus, during collaborative lesson planning, the mentor can share his or her lesson-planning materials for a particular class, present his or her rationale for the selected classroom activities, while the pre-service teacher can offer his or her insights on planning of the particular class (based on Tomlinson, 1995).

Stage 2: Co-Teach

The mentor and the pre-service teacher co-teach the co-planned class. The class will be video recorded.

Stage 3: Co-Reflect

During the discussion of the co-planned and co-taught class, the participants are encouraged to adopt a reflective approach to teaching, i.e., discuss what happened during the class, why the class proceeded as it did, and what specific actions resulted in. A video record of the class serves as data for the collaborative analysis.

Please select from the questions below, add to them, or make up your own. Then, take turns answering the questions.

Questions for Discussion

5 The recommendations for this session are based on Tomlinson (1995, pp. 175-185).
6 Based on Morford, M. (October 12, 2006) and Lesson Reflection Checklist (n.d.).
1. What went well (and why)?
2. What didn’t go as you had planned (and why)?
3. What came up during the lesson that wasn’t anticipated?
4. Did you teach the lesson as you had planned it? Were any adaptations necessary?
5. Were the materials available and appropriate? Did the instructional materials support the learning objective(s)? How?
6. Did you fulfill the goal of this lesson? If not, what were the barriers?
7. What parts of the lesson were challenging for the students? How did you handle this? What might you do in the future to address these challenges?
8. Which classroom management aspects were challenging?
9. Was the timing of the lesson appropriate? What about the classroom layout?
10. How effectively did the lesson involve the students? What signs of active engagement and/or disengagement did you notice in the students? Give examples.
11. How could you plan to increase student engagement in the future?
12. If you could change something about the class, what would you change (and why)?
13. Did the closure help the students consolidate their knowledge?

Post-Session Interview Questions (to be asked after each stage of the cycle)

Questions for the Mentors
1. How did you use the protocol for this mentoring session? Why?
2. How did you feel about this session?
3. If you participate in this mentoring session next time, do you think you will do anything differently? Why (not)?

Question for the Pre-Service Teachers
1. How did you feel about this session?
Appendix F
Cycle II: Solo Plan 1, Solo Teach 1, and Co-Reflect

Protocol for Pre-Service Teachers (to be given out before the session)\textsuperscript{7}

Before developing the lesson, the pre-service teachers were provided with the following:

1. Collaborate with your mentor and decide on a topic for your lesson.

2. Develop a lesson plan to introduce one or two topics from the course you have been observing. Describe the learning objective(s), materials, procedures for conducting the lesson, assessment of success of the lesson, and closure of the lesson. Describe how you will open the lesson, how you will group the students, the activities they will engage in, key questions you will ask to understand student thinking as the lesson progresses, how you will assess the lesson, specifically, what you expect to hear and see from the students, and how you and the students will consolidate the important points in the lesson.

3. Think of possible ways to adapt the lesson plan as necessary while you will be teaching the class. Why they might be necessary? How will you implement them? What difficulties might the students have with the topic? How will you address them?

4. Reflect on how this lesson fits into the general course design. Consider how this lesson is connected to what students have already learned in the course and what they will learn later.

Stage 1: Solo Plan 1

Protocol for the Participants

\textsuperscript{7} These guidelines are based on Lesson Plan and Reflection (n.d.).
During the Solo Plan 1, pre-service teachers describe the lesson plan, explain reasons, and discuss alternatives to their instructional choices with their mentors.

Please select from the following questions below, add to them, or make up your own.

Lesson Planning Reflection Questions

*Objectives:*
1. What will the students take away from today’s lesson?
2. What skills is this an occasion to teach, and how will students transfer these skills to future lessons?
3. What information should they retain from today’s lesson?

*Organization*
1. How does this lesson follow from previous lessons?
2. How are the skills and information in this lesson connected to tomorrow’s lesson?

*Motivation/Engagement*
1. Why should the students care about these skills or materials?
2. How can I motivate or interest them in the material?

*Scaffolding*
1. What prior knowledge can I draw on to help explain new material?
2. How can I help students make connections between new information and prior knowledge?
3. What about today’s lesson will be most difficult for students?

