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Stepping into Mindful Education: A Teacher Educator's Narrative of Contextualizing a SLTE Curriculum

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Abstract

Initiation into contextualizing mindful second language teacher education (SLTE) has challenged teacher educators causing their retreat into mindless submission to ready-made standardized directives. To revive the starting perspective in curriculum development in light of the recent trend towards responsive SLTE, this practitioner research investigated how the context was incorporated into the initial program phase. We reported an intrinsic case self-study narrating the contextualization events unfolded in the first five sessions of an English language teacher education program in Karaj, Iran. Selected factors guided data mining in an interview, classroom interaction transcripts, reflective tasks, institutional documents, and the teacher educator's journal entries and recollections. The data underwent meaning-oriented, temporally sequenced content analysis. We redrafted the resulting narrative after member checking, and critical reviews. Afterwards, we conducted a layered context-bound thematic analysis on the big story followed by further theme analysis of the existing and emerging facets of adaptive expertise. Engagement in this narrative inquiry developed awareness of her practices and professional agency, constraints and affordances within the context of SLTE program. The findings extend *narrative knowledging* to the wider professional community of SLTE.

Keywords: Adaptive expertise; Contextualization; Mindful teacher education; Narrative knowledging; Reflectivity; SLTE curriculum

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1. Introduction

The field of SLTE has confronted decontextualized situations whereby teachers' personal, social, and institutional context influences on their practices are rarely acknowledged (Freeman, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Following a fairly routine tradition, second language (SL) teacher educators are mainly concerned with explicit transmission of disciplinary knowledge of applied linguistics, specific content, skills, and prescribed classroom procedures advocated by seminal global research publications. Through such prescriptions, they often fail to adapt to the particularities of their teaching contexts and consequently replicate practice (Freeman, 2016). It is contrary to the contemporary emphasis on the incorporation of *context* (Graves, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) in the *substance* of SLTE programs (Freeman, 2009) to develop second language teaching (SLT) *contextual knowledge* (Richards, 1998, 2012). It is devoid of chances for teaching professional development utilizing the declarative and procedural knowledge to generate new solutions to the problems faced in practice (Maggioli, 2012) and for socializing into professional cultures as adaptive experts. Despite the desperate need for contextualizing instruction (Holliday, 1994), many teacher educators lacking the required *adaptive expertise* (Hammond & Bransford, cited in Johnson, 2009a) rarely embed their practices in the context of SLTE to structure teacher learning via gradually contextualized participation (Freeman, 2009).

The flame of re-visioning *context* (Graves, 2015; Richards, 2015) in SLT was ignited in our third co-author when she found her peer teacher educator trapped with a top-down curriculum from the TESOL 2006 directives replicating it since, at the institute where they worked. Baffled by the one-size-fits-all view of teaching, she felt more determined to mind her steps towards context-sensitive teacher education afterwards. To put SLTE *adaptive expertise* into perspective, therefore, we brought into focus the

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starting perspective (Graves, 2009) in a SLTE program run by her to undertake a *self-study* (Borg, 2015; Borg & Sanchez, 2015) of own practices that deliberated over her adaptive expertise in contextualizing instruction to raise awareness of her initial attempts, exploring the opportunities as well as challenges throughout this learning journey, and their consequences for *mindful SLTE* (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). This narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014), being part of a larger longitudinal research, was supervised by two of us, her co-authors as experts in applied linguistics and recounts the events unfolded through exploration. This qualitative report, therefore, does not follow the strict quantitative research article conventions in applied linguistics.

2. Review of the Related Literature

The question of second language (SL) teacher learning hence SLTE has been subject to various conceptualizations in the history of SLTE professionalism (Freeman, 2016; Johnson, 2009b). The more recent trends involve teacher cognition (Borg, 2006) as situated, social, and distributed (Johnson, 2009a) application of teaching knowledge and skills (Burn & Richards, 2009), requiring context-sensitive, interactive, and developmental *engagement* through teacher education (Burns & Richards, 2009; Freeman, 2016).

For sound SLTE curriculum planning, this study followed Graves' (2009) context-sensitive needs-based framework. For *the starting perspective*, therefore, we considered *who the teacher learners were, what they knew,* and *what their expectations* were like initially and addressed SLT *adaptive expertise* on *the ending perspective.* Decisions on the *content*, *instructional practices* and evaluative plans about program *effectiveness* were made on these bases. Context analysis (Graves, 2015), therefore, involved recognition of the existing resources and constraints to ensure

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pragmatic feasibility **(**Graves, 2009) of the design through a scrutiny of context parameters, and revealed minor discrepancies among the citations. While Richards' (1998) conception of the SLT context incorporates the *society*, *community*, and *institution*, Graves (2009) considers the *educational institution*, *local community*, *state*, and *nation* relevant and Nation and Macalister (2010) exceptionally attach a *political* dimension to SLT environment. This variability proved the analysis essential in the program initiation and its enactment (Graves, 2015). Considerable overlaps, though under different guises, in the context analysis cited (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Graves, 2009, 2015; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 1998, 2012, 2015), were also reassuring.

As a result, we conducted context analysis of the case under investigation on two sets of factors-the *institutional* and *social*-which we found most relevant and recurrent, and following Nation and Macalister's (2010), considered the *political* subsidiary, but discarded the *economic* contextual features (Graves, 2015) beyond the scope of this study. We found those contextual factors which were multi-dimensional, and incorporated them accordingly. The resulting inventory included facets of the local and the wider context of the SLTE case. Following Barkhuizen (2008), we subsequently resorted to the interconnected context domains emerging from teacher stories. The three-layered context comprises of: (a) an inner circle *small –s story* of teachers' practices derived from their thoughts, emotions, ideas, theories and social interactions with people in the immediate teaching environment; (b) a median *capital –S Story* as consequences of institutional mandates, attitudes, expectations, and prescriptions without teacher control, or manipulation power; and (c) an outer circle *capital STORY* of the wider sociopolitical macro-context of teaching and learning restricting teachers' power to influence their practices.

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Identification of the SLTE parameters towards *contextualizing* instruction, a leading indicator of *adaptive expertise* (Farrell, 2014; Maggioli, 2012; Tsui, 2005; Waters, 2005), appreciated Darling-Hammond and Bransford's (cited in Johnson 2009a) reference to teachers' adaptive power as the ultimate SLTE goal. Accordingly, adaptive expertise requires balanced teacher efficiency and innovation exploiting skills and strategies to plan, manage, implement, and assess teaching and learning, with simultaneous adjustments to the unpredictability of classroom life besides a degree of routinization. To enhance teacher learning opportunities based on their awareness of the self and the context with *adaptive expertise*, Maggioli (2012) adopts an MATESOL standard. The indicators of teachers' adaptive expertise are *self-awareness, response to unexpected occurrences, use of alternative supports for teaching and learning, use of reflection, as well as engagement in learning,* which unlike *routine expertise* (Bransford et al., 2005, cited in Maggioli, 2012), rely on their use of '*know about, know how,* and *know to* in a principled, pragmatic...integrative way', (Maggioli, 2012, p. 26) developing teachers' core competencies. In light of adaptive expertise, contextualizing SLT involves teacher's ability to generate new solutions to the problems faced in practice (Maggioli, 2012). Based on Richards' (1998) definition of *contextual knowledge*, it is the expertise involved in the process (and the outcome) of incorporation of knowledge of the *society*, *community*, and *institution* into teaching, targeting teacher learners.

