Original Paper

Dialogic Reflections of Pre-Service Teachers' Conceptualizations of Their Field-Based Teacher Education for Professional Development

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Abstract

This study was situated in a field-based teacher education program in Japan for English teachers. The focus was on the thought processes of two pre-service teachers (PSTs). The study draws on the interrelated roles of teacher cognition and dialogic reflections that emerged through interviews as mediated spaces to stimulate reflective pedagogical conceptualizations of the participants during their teaching practicum. In contrast to monologic practices, dialogic practices create a richer and more active teacher learning environment during supervision. Data were gathered in a three-staged interview process conducted by the PSTs' university-based supervisor (UBS) during their two-week practicum at respective high schools. Qualitative coding methods were used to sort the data through comparative analysis in a three-step coding process. Themes were abstracted from the data to encapsulate and report the PSTs' self-reflective thought processes. Results showed that the PSTs experienced positive growth in identifying metacognitive strategies for instructing students, but also found a gap between university teacher education coursework and the realities of classroom practice that are underpinned by a traditional educational culture of their field-based schools. Consequently, they had to modify their instruction to fit field-based conservative teaching practices. Implications indicate that a dialogic approach enabled a functionally productive mediated space for the PSTs to enrich their pedagogical conceptualizations of the practicum experience to better inform their practice through participating in professional discourse. Results also significantly served to apprise the UBS of the necessity to improve coursework to better prepare PSTs for their practicum.

Keywords: dialogism, pre-service teacher, professional development, self-reflection, teacher cognition

1. Introduction

This article reports a study on the teacher thinking of two pre-service teachers (PSTs) of English as they reflect on their two-week field-based teaching experiences in respective Japanese high schools. Reflections were elicited in a set of three interview sessions with their university-based supervisor (UBS, the author) during the participants' field-based teacher practicum. Rationales for the interviews were grounded in the literature that 1) supports the work on teacher cognition and the import of getting the PSTs to self-reflect on what they were thinking and experiencing; and 2) when dialogism is promoted as educational activity through dialogic talk it becomes a functional construct to elicit PSTs' dialogic reflections on their practicum. Through the use of dialogic reflections obtained in interviews, the participants are provided a mediated discoursal space to enhance cognitive activity (Boyd & Markarian, 2015) because dialogic reflection gives participants a voice to conceptualize their pedagogical thought processes for professional development (Chung, 2022; Freeman, 1996; Haneda et al., 2017; Lyle, 2008). First, a discussion on two areas, teacher cognition and dialogism, and the informative role they played in the supervisory teacher development of PSTs is presented. Second, a brief description of field-based teacher education in Japan is given. Finally, the study and implications are addressed.

1.1 Teacher Cognition

Research on teacher cognition emerged in the 1980s when researchers began to see the limitations of solely focusing on teacher behaviors, an area more conducive to measurement, while ignoring the cognitive domain, a messy hidden construct to measure, but one that importantly encapsulates the teachers' thought processes. A pioneering outlier study for its time that did go beyond solely focusing on observable actions was Jackson's *Life in the Classrooms* (1968). He posited:

> But the teacher's classroom behavior does not always reveal what we want to know. Occupational attitudes, the feelings of satisfaction and of disappointment accompanying success and failure, the reasoning that lies behind action these and many other aspects of a craft are scarcely visible except through conversations with a person who has experienced them (p.115).

Nearly two decades later, more studies did emerge on teacher cognition. For example, Clark and Peterson's (1986) work on the cognitive processes involved in teacher decision making called for more research to go beyond the behavioral domain of describing what teachers do to also explore the cognitive domain of teaching to learn why teachers do what they do. They argued that the two domains are reciprocal and wrote "teachers' actions are largely caused by teachers' thought processes, which then in turn affect teachers' actions" (p. 258). A few years later, teacher cognition found its way into language education studies (e.g., Burns, 1992; Farrell, 1999; Freeman, 1996; Woods, 1996). Borg (2003) formulated a definition of the concept as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81).

