Investigating reflective practice in a training course for young learner teachers

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Abstract

This paper reports on part of an action research project in which a teacher training course for teachers of young learners was run over six weeks in the British Council Doha. The course was unconventional in that it was based entirely on reflective practice. The aim of the study was to investigate the nature of the reflective practice that took place on the course and whether it could better prepare participants for teaching young learners.

In order to evaluate the course, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Data were collected by means of surveys from five participants, audio recordings of a collaborative discussion between participants and the course tutor, and a reflective journal kept by the tutor himself.

The study revealed a range of experiences with the reflective procedures used on the course. Participants derived significant value from defining a research question and actively sought out collaboration with peers to help them reflect. However, some participants struggled with keeping a reflective journal and there was evidence of resistance to the training method, particularly from teachers with less expertise. The implication of the study is that the popular status of reflective practice in second language teacher education is not without merit, and that it can make a positive contribution to teacher development on both a theoretical and practical level.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of young learners (YLs) studying English in state education and in private language teaching organisations (LTOs), driven by the advance of globalisation and the perception that the workforces of the future need proficiency in English (Enever & Moon 2009; Gimenez 2009). This growth has placed the spotlight on second language teacher education (SLTE), as it is more important than ever to have effective systems for educating teachers of YLs. However, there is considerable debate over the most effective means of achieving this. There has been criticism of the widespread use of Western teacher training methods as a solution for all contexts (Edge 2006; Kumaravadivelu 2011). Differences in social and educational contexts worldwide make a "one size fits all" model of SLTE less credible (Baker 2008; Littlewood 2007). Within private LTOs, YL-specific training is often lacking altogether and many teachers worldwide find themselves teaching YL classes with little formal training (Ellis 2012).

In the field of SLTE, there has been an increasing focus in recent years on what happens with teachers' professional development after their period of formal training comes to an end (Richards & Farrell 2005), and reflective practice (RP) has emerged as one solution for this. RP occurs when teachers systematically reflect on and analyse their own teaching practice and look for ways to improve based on their findings (Farrell 2007). Such is the current popularity of RP in SLTE, that it has established itself as "a ubiquitous presence in professional education and practice" (Mann and Walsh 2013:292).
At the British Council (BC) in Doha, Qatar, where I am [deleted to meet unbranded submission criteria], new teachers are often given the opportunity to teach YL classes, but often start their employment without a specialist YL qualification. Although YL training is provided by the BC, a busy academic calendar often means that some time can elapse before this is operationally possible. With a rapidly growing YL programme, I set about closing this training gap by designing a YL training course for new teachers that would be possible to run during term-time alongside a full teaching timetable ([deleted to meet unbranded submission criteria] 2012). The course, designed around principles of RP, is laid out in appendices F and G, but I will briefly outline the format here.

At the start of the course, trainees are introduced to the concept of RP, encouraged to examine their beliefs about teaching and learning, and asked to define a "problem" that they would like to investigate in one of their YL classes. They then begin teaching and keep a reflective journal over a period of six weeks. At the end of the course is a second and final session in which trainees have the opportunity to meet and discuss what they learnt from their research and address any ongoing problems.

The purpose of this study is to pilot the course and look for ways to improve it for future implementation. It reports on two stages of an action research (AR) project (see 2.2): the piloting and evaluation of one module of this course, on the topic of classroom management. Improvements would then be planned based on the evaluation, and fed into a redesign of the course.
Three research questions are asked. The first, aimed at understanding the nature of RP that occurs on the course, is:

1. What kind of RP occurs when this course is set up and run in the BC Doha?

The second, aimed at understanding whether this activity can improve classroom practice, is:

2. Can RP make teachers feel better equipped to teach YLs?

The third, aimed at evaluating the success of the course itself, is:

3. How did participants value the course and what improvements could be made to the programme?

I begin with a review of the literature on RP (the pedagogical basis of the course), AR (the framework for this research), and classroom management with YLs (the focus of the training). This is followed by an account of the research process, presentation of findings and a discussion of results, together with implications for those working in similar contexts. I end with an evaluation of the research and point to future research possibilities.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will begin with an overview of RP by positioning it in the recent history of SLTE, then discussing related processes and tools and highlighting some criticisms. Following this is a comparison of RP with AR, and a brief discussion of classroom management and teacher expertise, which figure prominently in the study.