Viewed from this perspective, contextualization involves various facets of adaptive expertise over the initial triggers, processes, and outcomes of SLTE. As social activity (Johnson, 2009a, 2009b; Johnson & Golombek, 2011b); therefore, it incorporates socializing teacher learners in SLTE *substance, engagement,* and *influences* (Freeman, 2009). To scaffold the learning of contextualization, and to examine its enactment thus it seems plausible to scrutinize teacher learners' engagement in gradually more

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demanding SLT professional activities. The focus follows Freeman's (2016) call for SLTE design-specific investigations of short-term and long-term teacher learner socialization into the activity of teaching.

In this vein, the central challenge of *how* to operationalize contextualization in this study lied in how it unfolded, scaffolding (re-)conceptualization of SLT contextualization in the teacher learners at the program onset. In the adoption of contextualization, following Maggioli (2012), we adhered to *principled pragmatism* (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) whereby we defined the knowledge base of SLT (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Richards, 1998), and identified the program scope (Freeman, 2009) as a springboard for strategic curricular decisions. This approach demands the educator to be *mindful*- be responsive, become supportive, and boost teaching expertise- which underlies *responsive mediation* (Johnson & Golombek, 2016), through systematic instruction, scaffolding teacher learners' conceptualizations to regulate their activity, and develop their adaptive expertise. Magnifying mediation, therefore, signifies the teacher educator's expertise to adapt to the *particular*, what is *possible* and proves *practical* (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), challenging operationalizing *located* SLTE to bridge the alarming teacher knowledge-skill divide (Freeman, 2016).

In the initiation of the SLTE program design, we followed Graves (2009) on two considerable issues. To empower teachers with *adaptive expertise* in *contextualizing SL instruction*, we primarily challenged 'educating teachers to replicate practice' (Graves, 2009, p. 122), but required *adaptive expertise in contextualizing SLTE*, informed by SLT/FLT standards (as cited in Maggioli, 2012), as the SLTE *outcome* (Freeman, 2009). However, to avoid the imposition of dislocated criteria for gauging teaching effectiveness, we reserved space for teacher researcher's exploratory *self-study* (Borg, 2013). To that end, next we conducted narrative research (Barkhuizen, 2013),

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incorporating *characters* in interaction, *time*, and *place*, (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as a subjective, and context-sensitive qualitative inquiry on the particularization of the case.

This narrative case study (Barkhuizen, 2015; Benson, 2013) was a practitioner auto-ethnography (Borg, 2013, 2015) as a *big story* (Bamberg, 2007) to explore own attempts for contextualization magnifying the *self* for self-disclosure, but dissected the self-expressed picture later for the nuances of meaning that it revealed in *small stories* (Bamberg, 2007). To this end, we utilized both *narrative analysis* and *analysis of narratives* strategically (Polkinghorne, cited in Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014). In *narrative analysis*, we used story telling for data analysis and reporting; through *analysis of narratives*, stories provided data. Narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014); therefore, unified multiple data sources to *contextualize* dilemmas, struggles, fears, triumphs and achievements (Barkhuizen, 2013) at the outset. According to Johnson and Golombek (2011b, 2013, 2016), *self*-authored narratives have transformative potential as meditational spaces to *externalize* own perceptions of sophisticated issues, *verbalize* thoughts theoretically, interpret experiences, and *examine* qualitative data with reflection systematically. Narrative reporting of the findings then extends *narrative knowledging* (Barkhuizen, 2013) beyond agency via engagement in the research (Borg, 2013) and involves the wider professional community in sense making, learning, and knowledge building.

One strand of narrative inquiry by teacher educators has allowed space to share stories of their professional experiences, and extend narrative knowledging. For instance, Barkhuizen (2008), a university lecturer on an intensive postgraduate ELT course of general ELT and localized ELT in South Africa, conducts a case study exploring context in an inquiry with two-experienced and inexperienced-English teachers. The teachers write a series of interconnected stories on given personal, and professional topics

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from which three levels of story applicable to their lives embracing significant or problematic teaching and learning events, their desires, fears, expectations and personal meanings emerge. The study illustrates each story level using extracts from participants' narratives. On the other hand, Johnson and Golombek (2013) explore the transformative power of dialogic interactions in a practicum blog between a teacher educator and two English as Second Language (ESL) teacher learners in an MA TESL teaching practicum in the US. The researchers trace the cognitive and emotive processes that novice teachers undergo through the course using the sociocultural notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), in light of the teacher educator's strategic mediations to scaffold the teacher learners' thoughts and actions. One other case involves Kaur (2015), a Malaysian teacher educator, on his journey with primary school writing teachers to explore how their pre-conceptions of guided and focused practice writing create a challenge for them facing free and open-ended writings. By scaling up support, the educator helps broaden their vision of writing instruction, gradually substitute their misconceptions about free writing by cognizance, overcome their fear of language errors made by less-skilled students, and show a more positive perspective of their students' writing abilities.

Outside the domain of teacher education yet inspiring in the methodology of narrative inquiry, Benson's (2013) narrative case study is noteworthy. The study temporally organizes the experiences of a Hong Kong student during study abroad in the UK. The timely experiential revelations seek context sensitive explications through narrative thinking which synthesizes experience into a unified narrative. As a result, the narrative analysis constructs a coherent whole out of the pieces of data content. That is, the outcome is a story that focuses on the student's SL identity development by the experience. The author constructs and then

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retells the learner's story, but leaves much of the narrative interpretation to readers of the research report.

The review of the related literature reported here proves the versatility of narrative inquiry backup for the present study. Johnson and Golombek's (2013) exploration of mediation, and Kaur (2015) study of teacher cognition, aim to bridge the theory-practice gap. On account of the context, Barkhuizen (2008) sheds some light on how SLTE narrows the gap, and Benson (2013) offers a fresh perspective whereby narrative analysis and reporting brings the context of teacher education into effect, and completes the mission of *narrative knowledging*.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The longitudinal two-semester-long study was conducted in the Academic Center for Education Culture and Research (ACECR) in Karaj, Iran. Site selection was based on the possibility of gaining entry and permission for this research due to our co-researcher's ten-year experience of teaching and running teacher education courses there.

Seven Iranian Teacher Training Course (TTC) candidates (one male and six female) aged 22-45 from a variety of English and non-English educational backgrounds were selected through convenience sampling (Creswell, 2012; Dörnyei, 2004) for this study. Moreover, given the nature of the study (self-study), our co-researcher, a 44-year-old female PhD candidate of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) acted as the main participant.

3.2. Instruments

To explore the issue under investigation, instruments including a focused group interview with the participants, a SLT reflectivity questionnaire, the

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Quick Oxford Placement Test released in 2001, the teacher educator's reflective journal entries, transcripts of recorded classroom interactions, teacher-made tasks, reflective assignments adopted and adapted from different SLTE sources, her recollections of running previous TECs, and the documents on the ACECR official website were utilized.