Language teacher education studies were further inspired by the reemergent work of Vygotsky's social cultural theory (1978) that social interaction leads to development. In other words, there is a mediated social function to learning in which language and thought stimulate each other for conceptual development. Consequently, research on language teacher cognition took on a social dimension (Johnson, 2006; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015), which prompted Johnson's remark that language teacher education has epistemologically taken a "sociocultural turn" (p. 237). Taking a sociocultural turn meant not only a recognition of teacher thoughts, i.e., teacher cognition, but also the importance of having teachers talk about or participate in mediated dialogic interactions. As Jackson had the prescience to write almost 40 years previously, "Consequently, talk is necessary, particularly talk about the professional aspects of life in the classroom" (p. 115). In doing so, if teachers are given mediated spaces to enable dialogic reflections, that is to make their implicit or tacit knowledge explicit through a socialization process of sharing knowledge with others, whether peers or mentors, then there will emerge knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2000) or richer conceptualizations of teaching, which further teacher development.

1.2 Dialogism

The open-ended, socialization process of collective voices sharing information to create knowledge is rooted in the Russian philosopher and literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) concept of *dialogism* in which, "Truth is not born nor it is found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (p. 110). Dialogism has important implications in the supervision of PSTs because it goes beyond the limitations of what Bakhtin called *monologism*, which "denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and responsibilities" (p. 292). Monologism underpins the traditional authoritative transmission model of education in which "monologue pretends to be the ultimate word" (p. 293). The monologic, one directional form of knowledge dissemination was criticized by the American educational philosopher John Dewey because it produces static outcomes in that knowledge is transmitted as a fixed detached entity.

Dewey believed that when knowledge is transmitted or mirrored to the learner, it manifests superficially as a "spectator vision of knowledge" (Chiapello, 2016, p. 6) void of self-reflection and engagement (i.e., social interaction). In a monologic, unidirectional learning relationship, learners are highly expected to "visualize" or reproduce (i.e., mirror) what the teacher as the knower has in his or her mind and is transmitting to them. In turn, a learning gap occurs between the teacher, the active (and ultimate) 'knower' agent of knowledge, and the students, who are regulated to the objectified role of

non-participatory passive recipients. For Dewey, to avoid this schism, the flow of knowledge should be rooted in active engagement, and students should be given a 'voice' in their learning process to be self-reflective critical thinkers (1910). In turn, students should be given the skills and agency to judge or do something with the information; he called for an inquiry-based, learning by doing process that takes place in a dialogic, interactive environment, and not in a static one in which students are fed "artifacts or pieces of dead wood of the past" (Boyles, 2006, p. 15). The aim of using dialogue in supervision during field-based training was to make the PSTs active agents by giving them a self-reflective voice to deepen their conceptualizations of what was occurring throughout the process.

1.3 The Study

In this paper, several seminal themes in studies on teacher cognition accumulated by Borg (2015) were used to inform the research that set out to explore: The participants pre-conceptions of teaching from prior learning experiences; their beliefs about teaching; and their thought processes throughout their field-based experiences that informed their decision making. Through being given opportunities for dialogic reflection within a mediated space, the PST participants were able to critically reflect on their basic knowledge about teaching and experiences in a public way that could make their implicit thoughts explicit. Moreover, through dialoging about their field-based experiences, the PSTs were engaged in a professional discourse about teaching that enriched their self-reflective pedagogical thinking leading to knowledge construction (Freeman, 1996; Wells, 1999b).

1.3.1 PSTs' Field Placement

In Japan, field placement of PSTs is referred to as *Kyoiku Jisshu*, directly translated as *educational training*. PST training is highly systematic and uniformed in Japan. Training usually involves classroom observations at the initial stages with teaching lessons at the last stage. The period for the educational training usually occurs in their 3rd or 4th year for a duration of one to three weeks. The time allotted for their teaching practicum is rather short in comparison, for example, to Finland in which teacher training for PSTs takes place each consecutive year referred to as orientation, pedagogic, didactic, and advanced practicum, respectively with deep involvement of university supervision (Paksuniemi, Keskitalo, Frangou, & Korkko, 2021). A reason given for why it is so short in Japan is that universities prepare students in all fields with general abilities qualifying them to enter employment, and it is the company's role to provide specialized skills corresponding to its needs. Accordingly, this applies to the teaching profession as well (Hawley & Hawley, 1997; Yonesaka, 1999). Although the time is short, the experiences from teacher practicum have a strong impact on PSTs, not only honing their skills, cognitively, but also affectively contributing to the formation of their professional teacher identity (Yuan & Lee, 2016).