2.1 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

2.1.1 TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION

SLTE has undergone a transformation in recent years. For many years, the modus operandi for training was a top-down approach, where trainees were positioned as the receivers of knowledge, which they were expected to apply in the classroom with little say over its conceptualisation (Akbari 2007). However, doubts began to emerge about the effectiveness of such prescriptive approaches amid concerns that "theory applied" fails to address the complexities of real classrooms (Schön 1987; Wright 2010). The growing hostility towards theory in SLTE has brought about a shift away from what teachers should know and placed the focus on practice itself (Halliday 1998; Wright 2010). Thus, as top-down approaches have fallen out of favour, bottom-up ones have gained popularity. So-called "experiential approaches" (Tusting & Barton 2003:36) place the focus on real classroom experience, involving reflection and critical analysis of authentic issues relevant to trainees (Wallace 1991; Rueda 1998). Johnson (2009) describes how this development has exposed SLTE to influence from several important theoretical
perspectives, such as sociocultural theory (Vygotsky 1978), constructivist principles of learning (Marlowe & Page 2005) and RP (Dewey 1910; Schön 1983; Kolb 1984). It is RP which will be the focus of this review.

2.1.2 THE CASE FOR RP

Growing to prominence out of the desire to place more emphasis on teaching practice rather than disseminated knowledge, RP has become an established concept in teacher education (Zeichner & Wray 2001; Korthagen & Vasalos 2005; Ghaye 2010). It occurs when teachers consciously reflect on their own practice by critically analysing their beliefs about teaching and learning, and the classroom actions that they take as a result of those beliefs (Farrell 2008).

By leading teachers to take responsibility for their practice in this way, RP aims to support them in constantly reshaping their knowledge, leading to continuous improvement and development (Tedick 2005). This is important, according to Bullough and Baughman (1997), because: "unless theories come from practice, they will not apply to practice" (p.20). RP, then, positions teachers as thinkers, aware of their own attitudes to teaching (Freeman 1991; Crandall 2000). In this way, they are better positioned to discover any potential gaps between the teaching and learning that occurs in their classroom (Farrell & Benniss 2013).

A certain amount reflection will, of course, occur naturally as teachers think about what went badly or well in their lessons, and Farrell (2008) has called this a weak form of RP. There is a stronger form, however, and it is this which is commonly meant by RP in teacher education (ibid). This strong form of RP is the act of teachers consciously subjecting their beliefs to critical evaluation and
systematically reflecting on their teaching practice in light of this. It involves
careful and continuous guided reflection and discussion, together with time to
analyse one's own experience (Richards 2004; Farrell 2007a).

2.1.3 TEACHER BELIEFS

At the cornerstone of RP lie teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning,
since it is those beliefs which most directly influence classroom decisions
(Breen et al 2001; Borg 2003; Farrell & Lima 2005). However, researchers
have found that many teachers are not aware of the beliefs they hold, meaning
that hidden beliefs may be dictating much of what goes on in the classroom
(Lee 1998; Farrell 2007). This might be especially true in the case of beliefs
formed on past experience, such as from the many years spent watching one's
own teachers at school. Such beliefs formed during the "apprenticeship of
observation" (Borg 2004) might remain hidden to the teacher who is focused
solely on the present reality of their teaching (Bailey et al 1996).

Consequently there exists a strong case for encouraging teachers to examine
their beliefs and subject them to critical analysis by determining whether they
and Benniss (2013) suggest doing this by asking teachers to try to articulate
their beliefs. If, when given this opportunity, teachers can be shown that beliefs
are more complex than they may initially have thought, this may then serve as
an impetus to think more carefully about how they translate into classroom
practice (Farrell 2007). Conventional top-down training has often come
unstuck when beliefs which go unexamined prove to be a barrier to learning.
This has been shown to happen when trainees who may be receptive to
advice can subsequently return to their regular classroom practice and reinterpret lessons learnt from training using their pre-existing beliefs (Ramani 1986; Borg 2001). Various reflective processes have been identified as a way to encourage the examination of beliefs, and I will now discuss these.