3.3. Procedure

3.3.1. Data collection procedure

A 50-session SLTE program comprising of two successive teacher education courses, Teacher Education Course 1 (TEC1), and Teacher Education Course 2 (TEC2), designed and run by our co-researcher (the third author) was recorded with participants' prior informed verbal consent. The five initial sessions provided the data for this study. Initially, in the sessions opening the foundation course, TEC1, demographic information was collected and motives were identified through the focused group interview and an English proficiency test. This understanding guided orienting the participants to the course goals and perspectives. Based on the collected teacher learner profiles, she designed, adapted and adopted tasks (classroom scenarios, and personalization mainly) to explore the participants' mindsets concerning their teaching and learning experiences and preferences. Contrary to her previous TEC experiences, she let her syllabus emerge gradually during the course. The revision of the recorded classroom interactions yielded adaptive steps in developing a spiral, aposteriori syllabus to enhance responsiveness to teacher learners' perceived needs and concerns. The course readings were also incorporated gradually along the unfolding classroom events. Moreover, the learners' mother tongue (Persian) was maintained as the main medium of instruction—upon interpreting the OQPT results. Our co-researcher also attempted introducing fundamental concepts of SLT (concepts of *teacher education*, *TEC* vs. *TTC*,

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teacher reflection, and *context* in language teaching) within the context of familiar experiences, examples, analogies, or metaphors. The challenges and affordances in engaging in the SLT social activities will be narrated in the analysis section.

3.3.2. Data analysis procedure

The *mixed narrative methods* analysis incorporated three phases to enhance the research *credibility* and *dependability* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). First, the various data sources underwent *content analysis* (Barkhuizen, 2013) which was meaning-oriented, involved *data mining* (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014) prompted by the selected contextual parameters, and was temporally sequenced. The analysis focused on the researcher exploring her contextualization at the interface between the self and the social institutional context (Chang, cited in Stephenson & Harold, 2015). The resulting narrative met the requirements of narrative texts (Clandinin & Connelly, cited in Barkhuizen, 2008): it was organized by *time*, and conveyed the *place*, and the key *participants* in the classroom interactions. The resulting insights were analyzed and reported via *narrative analysis*, in Polkinghorne's (cited in Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chick, 2014) terms, which formed the researcher's *auto-ethnography* (Chang, cited in Stephenson & Harold, 2015) as the *big story* of her contextualzing attempts.

To increase the *credibility* and *dependability* of the findings, we adopted several *data source triangulation* strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Firstly, our co-researcher's prolonged presence on the site, observing the practices and collecting data familiarized her with the participants and their inner worlds. Researcher's presence as a participant in the setting enhanced *reflexivity* (Hammersley & Atkinson, cited in Stephenson & Harold, 2015) through interaction with the research process, and its outcome. Constant *reflexivity* through journal writing, for example, helped to externalize her

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assumptions, experiences, values, and perspectives. Such clarification might illuminate her decisions and their interpretations. She also used an *audit trail*, a detailed description of data collection, and categorization (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, the researcher did *member checks* (Patton, 2015) for *participant validation*. The *member checks* (Murray, 2009) of the first draft big-storied data analysis with two research participants took three-hour independent sessions for paired reading of the story with the researcher to clarify or remove ambiguities caused by the in-text academic terminologies. It ensured the plausibility of her interpretations and removed misunderstanding and misinterpreting the actions and accounts, minimizing personal bias chances. Another strategy to enhance the trustworthiness was *peer review* whereby two field experts critically reviewed the findings (Stephenson & Harold, 2015).

The second step in data analysis, *narrative re-writing* (Barkhuizen, 2015, Benson, 2013), involved the re-reading and re-living the narrative using the feedback from the critical peer reviews to craft a more coherent story which reserved space for critical reflection. So the researcher excluded the digressions, included her responses to the feedback, and redrafted the narrative to maintain the critical incidents in the plot. The product was a more condensed version of the story in five episodes: *opening SLT(E) vision, SL teacher reflection, SL proficiency, SLT professional content, and SLT context.* The episodic divisions represented aspects of SLTE contextualization in a relatively timely manner. Each episode opened with a vignette portraying a relevant teaching challenge that the educator encountered turning the topic into an issue for contextualization in SLTE. The narrative was an intermediate product of the analysis.

The third phase involved thematic analysis of the reframed narrative. Initially, theme analysis involved *free coding* of the data regarding the interrelated *context* levels that the story contained, reflecting Barkhuizen's

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(2008) relevant *story* levels. The exploration took place at the levels of: (a) our co-researcher's personal and interpersonal classroom context, (b) the local institutional context, and (c) the wider institutional, and socio-political context. Later, her contextualization thoughts and practices at each context level underwent thematic analysis using both *free coding* with reference to MA TESOL (Maggioli, 2102) preset facets of *adaptive expertise* and *open coding* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) afterwards to ensure credibility of the findings, giving any emerging contextualization facet to tease out. Done systematically, it added to the *rigor* (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chick, 2014) of the data coverage. To achieve *analyzer triangulation*, a second field expert concurrently coded 20% of the data in all rounds having familiarized with the study aims and the data analysis procedure (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) prior to the coding, following a briefing session with our co-researcher.

3.4. Design

The present research adopted a qualitative case study as narrative auto-ethnography (Barkhuizen, 2015; Cresswell, 2012; Duff & Anderson, 2015; Richards, 2003, 2015) to understand contextualization course-initially in an alternative route (Freeman, 2016) institutionally-based SLTE program. To enact *context-sensitive* SLTE (Kumaravadiveu, 2012), the holistic, in-depth *self*-study (Borg, 2013) probed into the design, experiences, and processes that the participants underwent. Thereby, grounded new understandings of dynamics of *adaptive expertise* in SLTE (Tsui, 2009) were sought. To maintain *boundedness* (Hood, 2009) of the TEC case system, we conducted an *intrinsic case study* (Simons, 2014) advocating *naturalistic* closeness to the case magnifying its internal complexity. To explore the SLTE context for thick description of the attempts at contextualizing, through *process tracing* (Given, 2008), we examined inductive evidence temporally. However, this intrinsic case study has no claims beyond *naturalistic*

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generalizability (Given, 2008)-the thick descriptions, contextualize the findings through narratives, so the readers can examine the transferability of the findings to their own contexts.

Phase one: Writing own big story

My Adventures of Located SLTE

My adventures of SLTE have been vivid memories since I became a teacher. Twenty-three years have passed, and teaching advanced level English is not a dream for me anymore! Besides, I have been running teacher education courses for around ten years. My teaching experience has also traveled to other teacher education domains: Temporarily, I have supervised my English teaching colleagues, observing their teaching and mentoring them. Keen on my professional development, I have taken a host of teacher education/ training courses voluntarily or as a compulsory requirement all along my career life. In parallel, I have received mainstream higher education in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) whereby I have enriched the philosophical underpinnings of my SLTE decisions which rooted long before I was a teacher.

In an attempt to explore and justify the enactment of our co-researcher's contextualization practices upon the SLTE program initiation, we produced a quasi-narrative report. In the report, we primarily organized the revelations of her principles, plans, practices, beliefs, understandings, hopes, doubts, fears, and challenges and those which her TEC students shared with her, under two contextual parameters (Richards, 2015) in the data. One parameter focused, though not exclusively, on the teacher learners and the other on the teacher educator. Therefore, seeking more coherence for deeper exploration, we opted for a chain of layered readings and re-farming of the story. That was why the narrative underwent extensive re-storying, which

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Barkhuizen (2013) advocates. The product of the first phase analysis has been deliberately removed from this article as a matter of routine because of the space limitation.