The PSTs in this study, who were studying to be English teachers in high school, went through a required two-week educational teacher training program during their 4th year, and were placed in high schools from which they graduated. PSTs are in most cases, placed in schools they previously attended in their hometowns. The first week was dedicated to classroom observations, which involved making daily reports reflecting on what they observed. In the second week, they taught a number of classes at different levels, and each level required a different lesson plan. Before beginning the training, in accordance with the general preparatory procedure, a one-day introductory orientation session called *Aisatsu* is arranged, in which the PSTs visited their respective schools and as is the Japanese custom, greet their school-based teacher supervisor, other faculty and principal, respectfully thanking them all for the opportunity. The meeting further consisted of picking up the textbook, deciding on what part of the text their lessons should be focused on, sorting out their schedules and receiving background information about the students they will be teaching. The data presented in this study began when the PST participants returned to the university from their orientation meeting and met with the UBS (the author) in preparation for the lessons they would teach.

2. Method

The UBS and two PSTs, named Ayaka and Tomoko for anonymity, participated in three chronologically focused interviews. Interactions were planned as mediated structured spaces for the PSTs in the following manner: Pre-understanding elicitations of what the PSTs expected during the training process

(Int-A); reflections on the first week of observations before doing field-based lesson (Int-B); and post-evaluations of field-based lessons (Int-C). The first two of the mediated discussions took place before the PSTs conducted their lessons, and Int-C was carried out after the lessons. In Int-A, guided questions centered on eliciting tacitly held understandings of teaching based on their experiences as students in classrooms were asked. Lortie (1975) referred to the often-unexamined knowledge gained from classroom experiences as coming from their "apprenticeship of observation". Int-B took place after the initial one-week indoctrination interval, which gave the PSTs opportunities to further reflect on their classroom observations before conducting their own lessons. These reflections were felt to be of value to make adjustments to the lesson since the PST's observations would possibly enrich pedagogical considerations, eliciting ways to improve the lessons before conducting them. Int-C was conducted after the lessons. This post lesson interview session allowed the PSTs and UBS to engage in reflection-on- action (Farrell, 1999; Schon, 1975) discussions.

In addition to interview sessions, each PST discussed the lessons with the UBS. The lessons centered on the textbook contents that they were assigned to teach by the school-based teacher. Both participants had no real class teaching experiences other than simulated instruction through conducting mock lessons in university classes. To summarize, the study was conducted as followed:

1st stage: Elicitation of pre-understandings (tacit knowledge) in Int-A.

2nd stage: After PSTs one-week observations of lessons, Int-B took place.

3rd stage: Post evaluation of PSTs lessons with UBS at the conclusion of the final second week of practicum was conducted in Int-C.

Each of the three interviews were based on the theoretical stance taken in the study to explore the cognitive domain of the PSTs by providing a mediated-structured space to engage them in dialogic reflections on their professional development during field-based training. The semi-structured interview questions were framed around a "start list" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.58) to gather data from three areas: *affective* to gain insights into the psychological side of learning; *experiential* to allow opportunities for the PSTs to reflect on classroom behaviors and actions; *knowledge*, which focused on eliciting the pedagogical content knowledge the participants gained from their field-based experiences.

Because of the exploratory interpretive approach of the study, techniques aligned with qualitative analysis were used. All of the mediated interviews were recorded and transcribed for comparative analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) as means to make sense of the data. The data were coded following a three-step coding process often associated with grounded theory methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1968; Strauss & Corbin, 1998): *open coding*, immediately breaking down the data by labeling them into discrete parts to begin the comparative process, *axial coding*, drawing connections to labeled data through generating broader categories, and *selective coding*, abstracting data into thematic categories by connecting coded categories.

3. Results

The results of the data analysis presented below that emerged from the three-stage interviews revealed the progression of the PSTs as they prepared for and went through their field-based training. Data from the interviews are presented in chronological order.

3.1 Interview A: Reflections on Preconceived Beliefs and Orientation at Field-based School

The focus of Int-A was aimed at getting the PSTs to express their preconceived images and beliefs of teaching that were informed by their educational experiences. These "apprenticeship of observation" experiences have an impact on the early onset of how PSTs perceive themselves as teachers. Thus, one of the first areas that emerged in the coding analyses of Interview A was the PSTs teacher identity. Field-based experiences are integral to the professional identity of PSTs. It can be an anxious time for them, with intense reactions, especially when they are leading the classroom as teachers for the first time. Goldstein and Lake wrote (2003), "During their field placement period, then, pre-service teachers' images of themselves as teachers and their understandings of the contours of the job of teaching are in a state of flux" (p. 118). In order to gather insights into their teacher identity at this state, and at the same time to alleviate some of the anxiety they might have, the PSTs were given

opportunities to respond to questions that addressed their concerns, which were further heightened after the initial introductory orientation sessions at the field-based schools before class observations and teaching the lessons. The thematic categories below are grounded in the data from Int-A.