2.1.4 JOURNALS

A popular freestanding procedure for facilitating RP is journal writing (Gebhard & Oprandy 1999; Hiemstra 2001; Orem 2001). Keeping a reflective journal involves writing on a regular basis about what happens in the classroom, including thoughts and reactions on teaching experiences or learning occasions (Bailey 2006). The act of writing and recording classroom experiences helps to foreground teachers' decision making and make it available for retrospective analysis, thereby helping to develop awareness of how language learning takes place (Woodfield & Lazarus 1998; Richards & Farrell 2005). McDonough (1994) describes the benefits of such practice as making teachers more aware of "day-to-day behaviours and underlying attitudes, alongside outcomes and the decisions that all teachers need to take" (p.64).

A journal thus becomes a "problem-solving device, for reflecting on new teaching ideas, and as a means of legitimising [one's] own practice" (Farrell 2013:466). I have personally found reflective journals to be extremely effective for my own development, although its success lasted only as long as my motivation to continue the exercise. Mann and Walsh (2013) offer similar thoughts, warning against the institutionalisation of reflection in training programmes leading to it becoming an "increasing chore" (p.299). One option,
according to Brock, Yu and Wang (1992), is to carefully narrow the focus of journals to a few salient issues. Mann and Walsh, however, appear to disagree, stating that focusing on problem solving may be limiting (ibid). In terms of using journals for development, their personal nature has led Edwards (1996) to recommend that they be kept private, but I feel that the benefits of discussing one's journal may ultimately be more valuable, particularly in view of the perceived importance of collaboration in RP, which I will discuss next.

2.1.5 Collaboration

Whether limiting or not, it is commonly argued that RP should not exist for each teacher in isolation and that collaborative activities should be undertaken to support their practice, such as group discussion and peer observation (Edwards 1996). Edge (2002) calls this "continuing co-operative development" in his paper of the same name, and says that it affords the individual the opportunity to reflect more deeply than they could alone. Richards and Farrell (2005) suggest many ways to promote collaboration, including the use of reflective journals (*dialogical journals*) to explore areas of teaching in group discussion, sharing experiences, techniques and even solutions to specific classroom problems together. It has been noted that teachers find it difficult to engage in RP and the role of the tutor is important in addressing this and managing it in such a way that reduces resistance (Thomas et al 2002; Velikova 2009).

2.1.6 Role of Tutor

Teacher educators, then, need to help scaffold the reflective process for teachers, and facilitate opportunities for reflection to take place...
(Kurtoğlu-Hooton 2013; Velikova 2013). This is not necessarily an easy task, however. The role that the tutor takes, and even individual interactions between the tutor and trainees, can have a dramatic influence on the receptivity of trainees, and many suggest that the trainer is best advised to act as a facilitator and take a "backseat role" in training (Bailey 2006; Okeafor & Poole 1992). Mercado (2013) eloquently describes what such a role might look like: "A focus group facilitator…playing the role of a concerned, supportive promoter of professional development rather than a stringent evaluator or overzealous monitor" (p.50).

2.1.7 TRAINER AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

But it is not only the tutor's role vis-à-vis trainees that should be considered. Moon (1999) has noted that teacher educators who promote RP amongst teachers do not always employ reflection as a strategy in their own practice. Citing this, Edge and Mann (2013) insist on a commitment to practising what we preach as being a vital criterion for teacher educators.