Phase two: Re-writing the big story

The following presents the outcomes of the second phase of the data analysis. However, aside from the digressions and incoherence available in the first draft narrative, the re-drafted big story has major overlaps content-wise with the first narrative. The additions of the re-written narrative include the categorizations, elaborations, clarifications, exemplifications, and deletions resulting from our co-researcher's re-reading and re-telling of the story besides responses to the critical comments received through the revision. To enhance coherence, and to extract the story plot, we had to look backward and put together the disparate events of the past. The vignettes which prompt the beginning of each episode are also appended to the revised narratives and help with coherence. Thus the process altered the temporal sequence of the original narrative-like report. Meanwhile, we put less emphasis on *time* in light of the terminal objective of the study, a process supported in narrative re-writing (Ricoeur, cited in Freeman, 2015). As a result, we presented the journey as the following interrelated episodes.

Episode one: Contextualizing opening SLT(E) vision

It was the summer's term in 2015 when I first met my seven TEC learners. After I introduced myself, I invited them to take turns voluntarily and share their profiles with the class. Thus in my first attempt to create rapport and make a better sense of the context, I was informed about their academic degrees and affiliations, current English proficiency, teaching experience (if any), and reasons and aspirations for attendance. This course-opening

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interview also enabled me to contextualize my further decisions and actions as the dialog unfolded.

Through the interactions, I learned that the TEC candidates were from a variety of academic backgrounds. All but one held an English Diploma, although I later found that their English proficiency was below this entry level requirement. Regarding their teaching experience, and their experience with teachers, they also showed remarkable differences which affected their expectations from the course.

Adine, who attended this TEC at the turn of her first year experience teaching English to beginners at the same institute, had already taken TECs with me, and lamented that she had never had qualified university professors by the age of 32, so she had lost the motivation to get her bachelor's degree, feeling disillusioned at university. She sought this chance to share and resolve her present dilemmas, and teaching challenges. Niki, 45, an English Literature BA graduate with 15 years of experience in ELT said that she was pushed by the frustration resulting from frequent critical supervisor comments. Her *confusion*, therefore, had made her seek awareness about teaching, and self-confidence by updating her professional teaching knowledge. Afra, 28, held a BA in English Literature and had taught English up to the elementary level at an institute for around a year. She said, "I've come to improve my skills in teaching".

The other candidates did not have any ELT experience. Mina, aged 30, had a Master of Physics, the subject that she had taught for three years at university. She expected that she could extend her pedagogical knowledge to English teaching. She hoped to learn English better trough teaching it for she believed effective teaching involves effective learning as a pre-requisite. Ziba, 35, with a BA in Management, had tutored elementary school children in Math. She believed she could make an effective teacher in English. It took her a course-long challenge to realize how urgent it was to improve her

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English knowledge to fulfill the ambition because she had entered the course without the required English competence.

Two of the TEC candidates lacked any teaching experience. Amin, aged 24, was a senior BA student of Industrial Management, but claimed he had lost his confidence in the use of English due to his minimized exposure to the language. His false assumption about TEC was to be there to *learn English* which he felt he needed urgently for his major because he was more inclined to teach Industrial Management *in English* rather than general English. Neda, 21 years old, was a BS student of Urban Planning and was just interested in learning teaching.

Through the conversations, I realized that their various visions and passions for teaching created a big challenge to my contextualization. In response, based on my past SLTE experience, I decided to choose the candidates' shared first language, Persian, as the main medium of instruction. This decision was made despite my awareness of the prerequisite SL proficiency for English teachers. Next, to maintain responsiveness to the teacher learners' perspectives, aspirations, and attitudes, I deliberately avoided providing a detailed written course syllabus at the onset of the course.

As a step to develop a more profound understanding of the course, I drew the candidates' attention to the course title, *teacher education* versus *teacher training* (Richards, 2015). To clarify the distinction, I resorted to a familiar analogy in the field of dentistry. I reminded the candidates how an educated teacher would act differently from the one who has accumulated a handful of ready-made mindless trainings. The analogy assisted the teacher learners' participation in conceptualizing the fundamental theory-practice distinction in interaction with me and aided me to introduce the course objectives. The occasion was significant in contextualizing their language teaching awareness in some respects. First, it legitimized the re-naming of the course

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to the less commonly experienced *TEC*. In response, many of them nodded approvingly, and none complained. Second, it gave them the awareness to decide whether to quit the course, or to feel more determined to take the challenge of education. However, in the puzzled looks that I received, I detected more curiosity, willingness, and disbelief than deep distrust which I believed would resolve in time because learning teaching is a life-long phenomenon. Therefore, they were informed of the extended SLTE program comprising of TEC1 and TEC2, and recommended to continue to TEC2. Consequently, even the most hesitant candidate, Ziba, decided to stay on the course. That moment I called, "All aboard!" we started the life-long journey still unknowing how far each passenger was destined to get along.

Episode two: Contextualizing SL teacher reflection

Detached for a while from my natural inclination to seriously think and decide to (re-)act, my previous TEC practices had sometimes been criticized—which made me re-think the incorporation of reflection in the program. The criticisms were posed by those thoughtful candidates who felt frustrated near the end of TEC1s, the moment they were given the floor to express how well their ambitions for SLT were satisfied. Giving it a second thought, I realized that the decision to reduce the course load by minimizing the demand on teacher learners to think over SLT issues—concepts, theories, and practices—had to be reconsidered for the crowded short-cut was proven to have gone against the currents! Having learned the "two roads diverged", I decided to take "the one less traveled by"—whereby I attempted to mind every step of teacher reflection—"And that has made all the difference", to use Robert Frost's.

To initiate narrowing the theory-practice gap, following Farrell (2015), I aimed at extensive reflective engagement. I incorporated reflection as a lead-in, in input presentation and through the practice phases. Initially, the

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candidates' relative unfamiliarity with reflection and reflective action, partly due to minimal reflectivity through schooling, made its contextualization challenging especially as written self-expression. Given its significance in teacher learning, I tried to encourage reflectivity, constructively engaging the candidates in thinking over SLT issues to make a better sense of the concept and maintain it. To justify the incorporation of reflection course initially, I used familiar analogies and metaphors. Using the analogy of (not) being "like a willow in the wind shaking," I illustrated how reflective teachers, constantly substantiating their decisions and practices have better chances to survive like strong trees against high winds.

I also administered a SL teacher reflection questionnaire (Farrell (2015), for a rough measure of the teacher learners' reflectivity, and as a means to familiarize them with the instances of reflective teaching practices in planning, implementing, and assessing lessons. Since the questionnaire was written in English, during its completion, I helped interactively to remove ambiguities while the respondents, allowed to seek clarification and comment on own practices, were on task. The questionnaire was also meant to raise the teacher learners' awareness of their own reflectivity in LT. Despite the attempts to make the questionnaire input comprehensible, the terminologies were too many especially for those candidates lacking teaching experience, on a second thought. However, some voiced their appreciation of reflection in teaching and declared that this experience had opened their vision of teaching, demanding reflectivity.