- *Anxiety over the professional and busy role of being teacher*

After their introductory orientation sessions at their respective schools, the PSTs were immediately anxious over the workload of in-service teachers as Ayaka remarked, "They seem so busy." Tomoko was also anxious over the busy work of teachers when she remarked:

> They looked very busy doing different things such as consulting students, introducing me to other teachers in the same grade, as well as all the other English teachers, preparing for the classes, and so on. They live within very tight schedule. I wonder how they can deal with all of their duties?

Seeing some of the busy realities teachers face at work, Tomoko became more anxious:

> I'm looking forward to it, but I'm worried a little. I don't know what will happen. I should have a sense of responsibility as a teacher and that makes me feel a little pressure on this training. Once I stand on the podium, I don't think I can use the excuse of [just being a] university student because students would expect me to be a teacher and not see many differences between me and regular teachers.

Performing a new role as a teacher can be daunting and Tomoko's comments reflect anxiety. An added pressure of this new experience reflects the educational culture of Japan and how teachers are perceived. McKay (2000) found that Japanese students in a M.A. program during teacher practicum in America struggled with their professional identity and the role of being a facilitator and not a transmitter of knowledge. In the Japanese educational culture teachers are represented as "knowers" and should supply the students with the answers. Ayaka also showed reservations about what her role should be as a teacher:

> I am kind of nervous about it. I am not sure whether I am well qualified to teach or not. I was good at English when I was in school. English was my favorite subject. [But]I am not sure what problems students have and I am not sure how to deal with their questions.

Ayaka also showed a concern over her responsibility in the role of a teacher in helping the students. However, she expressed confidence in her teacher identity regarding her English ability. Both Tomoko and Ayaka showed confidence in their English ability that was recognized in their early schooling as positive aspect of their emerging teacher identity:

> When I could make myself understood in English with teachers, I felt 'wow'. That means self-confidence, right? (Tomoko)

> Self-confidence makes me positive for learning…when I could communicate in English, I could feel a superiority complex already when I was in elementary school (Ayaka).

Both PSTs stated they had professional identity anxieties as they prepared to enter their field-based training. Their student experiences at being good at English had formed an early positive teacher identity that had now come in conflict with their professional role of being teachers. Their anxieties were heightened because they had just come from orientation at their respective field-based schools, and the reality of what was before them had set in. Getting them to talk about their concerns were constructive. It allowed them to reveal their teacher identity insecurities over filling the professional role that is demanded of a teacher; and at the same time, positivity emerged in regard to their confidence in their English abilities.

- *Positive outcomes lead to positive performance*

In the first interview, they were asked how their experiences as classroom learners might have influenced their views of themselves as teachers. Both PSTs saw their own learner achievement as an important contributor to their teaching identity and what they should be doing as teachers:

> If learning shows success, I think the teaching is successful. I think the achievement of a goal is important. When a teacher made me feel that I achieved the learning goal, such as test score, I

think I could feel my motivation for learning. But at the same time, I think language teaching and learning will take more time to see the positive results. (Tomoko)

I think having successful experiences in English help learners to engage in class activities. So, I want to do more learning activities. I want them to use more English to retain language. Not focus on just the form of perfect participle and perfect participle progressive. (Ayaka)

The PSTs both saw the significance of motivation through learner achievement in their roles as teachers. Ayaka revealed her belief that giving students opportunities to use the language beyond focusing on grammatical structures is important. As a part of their teacher identity, they both stated the necessity of being a good role model:

Teachers need to encourage students to study by showing positive and enthusiastic attitude. They need to be a model for students. It is important for the teacher to create a bright learning atmosphere in the class…. But at the same time, I think language teaching and learning will take more time to see the positive results. To have Students keep motivation for learning English is not like 1+1=2. (Tomoko)

I think a teacher's positive attitude toward teaching is really important. The teacher has to show they are enjoying teaching and be patient. When students make a mistake, the teacher should encourage them to correct the error. (Ayaka).

