

NOVICE TEACHERS'
THINKING DEVELOPMENT
FROM PRACTICUM TO EARLY CAREER

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Abstract

Teacher education programmes have focused on training student teachers with knowledge of teaching methodologies and good teaching performance. What is going on inside student teachers' minds in their processes of learning to teach is more difficult to observe and sometimes overshadowed by this primary focus. This study sets out to gain a deeper understanding of novice teachers' developing thinking while learning to teach.

The existing literature on teachers' critical thinking, reflection, and cognition provides various frameworks each of which presents different levels or stages of teachers' development in the respective domains. Each level or stage is characterised by certain concerns, beliefs, skills, discourse, or teaching behaviours. However, underlying processes of change – i.e. how teachers move from lower levels to higher levels of such development, what triggers such movement – and how such movement enhances their teaching effectiveness are under-researched. In addition, those existing frameworks describe major stages of teachers' development during the whole of their professional journeys. Little research zooms in novice teachers' thinking development.

This research takes an exploratory approach, without relying on any existing frameworks, to investigating and theorising the unseen thinking development processes of novice teachers during the important transition from teaching practicum to early career teaching. The research included three stages of inquiry in which one stage was developed from the previous stage and its results were constantly compared to those of the previous one. The first stage involved in-depth individual interviews with nine early career teachers. The second stage involved working closely with a cohort of five student teachers during four months of their teaching practicum in the same teacher training program. The third stage involved my following one of the cohort members into the first two years of his teaching through online communication about his experiences and thinking about language teaching in real-life contexts.

The close interaction with the novice teachers incrementally constructed a clearer picture of the complexity and dynamics of their thinking. The stories of the three groups revealed and confirmed a hierarchy of attention to core aspects of effective teaching. However, the movement across the hierarchy was not linear but fluctuating and causing dissonance between their cognition and practice. Moreover, the novice teachers' thinking development also involved the development of generic thinking skills – from “either-or”

thinking to “both-and” thinking, from single-perspective to multi-perspective thinking, and from a focus on the detail to “big picture” thinking. Thinking development was found to go hand in hand with the development of teaching effectiveness, understanding of teaching methodologies, and awareness of professional identity.

This research proposes a tentative framework of novice teachers’ thinking development from teaching practicum to early career teaching. The framework presents both content and processes of their thinking changes, both internal and external factors influencing their thinking changes, and both teaching-domain-specific and general thinking skills. This framework suggests reconsidering the over-emphasis on surface teaching methodology and teaching performance in teacher education programs and calls for more attention to the thinking, emotions, and self-awareness which strongly influence novice teachers’ teaching performance and professional identity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The hidden side of teaching interests me.

Outline

- 1.1. Research Background
- 1.2. Thesis Organisation

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

My mom is a book lover. Since I was a child, I saw her reading so many books that I also wanted to have a bookshelf of my own. In my secondary school, shopping for my first bookshelf, I recognised that the books that took my attention were self-help ones about humans psychological and philosophical development. Christian practices also played a significant role in shaping my thinking habits due to its promotion of constant contemplation and reflection. Since then, I nurtured a great interest and curiosity in understanding things beneath the surface. When I studied to become an English language teacher in my undergraduate and master's courses, rather than being interested in observable aspects like strategies and methods, I was more inclined to something happening inside learners' minds and hearts. My master's thesis was on learner autonomy which I believed was a powerful inner attribute for learners' life-long growth.

During that process of learning to teach, I went through complicated thoughts and feelings, conflicts and fears. The most rewarding and impactful moments were when I saw new things from new perspectives, challenged my old assumptions, achieved new understanding, and knew that my thinking had gone to a higher or deeper level. Such cognitive development brought me happiness and confidence in who I was and who I wanted to be, not who others assumed I should be. In this process, I wished to be able to share my thoughts and feelings, fears and “ah-ha” moments with my trainers. I wished to tell them what worked for me and what did not, what boosted my development and what hindered it, what they might focus on in their training and what could be reduced or left out. I wished to discuss all that with them to both improve my learning and enhance their training effectiveness. Nevertheless, I observed that most teacher trainers did not have time to stop to understand what was going on inside student teachers' minds. They focused more on the content of training – predominantly teaching methodologies, skills, behaviours – and student teachers' teaching performance in adherence to the taught pedagogical knowledge. A complaint frequently heard from teacher trainers was that their trainees did not apply (well) what they had trained them. A lack of dialogue between trainers and trainees about trainees' inner thoughts and feelings was common from my observation and experience.

The literature reports the same phenomenon. In the book on “Mapping the landscape of teacher education”, Clandinin and Husu (2017) point out that teacher education was first

formed around one hundred years ago and since this time it has focused on appropriate content and methods to educate teachers (p. 24). Rosiek and Gleason (2017), in their survey of the foundational concepts that have shaped the landscape of teacher education, identify an exclusive emphasis on the epistemic foundations of teaching competency which has resulted in an over-emphasis on the measurable outcomes of teaching. Likewise, Karimi and Norouzi (2017) indicate that teachers' learning to teach has primarily been observed and assessed on the basis of teachers' observable performance and, as such, reflects the "process-product conceptualisation of teaching" (Dunkin, 1974) which focuses on teachers' outcomes and orientates teachers towards desirable behaviours (p. 38). The main goal of teacher education in such a context is "to detect those teaching behaviours that resulted in higher pupil achievement gain scores and, subsequently, to train teachers in these desirable behaviours, either in initial teacher education programs or by means of further professional development" (Verloop et al., 2001, p. 441). Such programs focus on classroom processes, classroom instruction (Gatbonton, 1999), or "public activity" such as "classroom actions, routines, interactions, and behaviours, which are publicly accessible through observation" (Burns et al., 2015, p. 185). A cost of this approach is that it has "lost sight of the complexity and interdependency of teacher behaviour as a whole" (Verloop et al., 2001, p. 442). In fact, teachers' learning involves complex and unobservable cognitive processes (Freeman, 2002). Yet, this "hidden side" of teaching or teachers' mental lives are largely ignored in many studies (ibid.).

Even though teachers' observable performance has been long overemphasised in both the literature and the practice of teacher education, an increase of focus on teachers' mental lives and the impacts of sociocultural factors is perhaps an inevitable development. As Hammerness et al. (2005) claim, such development in the practice of teacher education echoes the development of the learning theory. According to these scholars:

The process of change in teacher educators' foci of attention "parallels the development of learning theory over the past twenty years, as psychologists have moved from behaviourists' quest for a direct relationship between stimulus and response, to cognitive psychologists exploration of how individual learning unfolds, to the broader focus offered by sociocultural theory on the contexts and conditions that promote leaning (p. 389, cited in Broad & Evans, 2006, p. 11)

Rosiek and Gleason (2017), observing the current practices of teacher education, also claim that:

Where once teaching was assumed to require only knowledge of content and general pedagogical techniques, in many places around the globe pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula now feature the study of pedagogical content knowledge, the cultural context of teaching, critical examinations of the ideological biases of curriculum materials, case studies of teacher problem solving, narrative inquiry, and the preparation of teachers to conduct research on their own practice (p. 30).

That expansion of focus could also be found in the development of the theory of research paradigms. In other words, going beyond observable behaviours and phenomena to understand cognitive and underlying processes is a common development in various disciplines, and so it should be in the area of teacher education and teacher development.

The discussion above highlights a considerable gap in the literature of teacher education. There has been an overemphasis on teachers' observable performance and little attention has been paid to understanding the role of communication with teacher trainees or to understanding their mental lives. Experiencing such lack of communication and understanding during my own process of learning to teach as a teacher trainee, then as a teacher trainer, I became motivated to focus on the "hidden side" of student teachers' experiences and teaching. I wanted to go beyond student teachers' behaviours and investigate their thinking development, the personal and contextual factors influencing their thinking development, and the impact of their thinking on their teaching behaviours. In my working context, we trained students to teach English as a foreign language in a four-year undergraduate program. In the final year, they had a teaching practicum in which they practiced teaching real learners to get themselves ready to teach in the real life after graduating. As Yuan and Lee (2014) point out, the teaching practicum "lies at the heart of student teachers' professional training and learning" and is where "student teachers can enhance their teaching knowledge and skills and interrogate and reflect on their deeply held values and beliefs". Such learning and reflection "can contribute to their cognitive learning and development" and help them develop "more complex forms of thinking about teaching" (p. 1). Then in the first years of teaching, novice teachers have to deal with many challenges, which can undermine their beliefs, values, and passion for teaching profession (Farrell, 2008, 2016). Therefore, the teaching practicum and the first

years of teaching are critical periods in teachers' learning-to-teach journeys and as such, are deserving of more research which focuses on how novice teachers develop their thinking throughout the transition from a teaching practicum to early career teaching. For these reasons, I embarked on this research in order to understand novice teachers' thinking development during their teaching practicum and early career teaching.

1.2 THESIS ORGANISATION

The thesis includes seven chapters.

This first chapter introduces my motivation as well as a brief overview of the literature related to the motivation for conducting this research.

Chapter 2 discusses the research literature on the concept of teachers' thinking development. It surveys scholarship on teachers' thinking including critical thinking, teacher reflection, teacher cognition, and teacher development. Several decisions in terms of research methodology and research focus were made based on this review, including adopting an exploratory approach (not relying on any existing frameworks) in order to understand the abstract and under-researched concept of novice teachers' thinking development.

Chapter 3 starts with my worldview and then reviews the literature on research process. Having analysed my personal perspectives and learning from others' ways of doing research, I present the established philosophy underlying this research and the research process. This process was an intertwined and iterative process of data collection, data analysis, and implementation of results. It included three stages of inquiry. The first stage interviewed nine early career teachers reflecting on their teaching practicums and the first years of their teaching. The second stage investigated the learning-to-teach processes of a cohort of five student teachers who went through four months of their practicum. The third stage investigated one of the cohort members who was treated as a case study which focused on his thinking develop from his practicum to the first two years of his teaching. The last section of this chapter is the assessment of this research design.

Chapter 4, 5, and 6 report the results of the first, second, and third stage of the inquiry respectively. In chapter 4, the results of the first stage of the inquiry will be summarised

and discussed to reveal the initial understanding of novice teachers' thinking development. In chapter 5, the results of the second stage will be discussed with those of the first stage to challenge and enhance the understanding of the researched concept. In chapter 6, the results will be discussed together with those of the previous two stages in order to present a more profound understanding of the research concept of novice teachers' thinking development.

Chapter 7 presents a framework of novice teachers' thinking development which evolved from the results of the three stages of the inquiry. The chapter discusses each of its components and juxtaposes it with the relevant literature. As this research did not rely on existing frameworks, the findings led to new areas of research that had not been foreseen before the data were collected. For this reason, the chapter draws on themes and research literature that are not covered in Chapter 2 and which inform the development of the framework. This last chapter discusses implications for teacher education.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Current Understanding of Teachers' Thinking Development

Chapter 3 – Research Philosophy and Process

Chapter 4 – Stage 1: Early Career Teachers

Chapter 5 – Stage 2: A Practicum Cohort

Chapter 6 – Stage 3: Huy

Chapter 7 – The Thinking Development Framework, Implications, and Conclusions

CHAPTER 2

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHERS' THINKING DEVELOPMENT

“Little is known about the development of critical thinking skills and dispositions over time.”

Lai, 2011, p.25

Outline

- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. Teachers' Critical Thinking
- 2.3. Teacher Reflection
- 2.4. Teacher Cognition
- 2.5. Teacher Development
- 2.6. Decisions Made Based on Literature Critique

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of literature

In this research, reviewing the literature is for several purposes. I reviewed the literature when problematising issues in teacher training (see Chapter 1), investigating what has been known about teachers' thinking development (see Chapter 2), studying the theory of research philosophy and methodologies to design this research (see Chapter 3), and discussing the literature which was related to the emerging themes but had not been covered in Chapter 2 (see Chapter 7). Due to this multistage approach to literature, it would be misleading to call this chapter a "literature review". Instead, this chapter is an overview of the current understanding of teachers' thinking development. It provides a big picture of what is known and what is not yet explored with regard to this concept and suggests implications for the research methodology.

Teachers' thinking development

There has not been a separate established field in the literature for the concept of "teachers' thinking development". The related key concepts that appear when searching for teachers' thinking development are critical thinking, teacher reflection, teacher cognition, and teacher (professional) development. The following sections of the chapter will review the literature on these concepts with the main purpose of looking for insights into the development processes of teachers' thinking when learning to teach.

2.2 TEACHERS' CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is a popular term rooted in philosophy and psychology (Lewis & Smith, 1993) and paid increasing attention to in education (Sternberg, 1986). The literature on critical thinking is well developed in all those strands. However, it has been never easy or simple to define what critical thinking is. This is because:

This thing we call “critical thinking” or “analysis” has strong cultural components. It is more than just a set of writing and thinking techniques—it is a voice, a stance, a relationship with texts and family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one’s country. This is why “critical analysis” is so hard for faculty members to talk about; because it is learned intuitively it is easy to recognize, like a face or a personality, but it is not so easily defined and is not at all simple to explain to someone who has been brought up differently. (Fox, 1994, p. 125)

(cited in Atkinson, 1997, p. 71)

Despite a lot of effort in defining, developing, and assessing critical thinking, it is surprising to find that “little is known about the development of critical thinking skills and dispositions over time” (Lai, 2011, p.25).

One of the only researchers to hypothesise a developmental progression of critical thinking is Kuhn (1999). She claimed that three kinds of meta-knowing – the metacognitive, metastrategic, and epistemological are central to critical thinking. She worked out four levels of epistemological understanding – realist, absolutist, multiplist, and evaluative – corresponding with the development of critical thinking (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Levels of epistemological understanding (Kuhn, 1999, p. 23)

Level	Assertions	Reality	Knowledge	Critical thinking
Realist	Assertions are copies that represent an external reality.	Reality is directly knowable.	Knowledge comes from an external source and is certain.	Critical thinking is unnecessary.
Absolutist	Assertions are facts that are correct or incorrect in their representation of reality (possibility of false belief).	Reality is directly knowable.	Knowledge comes from an external source and is certain.	Critical thinking is a vehicle for comparing assertions to reality and determining their truth or falsehood.
Multiplist	Assertions are opinions freely chosen by and accountable only to their owners.	Reality is not directly knowable.	Knowledge is generated by human minds and is uncertain.	Critical thinking is irrelevant.
Evaluative	Assertions are judgments that can be evaluated and compared according to criteria of argument and evidence.	Reality is not directly knowable.	Knowledge is generated by human minds and is uncertain.	Critical thinking is valued as a vehicle that promotes sound assertions and enhances understanding.

However, this model is about human being’s thinking development from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. It is also too general to tell us about thinking development processes of language teachers.

Another well-known model of critical thinking development in education is the taxonomy developed by Bloom (1956) and revised by Anderson (2001) which focuses specifically on information processing skills. The revised taxonomy includes six levels: 1) remembering, 2) understanding 3) applying 4) analysing 5) evaluating and 6) creating. Almaguer and Pena (2012) used this as a six-level rubric to analyse student teachers' reflection of their field-based activities and score their critical thinking level. Collins (2014) claimed that critical thinking, as a higher-order thinking skill for the 21st century, can be developed by following this taxonomy. Nevertheless, the concepts within the taxonomies are found to be "vague" and "lack the clarity necessary to guide instruction and assessment in a useful way" (Lai, 2011, p. 9). These taxonomies also describe general skills of critical thinking rather than its development process in a specific domain such as teachers' learning to teach (English language).

Regarding pre-service teachers, in their survey of the relevant literature, İşlek and Hürsen (2014) claimed that we know very little about the critical thinking of pre-service teachers as a result of very few studies on this. Several insights have been gained from this limited research. Bakir (2015) reports one common finding of the studies on pre-service teachers' critical thinking as well as her own study that pre-service teachers' critical thinking dispositions are low (Bakir, 2015, pp. 229–230). However, other studies show that the tools and techniques of developing critical thinking brought benefits for student teachers. These studies show that critical thinking skills can help student teachers reflect critically on theories they have learnt as well as think critically about their micro-teaching and field-based practice. Such critical reflection and thinking can help to reduce gaps between training and real-life teaching and to better prepare student teachers for their job challenges (Alper, 2010; Liu et al., 2014; Bakir, 2015; Gashan, 2015; Paul & Elder, 2002). For example, in field observations, criticality could facilitate pre-service teachers' meaningful reflection of the practice and helped them to "make a connection between theory learned in their teacher education program and its practical application in the classroom" (Almaguer & Pena, 2012, p. 26). By reflecting in the context of the classroom, they question what they do and think and become critically reflective teachers (Brookfield, 1995). Research has also shown that such critically reflective teachers have been able to enhance their academic achievement (Bakir, 2015) and teaching effectiveness (Liu et al., 2014). Nonetheless, again, these studies assess pre-service teachers' critical thinking rather than exploring how their critical thinking develops in their learning-to-teach processes.

Furthermore, Yamada (2013) and Almaguer and Pena (2012) strongly recommend having a focus for critical thinking training, i.e. “thinking critically about what?” However, it is difficult to find research on critical thinking development in the specific domain of learning to teach, and particularly to teach English language, in the contexts of pre-service training or early career teaching.

Concerning the Vietnamese context where I collected data for my research, Bodewig and Badiani-Magnusson (2014), investigating the top skills needed for the 21st century workforce in Vietnam, conclude critical thinking is an important skill to be trained in Vietnamese schools and universities. Critical thinking is also generally mentioned as one of the goals of teacher education programs. However, how it is trained and whether it has been trained and learnt is left unexamined. Phung (2010) claimed that “in Vietnam, although critical thinking has become a buzzword, it has not been taught extensively”. She also noticed that “critical thinking courses have not been visible in the education system and studies on critical thinking have not been audible in the discourse of professional journals and conferences in Vietnam” (p. 131). This shows that we know too little about teachers’ critical thinking development in Vietnam’s educational context in general and teacher training in Vietnam in particular.

2.3 TEACHER REFLECTION

The literature on teachers’ critical thinking often associates critical thinking with reflection or critical reflection (for examples, see Brookfield, 2009, 2012, 1995). Dewey (1933), in his famous book on “How we think”, discussed both thinking and reflective thinking and, has therefore been widely cited by researchers and educators in both critical thinking and reflection. He maintains that reflection is an “active, careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge” (p. 9) and reflective individuals possess three attributes: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. “Since its first appearance in Dewey’s writings (1933, 1962), the concept of “reflection” has stimulated a great deal of discussion in the field of teacher education” (Mok, 1994, p. 93).

There are different terms and definitions referring to the concept of reflection in teaching. Some of them are “reflection-in-action”, “inquiry-oriented teacher education,” “critical reflection,” “reflective inquiry”, “critical inquiry,” “reflection on teaching,” and

“clinical supervision” (Mok, 1994, p. 94). The development of teachers’ reflective thinking has been studied and described in frameworks or models of teacher reflection (some of which are summarised in Table 2, p. 21). One common thing that can be seen among the existing frameworks or models of teacher reflection is that they all conceptualise teachers’ reflective thinking as a set of levels, phases, stages, or modes. Generally speaking, at the lowest levels, teachers ask questions like “What would I do?” and “How do I do it?” and have little discourse involving principles or theories of teaching. At the next levels, they would ask why-questions and apply principles and theories into their practice. At the highest levels, teachers consider different aspects of teaching as well as impacts of ethical, moral, and political issues on teaching and learning. In addition to these aspects, Thomas Farrell (2015b) added some other aspects for reflection such as teachers’ philosophies and other personal, spiritual, and emotional aspects (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019).

These frameworks are helpful to understand what teachers reflect on in each level of reflective thinking and what to promote them to think about to achieve higher levels of reflection. However, they have not provided insights into the processes of moving from a lower level to a higher level of reflection. Neither do they suggest specific implications for teachers and teacher trainers about how to develop teachers’ reflective thinking in everyday teaching. In addition, a tight correlation between these levels of reflection and their impact on teachers’ teaching and learners’ learning effectiveness is not so obvious. Another common feature of these frameworks is their focus on the theory–practice gap. Teachers’ reflective thinking is found to develop when teachers can make sense of teaching theories and put them into their practice. However, a similar question of “How does the process of making better sense of teaching theories during a process of learning to teach occur?” has not been explained in the frameworks. In other words, these frameworks are helpful to understand teachers’ reflective thinking in their whole professional development but not specifically related to their everyday teaching and their learners’ learning.

Table 2 – Some frameworks of teacher reflection

RESEARCHERS	FRAMEWORKS	LEVELS – PHASES – STAGES – MODES OF REFLECTION				
(M. van Manen, 1977)	Three modes or distinct levels of reflective thinking	Technical reflection: reflecting effective application of skills and technical knowledge in the classroom setting Novice teacher	Contextual reflection: reflecting assumptions underlying specific classroom practice and consequences of practice Expert teacher	Dialectical/critical reflection: asking questions about moral, ethical, or socio-political issues Master teacher		
(Sparks-Langer et al., 1990)	Three levels of language	Using no descriptive language	Using a simple layperson description	Talking about events labeled with appropriate, pedagogical terms		
	Four levels of thinking	Relying on tradition or personal preference	Focusing on principle or theory	Focusing on principle or theory and considering context factors	Considering ethical, moral, political issues	
(LaBoskey, 1993)	Degree of orientation toward growth and inquiry	Concrete thinkers: asking ‘how to’ or ‘what works’ questions, unaware of their need to learn	Alert novices: asking ‘why’ questions.	Pedagogical thinkers: grounded in knowledge of self, children, and subject matter, aware of teaching as a moral activity		
(Valli, 1993)	3 modes of reflection	Technical/ instrumental: concerned about classroom management and delivering instructions, addressing the means or procedures for delivering education while leaving important questions about the purposes, values and goals of schooling unexamined	Deliberative: concerned about (1) teaching-learning process, (2) subject matter knowledge, (3) political and ethical principles underlying teaching, and (4) educational institutions within their broad social context.	Dialectical: finding externally-derived knowledge about teaching less important. Instead, reflection is more personally grounded and is used to apprehend and transform experience		

(Farrell, 2015) & (Jay and Johnson, 2002, pp.77-79, cited in Farrell, 2015, p. 9)	3 levels agreed by most researchers	Descriptive reflection: focusing on teacher skills, involving describing a situation or problem, answering to the question of “What’d I do?” and “How do I do it?”	Conceptual reflection: focusing on the rationale for practice or comparative reflection: trying to solve the problem while also questioning their values and beliefs, asking “why do you do it?”	Critical reflection: examining socio-political and moral and ethical results of practice – critical pedagogy Involving teachers looking at all the different perspectives of a situation/problem and all of the players involved: teachers, students, the school and the community		
(Farrell, 2015; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019)	5 levels of reflection on practice	Philosophy: exploring the ‘teacher-as-person’, talking or writing about their own lives and how they think their past experiences may have shaped the construction and development of their basic philosophy of practice	Principles: reflecting on assumptions, beliefs, and conceptions of teaching and learning	Theory: exploring and examining the different choices a teacher makes about particular skills taught = putting their theories into practice	Practice: reflecting while they are teaching a lesson (reflection-in-action), and after they teach a lesson (reflection-on-action)	Beyond Practice: exploring and examining the moral, political, and social issues that impact a teacher’s practice both inside and outside the classroom

2.4 TEACHER COGNITION

Teacher reflection is then usually associated with teachers' cognition in the way that teacher reflection helps to explore and develop teachers' cognition, metacognition (for examples, Borg, 2011; Calderhead, 1989), teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and inner feelings (Farrell, 2015b; Farrell, 2016; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). Likewise, Moradkhani (2019) observed that "the overwhelming majority of published studies on RP [reflective practice] have used reflection as a research tool to indirectly probe into teachers' beliefs, pedagogical knowledge, or identity" (p. 61).

Research on teacher cognition, specifically in second language education, has developed significantly over the past two decades (Karimi & Norouzi, 2017).

However, how teacher cognition develops over time has not been well researched. Simon Borg (2003) has pointed out some important aspects of teacher cognition that needed further attention and research. Among these under-researched aspects was "mapping processes of change in teachers' cognitions and practices:

...additional themes which have much potential for expanding our understanding of this field: three in particular are (a) relationships between cognitive and behavioural change, (b) changes in the content and structure of teacher cognition, and (c) mapping the processes of change in teachers' cognitions and practices. (Borg, 2003, p. 105)

Since the time that Borg called for more attention to those aspects of cognition, there has been little substantial research about processes of cognitive change. Surveying the studies on teacher cognition, I found that most of them still focused on changes in the content of cognition – for example, changes in teachers' beliefs about how to teach grammar after taking a professional training course. They have not uncovered processes underlying such changes in teachers' beliefs and especially not cognitive development processes that teachers go through to learn to teach.

The limited literature that there is on processes of cognitive changes offers some frameworks or models describing these processes in teachers and pre-service teachers. One of them is by Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000). The researchers interviewed each of twenty five student teachers three times throughout a 36-week course in Modern Foreign Language teaching. They analysed the student teachers' accounts of their beliefs and perceptions of development in them and focused on the nature of the development

processes. They found the student teachers going through the processes listed in (see Table 3). These cognitive processes are generic rather than teaching domain specific. They are quite separate processes and thus do not reflect a progression in thinking development during a student teachers' learning-to-teach journey.

Table 3 – Summary of belief development processes (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000, p. 393)

Category label	Distinctive features	Example
Awareness/realisation	Awareness of a discrepancy, conflict or coherence	"I realised that..."
Consolidation/confirmation	Strengthening of existing beliefs	"I do actually feel stronger about..."
Elaboration/polishing	Reconstruction of beliefs by addition, omission and so on; deepening of belief by additional dimensions	"I've got slightly more sophisticated ideas now." "What I am saying now is just a bit more developed."
Addition	Integration of new beliefs	"...the notion of autonomy is quite a new one to me."
Re-ordering	Rearrangement of beliefs regarding their importance	"more and more I am realising that that isn't necessarily the most important thing..."
Re-labelling	Re-naming of a construct	"What I was then calling <i>dynamic approach</i> now I'd call <i>active pupil-centred</i> ."
Linking up	Establishing a connection between constructs	"...lesson planning will guarantee a good classroom management."
Disagreement	Rejection of existing beliefs or presented information	"I don't feel that anymore." "No, teacher shouldn't move everywhere."
Reversal	Adoption of opposite of previous belief	"[a teacher] has to be... a little bit mad..." (Interview I/ST14) "A bit mad no!..." (Interview II/ST14)
Pseudo change	Pretended or false change in beliefs; not a real change	"I have to do it, I'll do it". "I still agree with that but it's like doctors say 'we want to get paid more.' I think it's not possible."
No change	No apparent change or development in beliefs	"I feel the same way that I did at the beginning of the course."

Yuan and Lee (2014) conducted a study on three pre-service language teachers during a 10-week teaching practicum. They collected data from four rounds of semi-structured interviews before, during, and after the practicum, classroom observation followed by stimulated recall interviews, and the participants' weekly journals. The study aimed to answer the questions: "What are the participants' teacher beliefs before the teaching practicum, and how do their beliefs change during the teaching practicum?" (p. 3). The researchers found that student teachers experienced different processes of change in their beliefs during the practicum, including

- ♦ confirmation (strengthening their prior beliefs),
- ♦ realization (becoming more fully aware of or picking up a new belief),
- ♦ elaboration (deepening and expanding their existing beliefs by adding in new dimensions),
- ♦ disagreement (rejecting their previously held beliefs),
- ♦ integration (refining and reorganising of the prior and newly acquired beliefs into a comprehensive and integrated system), and
- ♦ modification (accompanying the process of disagreement, modifying and refining prior beliefs) (pp. 8–9)

Similar to the results of Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000)'s study, these cognitive processes describe general thinking activity rather than a progression in the development of thinking about teaching.

Yuan and Lee (2014) emphasised the same concern that Borg (2003, 2006, 2009) raised: "In L2 [second language] teacher education research, while much attention has been centered on the "content" of teachers' cognitions, the "process" of language teachers' cognitive change has remained relatively unexplored" (p. 2). They continue: "In particular, there is a paucity of research that focuses on the content and process of student teachers' belief change during the teaching practicum" (ibid.). Thus, Yuan and Lee (2014) voiced a need for research on processes of cognitive changes in pre-service teachers: "Further research focusing on the processes of cognitive (belief) change in their situated socio-cultural context is therefore needed to add to our understanding of the process of learning to teach among pre-service teachers" (ibid.).

2.5 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Having researched the above aspects – teachers’ critical thinking, reflection, cognition – but gaining inadequate knowledge of developmental processes of teacher thinking, I moved on to the area of teacher development. It is an established field in the literature investigating the development of teachers and their teaching profession. Levin (2003) made a point that what teacher educators were concerned about nearly 40 years ago – a desperate need of “coherent theory and practice to promote teacher development” (Glassberg, 1979, p. 2) – is still a big challenge for current educators (p. 254). The existing literature on teacher development provide insights into various aspects of teacher development including: changes in teachers’ concerns (Fuller, 1969; Pigge & Marso, 1997; Conway & Clark, 2003; Yan Fung Mok, 2005; Watzke, 2007; Çakmak, 2008; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Saricoban, 2009; Hagger & Malmberg, 2011; Smith, Corkery, Buckley, & Calvert, 2013; Berg & Smith, 2014); teachers’ moral, ego, and conceptual development (Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983); teachers’ information processing (information refers to teaching theories) (Hollingsworth, 1989; Lidstone & Hollingsworth, 1992); teachers’ life cycle (Huberman, 1989); teachers’ thinking about pedagogy (Levin, 2003), and so on.

Some frameworks or models describe processes of teachers’ thinking throughout the whole journey of their professional development. For example, Huberman (1989) reported stages of teacher development including survival and discovery, stabilization, experimentation/activism, self-doubt, serenity, conservatism, and disengagement. Levin (2003)’s model describes developmental sequences of teachers’ thinking about pedagogy (see Table 4): naïve empiricism, everyday behaviorism, global constructivism, differentiated constructivism, and integrated constructivism.

Table 4 – Developmental sequence of teachers' thinking about pedagogy (Levin, 2003, p. 278)

<i>Qualitative Level</i>	<i>The Goal of Instruction Is for Students to Attain:</i>	<i>To Obtain These Learning Objectives, Students Must:</i>	<i>Teacher Teaches by:</i>
1. Naive Empiricism	A large store of facts and procedures.	Be able and receptive.	Showing and telling students what they need to know in ways that are appealing.
2. Everyday Behaviorism	Skills that are essential for attaining and using facts and procedures.	Practice the new skills in question, having first acquired whatever prerequisites are needed.	Giving students a lot of directed practice, with corrective feedback and positive reinforcement as needed; modeling and reinforcing.
3. Global Constructivism	Correct understanding of the concepts that underlie the facts, procedures, and skills in a given subject.	Explore and manipulate relevant aspects of the real world, having reached the stage of development at which the concepts in question can be correctly understood.	Giving students opportunities to explore and manipulate developmentally appropriate materials; providing hands-on experience.
4. Differentiated Constructivism	Conceptual understandings of a sort that are better than before and may improve still further.	Be actively engaged in their most advanced ways of thinking to construct understandings of the concepts in question at their present level of development; engaged in sense-making	Engaging student in thought-provoking activities and guiding their thinking toward better understandings within each domain.
5. Integrated Constructivism	Conceptual understandings that integrate the academic, social, and ethical dimensions of each concept, procedure, or skill to be mastered.	Be actively engaged in problem solving to construct understandings of the concepts in question at whatever the child's individual level of development.	Engaging students in challenging activities and guiding their metacognitive understandings of the academic, social, and ethical issues and concepts inherent across several domains.

Levin summarised the five levels of teachers' thinking about pedagogy as follows:

According to this model, teachers' thinking about pedagogy begins with associationist and behaviourist conceptions (Levels 1 and 2) and develops toward constructivist conceptions that are initially quite global (Level 3), but that eventually become more differentiated (Level 4) and finally more integrated (Level 5). (Levin, 2003, p. 8)

Several observations can be drawn from reviewing these two studies as well as other research on teacher development. Firstly, most of them examined teacher development on a big scale – from pre-service training to mid and latter career; only some of them focused only on novice teachers in their pre-service and induction years. Secondly, like research in other fields of teacher reflection and teacher cognition, most of the research on teacher development describes major stages of teacher development in their profession. Little research addresses the processes of their thinking development in their processes of learning to teach their subjects. Thirdly, few studies conducted longitudinal in-depth case studies; most of them used questionnaires, checklists, and one-shot interviews. Fourthly, as Gavin Brown (2017) observes, most teacher education research is conducted in and on western, educated, and developed countries and “too often... teacher education policy makers uncritically assume western conceptions of the purpose of education will fit all nations and communities (Clandinin & Husu, 2017, p. 27). Brown (2017) also warns that

BASED ON LITERATURE CRITIQUE

“what might matter in one context in relation to being a good teacher, and subsequently what makes good preparation of a teacher, may be invalid in another” (p. 124).

2.6 DECISIONS MADE

BASED ON LITERATURE CRITIQUE

The existing frameworks/models of teachers’ development of critical thinking, reflection, cognition, and profession are insightful. They reveal the complexity and dynamics of teachers’ thinking as well as influences of various factors on teachers’ thinking changes. However, these frameworks segment teachers’ thinking development into levels and stages. They conceptualise “teacher development as moving in lockstep through a series of universal stages (regardless of setting or experiences)” (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 389). Little is known about how teacher’s thinking changes over time and what influences the processes that occur between these stages. Furthermore, these universal stages are too general to explain novice teachers’ development of their thinking about their everyday classroom and about their learning to teach. Consequently, these frameworks/models are too general to be adopted by teachers and teacher trainers for anything other than understanding a trend in teacher thinking development.

This literature review helped me to recognise two things. Firstly, I became more motivated to explore the unknown or under-researched concept of novice teachers’ thinking development in their process of learning to teach from the teaching practicum to early career teaching. Secondly, I was more convinced that I should adopt an exploratory approach to investigate novice teachers’ thinking changes rather than adopting or adapting any existing frameworks. My research goal was therefore to understand the researched reality and theorise it so that I could contribute a tentative framework of teachers’ thinking development to the existing literature on this concept. I believed that if we had more research aiming to generate tentative models grounded in authentic data about teachers’ lives and thought, the literature on this aspect would grow and become more insightful, authentic, and applicable to teacher educators and teachers themselves. This understanding was important because it challenged and shaped the philosophy underlying this research, which will be discussed in the next chapter, Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY & PROCESS

"If we knew what it was we were doing,
it would not be called research, would it?"

Albert Einstein

Outline

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Investigating Research Methodology

3.3. Establishing a Philosophical Foundation

- ♦ Question 1: An Ontological Question
- ♦ Question 2: An Epistemological and Axiological Question
- ♦ Question 3: A Methodological Question
- ♦ The research approach: bricolage, autopoiesis, and critical pragmatism

3.4. Designing My Research Methodology

- ♦ Methodological Principles
- ♦ Data Collection
- ♦ Data Analysis

3.5. Evaluating My Research Methodology

- ♦ Question 4: A Self-Evaluative Question
- ♦ Model of epistemological growth
- ♦ Verification strategies for trustworthiness and credibility
- ♦ Summary of evaluation

3.1 INTRODUCTION

After researching the relevant literature and making the decision to take an exploratory approach, I investigated how to do research. This investigation helped me to realise the importance of philosophy in designing a research methodology to achieve the research purpose. In this chapter, I report the research process and how I:

- Investigated research methodologies,
- Established a philosophical foundation,
 - Took a bricolage approach,
 - Developed a stance of critical pragmatism,
 - Decided to take an autopoiesis perspective,
- Designed my research methodology based on this philosophical foundation, and
- Evaluated my research methodology (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Research design process



3.2 INVESTIGATING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

What we find in our research is important, but how we find what find and how we know whether they ways we have done make sense are crucial. It has taken me a long time to realise all this, to realise that a certain research methodology that we use is governed by the philosophy we hold about the world and about how to understand the world at that time.

The literature on research methodology offers a shared perception about how to design a certain research project (see for example, Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2004, 2013; Hadley, 2017; Lukenchuk, 2013). Generally speaking, that process starts with an investigation into philosophical foundations, which reflect researchers' worldviews about knowledge and gaining knowledge. Philosophical foundations refer to ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontological assumptions are researchers' perspectives of reality and its characteristics or of whether something exists and what its properties are. Epistemological assumptions are researchers' perspectives of how they know what they know or how knowledge of reality is constructed. Axiological assumptions are researchers' perspectives of values including aesthetics and ethics in research. These philosophical foundations have over time brought about different schools of thought which form different research paradigms, each with its own set of beliefs about how to do research. Under each paradigm are research methodologies which reflect the set of beliefs. Research methodologies use different research methods of data collection and data analysis.

This shows that the process of designing a methodology for a research project is philosophical and should start with establishing philosophical foundations. It is an interplay among the researcher's underlying view of the world and of themselves, the research goal and context, and methodological options. Methodological options are diverse and plentiful but each of them is tethered to specific underpinning philosophical foundations and is appropriate not to all but to specific research goals and contexts. Therefore, decisions made about methodologies need to be informed by taking philosophical foundations and the research goal and context into consideration.

Table 5 below shows examples of research foundations from three authors of research methodology books. The first author presents philosophical foundations, then paradigms, and then methodologies. The second author also starts with philosophical foundations

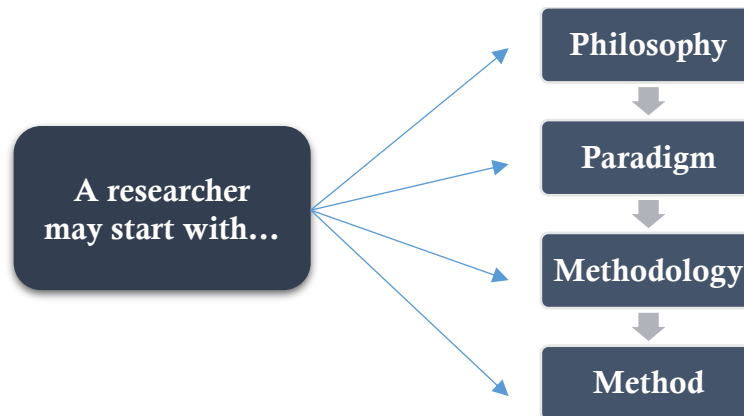
including ontology and then presents different paradigms. The third author introduces four paradigms and various methodologies. These examples show firstly the relationship between research philosophy, paradigms, and methodologies, and secondly the different starting points or focus of different researchers when investigating research methodology.

Table 5 – Examples of philosophical foundations, paradigms, and methodologies

Researchers	Philosophical foundation	Theoretical perspectives / Paradigms	Methodology / Research Designs
(Crotty, 1998)	Epistemology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivism • Constructivism • Subjectivism 	Positivism (and post-positivism) Interpretivism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic interactionism • Phenomenology • Hermeneutics Critical inquiry Feminism Postmodernism, etc.	Experimental research Survey research Ethnography Phenomenological research Grounded theory Heuristic inquiry Action research Discourse analysis Feminist standpoint research, etc.
(Gray, 2004, 2013)	Ontology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western: Heraclitean ontology of becoming • Parmenidean ontology of being (which “has held sway in Western philosophy”) 	Epistemology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivism • Constructivism • Subjectivism 	Positivism Post-positivism Interpretivism (While interpretivism and objectivism hold different epistemological positions, both are still based upon a being ontology (Chia, 2002) only recently postmodern epistemology based on becoming ontology)
(Creswell, 2014)		Postpositivism Constructivism Transformative Pragmatism	Quantitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental designs • Non-experimental designs, such as surveys Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative research • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Ethnographies • Case Study Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convergent • Explanatory sequential • Exploratory • Sequential Transformative, embedded, or multiphase

Different researchers may have their own starting point for their methodological inquiry and design (see Figure 2). While some researchers can design their research by going through this entire process – examining and establishing each of its levels, others may adopt a paradigm and only examine options of methodologies that reflect the paradigm that they pick. Some adopt/adapt a methodology and only examine options of methods.

Figure 2 – Researchers' possible starting points of their methodological inquiry and design



This current research started its methodological inquiry and design from the philosophical level, skipped the mid-levels by not subscribing to any research paradigm or methodology, and then established the research process and its methods of data collection and analysis which reflected these philosophical foundations and were appropriate for the research questions and context. The reasons for this decision were several.

Firstly, I found that research paradigms do not always and clearly differ in their sets of beliefs but sometimes just in their foci. For example, critical theory focuses on power, and feminism firstly on women's rights. This means that they sometimes overlap each other to different extents, which makes a choice of a paradigm become a choice of topics of interest rather than a philosophical choice. Secondly, each paradigm or methodology itself has different branches which are sometimes contradictory. It is the case of grounded theory for example. There are at least two different grounded theory approaches: Glaser's classical grounded theory which was based on post-positivism and avoided consulting literature before data collection and analysis and Strauss's approach which was based on interpretivism and allowed reviewing literature at different stages of research. This divergence within a research paradigm raises a question about whether it is necessary to proclaim a followership to any established school of thought. Finally, there is no consensus in categorising research paradigms and methodologies. For instance, pragmatism can be considered a combination of qualitative and quantitative

methodologies but can also be considered as a research philosophy (Morgan, 2014). Therefore, those labels or categories have different meanings to different people, which may make it confusing or misleading and probably unnecessary to label my research methodology specifically as any of these.

Nevertheless, that does not mean that I did not learn from the paradigms or methodologies. Reading about the existing paradigms, methodologies, and methods informed and influenced my research design.

The choice to start with philosophical foundations has given me a sense of agency in deciding what to do and how to do it, as well as a sense of criticality about why I did what I did. I therefore became more flexible and critical about my research methodology. That has also helped me with my pursuit of becoming a responsible researcher who attempts to make the philosophical assumptions and their impact on the methodology design transparent to readers and open to their judgment. I hope that this communication for mutual understanding would help me to communicate more effectively with other researchers about my research, especially with those who hold different theoretical perspectives.

In according with to the decision above, I established the philosophy which would guide the design of the research methodology and the conduction of this research.

3.3 ESTABLISHING A PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

The methodological inquiry aims to answer these four philosophical questions:

- ♦ *What do I want to understand?* – An ontological question
- ♦ *How do I understand it as fully as possible?* – An epistemological and axiological question
- ♦ *What should I do to understand it?* – A methodological question
- ♦ *Am I satisfied with my achieved understanding and about what I did to achieve that understanding?* – An evaluative question

The first question is about my choice and my tentative knowledge or imagination about the subject of my inquiry. The second question is about my choice of the way to achieve an understanding of the subject. The third question is about specific procedures and

methods that enable me to achieve that understanding. The last question is about my evaluation of my achieved understanding of the subject and my methodology.

Question 1: An Ontological Question

What do I want to understand?

Ontology is especially significant in this research because the research enquires an abstract concept of human thinking. There are two main ontological assumptions discussed in the literature: ontology of being and ontology of becoming. Ontology of being suggests that “reality is seen as being composed of clearly formed entities with identifiable properties” while ontology of becoming emphasises on “formlessness, chaos, interpenetration and absence” (Gray, 2013, p. 20). With ontology of being, “entities are held to be stable they can become represented by symbols, words and concepts”, which reflects a “representationalist epistemology” and “this representationalist epistemology orientates our thinking towards outcomes and end-states rather than processes of change.” (ibid.). With a focus on processes of change in human thinking which is itself abstract, complicated, and dynamic, the ontology of becoming was adopted as a philosophical foundation of this research.

However, the literature on teacher thinking (see chapter 2) addresses aspects of teachers’ thinking but not much about the processes of teachers’ thinking development, especially those of novice teachers in their classroom teaching. The existing models and frameworks of teachers’ thinking segment this concept into different fixed levels, which I found reflects an ontology of being and oversimplifies the complexity of the development of thinking. These models did not reflect my own thinking and professional development. For instance, I looked back at my ways of thinking ten years ago when I was a novice teacher. At that time, I already took into consideration political, social, and ethical issues whenever I contemplated my teaching. However, that did not make me a teacher with the highest level of reflective ability according to Farrell’s (2015a), Levin’s (2003), or Van Manen’s (1977), or Sparks-Langer et al.’s model (1990). I was also drawn to issues of power, leadership, relationships with colleagues, school systems, and innovation from the very first days of my teaching; that did not mean that I had been a mature and efficient teacher as some models of professional development described (for examples, see Hall & Loucks,

1978; Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973). This issue made me reluctant to impose these models on my investigation of novice teachers.

As a teacher trainer who works towards helping novice teachers develop their thinking, I found that the models/ frameworks of these concepts, despite being plentiful and detailed did not satisfy my need for a deep understanding of the essence of the developmental process of teachers' thinking. I reckoned that it could be their broad descriptions of levels of teachers' thinking that made it difficult for me to see the essential nature of teachers' thinking development. Researchers and educators have also been using these models to evaluate teachers' thinking, which I agreed with even less.

One more ontological challenge was a natural limitation of human language to represent this abstract concept of thinking.

According to Nickerson (1990), a widely cited author on teaching critical thinking: We can talk of thinking skills and processes, and even of specific thinking skills and processes, but we have to recognize that our language is only marginally descriptive of that to which it refers, and we must not be surprised when the entities we identify in our models or frameworks of thinking persist in jumping out of the boxes in which we have put them. (p. 503). (Atkinson, 1997, p. 74)

I was not able to find the literature or the language to enable me to define the essence of the development of novice teachers' thinking.

Because of these ontological challenges, when starting this research, I could not find in the literature a concept, a field, or a term that could describe the concept that I wanted to explore. At first, I felt insecure and worried about this sense of "knowing nothing" about what I was looking for and about starting with my imagination. Later, I found that I was not alone in this. Gaston, Audi, and Lukenchuk discussed this discovery of the unknown.

Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) once said that when imagination works, everything works. We first imagine things before we know them. Bachelard's poetic turn led him to reconsider his epistemology as a project of a science mind, this, giving primacy to imagination in the process of inquiry. Scientific knowledge "emerges only after we use some imagination, both in formulating questions and in framing hypotheses to answer them" (Audi, 2003, p. 260). (Lukenchuk, 2013, p. xxiii)

Albert Einstein says: “If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?” and also remarks: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.” Obviously, then, it is possible to start a research project without being able to fully define the subject of the inquiry. That perspective about “knowing nothing” described my position when starting this PhD research.

I also encountered grounded theory approach which encourages researchers to start their inquiry with an open mind about what they want to discover (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Likewise, naturalistic inquiry also advocates “exploratory research, particularly when relevant theoretical frameworks are not available or when little is known about the people to be investigated” (Salkind, 2010, p. 2). In addition, a bricolage approach to research also appreciates this “imagining what did not exist”:

In their move to the margins and transcendence of reductionism, bricoleurs seek to identify what is absent in particular situations – a task ignored by monological, objectivist modes of research. In this context bricoleurs seek to cultivate a higher form of researcher creativity that leads them, like poets, to produce concepts and insights about the social world that previously did not exist. This rigour in the absence can be expressed in numerous ways, including the bricoleur’s ability:

- . to imagine things that never were;*
- . to see the world as it could be;*
- . to develop alternatives to oppressive existing conditions;*
- . to discern what is lacking in a way that promotes the will to act;*
- . to understand that there is far more to the world than what we can see.*

(Kincheloe, 2004, p. 20)

Those views gave me validation and confidence in my adventure to the unknown and my decision of not adopting any of the existing models/ frameworks which did not reflect my ontology of being about processes of teachers’ thinking development.

Question 2: An Epistemological & Axiological Question

How do I understand it?

Because of the sophistication of the concept of thinking development, I was not satisfied with approaches which oversimplified it into specific and observable skills. Instead, I have adopted a constructionist epistemology. I believe such qualities like teachers' "critical thinking" or "intellectual development" do not exist as an objective truth waiting to be discovered through right ways of researching or with researchers' objectivism. Instead, they are broad, deep, abstract, sophisticated, multifaceted, and dynamic concepts that are manifested in different forms and evolve in various directions in different persons who live and work in different situations. Individuals construct their understanding and representation of their thinking processes in their own ways, and different researchers also make sense of the individuals' thinking processes differently. Consequently, a researcher's knowledge of an individual's thinking process is co-constructed by both the individual and the researcher. If epistemology is a spectrum with objectivism at one end and subjectivism at the other, I have found myself somewhere in the middle with constructionism. This philosophical standpoint underpinned the methodology that I designed for this inquiry.

My axiological assumptions were developed from my work experiences in human resources management and development and in leadership in educational organisations as well as my experiences in teaching soft skills including communication skills, working-in-groups skills, and leadership skills. Those experiences and investigation into the literature of these subjects formed my belief that data collection needed to be through authentic communication based on mutual trust, the researcher's sensitivity of the participant's psychology (personalities, needs, difficulties, preferences, relationships with the researcher, contextual barriers), and conversational skills including empathetic and analytic listening. I believed in co-construction of meaning and thus acknowledged the role and impact of the researcher on the participant's responses and attitudes. I believed that frequency of occurrence of some ideas did not always tell the researcher the importance or value of those ideas. I also believed in multiple opportunities of communication which meant plurality of interaction and variety of communication forms.

Regarding ethics, I emphasised the agency and freedom of participants in our communication. I found it very important not to manipulate but did my best to elicit their sharing of their honest thought and feelings. Therefore, I followed two principles in my

interaction with participants. Firstly, I tried to avoid having pre-conceptions about them and avoid imposing any frameworks on my questioning, understanding, or evaluating them. Secondly, I confirmed with them whatever assumptions and understanding I had developed from our communication. Additionally, I was concerned about what to give back to the participants, especially those who spent a lot of time and effort for my research. Giving back was mostly in the form of being a critical friend during their practicum.

Question 3: A Methodological Question

What should I do to understand it? – an exploratory, authentic, critical approach of inquiry

I agree with Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015)'s recommendation that teacher cognition should be studied from a bottom-up approach which:

embrace[s] the complexity of teachers' inner lives in the context of their activity and aspire to understand what we have broadly termed ecologies of language teachers' inner lives, as these relate to what language teachers do, why they do it, and how this may impact how their students learn. (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 436)

This research took an *exploratory, authentic, and critical* approach to understanding the complex concept of novice teachers' thinking development. It is an authentic inquiry because it respects and flows with the direction that the reality takes. It did not force a conceptualisation of the subject of inquiry but explored it through authentic communication and interaction with research participants. It is a critical inquiry because it was established on philosophical foundations and critical consideration of existing research paradigms and methodologies. It did not subscribe to any particular paradigm and methodology but made use of helpful procedures and techniques that are the most relevant to the philosophical foundations. This research has been established and conducted on a belief that methodology is not prescribed but designed.

Based on my ontological, epistemological, axiological assumptions, I formulated methodological principles, and used these to select useful principles from various research paradigms and then design the methodology of my research. Table 6 (p. 40) presents the ontological, epistemological, axiological assumptions and the methodological principles of this research as well as relevant research paradigms.

Table 6 – My philosophical foundations and relevant paradigms

My ontological assumptions	My epistemological & axiological assumptions	My methodological principles	Relevant paradigms
<p>1. Novice teachers change the way they think about teaching throughout their processes of learning to teach.</p> <p>Thinking changes may not necessarily mean improvement or degradation. It depends on how novice teachers themselves think about quality of their own current ways of thinking and its impact on their teaching and lives.</p>	<p>It is important to be open-minded when describing novice teachers' thinking changes to achieve an authentic understanding of the concept. No evaluation is necessary; no pre-conceptions or frameworks of how thinking development is necessary.</p> <p>Participants would show the researcher how they think and act; the researcher takes it as it is and tries to make sense of it. Both participants and the researcher co-construct the story about them. Subjectivity is necessary and acknowledged; but objectivity or rigor is equally important.</p>	<p>Understanding and interpreting the reality rather than evaluating or changing it</p> <p>Open-mindedness to exploring the reality by participants and researcher</p>	<p><i>Grounded theory:</i> avoiding imposing pre-conceptions co-construction of meaning "unknown" status of the subject of inquiry</p> <p><i>Phenomenology:</i> bracketing/epoché co-construction of meaning</p>
<p>2. A common pattern may underlie individual differences in thinking development. Common patterns would explain the core of novice teachers' thinking development.</p>	<p>In order to understand thinking development, it is important for the researcher to spend sufficient time with participants and immerse themselves into participants' professional lives. In such intimate and longitudinal interaction, the researcher needs to be sensitive to changes in the participant's thinking, attitudes, feelings, and actions.</p> <p>At the same, the researcher also needs to be patient to see bigger pictures of their thinking changes. Core patterns of thinking development may underline more concrete patterns; and the essence of thinking development is beneath such core patterns.</p>	<p>Longitudinal, intimate interaction with participants</p> <p>Shaking the data to the core – looking for the essence of thinking development</p> <p>Generation of a new tentative framework grounded in the data. This tentative framework is descriptive and informing a future theory of novice teachers' thinking development rather than being a complete and fixed theory itself.</p>	<p><i>Grounded theory:</i> generation of theory grounded in data The data generate the theory, not the theory shape the data.</p> <p><i>Phenomenology:</i> looking for essence of phenomenon</p>

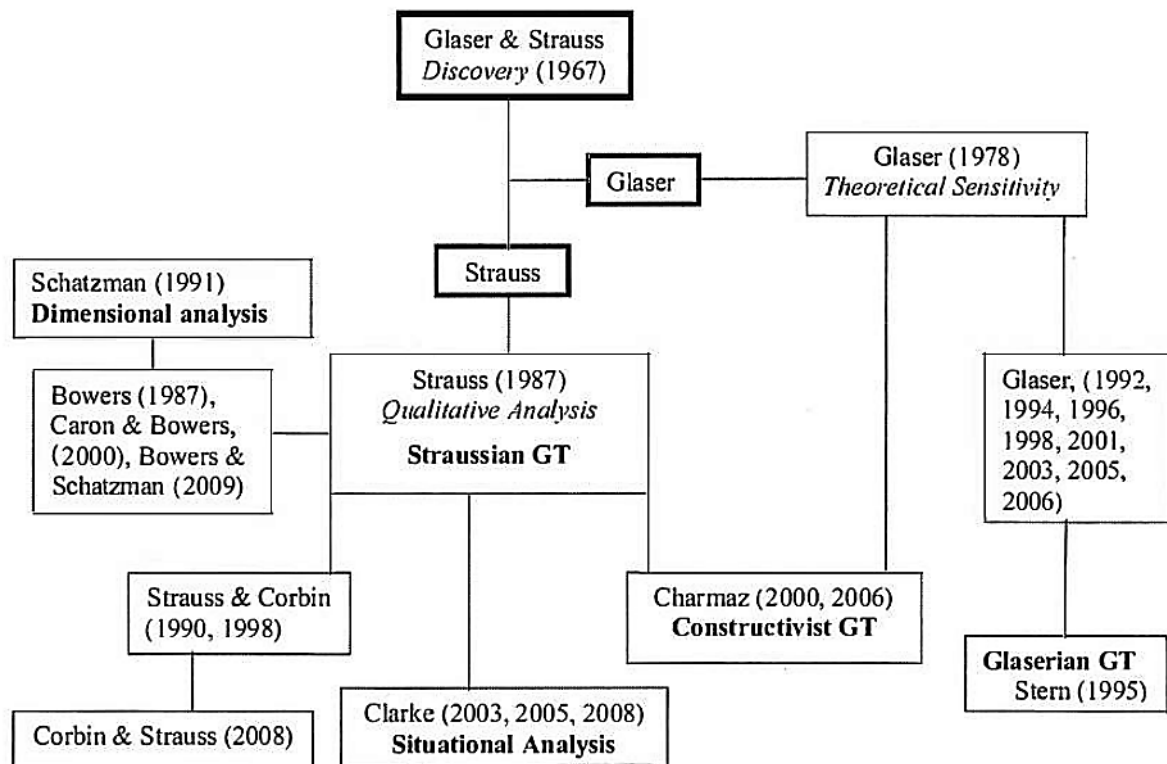
My ontological assumptions	My epistemological & axiological assumptions	My methodological principles	Relevant paradigms
3. Just as novice teachers' thinking change over time and varies in different novice teachers, the researcher's understanding of the participant's thinking development changes throughout the inquiry.	<p>An open mind to new understanding that challenges or supports the old understanding is essential.</p> <p>In their flow with the reality, the researcher may make immediate decisions about which participants they would need to further explore or whether more participants need to be invited.</p> <p>The content and purpose of the researcher's interaction with participants need to be developed and adjusted when they go, based on what have just happened.</p> <p>This journey of inquiry finishes when the researcher cannot find any major new patterns and is thus satisfied with and convinced of the core patterns they have found from the data.</p>	<p>Data collection and data analysis are interwoven. Data collection and analysis of one stage is based on the data analysis of the previous stage(s).</p> <p>Constantly comparing new data to the understanding formed in previous stage(s).</p> <p>Coding for themes, categories, and patterns</p> <p>Purposeful sampling – meeting those who can provide rich and authentic understanding of the researched subject & to enrich that understanding</p> <p>Need for saturation</p>	<p><i>Grounded theory:</i> interwoven data collection and analysis</p> <p>theoretical sampling, coding process,</p> <p>constant comparison, saturation</p> <p><i>Phenomenology:</i> purposeful sampling</p> <p>data saturation</p>
4. Thinking development can be evident in thinking about teaching and also emotions, attitudes, & relationships with others.	<p>It is necessary to talk with different participants who were at different stages of their learning to teach processes. In addition, it will be helpful to talk with those who are involved in participants' processes of learning to teach.</p> <p>Quality of communication between the researcher and the participant decided the quality of data collection</p>	<p>Not only focusing on participants' intellectual thinking but also feelings and relationships with others which occur and are shared by participants</p> <p>Interviewing is about communication between interviewer and interviewee. It is constructed by their identities, relationship, status, etc. All of these should be taken into consideration to pursue the truth.</p>	Interactive Interview (Holstein, 1995)
5. Factors other than time influence thinking changes. Understanding thinking changes cannot be separated from understanding why the changes occur.	To understand factors influencing one's thinking, the researcher needs to ask participants why questions: why they think or feel or do something the way they do.	Keeping asking why participants think and feel and do the way they do	
	Axiology – Ethics: paying back to participants	Researcher's role as their critical friend	

Among the relevant research paradigms and methodologies, the two whose philosophies, methods, and techniques resonate the most with this research and informed its design and implementation were:

- Grounded theory
- Phenomenology

Grounded theory was founded by Strauss and Glaser (1967), who at first developed it from a post-positivist perspective. However, they later diverged and took grounded theory into two main different branches. The one by Glaser is based on post-positivism while the other by Strauss is based on interpretivism. Since then, the second generation of grounded theory approaches have developed it into variants such as constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) and situational analysis (Clarke, 2005, 2009) (see Figure 3). It can be seen that when people talk about grounded theory, they can mean different things. A commonly heard comment that grounded theory does not allow consulting literature before data collection is a misconception or overgeneralization. It only applies to the traditional grounded theory by Glaser (1978).

Figure 3 – Genealogy of grounded theory: major milestones (Morse, 2009, p. 17)



Followers of grounded theory as well as many other researchers see and make use of it in different ways. Some adopt its methods of data collection and analysis; others take it as a

methodology or a paradigm. I found the following discussion between Juliet Corbin and second-generation grounded theorists interesting and capturing well my own research philosophy.

Jan: Hi Julie – We are here having a postmortem and thought this would be an opportunity to really discuss where grounded theory is going. Julie – you did not hear all of the sessions today, but do you think we have different grounded theory methods?

*Julie: Well, I don't know the exact intricacies of what Kathy and Adele are doing – and they have moved in a different direction, but I think **grounded theory is a way of thinking**. I believe it's a general all-around method, but the way you choose to do it – as long as you have theoretical sampling, constant comparison, ask some sort of questions – how you actually do it is individual. **We all do it differently**. The actual method you use is what works for you. I think you do it differently, Jan. I do it differently, everybody is doing it differently, and that's not important. **What is important is that you do "good work"**.*

.....

*Julie: But I think it all comes down to what grounded theory research looks like at the end. **The real test would be to look at the product**. How theoretical do you think the end result should be? Or how in-depth and well thought out is the analysis? I make a big point of this in the latest Basics book (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). (my bolding of some phrases)*

(Morse, 2009, pp. 236–242)

Corbin, one of the 'first generation' grounded theorists, considered grounded theory as a way of thinking and found it inevitable that different researchers would do it differently. She claims that the most important thing is that they do "good work" (Morse, 2009, p. 237) because "the real test would be to look at the product" (Morse, 2009, p. 242). The divergence and variety of grounded theory made me re-think and confirms the need to start with philosophical foundations when doing research. That also teaches me that when someone says they are doing grounded theory, I need to listen carefully to understand what they mean by grounded theory. Grounded theory should not be considered a sect; and neither should there be judges who criticise those who are not doing the grounded theory which they are doing.

The most important characteristics of grounded theory that I appreciated and made use of were mentioned in my analysis above and also in Table 6 (p. 40). They include:

- avoiding imposing pre-conceptions;
- co-construction of meaning (both the researcher and participants construct the meaning of the reality, e.g. the participants' stories, lived experiences, etc.);
- “unknown” status of the subject of inquiry;
- theoretical sampling (collecting data for generating the theory);
- interwoven data collection and analysis;
- constant comparison (each interpretation and finding is compared with existing findings as it emerges from the data analysis);
- theoretical saturation (when all concepts of the theory are well developed, no new properties of the pattern emerge);
- generation of theory grounded in data.