Besides, I included reflective assignments in the program early on the course. As an initial space for contemplation and reflection raising candidates' awareness about teaching *philosophies*, I encouraged them to state their preferred instructional activities triggered by classroom scenarios. The prompt was a two-page extract from *Learning Teaching* (Scrivener, 2011), including illustrated snapshots of classroom atmospheres depicting

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teachers' attitudes, roles, and those of learners. The task followed the general scheme of the book, but was minimally adapted to avoid intrusive terminology. Their required justifications, while on task, helped to capture their assumptions, beliefs and conceptions of effective classroom instruction. When justified, the selection (and de-selection) reflected their teaching *principles* (Farrell, 2015) and revealed their attitudes to communicative language teaching (CLT). To trigger and contextualize reflection on their pedagogical *theories* (Farrell, 2015), I also prompted their favorite instructional *techniques* within the classroom descriptions. Their responses, however, did not specify any in particular which gave a clue to their lack of such conceptualization at the outset.

I attempted to contextualize the *assignment* of the classroom scenario task, too. I gave the TEC students time, after an overview, to individually read and make their choices. Afterwards, volunteers initiated sharing their decisions revealing their *sense of plausibility* (Prahbu, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In response, I kept silent mostly and avoided critical comments which left ample space for the teacher learners' comments on the feasibility of *group work*, a very tangible aspect of classroom instruction. The discussion resulted in the *it depends* (Scrivener, 2011) comment, which emphasizes the dependability of SLT and significance of context-wise decisions. In the following, the candidates were reminded of the support that TEC was planned to give them for learning *context-sensitive* SLT.

I also designed the first reflection homework assignment with considerations of the context. The personal qualities, classroom images and analysis it elicited triggered candidates' reflection. To aid their self-expression, the teacher learners were allowed to choose to respond in their first language or English. In the following feedback, I emphasized the value of reflection and self-awareness for informed teaching.

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Episode three: Contextualizing SL proficiency

I could not believe my eyes the moment I learnt Zeinat, my struggling TEC student with her beginner level English, was admitted to do a Master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and was hired to teach elementary English classes. My puzzlement was out of my sympathy with her: Once I became an elementary English teacher, I had already managed to improve my English dramatically. However, I had to spend long hours to fill up my English knowledge gaps and prepare myself for every single class session I ran. Neither did I feel much confident then about my teaching expertise. Zeintat's case was different since she had some knowledge of SL pedagogy through her TEC participation, her perseverance and my attempts to adapt to her needs. Nevertheless, she was a world away from the minimum professional command of a typical EFL teacher. I would have felt less regretful if I had invested in her diligence persuading Zeinat to brush up her English before we lost touch.

Since then, ESL teacher learners' low proficiency in English has become a major concern for me. So I considered different ways to raise the TEC candidates' awareness of their current language proficiency and help them to improve it. To ensure their English command within the time constraints, the candidates sat a quick Oxford placement test (QOPT) without any prior announcement, and followed the standards of its administration and scoring. Tabulated comparisons of the QOPT scores with several other world-renowned English proficiency measures-e.g., the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale, and the common beginner to advanced level scale-were meant to contextualize TEC candidate awareness of the results. Appended was a chart (Scrivener, 2011) illustrating the required English

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proficiency levels in different professional domains of life including language teaching.

I deliberately postponed announcing the QOPT results until the time when the candidates appreciated the significance of SL communicative ability. The choice was a step towards contextualizing the input and the resulting awareness. Assigning English a subsidiary role and choosing Persian, as the main medium of instruction, early on this TEC, maximized opportunities for the teacher learners' involvement. To enhance conditions for improving English proficiency, in sessions following the proficiency exam, I introduced a few textbooks on demand. To encourage them to schedule regular study hours, I shared my own lamentations in a similar condition as a university freshman with them. In a few days, they either purchased the recommended English textbooks or requested the soft copies.

Episode four: Contextualizing SLT professional content

I am pleased with my sense of awareness—which has been derived from apprenticeship of observation, and academic exploration. This pleasing awareness explains how classroom interaction between my students and I appropriates space for communicating pedagogical content. At times, I have received encouraging comments from my TEC students like, "You present complicated scientific issues orderly and make them easy to digest." This reminds of a growing classroom interactional competence, in Steve Walsh's 2011 terms, seeded in me since I deliberated on my teacher's talk-in-interaction, and was sensitized in tactfully the teacher's discourse danced with us—elicited effectively, shaped our contributions, and facilitated space for interaction—and that was why his lessons were so moving! Now, I am proud of my students' approvals proving that I have come over the challenge of dancing with them by my talk-in-interaction.

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To benefit from the power of talk-in-interaction in contextualizing the SLT professional content, I acted opportunistically as the TEC1 started. Synchronous with the introduction to *TEC*, the candidates were encouraged to learn the common abbreviations and acronyms and recognized a reliable reference –*Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, edited by Richards and Schmidt (2010). I contextualized its introduction in other ways, too. It was a means to decode SLT terminologies and conceptualize teaching as a course objective. To better familiarize the candidates with this specialized reference, I compared it with typical general purpose English dictionaries. It made them more curious about the *Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. I deliberately draw their attention to the chief editor's name, Jack C. Richards, the world-renowned author of *Interchange* (2012), and *Passages* (Richards & Sandy, 2008). The early introduction of the dictionary and facilitating its access was also intentional. I shared the soft copy immediately with the class, helped to locate its hard copies, and informed the candidates about a bilingual edition of the dictionary. These were all attempts to let the teacher learners become gradually independent in socializing into the SLT content.

To contextualize SLT professional engagement, based mainly on my prior experience, I postponed the introduction to a long list of recommended reading materials too early because the face had left a negative impression on the novice professionals. Although the inventory had been prepared selectively with the intention to raise beginner teacher learners' SLT awareness and enhance their resourcefulness, it had looked threatening. Consequently, I became more considerate about *when*, and *how* to make *what* professional content relevant. So I made reference citation, for documentation, elaboration, focused practice, manipulation, consolidation, supplementation, or extension on demand so as to enhance-not to deteriorate-SLTE responsiveness.

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To orientate the TEC candidates to the course objectives, I first elicited their expectations and aspirations. Triggering memories of their particularly loveable or hateful previous teachers sought their longest-lasting impressions and helped me identify a general trend towards CLT in the candidates' viewpoints. The pre-service teachers had a less clear sense of CLT, its principles, and its emphasis on context. Nevertheless, they did not expect my paradigmatic approach to the CLT or involvement in communicative learning teaching activities at the outset. To this end, I utilized the power of talk-in-interaction via Socratic questioning to convince them of hidden dimensions to communicative teaching to be explored through the course. I found that their perceptions of communicative instruction differed although they commonly pinpointed its affective and cognitive dimensions. The very questioning act-*personalizing* a relevant teaching/ learning experience-was meant to contextualize the TEC content. It maximized the teacher learners' involvement. The diversity of teachers' present and prospective contexts of teaching legitimized appropriating the content for *adaptive teaching expertise* as a major program goal.