In the above comments, the two participants showed similarities in the affective roles that form their professional identities. They saw the teacher as being a positive model, one who should be encouraging, patient and creating a positive learning environment to assist student performance. (Being a good exemplar was substantiated in the final interview as well.) The PSTs also shared similar anxieties over facing the unknown of performing the role of teacher. Their state of anxiety increased as their perceived teacher identities tacitly formed by their apprenticeship of observation experiences as students were challenged when they both got a brief behind the scenes glimpse of what goes on in the busy world of teaching during their orientation visit. However, as a positive means to overcome some of this anxiety, they found solace in their confidence as English speakers and in the successes they had as learners. In the following, they also showed some confidence after going over their lesson plan with the UBS.

- *Learning activities must be well planned*

The PSTs belief about planning activities began to take shape after discussions with the UBS:

This session with you helps me a lot for planning the activity and how to deliver it in class. Before "activity" sounded shallow for me. But I found a learning activity itself is the main part of teaching and needs a lot of effort of teacher's sense and knowledge of planning and delivering it the class. Final goal must be already in their [teachers'] vision. In other words, teachers must think all of these through teaching material research and then practice lessons. It is surprising…It seems the English teacher are no longer traditional ones. I think I am lucky to use activity. (Tomoko)

Talking with you makes us feel that we can do what I have planned. A learning activity must be well planned. English structures that do not exist in Japanese language, such as present participle, must be very hard to explain, but teaching it through a language learning activity helps students to conceptualize the structure of it. Preparing classes requires more teaching experiences than I imagine. I don't think I can plan them all by myself. This session helped me a lot. I hope this activity works. (Ayaka)

The mediated space provided by Int-A interactions were revealing. It allowed the PSTs to address their anxieties, after their initial meeting at their respective schools, they found stepping into the role of teacher was on the one hand, overwhelming, but a belief in their own language abilities and making an effort to plan activities would lead to learner achievement and student motivation. Additionally, they felt they had made gains in their previously held tacit knowledge about planning activities after interactions with the UBS to advise them in their coming lessons. However, as the PSTs got closer to beginning their intensive two-week training, they naturally began to worry. Ayaka's comment 'I hope this activity works" summed up their anxiousness.

3.2 Interview B: Reflections on First Week of Observations before Teaching Field-based Lessons

After one week of observing classrooms taught by the in-service field-based teacher, the PSTs were in a better position to go over the lessons they were preparing to teach in the second week. Furthermore, the experiences of being in real classrooms made them realize that just receiving training at university is not enough as expressed in the themes below.

- *A gap between teacher training in university and teaching in real classrooms*

The value of field-based training is shown in comments below:

> Doing the mock lesson at university and teaching at high school is totally different. University students know what is going on [play acting in a mock lesson], and the vocabulary level is very different from high school students. In reality, students are in high school, so I realized that decision making on what activity can be appropriate with limited vocabulary is very crucial (Ayaka).

> What we have learned at the university cannot be adapted immediately, but through this experience of training. Now, I wonder whether I can deliver the class as planned. Nothing is perfect. (Tomoko).

Finding the right match between what real learners can do and what mock learners in a simulated class can do is expected. Ayaka's and Tomoko's comments above expectantly point out the necessity of field-based experiences for PSTs. However, Tomoko's comments below offered a significant finding because she found there existed a gap between ideal and reality in terms of teaching approaches. University English teacher training programs emphasize contemporary socially interactive methods getting learners to express their ideas in English learning that are complementary to the stated secondary school English goals of the national curriculum in Japan (MEXT, 2018). However, application of these institutionally-driven methods is not what is expected at the local level in schools:

> There is a big gap. For students here, English is a subject that they believe they have to remember the grammar and vocabulary. Now, I realize that there are no mistakes in teaching. Not so many students are motivated in learning to use English for communication. But in contradiction, students say that an interactive English lesson is enjoyable. They say learning activities with ALTs [Assistant Language Teachers-see below] makes them feel enjoyable.