Phenomenology is considered a research paradigm or theoretical perspective and methods of inquiry. “Phenomenology came into its own with Husserl, much as epistemology came into its own with Descartes, and ontology or metaphysics came into its own with Aristotle on the heels of Plato. Yet phenomenology has been practiced, with or without the name, for many centuries” (Smith, 2018). It is developed from constructivism/interpretivism epistemology (Gray, 2004). I found two definitions that I found precise and helpful:

Phenomenology is the study of “phenomena”: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view. (Smith, 2018, p. 2).

Phenomenology is a project of sober reflection on the lived experience of human existence—sober, in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications. (Manen, 2007, p. 12)

Like grounded theory, phenomenology has been practiced by many scholars from different perspectives (Dowling, 2007; Smith, 2018). Bowden made a list of some of the most commonly key features of phenomenological research (Bowden, 2017, p. 69):

- “(i) a focus on lived experience (Valle & King, 1978, Creswell, 2007);*
- (ii) a phenomenological attitude (openness) (van Manen, 1990), epoché or reduction (van Manen, 2011, Wojnar & Swanson, 2007);*
- (iii) collection of data in the form of rich narratives and concrete descriptions of lived experience (Wertz, 2005) through observation, participant diaries, reflective journals and art work (Creswell, 2007) that may explore the meaning and existential dimensions of the phenomenon (how the person felt in space, time, and within their social world) (Finlay, 2011);*
- (iv) data analysis that may involve the use of bracketing (Caelli, 2000; Gearing, 2004, Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Tufford & Newman, 2010; Wall, Mitchinson & Poole, 2004), analysing, intuiting (Bruyn, 1966, Wojnar & Swanson, 2007), horizontalization; imaginative variation (Finlay, 2011, Valle & King, 1978) or a combination of those steps (Finlay, 2011; Swanson-Kauffman & Schonwald, 1988);*
- (v) the production of a description of the essence or meaning of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Merriam, 2009, van Manen, 1990).”*

Some of these features are similar to those of grounded theory and fit my philosophy too.

The features that I made use of in this research (also see Table 6, p. 40) are:

- ♦ Epoché or bracketing (refraining from judging whether anything exists or can exist, refining consciousness and experiencing it for what it is, bracketing off presuppositions).
- ♦ Essence of a phenomenon (the core property that make an entity or substance what it fundamentally is).
- ♦ Purposeful sampling (selecting information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest).
- ♦ Co-construction of meaning (both the researcher and participants construct the meaning of the reality, e.g. the participants' stories, lived experiences, etc.).

The overall approach based on the philosophical foundation

Bricolage

The overall research approach of this research is based upon and similar to a bricolage approach. “The French word ‘bricoleur’ describes a handyman or handywoman who makes use of the tools available to complete a task” and “[it] can... imply the fictive and imaginative elements of the presentation of all formal research” because “as cultural studies of science have indicated, all scientific inquiry is jerryrigged to a degree; science, as we all know by now, is not nearly as clean, simple, and procedural as scientists would have us believe” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 1).

As my research is interdisciplinary, involving the fields of thinking, critical thinking, cognition, reflection, intellectual development, information processing, identity, leadership, professional development, teaching and learning English as a foreign language, and teacher training, the bricolage proves itself to be an appropriate approach to my inquiry. Bricolage is said to suit multidisciplinary research. Kincheloe (2004) claims that:

Such multidisciplinary demands a new level of research self-consciousness and awareness of the numerous contexts in which any researcher is operating. As one labours to expose the various structures that covertly shape our own and other scholars’ research narratives, the bricolage highlights the relationship between a researcher’s ways of seeing and the social location of his or her personal history (p. 2).

The open-mindedness in exploring the reality will result in innovative ways of seeing reality in ways it has not been seen and doing what has not been done. This is another common philosophy between my research approach and bricolage. Kincheloe claims: “In the epistemological and ontological deliberations of the bricolage we gain insight into new modes of thinking, teaching, and learning” (2004, p. 21).

Autopoiesis

Autopoiesis is Greek for “self-generation”. Autopoiesis addresses the interrelationship between different paradigms in which they need and produce each other. It is a concept developed in biology by philosophers of biology Humberto Maurana and Francisco Varela during the 1970s. They proposed a theory of the self-producing and self-constructing nature of living things. This was modified by the physicist and systems theorist Frijof Capra, who developed the notion of autopoietic networks. Capra believed that differing

systems of philosophical thought co-exist, which generates and maintains biological life. After that, researchers Sid Lowe and Adrian Carr used the notion of autopoiesis to describe the interrelationship between research paradigms (cited in Hadley, 2017, pp. 18–19). Hadley then modified this model and emphasised the dynamic interaction between research paradigms. Hadley remarks:

Instead of viewing different paradigms, methodologies, and methods as self-enclosed and incommensurable, in this view, paradigms flow cyclically in and out of one another in constant autopoietic interaction. According to this view, different paradigms, with their respective ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies, are not at odds with each other. Neither are they to be seen, as Lincoln and Guba (2000, p. 725) have claimed, like separate religions in competition for new converts. (Hadley, 2017, pp. 23–24).

Each paradigm normally has its own set of beliefs which the advocates of that paradigm use to differentiate themselves from others and expect the followers to conform to. Nevertheless, as I found that different research paradigms are interrelated and generate one another, I did not subscribe to any one of them but compiled what worked for my research purpose and context. For instance, the two extremes of subjectivity and objectivity interact each other in a harmonious way rather than being exclusive features of one paradigm or another. Picking up whatever research tools and techniques work and are best suited to answering the research questions, regardless of where they fit in quantitative or qualitative methodologies, positivism or interpretivism, is the core principle of pragmatism. However, I want to emphasise the criticality in the choice of what works and therefore want to introduce the notion of “critical pragmatism”.

Critical Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a familiar research methodology. Even though pragmatism is usually linked with mixed-methods research, its philosophy is more than “what works” (Morgan, 2014). Morgan claims that

most of the focus in mixed-methods research was on practical, procedural issues about how to combine the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods rather than philosophical claims. Thus, for most of the researchers operating within the field of mixed-methods research, the appeal of pragmatism was more about its practicality than in its broader philosophical basis. (p. 1051)

In fact, pragmatism empowers researchers to be free from the fixed schools of thought in order to establish their own research approach which fits their philosophy, research questions, and research contexts. This freedom triggers and requires researchers' criticality in examining and making decisions about their research methodology. Morgan (2014) elaborates on that as follows:

Pragmatism insists on treating research as a human experience that is based on the beliefs and actions of actual researchers... This calls for an approach to methodology that goes back to its original linguistic roots, the study of methods. Pragmatism shifts the study of social research to questions such as: How do researchers make choices about the way they do research? Why do they make the choices they do? And, what is the impact of making one set of choices rather than another?... Pursuing this new agenda requires examining not just what researchers do but why they do things the ways they do (p. 1051).

I use the term “critical pragmatism” for this research, foregrounding the criticality in researchers' decisions and actions. The criticality lies in the fact that the methodology of this research was rooted in and developed from a philosophical foundation rather than from a particular established school of thought. This criticality allows for a freedom to make pragmatic choices from aspects of different research methodologies in order to serve the research goal.

These three approaches – bricolage, autopoiesis, and critical pragmatism – represent the philosophical approach of this research. With these combined perspectives, it would be inappropriate to pick a specific label for the methodology of this research.

3.4 DESIGNING MY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section will present:

- ♦ Methodological principles
- ♦ Data collection
- ♦ Data analysis

Methodological Principles

The research was designed based on the following methodological principles. These principles drawn from the above analysis of the philosophical foundations and the relevant paradigms/methodologies can also be found in the third column of Table 6 (p.40).

OVERALL APPROACH:

- *Understanding the reality rather than evaluating or changing it (for this research).*
- *Being open-minded to explore the “unknown”, “yet-to-happen” reality and avoiding imposition of pre-conceptions or existing theoretical frameworks on the inquiry of the reality.*
- *Seeing that there is no one and fixed reality but that the reality is being constructed by both participants and the researcher, continuously changing, and manifested in various ways.*

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

- *Sampling could be random or purposeful at first but purposeful later. The purpose is to meet those who can provide rich and authentic understanding of the researched subject.*

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- *Longitudinal, intimate interaction with participants.*
 - *Not only focusing on participants’ intellectual thinking but also their feelings and relationships with others.*
 - *Asking why participants think and feel and do the way they do.*
 - *Data collection and data analysis are interwoven. Data collection and analysis of one stage is based on the data analysis of the previous stage(s).*
 - *Constantly comparing new data to the previous understanding formed in previous stage(s).*
 - *Coding for themes, categories, patterns, more abstract underlying patterns.*
 - *Shaking the data to the core – looking for the essence of thinking development.*
 - *Achieving some level of saturation where the core themes and patterns are confirmed through different stages of data collection and analysis. Longitudinal case study, purposeful sampling, constant comparison, and theoretical sensitivity are important to reach saturation.*
 - *Aiming at the generation of a new tentative framework grounded in the data. This tentative framework would be descriptive and informing a future theory of novice teachers’ thinking development rather than being a complete and fixed theory itself.*
-

Data Collection Context

The research was based at an undergraduate teacher training program delivered by a faculty of foreign languages in a state university in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam (see Figure 4). This four-year program trained students as English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers primarily for vocational colleges. Graduates could also work for universities, private language centres which were popular in Vietnam, or their private tutoring classes.

The training program provided courses to student teachers on English proficiency and knowledge, teaching methodologies, and a teaching practicum. The practicum was conducted in the last year of the program when student teachers were divided into groups of four, five, or six. Each group was supervised by a mentor and every four or five groups were managed by a head supervisor. Student teachers conducted a ‘field trip’ in which they observed classrooms of in-service English teachers and then a teaching practice where they taught four 50-minute lessons in real English classes at the university.

Figure 4 – Research context

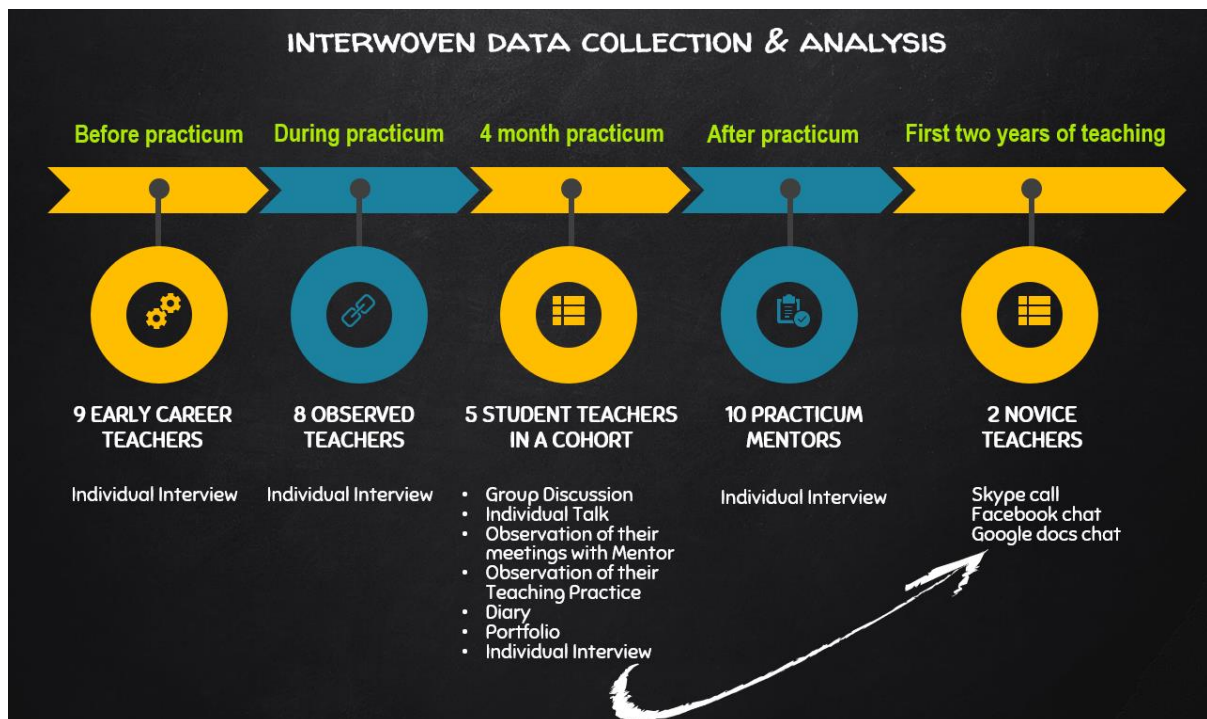


Data Collection Stages

The research aim was to investigate novice teachers' development of thinking about language teaching during the critical transition from practicum to early career teaching. With this in mind, I met different groups of stake holders to explore this thinking process:

(1) nine early career teachers who had experienced practicums in the same training program and now were teaching and considered early in their career, (2) a cohort of five student teachers who were at the stage of completing their practicum within this training program, (3) two of these five cohort members who completed their practicum and graduated and were now in their early career teaching, (4) eight in-service teachers who were observed by different cohorts of student teachers and (5) ten academic mentors supervising ten different practicum cohorts (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Five stages of data collection and analysis



The first stage of the research focused on gaining a big picture of novice teachers' learning-to-teach processes from their practicum to early career teaching through in-depth interviews. Nine early career teachers (ECTs) reflected back on their teaching practicum in the same teacher training program, on their current teaching, and finally on their development from the practicum to their early career.

Among these nine ECTs, three were teaching in the faculty where I carried out this research. These three ECTs attended teaching practicums as in-service teachers who were observed by student teachers. Therefore, these three ECTs shared their opinions not only from the perspective of the graduates but also as observed teachers who experienced student teachers' classroom observation and teaching practice. Their insights enriched my understanding of student teachers' thinking and practice.

In the second stage, I decided to interview, during the practicum, five other in-service teachers in the faculty who had been participating in teaching practicums as observed teachers to gain further insights into the development of student teacher's thinking. The participants included early-career, mid-career, and senior teachers, making a total of eight observed teachers whom I interviewed in the second stage.

The third stage looked closely at the cohort of five student teachers during the four months of their practicum. As their secondary mentor and critical friend, I followed all their activities in the practicum and discussed with them their thinking and experiences in a number of ways.

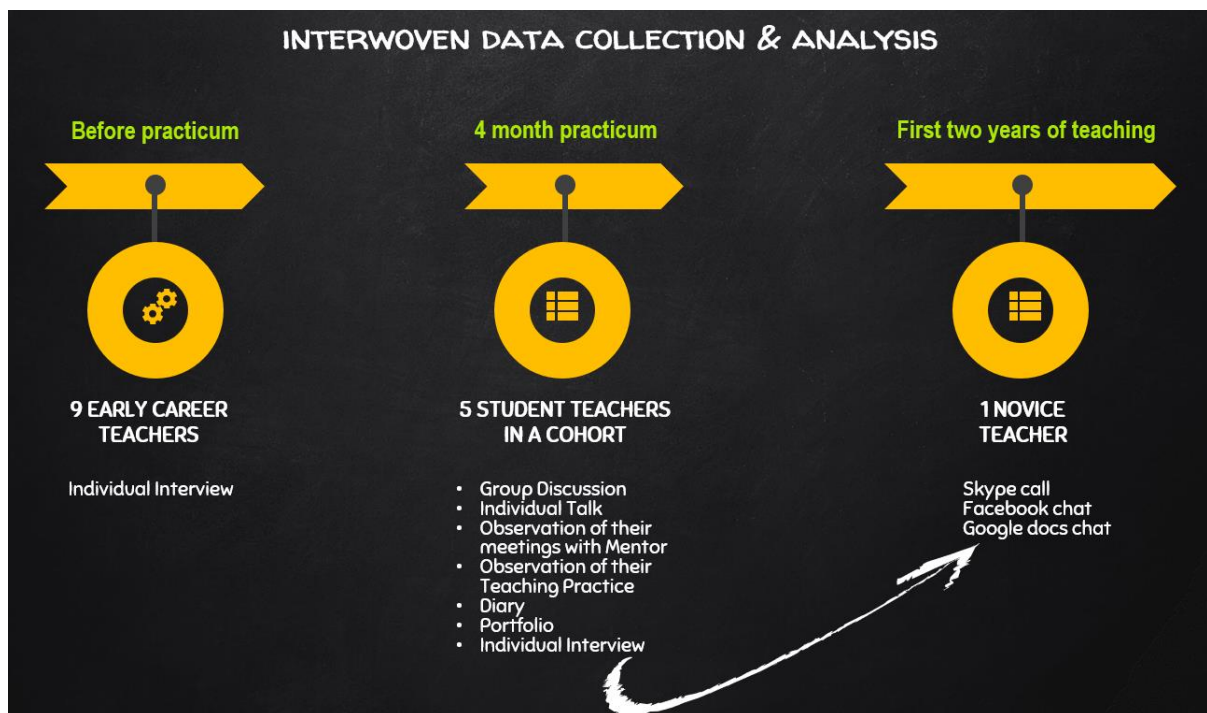
Working closely with the cohort of five student teachers revealed the strong impact of the primary mentor on their thinking and teaching practice. For this reason, at the end of the practicum, I decided to interview the ten mentors who supervised ten different cohorts of student teachers in this practicum. They included both novice and experienced mentors, both mid-career and senior teachers of English, both males and females, and both normal teachers and those in management positions in the faculty. This was the fourth stage of data collection.

The fifth stage occurred after the practicum. It followed two cohort members during the first two years of their teaching in order to understand the progression of their thinking development.

The first, third, and fifth stage investigated novice teachers (referring to both student teachers and early career teachers) while the second and fourth stage listened to the opinions of the other stakeholders. Given the limitation of the length of the thesis, I decided not to report on the observed teachers or the mentors. For the same reason, I report on the journey of only one of the cohort members in the fifth stage.

In this thesis, I will report on the three main stages of data collection and analysis (see Figure 6, p. 53) and mention the most prominent findings from the other stages for the purposes of comparison, clarity, and discussion of further research. The whole process of data collection lasted for 34 months: 2 weeks with the nine ECTs, 4 months with the practicum cohort, and 28 months with the novice teacher in his early career teaching (i.e. 32 months with him from the practicum to his early career).

Figure 6 – Three stages of data collection and analysis reported in this thesis



Data Collection Stage 1: Nine Early Career Teachers

- ♦ *Research Question:*
 - RQ1. How does the thinking of novice teachers develop from practicum to early career teaching?
 - RQ2. What are the factors that influence their thinking and thinking development?
- ♦ *Participants:* Nine graduates as early career teachers
- ♦ *Data collection:* Purposeful sampling, one-to-one in-depth interviews

The sampling process started when I was still in New Zealand. I sent invitation emails to twelve graduates of the teacher training program who I knew in person for an individual talk with me in Vietnam. I wanted to gain access to a diverse sample of teachers in terms of their graduation years, years of teaching experience (six ECTs in their first year of teaching, five having three, four, or five years of teaching), practicum mentors, and gender. I asked the faculty for information about their previous students so that I could come up with a list of the ECTs to invite.

I told the invited participants that the topic was about their experiences and thoughts during their practicum and early career teaching. The group comprised seven whom I had

taught before, two whom I knew from some of the faculty's events, and three who were my colleagues in the faculty. I found it important to talk with those who already knew me so that they could feel trusting and comfortable in the conversation about their personal experiences and inner thoughts. Among the twelve ECTs whom I invited, nine joined my research and the remaining three could not manage to come back to Ho Chi Minh City to attend interviews because they were teaching far away.

The nine ECTs who joined the research had these characteristics (see details in Table 7):

- graduation years and years of teaching experience:
 - 6 ECTs having 1 year of teaching experience
 - 1 ECT having 3 years of teaching experience
 - 1 ECT having 4 years of teaching experience
 - 1 ECT having 5 years of teaching experience
- exposure to practicum mentors: the group had worked with seven different mentors in their earlier practicum (as I assumed this could be an important factor influencing their experiences of their practicum)
- gender: 4 females and 5 males

Table 7 – Profiles of nine early career teachers

No	Pseudonym	Years of teaching	Gender	Teaching contexts	Relationship with me
1	Thuan	1	M	Language centres, private tutoring	Former student
2	Suong	1	F	Language centres, private tutoring	Former student
3	Tran	1	M	Language centres, private tutoring	Former student
4	Ngan	1	F	Language centres, private tutoring	Former student
5	Dat	1	M	A state college, language centres private tutoring	Former student
6	Nguyen	1	F	Language centres, private tutoring	Former student
7	Hien	3	F	A state university, language centres, private tutoring	Colleague
8	Giang	4	M	A state university, language centres, private tutoring	Colleague
9	Hoang	5	M	A state university, language centres, private tutoring	Colleague

I arranged with the eight ECTs the meeting time and place which were convenient for them. Each meeting lasted around 75 to 90 minutes and was recorded with their permission. The talks were semi-structured. I had a number of key questions that I wanted to ask but at the same time, I was also open to whatever it took in order to create authentic communication for understanding. The core questions that I asked all the ECTs were:

- (1) What do you want to share the most about your teaching practicum? Why? How did the practicum prepare you for your early career teaching?
- (2) What happened in the first years of teaching? What did you like about it? What were the difficulties? Why?
- (3) What are aha moments that you have experienced during your learning-to-teach process from practicum to early career? (and/or) What are changes in your thinking and teaching that you have realised from your practicum until now? (and/or) What have you learnt from practicum to current teaching?

Data Collection Stage 2: The Practicum Cohort of 5 Student Teachers

-
- ♦ *Research Questions:*
 - RQ1. What does a cognitive movement look like when it is studied more closely in a few student teachers during a practicum? (Is it a linear one?)
 - RQ2. Why does that cognitive movement occur? (What are factors that influence such cognitive movement?)
 - ♦ *Participants:* A practicum cohort of five student teachers
 - ♦ *Data collection:* Purposeful sampling / Group discussions, individual talks, observation of their meetings with mentor, observation of their teaching practice, individual online diary, reflection papers in portfolio, individual interviews
-

For the purpose of this stage –looking closely into student teachers’ experiences and thinking changes during their teaching practicum, I asked the faculty to allow me to mentor a cohort of five student teachers as their secondary mentor and invite one of my colleagues to be their primary one. This primary mentor was in charge of managing and evaluating the cohort in accordance with the official practicum procedure. As the secondary mentor, I was officially involved in all activities of the practicum but made no interruption in its official procedure nor was I involved in the assessment of the cohort to avoid conflicts of interest. In this way, I could encourage the cohort to consider me as a critical friend rather than an evaluator so that they could comfortably and trustingly share

with me any of their concerns and thoughts. Such roles and attitudes were significant to the collection of authentic data about the participants' inner thoughts.

After getting permission from the faculty and the agreement of a colleague who would mentor the focused cohort, I sent out an invitation to a group of 22 out of 84 student teachers in the course 2012-2016 in my home faculty. These 22 student teachers had once studied with me in an advanced grammar class in 2013. I found it more efficient to first contact those who had known me in person and later approach other student teachers if I could not get enough participants (I needed 4, 5, or 6 to form a cohort in the practicum). I used an earlier Facebook group to contact them again from New Zealand to introduce my research plan. In my invitation post, I stated my research purpose was to understand their experiences and thinking in the practicum and presented my research plan which was to follow them as their secondary mentor who would listen and discuss with them whatever issues they would experience in the practicum. I encouraged them to leave questions or send me private messages if they were interested and to feel free to pass this invitation to other course-mates who were not in this group chat.

Three of them confirmed their participation in my research. One of them let me know about two other student teachers outside this class who were also keen, making five in all. Talking with them individually, I knew they were all enthusiastic about joining my research because they wanted to have a critical and empathetic friend by their side during the practicum and also wished to understand themselves better through our discussions. I also found that they had a wide range of academic records, had studied teaching methodologies with different trainers of the teacher training program (it was assumed that their experiences with different trainers might be different), and comprised four females and one male (this ratio of females and males is quite typical in English-as-a-foreign-language programs in Vietnam) (see Table 8 for the list of the cohort members). I finalized the list of cohort members and sent it to the faculty as well as the primary mentor. After getting their approvals, I informed the cohort of their membership and the primary mentor who was assigned by the faculty. Having completed the participant recruitment, I went back to my home country in late December 2015 to meet the primary mentor (31 December 2015) and then the cohort face-to-face for the first time (09 January 2016) a week before the practicum officially started in mid-January 2016.

Table 8 – The cohort members

Pseudonym	Gender	Age
Huy	Male	21
Thao	Female	21
Tram	Female	21
Huyen	Female	21
Vien	Female	21

I mentored the cohort of five student teachers in their teaching practicum from January 2016 to April 2016. For a brief overview of what the teaching practicum looked like, the teaching practicum (from mid-January 2016 to end of April 2016, excluding 3 weeks of New Year holiday) comprised two stages: field trip (classroom observations) and teaching practice. In the field trip, the cohort as well as 11 other cohorts were asked to spend at least 20 periods (50 minutes/period) to observe in-service English teachers at the university. In this stage, the student teachers observed classes without their mentors' intervention or supervision. In the second stage, the student teachers first prepared a lesson plan with feedback from the primary mentors by emails (or face-to-face if possible). After carrying out that lesson, they sat with the primary mentor to give feedback for each other and listen to the mentor's feedback and evaluation. Then they went through the same procedure for the next three or four lessons. After they finished their teaching practice, each prepared a portfolio of reflections and practicum documents. They submitted their portfolios to the primary mentor, who then sent these portfolios to the faculty for the dean's or vice-dean's assessment.

Before the practicum, I met with the cohort in early January to discuss the research purpose and ethics issues and decided on the forms of communication which would best facilitate the expression of their thoughts and maximize my understanding of their thinking. During the practicum, the cohort participated in the official practicum activities consisting of the field trip, teaching practice, and other activities with the primary mentor and head supervisor. As the secondary mentor, I could engage in and follow all these activities through emails and observations. In addition to these official procedures, we added several activities including group discussions almost every week, individual talks

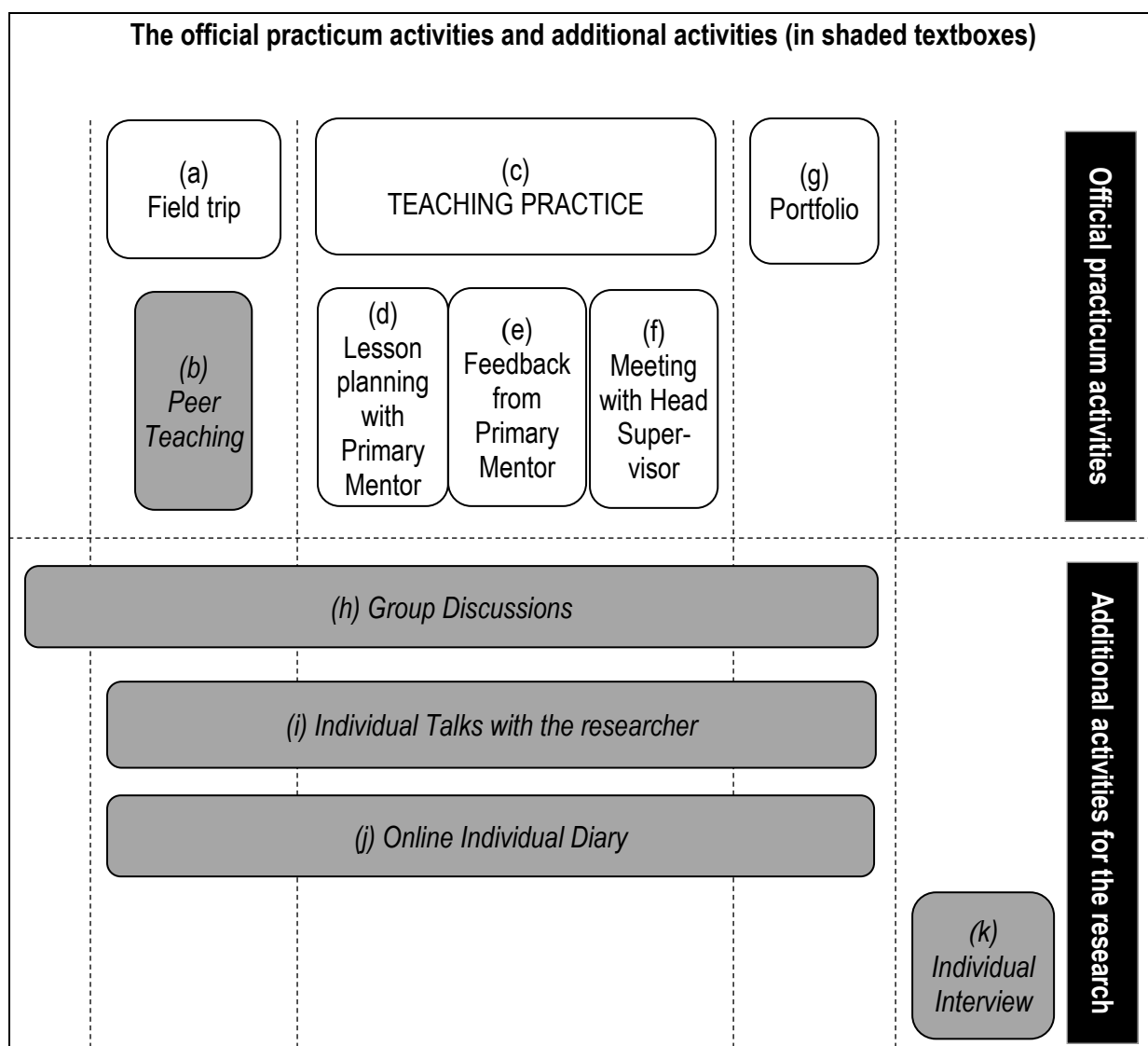
when needed, and diary writing. After the practicum, we met again for individual semi-structured interviews.

Such a wide range of data collection activities chosen collaboratively with the participants allowed me to engage authentically and deeply in the student teachers' professional lives in this critical period of learning to teach. Before meeting them, I planned to have only four group discussions, one individual talk, and one end-of-practicum interview with each of them. I thought of diary writing but I was afraid that they would find it boring and time-consuming. However, when we met, we agreed that more interaction was desired and new ideas were initiated by the cohort themselves.

Firstly, they all wanted to have a *peer teaching practice* within the cohort with my presence (without the primary mentor) to get themselves well prepared for the teaching practice. They also thought it was a good chance to get themselves familiar with being video-recorded while teaching, which was also helpful for my practice at video-recording. Secondly, they thought the cohort should meet every week in order to talk about their worries and prepare themselves for on-going activities during the practicum. Consequently, we had nine *group meetings* in total rather than 4 as planned. Thirdly, they expressed a concern of not being able to say everything in group discussions due to time limitation and their sense of privacy for some sensitive issues. Therefore, we agreed that after each group discussion, we might have *individual talks* and we could do that either face to face or on Facebook chat. Each of them had two individual talks with me, each of which lasted around one hour, and we also had other conversations through Facebook messages. Fourthly, when they could not meet me if they had something to share, they found it would be efficient to write instead. I suggested *diary* writing; and they all agreed to try it with google docs-based individual diary writing to note down their reflections and questions if any.

Figure 7 summarises all the data collection activities of the cohort, including both the official practicum activities and additional ones (in italics). All of these activities were observed, video-, or audio-recorded; and records were kept of related documents like the practicum syllabus, observations sheets, and lesson plans. The differences between the cohort and other groups of student teachers on the program were thus (1) the cohort had two mentors – the primary one and me as the secondary one – and (2) they did additional activities for the research purpose (b, h, i, j and k).

Figure 7 – Activities of the practicum cohort



(a) In the field trip, the student teachers conducted at least 20 periods of **classroom observation** of in-service English-as-a-foreign-language teachers at the university (referred to as “*observed teachers*”). There were three types of English classes in the university at the time the research was conducted. The first one was for English-major students who studied in the teacher training program of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, where I conducted my research. The second one was called “General English” for non-English major students who studied English as one of the compulsory subjects, taught by the teachers of English in the Faculty of Foreign Languages. The third was “English for Specific Purposes” also for non-English majors, taught by the teachers of their own faculties who had majored in those specialties and had good English proficiency. The Faculty of Foreign Languages aimed to train teachers of

English for non-English majors, and so encouraged the student teachers to observe the second and third types of classrooms of non-English majors. A meeting of those classes normally lasted for three or four periods (50 minutes per period). The student teachers might ask the observed teachers to allow them to observe a whole or first or second half of a class meeting. There was no supervision over the field trip. The student teachers conducted classroom observations by themselves and filled in observation sheets designed by the faculty as proof of their observations. Besides observing these classes, the student teachers were encouraged to observe their peers' teaching in the teaching practice and these observations were also counted in the required 20 periods. I had two group discussions with the cohort where we talked about the classes they had observed and what they had learnt from the observations. I also had the copies of their observation sheets for my record.

- (b) Between the first week and second week of the field trip, the cohort organised a **peer teaching practice** session among themselves and asked me to join with them. It was also important to note that the cohort expected me to watch their teaching and give them feedback so that they could be better prepared for their teaching practice. Although I was aware of my role of being a researcher who observed their thinking rather than governed it, I could ignore my role as a secondary mentor. I served both roles by asking questions that triggered their thinking and reflection rather than telling them what was good or bad.
- (c) After the field trip, the student teachers had a three-week New Year holiday break and came back to undertake the **teaching practice**. Each of them was required to teach four English lessons in real English classrooms of observed teachers at the university: three lessons of General English and one lesson of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Each lesson lasted for 50 minutes and covered one or more sections of the class syllabus. In the case of this cohort, they taught all three General English lessons in the primary mentor's classes and one ESP – English for Engineering – lesson in a cooperating teacher's class. All their learners were first year non-English-major students. I video-recorded all their teaching practice and wrote field notes while observing them.
- (d) The teaching practice was conducted under the primary mentor's supervision. Before each lesson, the cohort prepared their **lesson plans** and sent them to the primary mentor for her feedback. All their email exchanges were copied to me. I could thus see the

cohort' original lesson plans, the primary mentor's feedback, and the decisions the cohort made about revising their lesson plans.

- (e) After each teaching session of the cohort, when the learners had left, the primary mentor stayed with them in the classrooms, asking them to give feedback on their own and their peers' teaching. Then she gave them her **feedback and evaluation** together with scores for their teaching performance. There were eight meetings in total and my role was as an observer who recorded and took field notes of the meetings.
- (f) The cohort also met their **head supervisor** twice together with five other groups who were under his supervision. The meetings with the head supervisor were the times when the student teachers could share any issues or ask him any questions about the practicum. These two supervision meetings were also video- and audio-recorded, and I also took notes while observing them.
- (g) After completing the field trip and teaching practicum, each student teacher was required to submit to the primary mentor and the faculty a **portfolio**. The portfolio consisted of the materials that showed their performance in the field trip and teaching practice and two reflection papers. The former included their observation sheets, lesson plans, the primary mentor's observation sheets of their teaching, and their evaluations of their peers' teaching. The latter included a reflection on the preparation of the previous courses in the training program for their practicum and what they had learnt from the practicum. The cohort sent me soft copies of their portfolios.
- (h) For the research, I met with the cohort almost weekly to discuss what was going on with them. We had nine **group discussions** during the practicum: one before the practicum to talk about the research purpose, ethics, and research plan, two during their field trip to talk about their classroom observations, one after their demonstration teaching to prepare themselves for the teaching practice, four following four teaching sessions, and one after the teaching practice to reflect over the whole practicum. Each group discussion lasted from 120 to 180 minutes. The discussion topics of a meeting arose from the cohort's concerns and also from my analysis of the previous group discussions, the cohort's lesson plans, teaching, diaries, and their meetings with the primary mentor and head supervisor. I recorded all the group discussions and took notes during the discussions.
- (i) Each of them had two face-to-face **individual talks** with me to further discuss their concerns. All the talks took place in a study room of the university's dormitory where

four of them stayed. Each talk lasted about one hour. Before the talks, I reviewed the individuals' lesson plans, videos of their teaching, diaries, and their ideas in the previous group discussion in order to then work out the themes about them which helped me to develop the topics and questions for the talks. I recorded and took notes of these talks.

- (j) Each of the cohort members kept a **diary** that I created using google docs using a format with access limited to the diary owner and me. In the diaries, I created the entries for the key events in the practicum as well as prompting questions for their reflection. I sometimes left my feedback and questions to ask for their clarification or further thinking.
- (k) At the end of practicum when the cohort had finished the teaching practice and submitted their portfolios to the primary mentor and faculty for evaluation, each of them was invited to an **individual interview**. The interviews took place in teachers' rooms in the university and each lasted around 90 to 120 minutes. To prepare for the interviews, I reviewed all my memos about the mentored cohort which revealed prominent themes about their experiences during the practicum. I used those themes to develop the interview questions. Since the cohort members had both similar and different experiences in the practicum, the questions were just to cover the main points and the conversations were allowed to flow naturally. The new themes coming out from one interview were further investigated in the following ones. I recorded and took short notes during the interviews.

Data Collection Stage 3: A Cohort Member in Early Career Teaching

♦ *Research Questions:*

- RQ1. Do the surface and deep aspects found in the previous stages remain the core aspects for effective teaching in a first year of teaching?
- RQ2. How does the thinking development process take place in real-life teaching? (Do the levels of attention remain)?
- RQ3. What influences this process?

♦ *Participants:* One of the cohort members who became an early career teacher

♦ *Data collection:* Theoretical sampling / Facebook & Google-docs chats, Skype calls

After the practicum, I invited Huy to continue in the study, and he was happy to do that for the same reason as his participation in stage 2: he enjoyed having a critical friend to

talk with in his professional development journey. He was the first cohort member who mentioned the terms “surface and deep thinking” which were later adopted by the other cohort members to describe their thinking maturity. This later became a key concept in the emerging framework of thinking development. Huy was expressive and able to articulate his thinking and feelings and expressed an interest in joining the case study. He was also sure about continuing his teaching job after the practicum and was thus able to provide data for a longitudinal case study. As a form of theoretical sampling, I thought that his story would help to clarify and “saturate” the theoretical categories and generate theoretical insights into the emerging framework of thinking development.

This was a longitudinal study in which I closely investigated the thinking development of Huy from his practicum (January – April 2016) to his first two years of teaching (until August 2018). That included 32 months in total: 4 months of practicum and 28 months of teaching.

During the 28-month period, Huy and I remained in contact through Facebook, Skype, and Google docs because I was in New Zealand after the practicum had finished. He occasionally shared with me issues in his teaching, his lesson plans, and his PowerPoint slides. In our communication, we stuck to the agreement that I would not give him specific advice on how to teach but listen to his issues and reflect on them with him, as we did during the practicum. We also agreed that whenever he realised changes in his thinking and teaching and wanted to talk about them, we would make an appointment on Skype and record the conversation for data collection. There was a time when he decided to reduce his teaching and took another job as an interpreter and translator. During this time, Huy and I maintained contact through google chats and Facebook messages to talk about his new job and sometimes about his teaching. However, there was nothing major about teaching emerging from those conversations. After a year working full-time on the new job, Huy decided to quit March 2018 and came back to full time teaching. In August 2018, he asked for a Skype talk to discuss significant changes in his thinking about teaching. At that time, I had also constructed a more comprehensive understanding of Huy’s thinking development and wanted to share that with him for feedback.

During these 28 months, we had four in-depth Skype talks in total which he agreed could be used as data for this study. Each Skype call lasted for around 120 to 180 minutes. I recorded all these Skype conversations with his consent.

Data collection method: Authentic and trusting communication

Informal interviews were one of the main data collection methods used in this research. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) developed Active Interview theory. They argued that an interview conversation is not “a pipeline for transmitting information” (p. 3). The interviewer is “unavoidably implicated” in the process of creating meaning (p. 3), and respondents are seen not as containers of knowledge to be tapped but as “constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers” (p. 4). Holstein and Gubrium (1995) described the active interview as “interpretive practice” (p. 16). “Reality is constituted,” they say, “at the nexus of the hows and the whats of experience, by way of interpretive practice” (p. 16). The active interview is “improvisational” and “spontaneous,” yet “structured—focused within loose parameters provided by the interviewer” (p. 17). Finally, it is a “conversation” that seeks above all to “cultivate” the respondent to flesh out “narrative territory” (p. 76). The narrative is the respondent’s relating of experience and also a way of interpreting experience. In an active interview, the respondent “becomes a kind of researcher in his or her own right, consulting repertoires of experience and orientations, linking fragments into patterns, and offering ‘theoretically’ coherent descriptions” (p. 29). In this role as researcher/collaborator, the respondent may even provide “indigenous coding” (p. 56), with or without the prompting of the interviewer.

Authentic communication was particularly crucial in collecting data about the practicum cohort (stage 2 of the inquiry) and Huy (stage 3) and contributed to the trustworthiness of the data. I found it an issue of ethics and also my privilege to build friendships with these participants and enjoy trustful and authentic communication with them (my axiological principle). From my point of view, in order to gain a richer and deeper understanding of a person and especially their inner mental lives, there is no other better way than interacting with them as much as possible and doing so with authenticity, genuineness and respect. Their degree of openness and willingness to share honestly and rich examples decides the quality of the data and influenced my understanding of their thinking. In order to foster authentic communication, a number of issues such as power relations and communication skills needed to be taken into consideration.

Teamwork and communication skills – which I had taught for years at universities – were used in my interaction with the cohort. In our group discussions, I worked as a facilitator who brought up questions to trigger discussions and negotiations, then a gate keeper who

made sure every cohort member had chances to talk, and a critical friend who kept asking questions of “how”, “why”, “so what”, and “what if” which were crucial to my inquiry into their thinking processes. Some meeting norms were explicitly or implicitly exercised to keep the meetings going on efficiently. For instance, while a member was talking, we could either wait until that person finished talking to ask him/her questions or ask to interrupt him/her to explore the interesting point he/she was making.

Regarding power relations, there was a chance that participants may have felt that I had more power than them as both researcher and a critical friend/teacher/instructor. It was important that in talking about their own feelings and thinking, the cohort including Huy remained true to themselves and feel that their views were important and respected. There were a number of ways I managed power.

Firstly, I chose a role as their secondary mentor and critical friend who had no power in assessing them in their practicum. They knew very clearly that what they told me would not affect their performance or results and that I was loyal to the promise of keeping all their sharing confidential.

Secondly, right from the beginning, we talked about treating one another as friends so that we could feel comfortable, safe, and trustful in expressing our ideas and feelings to one another. We were all aware that my job was to accompany them to understand their experiences, thinking, and feelings during in the practicum instead of showing them what to do. I had to remind myself not to act like a trainer who told them what was wrong and what was right. Instead, I did my best to perform as a critical friend who was actively engaged into the discussions, used friendly discourse, and allowed them to do that. In fact, all five cohort members expressed their opinions and disagreement with my ideas quite forthrightly. They all used casual discourse and sometimes talked about sensitive issues such as their fears, their past experiences that affected their personalities, their sense of competition with others, their mental struggles with a temptation to do whatever to gain high scores from the primary mentor, or their conflicts with a peer in the cohort.

Thirdly, the trusting friendship that we developed was manifested in their constant effort to help me understand their thinking. In our group discussions, I heard them talking with each other about putting aside evening time to write their diaries so that I could be updated with their activities and thinking. They made phone calls to ask others to come to our group discussions on time. During our discussions, they encouraged each other to express

their thinking. In their meetings with their primary mentor, they sometimes asked each other to speak more loudly so that the recordings would have better quality for my listening later. These examples illustrated their commitment to the spirit of the research.

Data Analysis: Coding

Due to the exploratory approach of the research, the data analysis method was inductive thematic analysis. Inductive analysis is “a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Instead, it is data-driven, and the themes should be “strongly linked to the data themselves” (Patton, 1990, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83).

This inductive coding process included three steps adopted from the coding method of grounded theory and thematic networks. They are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9 – Basic coding method

Step	My research	Grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990)	Thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001)	
1	concerns, issues, challenges, perceptions	concepts	basic themes	lowest-order premises evident in the text
2	aspects of teaching	categories	organising themes	categories of basic themes grouped together to summarise more abstract principles
3	patterns of thinking / thinking changes	propositions	global themes	super-ordinate themes encapsulating the principal metaphors in the text as a whole

As can be seen in the table, in grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) data are coded into concepts, from concepts categories emerge, and from categories, propositions are developed. Similarly, in thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001), data are coded into basic themes, then organising themes, and then global themes.

In my research, I identified the participants’ salient issues, challenges, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc. without using any pre-existing nodes. I called all of these “concerns” and created nodes from them. These concerns revealed the participants’

attention to different dimensions of teaching which I called “aspects of teaching”. Observing the participants’ attention to these aspects of teaching, I figured out patterns underlying changes in their thinking. These patterns of thinking change generated the framework of thinking development.

Figure 8 is an example of a basic analysis method of data: coding data into “concerns” and grouping concerns which were related to different “aspects of teaching”.

Figure 8 – Example 1 of basic data coding

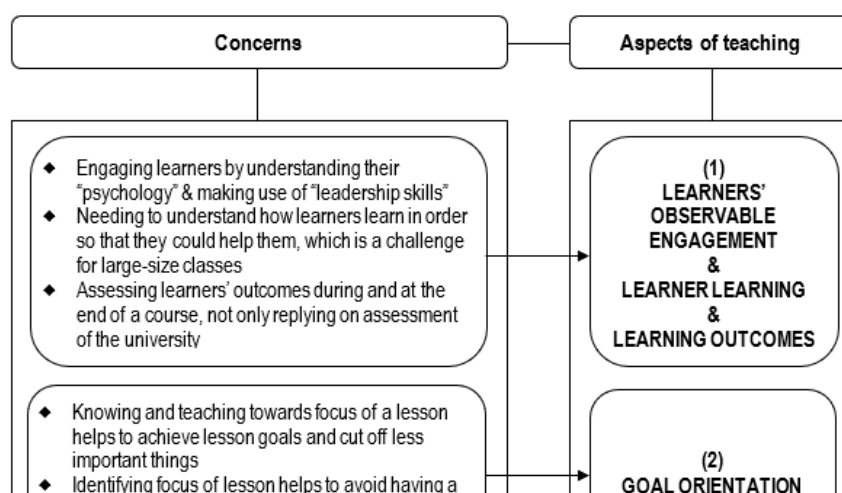


Figure 9 shows an example of the participants’ attention to different aspects of teaching at different times: their previous practicums, the first year of teaching, and the third, fourth, and fifth year of teaching. Their foci of attention at the different times revealed patterns of change in their thinking numbered (1), (2), & (3) in the figure.

Figure 9 – Example 2 of basic data coding

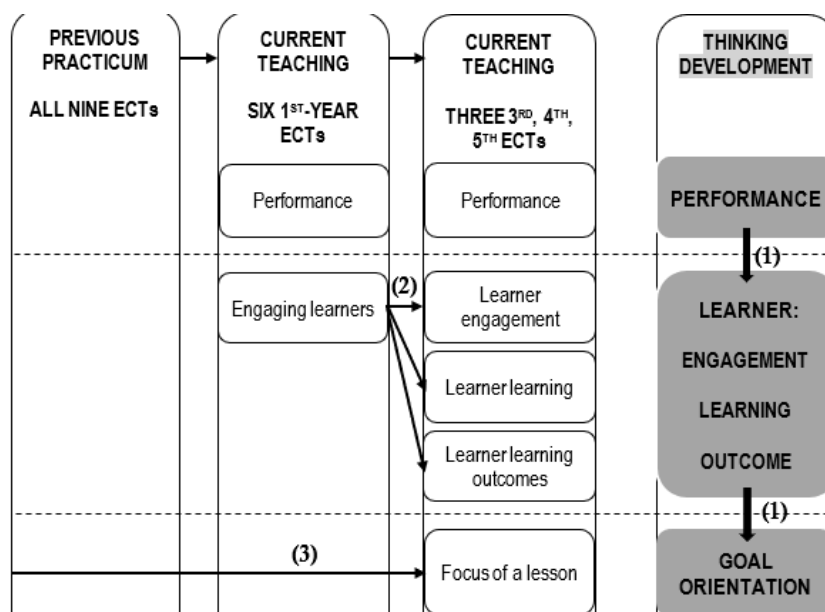


Figure 10 – Example of complex data coding

Data analysis was more complicated when the data were about changes in thinking across the whole group of participants. In this case, I had to look for changes within individuals' thinking as well as patterns of change across different individuals in the group. Figure 10 presents the analysis of both individual thinking (Part A) and collective thinking (Part B).

A. Cohort's Criteria of Effective Teaching – Listing the Criteria as They Went						
	Criteria	Thao	Huyen	Huy	Vien	Tram
1	Teachers' talking time is not much, more time for learners to talk and work.	✓				
2	Teachers interact with learners well.	✓				✓
3	Learners are given a lot of opportunities to self-discover their own learning methods; teachers are just the guides and learners have opportunities to be autonomous.	✓		✓		
4	Teachers cover what <u>should be taught</u> in a lesson.	✓				
5	Learners are able to do exercises and perform tasks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Learners cooperate with teachers.		✓	✓		
7	Class atmosphere is convivial.		✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Learners are attentive to teachers' teaching.			✓		
9	Learners feel happy.			✓		
10	Teaching is not constrained to standard procedure but appropriate to learners.				✓	
11	Teacher designs a lesson in the way that it follows standard methods and procedures.					✓
12	Learners have opportunities to practice using English in classroom.					✓
B. Cohort's Criteria of Effective Teaching – Grouping their Criteria into Aspects						
1	Teacher, in relation to Learner Teachers' talking time is not much, more time for learners to talk and work. Teachers interact with learners well.					
2	Learner engagement, in relation to Teacher Learners are attentive to teachers' teaching. Learners look happy. The class atmosphere is convivial.					

Data Analysis: Constant comparison

Constant comparative analysis is an analytical process developed and used in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process involves constantly comparing codes with earlier codes, new categories with earlier categories, new incidents with earlier incidents of the same category, and new data with earlier data (Chun Tie et al., 2019, pp. 3–4).

This iterative and on-going coding process helped me to stay true to the data as much as possible, allowed major categories and themes to be constructed and to be verified, and incrementally helped to depict the picture of the novice teachers' thinking patterns.

In particular, before collecting new data, for example when meeting a new participant, having another group discussion, or conducting another interview, I had to make sure that I had analysed the previous data and brought with me the notes and questions developed from that analysis. The following excerpt from my personal journal was an example of my tasks preparing for a new group discussion with the practicum cohort.

Preparing the second group discussion with the cohort after their first teaching practice session which was on 26/02/2016:

- ♦ *Read my notes of their teaching*
 - ♦ *Read my notes of the primary mentor's feedback on their teaching*
 - ♦ *Read my notes of their feedback for their peers' teaching*
 - ♦ *Read students' feedback on their teaching*
 - ♦ *Watch the videos of their teaching*
 - ♦ *Read their diaries*
-

The existing nodes and themes from the previous data were used to form my questions to prompt discussion in this new group discussion. It helped me to get more data about these existing nodes and themes and verify and deepen my understanding of them. At the same time, I allowed myself to flow with the current discussion and be open to new nodes and themes. The new nodes and new themes constructed from this new discussion were compared with the earlier ones. This comparison helped me to check, verify, and improve my construction of their thinking development.

In doing that, the constant comparison analysis that I used involved both inductive and abductive reasoning (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Chun Tie et al (2019, p. 4) cite Birks and Mills (2015) who suggest that abduction defined as 'a form of reasoning that begins with an examination of the data and the formation of a number of hypotheses that are then proved or disproved during the process of analysis... aids inductive conceptualization'

The ontology of becoming that I adopted always urged me to be slow in judging. I understood that people's thinking and feelings kept changing and were also expressed differently in different situations. Therefore, constant comparative analysis was helpful for me to keep open to new ideas and connect them with the earlier ones. Furthermore, constant comparison also enabled me to develop more abstract concepts in order to achieve the conceptual levels of data analysis. This method was therefore appropriate for my research which aimed to generate a framework grounded in the data.

Data Analysis: An iterative process

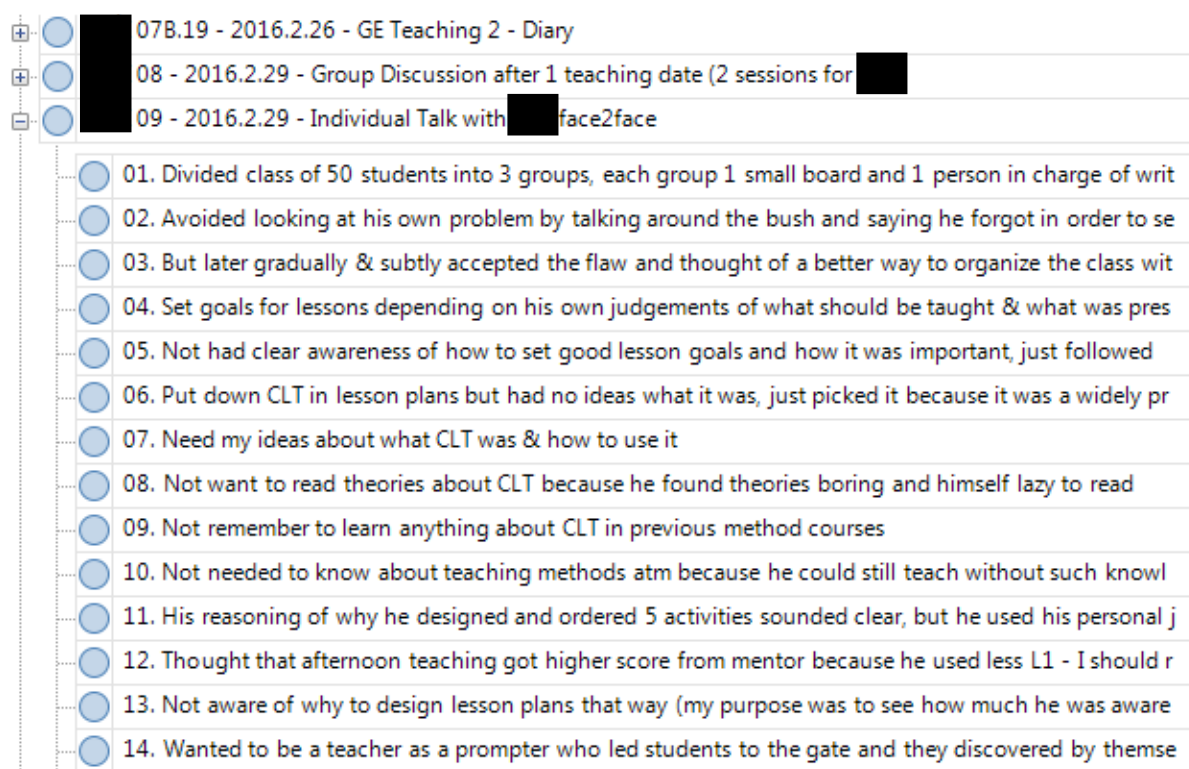
I made use of the software package Nvivo together with Excel Spreadsheet, Microsoft Word, and paper to manage the large amount of data I had collected. I had the interview data transcribed by a professional transcribing team in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, also with the participants' consent, and with a commitment from the transcribers to keep the data and the transcriptions confidential.

Coding basic nodes, using Nvivo

I inductively coded the raw data using Nvivo for each of the participants. What I learnt from this step was to code the raw data into the basic nodes and avoid categorising them (we sometimes do that subconsciously) at this first stage.

The snapshot below taken from the Nvivo project of this research illustrates this point.

Figure 11 – Example of Coding with N-vivo



For instance, the nodes 06, 07, 08, and 09 were all about the Communicative Language Teaching approach. However, they were kept as separate nodes rather than as something like “issues with CLT”.

This way of coding was helpful because later I found that each of these nodes belonged to different themes. Keeping them as closely to the raw data as possible made it easier to categorise, de-categorise, and re-categorise them later without losing the original nodes. This technique was especially important to my research which did not rely on any existing frameworks to develop a coding system. The cost was the time taken and the large number of nodes generated (e.g., over 500 basic nodes were produced from Huy's data about his teaching practicum). The technique is part of my interactive process of analysis that I will explain further in the next section.

“Playing” with basic nodes, an iterative process, using Excel, Word, and pens and paper

After coding basic nodes on N-vivo, I extracted the nodes into an Excel file. I preferred using Excel to Nvivo in this second step because Excel gave me a big picture view and a sense of control as if I was dealing with a jigsaw puzzle. I tried grouping and regrouping them in several ways in Excel spreadsheets until I found a way that worked the best.

Figure 12 shows an example of coding with Excel. Based on this data grid, I dealt with three sets of themes. The first was the organising themes in column C, the second was the organising themes in column D, and the third was the basic themes in the content cells horizontally related to each of the organising themes in Column C.

Figure 12 – Example of Coding with Excel

A	B	C	D	W	X
Processed	THEMES		PATTERNS OF CHANGES	HUY 10 - 2016.3.4 - GE Teaching 3	
				10. Meeting with Mentor	10.20. Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Challenges	Student engagement & learning	always cared about student engagement (Teacher's task vs student engagement, Evidence of effective teaching = student engagement) in both classroom observations and teaching practice + student engagement = they looked happy and did the tasks --- My question about noticing SLA when all 5 student teachers looked for more observable evidence of effective teaching --- still taught and set goals	01. no regret about the teaching because the lesson went smoothly but unhappy about the game because the class was not as exciting as expected 02. not sure whether learners learnt the words he taught even though he explained the meanings and delivered a game to review them 06. mentor found he controlled the class well, knew how to get their attention & interesto, goodd interaction with learners	03. thought his 3rd teaching f: the class atmosphere was do half, in main game, in speaking, sharing, langproduction. Stude not laugh while fun was main p this is a reading lesson)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Challenges: Others' observation of Huy	Develop learner's higher order thinking	mentor suggested he should pick up words or phrases in the reading and make reading comprehension questions but at more challenging level, not too simple to challenge learners more	09. mentor suggested he should pick up words or phrases in the reading and make reading comprehension questions but at more challenging level, not too simple to challenge learners more	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Challenges	Class management	most of time concerned about class control when observing teachers or self-evaluating his own teaching & interested in tips to deal with in-class situation from supervisor + faced challenges in activity organization and class control (such as dealing with big size classes vs organizing activites and grouping learners, giving feedback) + however, showed humor, attraction,	06. mentor found he controlled the class well, knew how to get their attention & interesto, goodd interaction with learners 10. mentor liked the way he gave scores to learners with the bad and good luck	06. got positive feedback from peers about teaching manner language, voice, making joke: dare to watch video of his tea
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Challenges	Giving feedback	forgetting to give feedback for students' performance (lack of feedback is quite common and recurring) --> finidng that he was too	07. mentor found he forgot to check learners' answers and give feedback, just finished the activity, collected learners' papers and did nothing	08. received feedback that fee students was not good becau perplexed, not know how to s. He thought maybe as I said he

This iterative process of categorisation enabled me to work out the best global themes that could fit all three sets of organising themes.

However, the emergence of the most important components of the framework of thinking development in this research actually occurred when I used a Word document, paper and pen to make sense of themes drawn from Excel sheets (see an example in Figure 13).

Figure 13 – Example of Coding with Word and papers

HUY'S STORY	14	
Huy's background	14	
My experiences with him since 2013	14	
His accounts recorded in his teaching practicum portfolio in April, 2016	14	
Huy's cognitive changes	14	
(1) Concerned issues when observing	14	
Effort & investment, enthusiasm, patience --- Concerned issues when observing	14	self
Smooth lesson conduction without stated transitions --- Concerned issues when observing	14	self - structure
Facilities --- Concerned issues when observing	14	self -
First classroom observations, in diary	14	
Excitement of activities & classroom atmosphere --- Concerned issues when observing	14	students - self
L1 Use --- Concerned issues when observing	15	self - students - goal
Smooth moving without stated transitions --- Concerned issues when observing	15	
(2) Metacognition of his classroom observations	15	
Surface vs Deep Observation --- Metacognition of classroom observations: for deep observation	15	
Learning when observing teachers teaching the same lessons --- Metacognition of classroom observations: for deep observation	16	
(3) Challenges in learning to teach	16	
No challenges in practicum --- Challenges: Self-awareness	16	
Language proficiency - Challenges: Self-awareness	17	self
Teaching manner --- Challenges: Self-awareness	17	self
ESP teaching, insufficient knowledge of a specialist field --- Challenges: Self-awareness	17	self
Time --- Challenges: Self-awareness	17	self - goal - structure
Technical problem - not complete lesson --- Challenges: Self-awareness	18	self - goal
Anxiety --- Challenges: Self-awareness	18	self
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) --- Challenges: Methodology	18	self - goal - student - structure
Authentic communication in tasks (related to CLT) --- Challenges: Methodology	19	self - goal - student - structure
Bonus using --- Challenges: Classroom management, Extrinsic motivation	20	self - goal - student
Scores of his teaching performance --- Challenges: Self-awareness	20	self
Giving feedback --- Challenges: Classroom management + Learner Understanding	20	self - student - goal
Anticipate learners' level & background knowledge --- Challenges: Understanding Learners	21	self - student - goal
Develop learner's higher order thinking --- Challenges: Learner intellectual development - Others' observation	21	self - student
Feedback from students about his teaching in practicum --- Challenges: Self-awareness	21	self - student
Learner autonomy --- Challenges: Learner intellectual development	22	self - student
Student engagement & learning --- Challenges: Learners - Self-awareness	22	self - student - goal - structure
(4) His strengths as a language teacher	25	
Humor --- His strengths: Self-awareness + Others' observation + Challenge	25	self - student - structure
(5) Perceptions of Teaching	25	
Evidence of effective teaching --- Perceptions of Teaching	25	self - student - goal - structure
Games & fun activities --- Perceptions of Teaching: Methodology	26	self - student
Goal-orientation --- Perceptions of Teaching: Methodology	27	self - goal - structure
Performance (see teaching as performance) --- Perceptions of Teaching	29	self
Structure of lessons (goal, method) --- Perception of Teaching	30	self - structure - goal
Teacher metaphor --- Perception of Teaching: Self-awareness	30	self - student
Vietnam's inefficient English learning/teaching --- Perception of Teaching: Context	31	
(6) Metacognition of his perceptions of his own teaching	31	
Surface vs deep self-evaluation of his own teaching	31	
(7) Conflicts, dilemmas, & resolutions	31	
Reality in classrooms vs School --- Conflicts, dilemmas, & resolutions	31	self - goal
ESP, conflicts in methods: GT vs CLT, b/w reality vs expectation --- His conflicts, dilemmas, & resolutions: Methodology	32	self - goal - student - structure
L1 Use --- Conflicts, dilemmas, & resolutions	32	self - goal - student
Theory vs Practice --- Conflicts, dilemmas, & resolutions	35	self - goal - student - structure
(8) Factors shaping his cognition	35	

This process of data analysis that I designed and implemented involved the iterative processes of coding – coding, de-coding, re-coding; of categorisation – categorising, de-categorising, re-categorising; and of using various tools – Nivo, Exel, Word, and paper.

