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Establishing A Community of Practice in the EFL Classroom: An Exploratory Case Study.

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In his model for curriculum analysis, Alexander demonstrates that teaching is underpinned not only by the beliefs teachers may hold of what constitutes learning, but one can also directly correlate this to their own views of knowledge linking these in the classroom to practice and outcome alike (Alexander, 2008). Subsequently, as an SLA teacher assigned to teach university English majors a 12-week course syllabus of my own choosing, I automatically started to consider the components of Alexander's framework in relation to the personal perspectives I held on education. In particular, I began to question what forms of language learning produced could I expect from my students participating on the course and how would I sufficiently demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge in order to validate any findings. By detailing the purpose, structure and end result of the course, this paper tries to offer an exploratory polemic on the desires of creating a community of practice especially for analytical purposes within the EFL classroom.

The Rational

Non-situated versus situated approaches to learning

As any educator belonging to the SLA teaching world is very much aware, there is a whole plethora of theories on learning that we may turn to in order to formulate and consolidate our pedagogical practices and which will therefore ultimately shape the curriculum.

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However, an all too apparent dilemma arises for teachers like myself when forced to choose between what may be perceived as one conflicting theory over another in order to best maximize our students' development and the understanding of it. For a start, even if we happen to take a completely situated perspective of teaching we still can never completely ignore symbolic-computational (s-p) theories on language learning as Jerome Bruner points out, especially regarding how information through symbolic representations of the mind is stored, restructured and ready for retrieval (Bruner, 1999). Nevertheless, we are warned by Bredo not to place too much credence on them especially if they are allowed to encroach and monopolize the whole learning process. In fact, if given the chance to do so in the classroom, three dualisms are spontaneously formed, which have a direct negative affect on education (Bredo, 2005).

To begin with, the s-p/computational approach sees language in the form of symbols as separate from reality and instead mirrors it. Since it assumes in the learning setting that all reality is specified, then it is the teacher's duty to transmit the world as it really exists to the students until the latter can posses in their mind an identical definition of this too. Unfortunately, language has obvious limitations if it is to be used to represent all of reality. Complications may also arise here in trying to describe things ever more precisely by making comparisons with entities whose realities have already been predefined. Moreover, this situation does not accommodate for the ambiguous nature of how contexts can impinge and do change meaning. Consequently, for educators, and no matter how diligent they might be, there is no guarantee that their learners will ever acquire in their heads, the originally identical perfect-formed symbolic representation intended.

A second dualism stemming from the s-p/computational approach that Bredo describes is the division between mind and body. It locates the thinking process as occurring only in the head. In other words,

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thoughts are not affected by the subject's own physical actions and are even independent from external surroundings. From this viewpoint, one immediately wonders how did ancient people ever manage to develop the skills necessary for using tools without using their hands to experiment on the external objects they came across. As for contemporary education, this theory places students in a slow passive role as they robotically see, think and then act *on* the environment. By comparison, situated theorists believe that learners are agentive in actively manipulating the situation that they are a part of and encircled by.

Finally, the third dualism Bredo notes arising from the s-p/computational approach, isolates the individual from society. Here, knowledge is seen as a given source from outside, which becomes the individual's property rather than simply being a social activity. Unfortunately, in real world of education, this procedure and its results are often not so straightforward. We can readily observe classroom scenarios in which a teacher teaches something and subsequently expects all the students to receive a standardized learning result from what was taught. Even though the information was originally transmitted uniformly, some students may result in seeming to be 'off-task' as they reinterpret the assignment in their own way, trying to make sense of what the actual original task was within their own existing context of knowledge (see McDermott, 2005).