Tomoko's observation is salient. Learners' expectations and beliefs are influenced by what and how they are taught. Contemporary approaches and methods such as social constructivism, inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, communicative language teaching and CLIL are not conducive to what the learning goals and expectations are at schools, emphasized by teachers, administrators and parents in preparations to pass entrance examinations that measure accuracy and not fluency (Takegami, 2015). The problem that exists in teacher development programs for both pre-service and in-service teachers is that although they engage in class demonstrations and the professional discourse of contemporary approaches and methods, there is a gap between the content they learn at university and the realities they face when they return to their classrooms (Smargorsky, 2010). There are two reasons for the gap in Japan. One is that to enter high schools and universities, as stated above students have to take entrance exams, which highly influence instruction. A second reason is related to teachers' beliefs. Teachers themselves have learned from a traditional approach, which prioritizes a monologic teaching--passive learning approach that emphasizes learning grammatical structures through translations. Since they have learned English that way themselves, they believe it is the best approach (Takegami, 2020).

Although traditional approaches have merit, there needs to be an integration of more active learning approaches as well. This is what Tomoko had observed when she found that when an Assisted Language Teacher (ALT), who was a native English speaker assigned to the school, introduced interactive activities, the students enjoyed them. However, the astute observation of Tomoko is indicative of a larger problem. PSTs learn that there is a dichotomous role within the educational culture of schools; one for the Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and the other for the ALTs. The role of the JTEs is to teach the traditional way with the goal of helping students pass entrance exams, focusing on structures, translation and vocabulary memorization, and it is left to the ALTs to mostly do

the socially interactive active fluency activities. For Tomoko, like other PSTs, the pressures of focusing on accuracy-- "I realize that there are no mistakes in teaching" – can have an enculturating impact on determining her teaching approach.

- *Conceptual and chronological constraints that negatively impact on activities*

Woods (1996) identified two major areas that concern teachers: *conceptual structures*, creating and conveying the lessons, i.e., content for instruction, and *chronological structures*, time constraints to carry out planning and class activities. When the two PSTs prepared for their field-based training, they had conceptualized the activities in their lessons to encourage student interactions according to the course of study goal for the subject of English stated in the national curriculum as Tomoko had stated in Int-A:

> It seems English teachers are no longer traditional ones. I think I am lucky to use this interactive activity.

At that time, Tomoko had been strongly influenced by her university courses and found the activity she had planned would fit nicely with the course of study goals and contemporary teaching approaches she had been introduced to. However, after the first week both PSTs ran into conceptual and chronological constraints. The former is seen below in Tomoko's comment:

> I feel like although the teachers try to have more project based English teaching, they seemingly do not have much ideas by themselves. In my case, the teacher told me that an activity [getting students to interact as a goal] is not teaching! She wants me to do more teachable teaching approach.

Her comments above indicate that the student-centered type activity of having students talk with each other to collaboratively solve a given task was antithetical to the field-based teacher's conceptualization of what teaching is or should be. This mismatch between the PST and field-based teacher put constraints on the preplanned lesson, and what Tomoko had previously thought during the planning stages before coming to the school:

> It seems English teachers are no longer traditional ones. I think I am lucky to use this interactive activity.

As Tomoko was realigning her pre-conceived beliefs, Ayaka also began to question hers as she ran into chronological and conceptual constraints regarding the activity she wanted to do:

> English teachers teach at least 15 classes, so I am a kind of afraid of going to ask him [school-based teacher] about planning. He manages the tennis club activity and it is the time for Ss to have competition. He comes to school early in the morning to supervise Ss tennis practice before classes starts [early morning tennis practice] and after school as well. I do not have enough time to plan the lesson. That makes me worry about myself.

The conceptual and chronological constraints are salient features of the realities the PSTs' face, (and of course the in-service teachers as well). When they get to the schools, they confront differences in teaching approaches of the field-based teachers in charge of them, and they also encounter these teachers who are very busy with their taxing workloads. There is little time to introduce, more robust interactive activities, such as those attributed to inquiry-based learning that require the need for carefully crafted scaffolded activities. Thus, conceptual and chronological constraints have a powerful and intense impact on the PSTs during their short-lived field-based training. They were also particularly and eye-opening experience for the PSTs as they completed their one week of classroom observations and had to revised their lesson plans.

3.3 Interview C: Reflections on Teaching Lessons

After completing their teaching of actual lessons in the final week of teacher training, the PSTs reflections were sharpened by being exposed to the realities of teaching. Two areas emerged from their final interview that focused on students and the PSTs' teacher education.