After implementing this method, I learnt that this analysis was a similar to a process called “iterative categorisation” which has been used by other researchers (Neale, 2016). In the first study which used this technique, the author collected a huge amount of interview data and analysed them using a new qualitative software program (WinmaxPro, now

MAXQDA). After coding the raw data, the author realised that it was “the best strategy was to export the data for each code into its own Microsoft Word document and then review this line-by-line, summarizing and organizing the findings iteratively under emergent headings and subheadings” (Neale, 2016, p. 1098). The author then modified and adapted this technique so that it could serve the demands of different qualitative studies with different research goals, from different disciplines, and from different research paradigms. Consequently, interactive categorisation “has its roots in pragmatism and other researchers are duly encouraged to select, adapt or develop aspects of the process according to what works best to improve understanding within any given study” (ibid.)

I could relate to the point that this iterative categorisation was helpful and appropriate to research following pragmatism or “critical pragmatism” (my term) as the underpinning of my research. Learning about this technique from the literature confirmed my confidence in my own process.

In general, this study took a critical pragmatism approach to choosing various methods, techniques, and tools to analyse and present the data.

Data Analysis: In-vivo coding

Another important analysis technique used in this stage was in vivo coding. In vivo codes are “the terms used by [participants] themselves” (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). This is one of the data analysis methods developed by grounded theory and then used by other researchers as well (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding is powerful in the way that it helps researchers to see the reality the way participants see and report their perspective as accurately as possible.

In my research, no any pre-existing codes were used due to the inductive coding and the exploratory approach that the research used. Instead, most of nodes were taken from the language that the participants used. Sometimes they used English words; sometimes they used their first language, Vietnamese. I adopted the exact English words in the former case and my translation of their Vietnamese words in the latter case.

Using in vivo coding was also helpful when I shared with the participants my construction of their accounts. The participants could relate to the familiar terms and concepts in the findings, which made it easier for them to understand and verify the findings. This

“member checking” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844) was helpful for verification. Verification is “the process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain” and is conducted to ensure “reliability and validity and, thus, the rigor of a study” (Morse et al., 2002, p. 17). I will discuss more about “member checking” in the following section.

3.5 EVALUATING MY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Question 4: Am I satisfied with my achieved understanding and with what I did to achieve that understanding?

In order to answer this evaluative question about my research decisions I draw on a model of epistemological growth. According to this model, a good decision is made based on the decision maker’s own values, beliefs, commitment as well as criteria that they learn from others. I will first briefly present the model and then the criteria or research verification strategies.

Model of epistemological growth

William G. Perry (1970) developed a model of intellectual and ethical development comprising four major stages of epistemological growth.

(1) Dualism

- ♦ believing there are right and wrong answers and authorities know the correct answers,
- ♦ seeking for truths and a sense of certainty.

(2) Multiplicity

- ♦ recognizing that some problems have absolute answers, but some do not,
- ♦ finding it difficult to say whether people are right or wrong because each person has their own perceptions and because there are multiple truths,
- ♦ feeling uncomfortable about this uncertainty and ambiguity,
- ♦ having to listen to one’s inner voice and say what one thinks.

(3) Relativism

- ♦ still seeing multiple truths and knowing that there are different ways of solving problems,

- ♦ but learning that depending on each context, some solutions can be better than others,
- ♦ evaluating and weighing different solutions and having reasons or criteria to decide which solution(s) work better for a particular context.

(4) Commitment

- ♦ being aware of one's own values and beliefs,
- ♦ making decisions based on the reasons and criteria that they have learnt from others but also based on their own values and beliefs,
- ♦ seeing multiple ways of doing things but deciding to be committed to one of them with awareness of why they do that,
- ♦ being responsible for their decisions and impacts of their decisions on others (a moral value),
- ♦ being aware of on-going process of learning and thus open to listening to others who think and do things differently from them and open to learning and changing.

Achieving the commitment level has required both my learning from others (such as research processes, research paradigms, research methodologies) and my awareness of my own philosophy and values about understanding and acquiring knowledge.

At this commitment stage, I am also comfortable to acknowledge that this tentative framework is open to improvement in the future and that no framework represents a permanent truth. I would like to quote one of the best comments that I received from my primary supervisor about my journey from suffering, avoiding, and then enjoying and appreciating sophistication, ambiguity, uncertainty, and imperfection of life and of our knowledge.

“Not pretending that I am dealing with actual reality.

The beauty of all this is that it recognises we are only building concepts that represent a complex reality, not describing the reality directly (impossible). The criterion for a good representation of reality is that it helps us to make decisions within that reality. In other words, it is a productive representation not just an intellectually tidy one. When you get to that point, you have more control over the research because you are no longer pretending that you are dealing with actual reality directly, only doing your best to capture it, so you can operate within it.” (David Crabbe, 8 May 2018)

Trustworthiness and credibility

At this commitment level, alongside my philosophical foundations, I have adopted strategies that helped to achieve trustworthiness and credibility for this research.

Trustworthiness was used by Guba and Lincoln in the 1980s to substitute for reliability and validity. It contains four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Morse et al., 2002, p. 14). Credibility “refers to the trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility of the research findings” (Tracy, 2010, p. 842). It is said to be “the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research and is concerned with the aspect of truth-value” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121).

In order to achieve trustworthiness and credibility for my research, I have managed to exercise the following strategies:

- transparency and audit trails (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Tracy, 2010)
- immersion in data or prolonged engagement (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Tracy, 2010),
- constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Morse, 2009),
- triangulation (Anney, 2014; Barusch et al., 2011; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Tracy, 2010), and
- member checking (Anney, 2014; Barusch et al., 2011; Birt et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Morse et al., 2002; Tracy, 2010).

Building sincerity by transparency and audit trails

Tracy (2010) argues that the sincerity of a study can be built when researchers are self-reflective and check their own biases, and when they are transparent about their research

process and methods. She defines transparency as being honest about the research process. Seal (1999) describes transparency as “a methodologically self-critical account of how the research was done” (p. 468, cited in Tracy, 2010, p. 842). The transparency can be also reinforced by a technique called “audit trail” which is “a record of the steps taken in the process of the research project from beginning to end and includes decisions made along the way that help illuminate and detail the entire process” (Barusch et al., 2011, p. 13).

In this research, I have been honest and transparent about what I did and why I did what I did. Firstly, I acknowledged the subjectivity and power relation between me and my participants and reported what I did to manage the power (see “Data collection method: Authentic and trusting communication”, p. 64 and Section 0, p. 251). Secondly, I described step by step the whole research process: how I developed my philosophical foundation, what I learnt from existing research paradigms and methodologies, how I designed my research approach, what I took and did not take from the literature before, during, and after my data collection and analysis, and what processes I went through to collect, analyse, and present the data, and what limitations the research had. Thirdly, I used audit trails for keeping track of my decisions and changes. For instance, I took notes of the process in which I decided to follow more student teachers in the practicum, what difficulties I had, and why I had to limit the number of participants. I also kept a daily journal on what topics I should focus on in today discussion with the cohort and where I drew these topics on. When analysing data, I kept a record of codes and how they changed. I also kept track of the iterative process of categorising, de-categorising, re-categorising and of using Nvivo, Exel, Word, and papers that I mentioned above and kept all different versions of the framework of thinking development that I had come up with and visualised.

Ensuring credibility by prolonged engagement and immersion in data

Prolonged engagement is one of the strategies to ensure credibility (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). Prolonged engagement is defined as “lasting presence during observation of long interviews or long-lasting engagement in the field with participants” and “investing sufficient time to become familiar with the setting and context, to test for misinformation, to build trust, and to get to know the data to get rich data” (ibid.) Anney (2014) argues that qualitative researchers are required to immerse themselves into the participants’ world.

I spent 32 months collecting data from different groups of participants. Especially, I joined with a cohort in all the activities that they went through in their four-month practicum. We also met every week to reflect on their activities both in group and individually. I then followed one of the cohort members into the first two years of his teaching. My long-lasting engagement into the reality of learning to teach of the novice teachers and my close interaction with them enabled me to build trust, get to know them as who they were, collect rich data, check and improve my understanding of their thinking.

Building credibility using triangulation

A frequently heard question for a research project of this kind is how to limit the researcher's subjectivity and bias. On the one hand, the constructionist epistemology of this research supported my participation in the student teachers' professional lives, and the co-construction of meaning between the cohort and me. On the other hand, I also took into consideration the limitation and bias of my understanding and tried to manage that by a triangulation of the collected data.

Triangulation of data is one strategy for improving the credibility of the analysis. "Triangulation in qualitative research assumes that if two or more sources of data, theoretical frameworks, types of data collected, or researchers converge on the same conclusion, then the conclusion is more credible" (Denzin, 1978) (cited in Tracy, 2010, p. 843). It should be emphasised that triangulation comes not only from multiple sources of data but also multiple methods, analysts or theories (Barusch et al., 2011, p. 12). In my research, I created triangulation in two ways.

Firstly, triangulation in this research was created from the diverse communication forms and times between me and the cohort members. We communicated both in the group and individually, both in oral and written forms, both face-to-face and virtually, both in classrooms and more relaxed settings like their dormitory or the university grounds, and both with and without the primary mentor. Cohort members shared their ideas and feelings about one event such as a teaching practice session in their meeting with their primary mentor, in our group discussion, in their diary, and sometimes in their individual talk with me. These multiple forms of communication made it less likely for me to miss their points or to be over-biased by my subjectivity.

Secondly, the picture of novice teachers' thinking changes were derived from various sources of data: the nine early career teachers, the practicum cohort of the five student

teachers, the two case studies, the practicum mentors, and the observed teachers. They all looked at novice teachers' thinking changes from different perspectives, which enabled me to gain a better picture of the research topic. In the process of collecting and analysing the data of these different stakeholders, the constant comparison method strengthened the triangulation strategy and helped me to see the core patterns of thinking changes and come to the essence of the phenomenon under study.

Building credibility and verification by member checking

While there has been some debate about whether member checking (allowing research participants to check the accuracy of transcripts and interpretation) is an effective strategy for building credibility (Barusch et al., 2011) others have argued member reflections can help ensure credibility (Tracy, 2010).

Anney (2014) indicates that “the purpose of doing member checks is to eliminate researcher bias when analysing and interpreting the results” (p.227).

In my research, I found this strategy helpful when analysing data. Sometimes I could not understand or remember what a participant meant when listening to them in the recordings. I contacted them and showed them the transcript of the part I was puzzled with, and they explained what they meant.

Beyond cohort member checking, I kept contact with Huy during my data analysis to check with him to minimise my misunderstanding or misinterpretation of his data. Especially, in every conversation which we agreed to use for data collection, I always summarised his points after he had finished talking about a particular topic and did the same at the end of our talk. I thought it was important to have him check my understanding of his thinking. In the last Skype call with him that included in the data of this research, I told him the full picture of his thinking development, as I had constructed it, for his checking and refining. That was essential because of my axiology of respecting participants and telling stories that they think truly reflected their thinking. Particularly, this strategy was rewarding because Huy analysed my construction of his thinking and added more insights into my initial construction.

Member checking was found helpful and rewarding in my study, and it reflected a co-construction of the framework of thinking development rather than “merely a nod to validation” (Birt et al., 2016).

Summary of evaluation

Within the allowed amount of time and other resources of this PhD journey, I can say I am satisfied with this research design and my understanding of the subject of inquiry. The satisfaction did not come from confidence about a perfect research approach or a complete model of novice teachers' thinking development. Instead, the informed decisions about the research approach and design were made at the commitment stage of epistemological growth. The research was designed and conducted on the foundation of the informed philosophy and the criteria for trustworthy and credible research.

CHAPTER 4

STAGE 1: EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

“I no longer focused too much on creating fun activities”.

An early career teacher

Outline

- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. Earlier Teaching Practicum
- 4.3. Current Early Career Teaching
- 4.4. Discussion of Thinking Development and Influencing Factors

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 reports the results of the first stage of the inquiry. It tells the learning-to-teach stories of nine early career teachers (ECTs) who had graduated from the same training program that I based this research on. They included six teachers in their first year of teaching, one in her third year, one in his fourth year, and one in his fifth year of teaching. The first group of the six first-year teachers were teaching at private language schools and a state college. The remaining three teachers were teaching at this university and at the same time at other private language schools.

Data were collected through a one-to-one interview with each of the first group and then the second group of ECTs. The main research questions of this stage were:

- (1) “How does the thinking of novice teachers develop from practicum to early career teaching?
- (2) What are the factors influencing their thinking?”

To answer these questions, each interview covered two main topics: (1) the ECT’s experiences in their earlier teaching practicum and (2) their experiences in the current teaching and the development that they found they had made in their teaching and thinking. The conversations with the two groups revealed similarities as well as considerable differences in their ways of thinking.

In order to highlight these similarities and differences, this chapter will present:

- ◆ The nine ECTs’ experiences in their earlier teaching practicum
- ◆ The nine ECTs’ experiences in their current teaching and their accounts of self-development
- ◆ A discussion of their thinking development.

4.2 EARLIER TEACHING PRACTICUM

We started the conversations by talking about the ECTs' experiences in their teaching practicum. It was clear that they might not remember much about the practicum, especially in the case of the second group of three ECTs who graduated three, four, or five years before. The purpose was therefore to recall whatever remained in their memories or whatever had impressed them the most about the practicums. Prominent issues that the ECTs shared about their classroom observation and teaching practice in their practicum included:

In classroom observation

- (1) Feeling uncomfortable about not knowing the specific purposes of observing classrooms
- (2) Acknowledging their ineffective practice of classroom observation
- (3) Avoiding giving negative comments about observed teachers
- (4) Noticing theory-practice mismatches, having “self-theory” & “self-authority” dilemmas
- (5) Not knowing goals of lessons that they observed (only reported by the second group)

In teaching practice

- (6) Feeling unhappy about not telling the differences among three types of lesson goals that they were asked to set for each lesson
 - (7) Being reluctant to communicate thoughts and feelings with their practicum mentors
-

All nine ECTs had had similar experiences in their earlier practicum except for one issue of “not knowing lesson goals in classroom observation” which was only mentioned by the second group. I will now report each of these seven issues and then discuss these issues.

(1) Not knowing purposes of observation

Recalling their classroom observations, the first thing that all nine ECTs mentioned was having no clear purpose in observing classrooms. They were unsure about what to observe, how to conduct effective observation, and how to use the observation form designed by the training program. They also mentioned a lack of guidance from their practicum mentors at this first stage of the practicum. They were supposed to conduct classroom observation themselves while the mentors were only involved in the second stage of the practicum – teaching practice. The only information that they received from the mentors was to observe at least twenty hours of in-service teachers' teaching and submit their observation forms as evidence for their observation.

As mentioned above, all nine ECTs had difficulties in using the observation form. The form had a few versions used in different practicums but in general included two main parts. The first part (see Figure 14 and Appendix 1) asked student teachers to note down classroom activities of observed teachers and then add their comments or suggestions for improvement. The second part (see Figure 15 and Appendix 1) asked them to evaluate the observed teachers' teaching by rating a list of items. For the first part, the ECTs said they were unsure about what to note down and what to skip because each teacher that they observed went through a lot of activities in a two or three-hour lesson. They did not know whether the faculty wanted them to describe the whole teaching procedure or just jot down activities that interested them. The second part was more confusing to them because the checklist was long, including 27 indicators many of which they said they could not make sense of. Despite of that confusion, all nine ECTs remembered that they did not ask their mentors for help because they were expected to work on their own.

Figure 14 – Classroom observation form – part 1

CLASS OBSERVATION FORM	
Supervisor (Mentor) name:..... Date of observation: / / 2016	
Student teacher name:	
Observed Teacher/ Student name:..... Course: GE / ESP (circle)	
Lesson Topic:	
The purpose of this form is to assist teacher/peer observation of classroom teaching by providing a checklist of indicators. Please check the appropriate column for each item in a section. 1: LOWEST – 5 : HIGHEST	
TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES	IMPROVEMENTS/ COMMENTS

Figure 15 – Classroom observation form – part 2

1	2	3	4	5	ORGANIZATION	Notes
					Is prepared for class	
					Groups students appropriately	
					Uses class time efficiently	
					Organizes learning materials or activities effectively	
					Summarizes material and/or provides closure	
1	2	3	4	5	INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS	

(2) Ineffective observation of classes

The nine ECTs admitted they did not gain as much as they should in the task of observing classrooms. In addition to the lack of obvious purpose, they were not sure what to put in the observation form, so they usually wrote whatever they had in their minds for the first part of the form and carelessly rated the items in the checklist in the second part. They sometimes filled the forms hastily so that they could hand them in to the observed teachers for their signatures as soon as the lessons finished. Their lack of motivation was influenced by the fact that most of the observed teachers did not have time to read their observation forms. The teachers had to sign the forms for many student teachers at one time after their teaching and then had to rush to their next classes. Not only did the observed teachers not read their observation forms but their mentors and the faculty would not read them carefully either. They assumed that the forms were just used as evidence of their observations.

They ECTs said that lacking specific purposes and motivation resulted in their lack of seriousness and investment in observing classrooms. The ECTs reported poor manners during classroom observations to be common among the student teachers. They admitted that they and their peers sometimes copied each other's observation forms to save time or make sure they had the forms ready as soon as the lessons finished. They also saw many of their peers arriving at classrooms late and/or leaving early when the observed teachers were still teaching. Some student teachers even fell asleep in the classrooms or chatted with each other at the back of the classrooms or took photos of themselves.

(3) Avoiding negative comments

Even though the ECTs assumed that the observed teachers might not read their observation forms carefully before signing them, they were still cautious about putting negative comments or giving a low rating for the indicators. They were worried that their relationships with the observed teachers would be negatively affected and the teachers would not sign their observation forms. Some of them added that avoiding expressing critical opinions meant they had nothing to look back at after the observations. Only one of the nine ECTs said she sometimes kept notes of her "real, honest" opinions in her own notebook.

(4) Theory–practice mismatches, “self–theory” dilemma, “self–authority” dilemma

In terms of what they learnt from observing classrooms of in-service teachers, the ECTs said they learnt the ways the observed teachers designed lessons and activities so that they could use them in their teaching practice. All the ECTs expressed their main concern about whether these activities reflected the teaching theories that they had been taught. They saw a lot of mismatches between the taught teaching theories and the teachers’ teaching in the reality. Reflecting on that incongruence, some of the ECTs claimed that teaching theories were not appropriate to real-life classrooms while others believed that the theories were still good guidelines for teaching but were not applied effectively by the teachers.

Discussing the mismatches, the ECTs revealed they were concerned a lot about what the “right things” were to do. They said they relied on their own teaching experiences and intuition both in their observations of classroom and teaching practice to determine what was the best thing to do. They also relied on these because they had trouble remembering the taught theories of teaching. However, they also thought that it might be good if they knew and applied fundamental teaching principles. I called this dilemma the “self vs theory” dilemma.

The ECTs added that they were concerned about applying the taught teaching theories and methodologies because they wanted to please their practicum mentors. They knew that the mentors preferred the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to “traditional” ones, so they always put CLT into their lesson plans without remembering the details of this approach. This shows another dilemma the ECTs faced during their practicums. It was a dilemma between what they wanted to do and what they perceived the authority, their mentors, expected them to do. I called this the “self vs authority” dilemma.

(5) Not knowing lesson goals in classroom observation (reported by the second group)

The last important theme about classroom observation was shared only by the three 3rd, 4th, and 5th year ECTs, this time not as former student teachers but as teachers who had been observed by student teachers. These three ECTs were currently teaching English at the university where I conducted this research, and they had participated in several teaching practicums as observed teachers. In this position, they realised that it was important for student teachers to know the goals of the lessons that they observed.

Nevertheless, the three ECTs said the student teachers, including themselves in their own practicum, did not recognise the value of knowing lesson goals. They saw that many student teachers came to their classes bringing no textbooks. The student teachers just sat observing them without knowing exactly what content they were covering. Reading student teachers' observation forms, the three ECTs found that some comments and suggestions were not relevant to the lesson goals at all.

The three ECTs claimed that by not knowing the lesson goals, student teachers could not understand why teachers were doing what they were doing. In fact, according to them, teachers had negotiated between the goals set in the course syllabus, learners' learning goals, learners' learning abilities, and the time limitation to set appropriate goals for their lessons. Without seeing this, student teachers easily gave uninformed and unfair judgment and evaluation of teachers' teaching. They could not evaluate whether teachers had managed to achieve lesson goals but instead focused mostly on teachers' observable performance such as their use of the target language, their use of fun activities, and the class atmosphere. These observable aspects were reflected in the student teachers' comments and suggestions in the observation forms.

(6) Not knowing purposes of setting three types of lesson goals

Coming to the second stage of the teaching practicum, the teaching practice, all nine ECTs all encountered an issue about setting goals for their teaching lessons. All of them said they had been confused about three kinds of goals which they were asked to set by the Faculty and their practicum mentors. The goals of each lesson had to include "knowledge", "skill", and "attitude" goals. They could not tell the differences among the types of goals; therefore, the goals they set often overlapped with each other. They expressed a sense of discomfort about doing this task because they did not know the purpose(s) of setting three types of goal. As a consequence, all the nine ECTs (including the three ECTs who later realised the importance of goal setting in their real-life teaching) said that goal setting in their teaching practice was boring and unhelpful.

(7) Lack of communication with practicum mentors

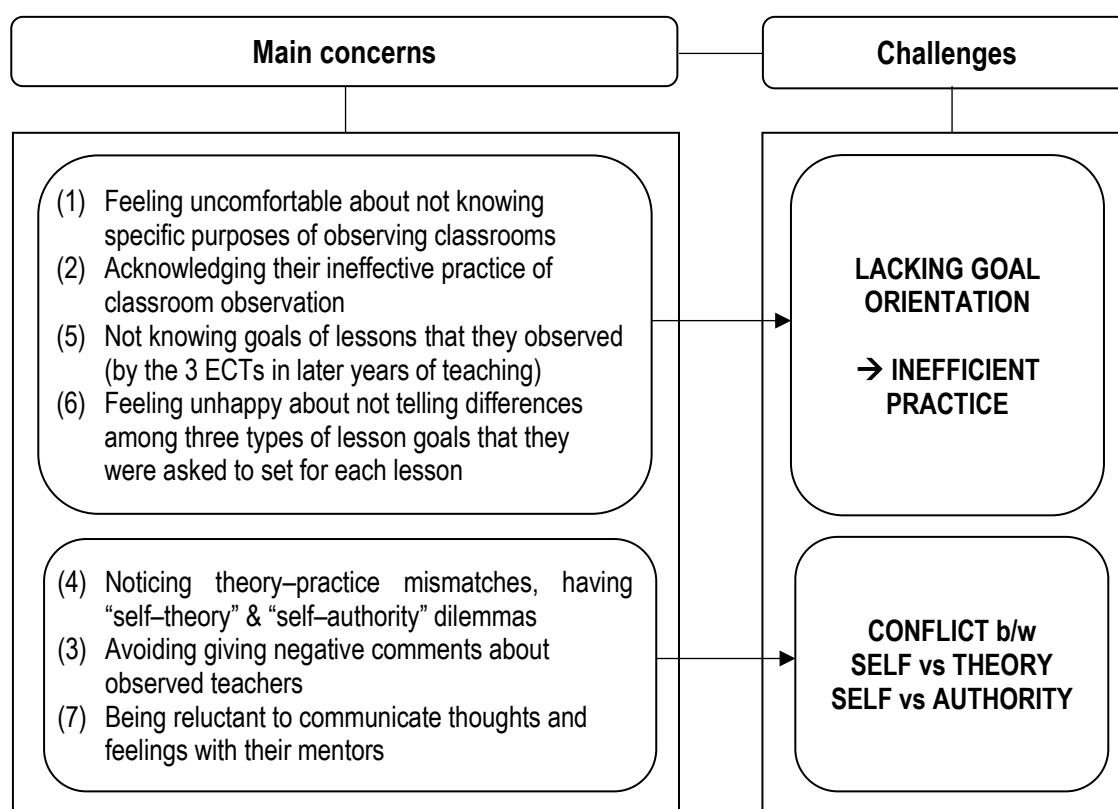
Despite facing difficulties, the nine ECTs said they were reluctant to discuss them or to express their disagreement or argue with their practicum mentors. The first reason for this reluctance was because they thought that they had not had enough teaching knowledge to argue about teaching. They were afraid that if their mentors disagreed with them, they

would not have enough knowledge and experience to express their opinions. The second reason for that reluctance was that they felt that they were not encouraged by their mentors or observed teachers to have open and safe dialogues with them. As a consequence, many issues and questions about teaching and learning arising during the practicum were left unresolved in their minds, which they thought made their practicum experiences less effective and enjoyable. They all wished that student teachers would be able to have open and friendly dialogues with their mentors as well as in-service teachers that they observed, during their practicum.

Discussion of the nine ECTS' experiences in earlier teaching practicum

These seven issues revealed two major challenges that faced the ECTs in their practicum (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 – The nine ECTS' issues during earlier teaching practicum



The first challenge was reflected in their first, second, fifth, and sixth issues. The nine ECTs in their own practicum had experienced little sense of goal orientation, which resulted in ineffective classroom observation and teaching practice.

The second challenge was reflected in their fourth, third, and seventh issues. The ECTs in their earlier practicum were confused by the mismatch between the taught teaching

theories and the in-service teachers' teaching in the reality. These mismatches made them question the role of theory in practice. However, as they perceived that the practicum mentors expected they should apply the taught teaching theory and they were not confident about their own intuition and knowledge, the ECTs were inclined to match the authority's expectations and the theory. In other words, at this stage of their learning-to-teach journey, the ECTs struggled with the "self vs theory" and "self vs authority" dilemmas and they chose to conform to the theory and the authority.

4.3 CURRENT EARLY CAREER TEACHING

The ECTs were encouraged to talk about their current teaching, what they liked about it, and what difficulties which they had faced, and what development they had made from the earlier practicum until then. The conversations revealed major differences between the thinking of the six ECTs in their first year of teaching and that of the three ECTs in their 3rd, 4th, and 5th year of teaching.

The six first-year ECTs

Talking about their current teaching, the six career teachers expressed their concerns about what they called "teaching performance" which included aspect related to how they performed in classes, about learners, and about their roles in the profession (see Figure 17, p. 96 for more details about these aspects).

(1) Teaching performance

All the six first-year teachers talked about their anxiety when starting their teaching jobs. The anxiety, according to them, mainly came from the fear of being judged as inexperienced teachers. They felt a pressure to convince their learners and supervisors of their capability as teachers. In order to do that, they all believed that it was very important to perform professionally. They said that they had paid attention to many things such as their appearance, clothing, body language, voice, and even pronouns to express formality and respect. They were also concerned about how learners judged their language proficiency. One of them talked about the pressure from his learners' judgments. He was teaching at an international language school in which learners paid a lot for their study and preferred to study with native speaker teachers. They were rather judgmental towards

young Vietnamese teachers. They often “nitpicked” (“soi, bắt bẻ”) Vietnamese teachers’ pronunciation, accents, and language knowledge. Therefore, this ECT said that he had to always pay attention to his language use and try to appear confident and firm in front of them.

Another challenge that all the six first-year teachers talked about was how to design teaching activities. Even though they had just gone through a teaching practicum, all of them recalled a sense of getting lost and being nowhere in their first lessons. For example, one of the ECTs had been working as a tutor in a private English language school until she was asked to teach a demonstration lesson to be promoted to a teacher post. She saw herself as an extrovert, confident, and effective tutor who always observed the teachers carefully to prepare herself for her future teaching. However, when asked to give a demonstration lesson, she found her mind going blank. She did not know where to start even though it was a simple speaking lesson about making a sandwich. During the first year of teaching, the 6 ECTs experienced many first-time things – the first time they taught a particular course, the first time they used a certain course book, the first time they taught a certain kind of learners. Therefore, they had to design new and interesting activities almost every day of their teaching. Some of them taught children and teenagers whom they found got distracted and bored very quickly. Therefore, they had to bring in diverse exciting activities beyond relying on course books. Even, one ECT recalled that, during the first half of her first-year teaching, she asked her family to help to cut game cards, colouring pictures, and photocopy teaching materials to get everything done before the following day.

(2) Learners

Whenever the six ECTs talked about performing or designing activities, they always linked those with the task of engaging their learners. Engaging learners was a major concern that all of the six ECTs talked at length about. They claimed that teachers’ good performance was partly manifested by whether teachers could engage and manage their learners. Likewise, when designing activities, one of their main purposes was to make the activities interesting and attractive to learners. To them, being able to attract, engage, and manage learners was evidence of successful teaching and vice versa. For example, one of them started the conversation with me with a strong claim that he was an unsuccessful and frustrated teacher because he failed to engage his learners. He used to be one of the top

students with excellent English proficiency and a good academic record. However, teaching at a private language school, he found that good language proficiency and linguistic knowledge were not enough to make him a good teacher. He found himself an introvert person who preferred being by himself. As a result of his introversion, he had serious difficulties in connecting with his learners, who gave feedback to the school about his “boring teaching” (his words). Being informed about the learners’ feedback, he had tried to improve the classroom atmosphere by including games into lessons to “make learners happy”. However, he himself still did not feel happy because the games that he brought in were not related to the lesson content. He found it hard to think of games that could be integrated into lessons meaningfully. He also recognised that he might enjoy lecturing about linguistic knowledge rather than teaching because teaching required him to have more interaction with learners. He realised that the most important thing that made a good teacher was not good language proficiency and knowledge of English language but an ability to make learners want to learn and learn something. “Unfortunately,” he said with disappointment, “it was something I could not do”.—Those difficulties and failures, according to him, made him believe that teaching did not suit him, and he should quit teaching as soon as he could find another job.

Even though engaging learners was a natural wish and got the automatic attention of all the six first-year teachers, paying serious attention to learners while teaching, for example, noticing learners’ use of English to give them feedback for their improvements, was not something they were automatically aware of. For instance, the teacher who talked of her first teaching lesson about making a sandwich acknowledged her lack of automatic attention to learners. After getting advice from the school’s academic manager and working hard on designing the lesson, she was ready for her first teaching. During this first lesson, she paid all her attention to conducting the lesson plan and trying to keep calm and confident in front of the learners and the evaluators. Finishing the lesson, she was happy because she could complete the lesson plan on time. However, she was surprised at the evaluator’s comment that she focused only on her performance and therefore forgot to give feedback to her learners. Recalling that incident, she recognised that as a beginning teacher, she might have been so overwhelmed with the task of remembering and following a long procedure of teaching steps in the lesson plan that she could not have time to think about how the learners felt and learnt or what feedback she should give them.

Seeing that the six ECTs focussed on attracting learners' attention through interesting activities but lost their focus on learners' learning, I wondered about their learners' learning outcomes. The six ECTs acknowledged their limited attention to learners' final learning outcomes. The ECTs who taught in private language centres, they said that the most important goal for their language centres was to make learners happy and continue studying with them. The centres understood that learners who came to their centres to study English in evenings and weekends were already tired after their work or study at schools and thus expected enjoyable learning time. For that reason, the language centres collected learners' feedback about how much they enjoyed learning with teachers and used this feedback rather than learners' exam results to assess teachers' teaching effectiveness.

Some ECTs revealed that some language centres did not allow teachers to fail learners because that disappoint learners and discourage them from learning at the centres. Instead, the centres would offer low-achieving learners extra tutoring sessions so that they could keep up with their classes. Therefore, the ECTs teaching at language centres did not pay attention to learners' final learning outcomes. Only one teacher among the six first-year ECTs was teaching at a national college; but this teacher was also relaxed about learners' final learning outcomes. He revealed that the college did not assess his teaching quality based on his learners' learning outcomes nor did they do any other things to assess teachers' teaching quality anyway. To him, making learners happy and enjoy their teaching was a more important goal.

In brief, the six first-year ECTs found attracting learners' attention and engaging them into class activities was an important objective of their teaching due to expectations of their workplaces as well as of their learners. They found it easy to lose focus on how learners learnt during lessons due to their major focus on their own teaching performance. They also did not pay much attention to how much learners achieved at the end of a course because it was not used to assess their teaching effectiveness by their workplaces.

(3a) "Self vs authority" tensions in classroom teaching

The six ECTs in their current teaching also experienced the self vs authority dilemma – a dilemma between doing things their way or conforming to the expectation of the schools they were working at. Again, just as in the earlier practicum, they resolved this dilemma by choosing to do what they perceived the schools wanted. They focused their major attention on engaging learners through interesting activities because they knew the schools

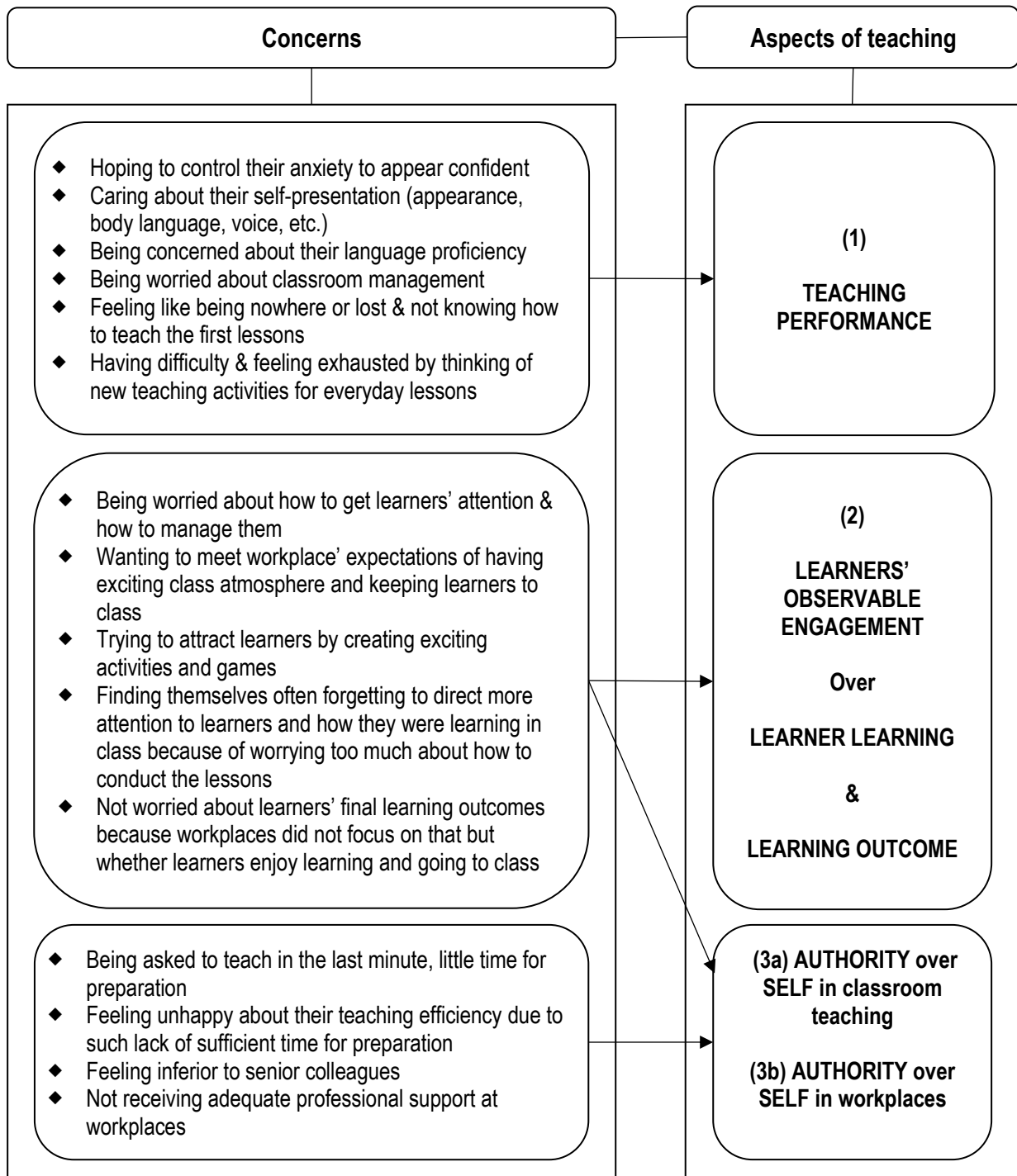
would assess their teaching effectiveness through learners' level of observable engagement. They said that they knew learners' learning outcomes were important but were not concerned about that because they knew the schools were not serious about that either. Their decisions also reflected a low sense of "self-leadership" in their decision making. By self-leadership, I mean teachers' awareness of and ability in leading their own teaching rather than being led by external power without their awareness and/or willingness.

(3b) "Self vs authority" tensions in the workplaces

All the six first-year teachers talked at length about issues they encountered in their workplaces in which they felt an inferior status. They all experienced the situation in which they were usually asked to teach or substitute for a teacher at the last minute. It was already difficult for them to design and teach only one lesson; therefore, they found it a nightmare to rush to design a lesson within a day or sometimes a few hours. This issue caused them so much stress and frustration that they wanted to leave their jobs. However, as beginning teachers, they did not dare to communicate this fear and unhappiness to their superiors but kept it to themselves, still agreed to teach these lessons, and then suffered dissatisfaction about their poor teaching performance.

One first-year teacher recalled a "terrible" ("khủng khiếp") case in which he was asked to substitute a teacher just two hours before it started. He was told to continue where the teacher stopped last time; and that was all the information he got. Quickly preparing for the lesson and not having time to even eat something before the 2.5-hour long evening class, he rushed to the centre and hoped for the best. He came into the classroom, quickly said "hello" to all new faces and started the lesson right away. After a while, the learners told him that he was teaching something else rather than the lesson they were supposed to learn that day, which was shocking to him. The centre manager must have got it wrong, he thought. His mind went blank for a while and he just wanted to run away. He then apologized the class, borrowed a book from one of the learners, asked them which session he should teach, and just tried his best. Coming home after the class, he kept being bothered by the idea that the learners might have recognised his lack of experience and that he might have said wrong things due to no preparation. This lack of a sense of controlling their work time, lack of freedom and courage to refuse last minute requests, and dissatisfaction about their teaching performance all together made some of the six first-year ECTs feel a lack of self-esteem in their workplace.

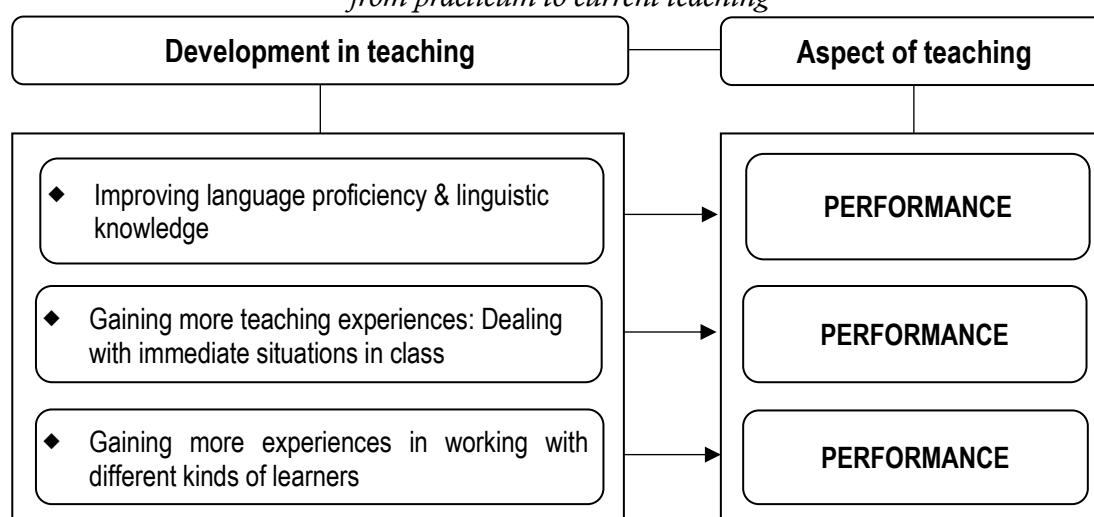
Nevertheless, the six ECTs said they were reluctant to initiate conversations with their superiors about their worries and challenges. They were afraid that the superiors might be too busy to be bothered. They were also worried that, if they told the superiors about their problems and weaknesses, the superiors might judge their teaching ability. Some of the ECTs also complained that they received no or little professional support either from their managers or senior teacher colleagues. All the first-year ECTs talked about a sense of loneliness in their early career teaching, especially in the beginning of it. They had no one to discuss their fears, challenges, or teaching ideas. Four of the six ECTs confessed that the idea of quitting teaching came to their minds many times; and one of them was even determined to change to another job as soon as he had the opportunity. These issues again showed the first-year ECTs' low exercise of self-leadership in their workplaces.

Figure 17 – Six first-year teachers' concerns during their early career teaching

Development from practicum to current teaching

An important part of the conversations we had was about our explicit discussions of the “aha moments”, realizations, or developments that the ECTs went through during their process of learning to teach, from their practicums to first year teaching. The six first-year ECTs expressed general ideas about their development because they said that they had not encountered any big aha moments the past one year. They found some development in terms of their language proficiency, their content knowledge, and more teaching experiences in general including managing classrooms, dealing with immediate situations happening in classroom, and dealing with various kinds of learners (see Figure 18). These dimensions of development involved their teaching performance which was a significant focus of attention in their current teaching.

Figure 18 – Six first-year teachers’ report of their self-development from practicum to current teaching



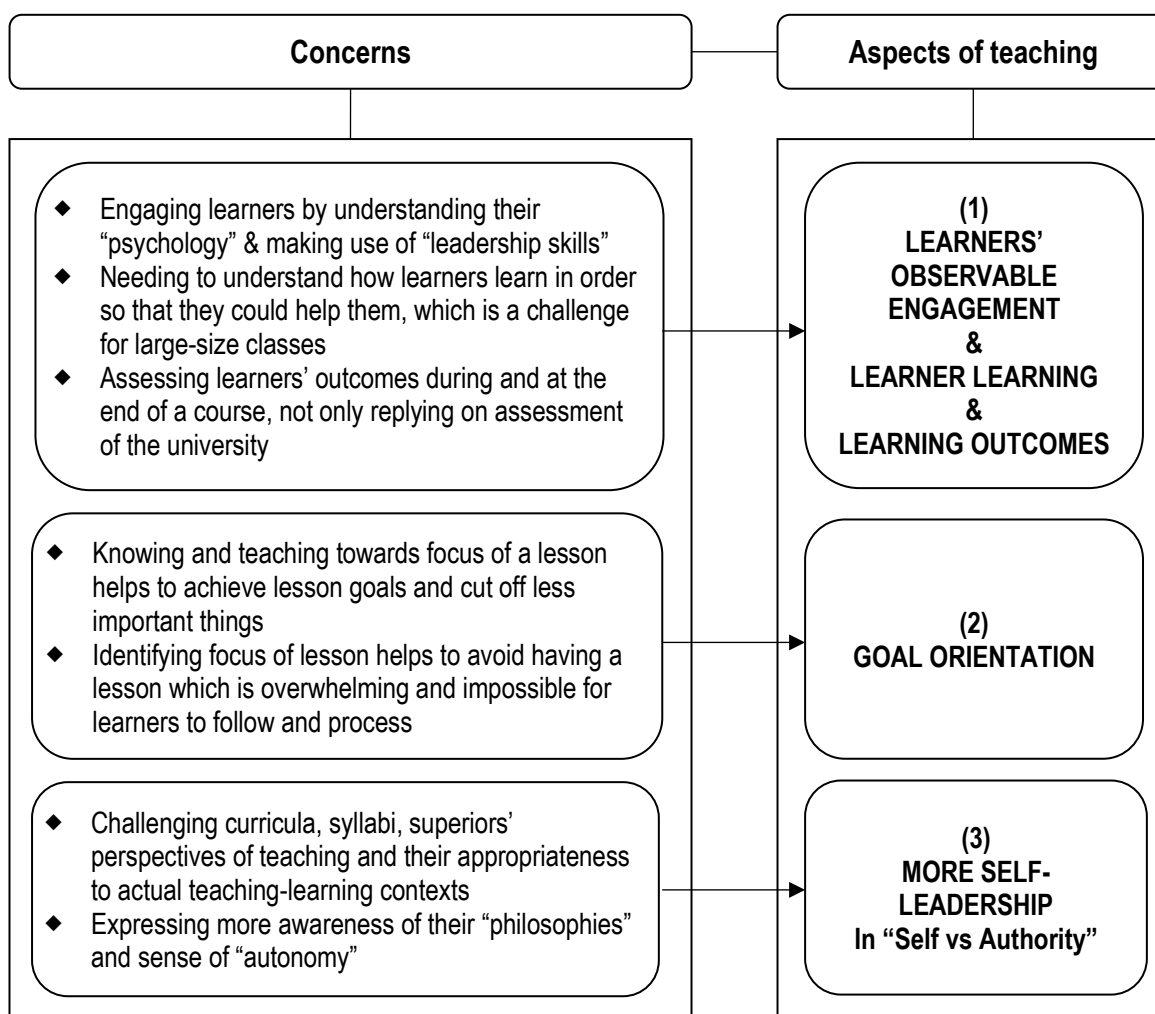
The third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs

The three ECTs who were in their third, fourth, and fifth year of teaching expressed the same major concerns as the six first-year ECTs did about teaching performance and learners’ observable engagement. Nevertheless, they also focused their attention on other aspects that the six first-year teachers had not mentioned. They emphasised the importance of focusing on learners’ learning, learners’ learning outcomes, and goal orientation. Concerning the “self vs authority” relationship, they expressed more self-awareness of their own teaching philosophies along with more critical attitudes towards the authority. In the discussion over the development that they had made from their

practicum to their current teaching, the three ECTs mentioned these additional aspects again as the most important lessons that they had learnt (see Figure 19). While the first-year teachers said they had not encountered any substantial changes in their thinking, these three ECTs articulated clearly these shifts in their thinking.

The first shift was their realization that to engage learners, they needed to understand them and make use of leadership skills rather than exercising the coercive power solely. Secondly, they moved from focusing on learners' observable engagement to learner learning – how they learnt, how they used the target language, whether they could use English after graduating from the university, and how to help them improve their learning. Thirdly, they all shared one important realization that identifying and achieving the focus of each lesson was crucial to effective teaching. Lastly, despite working under a lot of constraints of the system, these teachers expressed more awareness of their own philosophies as well as their critical attitudes towards the authorities. They critically examined superiors' perspectives of teaching, the curricula and their appropriateness to actual teaching-learning contexts.

Figure 19 – The 3rd, 4th, and 5th year ECTs' new concerns during their early career teaching



(1) Focus on learners: observable engagement, learning, and outcomes

These three teachers spent most of their time talking about their challenges, effort, and improvement in working with their learners. Firstly, just as the first-year teachers, these teachers were concerned about engaging learners. However, while the first-year group relied on using exciting activities, these teachers shared one common belief that the prerequisite was to understand learners, their needs and interests. For example, an ECT in his fifth year of teaching talked about his teaching principle of three Ps process – People, Plan, and Product that he developed from his teaching experience. “People”, according to him, was the foremost thing to analyse. He always learnt about students whom he was going to teach in order to understand their interests and concerns. This understanding would then help him to “Plan” appropriate lessons for them. For instance, rather than using topics in course books which were not familiar to Vietnamese learners, he chose other topics such as football or showbiz which he knew learners in a class would be

interested in. In addition, besides using games, songs, videos, group work and pair work activities as he had been doing from the beginning of his early career teaching, he also expressed his strong wish to learn more about psychology in order to understand his learners better. After planning, he carried out the plan and tried to help his learners to perform learning tasks and produce the target language. He then designed assessment methods to evaluate learners' learning outcomes. Furthermore, this teacher also found a need to learn about soft skills such as leadership and communication skills to manage learners more effectively. He recognised that teachers could only manage learners effectively once they had understood what learners wanted and had learners' respect.

Secondly, like the first-year teachers, these later-year teachers were also concerned about designing and conducting activities; however, their purposes were designing activities not only for learners' observable engagement but also for learners' learning and acquisition of the target language. The third-year teacher said:

Hien: I no longer focused too much on creating fun activities such as asking learners to run around the class in a vocabulary game. It was me some years ago. Instead, I focus more on designing learning activities, including games, which could provide scaffolding for my learners to learn and use English more effectively.

(translated from conversations with ECTs)

However, to understand learners' learning processes was not considered an easy job. The fifth-year teacher reported that one of his biggest current challenges was to teach listening skills more effectively. He said that he did not know enough about how individual learners processed what they listened to and how learners acquired listening skills. These puzzles were more challenging to solve when he dealt with so many learners at one time in large-size classes.

Hoang: I find it too difficult to teach listening skills in a class of 40 or 50 students. Everyone knows the steps to teach listening. But it's not that everything will be okay if we follow these steps. I had no idea what was going on inside their minds when they listened to the recordings, what blocked them from understanding the listening passages, and what I should do to help them process what they were listening. It is still a puzzle. I want to figure out practical ways to help my learners, not a whole class, but individual learners, to improve their listening skills. However, how can I understand and help each of them because I have almost 50 students in a class to take care of?

(translated from conversations with ECTs)

Finally, while the first-year teachers were more relaxed about learners' learning outcomes, these three teachers took this aspect seriously. The six first-year ECTs were most concerned about everyday lessons while three teachers talked a lot about what learners needed to achieve during and after a course and how to make it happen. They cared not only about learners' exam results but also whether their learners communicated in English better and loved English more when finishing a course with them.

(2) Focus of a lesson

Another important realization that the three teachers experienced was the importance of knowing the focus of a lesson. The fourth-year teacher claimed that since he recognised this aspect, his teaching had improved dramatically.

Giang: The best thing I have realised is that it is important to identify the focus of the lesson we are teaching. For example, in a section of the textbook that we are going to teach, there should be the most important thing that we need to achieve. And it is important to identify that focus. Once we could see that focus, that focus becomes our lesson goal; and whatever we do needs to be aligned with that goal. Once we could see that goal, we would know what is less important and can be skipped or cut down if the time is not allowed. By this way, we can make sure we would achieve the goal within the time limitation of a lesson. Before I realised that, I had had a strong tendency to include a lot of activities and try to cover a lot of content in a lesson. After that lesson, I was not sure whether I had achieved the main goals even though I had worked very hard during the lesson.

(translated from conversations with ECTs)

The fifth-year teacher made a similar point.

Hoang: The syllabus often requires us to cover a number of pages in a lesson. However, it is not about covering everything on those pages. It is researched that human brains could not acquire more than three things at one time. We teachers need to identify one important focus at one time and aim to achieve that goal. After the lesson, it is important to see whether learners have achieved that goal. If not, we may need to give learners homework to learn it beyond classroom...

If I could have a suggestion about revising the syllabi and curricula, I would want to change the way they design the syllabi according to course books. The syllabi need to be designed based on the goals we want to achieve for each lesson and the course, not based on a textbook we choose. Teachers can use whatever course books or extra materials to achieve the goals.

(translated from conversations with ECTs)

The third-year teacher emphasised the importance of knowing exactly what to teach and learn in a course and a lesson. She was excited to talk about her private tutoring in which she tailored each course to meet specific goals of a small number of learners. In her private

classes, she had to be responsible for the learners' learning outcomes and thus found that she had to be clear about what she was working towards.

Furthermore, these three teachers commented that student teachers might not be aware of this aspect of focus during their pre-service training program if their trainers or practicum mentors did not point it out explicitly to them. Talking about what take-a-way messages that they wanted to give student teachers, they all thought it was knowing the focus of what one was teaching.

(3) “Self vs Authority”

Just as the way the fifth-year teacher talked about improving the syllabi and curriculum, the three teachers expressed concerns about the education system and the authorities. This is one of the most substantial differences between the two groups of ECTs. While the six first-year ECTs talked about their sense of inferiority and the lack of professional support in their teaching workplaces; these three ECTs discussed issues about the curricula, testing systems, and the superiors' perspectives on teaching, and challenges that teachers and learners faced in the teaching-learning reality. They also expressed their critical attitudes towards the pressure of being evaluated by their superiors who held traditional perceptions of teaching and followed teaching theories which were sometimes inappropriate to learners. Although they were not empowered to suggest or make any significant changes in such fixed systems, they believed they should still have their own space and authority in their classrooms to teach their learners in the ways they believed. They expressed their teaching perspectives more clearly and confidently, compared to the six first-year teachers.

For example, the fifth-year teacher decided not to follow but skip some parts of the overloaded syllabi to have more time for communicative activities in class. He designed his own teaching materials to help his learners to learn and use English more efficiently. When I asked whether he was afraid that his superiors and colleagues might complain about his failure of covering the syllabus content, he said he would not mind that. He believed that at the end of the day, teachers' biggest goal was to help learners communicate well in English and to love English learning.

Hoang: I don't want to follow the curricula which are not well designed and not appropriate to my learners' abilities and the teaching-learning contexts of the university. They want us to teach and learn too much while the learners' levels are low, and the time is too limited. I believe we could not “make a learner run before s/he learns to crawl”. I don't mind if they judge that I have not covered everything in the syllabus. I also don't mind if they judge that I am not following

standard teaching methodologies. The shared goal is to help learners learn and love learning English. As long as I can do that, whatever ways I use is my own business. At the end of each course, after my learners have been informed of their scores and thus are free from the fear of being evaluated by me, I ask them to give feedback on my courses. The feedback I have received so far is mostly positive and encouraging. They enjoyed the classes. And look at the exam results, most of the learners who got high scores in the final exams organised by the faculty were my students. It means that although I did not follow the curriculum strictly or the expected teaching standards, my learners could still learn effectively.

(translated from conversations with ECTs)

4.4 DISCUSSION OF THINKING DEVELOPMENT & INFLUENCING FACTORS

Thinking development: A Hierarchy of Attention

Putting together the accounts told by the nine ECTs about their earlier teaching practicum and current teaching, patterns of change in their thinking emerged (see Figure 20 and the numbers (1), (2), (3), and (4) for the four patterns). They included:

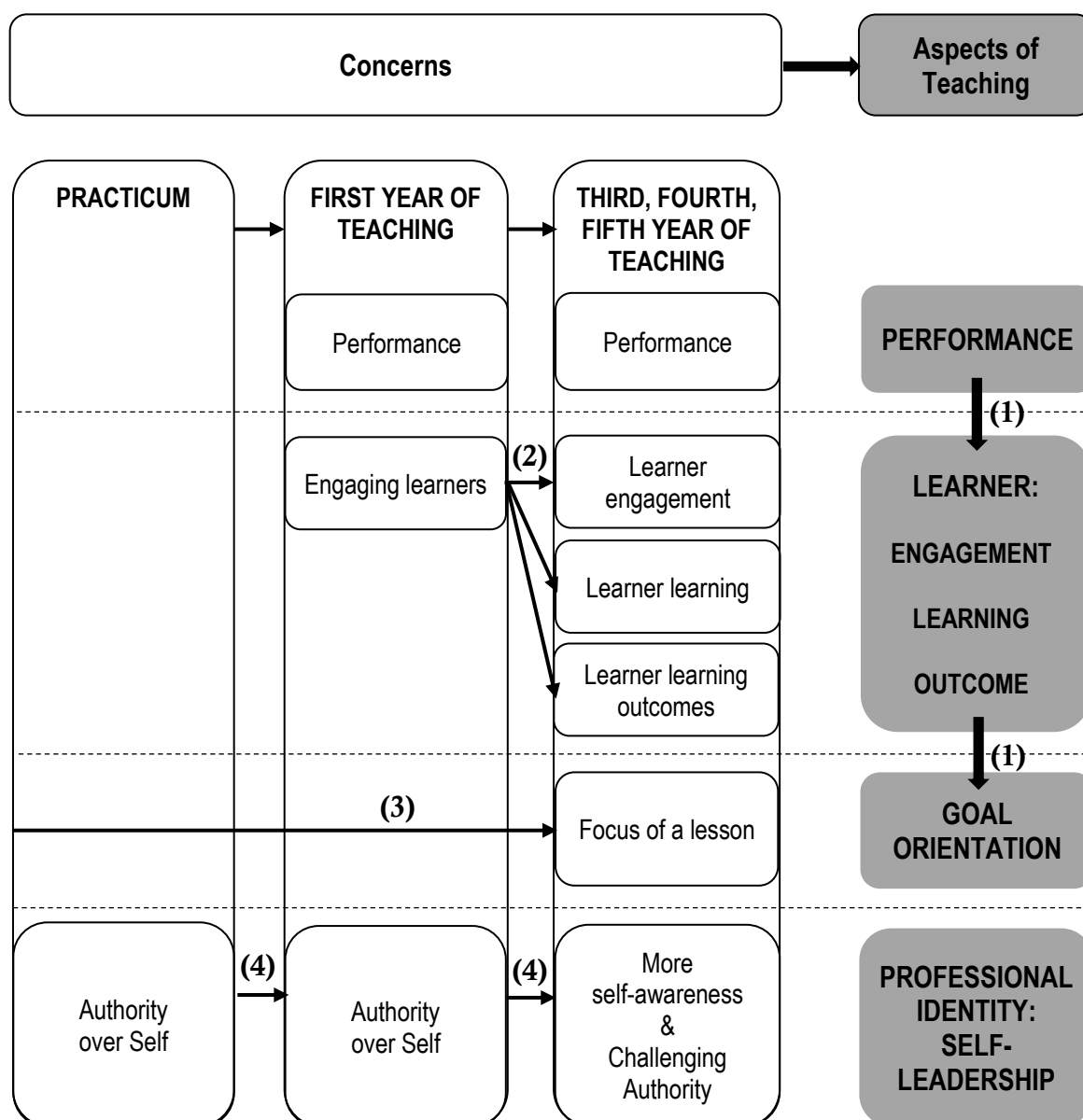
- (1) From self to other aspects: learner, goal.
- (2) From learner engagement to learner learning and learner learning outcomes.
- (3) From little to more goal orientation.
- (4) From little to more sense of self-leadership.

These cognitive movements revealed a hierarchy of attention to various aspects of teaching. In that hierarchy, the core aspects of teaching included: **(1) Teaching Performance, (2) Learner, (3) Goal**. Among them, teaching performance was an initial and natural focus of the ECTs' attention. After that, with efforts in learning to teach better, they achieved greater awareness and paid effortful attention to other aspects of being more "learner-focused" and "goal-oriented", especially being more focused on "learner learning" and "learner learning outcomes". These new foci were recognised by the third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs as being more crucial to teaching-learning effectiveness.

Along with this development of thinking about teaching, a sense of **(4) self-leadership** also developed in the later years of their early career teaching. By "self-leadership", I mean their ability to take control of their own teaching. They came from a place where they suppressed their own opinions and followed the authorities and the theory without

challenging them. They moved to a place where they became more aware of their own teaching philosophy, considered the appropriateness of the curriculum and the superiors' perspectives, and negotiated all these dialectic tensions to make teaching decisions which benefitted their learners and enabled them to achieve their teaching goals. This aspect reflects their emerging professional identities. In their negotiation of the conflicts between “self and theory” and between “self and authority”, they conformed neither to the theory nor to authorities uncritically, nor did they stick to their own perspectives uncritically. Instead, they were able to justify their teaching decisions based on the criterion of learner learning effectiveness which they believed was the common goal of their teaching and the curriculum and the authorities. Thus, they were developing an identity of a critical leader of themselves and their own teaching.

Figure 20 – The nine ECTs' thinking development from practicum to current teaching



Factors Influencing the ECTs' Thinking

The accounts above about the nine ECTs revealed several factors that influenced their thinking including:

- Factor 1: Their perception of learners' expectations of teaching performance.
- Factor 2: Their perception of a lack of professional support in the practicum and in real-life workplaces and from dialogue with their superiors.
- Factor 3: Their perception of power relations with their superiors.

Factor 1: Their perception of learners' expectations of teaching performance

The nine ECTs shared a common belief that their learners expected them to “perform professionally” (their words) in teaching. They perceived good teaching performance as having high English language proficiency, creating a friendly and exciting classroom atmosphere, and conducting various motivating learning activities. Because of this perception, the ETCs said they had focused on their teaching performance as an important goal of their teaching. However, the three ETCs in their third, fourth, and fifth year of teaching realised that this perceived expectation from learners had hindered them from seeing deeper aspects of teaching such as learning goals and “their teaching philosophy” (their words, meaning their own beliefs and perceptions of teaching) .