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8 The questions in this sub-section are based on Johnson (1999, pp. 111–112).
4. What skills, tips, and structure can I give students to help them troubleshoot their difficulties?

*Presentation*

1. How will I order the presentation of information?

2. How can I ensure that the students understand my directions?

3. How can I make my explanations clear to the students? Will they know what to hand in?

*Assessment*

1. How will I know if the students master skills and/or important information outlined in my objectives?

2. How will I grade their products?

**Stage 2: Solo Teach 1**

The pre-service teacher teaches the lesson. The mentor observes the lesson. The lesson is video recorded.

**Stage 3: Co-Reflect**

During this stage, a pre-service teacher describes the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson he or she taught. The mentor provides his or her feedback in relation to a specific area of the pre-service teacher’s concern. The video recording of the class serves as data for the discussion.

**Post-Session Interview Questions (to be asked after each stage of the cycle)**

**Questions for the Mentors**

1. How did you use the protocol for this mentoring session? Why?

2. How did you feel about this session?
3. If you participate in this mentoring session next time, do you think you will do anything differently? Why (not)?

Question for the Pre-Service Teachers

1. How did you feel about this session in comparison to the first time you co-planned and co-taught with your mentor?
Appendix G
Looking Together at Student Work

Protocol for the Participants

Research has shown that beginning teachers often feel apprehensive about assessing student work (Fuller, 1969; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Nolan & Hoover, 2007). Thus, a session during which the mentor shares his or insights into assessing student work has the potential to promote the pre-service teacher’s understanding of this aspect of L2 teaching. During this session, mentors could address the following general concerns: quality of student work and teaching practices, student comprehension, student growth, and student intent.

The following questions, as well as assignments/prompts and samples of student work serve as mediating artifacts for the discussion.

Please select from the following questions below, add to them, or make up your own.

**Quality of Student Work**

1. Is the work good enough? What is good enough?
2. In what way does the work meet or fail to meet a particular set of standards?

**Teaching Practice**

1. What do the students’ responses indicate about the effectiveness of the prompt or assignment?
2. How might the assignment be improved?
3. What kinds of instruction support high-quality student performances?

**Student Comprehension**

1. What does this work tell you about how well the student understands the topic of the assignment?
2. What initial understanding do we see emerge in this work?

**Student Growth**
1. How does this range of work from a single student demonstrate growth over time or fail to demonstrate such growth (if applicable)?

2. How can you support this student’s growth more effectively?

**Student Intent**

1. Which issues or questions is the student focused on?

2. Which aspects of the assignment interested the student?

3. Which parts of the assignment called forth the most effort from the student?

4. To what extent is the student challenging himself or herself? In what ways?

**Additional Possible Questions**

1. How can you support high-quality presentations (if applicable)?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of student presentations (if applicable)?

3. How can you use prompts to bring out more creativity in student work?

**Post-Session Interview Questions**

**Questions for the Mentors**

1. How did you use the protocol for this mentoring session? Why?

2. How did you feel about this session?

3. If you have to participate in this mentoring session next time, do you think you will do anything differently? Why (not)?

**Question for the Pre-Service Teachers**

1. How did you feel about this session?
Appendix H
Final Co-Reflection on the Course

Protocol for the Participants

As part of the work on course design, a mentor and a pre-service teacher engage in an evaluation of the course session. Both the mentor and the pre-service teacher receive a protocol to serve as a mediating artifact in the discussion.

Please select from the following questions below, add to them, or make up your own. Then, take turns answering the questions.

1. Please discuss the following questions in relation to the ESL course you taught this semester.
   a) **Goals and Objectives:** Were they realistic? Appropriate? Achievable?
      How should they be changed?
   b) **Course Content:** Was it what the students needed? At the right level?
      Comprehensive enough? Focused enough?
   c) **Needs Assessment:** Did it provide the necessary information? The right amount of information? In a timely way? Did the students understand it?
      Did the students appropriately and effectively respond to it?
   d) **Course Organization:** Did the course flow from unit to unit and within units? Did the students perceive a sensible progression? Was the course content balanced? Was material recycled throughout the course?