Constructivism versus socioculturist approaches to situated forms of learning

Though not necessarily exclusive, a much more beneficial approach not just for learners in the classroom but to facilitate better the analysis of learning would be to adopt a situated perspective. Here, in restating what was mentioned briefly above, the learner not

only plays an active agentive role in meaning-making but also that the given information/knowledge may not necessarily be prefixed. However even within this grouping, the educator still has to face apparent opposing theories linked to learning. In his essay, 'Where is the mind?' Cobb highlights the differences between the two main situated current arguments in teaching trends (the constructivist and socioculturist approaches to learning) in an attempt to coordinate the ideas of both sides and thus offer teachers like me a pragmatic route to follow (Cobb, 2005). What follows is therefore a brief scrutiny of these two approaches and how they can be reconciled.

Constructivists, deriving their work from the theories of Piaget, argue that cognitive development occurs when a learner is faced with a conflicting idea held by others. Through communication, the individual may be forced to revise his/her own thinking and thus as his/her perspective shifts, a new cognitive equilibrium level is reached. But Piaget also claimed that what was essential for causing this qualitative shift was that the individual learners must have an equal status of power amongst themselves. At least this is so until they reach the age of adolescence. Only afterwards do social influences contribute freely to cognitive development. However before then, asymmetrical learning can and does occur when say an adult teacher interacts with a young student, though what is important here is that the educator has to be able to create shared frames of references with the student in order to elicit a challenging reciprocity exchange (see Mercer, 2004).

Socio-culturists such as Rogoff on the other hand, center their ideas on the theories put forward by Russian psychologist Vygotsky early last century and are really trying to describe a different learning cognitive phenomenon altogether (Rogoff, 2005). While Piaget investigated qualitative cognitive shifts, Vygotsky's attentions lay more in how a learner comprehends the skills applied when using cultural tools e.g. like language. Vygotsky started out by establishing

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that the learner is a social being, whom as soon as he/she is born, actively uses the people around them to aid personal development and knowledge. What is important for cognitive development, he argued, is not the equal balance of power but in fact the different levels of knowledge between the learner and those willing to share their own greater skills or understanding. Vygotsky defined the learner's zone of proximal development as the learning potential gained when such an interaction is allowed to occur. Rogoff however manages to utilize the pedagogical implications from both types of theories by grouping learners with different levels of expertise depending on what type of learning is to be achieved. She suggests that peer tutoring is useful when the levels are unequal and the students need practice using a skill that does not go beyond their own pre-established knowledge boundaries. However peer collaboration should be encouraged when the student levels are the same and can be especially useful when the learners are faced with new intellectual challenges as it allows for the exploration and free exchange of ideas resulting in the joint negotiation of meaning (Rogoff, 2005).

Cobb (who incidentally is himself a constructivist) concludes that the differences between the constructivists and the soicioculturalists is really a difference of perspectives in that the former looks at how the individual interprets the social and cultural process and the latter places attention on the social and cultural experience of the individual experience (Cobb, 2005). Teachers, he believes, fundamentally should try to see either one perspective as being the background for the other or vise versa but also have the freedom of choice in deciding what to focus on depending on their accomplishment aims. In other words, Cobb's pragmatic approach therefore is a justification for adopting a particular pedagogical practice determined by circumstances. And by a slightly different token and based on her support of both peer and collaborative activities mentioned above, Rogoff also argues that educators should in fact be aware of both

socioculturist and constructivist theories and practices together and be able to switch pedagogy whenever there is a need to, since after all, it is the internalizing of the social practice that essentially counts for learning (Rogoff, 2005).

In sum, just as Sloboda identified a multitude of different abilities needed to learn music, EFL is equally a very complex subject involving many essential component skills (Sloboda, 2005). Consequently, to be an effective practitioner of English means from an s-p/computational approach, a student has to be able to recognize and recall symbols both orally and visually in the classroom. However, in terms of actual learning, a situated pedagogical approach is certainly more preferable. From constructivists' theories, the student must learn to create and negotiate meanings from these very same symbols. And just as important from a sociocultural perspective, he/she must be able to internalize the joint construction process of communication as well. Therefore, because of the diversity and range of the subject, I do believe that EFL teachers should be flexible and open to all pedagogical approaches depending upon their own personal teaching situation.