Factor 2 and 3: Their perception of a lack of professional support in the practicum and from dialogue with the superiors; and their perception of power relations with the superiors

The nine ECTs reported a lack of professional support in their practicums and teaching workplaces. For example, they did not get adequate instruction on how to conduct classroom observations or how to interpret and use the observations form. At teaching workplaces, they had no-one to talk with about the difficulties they met in their early career teaching. There was little dialogue between them and their practicum mentors as well as their superiors in the workplace about their thinking and feelings with regard to their teaching.

This lack of communication, as the ECTs explained, resulted partly from a power relation they that perceived between them and their practicum mentors and workplace superiors. Furthermore, this power relation made them reluctant to share their thinking, feelings,

and raise questions. A difference in power and authority put pressure on the teachers to follow the mentors and superiors' ways of doing things and to meet their expectations. This was also the reason why the ECTs focused more on teaching performance than other deeper aspects of teaching because they thought that it was the first thing the practicum mentors and workplace superiors looked for in them.

In conclusion, these factors involve the ECTs' perceptions of the expectations of other stakeholders including their learners, practicum mentors, and workplace superiors and of their relationships with these stakeholders. These external factors placed a social pressure on the ECTs' which influenced their thinking about teaching and especially their attention to more observable aspects which they called "teaching performance".

CHAPTER 5

STAGE 2: A PRACTICUM COHORT

“We have seen only surface things. There should be some deeper and more important aspects that we haven’t been able to see”.

A cohort member

Outline

- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. Classroom Observation Week #1
- 5.3. Peer Teaching Practice
- 5.4. Classroom Observation Week #2
- 5.5. Teaching Practice
- 5.6. Summary

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first stage of the inquiry collected the stories of the nine ECTs based on their reflection on their earlier practicum and current teaching. From these one-off interviews, their thinking development was manifested through a hierarchy of attention to certain aspects of teaching and the progression looked linear. This thinking development went along with their professional identity development in which the ECTs gained a stronger sense of self-leadership in their teaching profession.

The second stage of the inquiry looked closely into the student teachers' thinking development during a four-month teaching practicum. The data were not from one-off interviews but all the activities that the cohort of five student teachers went through in their practicum plus weekly group discussions among the cohort members and the researcher, individual talks with the researchers, their online personal diaries, and end-of-practicum individual interviews. This stage aimed to answer two research questions:

- (1) What does the cognitive movement look like when it is studied more closely in a few student teachers during a practicum? (Is it linear?).
- (2) What are factors that influence such cognitive movement?

This chapter will describe and discuss that cognitive movement and the influencing factors in the following sections:

- Classroom observation week #1.
- Peer teaching practice.
- Classroom observation week #2.
- Teaching practice.
- Summary of the cohort's thinking development.

5.2 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION WEEK #1

The cohort started the practicum with a two-week ‘field trip’ within the university. They were required to conduct at least 20 hours of observing classrooms. At the end of the first week, the cohort had a group discussion about their observation. They brought with them their observation sheets. During this week and after this meeting, they wrote in their personal diaries what they had learnt from both the observation and the group discussion.

In this group discussion, the cohort and I discussed four main topics. The second, third, and fourth topics were raised up spontaneously during the discussion.

- ◆ Topic 1: What did you observe in the classrooms?
- ◆ Topic 2: How to know teaching is effective? What are your criteria for effective teaching?
- ◆ Topic 3: How to know whether observation is effective? What are your criteria for effective observation?
- ◆ Topic 4: What can be said about second language acquisition (SLA) processes?

Topic 1: What did you observe?

The data showed two aspects that caught most of their attention: how teachers “performed” (their English word) and whether/how they attracted learners’ attention (“thu hút”) and “engaged” learners in their lessons (“lôi kéo”, their Vietnamese and English words). In addition, two major challenges that faced them were not knowing the purposes of observation or the goals of lessons they observed and dilemmas of “self vs authority” and “self vs theory”. These four issues are summarised in Figure 21.

(1) Teacher performance

Reporting what they had observed, all five student teachers talked about teachers’ language proficiency, sense of humour, use of their voice and movement, punctuality, speaking speed, ways of giving instructions, ways of giving feedback and responding to learners’ questions, organisation of group work and pair work, dealing with immediate situations in class, and teaching activities for a particular language skill or material (e.g. grammar and vocabulary). They said that paying attention to what teachers did gave them some ideas for their upcoming teaching practice.

(2) Learners' observable engagement

The cohort were especially attentive to teachers' ability to attract learners' attention to their teaching and engage them in their activities. They appreciated teachers who created good interaction with learners rather than "talking to themselves", who could create a friendly and exciting atmosphere, and who showed their patience, enthusiasm, and care for learners. They found that these qualities helped teachers to "win learners' hearts" ("lấy lòng sinh viên") and engage learners in their teaching. Especially, they believed that those teachers who used games, group work, pair work, or other interesting and fun activities, and rewards (e.g. bonus points, candies) /punishment (deduction of points) could engage learners better. For example, Huyen compared two classes and pointed out that the one with games and group work activities was more exciting and engaging than another without these.

Huyen: As for Ms. Hanh's class, I observed 3 hours of her class. At the beginning of the lesson, she did not use games but went directly to the lesson. She showed some pictures and asked questions about them. Many times, she asked questions, but she had to answer herself. The class at the beginning was frozen. I was frustrated. After that, she organised activities for the learners, group work and pair work. Those learners seemed to like group work. Whenever they did group work, the class atmosphere became exciting right away. After group work, she called some learners randomly and asked questions. This class's language level was quite high; they could answer the questions smoothly; their pronunciation was also correct. I think if I were a guest teacher of this class, I would organise a lot of group work which was the characteristic of this class. I could increase teaching effectiveness in this class...

Regarding Ms. Vy's class, her way of teaching was totally different from Ms. Hanh's. She taught exactly the same lesson that Ms. Hanh did. In the beginning of lesson, she organised games for the learners to play; the class was more excited. She could attract the learners. The class was more active; and the learners seemed to enjoy very much. I think she used a method that was applicable to these learners, the method which was not formal as the one in Ms. Hanh's class...

(translated from group discussion on classroom observation week #1)

The cohort perceived engaging learners (meaning "observable engagement") as a crucial factor that decided the effectiveness of a lesson but also as the biggest challenge to teachers. They observed in some classes, learners were passive and uncooperative no matter how much the teachers had tried to engage them, which created some invisible barrier to interaction between learners and teachers. The cohort also discussed reasons why engaging learners was that difficult. The cohort members observed that learners in the university had low English levels, low motivation in learning English, little confidence in speaking up, and reluctance to participate in class activities. In addition, English classes

for non-English majors in the university often accommodated 40 to 70 learners per class while the teaching-learning facilities were not sufficiently equipped. Only few classrooms were equipped with projectors, TVs, or microphones and speakers. Furthermore, they heard learners complaining about overloading English curricula and English exams which were more difficult than what was taught. Seeing all those challenges, the cohort confessed that they were very worried about their upcoming teaching practice when they would teach these learners.

Reflecting back on the previous methodological training courses that they had in this pre-service training program, the cohort said that they had not been prepared for this reality. In the demonstration teaching practice that they had in the previous methodological courses, they practised teaching their classmates rather than real learners. The problem was that their learner-classmates were of course cooperative in order to support them. Therefore, challenges in engaging learners and solutions were not discussed or practised.

Thao: The class on the Friday morning on the 22nd was the first real-life class that I observed. Actually, I had anticipated that learners' reactions would not be positive; however, I had not been able to imagine that they could be that bad. The learners seemed to be so scared and shy that they sat still most of the time. They did not cooperate at all or answer the questions that the teachers asked even though the teachers tried so hard to simplify the questions. This reality made us think back on the teaching methodology courses that we took before in this program. When taking the Methodology Course 1, 2, and 3, we did not ever think of what to do to engage learners and motivate them to willingly and voluntarily participate into our teaching activities. In the micro teaching sessions within these courses, we taught our classmates who of course always cooperated with us and helped us to conduct our teaching practice smoothly.

(translated from diary about classroom observation #1)

Tram: I understand we were that disappointed firstly because of being shocked by the real teaching-learning context. In teaching, how learners felt and responded was always the most important and decisive to teaching effectiveness. In the previous methodology courses, we had micro teaching practice in which we taught our peers. Even though they had tried to act as if they were learners, their actual learning and understanding abilities were still good and they could understand all what we said and taught. Yet, in real classes, things are totally different because learners had difficulties in understanding teachers' speaking and teaching. Many friends taking courses of English 1, 2, 3 in the university told me that they did not understand what teachers said (in English) at all. It was like "ducks were listening to thunderstorms" (a Vietnamese saying which means "understanding nothing"). They even did not respond to simple Yes/No questions of the teachers because they even had no idea about whether it was Yes or No! So scary!

(translated from group discussion on classroom observation week #1)

(3) Goal orientation

The cohort encountered the same issues related to purpose/goal orientation which the nine ECTs did in their practicum. All the cohort members expressed a sense of being lost before going to observe classrooms because they did not know exactly what they would observe. They complained about not having any specific guidance as to what to focus on when observing or how to use the observation form. However, they said they did not ask their primary mentor for her guidance. They just noted down whatever they saw in the classrooms and admitted that they were not so serious about filling the observation forms. They assumed that the observed teachers and the primary mentor would not read these forms (carefully) anyway.

In the light of the information from the third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs that as student teachers they had not known the goals of the lessons they observed, I checked it out with the cohort. All the cohort members said they did not have time to look for the objectives of the lessons they observed. Their most important concern was to be able to observe the teachers, the lessons (e.g. speaking, grammar, etc.), and the class levels (English level 1 or level 2) that they wanted to observe. They added that knowing lesson objectives was good, but it would not matter if they did not because their purpose of observation was to observe teachers and their activities in general.

(4) Self vs Authority, Self vs Theory

Just like the nine ECTs, the cohort were faced with self vs authority conflicts. They found it difficult to talk with the observed teachers or their primary mentors about their observations, questions, puzzles, and disagreement related to the teaching of the observed teachers. Firstly, they were afraid of displeasing them if they wrote critical comments in the observation forms (the cohort also observed the classes of their primary mentor). Secondly, they were also afraid that the observed teachers including their mentor were too busy to discuss these issues with them after their teaching. Thirdly, they were not confident to do so because they did not have enough teaching knowledge and experience in order to respond to the teachers' questions and the teachers would see flaws in their judgments or questions.

For instance, Huy observed his primary mentor's teaching at one time and disagreed with the way she gave instructions for some activities. He put that comment in his observation form and submitted to the primary mentor for her signature. He reported that when seeing

that comment, the primary mentor looked unhappy and asked him what he would have done if he had been her. He was nervous but tried to suggest alternative instructions. The primary mentor still looked unhappy and said that he should wait until he taught real classes to see how difficult the real teaching situations were. In his diary, he recorded how bad he felt to see his primary mentor looking unhappy. He decided to send her an apology email for his direct comment and his lack of teaching experience which was reflected in his judgement. However, later in an individual talk with me, he still believed that he could have given better instructions for the activities if he had been in her situation. In a group discussion, all the cohort members said they felt a power relation between them and the observed teachers and the primary mentor which made them reluctant to express their opinions or ask questions.

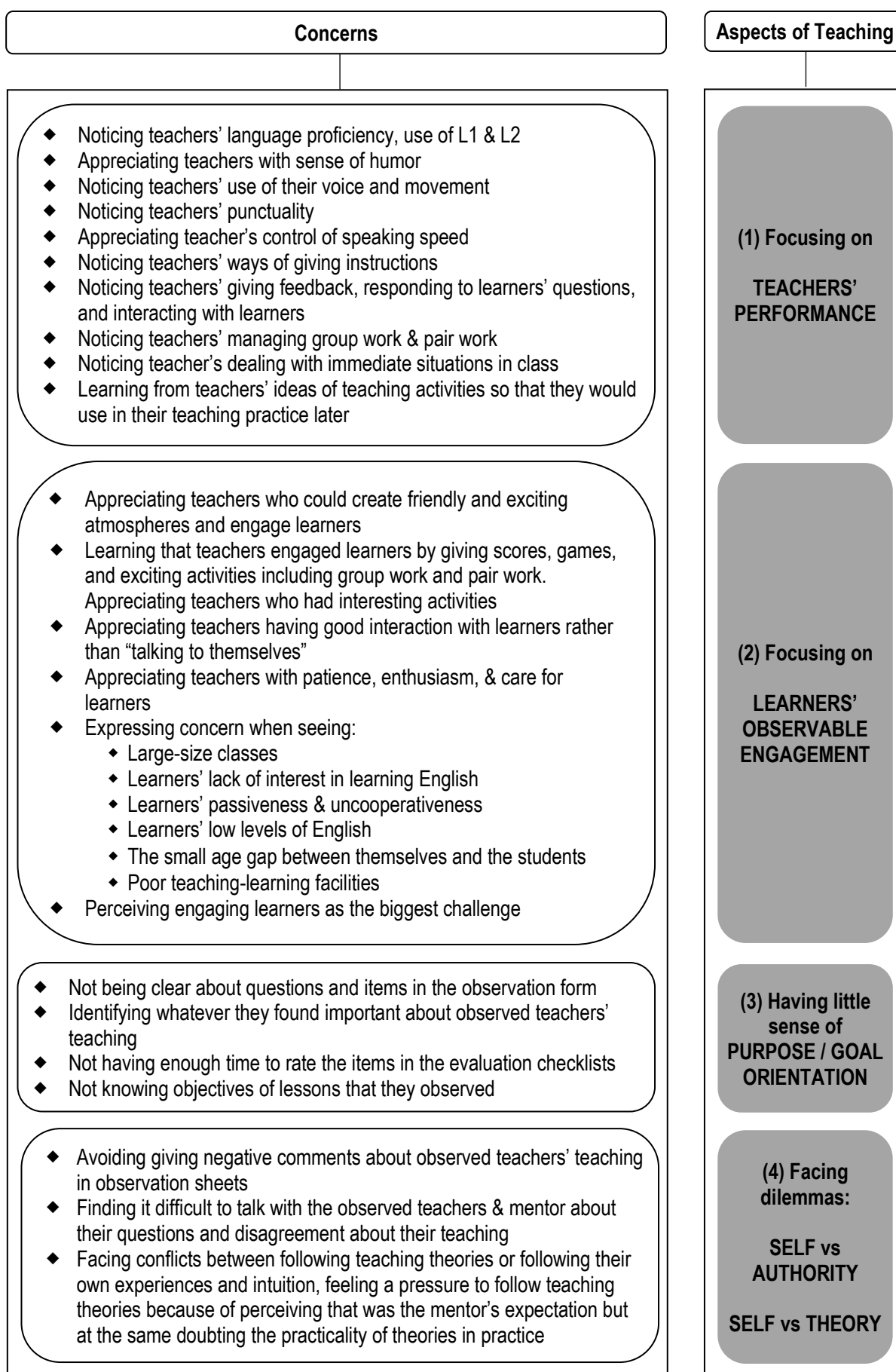
Like the nine ECTs the cohort were also concerned about the “self vs theory” dilemma. The cohort used “teaching theories” to refer to the literature on teaching and to what their trainers had taught them in this program. There were two main attitudes towards the role of teaching theories: belief in teaching theories or reliance on personal intuitions. One cohort member, Thao, believed teachers should follow teaching theories when teaching. When observing classrooms, she tried to find out whether the observed teachers applied teaching theories in their teaching. For instance, while she had been taught not to ask learners direct questions like “Do you understand?” to check their understanding, she found some observed teachers using that direct question instead of alternative ways to check their learners’ understanding. She thought that her belief in teaching theories could be thanks to her enjoyable experience in the previous teaching methodology courses and especially with one of her methodology trainers. She said that the methodology courses gave her ideas about how to teach English skills and materials, how to manage classrooms, and what roles teachers could play in classrooms. She believed that such knowledge helped also her to conduct more effective classroom observations.

Listening to her appreciation of teaching theories, the remaining four cohort members expressed disappointment because their experiences had not been that positive. They found themselves relying on their own intuitions, accumulated experiences, and personal perspectives when it came to how to teach. Concerning their observation of classrooms, they reported that had observed and evaluated based on their intuition and personal teaching knowledge. Like Thao, they also saw mismatches between theory and practice

when observing classrooms; however, these mismatches just made them have more doubts about the practicality of teaching theories in teaching reality.

One of those four cohort members, Huy, expressed a strong belief that practice would make teachers perfect while theories were usually boring, unrealistic, and inappropriate for diverse real-life teaching contexts. He made a strong claim that the previous teaching methodologies courses were not helpful to him. Another cohort member, Tram, thought the teachers that she observed seemed to be “obsessed by the idea that they should follow teaching theories” (her words), which made their teaching quite traditional and boring. She believed that freedom from following such rigid steps to teach in their own way would result in more interesting lessons and make learners enjoy their learning better. However, when asked whether, later in her teaching practice, she would teach in her own way, she said she might have to follow these teaching “standards” (“tiêu chuẩn”, both her English and Vietnamese words) so that the primary mentor would not think that her teaching was not “professional” (“có chuyên môn”, both her English and Vietnamese words, the latter meaning “methodical, not from intuition”). She was worried that without demonstrating the standard teaching steps, the mentor would think that her teaching was just exciting but unable to guarantee learning outcomes, teaching effectiveness, or desirable teaching standards.

It may be inferred from this that, despite following rigid teaching theories being boring, it was expected by her primary mentor as a guarantee of teaching effectiveness. The cohort’s current perceptions and resolution on the “self vs theory” dilemma revealed that they either followed or rejected one of these two seemingly opposite “poles”. Their perceptions were influenced by their experiences of the previous courses on teaching methodologies and their resolutions of this conflict were influenced by the power of the authority. In other words, there was an interrelationship between the “self vs theory” and “self vs authority” issues in the cohort’s thinking.

Figure 21 – The cohort’s initial concerns during classroom observation week #1

Topic 2: How to know teaching is effective?

Listening to the cohort talking about their classroom observations, I recognised an overarching theme in all their reports, judgements, and arguments. It was about “effective” (hiệu quả). The word “effective” (hiệu quả) appeared in every of their main points. For instance, Huy judged the effectiveness of the way a teacher organised a group work activity. Huyen was concerned about the effectiveness of a teacher’s way of giving feedback and talking time. Thao evaluated the effectiveness of an activity in which a teacher taught learners how to use dictionaries to become independent learners. Vien compared teaching effectiveness of two teachers based on their abilities to draw learners’ attention into their teaching. Tram evaluated teachers’ teaching effectiveness based on whether learners understood what teachers said. Different cohort members seemed to look at various dimensions of teachers and teaching to evaluate their teaching effectiveness.

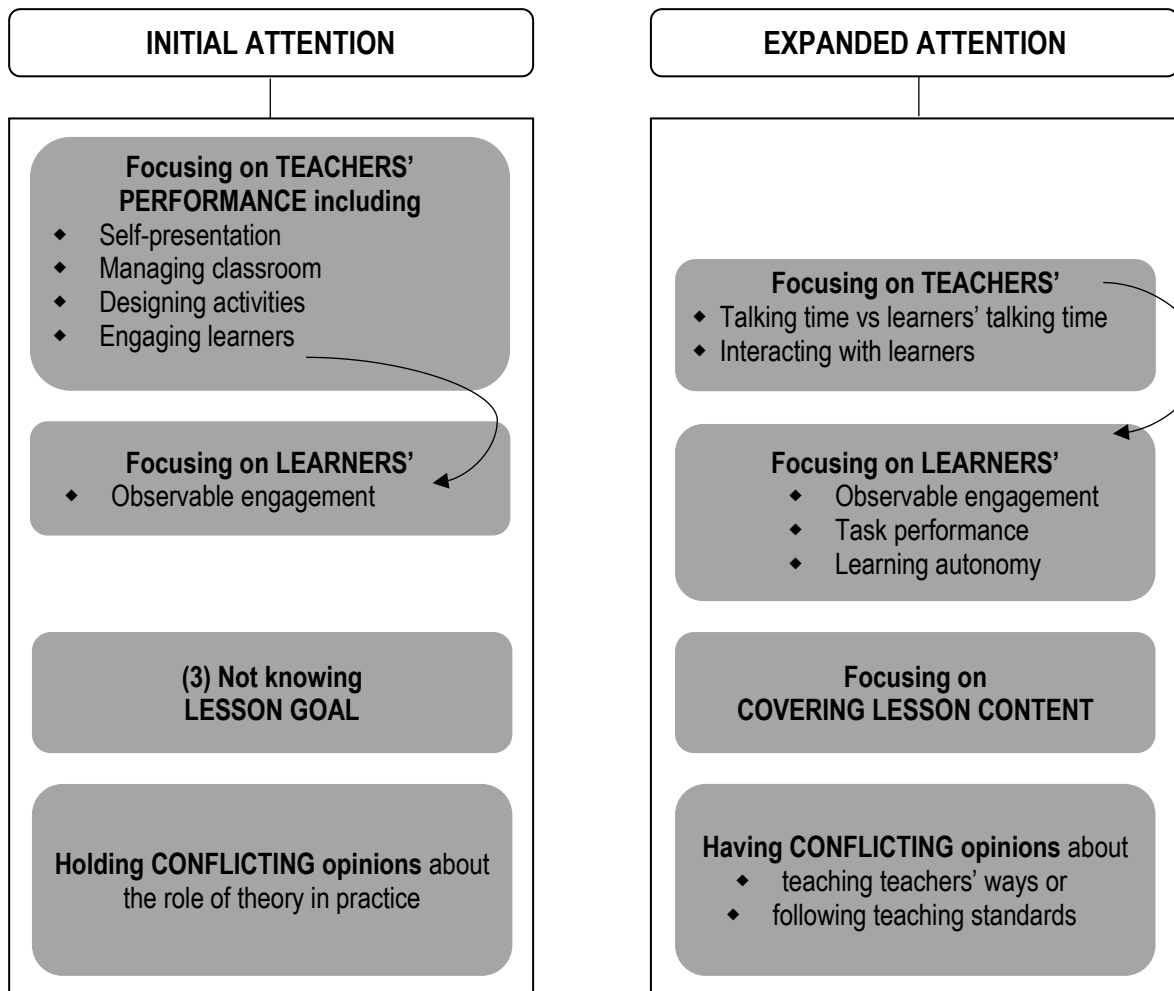
Therefore, I raised questions: “How do you know whether teaching is effective? And what are the evidence or criteria for efficient teaching in your opinion?” Different from the previous questions which asked them to report their observations, this question caused noticeable silence at first among them. Their verbal responses such as “Oh, wow”, their facial expressions, and the silence showed that they were surprised but also interested in the questions. After the pause, the cohort brainstormed their criteria for effective teaching which are summarised in Table 10. Part A of the table presents their stated criteria, and part B presents my categorisation of these criteria.

These criteria were then compared to their initial concerns that they shared in the first part of this group discussion. Figure 22 illustrates this comparison.

Table 10 – The cohort's criteria of effective teaching, after classroom observations #1

A. Cohort's Criteria of Effective Teaching – Listing the Criteria as They Went						
	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Thao</i>	<i>Huyen</i>	<i>Huy</i>	<i>Vien</i>	<i>Tram</i>
1	Teachers' talking time is not much, more time for learners to talk and work.	✓				
2	Teachers interact with learners well.	✓				✓
3	Learners are given a lot of opportunities to self-discover their own learning methods; teachers are just the guides and learners have opportunities to be autonomous.	✓		✓		
4	Teachers cover what should be taught in a lesson.	✓				
5	Leaners can do exercises and perform tasks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Learners cooperate with teachers.		✓	✓		
7	Class atmosphere is convivial.		✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Learners are attentive to teachers' teaching.			✓		
9	Learners feel happy.			✓		
10	Teaching is not constrained to standard procedure but appropriate to learners.				✓	
11	Teacher designs a lesson in the way that it follows standard methods and procedures.					✓
12	Learners have opportunities to practice English in classroom.					✓
B. Cohort's Criteria of Effective Teaching, grouped						
1	Teacher, in relation to Learner Teachers' talking time is not much, more time for learners to talk and work. Teachers interact with learners well.					
2	Learners' observable engagement, in relation to Teacher Learners are attentive to teachers' teaching. Learners look happy. The class atmosphere is convivial. Learners cooperate with teachers.					
3	Learner task performance and language use Learners are able to do exercises and perform tasks. Learners have opportunities to practise using English in class.					
4	Learner autonomy Learners are given lots of opportunities to self-discover their own learning methods; teachers are just the guides and learners have opportunities to be autonomous.					
5	Teacher's covering teaching content Teachers cover what should be taught.					
6	Teacher's following teaching theories vs following their own teaching ways (conflicting opinions) Teachers have a lesson which follows standard methods and procedures. Teachers are not constrained to standard procedures but tailor their teaching to suit learners.					

*Figure 22 – The cohort’s initial vs expanded attention
after discussing topic 2 about “criteria for effective teaching”*



Two main patterns of change can be seen in the cohort's foci of attention were:

- (1) Focusing less on teachers and more on learners, expanding attention from learners' observable engagement to learner learning and learner autonomy.
- (2) Noticing the importance of covering lesson content.

In addition, the cohort faced a “self vs theory” dilemma:

- (3) Expressing conflicting opinions about whether to conform to teaching standards or teach their ways.

The most obvious shift of thinking was the cohort's increasing focus on learner-related aspects including learners' observable engagement, task performance, and learning autonomy. The two teacher-related criteria – “teachers' interaction with learners” and “teachers' talking time vs learners' talking time” were strongly related to learners and

focusing on learners' benefits. In their previous discussion on what they had observed in classrooms, they had automatically focused on more teacher-related aspects.

In a group's brainstorming of ideas, the frequency of a theme may not indicate its importance because a cohort member might not want to repeat what had been said by previous speakers and agreed with. Nevertheless, what is prominent from part A of Table 10 is the cohort's collective interest in the dimensions related to learners such as "learners can do exercises and perform tasks", "learners cooperate with teachers", and "class atmosphere is convivial". These dimensions were about learners' observable engagement and learners' task performance. It can be argued that when being asked to think about what constituted effective teaching, the cohort paid effortful attention to learners.

In their expanded thinking arising from considering criteria, they mentioned the importance of covering lesson content as a criterion for an effective lesson. In their earlier report of their observation of classrooms, none of them had mentioned whether the observed teachers had covered the content of a lesson and moreover, they had been unclear about the goals of the observed lessons.

In parallel to the shift to the learner and an acknowledgement of needing to aim to cover the content, the cohort continued to face a dilemma about "self vs theory". They held conflicting perspectives about whether, in order to teach effectively, teachers should teach in their way, which they believed suited learners better, or follow standard teaching methods or procedures. This dilemma remained puzzling the cohort members in the next stages of the practicum and emerged as a critical issue that manifested the cohort's struggle with the appeal to power of the authority and popularity/dominance of the teaching "theories" as well as their professional identity.

Topic 3: How to know observation is effective?

Listening to the five student teachers talking about their observation of classrooms and their criteria for effective teaching, I recognised that each of them focused their attention on different aspects of teaching and also gave different weights to different aspects. Even when they observed the same lesson, their observation and evaluation were quite different. For instance, I first listened to Huyen describing two classes and appreciating the teacher,

Vy, who managed to cover a lot of content within a three-period (135 minute) lesson. She found that the teacher was efficient in teaching fast but still carefully enough.

Huyen: Ah, especially about Ms. Vy's teaching speed, she taught very fast but very carefully. Compared to Ms. Han, who completed 4 sections in 3 periods, Ms. Vy taught those 4 sections plus "Keep Talking" section only within 2 periods. The third period was for learners to do exercises in Workbook. I think I need to learn her way of teaching which was fast but still careful and good.

(translated from group discussion on classroom observation week #1)

Thao in expressing her point of view about the same class, thought that teacher Vy's way of teaching, despite covering a lot of content, limited opportunities for learners to self-discover knowledge and to work in class. Thao felt bored because most of the class time was for the teacher's going through activities rather than for learners' working.

Thao: Ms. Vy was like Ms. Thuy; she was very careful; she explained the lesson in a very detailed way; but she did not create opportunities for the learners to autonomously learn the knowledge. For Ms. My's class, it was better to let the learners self-discover than to explain little by little that way. That was the reason why she could go through the activities very quickly and carefully but there were very few opportunities for learners to work. The lesson was like a low flat line graph from the beginning to the end with few moments of going up and those moments were just like small waves, not hills. I was very sleepy, but I had to make myself concentrate in the observation.

(translated from group discussion on classroom observation week #1)

Thao was also the one who proposed "learner autonomy" and "teachers' covering lesson content" as the criteria for effective teaching. While Huyen was speaking more from the perspective of the teacher who had a responsibility to cover teaching content, Thao, who also agreed that covering lesson content was necessary, was speaking more from the perspective of learners.

In order to understand whether each student teacher was aware of their own perspective about teaching and what they thought about those of their cohort peers, I invited the cohort to self-evaluate their observations by discussing two questions: "(1) Among the five members, whose observations and observational evaluations impressed you the most? You can even vote for yourself. How do you find that? (2) How do you know a classroom observation is effective?" They spent approximately half an hour on exchanging their ideas enthusiastically.

All the five cohort members agreed that Thao's observation and observational evaluations were the most impressive and effective because they sounded the most "professional"

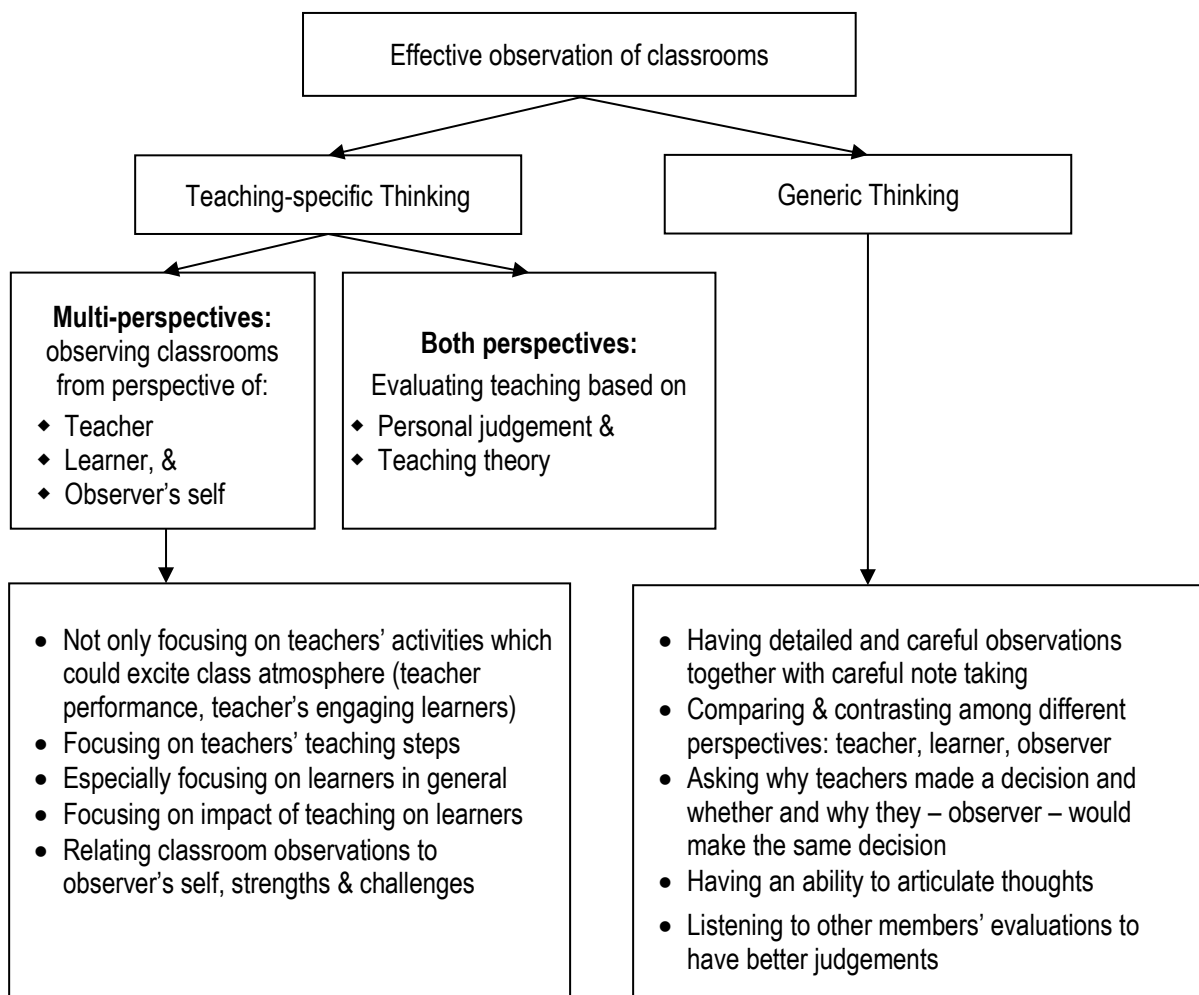
(“chuyên nghiệp, chuyên môn”, their English and Vietnamese words). The reasons for this were summarised in the following table. Salient nodes were italicized.

Table 11 – Cohort’s justifications of why Thao had the most effective observation

Cohort member	Their reasons for what Thao’s classroom observations and observational judgements were the most professional
Vien	Thao looked at <i>learners</i> , not only looked at <i>excitement</i> of <i>activities</i> or interestingness of <i>teachers</i> . Her judgements were based on teaching <i>methodologies</i> .
Huyen	Thao had a perspective which was normally found in experienced teachers. Her judgements were not based on her “ <i>gut/intuition</i> ” (“ <i>cảm tính</i> ”), but on exact <i>impacts and effectiveness of teaching on learners</i> . However, Thuy found herself looking at <i>activities, teachers</i> , not much at <i>learners</i> .
Tram	Thao’s judgments were not based on her “ <i>gut/ hunch/ emotion/ intuition</i> ” (“ <i>cảm tính</i> ”). Her judgements were not only based on their <i>personal</i> observations but she <i>analysed</i> and <i>compared</i> what she observed with her own <i>experiences</i> . She <i>compared</i> among teachers she observed and looked at things from <i>different angles</i> . She looked from this angle and turned to another and came back to the previous one (“ <i>lật qua lật lại vấn đề rất nhiều</i> ”). That was why her observations sounded more <i>detailed, careful, and deeper</i> and they sounded more <i>professional</i> .
Huy	Thao referred to <i>pedagogies</i> and teaching <i>methods</i> . That was professional.
Thao	I looked at things from perspectives of <i>learners, teachers</i> , and as a <i>novice teacher</i> who was observing the classes. Then I <i>compared</i> those perspectives to one another. I found observing <i>learners</i> was very important and then I observed <i>teachers’ steps of teaching</i> . I <i>compared</i> among teachers’ teaching activities and related those to <i>my previous experiences</i> and knowledge of conducting similar activities and considered the <i>effectiveness</i> of those activities. I kept <i>asking why</i> teachers made such <i>decisions</i> and why they were or were not <i>effective</i> . I also asked whether I would make the same <i>decisions</i> and why I would or would not. I <i>kept thinking</i> about those things while and after my observations. However, I found that such <i>careful observations, comparisons, noting down my thinking, and holding such information</i> in my brain was hard and <i>exhausting</i> . That I could share such professional observations and judgements was partly thanks to my <i>ability of articulating my thoughts</i> . Other members might think and see a lot, but they might have not been able to express their thinking. It was also because I <i>spoke after other members</i> , which gave me a chance to think better and share more. I believed my sharing of my effective observations made the <i>group discussion more effective and interesting</i> .
My notes	Thao was the member who first mentioned the need to let <i>learners by themselves study and discover</i> knowledge as a criterion of effective teaching. She was the member who was very much concerned about <i>learners’ psychology</i> right from the beginning of the practicum. In the discussion of their purposes of observing classrooms, Thao was the only one who mentioned the purpose of understanding <i>how learners actually learnt</i> in real classrooms.

After giving these justifications, the cohort continued discussing what constituted effective classroom observations.

Based on the data in Table 11 above and the further discussion, their criteria for effective observation can be summarised as in Figure 23.

Figure 23 – Cohort’s criteria for effective classroom observation

According to the whole cohort, the core of good observation was to take a multiple perspective on classrooms. They believed that it was important to expand their attention from teachers solely to learners and then to reflect what they observed on themselves, their perceptions, strengths, and weaknesses. They also started to pay more attention to what they called “the organisation or structure of teaching steps”. In addition, learning from Thao’s use of teaching theories to justify her observable judgements, the cohort realised that, rather than relying on either on experience or intuition or teaching theories, an effective observer would take into account both of them. Furthermore, the cohort uncovered thinking strategies/skills for effective observation and judgement. They included carefulness and mindfulness in observation, making comparisons between different perspectives, asking and reasoning why teachers did what they did, having an ability to articulate one’s thoughts, and listening to and learning from others’ ideas to come up with better judgments.

Topic 4: What about second language acquisition (SLA)?

The whole group discussion at this point showed that the cohort focused a lot on teachers, learners' observable engagement, and learners' task performance. This reflected the development of accounts shared by the early career teachers. They described how at first, they naturally paid more attention to learners' observable engagement and then learners' task performance. Only in the later years of their early career teaching did they accentuate the importance of understanding how learners learnt the target language and how to design lessons to make learning happen. These three ECTs thought that "learners' learning process" was however, something hard to recognise and understand by student teachers or beginning teachers because of their lack of teaching experience.

Because second language acquisition (SLA) processes are normally included in curriculum of English teacher training programs, I asked the cohort whether they were concerned about what happened in learners' minds with regard to language acquisition processes when they observed and evaluated a class.

Trang: In your observation of classrooms, did you think consider whether learners learnt through the activities that they did? I meant their "acquisition"?

All cohort members: [looked puzzled]

Trang: "Language Acquisition"

Huyen: Did you mean us or the observed teachers?

Trang: I meant you, as observers, did you think it was necessary to understand whether learners learnt through the activities?

Huyen: I still don't get your question.

Trang: Okay, let me say it again. In this group discussion so far, you have talked a lot about whether learners enjoyed the activities, whether they actively participated into the activities, and whether they worked on them. My question was whether it was necessary to consider whether learners learnt something from doing each of these activities. It was similar to the concept of SLA that I think you have learnt in the methodology courses before.

Huy: SLA? What does it stand for?

Trang: Second Language Acquisition

Huy: I don't remember we have learnt something like that in the previous methodology courses.

Tram: No, I don't think I know the term.

Vien: Neither do I.

Thao: (silent)

Huy: But I think I always wanted to understand why teachers used a certain activity.

Trang: Ah, I see. All right, let me move on to another question...

(translated from group discussion on classroom observations #1)

In the conversation above, the cohort members' reactions and irrelevant answers suggested that they were not yet aware of concepts in SLA. However, in their diaries, the cohort members wrote that they for the first time paid attention to learners' learning processes in their minds and felt that it was an important dimension that they had not noticed. For instance, in his diary, Huy wrote that SLA was "the first and deepest recognition" ("thứ nhất và sâu sắc nhất") that he got from this group discussion.

Huy: The group discussion today was very important. It has changed my thinking and viewpoint quite a lot. The first and the deepest recognition was about SLA.

(translated from diary about classroom observations #1)

Summary of classroom observation week #1

By the end of the first week of observing classrooms, the cohort reported their major attention was on teachers' performance and learners' observable engagement. However, the reflection activities on what constituted effective teaching and effective classroom observation as well as the group discussions raised the cohort's awareness of their current attention and expanded their attention. They recognised that more was needed for effective observation and effective teaching. Figure 24 illustrates important elements of expanded attention in the cohort's thinking:

- ◆ From teacher-focused to learners-focused.
- ◆ From learners' observable engagement to learners' task performance, autonomy, and learning processes.
- ◆ Attention to lesson goals and content.
- ◆ From no to more attention to the organisation of teaching steps in a lesson.
- ◆ From no to more attention to generic thinking skills (being mindful, careful; comparing, contrasting; asking why; articulating thoughts; listening to other).
- ◆ From either/or to both/and approach to teaching theories vs intuition/experiences.

Four important points emerged from these cognitive movements. Firstly, observing classrooms of in-service teachers, the cohort instinctively focused on teachers-related aspects including their ability to engage learners in their lessons. Their attention was expanded when they stopped thinking of themselves as student teachers sitting at the back of the classrooms and observing the teachers. They looked at classroom teaching from the

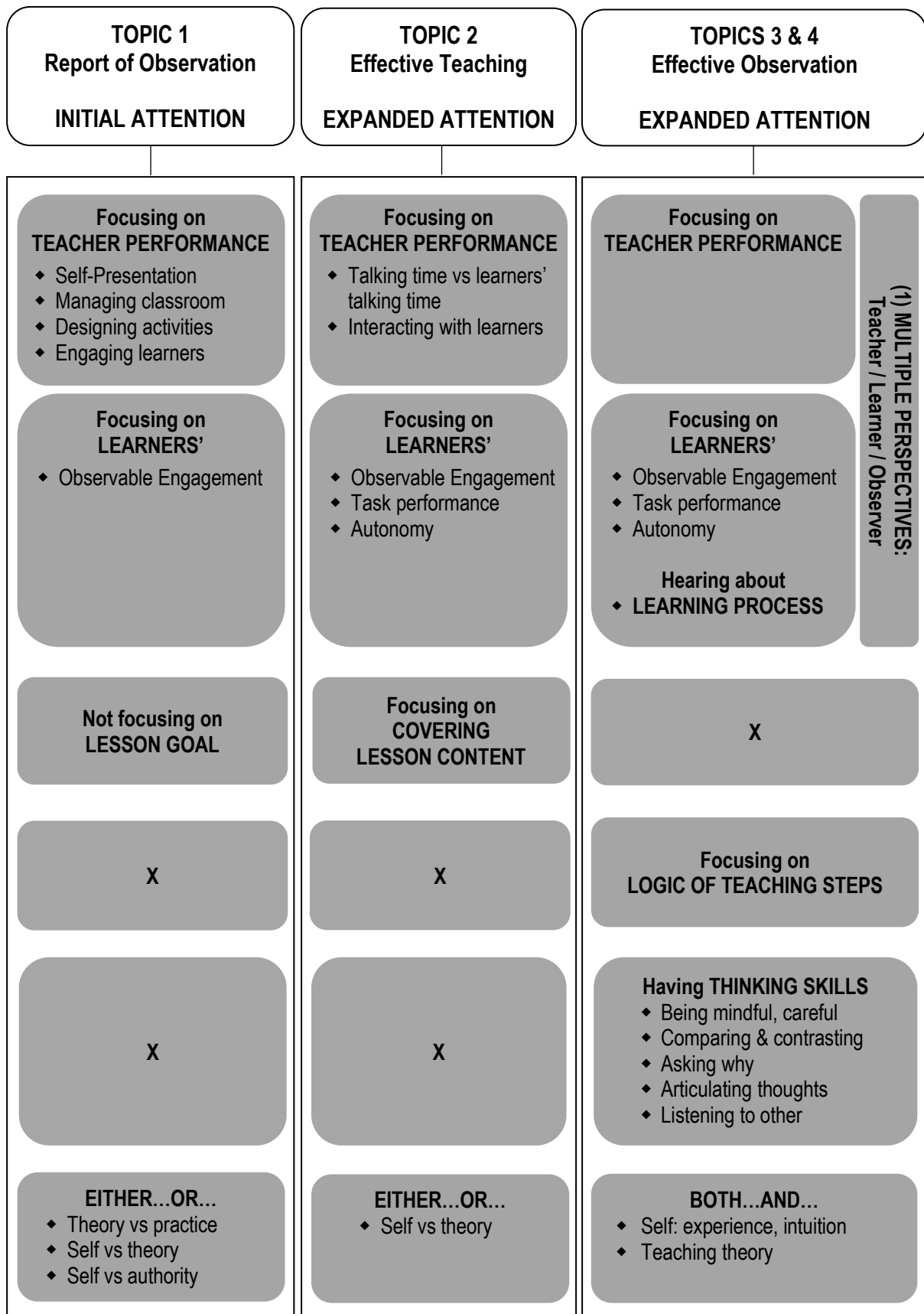
perspective of those who evaluated the effectiveness of the teaching and contemplated how to conduct observation effectively to judge teaching effectiveness. These new perspectives expanded their attention to learner-related aspects, not only learners' observable engagement but learners' task performance and autonomy in learning. My question about whether learner learning processes were something they had noticed in their observation raised new awareness of this aspect.

The second point was their attention to "lesson goal" aspect. The cohort did not pay attention to the goals of the lessons that they had observed. After the observation, when they discussed what constituted effective teaching, they mentioned the importance of covering the lesson content which is one form of goal. However, in the discussion of what constituted effective observation, they neglected this aspect. It can be argued that they had not developed a clear understanding of goal orientation at this stage.

Thirdly, was their professional identity. Just like the nine ECTs in their practicum, the cohort experienced conflicts between self and theory and between self and authority. Their perceptions and resolutions of these conflicts revealed the status of their professional identity. The cohort expressed an either-or way of thinking about these two seemingly opposite sources of knowledge, which reflected followership to one of these two sources and perhaps an undeveloped sense of self-leadership. However, in their reflection over what constituted effective observation, they learnt from each other, especially Thao, that it was important to take into account both of these sources.

Lastly, two factors that strongly influenced the cohort's thinking and thinking changes were the previous methodology courses that they took in this program and the dynamics of the group reflection.

Figure 24 – The cohort's attention by the end of classroom observation week #1



5.3 PEER TEACHING PRACTICE

After the group discussion, the student teachers and I met the following day for a teaching practice to prepare for their upcoming teaching practice. Only Tram, Huy, and Huyen took turn to teach their lessons, but Vien was also present, and Thao was absent.

After each of the three had finished their teaching practice, all four members who were present and I discussed that person's teaching before we moved to the next person. The discussions revealed their concerns which are summarised in Figure 25. The figure shows that, while some aspects remained the foci of the cohort's attention, other aspects were further explored or constructed by the cohort.

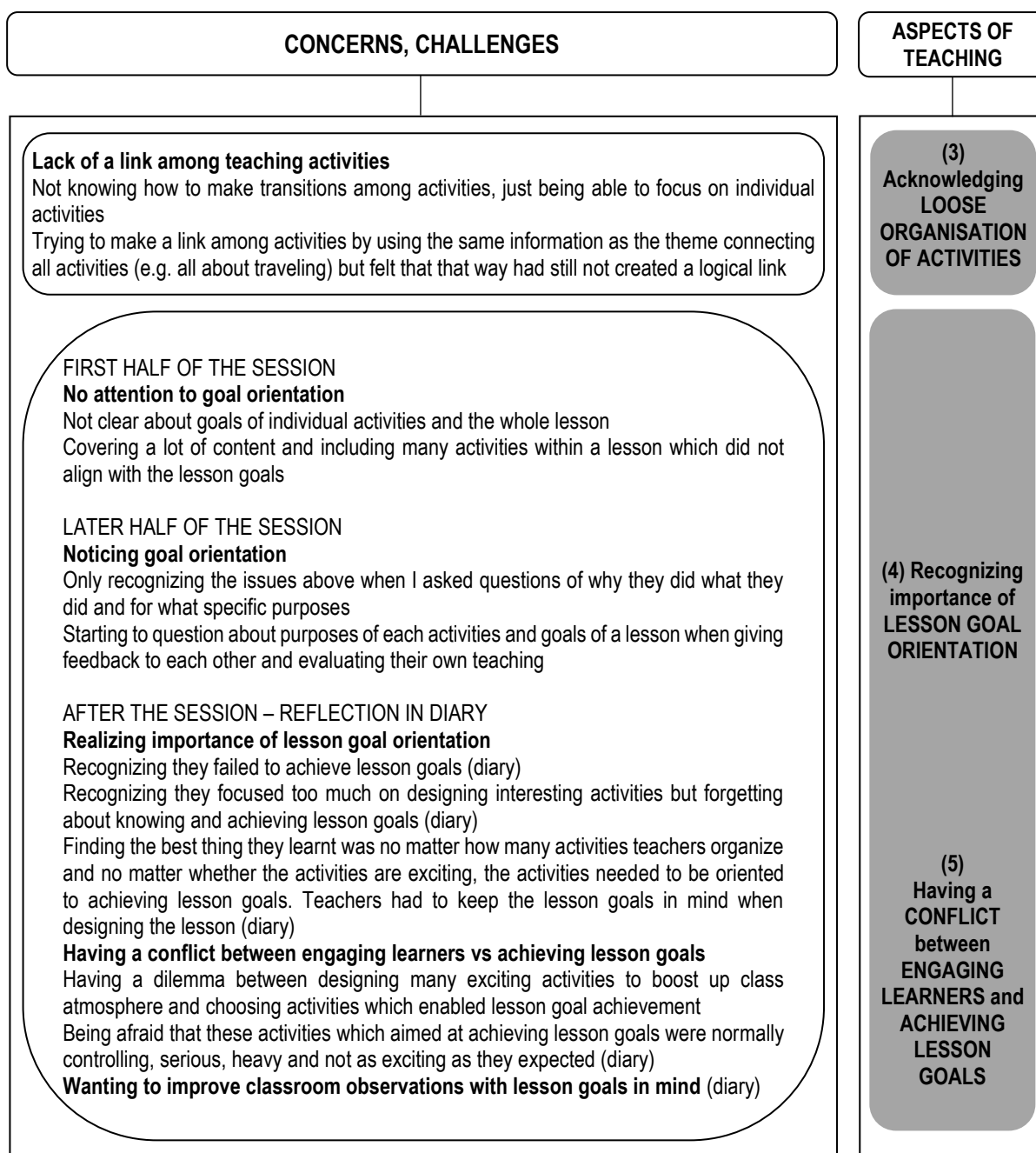
The aspects that experienced change in the cohort's thinking included:

- (1) Acknowledging little attention to learners' task performance (use of the target language) in practice while it had been focused in the previous group discussion over their classroom observation.
- (2) Acknowledging little attention and understanding in learner learning processes.
- (3) Acknowledging lacking a link among activities which was related to the organisation of teaching steps.
- (4) Recognising the importance of lesson goal orientation.
- (5) Having a conflict between engaging learners and achieving lesson goals.

These aspects will be discussed below.

Figure 25 – The cohort's concerns during peer teaching practice

CONCERNS, CHALLENGES	ASPECTS OF TEACHING
<p>CONCERNED ABOUT:</p> <p>Inadequate language proficiency Unprofessional self-presentation Soft voices, unprofessional presence (walking, gestures), difficult to control discourse and gestures in class (diary), needing self-confidence in public (diary)</p> <p>Poor classroom management Needing to improve instructions and explanations (discussion + diary) Having poor ability in anticipating possible situations in classrooms (diary)</p> <p>Learner management Worried about large-size class (diary) Not having effective interaction with learners Slow in responding learners' questions which they have not prepared for, which would make them feel petrified and puzzled "rối" (diary)</p> <p>Poor preparation of lesson Having poor preparation of teaching materials and content Lacking lesson rehearsal, which influenced efficiency of teaching (diary)</p> <p>Difficulties in conducting teaching activities Ineffectively organizing, conducting, managing teaching activities Wanting to design interesting activities, but the activities involved complicated steps and rules (diary) Having ineffective leading/warm-up which ineffectively led learners to the lesson</p>	<p>Focusing on TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE</p>
<p>Learners' observable engagement, exciting games/activities, exciting class atmosphere Finding it a big challenge to make learners perform their tasks in front of class Having an in-depth negotiation about whether and how to organize task performance in front of class after learners practiced the task in pair/group Very concerned about creating interesting and new activities to engage learners Wanting to design interesting activities beyond course books but it was difficult to find or create such activities (diary) Perceiving creating relaxed classroom atmosphere and bringing out learners' enjoyment as important criteria of effective teaching (diary)</p> <hr/> <p>Few opportunities for learners' use of the target language While giving feedback to each other, realizing that they had focused on covering a lot of content, not on giving learners opportunities to work, on how learners performed tasks, or on how to give them feedback on their performance</p> <hr/> <p>Over-emphasis on fun activities rather than on learners' learning Focusing on the fun of class activities, not on whether the activities fit learners' abilities and brought about learner learning</p> <p>Puzzle of how learning processes happen and how to make it happen Finding it difficult to assess learner understanding & how to make them understand First time hearing about SLA in the previous group discussion</p> <p>Insensitivity towards learners' learning difficulties and needs Not aware of learners' learning difficulties, e.g. those involved in their limited knowledge of the target culture, until getting feedback from other cohort members</p> <p>Lack of connection among teaching vs learning</p>	<p>Focusing on LEARNER OBSERVABLE ENGAGEMENT</p> <hr/> <p>(1) Acknowledging little attention to LEARNER PERFORMANCE</p> <hr/> <p>(2) Acknowledging little attention & understanding of LEARNER LEARNING PROCESSES</p>



(1) Little attention to “learner performance”

In spite of having realised the importance of being more learner-focused in the previous group discussion, the teaching cohort members in this peer teaching practice acknowledged that most of their attention had been drawn to their teaching performance. They said that they were overwhelmed with many worries about their inadequate language proficiency, unprofessional self-presentation, and lack of experience in managing classrooms. In particular, they said that they had to make sure to implement the set of teaching activities that they had planned for the lesson. They said that all those

concerns took their attention away from giving learners opportunities and time to perform learning tasks and use the target language.

“Learner performance”, which had been not mentioned in the cohort’s report of their classroom observations but then was identified in their reflection on the criteria of effective teaching and observation, was now neglected in their practice of teaching. It showed that without conscious awareness, the cohort did not pay much attention to this aspect in their practice of observing classrooms or teaching.

(2) Little attention to “learner learning processes”

When they practised delivering their lessons, the three student teachers recognised a big challenge in the gap between them and learners. They said that when teaching, they found it hard to know whether learners understood what they taught and how to respond if they did not understand. They claimed that, while whether learners were engaged and motivated could be observed, whether learners understood the lesson and whether learners actually learnt something out of it was difficult to observe. These three members as well as Xuan, who did not teach but still joined with us, acknowledged that they had heard of the concept of second language acquisition for the first time in our last group discussion. They came to realise that knowing whether and how learners learnt was important but also difficult for them.

I asked the cohort what they had learnt about learners’ learning process in the previous teaching methodology course. They claimed that their ignorance of the “learner learning” dimension in the practicum was due to the lack of focus on this dimension in the teaching methodology courses. In those courses, they were given opportunities to conduct a few micro-teaching sessions in which they practised teaching some language materials and skills to their classmates. They shared that the trainers usually gave feedback on their teaching performance but rarely on whether their teaching brought about learners’ learning. They assumed that because the learners were their classmates who did their best to support their teaching and of course understood the lessons, their trainers did not emphasise the dimension of learners’ learning.

Reflecting on this peer teaching in their diaries, the four cohort members who attended this peer teaching wrote that being aware of importance of the “learner learning” dimension was one of the most important realizations in the practicum so far.

(3) Loose organisation of teaching activities

During the first week of classroom observations, the cohort had noticed and appreciated the observed teachers' making smooth transitions among teaching steps. In this peer teaching practice, when they had to design and conduct their own teaching steps, they recognised that it was hard to create a link and transitions between their teaching steps. They realised that they just put the activities together by instinct without drawing on any particular principle and then they just carried them out by moving from one activity to another. During this discussion as well as in their diaries, all four student teachers expressed concern about how to create meaningful transitions between teaching steps of a lesson.

This aspect of a link across teaching steps was related to the aspect of “the logical organisation of teaching steps” that the cohort mentioned as a criterion of effective teaching in the previous group discussion.

Having transitions between logical steps of teaching was mentioned in the observation form (see a snapshot below); and so this could have had some impact on the student teachers' attention.

Figure 26 – A snapshot of the checklist in the classroom observation form

1	2	3	4	5	CONTENT OR SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE	
			✓		Appears knowledgeable about subject matter	Notes
				✓	Uses examples and/or illustrations to explain content	
			✓		Emphasizes major points during delivery of course content	
			✓		Assists students in the construction of their understanding	
				✓	Uses logical steps of teaching	
			✓		Have transition between steps	

(4) Recognition of lesson goal orientation

In leading discussion on each of the three cohort members' teaching, I raised questions about why they did what they did. Specifically, I asked them these four questions (in Vietnamese):

- ♦ What is your purpose of designing the first activity, the second activity, the third activity, etc.?
- ♦ Why did you organise the activities in that order but not in another order? Why activity 1 first and before activity 2?
- ♦ What is the goal of this lesson? How did you know the goal of the lesson?
- ♦ Do you think you have achieved the goal of this lesson?

The three teaching cohort members expressed difficulties in identifying purposes of their teaching activities and goals of their lessons. They referred to the sections in the textbook that they wanted to cover and said that they were their lesson goals. For instance, Huyen assumed that the goal of her lesson was to cover a speaking section for using the phrases to express disbelief and "I don't know". She designed some activities to help learners to use the target expressions. After watching Huy's teaching, she realised that her lesson was similar to Huy's, which covered two other sections preceding her section. But while Huy's sections introduced and gave learners controlled practice of these expressions, Huyen's was supposed to give learners free practice in speaking and using these expressions. Therefore, the goal of her lesson was supposed to be different and the activities that she chose did not align with that goal.

Moreover, by referring to the textbook sections as their teaching goals, their lesson goals were quite general rather than specific and measurable. For example, they knew that they would teach a reading passage in the textbook, but they did not know what reading skills (reading for gist, scanning, skimming, guessing reading content from titles and headings, etc.) they actually aimed to teach. They acknowledged that, as a consequence, they chose reading exercises and put them together according to their intuition rather than for the purpose of achieving any specific reading skills.

In all three teaching practice sessions, the student teachers could not clearly state specific purposes of each activity which they used. They shared that they did not think of this aspect of aligning activity objectives with lesson goals when designing and teaching their

lessons. They also admitted that some of the activities were chosen to create an exciting class atmosphere and attract learners rather than to serve any other purpose aligned with the lesson goals. This also explained why in their self-evaluation or evaluation of their peer's teaching, I did not hear them asking any questions or giving comments on whether they or their peers had achieved the objectives of the activities or the goals of the lessons.

In the latter half of the peer teaching practice, the cohort members paid more attention to the aspect of goal orientation. In giving feedback to each other, they put questions related to the goals of the lessons and purposes of the activities. In the last discussion after all the three members had finished their teaching, they also recognised the impact of their inattentiveness to goal orientation on their teaching. They said that one of their major teaching problems – covering too much content and including too many activities in a lesson – was because they did not identify the focus of a lesson and did not align their teaching with it. The third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs also recognised that identifying and sticking to the focus of a lesson helped them to be aware of why they chose some activities over others and helped them to cut down activities that did not align with the focus of the lesson. They added that this was one of the most important lessons that they had learnt after some years of teaching and they wished they had recognised earlier.

Reflecting on this peer teaching practice in their diaries, the four cohort members who were present in this peer teaching practice all said that lesson goal orientation was a new and important aspect of effective teaching. They came to the realization that even though they could manage to have interesting activities which could engage learners, their teaching would not be considered effective if they did not achieve lesson goals and did not help learners to achieve target learning outcomes. Along with learning process, the participants rated “goal orientation” as an important awareness that they had gained so far from the practicum and would want to put that into their practice in their next observation of classrooms in the second week.

(5) Learners' observable engagement vs lesson goal achievement

Despite recognising the importance of being goal-oriented for effectiveness of teaching and learning, the cohort members expressed an inner conflict between achieving goals and engaging learners in their diaries. They wrote that their first concern was always to be able to design many exciting activities to boost up class atmosphere and engage learners into their teaching. They were afraid that if they focused more on learning goals, they would need to reduce interesting activities and include more learning-focused activities which could be less exciting and engaging.

Summary of peer teaching practice

Reflecting on their teaching, the teaching cohort members realised that they had shifted their attention back to the aspects that they instinctively focused on – teaching performance and interesting activities for learners' observable engagement. They found that they had neglected the aspects that they had learnt to focus on – learners' tasks performance, learner autonomy, and learner learning. There were two reasons for this neglect that the cohort were aware of. First, they said that their minds were overwhelmed with many issues related to their teaching performance. This cognitive overload took their attention away from the newly learnt aspects even though in reflecting on their teaching they knew that these aspects were important for their teaching effectiveness. Second, the cohort reflected back on the micro-teaching sessions in the previous methodology courses and reported a lack of emphasis on learner learning. This did not encourage them to pay attention to this aspect, neither in the previous training, nor in this practicum.

In addition, these cohort members showed a concern about creating transitions between teaching steps and an organisation of the steps. However, they said that they still did not know how to do that. These were the two aspects that the cohort maintained their attention in this peer teaching practice. A possible factor for their maintained attention to these aspects could be the observation form in which these two dimensions were listed.

The aspect of 'lesson goals' and 'covering lesson content' had been mentioned in the previous group discussion but awareness in the cohort was low. In this peer teaching, the teaching cohort members acknowledged their difficulties in answering my questions of why they did what they did. They realised that they had not been aware of the importance

of identifying lesson goals, identifying the purposes of teaching activities and aligning them with the lesson goals, and evaluating their achievement of the lesson goals. They wrote in their diaries that the why-questions triggered their thinking about “being goal-oriented”, which was one of the most important aspects they had learnt in the practicum so far. However, these cohort members faced a conflict between designing activities that were interesting for learners’ emotional engagement and designing activities for achieving learning goals, which could be less interesting.

In brief, the cohort were discovering new aspects of teaching effectiveness: being “learner-focused” (especially “learner learning”) and “goal-oriented”. However, because of their major attention to their teaching performance and the impact of the previous training, they found it hard to fully understand and maintain their attention on these newly learnt aspects and apply them to their teaching.