To contextualize the CLT as a springboard for *adaptive teaching expertise*, I took a historical comparative approach to the SLT paradigms. It was risky as soon as the TEC1 candidates got on board for their educational backgrounds did not favor historical perspectives in education. Nevertheless, I insisted on this choice because I believed the contrastive analysis it involved would help to raise teachers' awareness of the pedagogical options as prerequisites for *adaptive expertise*. To convince the candidates to get along, I resorted to familiar analogies and metaphors to emphasize the inadequacy of naïve unsystematic experience in contrast to profound philosophical resolutions. Meanwhile, I resembled the changing philosophies to "revolutions", or "tsunamis" emerging from certain limitations, and affecting considerably large domains of life. Likewise, I

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stated, philosophies emerge from knowledge constrains and affect diverse knowledge domains. Next, I sketched the *cause-result* relationship between philosophies, and language teaching, as well as the *part-whole* relationship between linguistics and psychology as the two basic scientific disciplines contributing to SLT. To the relevant domains of inquiry that these sciences set, I consistently referred, posing these questions: "What is language?" "What is learning?" and "What is language teaching?" to identify the paradigmatic bases of widespread (post-)methodical SLT options. Activating memories interactively contributed greatly to making the abstract scientific concepts more tangible even when professional miro-teaching modelling videos were unavailable. In time, our shared experiences provided ample space for the candidates' more willing participation. Soon they felt less detached from the history of SLT although at the time of departure, we had to travel through the history as far as a whole century.

Episode five: Contextualizing SLT *context*

Never before I was hired by the Audio-lingual Method-stricken institute, bounded by its 'decontextualized' mandates, I appreciated context in SLT. It belongs to twenty years ago, but the memory of the prescribed lesson plans, uniformed teaching acts, mindless breath-taking pattern drills, and strict evaluative supervision is still fresh in my mind. Since the "paradise lost", hardly ever have I found myself as much disciplined or financially secured. Nevertheless, I count the escape the luckiest revival of my teaching 'self' and regain of my class 'spirit'. Today, as a teacher educator I see, beyond the confines of the ALM, the secret of teachers' lasting survival lies in their expertise in hiring their teaching 'context', harnessing its power, and bridging its gaps—in their 'adaptive teaching expertise', to be precise.

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To sensitize the TEC candidates to SLT context, the focused group interview questions and discussions were instrumental. The queries about lasting memories of teachers, and the classroom scenario discussion gave me clues to the candidates' SLT *context* sensitivity. *Adaptive teaching expertise* as a major SLTE goal also created space for an early introduction of SLT *context* although I had to begin with everyday renderings of *context* before its relevant facets were discussed. The context-oriented questions that I posed once our TEC1 met provided such scaffolding.

Further, I assigned homework for the first week, aiming at retrieving the teacher learners' conceptualization of *contextualization*. The assignment addressed the context of SLT by means of questions concerning the interrelated levels of language teaching context (Barkhuizen, 2008) in two sections: (a) the teacher learners' personal characteristics, (b) their ideal imaginary class conditions, and (c) their perspective of their ideal classroom events in relation to the society outside. Both sections were adapted from ELT pedagogy books—*Tasks for Teacher Education* (Tanner & Green, 1988) and *Learning Teaching* (Scrivener, 2011). The prompts were thematized, and the topics linked to the previous and the following class contents. In both, the items were interrelated and triggered reflection. The question of *context* in language teaching was specifically, but very conservatively addressed, avoiding terminologies, demanding personalized engagement. Questions eliciting candidates' personal qualities challenged them more because they seemed to have never imagined such personal attributes of SLT. Upon delivery, my feedback—written and oral—to the assignment gave individual communicative opportunities to raise awareness of self-awareness that context-sensitive teaching requires. With their cognitive presence and their volition to learn, I was inspired to set a new *scene* for the life-long story of my learning teaching. The characters who

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had just arrived on the scene helped to open a new chapter of the story titled—*My Adventures of Located SLTE*.

Phase three: Thematic analyses of the big story

Table 1 reports a selection of the outcome of the third phase data analysis in two rounds. The adaptive expertise-based theme analysis, on the outcome of the prior context-wise theme analysis on the previously coded extracts, was not exclusive to the MA TESOL standards.

Table 1

Selected outcome of thematic analysis

Episode one: Contextualizing the opening SLT(E) vision		
Small –s story (teacher educator's immediate context)		
Excerpt	**Facets of the immediate context**	**Facets of adaptive expertise**
Adine sought this chance to share and resolve her present dilemmas, and teaching challenges.	**Social interaction:** Candidates sharing emotions and challenges	**My engagement in learning about them**
Mina, a physics teacher, expected to extend her pedagogical knowledge to English teaching. She hoped to learn English better trough teaching it for she believed effective teaching involves effective learning as a pre-requisite.	**Social interaction:** My challenge of re-visioning learner expectations	**My engagement in learning about them** **My use of reflection**
That moment we started the life-long journey, still unknowing how far each passenger was destined to get along.	**Emotion:** My doubt	**Self-awareness**
Big –s Story (the median institutional context)		
I decided to choose the teacher learners' shared first language as the medium of instruction due to their limited English language proficiency--against the standard requirement for SLTE candidacy.	**No prescribed method:** My freedom affected by the flexibility of the context	**Use of alternative support for teaching teachers and their learning**
I deliberately avoided providing a detailed written course syllabus at the outset.	**No rigid materials/ methods**	**Use of alternative support for teaching teachers and their learning**
Capital STORY (the socio-political/ macro- context)		
Their previous experience with teachers affected their expectations from the course.	**Imposed curriculum:** My appreciation of candidate expectations rooted in mainstream education, but likely to create resistance	**My engagement in learning about them**
Based on her previous educational experiences, Mina expected to receive a handful of quick techniques.	**Imposed curriculum:** *False* expectations from the course rooted in dominant hidden teaching practices	**My engagement in learning about them**

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Episode two: Contextualizing SL teacher reflection		
Small –s story (teacher educator's immediate context)		
Having learned the "two roads diverged", I decided to take "the one less traveled by"-whereby I attempted to mind every step of teacher reflection.	**Inner thoughts**	**Use of reflection** **Response to unexpected occurrences**
To initiate narrowing the theory-practice gap, I aimed at reflective engagement.— I increased chances to incorporate reflection as a lead-in, in input presentation and through the practice phases.	**Inner thoughts:** Theorizing my practice	**Use of reflection** **Use of alternatives to support teaching teachers and learning teaching**
Adine, stated that the questionnaire had made her recognize the status and significance of reflection in teaching and think about pedagogical issues she had never thought of.	**Interaction:** Sharing teacher learner awareness of teaching	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
The discussion over the teacher learners' options in SLT resulted in the *it depends* (Scrivener, 2011) comment, which emphasizes the dependability of SLT--the significance of context-wise decision making in LT.	**Interaction:** Bridging theory-practice of adaptability **Raising their awareness of theory**	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
In response to the classroom scenario task, I decided to be silent mostly and avoided critical comments. My silence left ample space for the teacher learners' comments on the feasibility of group work.	**Inner thoughts:** About my SLTE decision, theorizing my practice	**Use of reflection** **Self-awareness** **Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
Capital STORY (the socio-political/ macro- context)		
The tendency to avoid reflection was partly due to minimal chances to develop reflectivity through schooling.	**Broader context of teaching/ learning:** A constraint	**Engagement in learning** **Awareness of my SLTE context**