The case for a communities of practice approach

In spite of Cobb's pragmatic approach to learning, the main differences between constructivist and socioculturist theories lie in their attempts to determine what the true nature of situated intersubjectivity might be as they question the learner's agentive relationship with others and how that may contribute to shared-thinking. Unlike constructivists, socioculturalists view cognitive development as being not the individually centered reconstruction of events, but actually is the internalization of the entire social process of negotiation. As a teacher, I too would ideally like to encourage my students to internalize the whole EFL social process in the classroom

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as much as possible, since I believe that this type of language learning leads to the transformation of learner participation and simultaneously changes in identity. Students then move away from being simply learners of English into consumers (or users) of English. And it is this whole procedure of internalization causing identity change, which Rogoff claims, that is also of greater analytical value for us in education, rather than simply looking at acquisition process models of learning (e.g. TOIEC tests). In particular, the use of communities of practices (COPs) can provide us with very useful tools in this analytical "viewpoint" of situated learning, managing to illuminate all aspects of learning for us such as identity, knowledge and the relationships between all participants, teachers and students alike (see Morita, 2004). For these reasons therefore I am inclined to favor sociocultural over constructive views of learning and in particular COPs.

Lave and Wenger originally coined the term community of practice when they were studying comparative apprenticeship systems as a learning model. There, they discovered that relatively little teaching in truth really takes place compared to learning and this is more commonly carried out symmetrically in relations with other learners (Lave and Wenger, 2005c). Lave and Wenger began to define a COP as being made up of varying levels of apprentices, including very advanced ones, all acting within a medium for members to learn. The practice of the community is dynamic in that it is continually shaping the identity of the COP, which in turn impinges on the COP members' identity and practice. Concisely, COPs are groups of people who share an interest for something they do and want to develop doing it better by interacting with other like-minded people. Wenger makes the claim that COPs can be global and/or local in size and it is possible to apply their concept to businesses, organizations, associations, government, education and even the web (Wenger, 2004).

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Lave and Wenger outline three characteristics essential for COPs to exist. First, the domain; members must have a shared interest in the identity of their community and be able to define it as such. Second, the community; members must participate in joint activities with each other that will result in learning, not just by the novice members of the community but by all, no matter what the level of ability each has attained. It should be noted that interaction is not required on a daily basis. Third, the practice; members of the community must practice something and by doing so develop shared resources (e.g. information) between them. Lave and Wenger distinguish this from a community of interests whose members might for example show a common interest in listening to jazz, but do not belong to a COP as they don't practice anything (Wenger, 2004).

For our analytical purposes in the classroom, Lave and Wenger propose their Legitimate Peripheral Participation model (Lave and Wenger, 2005a). Here, the learner is like an apprentice and belongs to the edges of a learning community of practice, transforming in time to become a fuller more active participating member as shared knowledge of the community is disseminated. They certainly do not give much credence to such a thing as a 'body of knowledge' per se and nor do not see it as something that can be transferable or transmitted from more centrally positioned members in a community of practice to those existing on the periphery (Roth, 2005). Rather, learning occurs between members through their joint participation in activities that specifically defines the community of practice. In short, learning comes about through the participation in the learning curriculum alone.

What Lave and Wenger contend as more valuable than the 'superficial' transfer or transmission of knowledge, is the deepening of a member's practice, which constitutes for actual authentic learning. It is demonstrated by the way the participants use the language of the community rather than just talking about it. Also,

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learning is how a member transforms and strengthens their identity within the community as their participation becomes fuller in time. In other words, it is *how* the learner forms and develops a sense of community identity that is the real learning taking place (Lave and Wenger, 2005b). Nevertheless, since both learning and identity are verily inseparable, we may still equate them with knowledge, if we are indeed compelled to adopt an aquisition metaphor over a participation metaphor in relation to knowledge (see Sfard, 1998).