5.4 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION WEEK #2

After the peer teaching practice, the cohort carried out the second week of classroom observation. At the end of this second week, the cohort and I had a group discussion in which they firstly reflected on what they had learnt so far and how that had influenced their classroom observation in the second week. After that, they reported what they had observed from the classrooms and discussed their observation.

The data revealed a mismatch between what they said they had learnt and should focus on and what they actually paid attention to, based on their report and discussion of their class observation.

Table 12 summarises the aspects of teaching that each cohort member said they should focus on (column 2) and those that they actually focused in their report of classroom observation (column 3). The table shows that, even though the cohort collectively came to new realizations about teaching – learners’ task performance, learner learning, lesson goal orientation, and logic of teaching steps — only some of them maintained their attention on these newly learnt aspects while others came back to their initial foci of attention – teacher performance and learners’ observable engagement.

Table 12 – The cohort's focus of attention in classroom observation week #2

MEMBERS	WHAT THEY SAID THEY SHOULD FOCUS ON	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY FOCUSED ON IN THEIR REPORT OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION
	SAY	DO
HUY	<p>GOAL Found that teaching was effective when it could achieve lesson goals</p>	<p>GOAL – LEARNER Did not appreciate teachers who delivered a lot of interesting knowledge like in talk shows but did not set clear targets to achieve or achieve the content in the course syllabus or make learners learn</p>
	<p>LEARNER LEARNING – GOAL Found that the most important thing of teaching was to make learners engaged, learn, and achieve the targets Believed SLA principles should be the criterion to evaluate effectiveness of teaching</p> <p>Reflected that previous microteaching did not promote student teachers' awareness of learner's learning but make them just focus on their teaching performance and teaching activities</p>	<p>LEARNER ACQUISITION Found that a teacher's teaching was ineffective because that teacher did not create opportunities for learners to work and use the target language in class, thus created little opportunity for SLA to happen Found that it was not enough just to create exciting activities but important to make learner work, study, and learn something</p> <p>LEARNERS' OBSERVABLE ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION Appreciated teachers who gave feedback in the way that encouraged learners to feel free to speak without being afraid of making mistakes. Found that way could "touch learners' hearts" (his English words) and thus very motivating</p>

	SAY	DO
THAO	<p>LEARNER Always believed that the most important thing that teachers needed to focus on was their learners</p>	<p>LEARNER PERFORMANCE, LEARNER ACQUISITION Was consistent when evaluating classrooms that teaching was not just delivering knowledge but to make learners work and learn Confirmed her belief that it did not matter whether a teacher's teaching was considered "pedagogical/ methodical" but essential that learners could master the lesson content.</p> <p>LEARNERS' OBSERVABLE ENGAGEMENT, MOTIVATION Appreciated teachers who gave positive and encouraging feedback to learners and believed that they must be experienced teachers in order to care about learners and know how to give constructive feedback without making learners feel ashamed or unconfident Clearly analysed how previous microteaching had discouraged novice teachers from noticing how learners felt and learnt</p>
	<p>Not mentioned: GOAL (Absent in peer teaching section in which goal aspect was raised)</p>	<p>Not mentioned: GOAL</p>

	SAY	DO
TRAM	GOAL Found that it was not enough to just have interesting activities like games but more important to help learners to achieve lesson goals and cover the content suggested in syllabus	GOAL Did not appreciate teachers who had interesting activities but did not achieve lesson goals
	TEACHER vs LEARNER INTERACTION TO ENGAGE LEARNERS Found that teachers should not just stand still and talk to learners but they also needed to control their body movements and ways of speaking in a way to attract learners and create cheerful atmosphere	TEACHER vs LEARNER INTERACTION TO ENGAGE LEARNERS Focused on and evaluated teachers' ways of talking and explaining lesson and whether their teaching was interesting and attractive to learners LEARNERS' TASK PERFORMANCE & GOAL Did not appreciate teachers who had interesting activities but did not achieve the main purpose of teaching – allowing learners to communicate in English as much as possible in class
	<i>Not mentioned:</i> LEARNER LEARNING	<i>Not mentioned:</i> LEARNER LEARNING

	SAY	DO
HUYEN	OBSERVATION SKILLS Learnt observation skills from other cohort members; did not have any observation skills before	
	GOAL Learned that achieving goals was important in teaching	
	LEARNER PERFORMANCE, LEARNER AUTONOMY Believe that teachers should let learners work in class and become autonomous	LEARNERS' OBSERVABLE ENGAGEMENT Believed that teachers needed to understand learners' psychology (i.e. feelings, needs) Appreciated teachers' use of games and interesting activities to motivate learners Appreciate teachers' relating lessons to learners' real-life needs
	TEACHER'S DELIVERING KNOWLEDGE Believed it was important for teachers to deliver good knowledge to learners and make them understand it	TEACHER Focused on teachers' self-presentation, classroom management, interaction with learners, delivering and lecturing helpful and interesting knowledge to learners
	<i>Not mentioned:</i> LEARNER LEARNING	<i>Not mentioned:</i> LEARNERS' TASK PERFORMANCE LEARNER LEARNING GOAL

	SAY	DO
VIEN		TEACHER Found it was fine if teachers needed to talk quite a lot to transmit helpful knowledge to low-level learners as long as they did not talk too much Still appreciated teachers who lectured about interesting topics even though learners did not speak much in class. Believed it was fine because the teachers were teaching English for specific purposes
	TEACHER to LEARNER Observed classrooms not only from teachers' perspective but also from learners' perspectives Focused on whether teaching activities suited learners' ability in understanding	LEARNERS' OBSERVABLE ENGAGEMENT Appreciated teachers who could inspire and motivate learners by creating a friendly atmosphere and good relation to learners Appreciated teachers who used games and exciting activities Appreciated teachers who tried to understand learners' psychology and needs, e.g. talking about their future career and how the course would help them with their future career Explained that previous microteaching in methodology courses discouraged students teachers from understanding learners
	<i>Not mentioned:</i> LEARNERS' TASK PERFORMANCE LEARNER LEARNING GOAL (attended the peer teaching but did not teach)	<i>Not mentioned:</i> LEARNERS' TASK PERFORMANCE LEARNER LEARNING GOAL

The cohort members' foci of attention are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13 – The cohort's attention to aspects of teaching during classroom observation week #2

Cohort members	INITIAL ASPECTS				NEWLY LEARNT ASPECTS							
	Teacher performance		Learners' observable engagement		Learners' task performance		Learner learning		Lesson goal orientation		Logic of teaching steps	
	Say	Do	Say	Do	Say	Do	Say	Do	Say	Do	Say	Do
Huy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Thao	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
Tram	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	X
Huyen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X
Vien	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

This table shows three important points. First, there were individual differences among the cohort members' thinking and practice. The data, especially their group discussions of the same lesson that all of them had observed revealed each cohort members' priorities. For example, Huy at this stage put lesson goal orientation as the main criterion for effectiveness of teaching while Vien maintained a belief that understanding learners' needs and engaging them affectively was the most important criterion of effective teachers. Second, some aspects were more challenging for the cohort to be aware of in their thinking and be put into their practice of observing and evaluating classrooms. They are highlighted in grey in the table above. They were also the aspects that they had not paid attention to at the beginning but learnt to pay more attention to through the discussions in groups.

Third, there was a dissonance between cognition and practice. For example, Huyen had been most concerned about interacting, managing, and engaging learners. She found herself lacking confidence in this aspect and always preferred to study with teachers who could engage and motivate learners. Therefore, even though she said and wrote that she had learnt two important things: focusing on learners' use of the target language and on lesson goal orientation, she actually focused her attention on teachers' engaging learners and based her evaluation of the teachers' teaching effectiveness on this aspect. Discussing a lesson that all of the cohort members had observed, she argued that the teacher had taught successfully because he was a great speaker who shared with learners helpful information and created a friendly and relaxing classroom atmosphere thanks to his interesting stories and jokes. Meanwhile, Tram pointed out that the teacher talked 90% of the time and 90% in Vietnamese. She believed that it was not an effective lesson because the learners sat and listened to his stories rather than using English and therefore both the teacher and learners did not achieve goals of this reading lesson.

Regarding what influenced the cohort's thinking, they mentioned again the lack of emphasis on learner learning in the previous methodology courses, which they found discouraged them from focusing on this important aspect.

5.5 TEACHING PRACTICE

Following the field trip was the teaching practice in which each cohort member went through a chain of diverse activities (see Figure 7, p. 59) and interaction with different people – the primary mentor, head supervisor, learners, each other, and me. The data collected from those activities revealed a number of salient issues that the cohort collectively encountered. They are summarised in Table 14 below.

Table 14 – The cohort’s report of salient issues in teaching practice

No	THE COHORT’S REPORT OF SALIENT ISSUES During Teaching Practice (And also the whole practicum for some issues)	FOCUS OF ATTENTION					GENERIC THINKING ABILITIES	SELF-LEADERSHIP
		Teacher performance	Learners’ observable engagement	Learner learning	Lesson goal orientation	Logic of teaching steps		
(1)	TEACHING PERFORMANCE vs LEARNER LEARNING							
a	Talking to myself and forgetting learners	✓	x	x				
b	Feeling I am an entertainer	✓	✓	x				
c	Not knowing how to give feedback for learners	✓		x				
d	Feeling fear of silence & allowing little waiting time	✓	✓	x				
e	Designing too easy questions	✓	✓	x				
f	Being puzzled about how to understand learner learning			✓				
(2)	LESSON GOAL ORIENTATION							
g	Being confused about 3 types of lesson goals required by the faculty and the primary mentor	✓			x			x
h	Setting teaching goals of completing textbook sections & completing lesson plans				x			x
i	Not aligning activities with goals				x			
j	“Being greedy”: covering too much in a lesson	✓	✓	x	x			
(3)	SEEING THE SYSTEM							
k	Finding it hard to create connection among teaching steps and transition between them			x	x	x	x	
(4)	SURFACE VS DEEP THINKING							
l	Constructing concept of “surface - deep thinking”	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
m	Figuring out how to achieve deeper thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(5)	PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY							
n	Challenging the role of theory in practice Challenging their reliance on their own experiences and intuition → “Both-and thinking” rather than “either-or” thinking						✓	✓
o	Challenging the requirement of following the curriculum							✓
p	Seeing communication barriers with authorities which hindered their learning to teach → Wishing for open and trusting dialogues							✓

In the table above, the second column presents the cohort's report of the issues that they encountered during the teaching practice and sometimes their reflection on the issues that they had experienced during the whole practicum. The next five columns on the right side present the relationship of each salient issue to the major aspects of teaching already identified from the classroom observations and peer teaching:

- ♦ Teacher performance.
- ♦ Learners' observable engagement.
- ♦ Learner learning.
- ♦ Lesson goal orientation.
- ♦ Logic of teaching steps.

The ticks show a positive relationship between the salient issues and the major aspects of teaching. The positive relationship means when dealing with a certain salient issue, they focused their attention on a particular aspect of teaching. The crosses show a negative relationship between the salient issues and the aspects. The negative relationship means, when dealing with a certain salient issue, they neglected a particular aspect of teaching that they had gained some awareness of before.

The last two columns relate the issues to the emergence of broader abilities – the ability to think about thinking and the sense of self-leadership in making decisions about their learning-to-teach and teaching processes. The ticks and crosses in these two last columns show the presense and absence respectively of these thinking abilities and sense of self-leadership in the cohort.

The first group of issues (a – f) included common teaching phenomena happening to the cohort and shared by the cohort themselves during their teaching practice. These issues revealed that the cohort was more concerned about their teaching performance, and engaging learners than about learner learning. Even when they had been aware of the importance of focusing on learner learning, they still found it hard to understand the processes of learner learning and to facilitate them. The second group of issues (g – j) were all relate to the challenge of goal setting and the lack of clarity in doing this. The third salient area - issue (k) can be related to taking a systemic perspective when looking at the teaching of a lesson. Struggling with these issues and reflecting on them constantly throughout the practicum, the cohort came up with a construction of concepts of surface vs deep thinking and of ways to achieve deeper thinking in teaching. This fourth group of

issues (l-m) was similar to the concept of a hierarchy of attention emerging from the stories told by the three ECTs in their later years of teaching. This meta-thinking development revealed the emergence of generic thinking skills beside domain-specific ones. By the end of the practicum, the cohort also became more reflective about their professional role. This fifth group of issues (n – p) was also an important growth in their sense of professional identity. Again, the generic thinking strategy of both-and thinking was found important to resolve the cohort's major conflicts of "theory vs practice" and "self vs theory".

I will now describe each of these salient issues of the cohort's teaching practice.

(1) TEACHER PERFORMANCE VS LEARNER LEARNING

(a) Talking to myself and forgetting learners

A common phenomenon among the cohort members was "talking to myself and forgetting learners". The cohort realised that they had a tendency to talk and explain too much as if they were playing the lesson plan in their minds without noticing their learners' responses or providing opportunities for them to respond. They explained that they did that because they wanted to make sure everything went smoothly as they had planned. They were afraid that if they allowed anything unexpected to bother them or if learners asked them unexpected questions, they would be slowed down and not be able to execute their lesson plans on time.

For instance, in one of her teaching sessions, Thao used a video to introduce the topic of the lesson that she was going to teach. Before playing the video about a place, Thao put a question to the learners about where this place was. After the video clip finished, instead of inviting the learners to guess the place, she herself identified typical landmarks of the place that were shown in the video and then told them the name of this place. After that, she told them that they would now listen to a conversation that took place in that place and then moved on to teaching the conversation. Teaching the conversation, she followed the procedure that she planned in her lesson plan. First, she let the learners to listen to the conversation while they read it. Then she asked them a question about the conversation to check their understanding. However, no one responded to her. She noticed that the learners were either not engaged or not able to answer the questions; therefore, she showed the next questions on the screen but answered them herself. After going through all the

questions, she asked the learners to listen to the conversation again and paused after each sentence/chunk for them to repeat it. However, the sentences/chunks were too long for the whole class to repeat chorally. Rather than doing something about that, she continued this activity until they went through the whole conversation.

In an individual talk between her and me, she told me that she was too controlling to be flexible to learners' responses and difficulties. She explained that there were so many steps that she had to remember and conduct in the lesson; therefore, she could not pause to wait for the learners' answers. If they could not answer or refused to cooperate, she would run out of time and fail to complete her lesson. She acknowledged that she usually focused a lot on conducting the lessons and this made her look like she was talking to herself rather than to her learners. This was a common phenomenon reported by all the cohort members in their teaching practice.

(b) Feeling I am an entertainer

Another common phenomenon among the student teachers' teaching practice was their wish to entertain learners. They all believed that teaching needed to be fun, class atmosphere needed to be convivial, and learners needed to feel happy and attracted to the lesson in order to learn effectively.

One of the examples of this phenomenon was Huyen's first teaching session. There were 3 hours in each class; a cohort peer covered the first hour, she the second, and another peer the third. Noticing that the learners in this class were passive in the first hour, as soon as her peer finished her teaching, Huyen literally jumped up to the front of the classroom and said "hi" to the learners with a very loud voice in an aim to stirring up the class atmosphere. She maintained the volume of her speaking, kept smiling and sometimes laughing out loud. She started the lesson with a game in which learners were asked to name the world's wonders that appeared one by one in a video. As she let the video play without pausing, the wonders appeared very fast. Therefore, for each wonder, she could get only one answer from one learner and she had to provide the correct answer right away before the next wonder appeared. In some cases, no learners called out any answers, she still provided the correct answers. During about 4 minutes of the game, she was the one who worked the hardest while few among around 50 learners gave any answer. When we reflected over this activity in our individual talk, Huyen acknowledged that the game was not effective for learning but effective for creating a better atmosphere of the class which

had been quite gloomy. Her job was to perform the game in an exciting way to attract the learners.

Other cohort members also acknowledged one of their main purposes in each lesson was to attract and entertain learners. For example, Vien used songs and jokes to make learners laugh and engaged into her lessons. Huy had a great sense of humor and good storytelling skill which he used in every lesson to make his learners feel happy, relaxed, and attracted to his teaching. Tram was the “quietest” student teacher in the cohort. She was said by the mentor and other cohort members to have a “serious and sad face” (“mặt nghiêm và buồn”) which made the learners feel wrongly that she was unhappy and difficult. This was the issue that worried her during all her teaching practice and even when she reflected on the whole the practicum and on her future teaching career. She also believed that engaging learners was very important and thus was upset about her difficulty in entertaining them. She tried her best to create competitive group-work games to make her learners feel happy.

In addition, the cohort also acknowledged that they excessively used rewards like scores and candy to motivate learners. The reasons that they gave for that was to motivate learners whom they had no legitimate power over and whom they had not developed any relationship with before. They were just trainees and only a few years older than the learners. The cohort expressed their serious worry about not being able to engage learners or manage them; and they all believed that using games or exciting activities and rewards were effective ways to attract learners and encourage them to cooperate with them.

(c) Poor feedback

In the phenomena described above, the cohort devoted their attention to teaching performance and thus did not have time or avoided responding to learners’ answers or questions. This caused another issue that all the cohort member encountered during all of their lessons. All of them admitted that they usually forgot to give feedback or gave poor feedback to their learners in every lesson.

For instance, the student teachers shared that they did not give any specific feedback on learners’ speaking performance. After pairs or groups of learners performed their tasks in front the class, the student teachers often gave very general feedback like “Good. Thank you. I will give you a score of 8” and then invited the next pair or group or moved on to another activity. They did not know what kind of feedback to give to the learners. Sometimes they even forgot to give feedback altogether.

The mentor in the meetings also pointed out that this was a repeated issue that she found in the cohort's teaching practice. She remarked that the student teachers only provided very simple feedback like "Correct" or "Incorrect" and then provided correct answers to learners. They neither asked learners to elaborate their answers nor explained to learners why their answers were wrong or right. The cohort agreed with her comment in the meetings and also when reflecting over the mentor's feedback in their diaries. However, even after having been reminded by the mentor, the cohort still struggled with giving feedback to learners.

When I asked the cohort why giving feedback was a repeated challenge for them, they said that it could be because they were too anxious about completing their lessons under the pressure of time. When they asked learners questions or asked them to perform a task, they were executing what they had planned to do. During the time the learners were providing answers or performing tasks, they had to remember their lesson plans to know what to do next. Therefore, they could not pay their full attention to what the learners said. That was why they usually did not remember learners' answers or performance to give any specific feedback to them. However, even when learners gave written answers on the board, the cohort said that it was still difficult for them to give helpful detailed feedback to learners. They even sometimes did not spot learners' mistakes in their answers and only their peers or the mentor saw the mistakes.

The cohort explained that the pressure of time and the anxiety of performing in front of others hindered them from carefully looking at the learners' answers. The cohort's problems with giving feedback revealed their major focus of attention on their teaching performance and also their inattention to how learners used the target language and how they learnt. In the case study, Huy also told me another important reason for this issue that he recognised in his first-year teaching. It was that their difficulty in providing detailed feedback was also caused by lack of awareness of the main purpose(s) of that activity.

(d) Fear of silence

Another salient issue for the cohort in their teaching practice was their fear of silence in class. The cohort was anxious when the class was silent because they considered that as evidence of lack of learners' enjoyment and cooperation as result of boring teaching. The student teachers said that they preferred teaching vocabulary and speaking skills because they could create exciting activities that contributed to the class atmosphere. All of them

were afraid of teaching grammar, listening, reading, and writing because learners would need to do written exercises, listen, read, or write, which would make the class atmosphere boring. Even when they were assigned to teach these kinds of lessons, for example in a reading lesson, they always spent a lot of class time on pre-reading in which they organised games to introduce reading topics and new vocabulary and also post-reading when they created speaking activities about the reading topics. They said that these exciting activities helped them to motivate learners and showed that they were interesting teachers.

The fear of silence, according to the cohort's reflection, also made them feel anxious whenever learners were unable to answer their questions. At those moments, they had to keep repeating the questions, or asked other learners to answer, or provided the answers to the class. They admitted that learners' silence might show that their teaching was not effective or could slow down their teaching which might not enable them to complete their lessons on time. As a result, the waiting time for learners' thinking and responding was very little and sometimes was not given at all.

These phenomena may show that the student teachers were so concerned about their teaching performance, exciting class atmosphere, and completion of lesson plans that they paid less attention to learners' information processing or learning.

(e) Too easy questions

The cohort often talked about a challenge in anticipating learners' language levels and learning abilities. This challenge caused difficulties for them in designing appropriate lessons, activities, or questions that could fit learners' levels. In the meetings, the mentor often commented that the student teachers asked too easy questions. She suggested they design more challenging questions so that learners could think more and learn more.

When we analysed this issue in our group discussions, the cohort said that they could not identify learners' learning abilities and thus they had to go for a safe option. They chose to ask easy questions so that the learners would be able to answer; otherwise, learners might feel frustrated and avoid cooperating with them. From the cohort's perspective, learners' enjoyment and cooperation were very important because they were evidence of "successful teaching" ("bài dạy thành công").

Nevertheless, after receiving the mentor's feedback about the difficulty level of their questions, the cohort still could not make better questions. They explained that they did

not know how to design more challenging questions. When designing questions, for a reading lesson for example, they often used the same language that could be found in the reading to phrase the questions. Therefore, the questions only required learners to look for the exact words in the reading rather than guessing or making inferences. This problem remained until the end of the practicum even though both the mentor and the student teachers were aware of it. One of the ten practicum mentors that I interviewed found that another reason for this problem was because the student teachers did not set specific goals for their questions or activities. He therefore trained his student teachers to make use of Bloom's taxonomy to set specific goals for questions or activities of different levels of difficulty.

This phenomenon may show that the student teachers still focused more on learners' affective and behavioural engagement. It was still a challenge for them to notice, understand, and promote learners' higher-order thinking and acquisition. A more detailed example and analysis of this issue will be presented in the case study of Huy, one of the cohort members (see CHAPTER 6).

(f) How to understand learner learning

Another common issue that was related to the issue of "too easy questions" was the cohort's puzzle in knowing whether learners understood and learnt the content they taught. This was the problem that all the cohort members raised in our group discussions, individual talks, and their diaries during their teaching practice. They admitted that while it was easier to know whether learners enjoyed the lessons, it was too difficult to know what was actually going in learners' minds. Whenever they gave an instruction, they looked at their learners who showed no clear attitudes and felt worried. Therefore, they had a tendency to repeat the instruction and even translated it into Vietnamese to make sure the learners could understand.

When designing lessons, the student teachers were also worried about whether learners could understand and learn the content they would teach and how to know that they understood and acquired the content. The cohort also thought that maybe the large size of the classes made it difficult for them to understand each learner's learning. They also explained that they just visited a particular class and taught a lesson for only 50 minutes; therefore, it was impossible for them to check whether the learners of that class learnt and remembered the content that they taught after a week or a month. This concern showed

that even when the cohort was aware of the importance of understanding learners' learning processes and acquisition, it was still a challenge for them.

All of the phenomena above showed that the student teachers at this stage put their teaching performance first, which limited any attention to the learning aspect. Their lack of knowledge about learners' learning as well as the teaching-learning context also made it more difficult for the student teachers to focus on this aspect in their teaching practice.

(2) LESSON GOAL ORIENTATION

(g) Three types of lesson goals

Setting specific goals was also a challenge for all the cohort members. This issue was also mentioned by the ECTs.

In addition, reading the email exchanges between the cohort members and their primary mentor as well as listening to the mentor's feedback about their teaching, I found little discussion about goal setting and achievement. The mentor only commented on whether the student teachers had all three kinds of goals and whether they covered the sections they were assigned to teach. Through to the end of the practicum, the student teachers mentioned that setting three types of goals was a challenging but unhelpful task.

(h) Covering the textbook sections – Completing lesson plans

When I asked them if they did not find setting three types of goals was helpful, then what they had done for setting goals. They said that to identify lesson goals, they just needed to look at the sections in the course book that they were assigned to teach by the mentor. The sections would tell them what they needed to cover and therefore they were the goals of the lesson. My document analysis showed, however, that the English course books that were used at that time did not state clearly specific purposes of a section. For example, for a reading section, the course books usually provided a reading text and some comprehension questions. Therefore, the cohort only knew generally about language skills or language points to teach rather than more specific objectives. It was the same in the course syllabi. The syllabi prescribed sections in the course book(s) that teachers should cover in each lesson so that at end of a course, teachers would cover certain chapters of the textbook. Even though the syllabi also described learning outcomes that the courses aimed to help learners to achieve, these learning outcomes were general.

The third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs also raised this issue. They graduated from this university and were also teaching in the university when I met them. They found that the English curriculum and syllabi for non-major learners were based on the course books rather than on objectives. That was what they wanted to change if they were empowered to do so.

As a consequence of setting goals based on the course book(s), the cohort perceived that completing the assigned sections and completing the lesson plans meant that they had achieved lesson goals. Moreover, the cohort reported that the primary mentor always emphasised the importance of covering all the assigned sections in the course book and completing teaching that was in the lesson plans, when she gave feedback on their lesson plans and their teaching effectiveness. They said that in the lessons when they could not manage to teach some parts of their lesson plans, the primary mentors always pointed it out and gave lower scores for their teaching. They said that they had been trying to live up to this expectation of their primary mentor.

(i) Aligning activities with goals

Knowing only general goals of a lesson by relying on the assigned sections in the textbook, the cohort expressed difficulties in justifying their choices of teaching activities. For instance, Huy and Vien were assigned to teach the same section on reading, but in two different classes. This section in the textbook included a short magazine article and a few follow-up comprehension questions. Huy and Vien used this article but designed more comprehension questions and other activities such as vocabulary and speaking activities for their lessons.

In a group discussion in which they reflected on this lesson, both Huy and Vien said that they had achieved the lesson goal of teaching learners to read and understand that article. When I asked them for their purposes of writing each of these comprehension questions and putting them in the order that they chose, they realised that they had not had any specific purposes but just a general goal of helping learners to understand the article. The group discussion helped them to remember that reading included various skills such as reading for gist, scanning, skimming, guessing meanings of new words, etc. and that they should have been aware of specific reading skills that they wanted their learners to practise. Likewise, they should also have been aware of specific purposes of the vocabulary and speaking activities that they included in this reading lesson.

Another common issue that all of the cohort encountered was that their warm-up activities were sometimes not related to their lesson content at all. Reflecting on this, they said that they were not sure about whether warm-up activities had to align with the lesson content or they just needed to be icebreakers. Also, the cohort acknowledged that sometimes their games were just for fun rather than serving any specific objectives.

The group discussions on these kinds of issues helped the cohort to realise that it was not enough to just have general ideas about what to cover in each lesson. They learnt that not setting specific goals for a lesson would result in not having specific objectives for each teaching-learning activity. As a result, teaching activities might not align with lesson goals, and lesson goals might not be achieved.

(j) “Being greedy”

Another consequence of not setting specific goals for a lesson and not being oriented to the lesson goals was the cohort’s covering too much in a lesson or being “greedy” (“tham lam”, “đạy nhiều”). This was a repeated problem happening to all the cohort members in all of their teaching sessions.

Reflecting on this teaching issue, the cohort justified that they needed to show their creativity and teaching ability by having a diversity of creative activities and these activities should be different from those in the textbooks. They searched for teaching ideas from the Internet, the teachers they observed, their peers, and their own experiences and creativity. After that they tried to fit into a lesson as many games and activities as possible in order to interest their learners and thus to convince the mentor of their exciting and effective teaching. Also, because they were not sure how much learners had known about a particular language point, they tried to teach as much as possible so that learners could have enough knowledge of that point.

Planning to include so many activities in a 50-minute lesson, the cohort themselves saw that they often ran out of time and this became a fear and pressure on their following lessons. This fear made them go through activities too quickly, become “clumsy” (their English word), forget small steps in the lesson plans, forget to give feedback to learners, and did not give learners enough time for them to do exercises or perform tasks.

The mentor also noticed this repeated issue and suggested them to cut down activities for their following lessons. However, the cohort shared in the group discussions that they

struggled to decide which activities to get rid of. They said that it was so difficult to cut down the activities that they had put a lot of effort in designing. Even though in the peer teaching practice, the cohort had already recognised that this problem was caused by their lack of being oriented to specific lesson goals, they still struggled with this issue during the whole teaching practice.

This issue was also raised by the third, fourth, and fifth ECTs. They remarked that if they could give any advice to student teachers, they would suggest to them not be to “greedy” (“tham lam”) and to focus only on main objectives of a lesson. Huy in the case study as well as the mentors that I interviewed also claimed that this was a typical issue that student teachers had and also pointed out the underlying cause of this cause was the underdeveloped ability of being lesson-goal oriented.

The four salient teaching issues – setting three types of goals, covering the textbook sections and completing lesson plans, aligning activities with lesson goals, and covering too much in a lesson – all revealed the cohort’s low awareness of the concept of lesson goal orientation.

(3) SEEING THE SYSTEM

(k) Seeing separate activities

During the field trip, the cohort always noticed and appreciated teachers who could make smooth transitions among their teaching activities. All of them believed that creating such smooth and natural transitions was “an art” (their English word). When reflecting on criteria for effective teaching and effective observation of classrooms, the cohort also emphasised the organisation of teaching steps and transition among them as important criteria. However, they admitted that they still could not explain how the teachers could create such transitions. This puzzle remained in their teaching practice. All of them faced a challenge of how to make activities of a lesson connected with each other and how to create effective transitions among them.

The practicum mentors saw this difficulty in seeing the system of connected learning-teaching goals as a lack of lesson goal orientation. They thought that because student teachers were not aware of aligning activities with lesson goals, they could not see the connection and progressive development of activities. Huy, the case study subject, later

suggested that the difficulty in creating a logical and meaningful smooth transition between teaching steps was caused by his lack of understanding “scaffolding learners’ learning” and of a sense of “lesson goal orientation”. I explore this further in the case study in chapter 6.

(4) SURFACE VS DEEP THINKING

(1) “Surface vs deep” aspects of teaching

The cohort’s construction of core aspects of effective teaching described above revealed one important pattern of the cohort’s thinking. While some aspects that came to the student teachers’ attention automatically and instinctively, some others were learnt through experiences, reflection, and group dynamics. These learnt aspects were more difficult for them to see, understand, and put into practice.

The cohort members themselves realised this pattern. They coined the two terms “surface” (“bề nổi, bề ngoài, hào nhoáng”, their Vietnamese and English words) and “deep” (“bề sâu, sâu sắc, chiều sâu”, their Vietnamese and English words) to describe their automatic and effortful foci of attention. In general, the cohort recognised during the practicum that they only focused on surface aspects of teaching and believed that there must be deeper and more important aspects that they had not seen clearly yet.

The first time these terms were mentioned was in an individual talk between me and Huy after his second teaching practice session. He used the term “surface level” to address this attention to the more obvious aspects such as his voice, interaction with learners, or a friendly and open manner. He thought that surface-level aspects were easier for him to see and probably not critical enough. He found that learners also looked at these surface aspects of teachers. A deeper aspect in his opinion was something more “professional” and “pedagogical”.

These terms were then mentioned by other members of the cohort. In the group discussion after their third week of teaching practice, the cohort claimed that teachers’ surface-level thinking resulted in learners’ surface learning. For instance, at a surface level, teachers designed reading activities in which reading questions required learners just to look at exact words in the reading text to answer the questions. In order to achieve a deeper level of learning, they said that reading questions needed to challenge learners’ thinking (“tu

duy”). In other words, learners needed to think and make references in order to answer reading questions. However, all the cohort members were not still able to clearly and surely define or name deep aspects that they were looking for. After this group discussion, the cohort conducted their fourth teaching practice session which was also the last one.

At the end of the practicum, in their reflection papers and the interviews, all the cohort members used those terms “surface” and “deep” again to discuss the level of their thinking. That happened when the cohort reflected on the most important things that they had learnt from the practicum.

Thao talked about the key criteria of effective teaching that she had learnt. They were:

- ♦ Deep: Learners learnt autonomously what teachers wanted to teach – the “above all” criterion.
- ♦ Surface: Teaching activities were “trumpety” (hào nhoáng), showy but of little value.
- ♦ Deep: Teaching activities were for learners’ actual learning.
- ♦ Deep: Interaction between teachers and learners
- ♦ Deep: Logical organisation of teaching steps: scaffolding for learners’ learning

She also added one important thing that she and her cohort members had learnt in this practicum and that she found missing in other cohorts. It was a way of teaching “subtly / tacitly” (“tinh tế”). Teaching “tinh tế” meant that teaching activities were not just games for fun, but they had purposes and the purposes were for learners’ learning.

- ♦ Deep: Goal – having and achieving purposes of each activity, purposes for learners’ learning

The key words in the aspects that Thao considered deeper were “learner learning”, “logic of teaching steps that scaffolding learner learning”, and “goals which were for learning”.

Similarly, Huy claimed that the two most important things that he had learnt in the practicum were “achieving goals” and “focusing on learners”.

- ♦ Deep: Goal achievement
- ♦ Deep: Learner aspect

In contrast to Thao, within the learner aspect, Huy still believed that making learners enjoy his teaching was still important to him. At the same time, he also noted the common realization of the whole cohort that achieving goals was more important than creating an

exciting class atmosphere or making learners happy. According to Huy, learners' enjoyment, learner learning, and goal achievement were all important to him even though learner learning, and goal achievement were deeper aspects.

- ♦ Surface but still necessary: Learners' enjoyment and feeling happy

Commenting on Huy's emphasis on learners' enjoyment in the individual interview, Tram expressed a worry that sometimes such activities were on the surface because they were for an exciting classroom atmosphere. She found it was quite "childish" ("trẻ con") because they did not contain deep dimensions. She also believed that that way of teaching might be effective only in this teaching practicum, not in the real-life teaching in the future.

- ♦ Surface: Teaching activities which are aimed at creating an exciting class atmosphere

Talking about her thinking development, she shared the most important realization that she had gained was her increasing awareness of the importance of "goal achievement". Before this practicum, she had no idea about setting and achieving purposes and goals. Due to her failures in the first few teaching sessions, she recognised that she was going off track and not achieving what she was supposed to.

- ♦ Deep: Goal achievement

Vien defined deep aspects in similar ways. She had gained two important realizations: one, about whether teaching activities aligned with lesson goals, and two, about whether activities suited learners' learning levels.

- ♦ Deep: Purposes of teaching activities aligning with lesson goals
- ♦ Deep: Teaching activities suiting learners' learning levels

Huyen shared that she learnt a lot from talking with other cohort members through the practicum. She could see that the cohort in general had moved from surface thinking to deeper thinking; however, she admitted that she was still overly concerned about surface aspects. In her opinion, it was on the surface when teachers only focused on the class atmosphere. It was also just on the surface when teachers organised group work activities which actually involved only a few learners and which did not promote deep learning.

- ♦ Surface: Exciting class atmosphere
- ♦ Surface: Exciting teaching activities following modern teaching methods but not achieving purposes or promoting deep learning

- ♦ Deep: Teaching activities which promoted deep learning

Huyen's opinions were similar to Huy's. They both agreed on what deeper aspects were but at the same time acknowledged their need to focus on more surface aspects at this stage of their learning to teach processes.

(m) Achieving deeper thinking

During the practicum and also in the end-of-practicum interviews, the cohort also explored why deeper thinking was harder to achieve and how to achieve it.

Table 15 puts together all the definitions of surface and deep aspects by all the cohort members together with their opinions about how to achieve deeper thinking.

Table 15 – The cohort's construction of surface & deep aspects of teaching

SURFACE VS DEEP ASPECTS OF TEACHING		
LEVEL	DIMENSION	ASPECT
SURFACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Teaching activities which were “trumpety” (hào nhoáng), not showy but of little value ♦ Teaching activities which aimed for creating excitement of class atmosphere ♦ Exciting teaching activities following modern teaching methods but not achieving purposes or promoting deep learning 	* TEACHER PERFORMANCE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Learners' enjoyment and feeling happy 	* LEARNER'S OBSERVABLE ENGAGEMENT
DEEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Learners learn autonomously what teachers want to teach – the “above all” criterion ♦ Teaching activities suiting learners' learning levels ♦ Teaching activities were for learners' actual learning ♦ Teaching activities which promoted deep learning ♦ Interaction between teachers and learners 	* LEARNER LEARNING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Goal achievement ♦ Purposes of activities aligning with lesson goals ♦ Achieving purposes of each activity, for learners' learning 	* LESSON GOAL ORIENTATION + Learner Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Logical organisation of teaching steps: scaffolding for learners' learning 	* LOGIC + Learner Learning
TO HAVE DEEP THINKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Asking why teachers made a particular decision and whether and why they would make the same decision ♦ Justification of why to choose a particular teaching activity ♦ Skepticism of effectiveness of teaching activities before adopting them ♦ Detailed and careful observations with careful note taking ♦ Comparison and contrast among different perspectives ♦ Ability to articulate their thoughts ♦ Listening to others' judgements to have better judgements ♦ Openness to criticism 	

The cohort's collective recognition of different levels of thinking is evidence of a significant movement in their thinking. The movement was triggered by their experiences of

observing classrooms and teaching, their primary teacher's feedback, and their reflection in group discussions, in their diaries, in their individual talks with me, and in the end-of-practicum interviews with me. While all accepted there were different levels of thinking, the relative weight given to the surface and deep aspects of teaching varied with individuals. The case study in Chapter 6 will explore one individual in detail.

(5) PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

(n) Self vs theory

Mismatches between teaching theory and real-life teaching were always a major concern to all the cohort members. While applying pedagogical knowledge to teaching practice was one of the most important purposes of the practicum as perceived by the faculty, this was not always the view of the student teachers. They held different opinions about the application of teaching theory. Some rejected it; some adhered to it. Some rejected the applicability of teaching theories but still sometimes tried to conform to them. However, they all said they would have to follow these teaching theories, otherwise, the primary mentor would think that their teaching was not “professional” (“chuyên môn” meaning having methods rather than just intuition), not meeting teaching standards, and thus not effective. Regarding the application of teaching theories, adopting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was one of the issues that bothered all the cohort members the most.

In lesson planning, the cohort were asked to name teaching methodology(ies) that they were using for a particular lesson. All of them put in CLT and confessed their uncertainty of this choice. They admitted that they did not remember much about teaching methodologies, so the reason why they chose CLT was just because of its popularity and the trainers' preferences for this methodology. The cohort said that CLT was said to be the best and the most modern teaching approach and also the only teaching approach that they practised using during their previous training in teaching methodologies.

In the group discussions and individual talks after their teaching, they reported that they were not so sure about whether their lessons' structure and activities and their conduction of the lessons followed CLT. Nevertheless, they believed that the lessons somehow did. From their memories, they assumed that CLT meant using the target language, games,

group work, and pair work and creating a lot of interaction in class which they managed to do in their lessons. However, attending their meetings with their mentor, I found that the mentor usually commented that some of their activities did not provide information gaps to promote authentic communication. Nevertheless, she as well as the cohort did not discuss further why that issue happened or how to solve it and did not discuss teaching methodologies either.

The cohort seemed not to be bothered by their lack of knowledge of teaching methodologies because they told me that they still designed and taught the lessons based on their intuition anyway. The teaching practice was the time when they were too busy and needed to focus on teaching performance rather than applying knowledge of teaching pedagogy into their practice. Such little comprehension of teaching methodologies resulted in their reliance on their personal practical knowledge and intuitions.

Their choice of CLT and the reasons given also reflected their professional identity. They were still working towards meeting the perceived expectations of their mentor and the faculty. They also chose a teaching methodology due to its popularity among the people in the field. Sometimes they expressed concerns about whether CLT really worked well in their actual teaching contexts, especially in teaching English for specific purposes and when learners' levels were too low. However, the appeal to authority and popularity dominated in this stage of their learning to teach processes.

Having finished the practicum, all the cohort members, again, expressed a wish to understand more about teaching pedagogy for several reasons. Firstly, they all believed that a good teacher needed to have a good foundation of knowledge about teaching and learning in order to deal with more challenging teaching tasks in the future. Without a good knowledge of teaching methodologies rather than only their own limited experience, they were afraid that they would not be able to deal with challenging teaching situations or learners. Secondly, they would need such knowledge to “speak the same language” (their English phrase) with their academic colleagues in discussions, reports, or negotiations about teaching. They were afraid that without such pedagogical knowledge, they would not be able to justify their teaching when others evaluated their teaching. Thirdly, they found teaching knowledge would be very necessary when they would have to train new teachers. In their reflection, their “*either-or*” thinking about the tension between pedagogical knowledge and real-life teaching ended up towards “*both-and*”

thinking. They believed that good teachers were those who made use of both pedagogical knowledge and personal experiences.

The cohort's fluctuating attention to applying teaching methodologies revealed their limited understanding of teaching methodologies and their ongoing negotiation between teaching their own ways or following prescribed ways. The cohort thought and acted in an "either-or" way by either relying on their intuitions or following teaching methodologies as an appeal to popularity and power. The negotiation between teaching quantity and quality was also a negotiation between the student teachers' personal judgement and pressure from the superior system and power. At this stage of their learning to teach process – the practicum, the cohort seemed not to have had criteria to make decisions for those negotiations; and therefore, the conflicts and dilemmas remained unresolved.

(o) Self vs curriculum

A further tension that existed in the student teachers' minds during the teaching practice as well as the whole practicum was the tension between teaching quantity and teaching quality. The student teachers could see a need to cover the syllabus content within limited class time. However, they were also worried that teaching for quantity might affect the quality of their teaching and learners' learning.

The cohort observed that English teachers in the university were concerned about handling with a large amount of content (overloaded syllabus) within a lesson (limited classroom time). Since the university adopted the 150 credits program in 2012, class time was reduced from 240 credits (1 credit is equal to 45 periods of 50 minutes) to 150 credits with a long-term aim to promoting out-of-class learning. As a consequence, both teachers and learners in the university struggled with overloaded syllabi within much less class time. The cohort's awareness of this pressure made them appreciate teachers who could cover a lot of content in their lessons but also teach carefully enough. However, they were also concerned that this way of teaching might lead to ineffective learning. This dilemma revealed a conflict between achieving teaching goals and learning goals and a conflict between teachers' selves and the power of the system.

(q) Self vs authority

During the teaching practice, in many cases the cohort decided to give up their own viewpoints to conform to the mentor's expectations and suggestions because they wanted to get a good assessment from the primary mentor and develop a good relationship with her.

Nonetheless, the cohort did have critical attitudes and expressed them quite explicitly in their interaction with me and among themselves. In our group discussion for example, they expressed their opinions, disagreements, and arguments openly. They explained that our trusting relationship made it easier for them to express their attitudes and thinking. The cohort also expressed their wish for open, friendly, intimate, and trusting dialogues with observed teachers and especially their primary mentor. They wanted to express their opinions and receive feedback from these superiors who knew more than them, which they believed would help them to grow. They also wished they could share their struggles, uncertainty, and questions during the practicum with their mentor.

The cohort's issues of self vs theory, self vs curriculum, and self vs authority as well as their wish for open dialogues with the authority revealed their on-going struggles to reconcile the differences between themselves and external powers. During the teaching practice, all cohort members were more inclined to follow these external powers at least on the outside and did not express a strong sense of leading their own teaching. Nonetheless, those mental struggles and their both-and thinking also showed that they were on their way to analysing and resolving these dilemmas and forming their professional identities.

5.6 DISCUSSION OF THINKING DEVELOPMENT & INFLUENCING FACTORS

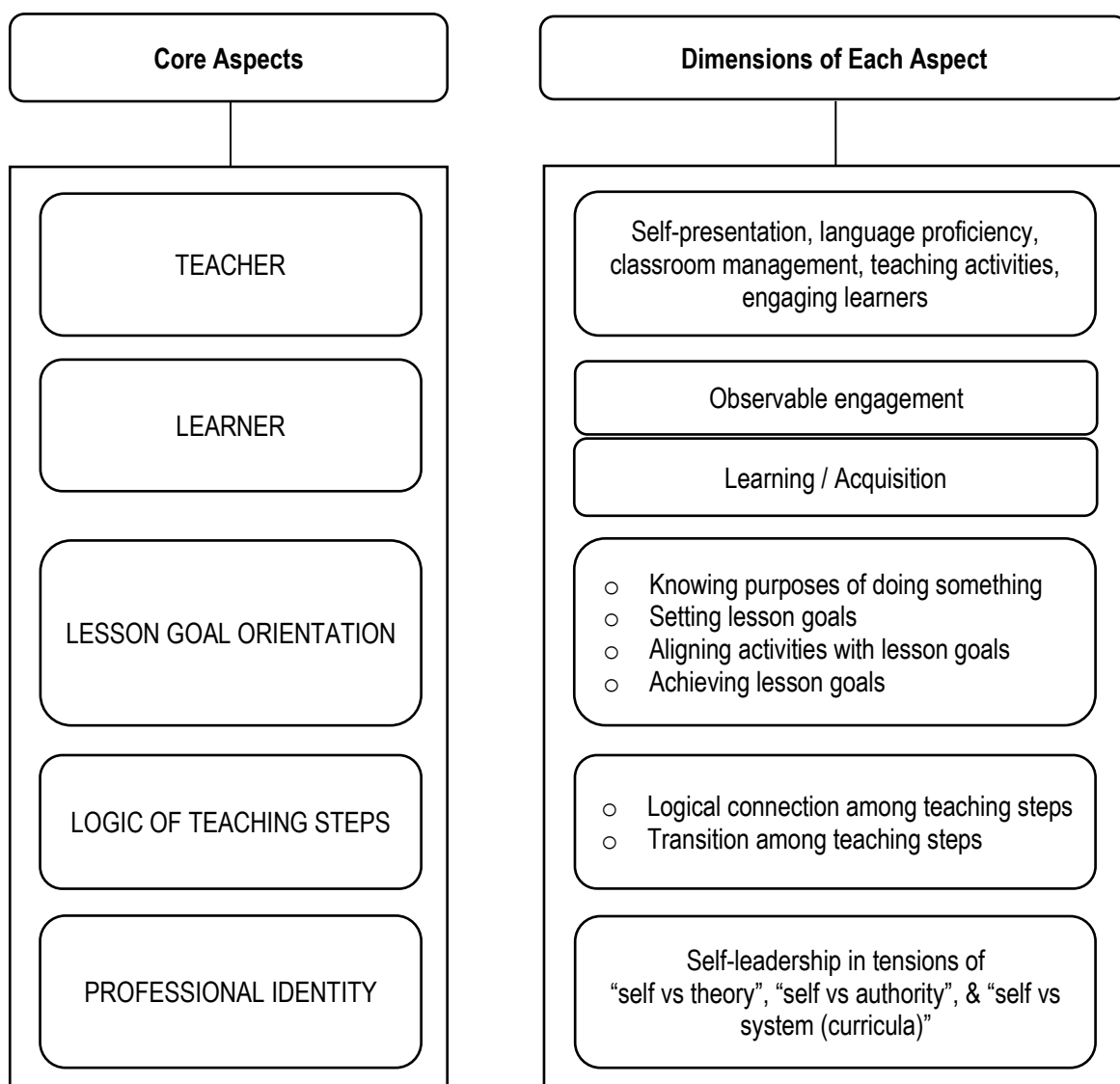
The Cohort's Thinking Development

Research Question 1: What does that cognitive movement look like when it is studied more closely on a few student teachers during a practicum? (Is it a linear one?)

Throughout the practicum, the cohort experienced a diversity of activities and expressed a variety of concerns. Those concerns were all related to several major aspects of teaching. It is noteworthy that these aspects were also what concerned the early career teachers during their learning to teach processes from practicum to early career teaching. They include (see Figure 27):

- Aspect 1: Teacher performance
- Aspect 2: Learners' observable engagement – Learner learning
- Aspect 3: Lesson Goal Orientation
- Aspect 4: Logic of teaching steps
- Aspect 5: Professional Identity with Self-leadership

Figure 27 – Core aspects of the cohort's thinking during teaching practicum



The different levels of attention and thinking which emerged from the first stage of the inquiry into the ECTs was also revealed in this second stage. The student teachers experienced cognitive movements from focusing on “surface” concerns to realising “deeper” concerns throughout the practicum. The deeper concerns were perceived by the cohort as more important aspects for teaching effectiveness. These deep aspects matched the significant aspects of teaching that the third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs reported. Nevertheless, the movements in their cognition were not linear – from concern X to Y and to Z – as described by the ECTs. The fluctuation of their attention to these deep aspects revealed a number of themes:

- ◆ the time and experience needed for the student teachers to achieve better understanding of the newly learnt aspects of teaching and maintain their attention on these aspects,
- ◆ the challenges for the student teachers in synchronizing awareness with practice,
- ◆ the different journeys of different student teachers in learning and dealing with complexity of learning,
- ◆ the inevitable tensions among co-existing concerns about teaching in the student teachers’ minds (e.g. achieving learning goals vs engaging learners emotionally), and
- ◆ the challenges for the student teachers to perceive and resolve “self vs theory” and “self vs authority” tensions to achieve a strong sense of self-leadership in the profession.

During the teaching practicum, the cohort were faced with conflicts between self and theory, self and authority, and self and system (e.g. the curriculum). Their perceptions and decisions were driven by the pressure of these external powers. Their professional identities were therefore still like those of uncritical followers who suppressed their own opinions and conformed to the power. They only expressed their critical attitudes and opinions in safe dialogue among themselves - and with me as their critical friend. The cohort said that their reluctance to express themselves was also because of their lack of confidence in their knowledge and experience in teaching. This showed that their sense of self-leadership was limited by pressure from external power and from their own lack of maturity in their professional thinking and teaching.

Factors Influencing the Cohort's Thinking

Research Question 2: Why does that cognitive movement occur? (What are factors that influence such cognitive movement?)

The factors influencing the cohort's thinking were revealed throughout their accounts of learning to teach in the practicum. These factors are summarised as follows:

- Factor 1: Their perception of the previous microteaching practice
 - *overemphasis on teaching performance,*
 - *lack of focus on learner learning.*
- Factor 2: Their perception of external power
 - *the primary mentor, observed teachers, popular theories, the faculty curricula.*
- Factor 3: Their perception of learners' expectations
 - *exciting class atmosphere,*
 - *good teaching performance.*
- Factor 4: Their perception of the teaching-learning context
 - *large-size classes making classroom management an important focus of attention,*
 - *learners who were fellow university students, which made teaching performance and learners' affective engagement the main foci of attention.*

- Factor 5: Their perception of reflective activities in the practicum
 - *group discussions with the peers and the researcher, individual talks with the researchers, diary writing, meetings with the primary mentor.*
- Factor 6: Their perception of group dynamics
 - *learning from each other (e.g. from Thao's observation skills, from Huy's use of the terms of surface and deep thinking),*
 - *being challenged by others.*
- Factor 7: Their perception of the researcher's questions
 - *about second language acquisition and the reason for choices made.*

- Factor 8: Their perceptions of teaching, their ability and work experiences
 - *view of language teaching as transmitting good knowledge or as providing language using/learning opportunities,*
 - *perception of one's own language proficiency,*
 - *experience of teaching, or public speaking, and working with people.*

These factors are grouped into factors drawing the cohort's attention to observable aspects of teaching, factors that promoted thinking about deeper aspects of teaching and personal factors. Each of these groups is discussed below:

Factors that drew the cohort's attention to observable aspects of teaching

- Factor 1: Microteaching
 - Factor 2: External power
 - Factor 3: Learners' expectations
 - Factor 4: Teaching-learning context
- Before this practicum, the cohort had had microteaching in the teaching methodology courses. They practised teaching short lessons to their classmates who acted as learners. In these practice sessions, the cohort found that their trainers focused on teaching performance both in their instruction and assessment. By “teaching performance”, the cohort meant their application of the taught teaching skills, their use of English, their confidence, their teaching activities which needed to be creative and engaging, and their ability to create a friendly and interesting class atmosphere. They did not see their trainers explicitly or consistently focused on whether learners could understand and learn from the lessons, or whether each of their activities aligned with the lesson goals or course goals. As a result, the cohort believed that they had been drawn to observable aspects related to teaching performance rather than less observable aspects such as learner learning or goal setting and achievement.
- During the practicum, the same pressure was perceived by the cohort. They found that their primary mentor, observed teachers, the faculty, and the people in the field of teaching English as a foreign or second language expected them to have good teaching performance. This good performance was expected to be reflected by their application of modern teaching methodologies like communicative language teaching, their ability to create an interesting and engaging class atmosphere, their creative and fun activities, and their proficient use of English in class. These were also what they thought their learners expected from them. As the cohort were very concerned about how the trainers and learners assessed them, they paid particular attention to teaching performance in order to convince these stakeholders of their teaching effectiveness.

- In addition, the challenging teaching and learning context also confined their attention to managing large-size classes of learners of their age-group and convincing these fellows of their “professional” (their word) teaching performance and teacher identity.
- Just like the early career teachers, the cohort realised that these perceptions diverted their attention away from seeing the deeper and less visible aspects of teaching and learning such as learners’ acquisition and goal orientation.

Factors promoting their thinking about deeper aspects of teaching

- Factor 5: Reflective activities
- Factor 6: Group dynamics
- Factor 7: The researcher’s questions

Regularly reflecting on their thinking, the cohort realised that their thinking was changing due to several factors. Firstly, they appreciated reflective activities in the practicum, including their group meetings discussing what was going on with them in the practicum, their conversations with me both in the group and individually, their diary writing, and their meetings with the primary mentor discussing their teaching practice sessions. Among these activities, they emphasised the importance of the group dynamics and feedback which challenged their assumptions and exposed them to new ways of thinking and doing. For example, they learnt from Thao’s observation skills which focused on learner’s feelings and learning and Huy’s use of the terms of “surface and deep thinking”. They particularly remembered several of my questions which triggered their curiosity about deeper aspects of teaching and made them question and understand why they thought the way they thought. The overall impact of these factors was to urge them to think beyond the observable aspects of teaching and to seek for deeper ones. This cognitive movement was believed by the cohort as a development of their thinking throughout and by the end of this practicum.

Personal factors that shaped the individuals’ thinking development process

The process of thinking change in individual cohort members was observed to be influenced by their perceptions of their abilities in teaching, language, public speaking, and working with people. There was individual variation in putting change in thinking into practice. For example, even though all the cohort members recognised the value of

paying attention to learner learning when collectively reflecting on their classroom observations, their attention to and practice on this aspect differed later. While Thao maintained her attention to this aspect and considered it to be an important criterion for effective teaching, Huyen reverted to paying attention to teachers' teaching performance. This was because Huyen believed that effective teachers needed to have good knowledge of a teaching subject and transmit that knowledge to learners. Therefore, in her opinion, it was fine if in an English class, the teacher spoke more and delivered a good lecture while the learners might speak less and listen more. She seemed to focus more on what the teacher needed to perform than whether the learners had achieved the lesson goal and practised using English in class. Another example was Tram, who was still not confident about her voice and confidence level. She said that made her concerned most of time about her teaching performance and as a result she sometimes overlooked her learners' feelings and learning process. Personal experience in tutoring university students and being an MC for an English-speaking club was also a factor that Thao found reinforced her tendency to think about her learners and their learning.

These personal factors created differences in the processes by which individual cohort members realised the deeper aspects of effective teaching, negotiated between their new understanding and their previous foci of attention, maintained and applied the deeper aspects to their practice. Despite being exposed to similar external factors as described above and going through similar patterns of thinking change, the individual cohort members took their own time and followed their own path in changing their thinking about teaching.

CHAPTER 6

STAGE 3: HUY

“Surface aspects are important”.

“If ‘teacher’ was an adjective, I am now ‘more teacher’”.

Huy

Outline

- 6.1. Introduction
- 6.2. Practicum – Classroom Observation, January 2016
- 6.3. Practicum – Teaching Practice, February – March 2016
- 6.4. Practicum – Overall Reflection, April 2016
- 6.5. First-Year Teaching, September 2016
- 6.6. First-Year Teaching, November 2016
- 6.7. First-Year Teaching, February 2017
- 6.8. Second-Year Teaching, August 2018
- 6.9. Summary

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Research questions

The first two stages of the inquiry have revealed a movement between surface and deeper aspects. This cognitive movement was complex because the cohort's attention to the deeper aspects fluctuated. There was still a lot of dissonance between the cohort's cognition and practice. By the end of the practicum, the cohort had not been found to apply their understanding of the deeper aspects to their teaching.

The questions raised by the end of the second stage were:

- (1) whether those surface and deep aspects remained core aspects for effective teaching in a first year of teaching,*
- (2) how the thinking development process took place in real-life teaching – whether the levels of attention remained, and*
- (3) what influenced this process?*

To answer these questions, I followed two of the five cohort members into their first two years of teaching. Due to the limitation on the length of the thesis, I will report only the case study of Huy in this chapter.

Data

This longitudinal case study about Huy included 32 months of data collection. The data of the practicum included nine weekly group discussions, two individual, in-depth, face to face talks with me, other exchanges with me on Facebook. Data also included his diary that he kept during the whole practicum, classroom observations sheets, lesson plans, four teaching practice sessions, eight meetings with the primary mentor, two reflection papers included in his portfolio required by the faculty. At the end-of-practicum he also had an individual interview with me. The subsequent data from the early career teaching were mainly from his conversations with me on Skype.

Huy

Huy was a student on my course on, advanced grammar in 2013 in this teacher training programme. During the course, Huy sometimes stayed after the class to talk with me and later contacted me on Facebook to share with me his issues. He told me that he came from a poor countryside area where English was not widely or effectively taught and consequently his English proficiency was much lower than his peers. He felt left out because he was shy, introverted, unconfident, and even “clumsy” (his word) in his speaking and behaviours. I appreciated his honesty and courage in reflecting on his weaknesses and strengths, his curiosity about strategies for effective learning, and his eagerness to improve himself. In my class, he often posed questions which might sound like he was challenging me but which I liked and always welcomed. During my stay in New Zealand, he sometimes texted me on Facebook to share his concerns and puzzles about his learning and self-improvement. When I sent out an invitation to my research to all the students in his class (because they were about to have their practicum), he was the first student who accepted my invitation.

In January 2016, he joined the practicum. He had already had experience in assisting teachers for a year and tutoring some young learners for half a year before the practicum. He continued working in those same jobs after his practicum. It is not uncommon for student teachers in Vietnam to have part-time jobs in language centres to support themselves financially during their university study.

After finishing the practicum in April 2016, he completed the remaining courses at the university in September 2016. For the purposes of this research, his first year of post-training teaching started right after the practicum. During the first two years of teaching, there was a time when he decided to take another full-time job as an interpreter and translator and reduced his teaching to weekends only. After a year, he decided to quit the interpreting-translating work and came back to teaching full time.

During this 32 month journey, Huy went through major changes in his thinking which are briefly mapped in Table 16 (p.171). The columns numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4 represent the four core dimensions of teaching emerging from his story. These columns and the shaded ticks aim to illustrate Huy’s fluctuating attention to these core dimensions.

Chapter outline

This chapter reports Huy's thinking development throughout his process of learning to teach, starting with the practicum and covers the first two years of teaching-

The sections following the overview in Table 16, describe Huy's thinking changes throughout the seven phases of the data collection:

- ♦ Practicum – Classroom Observation, January 2016.
- ♦ Practicum – Teaching Practice, February & March 2016.
- ♦ Practicum – Overall reflection, April 2016 (4 months in total).
- ♦ First-Year Teaching, September 2016 (6 months after the practicum).
- ♦ First-Year Teaching, November 2016 (8 months after the practicum).
- ♦ First-Year Teaching, February 2017 (11 months after the practicum).
(Having another job of an interpreter & translator from March 2017 to March 2018, reducing teaching to weekends only)
- ♦ Second-Year Teaching, August 2018 (28 months after the practicum, 32 months in total).

These sections are followed by a discussion of Huy's professional identity formation. The final section recaps the development of Huy's thinking and professional identity. In particular, it summarises the influencing factors that have been revealed throughout the earlier sections.

Table 16 – Huy's thinking development from practicum to the first two years of teaching

MAJOR CHANGES IN HUY'S THINKING							
1 = Teaching performance		3 = Goal orientation		1	2	3	4
2 = Learner Learning		4 = Logic of teaching steps					
PRACTICUM – CLASSROOM OBSERVATION – JAN 2016							
#1	Surface: Focusing initially on “teaching performance & “learner’s observable engagement”	✓					
#2	Deep: Learning about “learner learning” & “goal orientation” Grounding his classroom observation on the new aspects Being aware of shortcomings in his thinking		✓	✓			
PRACTICUM – TEACHING PRACTICE – FEBRUARY & MARCH 2016							
#3	Surface over deep: Re-learning about “teaching for learners” but Focusing on “learners’ observable engagement”, not “learning”	✓					
#4	Deep over surface: Coining the terms “surface” & “deep” aspects Vaguely recognising what surface & deep aspects were		✓	✓			
#5	Surface over deep: Prioritising “surface” over “deep aspects” due to pressure	✓					
PRACTICUM – OVERAL REFLECTION – APRIL 2016							
#6	Deep: Identifying deep aspects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ learner-focused,▪ lesson goal orientation,▪ logic of teaching steps = “structure” of a lesson		✓	✓	✓		
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING – SEPTEMBER 2016 (5 months after practicum = 10 months in total)							
#7	Connection between deep: Confirming importance of the three deeper aspects Better understanding of “logic of teaching steps” Seeing a connection among them		✓	✓	✓		
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING – NOVEMBER 2016 (7 months after practicum = 12 months in total)							
#8	Deep: Continuing to focus on “learners and learning”		✓				
#9	Deep: Transferring “lesson goal orientation” to learners Decreasing effort in “lesson goal orientation”			✓			
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING – FEBRUARY 2017 (10 months after practicum = 15 months in total)							
#10	Deep: Differentiating two kinds of attention to learners Wanting to learn theories about second language acquisition Perceiving respect for learners’ differences as moral value Identifying “learners’ acquisition” as his biggest goal after having mastered teaching content & skills		✓				
#11	Deep: Seeing his teaching improvement thanks to his lesson goal orientation and impact of his teaching on learning			✓			
SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING – AUGUST 2018 (28 months after practicum = 32 months in total)							
#12	Deep over surface happiness: Realising “surface happiness” & “deep happiness” in teaching Seeing a link between of thinking & happiness		✓	✓	✓		
#13	Both surface and deep: Identifying importance of both surface & deep aspects Understanding more deeply impact of teaching on learners’ learning & personal development Seeing more clearly among the three deep aspects Prioritising deep aspects as they key driver	✓	✓	✓	✓		
#14	Connection between surface and deep: Realising teaching goals were a negotiation between lesson goals, learners’ goals, and teaching workplace’s goals	✓	✓	✓	✓		

6.2 PRACTICUM – CLASSROOM OBSERVATION, JAN 2016

#1. Surface aspects:

Focusing initially on “teaching performance & “learner’s observable engagement”

At the beginning of the classroom observation, Huy paid more attention to the observed teachers’ teaching performance including their ability to create interesting lessons. Huy believed that a teacher’s main responsibility was to make learners enjoy learning so that they could learn more effectively.