- *There needs to be awareness of why students are doing what they are doing*

There seemed to be a deepened understanding by the two PSTs over the role of metacognitive strategies. For example, Tomoko observed that informing students about the learning purposes of activities should be valued:

> Students need to get awareness for what they are doing…They said that they can understand what the teacher want us [students] to do, but we [students] want to know what skills we [students] can achieve from what we [students] are doing.

Modelling is another metacognitive strategy that connected with Tomoko:

> The good part of having students with mixed levels of proficiency is that the lower-level students can benefit from being monitored by students with higher abilities as good models of learning.

Ayaka also spoke of explicit and implicit modeling by the teacher and other students, respectively.

> I found that Ss like to do study with finding out by themselves, but I think teacher should show the model of how to do it…also when students see other students do good performances, they try to do them more and better.

Another metacognitive feature of instruction that Ayaka noticed was to explicitly teach students strategies for learner autonomy:

> [We should] have students check information by themselves that are related to the learning topic. Clear guidelines lead students to do self-learning… Navigating students to focus on the learning point can lead a classroom activity quite well.

Metacognitive strategies assist students to think about why they are doing what they are doing, which empowers their thinking. The benefits of the field-based teaching for both PSTs were that in experiencing everyday teaching, they could inductively discover some of the most common metacognitive strategies.

The comments above by the two PSTs provided examples of what they gained in their field-based teaching experiences. However, there was the continuing emergence of the differential significance of what they were learning at university and the realities of teaching they had experienced. These insights are encapsulated by the following theme:

- *A significant gap between what the PSTs experience in university courses on education and what they experienced in real classrooms.*

Both PSTs offered comments that showed they were unprepared for the what they had expected to experience in their field-based training. This is first indicated in Tomoko's comments:

> A big gap between teaching reality, students' proficiency, and students' learning attitude and what my ideal imagination for teaching was huge.

In Tomoko's observation showed she was clearly unprepared for what she had experienced in her field-based school. The fact that the differential was rather vast suggests that the university courses had not effectively prepared her. Disillusionment over the preparatory role of the university is clearly observed in Ayaka's comments:

> What we have learned in the courses in university was not the same that we experienced at the school site. We need to adapt what we know and what we can do to the actual classes.

Navigating the PSTs closer to the realities of teaching are a constant challenge for universities. One of the most common techniques that university classes employ are mock lessons, which at least make a noble effort to simulate the realities of teaching. However, the limitations of these activities are in their very superficial nature of being 'mock' lessons as Tomoko found:

> What we have done at the mock lesson is done with university students. The mock lesson is not so real even though it was very helpful for knowing how to carry out the classes. We have done the mock lessons with university students. They understand English, they are involved in the

learning activity and respond well… [but] the response at the mock lesson was what we expected them to do. But the reality is different. The problem is that you don't know what students don't understand.

In the final Int-C sessions, dialogic reflections of the two PSTs that emerged from their lesson teaching experiences provided thoughtful insights. On the constructive side, the PSTs were able to articulate valuable teaching observations manifested in metacognitive strategies about their students learning process and what the role of the teacher should be. Thus, a gain in their teacher knowledge from their practicum had occurred. However, another common theme was they also saw the inadequacies of the university in preparing them for the realities that they would face in their teaching.

4. Discussion

Several implications emerged from three interview stages, which provided mediated spaces for the PSTs to reflect on their field-based experiences. Pioneering work done over several decades ago on the cultural progression that takes place when one enters a new culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1954) provides a fruitful framework to view the PSTs' experiences. In the cultural adjustment cycle used in intercultural studies, upon entering a new culture, there is primarily a U-curved sequence of a honeymoon period, a sort of euphoria; followed by a negative downturn culture shock stage; and then an uplifting initial adjustment stage. Much like the culture adjustment cycle, the PSTs in their field placement entered an educational culture of schooling, in which an introductory honeymoon period took place. As they began their first week, they expressed high hopes about teaching activities that would motivate their students. Int-A revealed that although the PSTs' anxiety levels within their teacher identities were high, a belief in their English language abilities and making well-planned activities with the help of the UBS helped to balance their concerns.