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Episode three: Contextualizing SL proficiency		
Small –s story (teacher educator's immediate context)		
I considered different ways whereby students could raise awareness of their current language proficiency and to improve it.	**Reflection for action:** Turning a constraint to an affordance	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
Appended was a chart that I had extracted from Scrivener's (2011) demonstrating the required English proficiency levels in different professional domains of life.	**Theorizing my practice**	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
Capital STORY (the socio-political/ macro- context)		
The tabulated comparisons of the QOPT scores were with English proficiency measures such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) …, and the common beginner to advanced level scale.	**Interactions:** Raising teacher learner awareness International standards of ELT teacher qualification requirements	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
Episode four: Contextualizing SLT professional content		
Small –s story (teacher educator's immediate context)		
Now, I am proud of my students' approvals proving that I have come over the challenge of dancing with them by means of my talk-in-interaction.	**My emotions** **Interactions:** My classroom discourse as an affordance	**Self-awareness** **Use of alternative supports for teaching teachers and learning teaching**
In the introduction to the course title, *TEC*, the candidates understood that they were required to learn common abbreviations and acronyms in the field.	**Interaction:** Sharing a requirement of the SLTE	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
Therefore, I decided that reference citation for documentation, elaboration, focused practice … be done on demand to enhance-not to deteriorate-SLTE responsiveness.	**Inner thoughts**	**Response to unexpected occurrences**
It was very risky to embark on a historical approach to SLT paradigms.	**Emotions**	**Self-awareness**

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Nevertheless, I insisted on this choice because I believed the contrastive analysis it involved would help to raise teachers' awareness of the pedagogical options as prerequisites for adaptive expertise.	**Inner thoughts:** Idea, reflection for action	**Use of reflection** **Self-awareness** ***avoiding* an expected alternative to support learning teaching**
Capital STORY (the socio-political/ macro- context)		
Their educational backgrounds did not favor historical perspectives in education.	**Imposed curriculum from schooling**	**My resistance to an expected occurrence**
Episode five: Contextualizing SLT context		
Small –s story (teacher educator's immediate context)		
To scaffold the TEC candidates' conceptualization of SLT context, I assigned homework retrieving the teacher learners' conceptualization of contextualization in a number of ways.	**Inner thoughts:** Theorizing my practice	**Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**
Luckily, soon I identified reassuring signs of a way opened to the teacher learners' hearts and their minds.	**Inner thoughts:** On interactions and the resulting emotions	**Use of reflection** **My awareness of their engagement in learning teaching** **My engagement in learning**
Big –s Story (the median institutional context)		
Never before I was hired by the Audio-lingual Method-stricken institute, bounded by its *decontextualized* mandates, I appreciated context in SLT.	**Imposed methods and materials**	**Response to unexpected occurrence**
Capital STORY (the socio-political/ macro- context)		
The assignment addressed the context of SLT by questions addressing perspectives of the relationship between their ideal classroom events and the society.	**Broader context**	**Use of reflection** **Use of alternative supports for learning teaching**

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4. Results

This study aimed at illustrating our attempts for mindful contextualization at the onset of a SLTE program concerning the affordances and challenging the existing constraints. Each phase of the analysis provided firsthand experience contributing to development of our co-researcher as a SL educator and the community of the field professionals. The following recounts the findings in the successive phases.

Phase one: *Writing Own Teaching Narrative*

Our co-researcher's engagement in narrating the SLTE program opening experiences supported her professional development in three ways (Johnson & Golombek, 2011): As a means of *externalization*, narrative writing allowed her to articulate her own teaching experiences detached from the scene and explicate tacit thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, fears, and hopes. The narrative space, therefore, advanced understanding of the interconnections between her situated, social cognition and practices-i.e., her contextualizing SLTE activities (Cross, 2010). Her *verbalization* and reflection in narrative also voiced and actively internalized adaptive expertise and its realization emerged from this first-hand experience. The narrative account required fresh *systematic examination* of contextualizing SLTE attempts and challenges within the context. In the revision, digressions under scrutiny revealed how the researcher's verbalized thoughts and uncertainties turned into *theorized practice* (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) enriching her *personal practical knowledge* (Golombek, 2009) of SLTE.

For example, teacher learners' choice of first language as the main medium of instruction was a decision externalized, verbalized, examined closely, and disseminated in the big story with reference to the macro-strategies of *principled pragmatism* (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). When publicized, the sense of plausibility expressed in the narrative for the

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unorthodox practice boosted the practitioner's confidence supporting Borg (2013, 2015) and Xie's (2015) findings. Narrative writing gave her ample free space to justify the decision deliberately to exclude unsupported claims facing the critical reader. At an institute where English teachers receive severe penalties for unsubstantiated use of own language translation for SLT, this was reassuring and, concurred with Johnson and Golombek (2011), transformative.

Ongoing dynamic theorizing of her practice, and underlying emotions were better exposed when she sought comments on the written narrative from us as her supervising co-authors and two critical friends as serious research (Barkhuizen, 2015). This facet of *narrative knowledging* (Barkhuizen, 2013) revealed the hidden dimensions of her SLTE in light of the opportunity of multiple readings and alternative interpretations (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). In the narrative space, she communicated her actions and her dilemmas to contextualize those practices in the narrative report, a potential that Barkhuizen (2015) pinpoints. Although her uncertainties about narrative as a research genre, counted as digressions, were discarded later, sharing her concerns with the internal and external field experts was inspiring for the present inquiry for the increased chances to share expertise in teaching and researching teachers (Borg & Sanchez, 2015), and to guide the revision as an episodic presentation of the re-drafted narrative.

Phase two: *Re-writing the big story*

The re-writing of the story as thematic episodes illuminated multiple types of *narrative* contextualizion as affordances via systematic examination of the SLTE practices (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Firstly, the exploratory divisions reflected our co-researcher's *located* yet *borderless* SLTE expertise (Freeman, 2016), contextualizing prominent facets of the

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knowledge base of SLT (Graves, 2009; Richards, 1998, 2015). Second, upon reflection, the SLTE features were archeologically identified with her *personal practical knowledge* (Golombek, 2009) in SLTE. Third, the emphasis on contextualizing the five dimensions of SLT in the narrative brought into focus teacher *learner-focused teaching* (Richards, 2012) as a unifying strategy which advocated consideration of aspects of SLT in ways that did not necessarily replicate past experiences with SLTE expertise (Borg, 2006; Tsui, 2003).

Phase three: *Thematic analyses of my big story*

The close scrutiny of the episodic narratives aimed to shed more light on how the SLTE contextualization perspectives reflected facets of the teacher educator's adaptive expertise in the three interconnected contextual planes advocated by Barkhuizen (2008). The following sketches some insights the analyses provided.