#2. Deep aspects:

Learning about “learner learning” & “goal orientation”

Grounding his classroom observation on the new aspects

Being aware of shortcomings in his thinking

Sitting with the cohort reflecting on classroom observation, Huy realised that he had been focusing on teachers alone while Thao had focused on both teachers and learners. He learnt that he would need to consider how learners felt about activities, whether they were participating, and whether they were using the target language in class. Even though he switched his attention to learners, I noticed that he mentioned only observable dimensions of learners including their enjoyment, participation, and use of the target language. That reminded me of the third, fourth, and fifth year ECTs’ comment about student teachers in the practicum. They reflected that as student teachers, they and their friends noticed only observable dimensions of learners rather than other dimensions such as learning and acquisition. Out of curiosity, I raised a question with the cohort: “What about learners’ language acquisition?” to see whether they knew about it but had not mention it. Hearing the question, Huy and the other cohort members acknowledged that they had not heard of this aspect before. Even though I did not encourage any further discussion on this aspect (because I wanted to minimise my intervention), it created some impact on Huy’s thinking. In his diary, he wrote that learner learning and acquisition was a new and important aspect of teaching that he had learnt from the practicum.

Practising a teaching a lesson with the cohort before the stage of teaching practice started, he ran out of time in his lesson. At first, he reflected that this was because of his “greediness” (“tham lam”) to include many exciting activities. After that, he asked me for my feedback. I said I was not supposed to evaluate his teaching, but I could ask questions. I asked him to discuss why he chose one of the activities he chose, what the activity was

for, why he put this activity before or after another activity, and finally whether he thought he had achieved the goals of the lesson. Struggling with the questions, Huy recognised that he had not set specific goals for the lesson or kept goals in his mind when designing each activity. Even though he thought he had known the lesson content well and prepared a lot of interesting activities to teach the content, when he set retrospective lesson goals, he realised that he had actually covered only half of these goals.

Huy came to a realisation that knowing the content of the lesson was different from being goal orientated. He then understood that his lack of goal orientation was the main cause of his “greediness” in choosing a lot of activities and his inability to finish the lesson on time. Also, Huy found that was the main reason why some of his activities were interesting but irrelevant because they did not align with any lesson goals. In his diary, Huy expressed his satisfaction at realising this new aspect – “lesson goal orientation” which would enhance his teaching effectiveness.

Compared to Tram’s and Huyen’s lessons, my lesson had been better prepared and thus went more smoothly.

But I made the old mistake that I had covered too much content in the lesson and had to go through activities very quickly and did not pay attention to timing.

I had not achieved all the lesson goals. Today I realised that I had always assumed that I knew the lesson goals but actually I had not known the exact and specific goals. Neither had I stuck to the lesson goals when designing each activity. Therefore, I had been too greedy and included so many activities in the lesson. This is the most important thing that I have realised after the today session.

(translated from Huy’s diary about peer teaching practice)

In his following classroom observation, group discussions, and diary entries, Huy maintained his attention to these two new aspects – learner learning and goal orientation – and his attempt to understand them better. His cohort peers also recognised this, and one of them gently teased him about his “epiphany” (her word). Huy acknowledged his inadequate understanding of these new aspects. He found it difficult to understand and evaluate whether and how learners learnt and acquired the target language.

Huy seemed very contemplative about his own *thinking* ability while the other cohort members were more concerned about their *teaching* ability. In his diary, he wrote about his shortcomings in thinking and observation of classes and his wish to develop “critical thinking” (his English words). Also, he identified the three stages of thinking development that he had just gone through, which reflected his critical self-awareness.

I find that I am not good at observing and thinking critically. While Huyen and Thao had surprisingly careful and detailed observation, my observation was too casual. I need to improve this.

There are three stages of change in my thinking as follows:

- At first, I went to observe classrooms with a relaxed attitude and thus did not write good comments on the observation form.

- After the group discussion on the morning of the 27th January in which I listened to other cohort members talking about their observation, which sounded very detailed and professional, I changed my way of observation right on that afternoon. I wrote a lot on the observation form and commented on almost everything I saw.

- This morning on 29th January, after the group discussion, I realised that way of observation was not necessarily suitable for me. Thao always observes carefully and listens carefully for details. I hold a holistic view instead. Maybe it is because I have not practised Thao's way of observation.

(translated from Huy's diary about the peer teaching practice)

6.3 PRACTICUM – TEACHING PRACTICE, FEB & MAR 2016

#3. Surface over deep aspects:

Re-learning about “teaching for learners” but

Focusing on “learners’ observable engagement”, not “learner learning”

Preparing for his very first teaching lesson, Huy was so stressed that he suffered sleep deprivation. He contacted me and told me his worries about how to design new activities beyond the course book, about his teaching manner which he was afraid might not be professional enough, and about his teaching ways which he thought might not meet the primary mentor's expectation. I asked him whether he might be caring too much about having a successful performance, and he acknowledged that. I tried to motivate him by reminding him that the teaching practicum should be time for student teachers to learn to teach rather than to perform and prove their abilities. I also reminded him of what he had said before, that he would not focus solely on teaching performance but more on learners and their learning.

The following morning, he texted me that he had got back the perspective of teaching for learners, not teaching for performance and had been ready for his first teaching lesson. In the diary, he wrote that focusing on learners and considering the practicum as a learning time rather than performing time had helped him to reduce stress and “immerse himself” into the lesson (his words).

Dear Trang (my Vietnamese name),

Because I cannot wait until tomorrow to tell you this, I am writing to you to express my immediate feelings.

I have really learnt a lot today. To put it more precisely, I have learnt a lot since last evening when I read your message. The message was that we should care about our learners and what they could achieve rather than we could teach. We should work for our learners' sakes. Having understood that, my heart has felt so light, and I could take things easy because I will no longer put too much emphasis on my performance tomorrow. All that I am thinking right now is that tomorrow I would give my learners an interesting lesson and always think about them and for them during the fifty minutes of the lesson. Thanks very much, Trang.

(translated from Huy's Facebook message after the first teaching practice session)

Having finished my teaching, I felt so relieved. Before the lesson, I had received a meaningful message from Trang, and then all that I did in the lesson was to let things flow naturally and smoothly as long as what I did was for my learners. And it worked. I found myself completely engaging with the lesson and the learners with all my enthusiasm. I was so excited that I almost lost my voice!!!

(translated from Huy's diary about the first teaching practice session)

In a Skype conversation with me a year later, Huy still remembered our conversation as one of the most impactful incidents that shifted his thinking about teaching.

Nevertheless, that realisation was superseded when he interacted with the primary mentor and the cohort. In his meetings with the primary mentors (after the first two teaching lessons), he was asked to assess his own teaching. I observed that he talked all about his teaching performance and learners' observable engagement. Huy was happy that his learners liked his humour and enjoyed his funny and creative activities. He seemed to care about learners, but about their observable engagement rather than their acquisition or achievement of the lesson goals.

Reflecting on these supervision meetings with me and the cohort, Huy recognised that he had switched his attention back to his own teaching performance and his ability to entertain and engage learners. He felt that the feedback of the primary mentor and the cohort peers as well as the in-class reactions and the end-of-class comments of the learners reinforced his attention to these observable aspects.

In brief, from the initial concerns about teaching performance, he had learnt to pay more attention to learner learning and goal orientation. However, his attention was soon drawn back to the more observable aspects due to his worries about his performance and his perception of what others – the primary mentor, friends, and learners – focused on.

#4. Deep over surface aspects:

Coining the terms “surface” & “deep” aspects

Vaguely recognising what surface and deep aspects were.

In following reflection activities, Huy talked and wrote about that back and forth movement in his thinking and actions. , He particularly wondered whether everyone including he himself, his primary mentors, his cohort peers, and his learners had always focused on “surface” (“bề nổi”) aspects of teaching and learning. He was the first cohort member who used this term.

He added that the learners on their brief written comments at the end of each lessons did not “care” (his English word) about “objectives” and “method[s]” (his English words) but only about whether his teaching was fun and good in general. He also noticed that the primary mentor in her feedback on his lesson plans mostly addressed his language mistakes but not his teaching methods. For example, she never questioned his specific rationale for choosing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) rather than other approaches. She also never questioned whether his lesson plans reflected that approach. Meanwhile, he put CLT in his lesson plans not because he understood how to use it but just because it was the most recommended in this teacher training programme as well as in English language teaching of the whole Faculty.

Truong [a pseudonym for his primary mentor] gave very detailed feedback on my lesson plan; however, the feedback was mostly about grammar. It almost did not address the teaching method or the teaching activities that I designed. Therefore, after receiving her feedback, I just needed to revise it only once and sent it back to the mentor; and that's it.

After teaching this lesson, I heard those who observed my teaching including my peers and the primary mentor said my teaching was really good and fun and exciting. Reading the learners' feedback, I also knew that they enjoyed my teaching. However, going home and contemplating my teaching and all that feedback, I realised that they had seen only the surface (“bề nổi”) of the teaching rather than paying attention to the objectives or methods, which made them give those compliments.

The biggest question that Trang (the researcher) asked me when I asked her to read my lesson plan was about teaching methods. She asked that since I claimed I was using CLT in the lesson, what the spirit of CLT was in my opinion. I did not study well in the previous course on teaching methodologies, so I could not give her a good answer. I thanked her a lot for her question which challenged me and helped me to realise that I was not fully aware of the teaching method that I was using.

(translated from Huy's diary about the first teaching practice session)

By figuring out what he himself and the others could see and what they did not see or focus on, Huy gradually constructed his notions of surface and deep aspects. In our one-to-one talk, Huy and I explored more explicitly what he meant by surface and deep aspects of teaching.

Huy: My weaknesses were countless. As for my strengths, they are my active energy, good voice, good interaction with learners, friendly ways of speaking to them, which are all the issues on the surface.

Trang: What do you mean by the surface?

Huy: It is the aspect that is easy to see and does not carry much deep meaning or value.

Trang: In your diary, you wrote that the learners' feedback on your teaching was positive but you found that they had seen only the surface aspect and that you actually had not achieved your objectives. What did you mean by the surface aspect? Is the surface aspect not important?

...In your diary, you wrote that students gave you good feedback on teaching, but you said that students could see the surface of your lesson and you haven't achieved the lesson goals...etc. So, is the surface not important?

Huy: The class atmosphere manifested the observable aspect of teaching and the outside aspect of a teacher. I think that was the thing that the learners looked at to evaluate my teaching. The learners did not care much about what that lesson should achieve or in what way it should be conducted. When they evaluated my teaching, that was all what they could see. My cohort peers might have observed and evaluated my teaching in the same way, based on the surface aspect of my teaching rather than on something else that teacher Truong [the primary mentor] used to mention.

Trang: Something else? What is it?

Huy: It is something more pedagogical, more professional. (“sự phạm hơn chuyên môn hơn”)

Trang: What is that for example?

Huy: She said it was using the target language in teaching and having smooth transitions between teaching steps which I have not been able to do.

(translated from Huy's individual talk with the researcher after his first two teaching sessions)

At this stage, he seemed to have a limited understanding of these concepts, but his terms of “surface” and “deep” aspects were found useful by the other cohort members. They adopted the terms to talk about the maturity level of their thinking. The concept of growing thinking from surface to deeper levels became a key theme in the cohort's following discussions.

#5. Surface over deep aspects

Prioritising “surface” over “deep aspects” due to pressure

Just as in the stage of classroom observation, Huy continued to struggle between “surface” and “deep” aspects of teaching. In his third and fourth teaching sessions, I observed that he prioritised the more surface aspects.

At the end of his third teaching session, the primary mentor and other cohort members congratulated him on his creativity and improvement in teaching. He also got a very high score of 9/10, the highest score that the primary mentor had given until then. Nonetheless, he came down to me after his teaching and sadly said that his lesson had failed. I asked why in surprise because, to my mind, I thought he had done well. He told me that the class atmosphere of the second half of the lesson cooled down, the learners did not look excited anymore, and the mentor, me, and his peers sitting the back of the classroom did not look happy either. It meant to him that he was not successful in the second half of the lesson. I could see his disappointment expressed everywhere, in the supervision meeting with the primary mentor, in his diary, and in our group discussion.

When I asked him to reflect whether it was important to maintain an exciting atmosphere throughout the lesson, he said it was. He elaborated that the purpose of the activities used in the second half of the lesson was to create “fun” (his English word). If the learners did not look excited, then the activities had failed. Then I asked him what cooled down the atmosphere, he said that it was because after the vocabulary activity, the learners had to spend more time than expected on reading and answering the reading questions. They seemed to be bored by this reading activity and the exciting atmosphere was gone. Then I asked him, apart from creating fun, what the learning goals of the pre- and while-reading activities were. By saying that the goals were to know necessary vocabulary for the reading and to read and understand the text, he recognised that the learners were doing exactly that. They did not look happy or excited anymore because they were reading and dealing with the questions, which was totally fine. Huy then understood that he had overlooked the learning goals of these activities and followed his instinct to make learners happy and behaviourally active all the time.

I recognised that his own perception of teaching had affected his attention to aspects of teaching and probably his perception of what others including his primary mentors,

friends, me, and learners expected from him. There was a conflict in Huy's perception between teaching for learners' affective engagement and teaching for learning goals.

Thao pointed out that the reading questions that he designed were “on the surface” (her English words”). Thao explained that the questions used the same language of the reading text and were therefore not challenging enough for the learners at that level of English. Huy justified that he had wanted the learners to answer the questions quickly so that he could move on to the post-reading activity which would be more exciting.

One more time Huy realised he had put fun over the learning goals. He admitted that he was afraid of silence in class because it might tell others that his lesson was not attractive enough. It was nice that, after that, Thao, other cohort members, and Huy altogether re-wrote the reading questions at “a deeper level” (their words), which challenged the learners' thinking more. While doing that, Huy repeatedly used the term “thinking level” (“*tư duy*”) to evaluate the reading questions they came up with. He wanted to make sure that the questions could challenge the learners' thinking. By the end of the group discussion, Huy acknowledged that his thinking was still “on the surface” (his English words) because he focused on the surface aspects of teaching and designed on-the-surface reading questions. Hearing that, the cohort, especially Thao, expressed an appreciation of the importance of thinking quality in teaching.

In brief, during the stage of teaching practice, Huy had negotiated between surface and deep aspects. His attention and actions were influenced by both personal (his own teaching perception) and external factors (group dynamics, reflective activities, feedback of the primary mentors and others). Every time he gained back attention towards deeper aspects, he seemed to gain better understanding of the aspects. He also demonstrated a strong self-awareness of his thinking and actions.

6.4 PRACTICUM – OVERAL REFLECTION, APR 2016

#6. Deep aspects:

Identifying deep aspects: learner-focused, lesson goal orientation, & logic of teaching steps

In the overall reflection writing and the individual interview with me at the end of the practicum, Huy confirmed the development of his thinking and teaching throughout the practicum. He reflected that his thinking development was the growth of his thinking from a surface to a deeper level. In the interview, we explored what he meant by a deep level of

thinking. Huy identified the deep aspects of teaching that a teacher with deep thinking could focus on. They were “*lesson goal orientation*”, “*focusing on learners*”, and “*logic of teaching steps*”.

While the first two had been discussed a lot throughout the practicum, the third aspect was rather unclear to me. I asked him to elaborate on that and knew that he was not very clear about it himself. He always felt that the steps a teacher conducted in a lesson needed to be logically connected and transition between them needed to be smooth and clear. He said it was an underlying aspect which reflected the “*structure [of a lesson]*” (“*cấu trúc, kết cấu [của bài dạy]*”). Then the structure of a lesson would reflect the teaching “*methodology*” or teaching “*approach*” that the teacher used (his words). However, he could not say anything more than about this third deep aspect.

The practicum finished in late April 2016. Huy continued his part-time job as a teaching assistant at the international school while I came back to New Zealand. Soon after he also had his own small-size classes where he tutored the learners at the school who needed more tutoring. We kept contact on Facebook, Google docs and chats, and Skype so that I would be able to follow him through to his early career teaching after the practicum.

6.5 FIRST-YEAR TEACHING, Sep 2016 (6 months after practicum)

#7. Connection between deep aspects:

Confirming importance of the three deeper aspects

Better understanding of “logic of teaching steps”

Seeing a connection among deep aspects

Five months after the practicum, in mid-September 2016, Huy asked me for a Skype conversation because he had realised important changes in his thinking about teaching. The discussion confirmed that in early career teaching, the three deep aspects that emerged from the practicum remained the core foci of his thinking and teaching.

Firstly, Huy talked at length about **learners’ learning**. He said he had understood better how different learners learnt English differently and what to do to facilitate their learning. He gave me specific examples about “slow learners” and “fast learners” (his English words) and how he had dealt with them. He also talked about silence in class, something he remembered that he used to be afraid of in the practicum. He understood that silence was not necessarily evidence of out-of-dated, boring, or ineffective teaching. Instead,

silence was sometimes needed for learners to read, think, process information, or look for answers to his questions.

Reflecting on what had facilitated that development, Huy realised that class size was a factor. In the practicum, he practised teaching large-size classes, which made it very difficult for him to pay attention to individual learners and understand how they learnt. In his own small-size classes (3 children per class), he was able to see each learners' learning abilities and difficulties. He could also see more clearly when his lessons resulted in certain changes in the learners' learning attitudes and learning outcomes. The second factor that he aware of was my questions to him during the practicum. Through my questions, he noticed that I was interested in exploring people's thinking processes. Therefore, whenever talking with me, he had a tendency to think about thinking too. Huy said that such practice had nurtured in him an increasing interest and ability in understanding the thinking of his learners.

Huy: Every time I talk with you, you often talk about individuals' psychology and thinking. It has influenced me. Like today, when talking with you, I have noticed that you have cared about why I think what I think and what the teachers and learners that I described thought when they did what they did. Because of that, I have also thought more about that aspect. I feel that this has made me develop better.

Trang: Why is that?

Huy: Ah... it is good for me also before as you care about my thinking, I have become more aware of my learners' thinking and thought more about it. It... ah, it has made my thinking more multidimensional and my understanding more complete.

Trang: Talking with me has made you develop multiple-perspective thinking? But is that you or do you try to be someone else? Is that what you really want?

Huy: It is not only just now that I am influenced by you. In the practicum before, I already cared about my learners' thinking. In my tutoring class, I already found that individual young learners had different ways of thinking. I already known that it was necessary to be aware of that aspect.

Trang: It means that you have always cared about individual young learners' inner thinking to help them?

Huy: Yes. But when I talked with you, that awareness became clearer and that ability was enhanced.

Trang: Awareness?

Huy: When I talked with you, my awareness of understanding individual learners' thinking became stronger than usual. Do you get me?

Trang: Yes, I did. I am not sure how you find my influence on your awareness; but to me, I did not do that intentionally and was not aware of that influence on you.

Huy: You have influenced me because the way you posed problems and asked questions challenged me and made me think about my issues.

Trang: Which questions for example?

Huy: For example, in the meeting with Nhi [a student teacher from another cohort member who wanted to discuss her lesson plan with me and the cohort that I was co-supervising], she used a family tree to teach the vocabulary and designed several activities to teach that. You asked her which activity should be put first and whether it would matter if she had changed the order of the activities. I was impressed by that kind of questions and other questions of yours as well which challenged my thinking and changed my perspective.

Trang: So, when your thinking has been changed as such, in your opinion, is it a change for better for worse?

Huy: It's definitely a positive change. When I go into a person's thinking and try to understand it, I will have better actions. I can have more effective solutions which suit them better of course.

Trang: Ok. Has this change started since you conducted your practicum?

Huy: Yes. It started to take place during the practice and has gone on until now.

(translated from Huy's Skype talk #1, 13th September 2016)

Huy's more profound understanding of learners' learning had helped him to improve his teaching, Huy said. When planning and teaching a lesson, he found himself looking at things with multiple perspectives: from his own perspective and that of his learners, for fun and also for learning. Huy felt that such multiple-perspective thinking was a manifestation of his professional development.

Secondly, Huy was happy about his increasing sense of **goal orientation** when planning and teaching lessons. He had been able to set clear objectives for each lesson which aligned to the goals of the whole course. For each lesson, he could set clear objectives for each activity which aligned with the objectives of the lesson.

Reflecting on influencing factors, he recalled that during the practicum, I had always asked him why-questions. The questions made him think about the purposes of everything he did. His recognition in the practicum of the importance of being goal-oriented had continued to manifest during his early career teaching, Huy told me. Another important factor that Huy mentioned was teaching his own classes. In each of these classes, he was responsible for designing a whole course and assessing his learners' learning outcomes. Many of his learners and their parents also set tangible goals such as achieving a certain score at an international exam. Taking charge of the whole course enabled him to see a bigger picture. He realised that the success or failure of a course and its learners was in his hands. Therefore, he had to be clear about what he needed to achieve by the end of the course and by the end of each lesson.

He also had to regularly assess the learners' learning outcomes in order to adjust his teaching. Furthermore, Huy said that thanks to being more goal-oriented, he stuck to the goals, there was less "wandering" ("lan man") while teaching, and he was less "greedy" ("tham lam") when including activities into a lesson. Being goal oriented, he also had goals as a foundation, based on which he could observe, monitor, and evaluate his teaching and his learners' learning progress. All of those made him much more aware of the value of "learner learning" and "goal orientation" in teaching and learning. Those opportunities were lacking in the practicum, Huy reflected.

When discussing how to design a lesson to achieve its goals, he mentioned the concept of "**a logical structure**" of teaching steps. He thought that the steps needed to be logically organised in the way that could lead learners towards achieving the lesson goals. He recognised an interrelation between the two aspects of learner learning and goal orientation and the third aspect of logic of teaching steps. While at the end of the practicum, he had not been so clear about this third aspect, he now could explain more clearly due to his increasing awareness of the other two deep aspects.

Huy analysed further the **interrelation between the deep aspects** by correlating teaching goals with learning goals. He talked about how to adapt a course book to design his lessons. He said that the adaption was necessarily based on firstly his teaching goals, secondly learners' goals, and thirdly learners' learning abilities and styles. He remembered that he used to pick activities in a course book that he found interesting and helpful. He now learnt that course books were designed for general learning needs while his learners had special learning needs and goals. He believed that both teaching goals and learning goals should be considered and combined.

Being able to articulate the interrelation between the deep aspects and to grasp the logical structure of a lesson and of a course, was evidence of developing multi-perspective and big-picture thinking.

6.6 FIRST-YEAR TEACHING, Nov 2016 (8 months after practicum)

Two months after the first Skype talk, Huy and I had the second one. Huy continued to confirm the role of the deep aspects in his teaching.

#8. Deep aspects:

Continuing to focus on “learners and learning”

Huy said that the thing that had concerned him the most from our last Skype talk was about “slow learners” and “fast learners” (his English words). He had spent a lot of time exploring what made some learners learnt faster than others and found important reasons.

Firstly, he had decided that learners’ learning speed was influenced by their thinking and acquisition ability (“tư duy não” and “tiếp nhận lượng kiến thức”). Their acquisition ability depended on their levels of motivation and investigation in learning. Secondly, he had noticed that learning speed also depended on subjects or skills that learners learnt. A learner could learn grammar very quickly but was slow to improve their speaking. Thirdly, he believed learners could improve their learning just by reviewing the learnt knowledge and practising using it, not necessarily always by learning new knowledge or skills.

Fourthly, he had observed that learning depended on teaching activities. Whether communicative activities that teachers used created authentic communication purposes affected whether learners could perform well. Huy found that sometimes the main teacher that he co-taught gave the learners some activities which did not create any information gaps or puzzles for learners to do. They simply asked the learners to make sentences based on a fixed given structure. Such activities in his view did not facilitate the learners’ ability to speak.

Fifthly, he believed that whether learning improved quickly or not depended on whether teachers communicated learning objectives to learners and gave them feedback based on these objectives. Huy observed that some foreign teachers in his teaching workplace usually did not tell learners what they needed to achieve or were not serious about their achievement of lesson goals. Neither did they pay serious attention to learners’ mistakes. Instead, they tried to create a fun atmosphere in order to keep learners going to school. The teachers also avoided giving critical feedback but instead mostly positive and too general feedback like “Well done”. As a result, Huy noticed that the learners in the class he co-taught did not know exactly what they needed to improve. Huy reflected on his

teaching in the practicum and found that his feedback was not effective either because it was too general and did not point out what learners did well on and needed to improve. His conclusion was that teachers' feedback was very important to learners' learning improvement. Huy spoke and gave examples about each of these realisations. He found they were deep realisations about deeper layers of learning.

#9. Deep aspects:

Transferring "lesson goal orientation" to learners

Decreasing effort in "lesson goal orientation"

Huy extended his discussion about learners' learning to learners' goal orientation. He transferred the goal orientation that he had developed for his own learning as a novice teacher to his learners. As mentioned above, he found it important for teachers to communicate learning goals to learners. He believed that learners needed to be aware of what they were learning for, what they had achieved, and what they would need to do next. When they knew the purposes of learning, he recognised that his learners became more motivated to learn and showed a stronger sense of responsibility in their learning. Huy talked about a relationship between being goal-oriented, being motivated to learn, and being autonomous. He re-affirmed the value of goal orientation not only in teaching but also in learning.

Nonetheless, he did not always perceive consequent improvement in his teaching. Huy told me about his decreasing passion and effort in setting and achieving teaching goals. He felt held back by a very low-achieving learner. Because the learner usually forgot what he had learnt, Huy had to go very slowly and usually revise the taught knowledge. Very occasionally he could teach something new and needed to prepare a careful lesson plan. Gradually, he lost the passion for designing lessons, setting goals, and assessing goal achievement because there was nothing new to him anymore. This made him feel unhappy. He felt that he was going down in his professional development by being "lazy" and not doing his best ("làm biếng, không cố gắng"). I asked him whether dealing with a very low-achieving learner could be an interesting goal. He said it should be, but he learnt better and faster if he was challenged to teach new and more difficult content. However, he said he would try to re-set goals which suited this learner and also make sure other learners in this class would continue to improve their learning.

6.7 FIRST-YEAR TEACHING, Feb 2017 (11 months after practicum)

#10. Deep aspects:

Differentiating two kinds of attention to learners

Wanting to learn theories about second language acquisition

Perceiving respect for learners' differences as a moral value

Identifying "learners' acquisition and happiness" as his biggest goal after having mastered teaching content & skills

Three months later, Huy and I had a third Skype talk. Huy continued to manifest his deeper understanding about learning through his teaching.

He made a clear distinction between **caring about learners and paying close attention to their learning processes**. He said he had always cared about his learners anyway even before the practicum. He remembered he used to talk about his instinct to care about other people, which made him care about his learners and their parents. He used to be nominated as the best teaching assistant in his teaching workplace due to his good relationship with his learners and their parents. However, he now saw that care for learners was not the same as attention to their acquisition. While the first one was from his instinct, the latter required learning, thinking, and practising. While the first one was about students as people, the latter was about them as thinkers and learners of the target language. Therefore, Huy realised that showing care about learners was nice but not enough to help them to acquire English. He needed to pay closer attention to the processes by which they learnt.

In order to understand more deeply about learner learning, Huy said he needed to learn theories about **second language acquisition** (SLA) and do research on that. He emphasised that he had heard about SLA in the practicum – something that he “remembered, not just a little bit, but the most and the most carefully” (“không phải đó là cái em khá nhớ mà là em nhớ nhiều và kỹ nhất”). He gave me examples of how he learnt English articles a, an, the and English tag questions. It had been a complicated, challenging, time-taking process until he could grasp these grammar points and use them. He found it difficult to articulate that process. For that reason, he wanted to understand more about language acquisition processes in order to help his learners better. He acknowledged that his own teaching experience and intuition were not enough for him to

understand this aspect. While he used to think teaching theories were boring, he now wanted to read about teaching-learning theories or to join training workshops about them. Deepening the understanding about learners' differences, Huy found himself more appreciative of individual differences. He emphasised that each and every learner had their own ways of thinking and learning. Instead of treating them as a group and overlooking their differences, teachers needed to understand and respect individual differences. He elaborated this perspective as follows.

Huy: From my observation, I have found that individual learners have unique characteristics. Then working with you in the practicum, I observed that you [the researcher] cared about people as individuals. Sometimes you cared about very small things that each person did or said but we overlooked. But when we stopped and looked at these small things, we realised that they were actually important things. When you asked us for our observation of individual teachers and learners, we could not answer your questions. All this made me gradually find understanding individual people really meaningful. It is important to understand individuals not only in teaching but also in life. I have realised a significant change in me. I used to get irritated by those with weird ways of behaving, but now whenever I see something like that, I don't get angry quickly but try to put myself in their positions to understand their thinking and understand why they do what they do. I learnt to pay special attention to the words "não" [brain, thinking] thanks to you and learnt that individuals' thinking is so different. It is these differences that I need to respect, that I need to understand. This is an important "tư tưởng" [philosophy, mindset] that I have learnt so far...

(translated from Huy's Skype talk #3, 17th February 2017)

Furthermore, he realised that it was differences that made great things. He became fond of learners who were different and rebellious because he found them unique and their ideas creative. He encouraged these learners to express their thinking and feelings, by which he believed that he could help to promote their "critical thinking" (his English words). Regarding low-achieving learners, he had learnt to be more patient and sought for ways to help them. Huy even raised this respect of learners as individuals to the level of a moral value in teaching and an important criterion of good teaching.

Additionally, Huy reinforced the importance of **developing learners' learning goal orientation** which he had mentioned in the last Skype talk.

Huy: I find it important to raise learners' awareness of why they are learning a particular language point or skill. As far as I can see, when I communicated with my learners the objectives of a lesson or a learning activity, my learners understood the purpose(s) of learning what they were learning rather than feeling passive in receiving the knowledge when they did not understand why they were learning it. This helped them to become more autonomous and willing to learn.

(translated from Huy's Skype talk #3, 17h February 2017)

In raising learners' awareness of learning goals, Huy observed that the learners took charge of their learning and learnt more effectively. He also raised this to the level of a moral and ethical value of teachers because with this perspective, teachers would empower learners and treat them as the main agents of their learning.

Reflecting on what had helped him to develop these perspectives, Huy discussed two main influencing factors. Firstly, it was the novels and stories that he had read and people he had met. The stories were about teachers going to undeveloped areas to teach. There they discovered genius learners who were considered different and odd by people surrounding. Their trust and on-going support for these learners had helped them to finally become brilliant and famous people in the world. Huy said that he could relate to these stories because he himself had been considered odd and looked down on by many others. The stories had inspired him to be kind to his learners and respect their differences. Also, Huy had met a foreign teacher who strongly believed in human rights and people's differences in all aspects of life, which inspired him to think about the issue. Moreover, Huy remarked that all this thinking had become stronger since he participated in my research and observed me respecting individuals and appreciating their talents and opinions. This thinking had turned into his practice of teaching, Huy said.

Another reason for his development of learner-oriented thinking was the increasing free space in his mind. He had had more mental space to think about deeper layers of learner learning because he had resolved many concerns about teaching performance. Huy said that he had been used to these classes, materials, and learners. There had been almost no new challenges. He had felt that he was on the top of his teaching and was therefore no longer too worried about teaching. Instead, he focused his main attention on making sure his learners achieved learning so that they could feel satisfied about their achievement. Huy believed that such satisfaction would create a strong motivation for his learners and that was his biggest goal in his teaching.

#11. Deep aspects:

Wanting to develop learners' lesson goal orientation.

Seeing his teaching improvement thanks to his lesson goal orientation and impact of his teaching on learning

In the previous Skype talk three months earlier, Huy had talked about his decreasing commitment in lesson goal orientation. This had improved thanks to his deeper exploration and appreciation of learner learning. He told me that he had got back the energy to plan his lessons with clear learning objectives and to work towards them.

Huy one more time affirmed that goal orientation had helped to take his teaching to a “more advanced level” (his English words). His teaching seemed to have become more effective, “righter” (“đúng đắn hơn”), “more methodological” (“có phương pháp hơn”), and “more academic or professional” (“học thuật hơn”). He believed this change marked a development in his thinking and his teaching effectiveness.

6.8 SECOND-YEAR TEACHING, Aug 2018 (28 months after practicum)

After the previous Skype talk, Huy was offered a job as a translator and interpreter at a corporation. He wanted to get more work experience, so he took it and worked full-time from March 2017 to March 2018. During this year, he reduced his teaching to weekends only. Even though we kept contact, it was not clear whether I should continue to collect data about his thinking about teaching. In March 2018, he decided to quit the job and came back to full-time teaching. He taught his own classes and at the same at a language school. Back in full-time teaching, Huy had gained more understanding about teaching, and we agreed to continue talking and that I could record our discussion as data. Therefore, in August 2018, we had a Skype conversation. This was a special talk because not only did he talk about his significant changes, but I also shared with him my construction of his thinking development. The themes emerging from this conversation changed my own perspective of surface vs deep aspects of teaching.

#12. Deep over surface happiness

Realising “surface happiness” & “deep happiness” in teaching

Seeing a link between of thinking & happiness

Huy said the most important realisation he had gained during the past period was about happiness in teaching. He talked about “surface happiness” and “deep happiness” which referred to the depth of his satisfaction after teaching a lesson. “Surface happiness” came when he saw his learners smiling, laughing, and participating voluntarily and happily in class. He told me that learners at language centres in Vietnam expected an enjoyable learning time after their hard work and/or formal study during the day or the week. Therefore, he found it necessary to create an interesting and friendly atmosphere in his classes. Moreover, his teaching workplace also expected teachers to make learners enjoy the learning activities and keep going to class. Therefore, Huy found it compulsory to do so. The learners and workplace’s expectations made him focus more on the learners’ affective engagement. Having achieved this after each lesson, Huy came home and felt happy.

Nonetheless, Huy said when reflecting on such lessons, he felt something missing inside his heart. Huy recognised that such happiness was “happiness on the surface” (his words) because the learners had not had deep learning from those fun activities. This recognition bothered him and urged him to design lessons which could facilitate deeper learning. Again, he was aware of setting clear and higher-level objectives for each lesson. He designed activities which challenged learners’ thinking and organised the activities in such an order that could scaffold language acquisition. In class, rather than focusing only on “entertaining learners” (his words), he also observed whether the learners were achieving the objectives that he set. Coming home from those classes, he felt happy and satisfied. That sense of happiness and satisfaction was deeper, more long-lasting, and more powerful to him. He was deeply happy and proud of himself because he knew that his learners had achieved the learning goals.

Listening to Huy’s realisation of the two levels of happiness, I recognised that deep happiness was brought about when Huy took into consideration and put into practice the three core aspects of teaching: goal orientation, learning/acquisition, and logic of teaching steps.

#13. Both surface and deep aspects*Identifying importance of both surface & deep aspects**Understanding more deeply impact of teaching on learners' learning & personal development**Seeing more clearly among the three deep aspects**Prioritising deep aspects as the key driver*

Huy's description of deep happiness might create an impression that it was more important and valuable than surface happiness. The data collection and analysis until then had also confirmed that thinking about deep aspects of teaching was considered more mature than thinking about surface aspects.

Nevertheless, Huy's further analysis of surface and deep happiness challenged this long-standing impression. Huy told me he used to think that deeper aspects of teaching were more important. However, he then realised that deeper aspects could not be achieved without surface aspects. He explained that learners could not learn effectively if they did not feel motivated to learn. Therefore, before bringing in "serious" activities ("ng nghiêm túc") for deep learning, Huy needed to make sure that his learners had been motivated to learn. Otherwise, deep-learning activities might just frustrate them. In this case, he needed to conduct interesting activities to engage them first, even though these fun activities might not be strongly related to the lesson goals.

He found himself seeming to go back to his initial intuition about creating motivation for learning. He used to want to make his learners feel happy when learning, then realised deeper learning was more important for him to focus on, and then realised that actually both were necessary to be promoted. He could not be deeply happy if his learners learnt substantial content but did not enjoy learning it. This development in Huy's thinking showed that thinking development was not a linear process from switching attention from surface to deep teaching aspects. Instead, it reflected a "both-and" approach and also a cycle of seeing and revisiting one aspect of teaching with increasing awareness and understanding.

However, nor did this both-and thinking imply that surface and deep aspects of teaching were equally important. Huy continued to discuss more deeply how both interacted with each other. It was true that both learners' affective engagement and deep learning were important, and the latter happened only when the former had been built. Yet, Huy discovered that it was the deeper aspects that were the key driver. He elaborated that

whenever he aimed for deep learning, he would automatically remember learners' affective engagement and promote it first (if it had not been done). However, when his mind was fixated only on motivating and "entertaining" learners (his word), he usually forgot deep learning. Because of that, he learnt that while surface and deep aspects were complementary, paying attention to deep aspects prompted attention to surface aspects but not vice versa. The both-and thinking therefore did not exclude the hierarchy of the roles of surface and deep aspects of teaching.

#14. Connection between surface and deep aspects

Realising teaching goals were a negotiation between lesson goals, learners' goals, and teaching workplace's goals

The interconnection between the aspects of teaching was furthered reinforced by another important change in thinking that Huy reported.

Huy provided a deeper insight about setting goals. Previously, he had set goals based on what he wanted to teach and also based on the course books. Now, he set goals based on what he wanted to teach, what learners wanted to learn, what parents expected him to teach their children, and what teaching workplaces asked him to cover. He had to take into consideration all these goals and negotiated among them. In line with the above both-and perspective, Huy said it was not necessary to always focus on deep-learning activities. For instance, he observed that young learners with a low level of language needed more engaging activities while learners at higher language levels knew their purposes of learning better and looked for more meaningful and intellectually challenging activities.

Also, Huy learnt that each teaching institution had their own philosophy, objectives, and policies which he needed to know and respect, and then act accordingly. Huy also realised that mature thinking did not mean working towards the expectations of workplaces or learners and nor did it mean relying solely on his intuition or experience. Instead, he felt encouraged to discover and appreciate his own teaching beliefs and goals while still considering goals of other stakeholders. He believed that he should no longer feel bad about his goal of making learners happy with his jokes and fun activities but that he should utilise his sense of humour and creativity to motivate learners and engage them in deep learning. By negotiating between factors which were sometimes conflicting, Huy's thinking, in my observation, had manifested an expansion and deepening of attention to

various aspects of teaching, multi-perspective thinking, both-and thinking, and dialectic thinking.

6.9 HUY'S PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION

The development of Huy's thinking throughout 32 months revealed another important development – that of his professional identity – which was not separate from his thinking development. Table 17 (p. 199) adds major changes in Huy's identity formation to the thinking changes summarised in Table 16 (p. 171).

During the practicum, Huy struggled between following the taught teaching *theories* and methodologies and freeing himself of such an imposition and doing things his way. He found himself an intuitive person who trusted in his own intuition and experiences in teaching. He did not enjoy the previous courses on teaching methodologies and seemed to forget everything he learnt. Working with a friend in the cohort, Thao, who was very good at applying the taught teaching knowledge into the practicum, Huy was exposed to her discussion of her application. The group dynamics in reflective activities made him realise the importance of both theory and intuition/experience. However, this realisation was just an initial vague recognition rather than a deep understanding.

As a result, there were many times in the practicum, Huy went back to his intuition to make teaching decisions and justify them. Huy said that the challenges in the practicum were within his capability to cope with. His understanding about how to teach was enough for him to teach the assigned lessons. By the end of the practicum, while he still thought that teaching theories and methodologies were helpful, he did not believe they were very necessary for his current teaching. By rejecting theory and replying solely on intuition but at the same feeling pressured to demonstrate his application of theory, Huy seemed still not to take control of his teaching.

During the practicum, Huy had critical opinions about the trainers' perspectives of teaching, the English curriculum, the teaching of the observed teachers, and the feedback of the primary mentor. Huy shared these opinions with me and the cohort. However, because of the power relation, Huy did not feel comfortable to express these opinions to those involved. Huy questioned the negative impact of this power relation. He wished for more open, trusting, and critical dialogue with his trainers and mentor. These issues again

reflected that he was still working under the pressure of the system and authorities and suppressing the criticality of his thinking.

During the practicum, I observed that Huy's concerns about teaching theory, the dominance of the system, and the power relation had created in him an attitude of emotional rejection towards theory or the authorities and an uninformed reliance on self. This might show that he was fighting for his power and freedom in the profession, but his professional identity was not clearly formed at this stage.

In the first year of his teaching, Huy recognised changes not only in his thinking but also in his professional identity. Being more goal-oriented and learning-focused, he gained a better control of his teaching. He could see more clearly the impact of his teaching on his learners' learning and improvement. This increased awareness of his impact led to a shift in his perception of his role.

Huy: The positive feeling comes from the fact that teaching with purposes makes the role of a teacher become more valuable and appreciated. I used to go to class without considering myself a teacher but just a friend or a helper of my learners. Now I find that I am really a teacher teaching a lesson with specific content. Before, I used to teach without setting goals in advance. I came to class, asked learners to do exercises in the textbooks, and explained the language points that they had difficulties. Now I know what my learners have not known and what I should teach in each lesson, and I teach what I plan to teach. I am a teacher now.

Therefore, if "teacher" was an adjective, I would say I am "more teacher" than before.

Trang: More teacher?

Huy: Yes. It is because I am now taking charge of my teaching better. I know what I am teaching and what I have to achieve in my teaching. My learners will learn towards the goals that I set. I used to wander around in my lessons, taught whatever came up, and many times my learners led me by their questions and problems, which made me feel that I was just a supporter.

(translated from Huy's Skype talk #1, 13th September 2016)

Huy saw a *big shift in his role* from a study-mate or helper ("bạn học" or "người giúp đỡ") to a teacher. He added that this awareness of his important role in teaching made him love the teaching profession better.

Also in the first-year teaching, gaining a better understanding of goal orientation and learner learning, Huy used these as a foundation to evaluate his own teaching and that of the main teacher that he co-taught with. He had always felt that this main teacher's teaching was not very effective and that other colleagues felt the same way. He had observed that the teacher used too many games which were too easy for learners. However, Huy had not known how to give feedback to the teacher and the academic

manager in a convincing way. Moreover, the main teacher was a native speaker of English while he was Vietnamese and just a teaching assistant. This power relation made him nervous to express an opinion. It had been an issue for quite a long time, and he was worried about the learners' learning outcomes. Since he was more aware of the importance of helping learners to achieve learning goals, he understood why he found the teacher's teaching was not effective. He could see that the teacher's activities did not align with the goals of the lessons, which meant the learners were not enabled to achieve the learning goals. He became more confident to meet the academic manager and discuss his concern about this class. The manager took his point and thanked him for his constructive feedback. He told me this incident in pride because he said he had demonstrated more confidence in himself as a co-teacher and in expressing his opinions to the authorities. I could see that the development of thinking about teaching had given him more confidence in teaching and in forming his identity as a capable Vietnamese teacher of English in the language centre where only native speakers of English could be the main teachers.

This exclusive power of native speaker teachers in the workplace was a frustration to Huy. Huy knew that there were almost no opportunities for him to become a main teacher in this centre because he was Vietnamese. This gave him a sense of stagnancy in his professional development. He was unhappy when thinking about what others – teachers, friends, and family – thought about this. Huy said that it was embarrassing and shameful when people asked him what he had been up to and he told them that he was still been a teaching assistant at the same language centre since the practicum. He was so unhappy that he questioned his potential in the teaching profession. He remembered a Vietnamese poem saying it was important to embrace the youth and make the best of it before it passed by. He was wasting his youth by being nothing but a teaching assistant. He considered taking risks by doing other jobs but was afraid that he would not find any and would not be able to earn his living and support his family. Through the conversation, I could see clearly that Huy was going through a crisis in his life, a crisis about his identity and career path.

Considering the qualities required to become a good teacher of English, he was unhappy about his limited proficiency and knowledge of English. He said that he only knew English in academic contexts, not English in daily communication or for specific purposes. He wanted to improve this, so he applied for a job as a translator and interpreter at a big corporation in Ho Chi Minh City. In the interview, he sadly realised that he could not

communicate effectively with the interviewers in English because he lacked English and knowledge in the corporation's area. In addition, Huy found that he knew too little about other aspects of life beyond English language classrooms. He observed that the teachers he admired all had experience in other domains outside their English teaching profession. Whenever he studied or talked with those teachers, he enjoyed their in-depth and broad discussions drawn from their rich experience. He felt they were attractive and effective in teaching English because they could impress and convince learners of their wide knowledge and rich experience. Huy wanted to build an image like that – a teacher who had good knowledge and proficiency of English in different domains and who had diverse life and work experience.

Regarding to teaching ability, Huy expressed a strong need to know more about teaching-learning theories and methodologies. He realised that his knowledge and experience was not enough for him to understand complex processes of learning a language. Wanting to help his learners to improve their learning, he wished to attend workshops providing such knowledge or to have time to read about this aspect. This was the first time Huy expressed explicitly his appreciation for teaching-learning theory and professional training – something he had not been fond of. Emotional rejection was no longer an issue which stopped him from learning from others. This balance reflected a both-and perspective and also his sense of self-leadership in teaching. He led by still trusting his intuition and experience but also feeling comfortable with learning from others.

In the second year of teaching, when coming back to teaching after trying out the job of interpreter and translator, he noticed dramatic shifts in his self-image. Firstly, he correlated thinking and feeling by identifying surface and deep happiness in teaching. He looked for real happiness not by excluding any aspects of teaching and by appreciating both surface and deep aspects.

Understanding more deeply the negotiation of goals, he gained control over his teaching by being able to accept and negotiate his own teaching beliefs and goals with those of learners, parents, and workplaces. Instead of rejecting the power of the authorities, he was more relaxed about it and found ways to manage it without losing his own identity. This revealed his developing sense of self-leadership in his own teaching.

Furthermore, seeing the impact of his teaching on his learners' learning, he became more aware of the importance of his role as a teacher. He noticed that when he gave a learner a

compliment and explained why he gave that compliment, that learner looked happy and became more engaged in following activities or lessons. Whenever he gave constructive feedback with a clear explanation and a suggestion to a learner about a particular aspect, the learner became more focused on that aspect and made some improvement in it. From those observations, Huy realised his feedback – something he used to ignore in the practicum – had a significant impact on learners. Therefore, he became more careful and purposeful about everything he said or did with regard to the learners. Realising the impact of his role as a teacher on learners' learning success, Huy said he treasured and loved teaching more. After a time of crisis and doubt, he said he had become surer about what he wanted. He wanted to be a teacher in order to help more learners with their learning and success.

In brief, Huy's formation of his professional identity and sense of self-leadership or taking control of his teaching occurred alongside his thinking development.

6.10 DISCUSSION OF THINKING & IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT & INFLUENCING FACTORS

RQ1: Do the surface and deep aspects found in the previous stages remain the core aspects for effective teaching in a first year of teaching?

RQ2: How does the thinking development process take place in real-life teaching. (Does the hierarchy of attention remain)?

RQ3: What influences this thinking development process?

Huy's Thinking Development

The finding from this stage confirmed that “teaching performance”, “learners' observable engagement”, “learner learning”, “lesson goal orientation”, and “logic of teaching steps” remained the core aspects for effective teaching over the first two years of Huy's teaching after the teaching practicum. The first two aspects were still perceived as surface aspects and the remaining three – “learner learning”, “lesson goal orientation”, “logic of teaching steps” – as deeper aspects.

The data from stage 1 (the early career teachers) and 2 (the cohort of student teachers) showed an expansion of their attention from surface to deeper aspects. These novice teachers believed that focusing more on deeper aspects demonstrated an advanced

development in their thinking and helped them teach more effectively. However, this case study challenged the perception that a simple shift to deeper aspects was an advance in their thinking. The data showed that the thinking about the five core aspects of teaching was not in such a simple and linear order of development. The checked boxes in Table 17 (p. 199) illustrate this non-linear process.

Thinking about the surface aspects was not abandoned in favour of the deeper aspects. Instead, the thinking developed such that the surface and deeper aspects were both seen as important to effective teaching. Moreover, they were interconnected and supported each other. In fact, attention to the deeper aspects (language acquisition processes) could only work when attention had been paid to the surface aspects (teacher performance to engage the students). This was an example of a shift to both-and rather than either-or thinking.

In adopting a both-and perspective, an understanding emerged of the relationship between the surface goals of keeping the students entertained and the deeper goals of acquisition. The deeper aspects eventually took the dominant place as the ultimate goals of teaching and in doing that the surface aspects became a means to that end. Whenever he worked towards surface goals only, he was overwhelmed with these surface aspects and forgot the deeper ones.

Table 17 – Major changes in Huy's thinking and professional identity

MAJOR CHANGES IN HUY'S THINKING &						PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY
1 = Teaching performance	3 = Goal orientation					
2 = Learner Learning	4 = Logic of teaching steps	1	2	3	4	
PRACTICUM – CLASSROOM OBSERVATION – JAN 2016						
1. Surface: Focusing initially on “teaching performance & “learner’s observable engagement”		✓				- either teaching theory or one’s intuition & experience?
2. Deep: Learning about “learner learning” & “goal orientation” Grounding his classroom observation on the new aspects Being aware of shortcomings in his thinking			✓	✓		- both theory and personal experiences
PRACTICUM – TEACHING PRACTICE – FEBRUARY & MARCH 2016						
3. Surface over deep: Re-learning about “teaching for learners” but Focusing on “learners’ observable engagement”, not “learning”		✓				- challenging system & relying back on intuitions
4. Deep over surface: Coining the terms “surface” & “deep” aspects Vaguely recognising what surface & deep aspects were			✓	✓		- questioning power relation
5. Surface over deep: Prioritising “surface” over “deep aspects” due to pressure		✓				
PRACTICUM – OVERAL REFLECTION – APRIL 2016						
6. Deep: Identifying deep aspects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ learner-focused,▪ lesson goal orientation,▪ logic of teaching steps = “structure” of a lesson			✓	✓	✓	wishing for more dialogue with trainers
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING – SEPTEMBER 2016 (5 months after practicum = 10 months in total)						
7. Connection between deep: Confirming importance of the three deeper aspects Better understanding of “logic of teaching steps” Seeing a connection among them			✓	✓	✓	expressing critical opinions & developing professional image
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING – NOVEMBER 2016 (7 months after practicum = 12 months in total)						
8. Deep: Continuing to focus on “learners and learning”			✓			professional stagnancy due to lack of opportunities to become a main teacher
9. Deep: Transferring “lesson goal orientation” to learners Decreasing effort in “lesson goal orientation”				✓		
FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING – FEBRUARY 2017 (10 months after practicum = 15 months in total)						
10. Deep: Differentiating two kinds of attention to learners Wanting to learn theories about second language acquisition Perceiving respect for learners’ differences as moral value Identifying “learners’ acquisition” as his biggest goal after having mastered teaching content & skills			✓			- concerned about his qualities of a teacher - more appreciation of teaching-learning theories
11. Deep: Seeing his teaching improvement thanks to his lesson goal orientation and impact of his teaching on learning				✓		
SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING – AUGUST 2018 (28 months after practicum = 32 months in total)						
12. Deep over surface happiness: Realising “surface happiness” & “deep happiness” in teaching Seeing a link between of thinking & happiness			✓	✓	✓	- real happiness in teaching - critical leadership in making teaching decisions - awareness of his impact on learners - more love & respect for teaching
13. Both surface and deep: Identifying importance of both surface & deep aspects Understanding more deeply impact of teaching on learners’ learning & personal development Seeing more clearly among the three deep aspects Prioritising deep aspects as the key driver		✓	✓	✓	✓	
14. Connection between surface and deep: Realising teaching goals were a negotiation between lesson goals, learners’ goals, and teaching workplace’s goals		✓	✓	✓	✓	

The complex and iterative cognitive movements among the aspects of teaching were, thus, a development of thinking, from an either-or to a both-and approach, from single-perspective to multiple-perspective thinking, and from little picture to big picture thinking. The both-and, multiple-perspective and big picture ways of thinking see the co-existence and interconnectedness of different aspects of teaching. They enable novice teachers to negotiate among these aspects for more critical teaching decisions. In other words, thinking development does not simply mean shifting attention from one aspect to another but is rather a process of expanding and deepening attention to all core aspects of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the case study also revealed an important connection between thinking development and sense of professional satisfaction in teaching. Table 17 includes this professional identity dimension. Understanding how the deeper aspect of language acquisition could be attended to was found to bring deeper satisfaction to the novice teacher. Huy raised the goal of achieving these deep aspects to a moral commitment that teachers needed to have.

Such cognitive development did not happen easily. Huy's data from the practicum to his first years of teaching revealed his struggles in establishing what should be the dominant focus of attention. For instance, Huy said that although he had realised the importance of "teaching for learners rather than for his own performance" when talking with me about the pressures before his first teaching practice session. It took him a long time and experience to better understand that concept and put it into practice. Huy also found that his mind had more space to pay more attention to the deeper aspects when he had become familiar with the teaching subjects, context, and learners and was no longer stressed about his teaching performance or skills. This suggests that developing thinking about teaching is a process of reducing complexity in which a certain aspect, through practice, becomes automatized, simplistic, and transforms into implicit knowledge and this leaves mental space for dealing with another aspect. In other words, cognitive movement takes time and effort and also requires on-going support to occur.

A further important point about thinking development is a teacher sharing his or her insights with learners. Huy, once having achieved a stronger awareness of the value of "lesson goal orientation", realised the value of "knowing purposes of doing things" or "goal orientation in general" and wanted to develop that in his learners. In fact, he did share this way of thinking with his learners by telling them the objective(s) of the subject

content that they were learning and of the activity that they were doing. Huy developed the belief that by doing this, his learners would become more motivated and autonomous.

This was exactly what happened to Huy himself. Knowing the purposes of what he was doing and being oriented to teaching-learning lesson goals, he became more autonomous in making teaching decisions, more effective in teaching, more confident in expressing his opinions, more aware and appreciative of his role as a teacher (rather than a “helper”).

The case study provided more evidence about the connection between thinking, practice, and professional identity. The development in thinking was found to lead to improvement in practice and a development in self-awareness and professional identity. Huy reported that he missed those developments while he did his other job as a translator and interpreter. Coming back to full-time teaching, Huy appreciated these professional aspects even more.

Factors Influencing Huy's Development of Thinking

The discussion of the findings throughout this chapter have identified a number of factors influencing Huy's development in thinking, practice, and professional identity. The factors are summarised in the list below:

- Factor 1: His perception of the expectations of those with external power: the trainers of the micro-teaching and methodology courses, the primary mentor of the practicum, the observed teachers of the practicum, and of managers and senior teachers at his workplace.
- Factor 2: His perception of learners' expectations.
- Factor 3: His perception of challenges in teaching contexts such as class size, low-achieving learners, teaching towards exams.
- Factor 4: His perception of a lack of promotion opportunities in the workplace leading to his professional stagnancy.

- Factor 5: His perception of reflective activities.
- Factor 6: His perception of group dynamics.
- Factor 7: His perception of "Why" questions by the researcher.
- Factor 8: His perception of the researcher's attention to people's mental lives.
- Factor 9: His perception of stories with a people-oriented perspective.
- Factor 10: His perception when taking responsibility for learners' learning outcomes.
- Factor 11: His perception when being required to design a whole course.

- Factor 12: His perception of his own teaching style and beliefs.

As in Chapter 5 on the factors influencing the cohort's thinking, these factors can be grouped according to whether they promoted attention to observable aspects, or deeper aspects of teaching, or whether they represent personal factors that influence change in thinking.

Factors that drew Huy's attention to observable aspects of teaching

- Factor 1: External power.
- Factor 2: Learners' expectations.
- Factor 3: Teaching-learning context.
- Factor 4: Promotion opportunities.

As part of the cohort, Huy reported the same influencing factors that the practicum cohort collectively reported. They firstly included his perception of the influence and expectation of his superiors in the teacher training programme and workplace. This external power seemed to have a strong impact on his thinking as well as that of his practicum cohort in the second stage and the nine ECTs of the first stage of the inquiry. His perception came from the superiors' instruction, feedback, and assessment on his teaching practice and that of his peers and colleagues. He perceived that they expected him to apply the trained and trendy teaching methodology in his teaching. He was expected to create an interesting class atmosphere, use English most of the time in class, make learners happy and cooperative, have creative and various teaching activities, be confident in front of learners, manage them well, etc. He found all these were about delivering a good teaching performance, the term also used by the ECTs and the other cohort members. Likewise, these were what he thought the learners expected from him.

The teaching-learning contexts were again a factor that made him pay more attention to teaching performance. In his workplace, he taught English for international exams, which gave him pressure to cover the huge amount of knowledge which the learners would need for the exams. This, according to Huy, did not give him time and space to focus on individual learners' learning processes. Another challenge in his workplace was a lack of promotion opportunities. He said it was difficult or almost impossible for him to become a main teacher of a class but only a teaching assistant because he was not a native speaker of English language. This made him feel a sense of stagnancy in his professional development which discouraged him to further explore and practise the deeper aspects of teaching that he had learnt in the teaching practicum.

Factors promoting Huy's thinking about deeper aspects of teaching

- Factor 5: Reflective activities.
- Factor 6: Group dynamics.
- Factor 7: "Why" questions by the researcher.
- Factor 9: The researcher's attention to people's mental lives.
- Factor 8: Stories or people about people-oriented perspective.
- Factor 10: Taking responsibility for learners' learning outcomes.
- Factor 11: Being required to design a whole course.

As with the cohort, Huy appreciated the reflective activities and group dynamics in the teaching practicum because they triggered his awareness of his attention to more surface aspects of teaching and promoted his thinking about deeper aspects.

He especially acknowledged the influence of the researcher during his practicum and early career. He recognised that my “Why” questions made him think more deeply about what he thought, believed, and did. “Why” questions also made him question the purposes of his classroom observation, the goals of his lessons, the objectives of individual teaching activities within a lesson, which developed his sense of goal-orientation.

In addition, he also noted my tendency not to take for granted what people said and felt but to explore and understand everyone’s thinking and feeling. He appreciated the curiosity about what he said, how he felt about teaching issues and the questions that asked him to further explore his own thinking and feeling. He said that these processes focused his mind on the thinking and feeling of himself and of his learners. This had gradually developed his increasing attention towards deeper aspects related to his individual learners such as their feelings, learning needs, learning styles, and learning processes. Huy added that he had been drawn to stories in books and in real life about teachers who trusted in disadvantaged children’s abilities to succeed and saw them become successful and even famous later. He said that this tendency to respect and encourage individual learners had become reinforced by my similar values. All this may reflect Huy’s nature to care and respect individual learners. These factors encouraged him to go beyond surface engagement of learners to pay closer attention to individual learners’ learning processes.

In addition to the above factors, Huy’s early career teaching gave him special opportunities which reinforced his belief in the value of the deeper aspects that he had found by then. In his private tutoring classes, he took full responsibility to design the courses which suited his learners and their goals and to make sure the learners would achieve the expected learning outcomes. This made him become more aware of the value of learner-learning oriented and goal-oriented thinking in teaching. Reflecting on these factors and over the previous teacher training programme, Huy reflected that the microteaching and teaching practicum did not give any opportunity for him and student teachers in general to see a big picture of course design and the interconnection of different lessons of a course and different activities of a lesson. Nor did he feel he was given the opportunity to follow a class for a longer time to see the learners’ background knowledge, understand their learning goals, and assess the learners’ achievement of these learning goals after his

teaching. He believed these were important factors that hindered him from seeing the deeper aspects of teaching.

Personal factors that shaped his own thinking development process

- Factor 12: His perception of his own teaching beliefs and style.

Along with the external factors discussed above, other internal factors, such as Huy's own teaching beliefs and style, also shaped his thinking. Huy was aware that his perceptions made him pay attention to "making learners happy" and creating fun activities in all of his lessons. He perceived that his perceptions somehow hindered him from seeing the deeper impact of teaching on learning. However, once he had seen, understood, and appreciated the deeper aspects as more crucial ones, he did not dismiss the more surface aspects such as making learners happy. Instead, he acknowledged his personal style of motivating learners, his belief that learning should be fun, and his strong sense of humour. He came to an awareness that both deep and surface aspects were important and supported each other. He also believed that he needed to be true to himself and maintain his strength and style of teaching.

As was found among the cohort members, individuals' perceptions and abilities shaped their own process of thinking changes.

These influencing factors together with those found in stage 1 and 2 of the inquiry will be summarised in Chapter 7 in order to suggest implications for teacher training and teacher development (see Figure 39, p. 238).