If tutors, too, are to engage in RP, it stands to reason that similar methods can be employed to those recommended for teachers, such as reflective journals to record events in a training course. Lengeling (2013), for example, describes the use of field notes for the purpose of impartially recording events in observations, and how they contributed to a deeper level of reflection for her as a tutor. As reflective practitioners, teacher educators should ask how trainees react to the implementation of innovations and how their teaching practice is affected as a result (Edge & Mann 2013).
2.1.8 Criticisms

In proportion with its growth in popularity in STLE, criticism of RP has also become more vocal. On the theoretical side, RP has been criticised for a lack of rigour in its conceptualisation, having been influenced by a multitude of theoretical backgrounds, leading to a lack of a commonly agreed definition of what it is (Akbari 2007). According to Akbari (ibid), RP has: "lost its real, core meaning and it means whatever academics want it to mean" (p.196). This weak representation of the nature of RP, is compounded by difficulties in evaluating the value of the practice itself and the processes typically involved, due to a tendency for researchers to present results in "flabby, vague and unhelpful ways" (Mann & Walsh 2013:296). Perhaps more damningly, a lack of evidence on improved teacher or student performance as a result of teachers engaging in RP, further fails to support the case (Griffths 2000).

The methods for engaging in RP mentioned in 2.1.3-5 have been criticised for an obsession over the past (Conway 2001; Birmingham 2004). It is argued that the prominence of retrospective reflection, or reflection-on-action, stifles imagination and creativity in the classroom. Mann and Walsh (2013) make a related point, criticising the foregrounding of individual, "in the head" (p.296), reflection at the expense of acknowledging the role of collaboration with others in the reflective process. Where this reflection is done by means of written accounts, there is a danger that writing can become a means of reflection rather than a record of reflection. Thus, if the writing process takes on too much importance, the completion of the task itself can begin to sully the quality of reflection (ibid). Instead, spoken collaborative reflection is cited as a
particularly good alternative to written journals and as being an underrepresented medium of recording reflection (ibid).

These criticisms, however, serve principally as a call to improve the methods we use to undertake RP, rather than a reason to reject it as a useful tool in teacher development, as Mann and Walsh (2013) are careful to acknowledge in their appraisal.

2.2 Action Research

In chapter one, I laid out how this study will form part of an AR project, and I will briefly discuss AR here.

AR is an established educational movement which involves practitioners investigating their own work. While a traditional researcher might investigate a certain context from the outside, AR involves investigating one's own context from the inside, as an active practitioner (Burns 2010). At the core of AR is identifying what Burns (ibid) calls "problematic situations" (p.1) in one's practice and deliberately intervening in such a way that change and, hopefully, improvement can be brought about.

AR is seen as a repeated cycle of processes, summarised by Richards and Lockhart (1996):

- Planning
- Action
- Observation
- Reflection
As a method of investigating one's own context, this iterative framework makes AR more rigorous than mere reflection alone and can lead to more effective outcomes (Wallace 1991). Furthermore, outcomes of AR can be quickly implemented by practitioners because of the fact that it is of direct relevance to their daily practice and needs (Farrell 2008).

I will now briefly cover two other areas related to the study: classroom management with YLs and teacher expertise.

2.3 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT WITH YLs

Classroom management is "a teacher's efforts to establish and maintain the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning" (Brophy 1986:192) and it is widely believed that the quality of learning in the classroom is dependent on the quality of the classroom management (Nunan 2011; Sartas 2000). The successful setting up of tasks and activities, for example, requires clear instructions, and procedures such as keeping students on task and providing feedback are all parts of managing the learning in the classroom (Thornbury 2006). According to Thornbury (ibid) the majority of classroom management decisions are made on the spot. Therefore, the resulting challenge for the teacher is to take stock of the multiplicity of classroom interactions occurring at any one time and make appropriate decisions to maximise learning (Edwards 2003).

Part of managing the classroom is managing discipline, and this becomes more of a challenge when YLs are concerned. Shorter attention spans and behavioural challenges increase the number of elements that factor into decision-making, and the knowledge required of the teacher increases
accordingly (Nunan 2011). This could include, for example, children’s cognitive development and literacy in their mother tongue. Particular classroom management skills required of the YL teacher include varying activities in order to hold learners’ attention, carefully managing teacher talk, and showing particular sensitivity to individuals in order to ensure a positive learning environment (ibid).

Classroom management skills are one of the factors most commonly associated with teacher expertise, which I will now discuss.

2.4 TEACHER EXPERTISE

It goes without saying that no two teachers are the same. When evaluating the success of a training programme intended to influence teacher skill, it is therefore important to understand the participants themselves, and how their particular background, experience and knowledge may affect their development. One way of doing this is to categorise teachers according to their expertise.