However there is a caveat warning Lave and Wenger shoots out at all educators (even for those who favor mostly a situated view of pedagogy like myself). They believe a possible dichotomy exists in schools, between what is learnt and what is taught. They contend that the teaching curriculum in reality usually only operates parallel to a learning one and that participants of each have distinctly separate goals. The former is deliberately created by teachers based on the knowledge they wish impart for the instruction of newcomers. In truth, what is being forged is a community of schooled practices rather than the replication of any authentically 'knowledge' community, as students become competent really in only 'doing school' (Lave and Wenger, 2005c). To overcome their disdain for 'formal learning centers', I believe all educators should strive as much as possible for the replication of authentic and genuine COPs in their classroom that mirror or are in fact the same as the COPs operating outside in the real world.

The Research

The context of the course and its participants

To begin with, for my own teacher's role in the classroom COP, it did not mean that I could simply be complacent by sitting back and expecting my students to actively gravitate towards greater

participation, let alone even take part in it. Freire's discussion with Macedo offered some advise to me by questioning the preferable character for a teacher to be. He dismisses outright the notion of the teacher as a facilitator, since this is simply a way to "relinquish their authority in order to... impose their bureaucratized dialogical method" (Friere and Macedo, 2005), e.g. when an EFL teacher demands all students to speak even if they do not want to. Instead, he argues, students need to be challenged in situations that are sufficiently problematic so that they may become critically aware and actively engaged with the subject matter, especially through dialogue. As opposed to inhabiting the role of facilitator, teachers ideally should be figures of authority so they can create the 'pedagogical spaces' for their learners and because of their expertise of the subject matter, act as a negotiator between the understandings of the students and the meanings of the culture -in this context, teaching (Friere and Macedo, 2005). In other words, by creating the syllabus, I would try to offer my learners those pedagogical spaces and provide activities that were appropriately problematic enough to challenge my students in their COP within the classroom.

Now, in order to comply with Lave and Wenger's conditions for what constitutes a COP, I fundamentally wanted a course subject that would entice my students to be active learners, stressing pair and group work activities as opposed to experiencing passive teacher-centered lessons. Because of my students' uniformed background, 'knowledge' and interests, (i.e. all 13 of them were Japanese women in their early twenties who commanded fairly high levels of spoken English and each had a strong desire to communicate in English with foreigners), I finally decided that my course would be the teaching of Japanese cultures to English speaking people. The COP that I was to forge would be a community of Japanese cultural teachers. Critically, I wanted them to encompass Bruner's four principles of what constitutes a community of learners i.e. agency, reflection,

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I subsequently outlined 6 specific course goals for the students. These were:

1) Communicating and teaching effectively in English (applying all core English skills).
2) Participating in an authentic (English speaking) community of teachers.
3) Extensive peer learning and the joint negotiation of meanings.
4) Applied critical thinking to problems.
5) Developing presentation skills.
6) Deepening ones own knowledge on a subject matter and 'going meta' (i.e. becoming a reflective thinker).

Naturally, my students were given the freedom of choice in deciding what cultural aspect they would like to teach, however it had to be done within the confines and limitations of an ordinary classroom. But because of a larger than expected student enrollment for the course which was itself restricted to just 18 hours of class time (conducted over a 12 week period), I therefore would have to limit the amount of teaching they were to do to just 3 lessons. Since all the students had no experience of teaching in a classroom situation, I thought for their first lesson they should teach to the full class all about themselves. For the second lesson, they would each have to teach a skill-based lesson. Finally, they would do research on their chosen subject-matter and subsequently teach their cultural lesson.

Data collection and methods of analysis

Due to the time constraints of the course, admittedly this is a very limited qualitative ethnographic multiple study taken in an attempt to understand the learners' perspectives. Before each lesson, all the

students were required to draw up lesson plans, breaking down their lesson into timed components stating their procedures and purposes. When carrying out these tasks all the students were assigned a partner for peer consultation, advice and support.