CHAPTER 7

THINKING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

“I am not who you think I am; I am not who I think I am;

I am who I think you think I am.”

Thomas Cooley

Outline

- 7.1. Introduction
- 7.2. Novice Teachers’ Thinking Development Framework
- 7.3. Components of the Framework in The View of the Existing Literature
- 7.4. Implications for Teacher Education
- 7.5. Strengths and Limitations of the Research
- 7.6. Implications for Further Research
- 7.7. Final Comments

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a description of the development of professional thinking in novice teachers based on the research findings. It then draws and discusses the implications from this description for teacher education.

In the first section of the chapter, each element of professional thinking development will be discussed and interpreted with reference to the relevant literature. Based on the factors that have been found to influence novice teachers' thinking development, implications for teacher training will be explored in the second section. The third section will add concluding comments.

Accordingly, the chapter will cover:

- 7.2. Novice teachers' thinking development framework.
- 7.3. The framework vs the existing literature.
- 7.4. Implications for teacher education.
- 7.5. Strengths and limitations of the research.
- 7.6. Implications for further research.
- 7.7. Final comments.

7.2 NOVICE TEACHER'S THINKING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

During the three stages of the interwoven data collection and analysis, a tentative framework of novice teachers' thinking development was constructed based on the accounts of the nine early career teachers. The framework was based on the teachers' reflections on their learning-to-teach journeys from practicum to their current teaching, their experiences as a cohort of five student teachers during their four-month teaching practicum, and from the longitudinal study of one of the cohort members from his four-month teaching practicum to the first two years of his teaching.

The data from the ECTs showed a hierarchy of attention to different aspects of teaching. In this hierarchy, the initial attention was automatically paid to "teacher performance" and "learners' observable engagement" and, later, effortful attention was paid to "learner learning" and "lesson goal orientation". The novice teachers found that an understanding of "learner learning" and "lesson goal orientation" were important contributors to the effectiveness of teaching. Along with this new understanding, the ECTs' professional identity also changed. The ECTs in their first year of teaching, faced with "self vs authority" and "self vs theory" conflicts, avoided expressing their critical opinions to the authorities and tried to conform to them and to the dominant teaching methodologies. In contrast, the third, fourth, and fifth year ECTs gained an increasing awareness of their own "teaching philosophies" (their word) as well as a stronger sense of self-leadership in their teaching.

The data from the practicum cohort showed the same hierarchy of attention but a more detailed and complex movement among the elements of the hierarchy. The cohort were initially, automatically, and constantly overwhelmed with concerns about "teaching performance" and "learners' observable engagement" throughout the practicum. They then learnt to focus on "learner learning", "lesson goal orientation", and "logic of teaching steps" but varied their attention to these aspects during the practicum. The cohort used the terms "surface thinking" or "surface aspects" to refer to the initial automatic attention to teaching performance and learners' observable engagement. They used "deep thinking" or "deep aspects" to refer to effortful attention to learner learning, lesson goal orientation, and the logic of teaching steps. There were conflicts between the surface and deeper aspects in the cohort's minds and a dissonance between what they said they wanted to

focus on and what they actually did in their practice of observing classrooms and teaching their own lessons. Their experiences and reflection during the practicum also helped the cohort to achieve a “both-and” thinking about the relationship between teaching experience/intuition and teaching theories. They also expressed their critical opinions towards the curriculum and the training but only among themselves and with me.

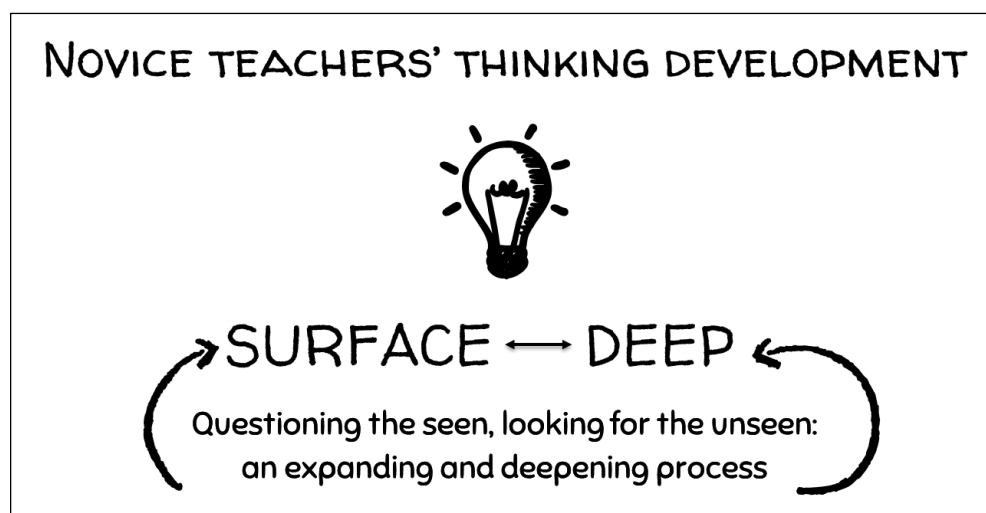
The data from the longitudinal study of Huy showed that these surface and deep aspects remained the core elements of teaching that concerned him during the first two years of his teaching after the practicum. Among the three deep aspects, Huy gained an understanding that the “logic of teaching steps” in a lesson could be achieved if he designed the lesson based on the other two aspects – making learning happen and being lesson goal oriented. However, his attention to and practice of these deeper aspects was not always easy.

Over time, Huy added three important insights to the understanding of thinking development. Firstly, Huy found that it was not simply that deeper aspects were more important than surface aspects. Actually, they were connected with each other and all were essential to teaching and learning effectiveness. The second important insight was that even though all the core aspects were interconnected and important to teaching-learning effectiveness, it was the deeper aspects that should be effortfully paid attention. He realised the surface aspects could be used to create conditions for the deeper aspects to be achieved.

The third important insight Huy developed was the need to negotiate between the four core aspects of teaching and the pressure from external factors such as the authorities and learners. Huy learnt that decisions in teaching were based on negotiation among conflicting elements and perspectives. Thinking and negotiating between those elements of teaching, Huy also acquired higher-order thinking skills such as both-and rather than either-or thinking, multiple perspectives rather than a single perspective, and big-picture thinking rather than detail-focused thinking. Furthermore, Huy reported that his thinking development helped him to improve his knowledge and performance of his teaching as well as his professional identity. He found that, he became more appreciative of his own teaching perspectives, more expressive of his teaching perspectives to the authorities, thought of himself as a teacher rather than just a helper, and developed love and respect for the teaching profession.

Based on these findings, the core pattern of the professional thinking development can be briefly described as representing an expansion and deepening of novice teachers' attention to various core elements of teaching and a shift of attention back and forth between the surface and deep elements (see Figure 28). These cognitive movements occurred when the novice teachers questioned the seen aspects of their teaching and sought for the unseen. The unseen aspects were perceived by the novice teachers as less observable, deeper, and relatively more crucial to the maturity of their professional thinking and the effectiveness of their teaching.

Figure 28 – A core pattern of novice teachers' thinking development



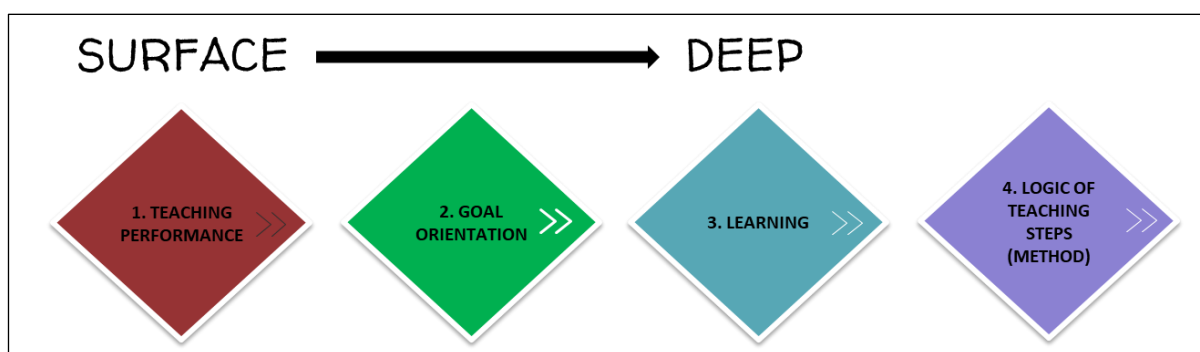
This thinking development, despite variations in different individuals, has seven common features as follows.

- Feature #1. Expansion of attention from surface to deeper aspects of teaching.
- Feature #2. Deepening of attention from surface to deeper layers of each aspect.
- Feature #3. Interconnection between surface and deep aspects at their deepest layers.
- Feature #4. Not a linear but spiral process.
Conflicts among aspects promoting thinking development.
- Feature #5. All aspects are significant and generate one another.
Deeper aspects are the key driver.
Deep thinking is different from deep aspects of teaching.
- Feature #6. Co-existence of teaching-specific thinking and generic thinking.
- Feature #7. Professional thinking goes hand-in-hand with professional identity.

Feature #1. Expansion of attention from surface to deeper aspects of teaching

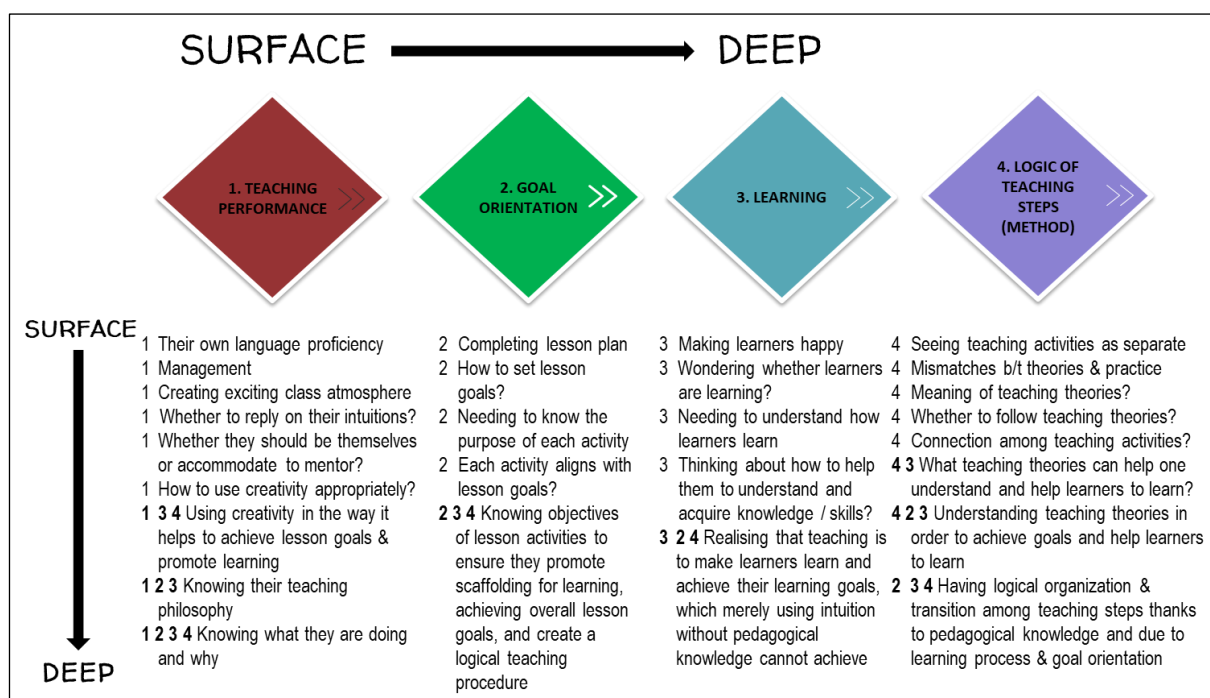
The novice teachers during their learning-to-teach processes expanded their attention from “teaching performance” (their word) to “goal orientation”, “learner learning”, and “logic of teaching steps” which reflected their teaching methodology (see Figure 29). Among various issues related to their teaching, these emerged as the most salient aspects in the stories of all the novice teachers in the three stages of the inquiry. These aspects remained crucial elements for effective teaching and were better understood and described by the novice teachers in the first few years of their real-life teaching.

Figure 29 – Feature #1. Expansion of attention from surface to deeper aspects of teaching



Feature #2. Deepening of attention from surface to deeper layers of each aspect

The novice teachers’ thinking development involved not only the expansion but also the deepening of their attention. In addition to expanding their attention to various aspects of teaching, the novice teachers deepened their attention to various layers of each of the aspects. Figure 30 summarises the layers developing from surface to deeper levels within each of the core aspects of teaching. For instance, regarding the aspect of learners and learning, the novice teachers initially focused on making learners happy. Thanks to several influencing factors, they deepened their thinking about this aspect by realising that teaching was to make learners learn and achieve their learning goals. In order to do this, it was not enough to rely on their intuition of how to teach but also to learn and make use of pedagogical knowledge such as how to understand and promote learners’ language acquisition.

Figure 30 – Feature #2. Deepening of attention from surface to deeper layers of each aspect

Feature #3. Interconnection between surface and deep aspects at their deepest layers

Novice teachers came to see the connection between surface and deeper aspects of teaching (see the underlined layers in Figure 31). Back to the example above about the learning aspect, the novice teachers' deep understanding of this aspect (the layer numbered 3 2 4) involved their awareness of learning processes (number 3), learning goal achievement (2), and pedagogical knowledge (number 4).

The fourth core aspect of teaching, the logic of teaching steps, which reflects teaching methodology was developed by the novice teachers when they had come to understand aspects of learning and goal orientation.

At the beginning of the practicum when the cohort observed in-service teachers' teaching, they noticed and appreciated "smooth transitions" (their English words) between teaching steps that the observed teachers created. They reported verbal transitions that the teachers used to connect an activity with the following one, which made the activities of a lesson flow naturally. According to the cohort, creating such smooth transitions was "an art of teaching" (their English words). However, the cohort said they had not figured out how to create such transitions.

In the reflective activities, the cohort also realised that they would need to pay more attention to teachers' teaching steps. From that point, the cohort were more concerned about creating a logical organisation of teaching steps of a lesson. However, they said they still did not know how to do that.

During their teaching practice, the cohort received feedback from their primary mentor about a lack of transition between their teaching activities of a lesson. The cohort became even more concerned about this aspect and tried to create such a transition in several ways. For instance, they tried verbal transitions such as "You have listened to the conversation... Now let's talk about each person in this conversation..." However, they found this way quite mechanical and sometimes forced. They also chose a theme for a lesson (e.g. "travelling") and made sure all the activities of the lesson were related to that theme. By this way, they tried to create a connection between the activities. Even though Huy did that too, he was worried that this theme-based connection would not work for all lessons.

In the interview at the end of the practicum, Huy identify such connection between teaching steps was one of the deep aspects of teaching. He said that even though he still did not explain it clearly, he felt that such logical structure of a lesson reflected the teaching methodology of that lesson.

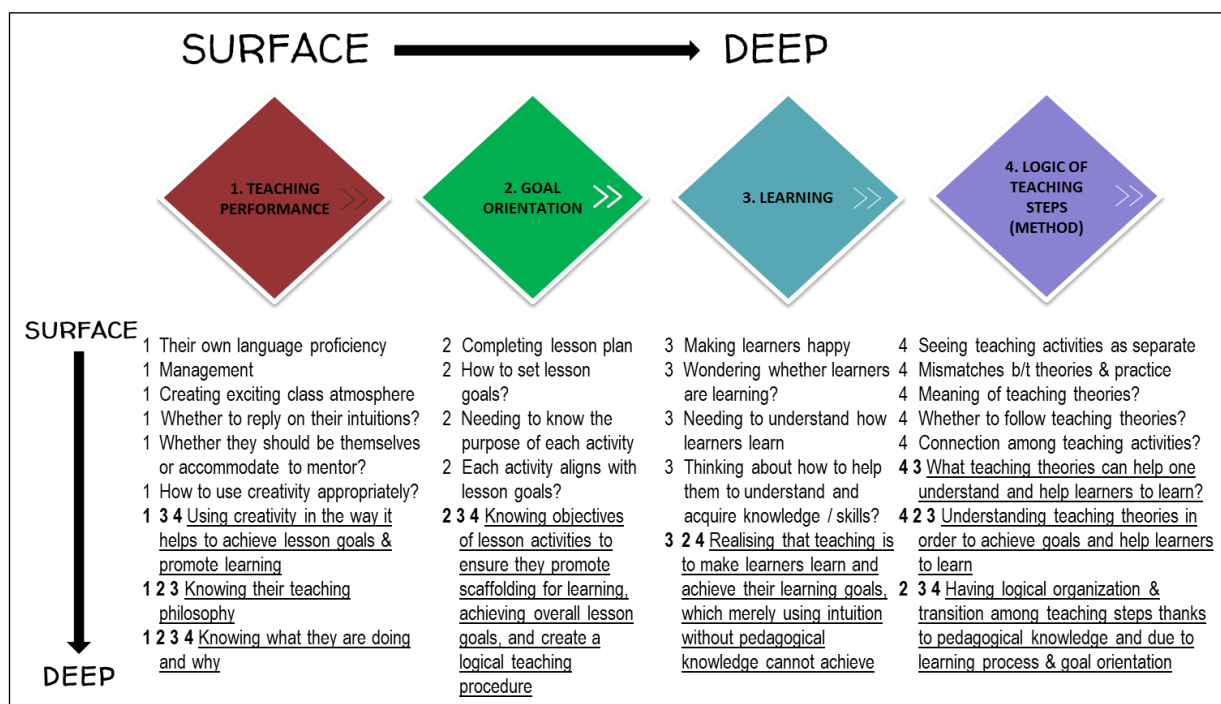
Regarding teaching methodology, throughout the practicum, the cohort were concerned about which methodology suited their teaching context and their lessons. They acknowledged their little understanding of CLT, that they claimed they were using. They talked about a pressure of following the trained and trendy teaching methodologies, which they disliked, especially Huy, but except Thao, who liked to learn and apply teaching methodologies.

In the early career teaching when Huy had been able to grasp the aspects of learning and goal orientation, he realised how to create such logic of teaching steps and confirmed that such logic underlied teaching methodology. Specifically, he realised teaching activities of a lesson needed to be designed and organised in a way that suited and promoted learners' learning processes and enabled him/the teacher and learners to achieve the lesson goals. Doing this, the teacher would be able to create a logical structure of their teaching steps. In other words, the understanding and practice of this fourth aspect of teaching was developed thanks to the understanding and practice of the other two deep aspects of the teaching.

They were all interconnected and improved teachers' understanding and practice of existing methodologies of teaching.

In brief, all the core aspects of teaching are interconnected. The awareness of one aspect or layer promoted or generated the awareness of others. Altogether these aspects and layers contributed to the development of thinking and teaching effectiveness. This implies that there is not one single right path to develop a novice teacher's thinking. Depending on their beliefs, experience, and preference, they can come to realise a particular aspect or layer before others while their peers start with a different aspect of a layer. This research reveals these individual differences and this framework captures this diversity.

Figure 31 – Feature #3. Interconnection between surface and deep aspects at their deepest layers



Feature #4. Not a linear but spiral process.

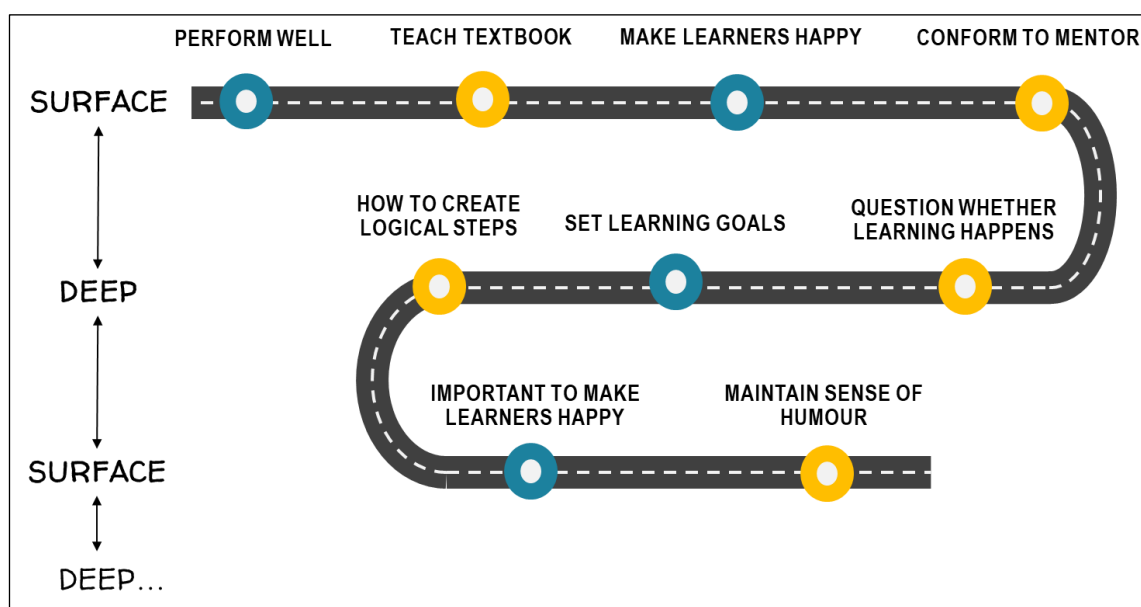
Conflicts among aspects promoting thinking development.

The complexity of the thinking development is not only due to individual differences but also because of the novice teachers' moving back and forth between the surface and deep aspects of teaching. It is also shaped by teachers when they re-encounter and revisit these aspects during their learning-to-teach journeys.

The moving back and forth between the teaching aspects happened due to the conflicting influences that affected them. They could be aware that they needed to slow down and pay attention to learners' difficulties in learning. However, the pressure of completing the lesson as their practicum mentors were watching took their attention away from that aspect and redirected their attention to their teaching as performance. Reflective discussion then made them think about the effectiveness of their teaching and their learners' learning, which again reminded them of the less visible aspects which had not come automatically to their attention. The expansion and deepening of their attention sometimes created conflicts in their thinking. They struggled to figure out which to follow and also to maintain their attention on the deeper aspects that they still needed to make an effort to understand and put into practice. The inevitable conflicts and their resolution of the conflicts boosted up their thinking and brought out changes and development in their thinking and teaching practice.

Whenever the novice teachers re-countered the core teaching aspects, due to the influences of expectations and experience, they deepened their understanding of it and resolved more conflicts among the aspects. This means that their revisiting of an aspect was not the same as the previous encounter. They gained more understanding of each aspect, which helped bring it to their automatic attention. The novice teachers' thinking development process is not linear but more like a spiral process in which the later gained layers were deeper or more informed than previous layers of the same aspect of teaching. Figure 32 is an example which illustrates this spiral process of the novice teachers' thinking.

Figure 32 – Feature #4. Not a linear but spiral process.



Feature #5. All aspects are significant and generate one another.

Deeper aspects are the key driver.

Deep thinking is different from deep aspects of teaching.

Even though the thinking development was perceived by the novice teachers as a cognitive movement from surface to deeper aspects of teaching, the case study showed that in the real-life teaching both surface and deep aspects were significant and generated one another. All surface and deep aspects were essential to effective teaching and learning. For example, one cannot focus only on teaching-learning activities which could facilitate language acquisition and forget to include activities that could affectively motivate learners and made learning easy and fun. Deeper thinking is therefore not the same as paying attention to deeper aspects of teaching. Deeper thinking is to be aware of both surface and deeper aspects of teaching and learning and to negotiate them to bring about effective teaching and learning in a specific context.

Nevertheless, this both-and approach to the surface and deep aspects of thinking does not mean that both are equally important or a superficial balance between them is required. Instead, the case study revealed that if one for some reason pays more attention to the surface aspects, they are very likely to forget the deeper aspects. On the other hand, when they pay more attention to the deeper aspects, they will automatically remember the surface ones because the surface ones are easier to see. This means that both surface and deep aspects of teaching are essential, but the deeper aspects and layers are the key and should be paid more attention by teacher trainers, academic managers, and novice teachers themselves.

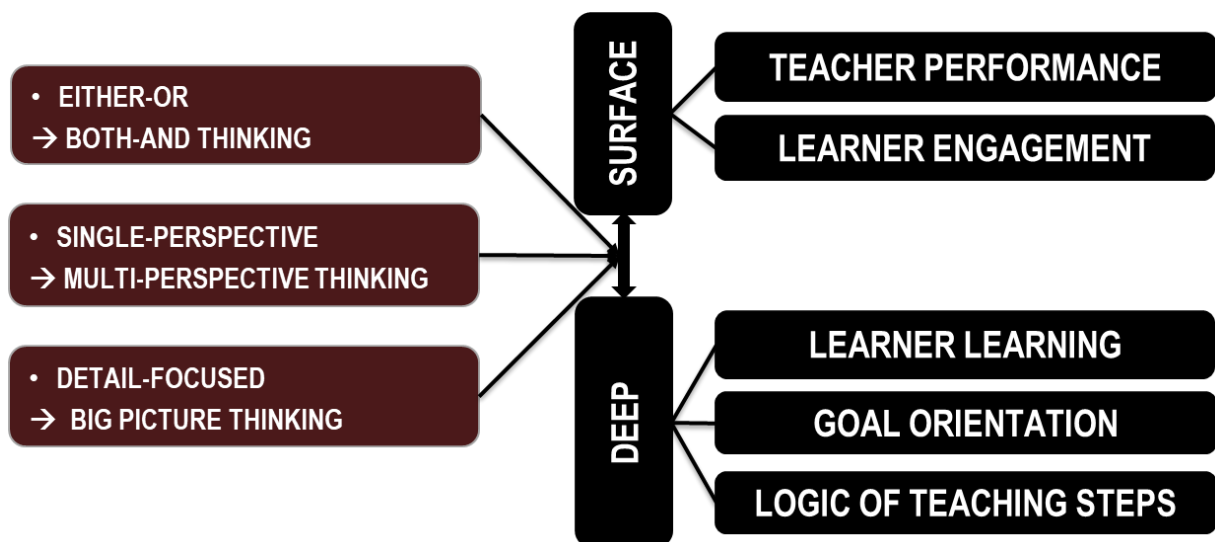
Feature #6. Co-existence of teaching-specific thinking and generic thinking

The five features above of thinking development reveal not only thinking skills about the teaching domain but also general thinking skills that can be found across disciplines (see Figure 33). The first overall one is both-and thinking. The novice teachers were found to adopt initially an “either-or” thinking: either the trained teaching methodology or their own teaching way, either creating fun activities or more “serious” ones (their word), or either surface or deep aspects of thinking. Later in their thinking development process,

their discourse was different. They used “not only...but also” and “both-and” when talking about various aspects of teaching. This generic thinking skill was important to shift their thinking from a single perspective to multiple perspectives. They said it was not enough just to focus on their teaching but also learners’ learning and goal achievement. Their realisation of the logical connection between activities of a lesson and between lessons reflected their shift from detail-focused to big-picture thinking. If at the beginning of the practicum, they said they could only focus on designing and conducting single activities, they later could be more lesson goal-oriented when designing individual activities and could create a sensible transition between them.

Either-or to both-and thinking, single perspective to multi-perspective thinking, and detailed-focused to big picture thinking represent the development of generic thinking skills alongside teaching-domain-specific thinking. These generic thinking skills helped the novice teachers to see the unseen and the interconnectedness and intergeneration of all of the core aspects and layers. Referring to the controversy within the literature of critical thinking mentioned in Chapter 2, the framework generated from this research confirms the co-existence of generic and domain-specific thinking skills in novice teachers’ thinking development.

Figure 33 – Feature #6. Co-existence of generic thinking and teaching-specific thinking



Feature #7. Professional thinking goes hand-in-hand with professional identity.

Although thinking was the main subject of the inquiry, professional identity emerged as an important and related issue in all of the participants' learning-to-teach journeys.

It was reflected in the novice teachers' conflicts between themselves and their superiors (which I called "self vs authority" conflicts), between themselves and the taught or dominant teaching theories (which I called "self vs theory" conflicts), between themselves and the system they were working in (which I called "self vs system"), or between themselves and their learners' expectations (which I called "self vs learner"). Their concern about their professional identity was also reflected and resulted in their anxiety when dealing with learners who were their university-peers, appearing as teacher trainees rather than teachers, appearing as novice teachers rather than experienced ones in the workplaces, feeling inferior to senior teachers, or seeking for opportunities to be promoted from a teaching assistant to a main teacher.

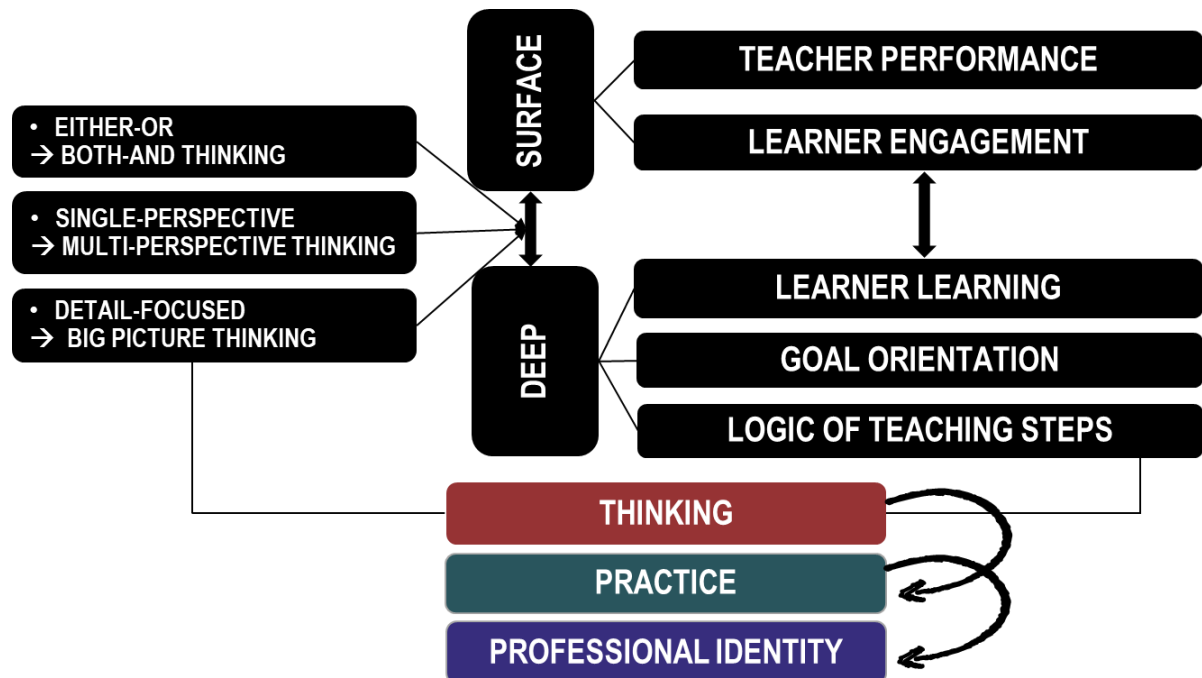
Sometimes they complied with the external powers and authority figures without being critical about why they did that. Sometimes they acted upon their own intuitions and held negative feelings towards the pressure from the external power. Later they recognised that a both-and approach to these conflicts was helpful. They could resolve these conflicts better and still feel a sense of control and leadership over situations.

In the case study, Huy experienced dramatic changes in his awareness of his professional identity when he gained better understanding of the core aspects of teaching. This deeper understanding gave him more confidence in justifying his teaching decisions and having opinions about his colleague's teaching effectiveness. Then this courage to speak up in the workplace made him more confident about his perspective and teaching ability. The deeper understanding of the aspects of learner learning and goal orientation also gave him more control and a sense of purpose of his teaching. This made him see the impact of his teaching on his learners' learning, by which he was more confident to call himself "a teacher", not just "a helper" like he did before.

In general, the thinking development was found to go hand-in-hand with the development of professional identity (see Figure 34). This identity development was seen when the novice teachers took a leadership role in making decisions about their own teaching and in resolving the self vs authority, self vs theory, self vs system, or self vs learner conflicts.

By doing this, they felt more satisfied about their own decisions and their teaching in general. In the case of Huy, he even developed more love for teaching and treasured it as a profession more than before when he was less aware of his professional identity or self-leadership in the profession.

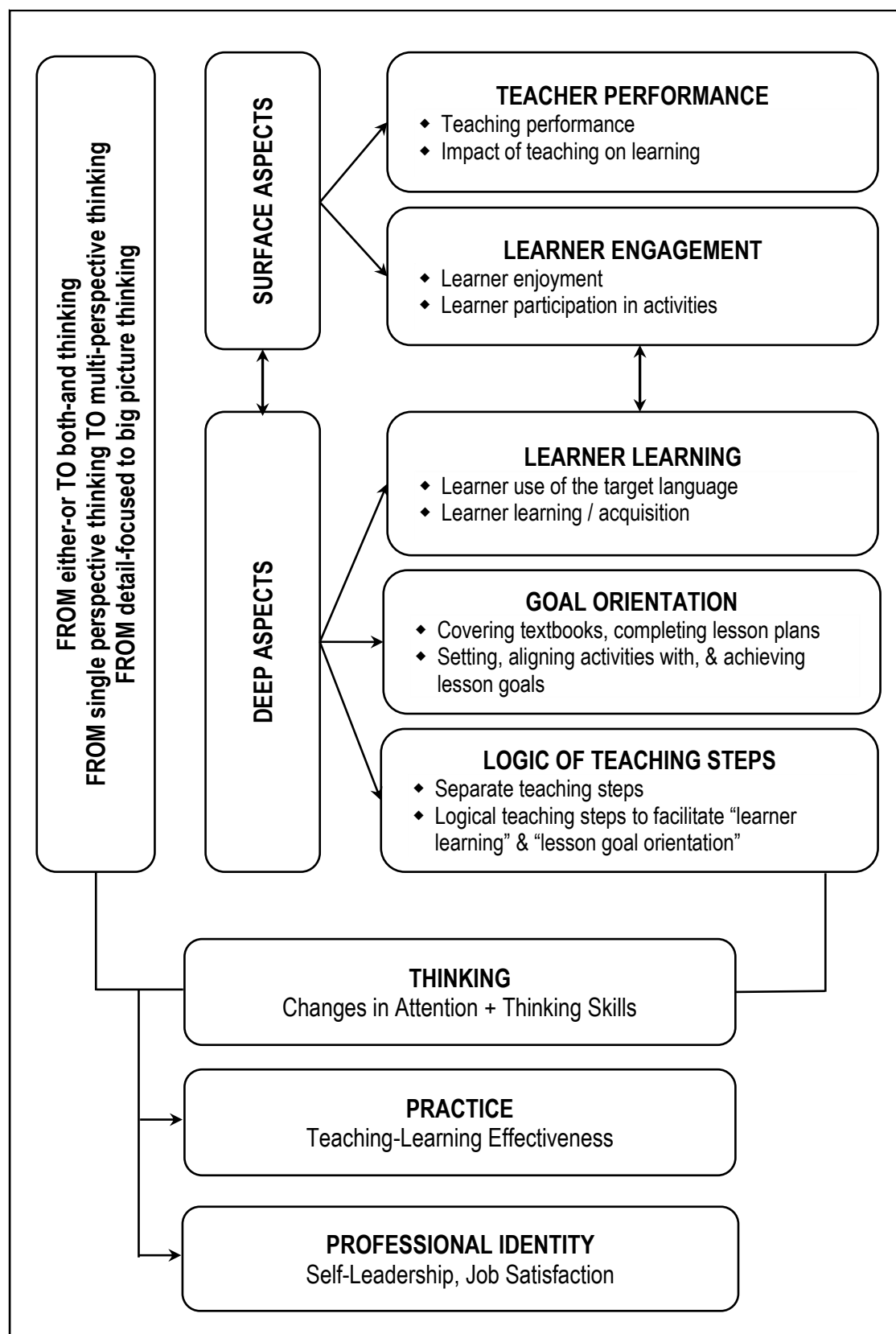
Figure 34 – Feature #7. Professional thinking goes hand-in-hand with professional identity.



Overview of the thinking development framework

Figure 35 attempts to capture the seven features of the thinking development discussed above and presents a tentative framework of novice teachers' development of thinking, practice, and professional identity.

Figure 35 – A tentative framework of novice teachers' development of thinking, practice, and professional identity



7.3 THE FRAMEWORK VS THE EXISTING LITERATURE

This section will discuss the literature which is related to the components of the novice teachers' thinking development framework. Some of this literature became relevant only in considering the findings of the study and was not, therefore, in the initial review in Chapter 2. The purpose of this discussion is to gain better understanding of the components of the thinking development and to see the contributions of this research to other studies.

The following sections include:

- (1) Learner engagement vs the literature on “learner engagement theory”.
- (2) Goal orientation vs the literature on “goal theory”.
- (3) Attention to aspects of teaching vs the literature on “teacher concerns”.
- (4) Thinking development vs the literature on “critical thinking”.
- (5) Professional identity vs the literature on “teacher identity” and “critical leadership”.

(1) Learner engagement vs “learner engagement theory”

The literature shows that learner engagement is a multidimensional construct (Fredricks et al., 2004). It has at least three components: emotional, behavioural, and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Moreira et al., 2009; Sciarra & Seirup, 2008). Emotional engagement involves learners “positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work”. Behavioural engagement “draws on the idea of participation” and “involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities”. Cognitive engagement refers to learners' investment and “incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills” (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60). Each of them encompasses different levels or degrees. For example, emotional engagement can range from “simple liking to deep valuing of, or identification with, the institution each component” (ibid.). Behavioural engagement can range from following instructions, adhering to classroom rules, simply doing the work, participation in extracurricular activities, involvement in learning activities reflected through attention to task, persistence and concentration. Cognitive engagement can range

from “simple memorization to the use of self-regulated learning strategies that promote deep understanding and expertise” (Fredricks et al., 2004; Hughes et al., 2008). The three components, despite sometimes being defined and examined separately, are dynamically related to each other within an individual (Fredricks et al., 2004; van Uden et al., 2014).

The data of this research showed that the novice teachers were concerned about all three components of learner engagement. At a surface level, they paid the most attention to whether learners liked teaching activities and enjoyed learning with them, whether learners paid attention to their teaching, whether they were willing to participate in activities and interact with their classmates. Sometimes, they focused more on learners’ enjoyment than learners’ working and using the target language. This was the case in which some of the cohort members appreciated a teacher who delivered an interesting lecture related to the reading topic instead of organising reading activities for the learners to work on. They also focused more on whether learners participated in classroom activities than on how learners used the target language in these activities. They acknowledged the challenge in understanding learners’ acquisition of the target language and in maintaining their attention to this aspect during their teaching. They also mentioned the importance of developing learners’ orientation to the learning goal and autonomy.

Accordingly, the data showed a hierarchy of the novice teachers’ attention to “surface, more visible” levels of engagement to “deeper, less visible” levels. This is the list of increasing depth of learner engagement that the novice teachers paid attention to, from observable to unobservable (the last three).

- ♦ looking happy,
- ♦ paying attention to teacher,
- ♦ participating into class activities,
- ♦ working on tasks,
- ♦ using the target language,
- ♦ acquiring the target language,
- ♦ retaining the learnt knowledge and skills,
- ♦ being goal orientated and autonomous.

These levels reflect all three main components of learner engagement reported in the literature. However, I used only “learners’ observable engagement” and “learner learning”

in my data analysis because they reflected the two most contrasting dimensions of learners that the novice teachers reported. “Learners’ observable engagement” refers to the visible manifestation of learner engagement like being interested in classroom activities and working on tasks, and “learner learning” to what happened in learners’ minds, their understanding, and their acquisition processes.

The data from the case study showed that all these levels of learner engagement are dynamically interrelated and important. This interrelation is also supported by the literature (Fredricks et al., 2004; van Uden et al., 2014). Furthermore, Huy found that learner learning only happened if learners had already been engaged affectively. Archambault et al. (2009) also found that emotional engagement predicted both behavioural and cognitive engagement. Although in the second year of teaching when Huy had learnt to pay more attention to learners’ deeper learning rather than learners’ enjoyment, he still put a lot of effort in engaging learners affectively. He said he would not change his image of a teacher who was funny, interesting, and caring and who could help his learner to love English and love learning better.

This shows that focusing on surface levels of learner engagement does not necessarily reflect a lower level of teacher’s thinking. What decides the thinking maturity is whether that focus is based on instinct or informed choice. This highlights the importance of awareness in decision making, which is believed to be one of the key qualities of critical thinking (Facione, 1998; Noel et al., 2017).

In addition, the literature indicates that developing learner engagement is influenced by a number of factors such as the size of the school, the teacher–student ratio, learning environments in which an appropriate level of learner autonomy is supported and monitored, peers, learners’ age, goal directed learning, task selection, intensive teaching, teacher responsiveness, and teachers’ interpersonal teacher behaviour (Keen et al., 2011; van Uden et al., 2014). Among these factors, teachers’ interpersonal behaviour which promotes a positive relationship between student and teacher has been found to have the strongest relation to student engagement and achievement (den Brok et al., 2004, den Brok et al., 2006, van Petegem et al., 2008, Wubbels et al., 2006, Roorda et al., 2011; cited in van Uden et al., 2014).

Those studies support the concern of the novice teachers in this research about developing a good relationship with learners, but the deeper levels of learner engagement remained

the priority according to the research findings. Achieving a deeper understanding of these deeper levels of learner engagement, Huy realised the significance of understanding and respecting individual learners' thinking and considered this a moral value that teachers needed to have.

(2) Goal orientation vs “goal theory”

The analysis of the data showed a strong connection between two of the deep elements – teachers' lesson goal orientation and learners' learning. For instance, Huy found that when he was aware of his lesson's goals and activities' objectives, he could be more sharply focused on making learners' learning happen. This resonates with the results of Keen, Pennell, Muspratt, and Poed (2011)'s study on teachers' self-report of learner engagement strategies. They found that teachers' focus on a learning goal was one of the important factors that could enhance learners' cognitive engagement. Their data showed that:

A child may be actively engaged in activities, but learner engagement however requires the engagement to be goal directed. That is, the child must be participating productively in a way that will lead to learning outcomes that are relevant and meaningful (Fuchs 2002). To ensure the child is on task and working toward the specified learning goal, it is necessary for the teacher to be clear about the purpose of the task and how it relates to learning goals. Furthermore, monitoring progress toward goal achievement ensures that the child progresses to new challenges once a goal is reached (Keen and Arthur-Kelly 2009).

(Keen et al., 2011, p. 303)

Teachers' goals have not been a major focus in the literature. Ravindran, Greene, and Debacker (2005) found that: “To date, there has been no research on preservice teachers that examines goals and beliefs simultaneously” (p. 224). Butler (2007) found that: “Student motivation has long been a major focus of basic and applied research in educational psychology, but there has been surprisingly little research on teacher motivation” (p. 241). Retelsdorf, Butler, Streblow, and Schiefele (2010) maintained a similar observation.

Due to this lack of a theory of teachers' goal orientation, what researchers on teachers' goals have done so far is to make use of learners' goal theory (Shim et al., 2013). For example, Butler (2007) used this approach to propose a framework to understand teachers' motivation. He proposed four types of teachers' goals:

*“(a) learn and develop professional competence (mastery goal orientation),
(b) demonstrate superior teaching ability (ability-approach goal orientation),
(c) avoid the demonstration of inferior teaching ability (ability-avoidance goal orientation), and
(d) get through the day with little effort (work-avoidance goal orientation)” (p. 31)*

Other researchers in this field so far have understood teachers' goals in the same way. Shim et al. (2013) observed that:

“achievement goal researchers have classified the two major classes of goals... mastery goals focusing on developing academic competence – with primary attention to personal growth – while performance goals focus upon demonstrating academic competence – with primary attention to comparisons with others... As goal theory evolved, performance goals were further bifurcated as approach or avoidance oriented.” (p. 86)

That understanding of teachers' goals, however, does not explain in detail the concept of teachers' goal orientation found in this research. Within the context of classroom teaching, teachers were found to have different specific goals such as teaching performance (i.e. teachers' language proficiency, classroom management, etc.), various levels of learner engagement, lesson goal orientation (i.e. teaching-learning content goals), and the organisation of teaching steps. The data provides a more close-up snapshot of novice teachers' goals for classroom teaching. Their perceptions and choices of these goals were found to influence their thinking development and teaching effectiveness.

The shift in “goal orientation” revealed the novice teachers' development of their understanding from surface layers to deeper layers. These layers include:

- ♦ setting lesson goals based on textbooks,
- ♦ setting three types of goals required by trainers,
- ♦ covering lesson content prescribed in textbooks,
- ♦ completing lesson plans,
- ♦ knowing general goals of a lesson,
- ♦ knowing the objective of individual activity without aligning it with lesson goals,
- ♦ setting more specific goals for a lesson and aligning activities with lesson goals,
- ♦ setting lesson goals which promote learner learning,
- ♦ negotiating between goals of teachers, textbooks, learners, (and parents),
- ♦ seeing beyond goals of individual lessons, seeing goals of a whole course.

However, the current research revealed that goal orientation would become superficial and ineffective if novice teachers just set general goals at the beginning and later assessed the general achievement of the goals after teaching. More than that is required. Teachers need to constantly ask why-questions in each decision, align each teaching activity to the lesson goals, align each lesson to the course goals, and keep in mind learner learning processes and styles when setting goals and monitoring and assessing goal achievement.

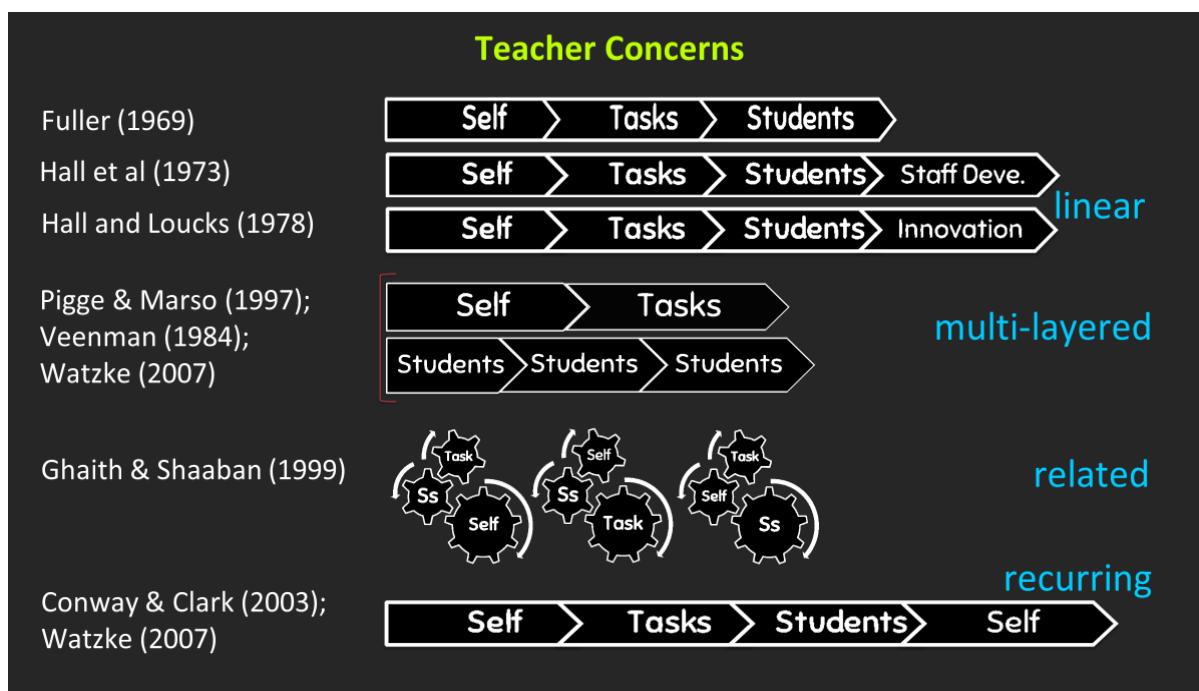
(3) Attention to aspects of teaching vs “teacher concerns”

Fuller (1969) found teachers went through three major concerns in the three main stages of their professional development (see Figure 36): the teachers themselves in the survival stage, tasks in the mastery stage, and students in the impact stage. “Self” includes concerns about their adequacy, class control, evaluative opinions of students and colleagues. “Tasks” includes concerns about performance of their teaching tasks together with features such as students, time, resources, etc. “Students” refers concerns about students’ social and learning needs, discipline methods, curriculum choices, etc.

Figure 36 – Fuller (1969)’s model of teachers’ concerns



Later research has “expanded or redefined the categories of concerns” (Mok, 2005, p. 55) to be less linear and more dynamic. I represent this expansion of research into teacher concerns in Figure 37.

Figure 37 – Literature on Teacher Concerns

Some of the later studies (Hall et al., 1973; Hall & Loucks, 1978) added more concerns such as “staff development” and “innovation”; however, they still saw the changes in teacher concerns as a linear process.

Other researchers have challenged that linear process and found that concerns about “students” existed at the beginning and remained over time while those about “self” reduced and were replaced by “tasks” in the later stage of the professional development (e.g. Pigge & Marso, 1997; Veenman, 1984; Watzke, 2007). Ghaith and Shaaban (1999) provided the further insight that the three types of teacher concerns were related with each other and thus existed together during a teacher’s professional development. However, in each stage of the professional development, each of them was found to be more focused than others. Some studies have also found a movement from inwardness (self) to outwardness (tasks, students) and back to inwardness (self) within a teacher (e.g. Conway & Clark, 2003; Watzke, 2007).

These studies provided helpful insights into changes in teachers’ foci of attention. A few similarities with the results of this research can be seen. Whatever patterns of change, the existing studies agreed on one point - that teachers always focused on themselves and their teaching performance first and it may take some time for them to pay more attention to learners. The interrelations among the concerns also matched with the results of this research. The movement from inwardness to outwardness and back to inwardness was

found in this research when the novice teachers gained more awareness of their own teaching beliefs and professional identities.

The current research shows firstly that the novice teachers did not simply switch from one concern to another but expanded and deepened their concerns. These concerns were related to each other and co-existed. Their co-existence resulted in conflicts in the novice teachers' minds; and the resolutions of the conflicts depended on their dominant concerns, teaching beliefs, and external factors such as their superiors and teaching contexts. Secondly, the research provides insights into not only different types of concerns but also different levels of each concern, how they are related to each other, and how each of them is related to teachers' thinking development, teaching practice, and professional identities. Thirdly, the research agrees with Mok (2005) that teacher concerns do not necessarily depend on teachers' years of experiences as other studies found. The data show that in his practicum and the first year of teaching, Huy was already concerned about the deeper aspects of teaching that were addressed by the ECTs in their third, fourth, and fifth year of teaching. Time may not be the only or strongest factor that influences changes in teacher concerns and thinking but other factors such as reflection in group, teachers' personal beliefs and dispositions, and working environments are influential as well. In other words, this research not only presents changes in teacher concerns but also why such changes took place. Those influencing factors will be summarised in the next section.

(4) Thinking development vs “critical thinking”

The analysis of the data showed that the novice teachers found their thinking developed when they expanded their attention from surface aspects to deeper aspects of teaching, deepened their understanding of each aspect, discovered the interconnection, interdependence, and understood the reciprocal influence between these aspects, and when they saw their impact on teaching-learning effectiveness. In these processes of thinking development, the novice teachers developed the awareness of those core elements of effective teaching (i.e. teaching-domain-specific thinking) and at the same time developed general thinking strategies to process these core elements such as both-and, multi-perspective, and big-picture thinking (generic thinking).

Regarding the expansion and deepening of attention to surface/deep elements of teaching, the literature indicates explicitly the relation between teachers' goals (which are similar to

teachers' attention to various elements of teaching in this research) and levels of their cognitive processing as follows.

A task (mastery) orientation was related strongly and positively to the use of deep processing strategies, and less strongly to the use of surface processing strategies. In contrast, an ego (performance) orientation was related positively only to the use of surface-level strategies (Anderman et al., 2002, p. 208).

This notion of “surface/deep processing” in the literature resonates with the notion of “surface/deep thinking” emerging in this research. Additionally, according to goal theory, those “who are learning-oriented focus less on the façade of competence and more on their growth and mastery of tasks and information” (Albert & Dahling, 2016, p. 245). This notion of “*façade*” is similar to that of “surface” found in this research.

Thus, the common pattern found in both the literature and the current research is that performance goals associate with a more surface level of thinking while mastery or learning goals associate with a deeper level of thinking. In other words, professional thinking development is a process of going beyond visible, observable, on-the-surface aspects to look for, understand, and put into practice unobservable, underlying, inner, deeper aspects of teaching and learning. It is a process of going beyond teachers' performance and learners' performance to understand and promote learners' cognitive development in order for them to achieve learning goals.

Novice teachers' first focused on the surface aspects which they assumed to be elements of effective teaching. They then challenged and examined this assumption and realised that other deeper aspects were needed to teach effectively. This process involved checking old assumptions and achieving new understanding. Likewise, the process of attending to deeper aspects instead of surface aspects and then realising that both deeper aspects and surface aspects are necessary for effective teaching involved integrating old and new assumptions and achieving a more holistic understanding.

This process of old assumption checking and new assumption building is the core of critical thinking (see Brookfield, 1987, 1995, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2014). This research adds to this ‘frame’ of critical thinking the ‘flesh’ of specific assumptions about specific aspects of (language) teaching and learning. What else is added is a more specific movement, not only from old to new assumptions in general, but from

automatic/instinctive attention to surface aspects to effortful attention to deeper aspects and to realisation of interrelationships between surface and deep aspects of teaching.

The fact that the novice teachers developed thinking about the core elements of teaching and, in doing so, applied general thinking strategies suggests an answer to one of the most important questions about critical thinking (if critical thinking is understood simply as good, more mature, more effective thinking). It is a question about whether critical thinking consists of general, transferable thinking strategies/ skills or domain-specific thinking strategies/ skills (see more in Chapter 2).

This research suggests that to think “better” and teach more effectively, the novice teachers learnt to reflect on “learner/learning”, “goal orientation”, “logic of teaching steps” and in order to do that they had to think with regard to “both-and”, “multiple-perspectives”, “the structure/system of teaching steps”, the “big-picture” across lessons and courses, comparison, analytical listening, asking why, careful observation, articulating ideas, etc. This shows that professional thinking development both stimulates and draws on the development of general thinking strategies which help to process or occur underlying thinking about discipline-specific issues.

However, some of these generic thinking strategies such as both-and, multi-perspective, and big-picture thinking have not been explored in the literature of critical thinking. Both-and thinking, for example, usually appears in the discussion over dilemma resolving. It is also taken as a manifestation of “pluralistic thinking” (Novis-Deutsch, 2018). Even though it is a commonly heard concept, “it is not that living with contradiction in both/and is easy” (Rapport, 1997, p. 666).

These general thinking skills may be still rare in the discussion and practice of teacher training; however, this research showed that they were significant strategies that helped novice teachers to resolve dilemmas in their thinking and develop their professional thinking as well as their professional identity. Both-and and multi-perspective thinking were crucial to the cohort’s expansion of their attention from themselves as teachers to learners, to Huy’s significant realisation of the interrelationship between surface and deep aspects, and to the novice teachers’ appreciation of both theory and personal experiences in teaching. Big-picture or system thinking helped teachers to look beyond single teaching activities to see the logic of teaching steps. This way of thinking was also said by the mentors to be important for student teachers to see the interconnected learning goals

across different lessons and courses in order to set more realistic goals for their lessons and avoid the “being greedy” phenomenon (see more in Chapter 5).

(5) Thinking development vs “teacher cognition, teacher reflection”

The existing models of teacher reflection and teacher cognition (see section 2.3, p.19 and section 2.4, p. 23) describe stages or levels of development. These models are intended to inform teachers and teacher trainers of what is going on with teachers in each stage. The frameworks of teacher reflection describe at each level of reflection, what teachers reflect on (e.g. their beliefs, teaching principles, or ethical and political issues) and what discourse they use when reflecting (e.g. no descriptive language, a simple layperson description, or pedagogical terms).

The models of cognitive development (see section 2.5, p.26) present processes of cognitive changes (e.g. confirmation, realization, elaboration, disagreement, and integration) or levels of pedagogical thinking (e.g. naïve empiricism, everyday behaviorism, global constructivism, differentiated constructivism, and integrated constructivism). These models have been found informative in understanding and assessing the levels of teachers’ thinking and professional development.

In addition, research into novice teachers’ learning-to-teach journeys provides helpful insights into common maxims, perceptions, phenomena, and challenges (e.g. first-year shocks) that they have during their practicums and first years of their teaching (e.g. Farrell, 2006, 2007, 2008; Richards, 1996). Those descriptions depict a reality of what happens to novice teachers in this important transition. Moreover, these studies also identify factors that influence teachers’ cognition such as teachers’ prior experiences, teachers’ beliefs, teacher training programmes, working environments, etc. Implications could be drawn from these influencing factors. However, the questions of what the essence of those development processes is, or what triggers such development, or what novice teachers need to do to develop their thinking about teaching and their teaching effectiveness have not been explicitly answered.

The tentative framework of development of teacher thinking constructed in this research proposes a more specific answer for that question. The analysis of the data showed that during teaching practicums and the first years of teaching, the novice teachers were overwhelmed with so many concerns, incidents, challenges and other factors. However, there were two key aspects that could connect all the dots and trigger their thinking

development and teaching effectiveness. These were “goal orientation” and “learners’ learning process” (or learners’ cognitive engagement). Raising awareness and gaining a good understanding of those two core aspects and using them to interpret practice in classroom observations and teaching were found to support all other core aspects of teaching and learning. Furthermore, in achieving control over these two aspects, the novice teachers were found to also gain a stronger sense of self-leadership and stronger awareness of their professional identity. These two core aspects could be emphasised in teacher development by drawing on them to analyse all teachers’ teaching activities and decisions.

(6) Professional identity vs “teacher identity” and “critical leadership”

The stories of the novice teachers revealed an important aspect of professional identity that occurred and developed alongside their thinking and teaching practice. They manifested different roles in the classroom teaching and in their relationships with external elements, including the authority (i.e. mentors, observed teachers, faculty), the system (curriculum), and dominant pedagogical theories. In different situations and at different stages of their learning-to-teach processes, the three groups of novice teachers performed different roles including:

- ♦ an uncritical follower who conformed to the expectations and standards of these external factors without challenging them,
- ♦ a radical but suppressed leader who conformed to the external expectations in their behaviour but rejected them in their mind,
- ♦ a radical and expressive leader who rejected conformity and relied on their own experiences, beliefs, and intuition,
- ♦ a critical follower or critical leader who chose to follow others or themselves with reasoned thought, thanks to taking a both-and approach and negotiating between the expectations of others and their own understanding about teaching and about their learners.

The longitudinal case study showed more clearly the development of identity formation and role changes. During the practicum and the beginning of his early career, Huy manifested all the roles as an uncritical follower, radical but suppressed leader, and radical and expressive leader. Only when he gained more confidence in his teaching, did Huy express more confidently his own teaching beliefs and his critical attitudes towards the

external factors. He felt that he was taking charge of his own teaching better and developed a self-image as a teacher rather than just a supporter like before. Nevertheless, this sense of confidence and agency did not make him totally reject the external influences like before. Instead, he considered the expectations of his superiors, his learners, the learners' parents and negotiated between them with his own teaching goals to make better teaching decisions. He also expressed more appreciation for "the theory" (i.e. pedagogical knowledge, teaching methodologies) and showed a wish to learn about it to improve his teaching. Again, the both-and, multi-perspective, and big-picture lens was manifested in his resolution of the "self vs theory", "self vs authority", "self vs system", "self vs learners (and parents)" dilemmas. In this way, Huy was no longer an uncritical follower or uncritical leader, but a critical follower or critical leader who knew himself and knew others too. In other words, critical leadership emerged as a positive role, an ideal identity that the novice teachers learnt to achieve, and it was achieved when the novice teachers developed their professional thinking and teaching effectiveness.

In the literature, language **teacher identity** has been an important focus in language teacher education and teacher development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Thomas S. C. Farrell, 2011; Tsui, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005; Verloop et al., 2013; Yuan & Lee, 2014a). Understanding teacher identity is important because:

in order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them. (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22)

Teacher identity has numerous definitions (Izadinia, 2013). Some of them are:

- *"the conceptualisation, conscious or not, teachers have of themselves" (Murphey, 1998; Singh & Richards, 2006),*
- *"a certain 'kind of person' in a given context" (Gee, 2000, p. 99), or*
- *"the intersection of personal, pedagogical, and political participation and reflection within a larger sociopolitical context" (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008, p. 153)*
(cited in Izadinia, 2013, p. 694).

Gee (2000), emphasised that one might have a "core identity" but at the same time possess multiple identities. Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) identified two types of identity: assigned identity, "the identity imposed on one by others", and claimed identity, "the identity or

identities one acknowledges or claims for oneself” (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 23). This knowledge of teacher identity resonates with the research findings here. The novice teachers’ identities were influenced and shaped by external factors, which made them perform different identities in different situations. They were uncritical followers or suppressed leaders with their mentors but expressive leaders when with their peers and the researcher. However, the case study also showed that at one point after considerable professional thinking and teaching practice, Huy could reconcile his multiple identities to express the ideal identity as critical leader more consistently – both with himself and others including his colleagues, his learners, and with his academic manager.

The literature also shows a strong connection between identity and agency (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). As Varghese et al. (2005) emphasise “the primacy of agency in identity formation, a movement away from a structurally deterministic view of the fashioning of individuals... to understanding individuals as intentional beings” (p. 23). In addition, Gee and Crawford (1998) affirmed that teachers’ “striving for uniformity and conformity” would “threaten their active location in the process of professional identity formation” (cited in Verloop et al., 2013, p. 209).