*Novice teachers* are relatively easily defined as those with little or no classroom experience - often less than two years (Rodríguez & McKay 2010). With the pressures associated with being new to the profession, novice teachers will have generally had little opportunity for meaningful reflection on their teaching (Babinski, Jones & DeWert 2001). Beyond the novice stage, it becomes more complex. As Rodríguez and McKay (2010, citing Tsui 2003, 2005) point out: “teaching experience does not necessarily result in expertise” (p.1). That is to say, teachers may have been in the teaching profession for many years without developing the expertise often associated with experience.
Tsui (2003) terms such teachers "experienced non-experts" (p.3). *Expert teachers* are those who have typically been teaching for at least five years and demonstrate particular characteristics associated with expertise (ibid), such as higher intrinsic motivation for teaching (Bastick 2002), strong classroom management skills (Martin, Yin, and Mayall 2006), higher preoccupation with student outcomes and pedagogy than learner reactions and behaviour (Gatbonton 2008), and reflection on teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & Bransford 2005).

For the purposes of this study, I will adopt the umbrella term *non-expert teachers* to refer to both novice teachers and "experienced non-experts". I will use the term *expert teachers* to refer to those teachers with more than five years' teaching experience and who demonstrate the above characteristics of expertise.

In this chapter, I have outlined the theoretical background to areas of importance to this study: RP, AR, classroom management and teacher expertise. I will now continue with an account of research procedures.
3. Methodology & Data Collection

In this chapter I will describe the study that took place, giving information on implementation, participants, ethics and data collection.

When the YL training course was set up, it was made available (on a voluntary basis) to all teachers in the British Council Doha who were teaching YLs at the time. Prospective participants were sent an invitation to join, stating that the focus of the course was classroom management with YLs and that it would centre on RP. In order to manage expectations, there was also a brief description of what RP is, and a message that the training was likely to be quite different to any other they may have had in the past. Once participants had been confirmed, the first 90-minute session of the course was scheduled and run the following week. The course then proceeded over a period of six weeks, as laid out in appendices F and G, with data collection occurring throughout, as I will now describe.

3.1 Participants

Participants were five female teachers at the British Council Doha between the ages of 25-40, all of whom taught YLs as part of their regular duties and had arrived in-post between 2-6 months prior. In figure 1, I summarise their teaching experience and indicate their level of teaching expertise (2.4), based on my knowledge and experience of these participants in my capacity of observer, trainer and manager in the BC. Names have been changed to protect identities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years' teaching experience</th>
<th>Celta-qualified or equiv.</th>
<th>Delta-qualified or equiv.</th>
<th>Master's-qualified</th>
<th>Expert (E) or Non-Expert (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryam</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1

The course tutor, referred to throughout as "the tutor" was the author of this study.

3.2 ETHICS

Participants were fully informed of the nature of this research and my dual role as tutor and researcher. They understood that information they would give in questionnaires and group discussions (which were to be audio recorded) would be used for data collection, but that their identities would not be revealed. Furthermore, neither their performance on the course nor their feedback on it would impact in any way on their performance evaluation within the teaching centre, and they could withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences. Consent forms were signed and returned by all participants (appendix I).
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The majority of this study involved **qualitative research** (Nunan 1992), although there was also a small element of **quantitative research** (ibid). The aim of qualitative research is to **interpret**, rather than to reveal **objective facts** (Holliday 2010). RP, as we saw in chapter two, can be a vague subject, and qualitative research is therefore appropriate for further investigating its nature. Thus, with this research, I intended to "explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality" (ibid:6). Holliday (ibid) reminds us that: "interpretation is as far as we can go" (p.6). Quantitative data can complement the qualitative kind, and, although only a small element of the study, gave it characteristics of a mixed-methods approach (Lodico et al 2006). It was included to provide a source of triangulation to the qualitative methods already in place, especially for the key questions, such as whether teachers felt better prepared to teach YLs as a result of the course.