Aside from my own field notes, I declined from actually filming my students' lessons, being sensitive to their needs. But in order to validate my accounts and observations, I employed a system of triangulation data gathering. Namely, after each lesson, the students would write down reflections of their own lesson which I photocopied while the other students were also instructed to jot down notes for feedback purposes. Afterwards, when all the lessons of each stage were completed, we would have an open-ended group discussion talking about each lesson in turn. Finally, there was to be a short man-to-man recorded student interview with myself as well as a general overall course reflection worksheet to be filled out by everyone. Once more, both types of queries were to be open-ended.

To analyze my qualitative data I basically used inductive methods. Before I started, I was aware that my questions would affect their responses and so therefore was determined to ask them all the same uniformed worded questions. I then first identified the incidents relating to the different topics discussed before trying to categorize them for analysis. These mainly came about through the issues that the students would themselves bring up in their interviews and questionnaires. Subsequently, I tried to establish whether any intra-group common patterns were present in the recorded interviews and written worksheets before applying comparative analysis to the students' different responses.

The Results

Findings

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Haneda, in her critique of COPs linking learning with practice argues, "What is needed…is the development of a more sophisticated view of learning through participation in community practices that takes into account of the different types of learning associated with practice" (Haneda, 2006). Certainly, my course required from the students competency in the joint negotiation of meaning-making, identity construction and the forming of good working relationships in several distinct areas. However, just as Eckert and later on Bucholtz acknowledged the existence of multiple communities, I too went against the idea of just only focusing on an overall single community of practice classroom entity (Eckert, 1989 and Bucholtz, 2003). Rather, I decided to categorize the presence of 3 distinct but sub-COPs operating in the class, nonetheless where novices and experts were still to be positioned within them accordingly based on their 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation' (see appendix 1).

An obvious COP (thereafter referred to as COP1) that instantly emerged was one based on English ability (mostly spoken), especially since all the lessons required the students to teach in English. This was not just sometimes a challenge for the teachers teaching but also for the students learning, as they too had to understand the instructions given by the teachers and what was expected from them when carrying out the various lesson tasks. Here, the joint negotiation of meaning-making was very salient. The second COP (COP2) I identified was the students' own level of confidence in relation to the course as a whole and individually how they related/interacted with their fellow students. Bruner before has extensively attached the importance of student self-esteem as being a crucial factor for fostering a strong can-do attitude in the classroom (Bruner, 1999). Relationships and student interactions were all very significant for positioning within this COP. Finally; a third COP (COP3) I singled out in the classroom was pedagogical competence and class participation leading principally to identity change. In this context,

students were required to 'go meta' in relation to the subject matter they were going to teach. Not only that, but they had to find and develop their own teaching voice (both external and internal) even if that meant imitating those of other teachers. How they were able to construct successfully their own teacher identity through the joint negotiation of meanings was paramount in this COP.

While a student may have been centrally positioned within one type of COP, by contrast that same student could be marginally located in the periphery of another (see figure 1). Student 1 for example had lived in an English speaking country for sometime and had an excellent command of English. However, confidence in herself was low. In the man-to-man interview, she speaks very negatively of her lesson. She compares her lack of any handouts with what the other students distributed in their own lessons. Also, how because of her nerves, she had accidentally skipped parts of her lesson. Contrast this with Student 7, who, despite her obvious weakness with spoken English stated simply that,

'...teaching is fun'.

Student 6 demonstrated her own prior anxieties with English and the extent of overcoming them by claiming that,

"At first I thought it very difficult to teach in English but I ...would like to teach Japanese culture to foreigners just like we did in this course".

Naturally, the students' positioning within all the COPs were not static and movement from the periphery to the centre and vise-versa occurred over time. Many of the students conveyed their initial nerves of teaching in front of the other students. However, these were often dissipated by the positive reactions afforded to them by the rest of the

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class during their lessons. Student 11 noted that,

"At first, I felt nervous about teaching because I don't like talk in front of many students. However, I really enjoyed teaching because everyone reflected positively my presentation and listened to my teaching seriously".