Thus, in forming a professional identity, teachers need to develop their sense of agency and resist appeal to uniformity and conformity in order to be who they want to be. This connection resonates with these research findings. When the first-year ECTs and the practicum cohorts tried to conform to authority, they expressed little sense of agency but took on a role as an uncritical follower or uncritical leader. Meanwhile, the third, fourth, and fifth-year ECTs and Huy in his early career teaching expressed a stronger sense of agency and critical leadership when they challenged the external influences and reconciled them with their own philosophies. This development of critical leadership was found to go hand in hand with their development of professional thinking.

The literature also provides helpful insight into the concept of critical leadership. Among numerous definitions of “leadership”, the simplest one is offered by Barth’s (2001), who defines leadership as “making happen what you believe in” (p. 85). This concise definition implies that everyone can lead (Phelps, 2008, p. 119). It is increasingly argued that a good member not only takes a followership role but knows how and when to perform leadership (Billot et al., 2013; Blanchard et al., 2009; Kelley, 1992; Yung & Tsai, 2013). Thus, exemplary followers are those who “adopt some characteristics of leadership” and are aware that followership is “a form of leadership” (Jerry, 2013, p. 348). This idea has been

spread to education where leadership for teachers without a formal leading position has gained more attention. Fullan (1993) confirmed, “Teacher leadership is not for a few; it is for all.” (p. 246) because he found that schools “cannot flourish – at least, not for long – on the actions of the top leader alone” (2002, p. 20). In fact, “teachers are naturally leaders,” Sugar and Warren (2003) argued, “because they are responsible for what takes place in their classrooms” (p. 30; cited in Bond, 2011, p. 288). Teachers who take a leadership role can boost their teaching effectiveness, their professional development, students’ learning, and institutions’ quality (Barth, 2001; Billot et al., 2013).

However, in the growing trend of teacher leadership, by liberating teachers from passive followership, researchers and practitioners have tended to over-emphasise the notion of leadership. That is they are moving from “pure” followership to “pure” leadership as two opposite sides (Howell, 2007). In fact, “school teachers have dual roles... both follower and leader roles” (ibid., p. 14). Howell (2007) remarked, “the complex organisations of the 21st century... require individuals to move seamlessly between leadership and followership... [and to] demonstrate an ability to become good leaders while continuing to be good followers” (p. 39). Future teachers need to not only “look for possibilities to go beyond educational constraints” to be creative (Lutzker, 2015, p. 136) – taking leadership – but to accept these constraints “as a stimulus and as a support for creativity” – maintaining followership (Maley, 2015, p. 6).

In view of that, it is recommended to make a radical move from dichotomy – either followership or leadership – to a dialectic – both followership and leadership (Collinson, 2014). This move is the central task of the so-called “critical leadership” studies (Collinson, 2005, 2014) which particularly examine “processes of control/resistance and consent/dissent” (Collinson, 2014, p. 42). Thus, it is essential for teachers to be critical about their roles and decisions (controlling and resisting, consenting and dissenting) in every professional situation. This move from dichotomy to dialectic was clearly manifested in the identity formation of the novice teachers in this research, especially Huy.

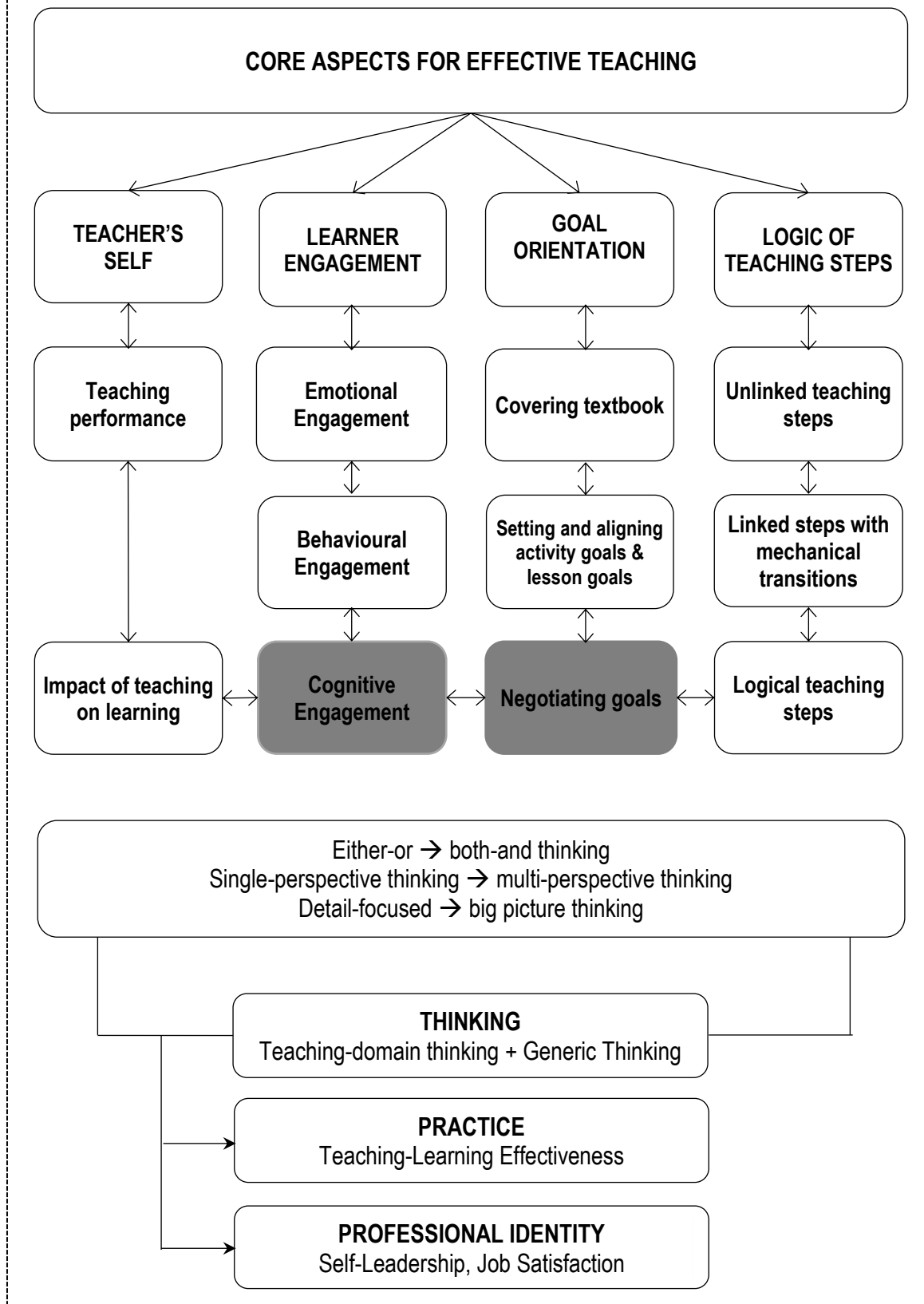
In general, the above discussion reveals an interrelationship among thinking development, teaching effectiveness, identity formation, and critical leadership development. Studies found that teachers’ sense of who they are “strongly determines the way teachers teach, the way they develop as teachers, and their attitudes toward educational changes” (Verloop et al., 2013, p. 207). In the context of novice teacher training, understanding identity formation of student teachers is believed to be significant because the transition

from student to teacher during the first years of teaching “entails an interplay between different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives, beliefs and practices, which are accompanied by the development of the teachers’ self” (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 219). Putnam and Borko (1997) and Wideen et al. (1998) claim that teacher education programs are “the first and perhaps the most important stage” in which student teachers shaped their professional identity (cited in Izadinia, 2013, p. 695). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) assert the importance for teacher educators to understand teacher identity and its formation processes when designing teacher education programs.

While teacher identity has been more widely discussed in the literature of teacher development and teacher training, little published research can be found on teacher leadership during pre-service training (Bond, 2011, p. 281; Xu & Patmor, 2012, p. 253). In addition, most of existing research is about characteristics and dimensions in practice of teachers who have taken leadership positions. Little has been done about how a teacher develops leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 255), how a teacher takes a dual role of followership and leadership (Billot et al., 2013), what significant dilemmas and paradoxes teachers encounter when developing leadership and how they deal with them (Collinson, 2014, p. 44). The concept of leadership is even much more ill-informed in the field of English for speakers of other languages (McGee et al., 2015, p. 93); and existing studies in this field are limited to the United States context (ibid., p. 98).

Figure 38 is a reworking of Figure 35 in order to emphasise not only the expansion of their attention to different aspects of teaching but also the deepening of their understanding of each aspect. In this deepening process, the novice teachers went through different interpretations of the aspect, which made the aspect encompass different layers of meaning or manifestation. The deepest layers of the four aspects were found interconnected with each other. It means that when the novice teachers achieved the awareness and understanding of the deep layers of each aspect, they also at the same time saw and understood the deep layers of other aspects.

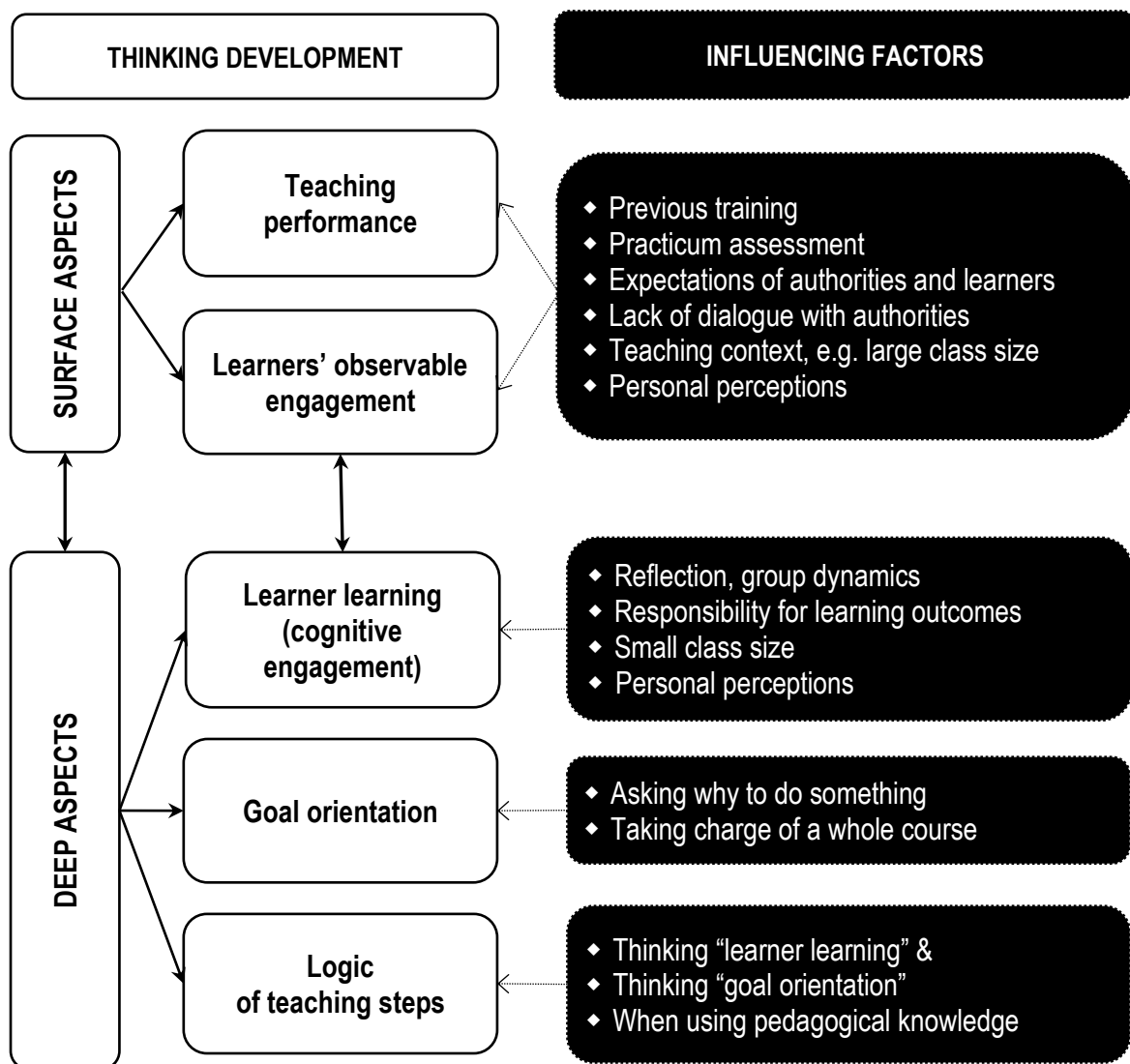
Figure 38 – The tentative framework of novice teachers' development of thinking, practice, and professional identity



7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

In this section, several implications are explored based on the tentative framework of thinking development and the factors that the novice teachers of the three inquiry stages found influencing their thinking. Figure 39 shows the factors that confined the thinking to the surface aspects and the factors that promoted their awareness of the deeper aspects.

Figure 39 – The factors influencing novice teachers' thinking development



It can be seen from the figure that the factors drawing the novice teachers' attention towards the more surface dimensions of teaching include:

- The teacher education programme (previous training, practicum assessment).
- Trainer-trainee communication (expectations of authorities and learners, lack of dialogue with authorities).
- The teaching-learning context (large class size, university-mates as learners, etc.)
- Personal perceptions.

The factors that triggered their awareness of the deeper dimensions of teaching include:

- Reflection, group dynamics.
- Thinking “learner learning”.
- Thinking “goal orientation”.
- Thinking “logic of teaching steps” when using teaching theories.
- The teaching-learning context (responsibility for learning outcomes, small class size, taking charge of a whole course).
- Personal perceptions.

Based on the knowledge of these influencing factors, the following sections will discuss implications for teacher education to promote novice teachers' development of thinking, teaching, and professional identity. The main implications include:

- (1) Identifying the foci of teacher education programmes.
- (2) Changing the approach to teaching pedagogical theories.
- (3) Promoting novice teachers' reflection for self-awareness of personal perceptions.
- (4) Considering the setting of the teaching practicum.
- (5) Promoting trainer-trainee dialogue.

(1) Identifying the foci of teacher education programmes

As discussed in Chapter 1, the main focus of teacher education programmes in this context is on teaching performance and teaching theories. This research found that the novice teachers had more to think about in order to develop their thinking and teaching. Table 18 (p. 240) summarises the foci of the teacher education programme in this study and those of the novice teachers in their process of learning to teach.

Table 18 – Identifying the foci of teacher education programmes

Foci of the teacher education programme in this research	Foci of the novice teachers when learning to teach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching performance ▪ Theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching performance & teaching philosophy ▪ Learner learning ▪ Goal orientation ▪ Logic of teaching step vs teaching theories ▪ Professional identity

Teacher training: surface or deeper aspects?

One implication of this study is that teacher education may need to consider whether the focus of the current teacher training programmes suit the needs novice teachers and whether they adequately facilitate the development of their professional thinking, teaching, and professional identity.

The main reason for the novice teachers' overemphasis on the surface dimensions such as "teaching performance" and "application of teaching theories" was because of the emphasis of the teacher education programme on these dimensions, particularly in the assessment. The novice teachers said that the teaching methodology courses, the micro teaching sessions, and the teaching practicum focused mainly on teaching methodologies and classroom management.

The in-depth interviews with the ten mentors attending the current practicum, including the primary mentor of this cohort, indicated that they were aware of what was unseen by most student teachers. The unseen aspects that they identified were exactly the deeper aspects identified by the novice teachers in the three stages of the inquiry. Nevertheless, not all the mentors chose to focus on the deeper aspects in the practicum. Nine out of the ten mentors believed that deeper aspects such as understanding learner learning processes and being goal-oriented were too challenging for student teachers to understand. While they said that these aspects were important, they believed they would be understood and learnt later when student teachers had more teaching experience.

In the context of pre-service training and the short teaching practicum, the mentors believed student teachers should first learn more basic aspects such as classroom management, designing lesson plans, applying teaching methodologies and skills,

delivering lessons, controlling their interaction with learners, having a professional manner, etc. Only one of the mentors thought the opposite. He believed that being lesson goal-oriented was a basic thing that student teachers needed to consider when designing lesson plans. He also believed that understanding learner learning was crucial to designing activities and organising them in a way which could scaffold learner learning. He wondered, if teacher educators/trainers did not focus on these aspects in pre-service training and especially in the practicum, when these pivotal aspects would be introduced to student teachers. He added that student teachers might find these aspects challenging to understand at first, but he did not think trainers should delay or hesitate to expose student teachers to these important aspects of effective teaching and learning. The question for teacher educators/trainers to consider is when to raise student teachers' awareness of the deeper dimensions of teaching. The data indicated that it was possible to do so in teaching practicums and pre-service training programmes in general.

Furthermore, the data showed that the over-emphasis on the surface aspects hindered the novice teachers from seeing deeper aspects which they later recognised as the key driver of thinking development. Instead, when being deep-aspect-oriented, they were less stressed about their performance and improved it. The case study of Huy particularly reinforced the key role of deeper dimensions of teaching. He reflected that when he focused on the surface aspects, he usually neglected the deeper ones. When he aimed for the deeper aspects in planning lessons, both the surface aspects and the deeper aspects would be well attended to. That is to say that including the deeper aspects in pre-service teacher training is possible and recommended.

In assessment: teaching performance or beyond?

Reconsidering the criteria of student teacher assessment is as important as reconsidering the focus of the training courses and the practicum. The data analysis showed the novice teachers felt pressured to adjust their thinking and performance in accordance with the feedback and assessment of the trainers and managers. Therefore, in order to develop novice teachers' awareness, understanding, and practice of the deeper dimensions of teaching, the assessment criteria and methods need to change. They need to focus on these deeper dimensions rather than only on teaching performance or surface application of teaching theories. In the observed teaching practicum, the assessment of the student teachers was 90% on their teaching performance of four teaching lessons and 10% on their

portfolio, including their lesson plans, classroom observation sheets, and a reflective piece of writing about the practicum. The assessment should promote more of the student teachers' reflection on their thinking and actions, participation in group work discussion, activities of goal setting and achievement, assessment of learners' learning outcomes if feasible, and reflection on the applicability of teaching theories and methodologies in a lesson.

Understanding and patience

The movement between the layers of surface and deep thinking suggests patience is needed by both trainers and trainees. Learning and development of thinking takes time and fluctuation is inevitable because things are learnt and re-learnt. For instance, when a student teacher says they have realised the value of goal orientation, a trainer can expect them to forget that or not put it into practice at all. The trainer will also see them coming back to this realisation over and over again but probably at another level of understanding. It is thus a spiral process requiring understanding and patience.

(2) Changing the approach to teaching pedagogical theories

Teacher training programmes in this context have so far placed a great emphasis on equipping student teachers with a knowledge of teaching methodologies and assessing their teaching performance through their application of these methodologies. However, this research showed that the novice teachers only had a vague memory of the teaching methodologies and did not apply them in their teaching. The novice teachers even doubted the applicability of the teaching methodologies to practice and said they would rely on their intuition and experience first. In their teaching practice, all of them put down Communicative Language Teaching as the teaching methodology for all their teaching lessons. They did so because they had been taught that CLT was a modern, effective, and widely used teaching approach. However, they admitted that they were not sure whether their lessons reflected this approach.

Reflecting on this issue, most of the novice teachers (except Thao, one of the practicum cohort members) said that they did not enjoy the training courses on teaching methodologies because they focused only on theories. One of the six first-year ECTs commented that he had loved reading the course books on teaching methodologies. At

that time, he found what was written was common sense and thus easy to understand. However, when it came to the teaching practicum and first year of teaching, he did not remember much about what he had read. He thought it was because he just read them and understood them on the surface.

The data from the case study revealed the key things that helped Huy make better sense of teaching methodologies. He was the cohort member that expressed rather strong rejection of conforming to teaching theories and strong reliance on his experience and intuition when teaching. He usually emphasised the low effectiveness of the previous courses on teaching methodologies. However, in the interview at the end of the practicum, Huy expressed a noticeable change in his perception about the value of teaching methodologies. After Huy finished the last teaching section in the practicum, he took a course on materials design. I interviewed him when he had taken 9 hours out of 45 hours of the course. In the interview, when we discussed what significant changes he had made after the practicum, he excitingly talked about his enjoyment of this materials design course. He said that for the first time he enjoyed learning theories because he could connect the theories with “learner learning” and “content goal orientation”. Huy said that he had realised better the value of teaching-learning theory when the course coordinator and he himself analyzed how they could be used to enable learner learning and content goal achievement. Rather than learning the theory as something prescribed to him, he learnt to understand why and how he should use it for his learners’ achievement of learning goals. This then increased his sense of self-leadership or autonomy in his learning to teach.

Another case study (not included in this thesis) supported this point. Thao was the only participant that explicitly expressed great appreciation of a knowledge of teaching methodologies and the methodology courses that she took in this programme. She was also the only cohort member whose classroom observation and judgement were found by the remaining cohort members to be professional because she based her judgement on teaching theories. In her first year of teaching, she worked for a language school which was known for its special teaching-learning method which they called “The Reflex Method”. It was similar to the direct method, allowed only English in classrooms, and aimed to develop learners’ ability to respond quickly in English. Thao described one of the main activities used in this method which was to ask learners a set of questions for them to respond as quickly and accurately as possible. Thao said that she at first liked this idea

because, like her, the school was serious about applying a teaching method. However, she later decided that this method was effective in teaching vocabulary, pronunciation, and short expressions in communication but ineffective in teaching grammar, writing, reading, etc.

Thao experienced a long period of struggle between adhering to this teaching method or teaching her own way. She said even though she had always been attentive to learner learning, only now she realised more clearly the impact of teaching methodologies on learner learning and learners' learning goal achievement. She affirmed that teaching methodologies needed to be understood and used in the way that facilitated achieving the learning goals. When this understanding was sufficient, she confidently decided to use other teaching methods when necessary. As all the classrooms were videotaped, she was reminded a few times to follow the method until being fired. That was a difficult time for her; however, she said she did not regret that decision. The decision revealed her strong sense of self-leadership and autonomy in her teaching profession.

Thus, at the beginning of the practicum, although Thao and Huy held contrasting opinions about the value of teaching methodologies, in their process of learning to teach, they both gained a better understanding of the teaching methodologies thanks to their analysis and application of the methodologies in the light of "learner learning" and "lesson goal orientation". This also implies that in order to teach teaching methodology more effectively, both trainers and trainees need to critically evaluate the teaching methodology based on the four core aspects of teaching. The effect of this is to develop a principled understanding of teaching and learning and thus greater autonomy and effectiveness in decision making.

(3) Promoting novice teachers' reflection for self-awareness of personal perceptions

The whole learning to teach process of the cohort including Huy revealed the important role of reflection. When reflecting individually, in groups, or with me, they not only observed others but also observed themselves. They looked into their minds; tried to unpack and explain their thoughts, feelings, actions; and achieved a better understanding of themselves. The data showed that reflective activities created conditions and

opportunities for the cohort to look at things from new perspectives and increase their awareness of surface and deep elements of teaching.

The literature on teacher identity reveals four broad categories of factors influencing teacher identity: learning communities, reflective activities, their prior experiences, and contextual factors (Izadinia, 2013, p. 697). Among these factors, reflection and its relationship with teacher identity is emphasised (ibid.). Researchers agree that reflection is a critical process in which student teachers' beliefs, prior knowledge and experiences interact with each other and result in their learning and forming their professional identity. Different reflective activities could be used to develop and examine teachers' identity such as reflection cycles and forums, reflective journals, autoethnographies, portfolios and drawings (Izadinia, 2013, pp. 697–698).

Reflection on the core aspects of teaching

Reflection does not simply mean sitting down and talking or writing about whatever. Neither does it necessarily mean talking or writing about the topics such as teaching pedagogies, moral issues, or political issues that were found, in the literature of teacher reflection, to indicate higher levels of thinking (see Chapter 2). The findings of this research suggest more specific aspects of teaching and learning that could offer a framework for reflective activities. The framework could be used to focus activities to develop novice teachers' professional thinking, teaching practice, and professional identity. In particular, this research recommends novice teachers be encouraged to reflect on the core aspects of teaching – teaching performance, learners' observable engagement, learner learning, lesson goal orientation, and the logic of teaching steps – and the interrelationships among them. In doing this, generic thinking approaches such as both-and, multiple-perspective, and big-picture thinking are usefully encouraged.

The identification of novice teachers' conflicts and dilemmas can help them to address their mental and emotional blocks, develop their thinking, and activate their self-awareness of their identities and their development of critical leadership. The literature shows that dilemmas are opportunities which trigger critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987, 2012a) and develop critical leadership (Collinson, 2014). Storey and Salaman (2009) claim that dilemma and paradox management is “the essence of leadership” (p. 22).

Reflection using why-questions

In reflection, asking and answering why-questions is a good way for novice teachers to explore their own perceptions and understand their behaviours. The data also showed that why-questions helped to have more effective classroom observation and judgement, to raise awareness of lesson goal orientation, and to promote deep thinking in general. Asking and knowing why one is doing something also triggers critical thinking and a sense of epistemology.

Several why-questions that the practicum cohort and Huy found impactful to their thinking included:

- ♦ Why did you choose this activity? What was your purpose of designing the first activity, the second activity, the third activity, etc.?
- ♦ Why did you organise the activities in that order but not in another order? Why activity 1 before activity 2, why not vice versa?
- ♦ What is the goal of this lesson? How did you decide the goal of the lesson?
- ♦ How does this activity help you to achieve the lesson goal?
- ♦ Do you think you have achieved the goal of this lesson? Why?

(4) Reconsidering the setting of a teaching practicum

The contexts of teaching were found to either hinder or facilitate the novice teachers' thinking development. The implication for both pre-service and in-service teacher training is to create a setting with favourable characteristics or to be aware of challenging situations and provide support to novice teachers.

Class size

The large class size was a challenge for their classroom management and activity organisation. This made the novice teachers in the practicums overwhelmed with the task of engaging and managing a large number of learners in the class. They had little or no time and mental space to pay attention to individual learners' learning processes and performance. When teaching a few students in a class, Huy had the opportunities to discover the important dimension of teaching which was the learners' learning difficulties, processes, and styles.

In a teaching practicum, it is recommended that student teachers are given smaller more manageable classes to practise their teaching so that they could focus on the dimension of “learner learning” more easily and effectively.

If the purpose is to get novice teachers familiar with the real-life context of large classes, this can be achieved by a scaffolding process of working with small classes first and then later observing and managing large classes.

Taking charge of or understanding a whole course

The microteaching and teaching practicum of the teacher training programme in this study asked novice teachers to prepare to teach separate small lessons. The data showed that this might have made them hold a detail-focused perspective because they did not see the systematic connection between the lesson they taught and the whole course. They were not trained to study the course syllabus or programme curriculum when preparing to teach a lesson. The case study revealed that teachers needed an opportunity to take control of a whole course. By taking control they could develop awareness of how learners learnt and improved, and awareness of the connections between the activities of a lesson, between the lessons of a course, and between the courses of learning journey and awareness of the ineffectiveness of covering so many things in a lesson.

This suggests that in teacher training programmes, student teachers might benefit from being given opportunities to see the big picture of a whole course, learn to set course goals, lesson goals, align activities with lesson goals, organise activities in a way that promotes a scaffolding for learner learning, and assess their learning goal alignment and assessment. Regarding classroom observation, they may need opportunities to observe and investigate lessons, teaching and learning across a whole course rather than random classes. In a teaching practicum, instead of teaching different lessons in different classes, student teachers might observe one particular class, understand its syllabus and expected learning outcomes, observe the learners, practise teaching them, and observe and/or assess their learning outcomes.

Taking responsibility for or assessing learners' learning outcomes

The practice on the teacher training programme was for the student teachers to practise teaching their lessons in selected classes and then leave. They were not aware of whether their teaching had any impact on the learners' learning. The case study revealed that, by being responsible for his learners' learning outcomes, Huy had to be clear about what he

wanted his learners to achieve by the end of the day and of the course. In this way, he developed a strong sense of learning goal orientation.

The implication drawn from this is student teachers may benefit in terms of thinking development if they are supported to identify expected learning outcomes and use different and appropriate methods to assess learners' learning while teaching and after teaching. Being involved in a whole course, as suggested above, will also give student teachers more opportunities to see the impact of their teaching on learners' achievement of the learning outcomes. Learners' learning outcomes might also be included in evaluating student teachers' teaching effectiveness.

(5) Promoting trainer-trainee dialogue

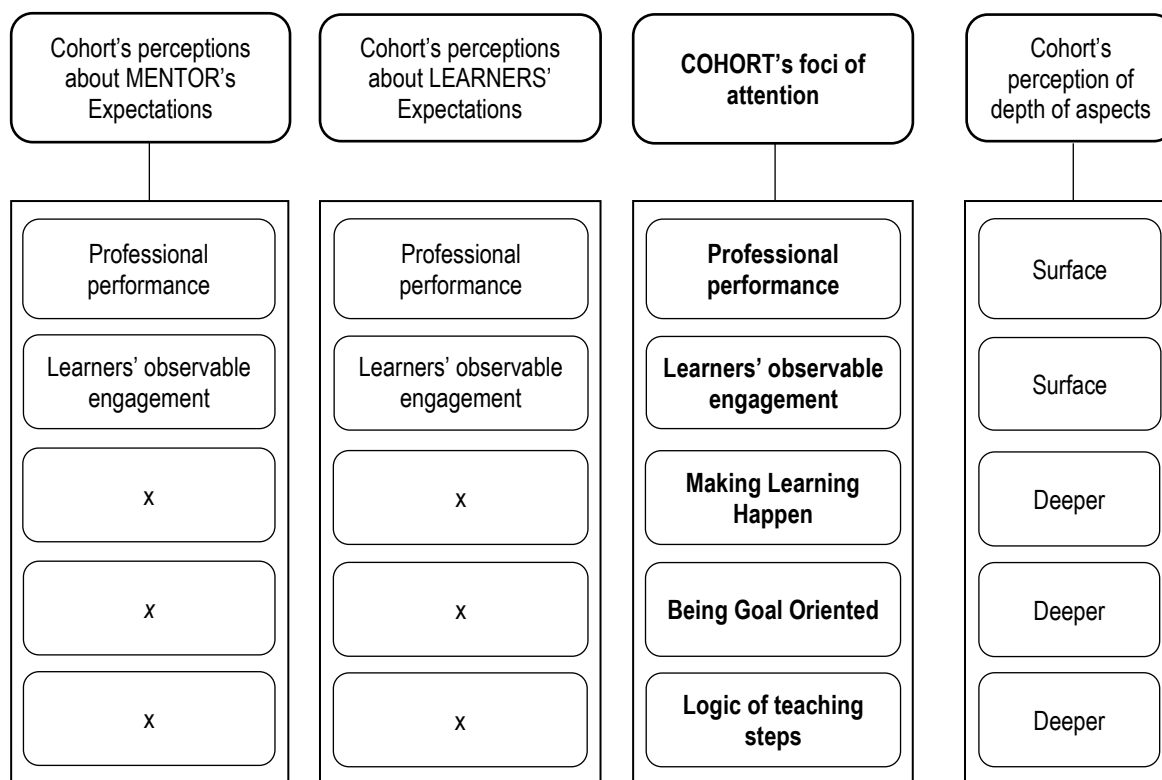
A strong theme coming out from the data analysis was a lack of dialogue between novice teachers and their pre-service trainers as well as their academic managers at the workplaces. The novice teachers talked about the power relations and dynamics which hindered them from expressing their critical opinions, concerns, and feelings.

On the other hand, the eight observed teachers that I interviewed said that they hardly saw any student teacher staying and asking them questions about their teaching. They said they would love to talk with student teachers and listen to their questions. They expressed their unhappiness about being assessed and judged by student teachers who came to observe their class and left without communication to understand their teaching philosophy and classroom challenges.

The ten mentors that I interviewed added that student teachers usually wrote nice comments about the classes they observed for fear of displeasing the observed teachers. However, the mentors said the student teachers hardly ever shared with them this sensitive issue or other concerns. Such lack of communication caused many problems including a serious incident happening to the cohort. One of the cohort members cried and felt offended because the primary mentor refused to assess her first teaching session. The student teacher assumed that the mentor did not appreciate her and felt that she did not have a capability to become a teacher. In talking with the primary mentor, I learnt that the mentor did not want to give the student teacher a low score which would be discouraging. She wanted to give this student teacher a second chance to do better.

Such conflicting assumptions by trainers and trainees were not usually brought into open discussion according to the data in this research. These unchecked assumptions might have not only influenced their relationship but also their thinking. Figure 40 illustrates this point by summarising the aspects that the cohort thought the primary mentor focused on, that the learners expected, and that they themselves focused on. The last column is the cohort's opinions of what aspects were surface and what were deeper.

Figure 40 – The cohort's perceptions of the mentor and learners' expectations



The figure shows that the teaching aspects that the cohort by instinct focused on were the ones that they assumed the primary mentor and the learners focused on. By the end of the practicum, these aspects were perceived by the student teachers as those on the surface. The aspects that took the cohort more time and effort to acquire were the ones that they assumed the primary mentor and learners did not see. These unseen aspects were perceived as deeper aspects. The novice teachers, as well as many of us, may live the way we think others think we are. This reflects a quote by Thomas Colley: “I am not who you think I am; I am not who I think I am; I am who I think you think I am”. This relates strongly to the formation of professional identity. Novice teachers need time and safe spaces to unpack their assumptions about who they think they are and who they think others think they are. They need this time and space in order to have better awareness of

their identity and leadership role in teaching. Reflection is a helpful tool, and critical dialogue with others is very necessary.

The framework and data analysis call for more attention to be given to novice teachers' inner thoughts. Teacher education may need to go beyond novice teacher's teaching behaviours and help them to uncover their assumptions about teaching, about themselves, and about what they assume others think and expect from them. Checking assumptions and achieving better understanding for more informed decisions are exactly what critical thinking is all about (e.g. Brookfield, 1987). That is to say, thinking development and identity formation involve critical thinking and all of these can be fostered by critical reflection and dialogue. The helpfulness of such dialogue for reflection between the participants and the researcher as their critical friend has been demonstrated in this research.

For those reasons, it is crucial to have more open and trusting dialogue between teachers and trainers, teachers and academic managers, and among teachers themselves. Such dialogue can be encouraged throughout the teacher training programme and in teaching workplaces. It can even be included as an official part of the training and formative assessment. It can be conducted in various forms such as group discussion, individual face-to-face talks (or online), chats, interactive diary/journal writing (where the trainer, for example, can leave comments and questions on the student teacher's writing), and remote calls, all of which were found helpful in this research.

A possible concern is that trainers and managers might not have time for such dialogue. I believe this is the matter of priority. Within the same amount of time, teacher trainers and managers can choose to focus on surface or deeper aspects, to teach theories or to converse with teachers about how they will and have tried out the theories. It is a matter of priority and also leading by example. This research showed that my dialogue with the novice teachers, without needing to teach them anything, was helpful for them to develop their thinking. The novice teachers in this research said they would value teacher educators' awareness of the power of critical dialogue and keeping company with the novice teachers.

7.5 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Strengths and contributions of the research

The strengths of this research firstly lie in its research approach. The philosophy underlying this research is to minimise controlling the reality or selectively collected data about a specific topic of interest. This exploratory approach allowed the researcher to embrace as fully as possible the reality of the participant's learning-to-teach journeys. It was a challenge because the researcher was exposed to huge, complex, and on-going collection of data during the 32-month period without knowing what to focus on specifically. However, it was rewarding because it minimised the chance that the researcher had missed something important emerging from the novice teachers' journeys. The researcher's immersion in the data and time spent in the field were particularly valuable for research on people's inner thoughts and feelings. The themes drawn from the data and the framework of thinking development generated were therefore strongly grounded in the data with minimal pre-conceptions or pre-focus of the researcher. The findings were therefore surprising and original with regard to the researcher's background understanding of the research subject.

The second strength related to the research approach is the researcher's trust and relationship with the participants. This made critical and open dialogue with them possible, enjoyable, and informative. The participants expressed an interest in talking with the researcher and even initiated conversations rather than waiting for the researcher's invitations. Their openness and autonomy in sharing thinking and feelings with the researcher helped to provide truthful and deep data about themselves. Especially, it was the researcher's privilege to be the participants' critical trusting friend and to follow one of them throughout the first two years of his teaching.

The third methodological strength is the constant comparison method adopted during the interwoven processes of data collection and analysis. The themes emerging from one time of data collection was compared to those from the earlier times. This helped to check, challenge, reinforce, and improve an understanding of the thinking development. This comparison was done constantly throughout the three stages of data collection and throughout all the events of data collection and analysis of each stage. The researcher constantly kept open-minded to new data, connected the emerging themes with those found earlier, and checked them out in the next event of data collection. The constant

comparison enabled the picture of thinking development to unfold gradually like building a house from well-connected stones. This process went on until the researcher uncovered the common patterns of thinking development that fitted all the data collected about all the participants. When this happened, the research had been able to achieve a certain level of saturation. These found patterns generated the framework of thinking development.

The fourth methodological strength is that my research approach was based on a selective combination of the research paradigms and methodologies that suited the underlying philosophy. The research made use of principles and methods from phenomenology and grounded theory, from pragmatism, bricolage, and autopoiesis, and Perry's model of epistemological growth. The research suggested using the term "critical pragmatism" to emphasise the criticality in having criteria and a philosophical foundation ("critical") when choosing what works best ("pragmatism") for the research.

This is an interdisciplinary study which did not confine itself to one research field from the beginning. Relevant related literature was initially consulted in order to better understand the reality. This research on thinking development inevitably involves a number of areas such as critical thinking, teacher cognition, teacher reflection, teacher development, teacher identity, teacher leadership, goal theory, etc.

The research findings heightened awareness of the *process* of thinking development rather than *stages* of development. Rather than identifying neatly described stages or levels of thinking development, the findings show that thinking development involves dynamic, complex, and spiral processes. Despite its complexity, thinking development for teaching requires the acquisition of the core dimensions of teaching and generic thinking skills. The research was also able to reason why the thinking changes occurred. It identified the external and personal factors that the novice teachers themselves found influence their thinking development.

The research recognises and acknowledges individual variability within a general cognition development framework. The novice teachers in the research were found to take their own time and follow their own path to develop their thinking despite being exposed to similar external influences or going through common patterns of thinking change. The framework is tentative and informative rather than definitive.

Finally, the investigation into the development of professional thinking was based in a specific context of teacher education – in Vietnam. The methodological approach allowed

an understanding not only of personal development but also of the particular contextual factors that influenced that development. The research thus provides an insight into the Vietnamese teacher education context as well as into the way in which personal development is never separate from cultural and social influences.

Limitations of the research

The strength about the contextually based nature of the research can be also a limitation. The research is based on one teacher training programme of a university in the south of Vietnam. The educational, social, cultural, and political features of that context will have influenced the data and shaped the framework in some way, thus limiting any generalisation.

All five student teachers in the practicum were supervised by one primary mentor. The shaping of their thinking and thinking changes might thus not be representative. At first, the researcher tried to investigate three cohorts supervised by three different mentors in the practicum. However, the limitation of time made it impossible for the researcher to closely observe all the activities of the three cohorts and conduct group discussions and individual talks with all of them. For this reason, the researcher had to limit the research to one cohort only.

This thesis has not included another case study due to the limitations of time and word amount. One case study did not enable cross-case comparison and a richer description of individual variability.

The perspectives of the trainers have not been voiced in this thesis due to the same limitations. Their opinions were limited to providing a form of triangulation to better understand novice teachers' thinking development and influencing factors and in addition to informing the discussion of implications for teacher education.

The close relationship between the researcher and the participants may be a limitation in the way that they might focus on what they assumed that I focused on. They might have tried to pay more attention to learners' thinking because they observed that I paid a lot of attention on their thinking. The subjectivity and unintentional intervention of the researcher have been acknowledged and managed and has been reported in Chapter 3.

Due to those limitations, the framework developed in this research is tentative and subject to change in the light of further work.

7.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

More case studies about novice teachers

Further case studies about novice teachers are needed to refine the tentative framework of thinking development. Longitudinal studies would be particularly useful as the case study of Huy demonstrates.

Research to test the framework and build theory

Once sufficient qualitative data has been collected to refine the framework of thinking development, experimental and action research could be conducted to test this framework on a larger scale. The framework should also be tested and evaluated in different contexts to assess the practical value of the model and its possible contribution to theory on teacher thinking development.

Trainers and teacher education

The perspectives of teacher educators including teaching methodology trainers, practicum mentors, observed teachers, teacher training programme designers, in-service trainers, employers also need to be examined. These views and their accounts of thinking development would be very valuable to further deepen our understanding and what actions need to be implemented to promote novice teachers' thinking development.

Future studies should be done to evaluate the effect of surface-dimension-focused training and deep-dimension-focused training in teaching practicums on novice teachers' thinking development. In particular, a critical analysis of the discourse between trainers, for example practicum mentors, and novice teachers and its impact on the novice teachers' thinking merits more investigation. The use of critical friendship and authentic communication with student teachers also has potential to be explored further and links to research on well-being and emotional development.

Learners' voice

The study shows the impact of the novice teachers' perception of learners' expectations on their thinking. Further research could examine the impact of novice teachers having dialogue with learners about the learners' expectations and the consequential impact on their thinking and practice.

7.7 FINAL COMMENTS

One important point that I mentioned at the beginning of this thesis was my wish to be heard and understood by my trainers on the teacher education programmes that I took. Rather than orientating me towards what was called good teaching performance and effective teaching methodologies, I wished those involved in teacher education to understand and appreciate my own thoughts and feelings about my own teaching. It was one of the strong motivations for me to conduct this research.

The interaction with the participants told me that I was not alone in this desire. The novice teachers that I talked and worked with expressed the same wish as mine. Their stories have challenged the long-lasting overemphasis in teacher education and teaching workplaces on teaching performance. In order to train us – teachers – to teach, teacher educators need to understand our thinking and feelings about teaching. As Socrates puts it: “I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think”. This research demonstrates that triggering novice teachers’ thinking development can enhance their development, teaching practice and criticality. More than that, the development of professional thinking can bring about self-confidence and a sense of self-leadership, which activates teachers’ sense of self and helps them to form their ideal professional identity. The essence of teacher education, therefore, needs to go beyond training towards desirable performance but towards thinking development and self-awareness.

The findings of this research led to the construction of an evidence-based working framework for conceptualising thinking development in teachers. The framework suggests specific and pragmatic implications for teacher education and teacher development.

An implication that I have drawn out for myself from this project is that I should appreciate and foster prioritising the mental lives of teachers and others. Education and workplaces have been so much about intellectual abilities and performance. I need to be one of those who develops training that is focused on mental, emotional, and even spiritual dimensions as closely connected with intellectual dimensions and identities. It is time to pull the string towards emotional understanding and well-being in education and teacher education.

An important reward for myself from doing this research was to be able to explore and recognise the value of philosophy in doing research. The appreciation of epistemology, ontology, and axiology brought me to the root of research methodology. Once I have

understood the root, I was grounded and free to explore methodologies to conduct a study without having to subscribe to any school of thought. I have become a free and critical researcher who knows what I am doing and who can make informed decisions on what I can take from existing literature and research methodologies. Critical self-awareness is important because it empowers individuals to shape their own development path while still learning from others.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Classroom Observation Form

CLASS OBSERVATION FORM

Mentor's name:..... Date of observation: / / 20...

Novice teacher name:

Observed Teacher/ Student name:..... Course: GE / ESP (circle)

Lesson topic:

The purpose of this form is to assist teacher/peer observation of classroom teaching by providing a checklist of indicators. Please check the appropriate column for each item in a section, **1: LOWEST – 5 : HIGHEST**

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES	IMPROVEMENTS/ COMMENTS

1	2	3	4	5	ORGANIZATION	
					Is prepared for class	Notes
					Groups students appropriately	
					Uses class time efficiently	
					Organizes learning materials or activities effectively	
					Summarizes material and/or provides closure	

1	2	3	4	5	INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS	
					Uses teaching technique(s) appropriate to the instructional goals for this class	Notes
					Uses appropriate question strategies to enhance student learning and confidence	
					Proceeds at an effective pace	
					Uses teaching aids effectively	
					Provides clear directions for group work/pair work/exercises	
					Corrects and gives feedback	

1	2	3	4	5	CONTENT OR SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE	
					Appears knowledgeable about subject matter	Notes
					Uses examples and/or illustrations to explain content	
					Emphasizes major points during delivery of course content	
					Assists students in the construction of their understanding	

					Uses logical steps of teaching	
					Have transition between steps	
1	2	3	4	5	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
					Is enthusiastic about the subject matter	Notes
					Makes material interesting to students	
					Responds to questions clearly and promptly	
					Uses speech that is audible, distinct, and appropriately paced	
					Demonstrates adequate command of English or the language of the course	

1	2	3	4	5	STUDENT INTERACTION	
					Encourages student participation	Notes
					Manages student interactions effectively	
					Welcomes and respects diverse viewpoints	
					Treats students equitably	
					Motivates students	

General Comments: _____

Observer

Appendix 2 – Ethics Document



Phone 0-4-463 5480
Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Hoang Ngoc Trang
COPY TO	David Crabbe
FROM	AProf Susan Corbett, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	22 November 2015
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval:22386 The Impact of using critical incidents in the teaching practicum of pre-service English language teachers

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 22 November 2018. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards



Susan Corbett
Convener, Victoria University Human Ethics Committee

Stage 1: Early Career Teachers



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING EARLY CAREER TEACHER

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

I am Hoang Ngoc Trang. I am undertaking a research project in order to complete a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). I have received approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee to conduct this research.

My PhD project aims to assist pre-service teachers to identify and problematize professional critical incidents in language teaching in order to connect theories they have learnt in teacher education programs to their teaching practice, to connect their practice to the standards of their profession, and to understand how their critical incident analysis would affect their actions in the classroom and school communities.

I would like to invite you to participate in this project in which your professional stories will be valuable and authentic sources for pre-service teacher training. Should you agree to participate in this research, I will invite you to orally share what critical incidents you have encountered in your teaching and to what extent the teacher education program you attended helped you to analyse and deal with such incidents. The interview which will be recorded will take up to 60 minutes and will be scheduled at a time and a place that are convenient for you.

All data will be gathered and reported on a confidential basis and only I and my supervisors, Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe and Dr. Jonathan Newton will have access to the data. The results of the research will be anonymously presented in my thesis. You will not be identified in any way in the thesis, which will be publicly available. The research may also be presented at academic conferences and published in academic journals, or books, also without identifying any participants. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Since your participation in this research is voluntary, you are free to withdraw from this research any time during the interview and up to two weeks after the interview without giving any reason. In that case, the data collected will be destroyed or be returned to you.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 5480.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at the information provided below. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

CONTACT DETAILS

Researcher:

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Supervisors:

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 Supervisors: Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe (david.crabbe@vuw.ac.nz)
 Dr. Jonathan Newton (jonathan.newton@vuw.ac.nz)

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

EARLY CAREER TEACHER CONSENT TO INTERVIEW

1. I have read the **Information Sheet** for this research and have understood the procedure of this research.
2. I have been given an opportunity to ask and I have had my questions about the research answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.
4. I also understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular questions in the research, withdraw from this research any time during the interview and up to two weeks after the interview without giving any reason, or withdraw any data provided.
5. I understand that any information I give will be under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the information sheet and pseudonyms will be used.
6. I agree to participate in this research and provide information needed by the researcher.
7. I understand that all the data will be destroyed or returned to the participants if requested, two years after the conclusion of the research.

Participant's Name :

Participant's Signature:

Date: / /

If you would like to receive a written summary of the research findings at the end of this research, please tick here ☐ and provide me your e-mail address to which this summary can be sent:

Stage 2: The Faculty Where the Practicum Took Place



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING FACULTY

Date:

Dear Dean of the Faculty,

I am Hoang Ngoc Trang. I am undertaking a research project in order to complete a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). The title of my research is "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching". I have received approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee to conduct this research.

My PhD project aims to assist pre-service teachers to identify and problematize professional critical incidents in language teaching in order to connect theories they have learnt in teacher education programs to their teaching practice, to connect their practice to the standards of their profession, and to understand how their critical incident analysis would affect their actions in the classroom and school communities.

I would like to invite your faculty to participate in this project in which your English teacher education program will be the main context for my research. Should you agree to participate in this project, I will ask for your permission to be a secondary mentor of a group of 5 student teachers in the teaching practicum which lasts from January to April 2016 at your faculty. The main mentor of this group who will be one of your teachers and is assigned by your faculty. That mentor will be in charge of all formal assessment of the student teachers' performance in the practicum. I will discuss with that mentor about my research and our supervision roles. Then I myself will recruit 5 pre-service teachers by sending an invitation email of research participation to the students of Course 2012. After that, I will send you the list of the 5 pre-service teachers who agree to participate in my research so that you will put them into my supervision group. During the practicum, I will follow the normal procedure set by the faculty in the practicum syllabus. Three additions to the normal practicum for the purposes of my research are:

- (1) to train these 5 pre-service teachers two weeks before the normal practicum to assist them to analyse professional critical incidents reported by early career teachers in my previous research phase (the first two weeks of January 2016)
- (2) to assist them to identify and analyse critical incidents in observed classrooms in the field trip (the last two weeks of January 2016) and in their teaching practice which will be video-taped (the next six weeks from 22 February to 02 April 2016), and
- (3) to interview them for their evaluations of the impact of this practicum using critical incidents (the last 3 weeks of April 2016).

All data will be gathered and reported on a confidential basis. Only I and my supervisors, Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe and Dr. Jonathan Newton will have access to the data. The results of the research will be anonymously presented in my thesis. The real names of your faculty, your university, your pre-service teachers and observed teachers will not be identified in any way. The research may also be presented at academic conferences and published in academic journals, or books, also without identifying any participants. All collected data will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Since your faculty's participation in this research is voluntary, your faculty is free to withdraw from this research any time during the practicum and up to two weeks after the practicum without giving any reason. In that case, the data collected will be destroyed or be returned to your students and teachers.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64 4 463 5480.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at the information provided below. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Hoang Ngoc Trang

CONTACT DETAILS

Researcher:

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 Dr. Jonathan Newton (jonathan.newton@vuw.ac.nz)

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

FACULTY LETTER OF CONSENT

1. I have read **the Information Sheet** for this research and have understood the procedure of this research.
2. I have been given an opportunity to ask and I have had my questions about the research answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.
4. I also understand that my faculty is free to withdraw from this research any time during the practicum and up to two weeks after the practicum without giving any reason.
5. I understand that any information that the participants from my faculty provide will be under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the information sheet and pseudonyms will be used.
6. I allow this research to take place at my faculty.
7. I understand that all the data will be destroyed or returned to the participants if requested, two years after the conclusion of the research.

Dean's Name :

Dean's Signature:

Date: / /

If you would like to receive a written summary of the research findings at the end of this research, please tick here ☐ and provide me your e-mail address to which this summary can be sent:

Stage 2: Primary Mentor of The Cohort



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING PRIMARY MENTOR

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

I am Hoang Ngoc Trang. I am undertaking a research project in order to complete a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). I have received approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee to conduct this research.

My PhD project aims to assist pre-service teachers to identify and problematize professional critical incidents in language teaching in order to connect theories they have learnt in teacher education programs to their teaching practice, to connect their practice to the standards of their profession, and to understand how their critical incident analysis would affect their actions in the classroom and school communities.

I would like to invite you to participate in this project in which you play the central role. Should you agree to participate in this research, with the permission of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, I will invite you to co-supervise a group of 5 student teachers in their teaching practicum which lasts from January to April 2016 at the faculty. In the practicum, you will be the primary mentor and will be in charge of all formal assessment of the student teachers' performance according to the assessment plan required by the faculty. My role is to accompany, observe, and support the student teachers during this teaching practicum by additional activities.

- Then during the field trip in which the student teachers will observe in-service teachers using the observation form provided by the faculty, they will be asked to identify and analyse critical incidents in these classrooms. While the observation forms can be accessed by both of us, the critical incident reports and analysis can be accessed by me and my supervisors only.
- During their teaching in the practicum which will be video-taped, they will identify and analyse their own critical incidents in your teaching. They will write about the incidents right after they finish a teaching session and feel free to add to change anything in your critical incident analysis after watching the video of that teaching session. The videos and critical incident reports and analysis can be accessed by me and my supervisors only.
- In group meetings among you, the student teachers, and me, I will video-tape the meetings in order to analyse the student teachers' perceptions and reflections of their teaching. The videos can be accessed by me and my supervisors only.
- In group discussions among the student teachers and me only, we will talk about their reflections on critical incidents. The discussions will be also video-taped for analysis of the student teachers' oral reflections of critical incidents. The videos and content of these discussions will be accessed by me and my supervisors only.
- After the practicum, beside the portfolio that they are required to write and submit to the faculty, they will be invited to a 45-minute interview in which they share your evaluations of the impact of using critical incidents. The recordings of these interviews will be accessed by me and my supervisors only.

All data will be gathered reported on a confidential basis and only I and my supervisors, Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe and Dr. Jonathan Newton will have access to the data. The results of the research will be anonymously presented in my thesis. You will not be identified in any way in the thesis, which will be publicly available. The research may also be presented at academic conferences, and published in academic journals, or books, also without identifying any participants. All collected data including classroom observation forms, critical incident report and analysis, videos of student teachers' teaching, videos of group discussions, interview transcripts, summaries, and any recordings will be kept securely and will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Since your participation in this research is voluntary, you are free to withdraw from this research any time during the practicum and up to two weeks after the practicum without giving any reason. In that case, the data collected will be destroyed.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 5480.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at the information provided below. Thank you for your cooperation.

CONTACT DETAILS

Researcher:

Hoang Ngoc Trang

ngoctrang.hoang@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisors:

Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe

david.crabbe@vuw.ac.nz

Dr. Jonathan Newton

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Dr. Jonathan Newton (jonathan.newton@vuw.ac.nz)

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

PRIMARY MENTOR CONSENT TO RESEARCH

1. I have read the **Information Sheet** for this research and have understood the procedure of this research.
2. I have been given an opportunity to ask and I have had my questions about the research answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.
4. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from this research any time during the training and up to two weeks after the practicum without giving any reason or withdraw any data provided.
5. I understand that any information I give will be under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the information sheet and pseudonyms will be used.
6. I agree to participate in this research and provide information needed by the researcher.
7. I understand that all the data will be destroyed or returned to the participants if requested, two years after the conclusion of the research.

Participant's Name :

Participant's Signature :

Date: / /

If you would like to receive a written summary of the research findings at the end of this research, please tick here ☐ and provide me your e-mail address to which this summary can be sent:

Stage 2: The Cohort



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING STUDENT TEACHER

Title of the research:

"Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

I am Hoang Ngoc Trang. I am undertaking a research project in order to complete a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). I have received approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee to conduct this research.

My PhD project aims to assist pre-service teachers to identify and problematize professional critical incidents in language teaching in order to connect theories they have learnt in teacher education programs to their teaching practice, to connect their practice to the standards of their profession, and to understand how their critical incident analysis would affect their actions in the classroom and school communities.

I would like to invite you to participate in this project in which you play the central role. Should you agree to participate in this research, I will invite you to conduct your teaching practicum under my formal secondary supervision permitted by the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education and primary supervision of another teacher. This main mentor is one of the teachers of the faculty and will be assigned by the faculty. That main mentor will be in charge of all formal assessment of your performance in the practicum. My role is to accompany and support you during this teaching practicum.

In addition to the normal practicum, you will be invited to attend a two-week pre-practicum training in which you will analyse professional critical incidents reported by early career teachers. This initial training will be conducted by me only without the presence of the primary mentor. During the field trip, you will observe teachers in order to identify and analyse critical incidents in their classrooms. All of your identifications and analysis of such critical incidents must be kept confidential; they must not be shared with anyone except me. During your teaching in the practicum which will be video-taped, you will identify and analyse your own critical incidents in your teaching. You will write about the incidents right after you finish a teaching session and feel free to add to change anything in your critical incident analysis after watching the video of that teaching session. In group discussions among your peers and both mentors and sometimes among your peers and me only, we will not only talk about your lesson plans and teaching sessions but also your reflections on critical incidents. All group discussions will be videotaped. After the practicum, beside the portfolio that you are required to write and submit to the faculty, you will be invited to a 45-minute interview in which you share your evaluations of the impact of this training. The interview will be recorded and scheduled at a time and a place that are convenient for you.

All data will be gathered reported on a confidential basis and only I and my supervisors, Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe and Dr. Jonathan Newton will have access to the data. The results of the research will be anonymously presented in my thesis. You will not be identified in any way in the thesis, which will be publicly available. The research may also be presented at academic conferences, and published in academic journals, or books, also without identifying any participants. All collected data including critical incident report and analysis, videos of your

teaching and group discussion, interview transcripts, summaries, and any recordings will be kept securely and will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Since your participation in this research is voluntary, you are free to withdraw from this research any time during the training and up to two weeks after the practicum without giving any reason. In that case, the data collected will be destroyed.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 5480.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at the information provided below. Thank you for your cooperation.

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 Dr. Jonathan Newton (jonathan.newton@vuw.ac.nz)

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

STUDENT TEACHER CONSENT TO RESEARCH

1. I have read the Information Sheet for this research and have understood the procedure of this research.
2. I have been given an opportunity to ask and I have had my questions about the research answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.
4. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from this research any time during the training and up to two weeks after the practicum without giving any reason or withdraw any data provided.
5. I understand that any information I give will be under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the information sheet and pseudonyms will be used.
6. I agree to participate in this research and provide information needed by the researcher.
7. I understand that all the data will be destroyed or returned to the participants if requested, two years after the conclusion of the research.

Participant's Name :

Participant's Signature :

Date: / /

If you would like to receive a written summary of the research findings at the end of this research, please tick here ☐ and provide me your e-mail address to which this summary can be sent:

Stage 3: The Case Studies



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING NOVICE TEACHER

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

I am Hoang Ngoc Trang. I am undertaking a research project in order to complete a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). I have received approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee to conduct this research.

My PhD project aims to understand thinking development processes of novice teachers from their teaching practicum and early career teaching. As I have followed your learning-to-teach journey during your practicum, I would like to follow you into the first year of your teaching and discuss with you experiences that you will go through in your early career teaching. We would keep contact through emails and/or social networks which you feel comfortable about. We will talk on Skype when you feel you have something to share with me. All conversations and exchanges will be recorded.

All data will be gathered reported on a confidential basis and only I and my supervisors, Assoc. Prof. David Crabbe and Dr. Jonathan Newton will have access to the data. The results of the research will be anonymously presented in my thesis. You will not be identified in any way in the thesis, which will be publicly available. The research may also be presented at academic conferences, and published in academic journals, or books, also without identifying any participants. All collected data will be kept securely and will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

Since your participation in this research is voluntary, you are free to withdraw from this research any time without giving any reason. In that case, the data collected will be destroyed. Otherwise, I will stop collecting data when you decide to stop teaching or when I think the data have been enough.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 5480.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at the information provided below. Thank you for your cooperation.

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Dr. Jonathan Newton (jonathan.newton@vuw.ac.nz)

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING NOVICE TEACHER

1. I have read the **Information Sheet** for this research and have understood the procedure of this research.
2. I have been given an opportunity to ask and I have had my questions about the research answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.
4. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from this research any time without giving any reason or withdraw any data provided.
5. I understand that any information I give will be under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the information sheet and pseudonyms will be used.
6. I agree to participate in this research and provide information needed by the researcher.
7. I understand that all the data will be destroyed or returned to the participants if requested, two years after the conclusion of the research.

Participant's Name :

Participant's Signature :

Date: / /

If you would like to receive a written summary of the research findings at the end of this research, please tick here ☐ and provide me your e-mail address to which this summary can be sent:

Transcriber



INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING TRANSCRIBER

Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

I am Hoang Ngoc Trang. I am undertaking a research project in order to complete a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). I have received approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee to conduct this research.

My PhD project aims to understand thinking development processes of novice teachers from their teaching practicum and early career teaching. I am inviting you to join my research as a transcriber transcribing group meetings and one-to-one interviews. I have assured my participants that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain full confidentiality. You are required to

1. Keep all research information that is shared with you (i.e. audio and video recordings, transcripts) confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than me;
2. Ensure the security of research information (i.e. audio and video recordings, transcripts). This includes:
 - Using closed headphones when transcribing audio taped interviews;
 - Keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews on a password protected computer with password-protected files;
 - Closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
 - Keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
 - Permanently deleting any digital communication containing the data.
3. Not make copies of research information (i.e. audio or video recordings, transcripts) unless specifically instructed to do so by me;
4. After discussing it with me, erase or destroy all research information i.e. audio or video recordings, transcripts) that cannot be returned to me upon completion of your duties as a transcriber.

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 5480.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at the information provided below. Thank you for your cooperation.

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Title of the research: "Investigating novice teachers' professional learning from the teaching practicum to early career teaching"

TRANSCRIBER CONSENT TO RESEARCH

1. I have read the **Information Sheet** for this research and have understood the requirements.
2. I have been given an opportunity to ask and I have had my questions about the duties answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.
4. I understand that any information I give will be under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the information sheet and pseudonyms will be used.
5. I agree to participate in this research and provide information needed by the researcher.

Transcriber's Name :

Transcriber's Signature :

Date: / /