Data collection tools used in this research were audio recordings of the group discussion with participants, pre- and post-course questionnaires on the reflective process, an end-of-course evaluation questionnaire and a reflective diary kept by the course tutor (see appendices B-E). The tools were administered at various points in the course, as I describe below, and all, with the exception of the course evaluation form, returned qualitative data.

3.3.1 GROUP DISCUSSION

Participants were asked to prepare a short presentation for their peers in the last session of the course, with instructions to summarise their experience, paying particular attention to their reflective journals - what they had learnt and
their reactions to the journaling process (appendix A). The purpose of this session was to actively facilitate collaborative reflection on teaching and learning (2.1.5), and consequently participants were encouraged to comment and ask questions of each other, exploring topics as they arose. The tutor acted as a facilitator, guiding discussion and asking probing questions. Calls have been made for spoken and collaborative reflection in place of the written and individual kind, in order to better capture the true nature of reflection as it occurs (see Mann & Walsh 2013 in 2.1.5), and this approach was an answer to that call. An audio recording was made and transcribed, yielding a total of approximately 11,000 words (appendix E). This data collection, then, can be described as using a hybrid research tool, as the session had elements of both an interview and a focus group (Burns 2009). The benefit of audio recording in this case was that the researcher was involved in the session itself and it would have been impossible to capture everything that was said through notes alone. Transcripts, according to Allwright & Bailey (1991), are: "written records of interaction in which the researcher copies down, verbatim, the utterances of the participants" (p. 62), and analysis of this transcript was used to answer research question one.

3.3.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

As the second data collection tool, identical questionnaires (appendix B) were administered once as a pre-course task, and then again as a post-course task, and all were returned. The questions were designed to elicit trainees' awareness of RP and of classroom management, the aim being to capture any changes in attitudes or beliefs that occurred during the course. According to Burns (2010), questionnaires are best used when information is required from
several people. The questionnaire in this case solicited two of Dornyei’s (2003:8-9) three types of information - behavioural and attitudinal - and questions used open-ended items (Burns 2010), where participants were able to give personal accounts in their own words. Cohen et al (2007) cite Bailey (1994) as saying: "Open-ended questions are useful if the possible answers are unknown or the questionnaire is exploratory" (p.321), which was the case in this research. There are drawbacks when it comes to analysis of open-ended questions, however, since data are difficult to compare across participants, and coding of responses can be a challenge (Cohen et al 2007). This analysis formed the answer to research question two.

3.3.3 END-OF-COURSE EVALUATION AND TUTOR JOURNAL

Two data collection tools were employed to address the third research question. Firstly, an anonymous end-of-course evaluation (appendix C) was given to all remaining participants after the course had concluded, with all five being returned. Data was collected through a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions (Burns 2010). The latter constituted the only element of quantitative data collection in the study. The tool used for this was Likert scales, which are useful in that they allow for differentiation in individual responses while also generating data for quantitative analysis (Cohen et al 2007). Anonymity was given to promote more honest responses. The aim was to solicit participants’ views on the course as it was delivered, with a view to improving the content and, crucially for my context, the assessing the viability of the course as a training solution for full-time teachers. The evaluation and continuous revision of courses is necessary, as Breen, Candlin, Dam and
Gabrielson (1989) point out, in order to meet the differing needs of specific local contexts.

Secondly, I kept a reflective journal of my experience as the trainer throughout the research process, which is common practice in qualitative research (Etherington 2004), and the transcript is presented in full in appendix D. The aim was to document my observations on the process, the participants, and the challenges I faced in what I wanted to achieve. Indeed, one of Moon's (2003) eighteen purposes for keeping a journal is "to support planning and progress in research or a project" (p.7). The secondary motivation for keeping a reflective journal came from calls to practice what we preach as teacher educators (2.1.7), and keeping a journal alongside course participants was seen as an appropriate way to do this. A Microsoft Word document was kept on my computer and updated at least once a week during the research, often more during periods of increased interaction with participants. A "free" (Moon 2003:3) approach was taken, where there was no predetermined structure to the writing, principally because I was unsure what to expect from my role in the research.