Likewise, Student 10 informed me that,

"I was really nervous because I had never experienced teaching...but gradually I got more and more confidence... because you told us how to teach or the students gave me some reactions while I was teaching. So, I was really comfortable of teaching in front of people. So I think I got more confidence about teaching".

Student 9 expresses herself in even more strong terms regarding how she initially viewed her peers with suspicion, but who in the end in fact transformed her pedagogical development, verbally declared that,

"At first I felt chicken. I'm not used to talk in front of many peoples... so I was worried about everyone listen to me or not and I thought the students were like enemies,. But in this course, they were my friends and they listened to me and they helped me with their smile and their faces helped me. So in this course I changed my feelings about fear to students so that class was good".

Just as important to note was that even though individual confidence was seen as an essential component in COP2 for being a good teacher and peer reaction helped in the building of it, conversely however, the perceived loss of it (as well as other factors) relegated a student to the periphery away from the center. Student 2 confided that,

"I found from this course that confidence and preparation is so

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important and I lost my confidence in front of all. I had thought teaching not so difficult until I took this course. [Teaching] is so hard. Even teaching in Japanese is difficult, much more in English. Double pressure. Confidence [makes a good teacher] and careful preparation, which gives a person confidence".

In COP3, I could really witness the negotiation of meaning-making taking place between peers and how centrally positioned students influenced the others. For example during the research phase of their cultural lessons, one student had an idea to use a worksheet in her following lesson. This acted as a catalyst for the others who also insisted in using one in their own lesson. Or, when one student decided to have a pop quiz as a lesson warm-up, subsequently in most of the other remaining lessons, the majority of students incorporated this aspect too. It seemed as if because it had originally worked well for one student in that particular lesson, then perhaps it might also work well for the others. In addition, as they had originally been instructed to work together and offer each other feedback on their lesson plans before they were to each teach their lessons, then not surprisingly perhaps, student pairs often had similar themed lessons, One pair, I had to redirect their lesson orientation plans completely which were both unworkable in the classroom (i.e. a lesson in the making of Japanese food).

Finally, also observed throughout the course was the creation of other lesser significant COPs and practices. For example, Students 6, 7 and 8 were seen by the other students in the class to be the experts in how to use the classroom projector and would rely on them if they needed it for their own lessons. And likewise a PowerPoint COP made up of Students 5, 1 and 2, would be consulted by others who wished to use it in the class. And if I were to also consider what Bucholtz described as 'negative participation' in her own COP analysis, I could maybe make the claim that really only Student 13

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demonstrated this by failing to attend a few of the classes as well as actually not teaching one of her required lesson (Bucholtz, 2003).

In conclusion and in order for us to fully understand these findings, what fundamentally determined their positioning within the COPs, was the students' use of languages, both English and Japanese which in turn facilitated the negotiation of the various classroom discourses played out throughout the course. Subsequently, these were to underpin the continual reconstruction of relationships and positioning within the COP, ever transforming the students' identities in the various COPs. However if we adopt a neo-Vygotskian perspective, we should not only see language as being responsible for the students' individual identities but also in the wider sense, as a cultural tool used to construct the group's overall identity. To extend this concept somewhat, socio-cultualist Neil Mercer argues that one of the crucial elements for any community to exist is their ability to exercise the successful joint intellectual activities through language. Moreover, it is fluency in the discourse of the community by its participants, which offers us observers a sure and certain sign of membership (Mercer, 2004).

COP members therefore should be aware of the community's rules on language use, this includes knowing which specific genre(s) and registers are appropriate to employ and when to do so. However, Mercer notes that problems can arise because of this that we educators should be aware of. That is, the special characteristics of the community's own language can often make it often difficult for outsiders to participate in. Members who are not able to use the community discourse correctly are maybe more readily dismissed than others, even if they happen to bring up relevant ideas. Conversely, members who adequately 'chit the chat' so to speak, are less likely to be challenged even when it would be to the community's benefit if they were (Mercer, 2004).

