

## Comparison between Yoshi's and Kathy's Teaching

As you've undoubtedly noticed, there are some obvious differences between Yoshi's and Kathy's styles of teaching. While Yoshi goes through his lessons in a more or less "lockstep" fashion, mostly following the text, Kathy designs her own lessons and brings innovative ideas into her teaching. Yoshi follows a course program in which he leads into a topic with a tape, followed by a reading selection, comprehension questions, another reading, and discussion questions. He rarely breaks from the step-by-step progression in the course text, even when he senses the students are not showing interest or comprehending the content. He does his best to explain the meaning of the text, but he does not break from it. Yoshi does not engage the students in negotiating the meaning of the text with him or each other. He is the center of the lesson and all instruction. He feels secure in having the text to follow, and although at some level he senses that his lessons could be greatly different, he does not break away from his lockstep way of teaching.

In contrast, Kathy doesn't seem to rely on one way of teaching. Rather than making herself the center of attention, she consciously looks for ways to make the class a community of learners in which students feel free to communicate with each other in English, to ask her and classmates real questions, and to assume some of the responsibility for their own learning. She is trying to focus the learning on the students.

In recognizing these differences, it is worth asking why Kathy

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## What Factors Are Central to Teacher Self-Development?

Several factors affect teacher self-development. First, there is no doubt that development takes time. It takes time to observe interaction in our own classrooms and to visit other teachers' classes, as well as to write in a journal and to talk to others about teaching. Pre-service teachers have an advantage in that the time factor is built into the teacher education program. Teachers in in-service programs or those working independently on their development have less time. Nonetheless, teachers who believe that development is important need to make a commitment to devote time to their development.

In addition, for teachers who are in the first few years of their



teaching career, time is needed to work through stages in their development.<sup>1</sup> Kathy, for example, apparently allowed herself to work through these stages. She was not always confident or able to create and re-create relevant, interesting lessons for the students. The developmental stages of a teacher include going from being dependent on outside sources (such as supervisors and the textbook) and concerned with self-survival ("What do I do tomorrow in class?") and with what kinds of techniques to use, to being concerned with student learning and able to make informed teaching decisions.

② **Second**, development requires an **ongoing commitment**. Development teaching is not something to do only in a teacher education program or at the beginning of a teaching career. Rather, even the most experienced teacher can learn new things about teaching, and development is enhanced when the teacher makes a commitment to ongoing development. For example, although many would call Kathy's teaching skills developed, she continues to think about her teaching and its consequences on students, especially about creating a more learner-centered classroom that engages students in learning to be communicatively competent in English.

③ **Third**, development is enhanced through **problem solving**. When teachers recognize problems and work at solving them, they can discover new ways to teach and discover more about their role as a teacher. For example, Kathy's exploration into getting the class started quickly and her interest in getting students to use more English in class indicate that she continues to generate ways to solve perceived problems in her teaching.

④ **Fourth**, development is also enhanced through **exploration for exploration's sake**. Teachers can, indeed, discover much by exploring simply to explore, not just to solve a problem. Such exploration can be based on pure interest—for example, trying an approach that is the opposite of one you love simply to see what happens, or trying a new approach/technique simply because it sounds interesting.<sup>2</sup>

⑤ **Fifth**, development is enhanced by **paying attention to and reviewing the basics of EFL/ESL teaching**. Although Kathy's introduction to the basics began during her Peace Corps training, she has continued to study ways to create opportunities for students to interact in English; ways to manage classroom behavior; and materials and media used to teach EFL. In addition, she undoubtedly considered ways to teach different skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

⑥ **Sixth**, development is enhanced by **searching out opportunities to develop**. It turns out that Kathy talks with other teachers about

teaching; she reads about teaching; she attends teaching seminars and workshops; and she participates in other activities that give her chances to reflect on her teaching and see new teaching possibilities. In other words, when we, as teachers, teach lessons in different settings, read about teaching, observe our own and others' teaching, write about teaching, and talk about teaching issues and problems, we are provided with opportunities to raise new questions about our teaching, as well as ways to search for answers to these questions. The more activities we experience related to teaching, and the more questions and answers we can come up with through this ongoing process, the more chances we have to develop our teaching beliefs and practices.<sup>3</sup>

⑦ ⑦ Seventh, self-development of teaching beliefs and practices requires the cooperation of others. It takes others who are willing to observe us, listen to us, and talk with us about our teaching. We need administrators, students, other teachers, and friends to help us succeed with our development. Without their cooperation, self-development is very difficult as there is neither any source for feedback nor any stimulus for ideas.