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e) **Materials and Methods:** Were they at the right level? Was the material engaging? Did the students have enough opportunities to learn what they needed to? Was the material relevant? Were the students comfortable with their role? With the teacher’s role?

f) **Learning Assessment Plan:** Did the students understand how they will be assessed and why? Did the assessment activities assess what had been learned? Did they help students diagnose needs? Measure progress and/or achievement? Were they timely?

g) **Course Evaluation Plan:** Did the students understand how the course was evaluated? Did they understand their role in course evaluation? Did they understand the purpose? Was the formative evaluation timely? Did it provide useful information?

Post-Session Interview Questions

Questions for the Mentors

1. How did you use the protocol for this mentoring session? Why?

2. How did you feel about this session?

3. If you participate in this mentoring session next time, do you think you will do anything differently? Why (not)?

Question for the Pre-Service Teachers

1. How did you feel about this session?
Appendix I
Post-Semester Interviews\textsuperscript{10}

Questions for Pre-Service Teachers

Language Teaching

1. What are the most important aspects of teaching ESL?
2. What should/will you consider when planning an L2 course?
3. What should/will you consider when planning an L2 lesson?
4. What should/will you consider when assessing L2 student work?

Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

1. Have your ideas changed about how we learn a second language? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
2. Which semester experiences this semester have led to changes in or reinforcement of your beliefs about L2 learning and teaching?

Mentoring Experience

1. While observing mentors’ classes, what did you pay attention to?
2. What did you learn from your mentor?
3. How do you feel about your participation in the mentoring sessions?
4. Do you think participating in this study influenced your teaching beliefs and/or practices in any way? If so, how?

General Thoughts about the Semester

1. In general, how would you describe this semester of teaching?
2. What emotions do you attach to your experiences?

\textsuperscript{10} The questions in this section were partially adopted from Childs (2011), Johnson (1999), and Smolcic (2009).
3. What have been the most salient moments of the practicum experience for you this semester and why?

Critical Reflection on Language Teaching

1. Which areas of your teaching do you want to improve/work on?

Questions for Mentors

Language Teaching

1. What are the most important aspects of teaching ESL?
2. What do you consider when planning an L2 course?
3. What do you consider when planning an L2 lesson?
4. What do you consider when assessing L2 student work?

Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

1. Have your ideas changed about how you believe we learn an L2? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
2. What semester experiences have led to changes in or reinforcement of your beliefs about L2 language learning and teaching?

Mentoring Experience

1. How would you define your role as a mentor?
2. Has anything changed in regard to your views on mentoring since the beginning of the teaching practicum?
3. How do you feel about the mentoring sessions?
4. What other sessions can you think of?
5. Do you think participating in this study influenced your teaching in any way? If so, how?
6. What topics for discussion would you like to raise with a pre-service teacher if you mentor in the future?
General Thoughts about the Semester

1. In general, how would you describe this semester of teaching?

2. What emotions do you attach to your experiences?

3. What have been the most salient moments of the practicum experience for you this semester and why?

Critical Reflection on Language Teaching

1. Do you think your teaching has changed since the beginning of the semester? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

2. Which areas of your teaching do you want to improve/work on?
Appendix J
Transcription Conventions

The following transcription symbols were proposed by Jefferson (1979) as cited in Schifflin (1994, pp. 424–431). In addition, the symbol // will be used to indicate overlapping utterances.
Table 1-2. Transcription Conventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overlapping utterance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>No interval between adjacent utterances, the second being latched immediately to the first without overlapping it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>An interval in the stream of talk is timed in tenths of a second and inserted within parentheses and within an utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.0)</td>
<td>Short untimed pause within an utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>Extension of the sound or syllable it follows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Rising inflection (modulation), not necessarily a question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑↓</td>
<td>Rising and falling shifts (changes) in intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_</td>
<td>Emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; &lt;</td>
<td>Part of an utterance is delivered at a pace quicker than the surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>Material enclosed in ( ) is unintelligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


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