However, in Int-B during their classroom observation stages, a sort of teacher shock stage appeared. They faced a cultural cycle of conservative schooling. This shock can be seen in questioning some of their initial tacitly held beliefs that were challenged by the realities they encountered during their field placement. When this occurs, PSTs often abandoned those previously held conceptions and aspirations that were formed by their coursework (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Goldstein and Lake (2003) observed how initial preconceived beliefs can change in ways that manifested in the participants:

> In their field placements pre-service teachers are subjected to influence from cooperating teachers and from other classroom-based and institutional factors that can lead to increasingly conservative and traditional beliefs or to more bureaucratic and impersonal practices (pp. 117-118).

In the case of the two PSTs, a conflict emerged within their teacher beliefs between what they had learned in their coursework and the realities of teaching. This dichotomy was similarly observed by Smagorinsky to be:

> …the central tension faced by beginning teachers as they make the transition from their university programs to their first jobs. As is common among teachers at large, the teachers I have studied learn some version of a progressive pedagogy in universities that they find difficult to practice in the conservative setting of schools (2010, p. 23).

This was the case of the two PSTs. Their previously held beliefs influenced by studying contemporary, constructivist-collaborative approaches in their coursework were now being replaced by the status quo traditional approaches. Thus, conceptual concerns of creating more developed interactive activities were displaced by chronological realities of getting the lessons done on time. They found the traditional approaches used by their field-based teachers had made the lessons more 'bureaucratically' efficient. The finding is significant because the PSTs saw a gap between the contemporary approaches they had been studying and what their field-based teachers were doing. When pre-service teachers find their preconceptions and aspirations challenged during practice teaching experiences, ideas and beliefs previously embraced during teacher education coursework are often cast aside (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Therefore, it is important to know not only what PSTs preconceived initial beliefs are, but also teacher developers must attempt to address the ways these beliefs are reinforced or challenged

(Goldstein & Lake, 2003). In addressing these issues, UBSs can assist in getting their PSTs to overcome their teacher practicum shock.

In continuing with the allegory of the U-curved cultural adjustment cycle to the adjustments the PSTs made in their practicum, a positive sign in overcoming culture shock was the initial adjustment stage. In Int-C, their comments showed areas of making a transition between overcoming the shock of realizing what they were learning at the university was not applicable to the realities they confronted and gaining insights into teaching that materialized in identifying areas of metacognitive strategies. The outcome was significant because the two PSTs could get a macro view of teaching in their awareness about the import of informing students why they were doing what they were doing; the need for modeling activities; and getting students to be autonomous in their learning. These insights, articulated in the interviews, represented the upward trend of the teacher practicum U-curve by making initial adjustments to overcome their practice shock.

5. Conclusion

The data that emerged from the three interview stages allowed the PSTs a mediated space to talk about their teacher practicum. The interviews revealed the tension they felt as they realized their university teacher preparation coursework, which presented progressive, contemporary approaches to teaching, was in conflict with the realities of the conservative educational culture they had entered into in their practicum. This finding can be viewed from two perspectives. First, it substantiates the view that PST field-based teacher education can ironically lead to static development or conformity as it "…can serve to reproduce rather than challenge school norms" (Smagorinsky, 2010, p.27). One solution to overcome this unproductive situation would be to change the system in Japan and extend the time at schools and improve the quality of the field-based training with more interactions between the UBS, PSTs and field-base teachers.

Second, getting the PSTs to address emerging doubts toward their previously-held beliefs and to articulate these concerns can have positive effects. The ability to articulate teaching in terms of professional discourse is invaluable to teacher development, pre-service or in-service, because it leads to construction and reconstruction of their teaching experiences in ways that better inform their instruction (Freeman, 1996; Takegami, 2015; Wells, 1999b). When the dialogue is centered on teaching practices, it engages the participants in a professional discourse. In the case of the participants, voicing frustrations during interviews that emerged because of the gap they experienced in their practicum led to productive opportunities for UBS to further the individual development of PSTs. Moreover, the collective insights that emerged from making the PSTs' implicit thought processes explicit through a socialization process allowing them to conceptualize their thinking in a public way has implications for PST educational development. Their contributions can be used to better inform the planning of coursework of PST development which can lead to narrowing the gap between what they learn at university and what they confront in their field-based teacher education in schools.

Finally, teaching will always progress in one way or another as long as there is continued efforts to improve professional development and the desire to be a "teacher" exists among PSTs. As Ayaka stated:

> I'm relieved I finished the training but I miss being called *sensei* [teacher] by students they were so inspiring

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