Another way to explore our teaching as language teachers is to learn another language., Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan 10 point out several advantages to doing this: First, we can better understand the challenges that the learners face. Second, we can gain more insight into understanding language. Third, by assuming the role of learner, we can gain insight into ways of teaching that seem to work and don't work, at least within our language learning setting.



Q | Ways to Explore Teaching

- 1. Read journal articles and books about teaching and learning.
- 2. Read teacher narratives.
- 3. Attend professional conferences.
- 4. Establish a mentoring relationship.
- 5. Put together a teaching portfolio.
- 6. Learn another language.
- 7. Do action research.
- 8. Do self-observation.
- 9. Observe other teachers.
- 10. Talk with other teachers.
- 11. Keep a teacher journal.

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Cyclic Process of observation?

Teach while Collecting Samples of Teaching  
Audio- or Videotape

التغيير  
**Generate Changes**  
Plan a calculated change.  
Plan to try the opposite.  
Plan to adapt a random change.  
Plan not to change anything.

- 1 التخطيط للتغيير
- 2 التخطيط للتغيير العكسي
- 3 التخطيط للتغيير العكسي
- 4 التخطيط للتغيير العكسي

التفاعل  
**Analyze Interaction**  
Listen to/view tape.  
Take notes & sketch.  
Tally behaviors.  
Make short transcripts.  
Code the interaction.  
Study the interaction.  
Look for patterns.

- 1 تذاكر
- 2 خلاصات
- 3 خلاصات
- 4 خلاصات
- 5 خلاصات
- 6 خلاصات
- 7 خلاصات

**Reflection and Interpretation**  
Am I providing chances for students to learn English?  
Do I block students from learning English?  
What are my beliefs about teaching?  
Are my teaching practices consistent with these beliefs?  
Do I do what I think I do in the classroom?  
Are there any issues of self I need to address?  
Am I facing my teaching self?

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## Analyzing the Samples of Teaching

The second stage is to analyze the collected samples of teaching, and analysis also depends on the objective of your exploration. For example, if you are interested in knowing the number of questions you ask, you can listen to or view the tape and tally each question you ask, as well as jot down examples of actual questions. You can do the same thing for the number of errors you treat, the number of times students speak English or their native language, and the seconds you wait for students to answer a question.

A second way to analyze the collection of teaching samples is to make short transcripts from the audio- or videotapes. Again, what you decide to transcribe depends mainly on the focus of your exploration. For example, if you are interested in learning how you treat language errors, you might make and study short transcripts of the times errors are treated. If your interest is on learning about the accuracy of the students' language during group work, you can transcribe and study short sections of interaction among students during group work activities. A further step you can take in analyzing interaction is to code a transcript with a category system. Although I do not directly discuss such systems in this book, I recommend two: Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) and Foci on Communications Used in Settings (FOCUS).<sup>20</sup>

While it is possible to have a particular focus when collecting and analyzing these descriptions, it is also possible to do the opposite, which I like to call *pure exploration*. Such exploration does not focus on a specific observation objective, but begins with an empty mind. For example, it is possible to tape a class and view the tape, and while doing this, make one-minute transcripts of classroom interaction five, ten, and 20 minutes into the class. These transcripts could then be studied simply to monitor what is happening and when. I think of such exploration as being similar to going for a walk. Usually we have objectives when going for a walk, such as walking to the bank or the grocery store. However, sometimes we can simply take a walk, randomly taking side



About a quarter of the world's population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is growing—in the early 2000s that means around 1.5 billion people. No other language can match that growth. Even Chinese, found in eight different spoken languages, but unified by a common writing system, is known to "only" some 1.1 billion.

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—Crystal 2003, 6

**EFL** = English as a Foreign Language.

**ESL** = English as a Second Language.

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## EFL and ESL Teaching Settings

- Q1 • What is an EFL teaching setting? What is an ESL teaching setting? Why are these two terms, *EFL* and *ESL*, not always adequate to describe English teaching settings?
- Q2 • What are examples of *EFL* and *ESL* teaching settings?
- XQ3 • How are different teaching settings woven into this book? → X

What Is an EFL Teaching Setting?

What Is an ESL Teaching Setting?

Why Are These Two Terms, *EFL* and *ESL*, Not Always Adequate to Describe English Teaching Settings?

**EFL** <sup>setting</sup> is an acronym for English as a Foreign Language and is studied by people who live in places where English is not a first language, such as in Italy, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam. **ESL** is an acronym for English as a Second Language. People who study ESL speak other languages, such as Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, or Swahili as their first

or native language.