Examining *opening SLT(E) vision*, following Dörnyei and Kubanyiova's (2014) framework for motivating teachers, within the context domains (Barkhuizen, 2008), revealed certain prominent facets of our co-researcher's adaptive expertise. Within the immediate classroom context, her small –s story opened with social interactions to create rapport and *establish context*. Later interactions frequently *engaged* her *in learning about* candidates' diverse passions, and prospects, facing the challenge of their misinformed perspectives and misperceptions. In response, she *exploited reflection* frequently to involve the candidates in 'creative tension' (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 124), gradually raising their awareness of the discrepancy between their visions and reality. Interactive reflection with patience helped to protect the candidates' teaching visions under the pressure of re-current re-conceptualizations-replacing the puzzles, and false

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beliefs by awareness-resisting the challenge of sustaining hope. In light of *alternatives to support learning* teaching, widening SLT visions with awareness, she expected them to decide preferred routes for development independently. The TEC survivals more readily desired an open SLT vision-a fact that raised *her awareness* of the context through self-reflection and broadened her SLTE vision. Emerged from the institutional context, her *choice of alternatives* to SLTE methods and materials was grounded in a lack of rigid prescriptions at the ACECR. She interpreted this gap as an opportunity that allowed a wider SLT vision, and a challenge that welcomed blurred-SLT vision candidate screening. To support opening SLT(E) vision, at the institutional and global macro-context level with alternatives, she initially attempted a compromise through identification of the candidates' current mindsets and curriculum impositions at both levels.

The teacher educator's decisions on *contextualizing SLT reflection* relied mainly on her *use of reflection* within the immediate personal-interpersonal context embracing reflection *on* previous TECs and the related literature as initial triggers. In response to the SLTE challenges, in effect mostly from outer reaches of context, she felt committed to promote reflection through the SLTE (Farrell, 2015) and hired the available channels, accordingly. Through interaction, she got a rough measure of the candidates' attitudes to reflectivity and assessed their perspectives of the CLT as a plausible outcome of reflection. Meanwhile, the candidates were prompted to reflect using various non-technical, semi-technical, and technical means. The less technical triggers for reflection on their SLT *philosophy, principles,* and *practice*-in Farrell's (2015) terms, proved more fruitful at the outset. Gradual *learning about* the candidates opened our co-researchers' vision for working solutions to encourage a reflective attitude. Her passing reference to the status of reflection in our religious trainings was one such attempt in the macro-context.

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For the *contextualization of SL proficiency*, our co-researcher faced false assumptions and faulty practices residing in the macro-context of the national curriculum policies and the institutional pressures, but was determined to resist to boost the candidates' motivation for SLT by awareness raising, and widening their teaching vision (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). The decision was supported by her previous TEC experiences and her readings (e.g., Katz & Snow, 2009; Scrivener, 2011). Through classroom interactions, she sought the candidates' declarations of their English proficiency and revelations of their beliefs about teachers' SL proficiency requirements before the global standards evidenced their SL proficiency gaps and warned them about the hazards of SL incompetency. The alternative to her past TEC practices deliberately disclosed these alarming facts early on the course and empathized supportively, sustaining the hope to improving before feeling frustrated facing the real-world demands of SLT.

Contextualizing SLT professional content was also guided by the macro-context impacts and the educator's previous and present TECs. Our co-researcher deliberately identified *adaptive teaching expertise* as the program goal to meet the diversity of the candidates and the future demands on them as teachers. Developing SLT adaptive expertise did not mean a heavy load of professional content, but calculated engagement with it (Freeman, 2016). Engaging content resided considerably in extensive interactions with the candidates in the class and via cyberspace. She exploited classroom interaction mindfully (Walsh, 2011) to enhance opportunities for reflection, topic initiation, content core-periphery weighting, and content integration. To appropriate alternatives supporting teacher learning, she frequently involved the candidates in reflection on the content and assessed its outcomes. Occasionally, however, candidates' unfavorable, yet

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indispensable professional content was manipulated by various bridging strategies to facilitate their access to it.

Contextualization of SLT context emerged primarily from the teacher educator's personal small –s stories of prior teaching and teacher education experiences. Through reflection, she raised awareness about the value SLT context in the same vein. Likewise, she approached the teacher learners' background knowledge and experience via interaction and reflection as a springboard for gradual awareness raising. Beginning with their firsthand educational experience, she inquired about their conception of SLT context in a rather non-technical sense. Seeking their imagination of ideal teachers and classroom instruction was a practical first step followed by a paradigmatic shift to theoretical conceptualization of SLT context. To ensure the candidates' appreciation of context, a critical appraisal of the changing SLT paradigms was initiated, which proved more effective when approached multi-modally.

5. Conclusion

This study provides evidence from localized teacher research that documents teacher development verifying the claim by Johnson and Golombek (2011) in the domain of SLTE through engagement in narrative inquiry that fosters cognitive processes of *externalization, verbalization* and *systematic examination*. This self-study, therefore, achieves real world impact as it, according to Borg (2013), has fostered my reflectivity, criticality, and analytic attitude as a teacher. In the same vein, the study supports the centrality of narrative as a vehicle for teacher research instrumental in knowledge building, disseminating professional knowledge, and transforming the field of SLTE, through narrative knowledging (Barkhuizen, 2015).

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With insights into how I initiated contextualization in the SLTE program, I am among the teacher practitioners who will have a clearer starting point to understand how the development of SLT adaptive expertise in teacher learners relies on the enactment of their own adaptive expertise through teacher education in a process whereby every initial step matters in the recognition of affordances and existing challenges, in line with Borg (2013). Furthermore, from a more practical perspective, SLT educators who trust my confidence boosted through this research (Borg & Sanchesh, 2015) will benefit from proactively creating ample space for classroom interaction. Classroom interaction will thus serve as a springboard for knowing teacher learners and the context of their teaching which is shaped by their unique presence and their mutual engagement in learning there, congruent with Freeman's (2016) account of the state-of-the-art SLTE. If teacher educators are aware of the potential and pressures exerted by their immediate personal-psychological, institutional, and socio-political contexts, following Barkhuizen (2008), they can make the most of opportunities for reflection and the resulting awareness in externalizing their adaptive expertise and in bringing about adaptability as well as nurturing adaptive SLT expertise in the present or prospective teachers whom they engage with.

As with all forms of research, limitations are inherent in the present study. Due to the nature of the auto-ethnographic case study and setting constraints, the self-study is limited in its scope as it investigates the contextualization practices of a single case SL teacher educator in an alternative route institution-based SLTE program upon its initiation. In addition, as an indispensable characteristic of teacher research, our local concerns for developing understandings which contribute primarily to the improvement of our co-researcher's own practices limit the generalizability of this research and advocates an alternative view of generalizability that, as Richards (2003) holds, depends on rich description and interpretation of the

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case under investigation. One final word related to limitations regarding the research methodology reported is the one we share with other teachers. That is, in attempts to articulate individual beliefs and practices, we may not have been able to verbalize the justification of a particular decision partly because teacher beliefs are subject to change, and even when articulated, they may be an unreliable guide to the reality of classroom practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, as teacher research, concurred with Sanchez and Borg (2015), this study has no claim to provide definite conclusions.

Therefore, the understandings generated will be subject to review as a result of future inquiry. An awareness of the challenges we faced in the practice of contextualizing the SLTE, in conducting this research, and in reporting its findings also has clear implications for the conditions that are required to support teacher researcher efforts by accommodating the required research knowledge and skills in the first place, and by magnifying the investigative and analytical strategies used, as well as the real-world impact of this type of research when it comes to evaluating it, as recommended by Sanchez and Borg (2015). Besides, further longitudinal teacher research studies that examine the same facets of contextualization in SLTE programs for more specific purposes addressing purposively selected participants, following teacher educators and/ or teacher learners as they embark on the program would offer the opportunity to further scrutinize the interplay between each of the three facets of context and how they are deployed in orienting the teacher learners to the program goal.

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