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Final thoughts

Because, as is often the case in Japan, there is still too much attention placed on university entrance exams, which contues mainly to only test written and reading English competencies, the experienced English curriculum for many Japanese young students is not even considered on matters relating to learning, knowledge and pedagogy. There, often teacher's views of the mind are usually heavily skewered toward symbol-processing approaches to learning. Consequently, there is an overly emphasis on grammar/translation methods of teaching English in Japan. These often entail rote and substitution drills as a way of 'doing English' in the classroom. English knowledge is only seen as being pre-fixed, allowing no room for collaboration or the joint construction of meaning. Unfortunately, as a result, students are unable to sufficiently express themselves orally in English or even respond appropriately to communicate in real-life English 'text' situations that are outside of the official teaching curriculum.

Though not completely ditching an s-p/computational view of learning, this paper makes the case on the importance of situated learning and knowledge from both socioculturalist and constructivist perspectives respectively. However in terms of getting students to internalize the social process within an ESL curriculum such as the joint negotiation of meaning, then I value the soiciocultural perspective as being more essential for teachers to adopt (though this may not necessarily be the case for the learning of other subjects e.g. math). In particular, the establishment of COPs in the classroom creates a better learning environment for students than teacher-centered practices, providing students with a more agentive role in their own learning process. Unquestionably, COPs offers both teachers and researchers a useful medium for classroom analysis. Within Legitimate Peripheral Participation in this study, we could see

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the continual reconstruction of identity and shifts in position occurring on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Participation and the joint negotiation of meaning-making was readily visible as was symmetrical scaffolding between the peer learners.

However admittedly there were some weaknesses in carrying out this research. In terms of the longitudinal timeframe of this study, it was far too short. Students were not given enough lesson opportunities of teaching to develop their pedagogical skills better. The speed of the course also seemed to offer only a brief snapshot of the students' process of learning. It is hard for me to anticipate how this would have evolved over the space of a year. In addition, time restriction thwarted a potentially wider and deeper ethnographic recorded investigation, which would have undoubtedly shed more light on the evolution of the students' identities and the construction of relationships within the various COPs. Really, what is needed for future research purposes is an ethnographically day-by-day recorded account of the students interacting with each other to better show internalization, transformation and changes in identity.

Finally, I also concede that despite my best intentions, what formed in the classroom were still not genuine authentic COPs but unfortunately only schooled COPs (and therefore I was not able to successfully refute the reasoning behind Lave and Wenger's disdain for most traditional institutions of education). Absolute authenticity would have required there to be foreign students, learning Japanese culture from the Japanese students. Even though more authentic COPs could I believe still have been forged via the internet, the schooled COPs nevertheless gave students the agentive experience of teaching something in English in front of a class. And even though the classes were not made up of any genuine foreign students, they offered the Japanese students pedagogically appropriate challenging spaces whilst acting as an induction tool for the teaching of possible future real lessons within their zone of proximal development.

	Communities of Practices*		
	COP1-English Ability	COP2-Confidence of Character	COP3-Pedagogical Competence and Participation
Student #1	5	2	4
Student #2	4	3	4
Student #3	3	3	4
Student #4	5	3	3
Student #5	4	4	3
Student #6	4	5	5
Student #7	3	3	3
Student #8	5	5	5
Student #9	3	4	4
Student #10	4	4	5
Student #11	4	4	4
Student #12	3	3	4
Student #13	3	3	2

Appendix 1

*Note: 5= centrally positioned within a COP and 1= marginally located in the periphery.

Acknowledgements

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-Confidence Character	COP3-Pedagogical Competence and Participation
2	4
3	4
2	4
3	3
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5	5
5	3
5	5
4	4
4	5
4	4
3	4
3	2

a COP and 1= marginally

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