Figure 2 provides a summary of the use of data collection tools at different stages in the course:
Data from the transcription, questionnaires and course evaluations were individually analysed through a process of inductive coding (Burns 2010), which is common in qualitative research and AR, and involves repeated reading of the data, leading to categories emerging from the data itself, rather than being predefined by the literature (ibid).

Categories identified were:
1. How reflection occurred

2. The nature of that reflection

3. Teacher expertise

4. Resistance

5. Teaching journals

6. Working with the RQ

7. Collaboration

8. Understanding the learners

9. Preparing for the group discussion

10. Role of the tutor

As I worked, I found that the categories were not easily relatable to the RQs. I struggled with the quantity and nature of data on a number of occasions, since the data returned were wide-ranging, and their relevance not restricted solely to the intended RQ. For example, although the course evaluation form was the planned mechanism for evaluating the success of the course, comments that arose during the presentations were also highly relevant to this. Likewise, certain statements from teachers in presentations were reiterated in their questionnaire responses. I eventually reverted to a process of reading and rereading all data, looking for threads and patterns which appeared to be relevant to each RQ in turn. In particular, I spent a great deal of time looking at data from the perspective of individual participants in order to "tell their stories" from the beginning to the end of the course. Emerging themes were recorded
and revised, my hunches were either supported by more evidence or reinterpreted and eventually dismissed, and I was gradually able to construct a meaningful narrative of findings from the study.

This was the very opposite of what I had intended from the data collection tools (namely that they would work mostly discretely from one another), and yet the resulting picture that emerged from a combination of tools created a rich description of events which was convincing in its complexity. The fact that multiple sources of data could be brought to bear on one RQ functioned as triangulation (Stake 1995) and established a degree of reliability to the data (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

In this way, answers to the RQs slowly began to emerge.
4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

I will now discuss the results of the research by dealing with each research question in turn, presenting the main themes that emerged within each. I have chosen to use data extracts throughout to support my argument, together with a discursive commentary to highlight the significance of those data as necessary (Holliday 2010). See appendix H for a list of participants’ RQs.

4.1 WHAT KIND OF RP OCCURS WHEN THIS COURSE IS SET UP AND RUN IN THE BC DOHA?

The first research question will be answered with a look at four different areas which emerged from the coding process (3.3.4):

1. How reflection occurred
2. The nature of that reflection
3. Teacher expertise
4. Resistance

4.1.1 HOW DID REFLECTION OCCUR?

The first stage in establishing the reflective process for individual participants had been to choose a particular YL class to be the focus of their research, "problematising" (Burns 2010:2) it by identifying a particular classroom challenge, then writing a RQ to guide their search for answers. Finding answers to the RQ would then become their aim for the course. Needless to say, the RQ defined by each participant is of great importance to the study and
the entire nature of participants' enquiry was guided by their individual RQs. As such, I will begin with an analysis of the role of the RQ in the study.

Anna, in the group discussion, described how the presence of the RQ, and the process of defining it, guided her research:

"I found that the RQ was great because it was in the back of my mind - I think of an idea and try and do it. [Without the RQ] I wouldn't have been as focused. I wouldn't have been thinking: 'Okay, explain the practice! Explain the outcome!' as much. I probably would have gone off in different directions. It did, definitely focus me. And even the process of narrowing it down - 'cause I was thinking: 'I've got a problem in my classes. They're not really doing what I want them to do. Why is that?' And having to think it all through and coming to just finding something that I could focus on, and work on, and narrowing it down. That was really good mental exercise."

Another participant agreed with this assessment, writing anonymously in her course evaluation: "The process of refining and narrowing my RQ helped me to pinpoint the root of the problem and focus on finding appropriate solutions."

Thus, the RQ helped participants understand the nature of the problems in their classes, which is consistent with an emphasis on the reality of the classroom found in experiential approaches to learning (2.1.2). However, that is not to say that answering the RQ was easy, as the following exchange from the group discussion shows:
Trainer: “Did you think even having the RQ in the first place was a good thing?”

Penny: "Yeah, it is, so you have something you want to answer, so you have a goal in mind. But it is difficult to stick to it."

Penny found that the RQ was in her mind, and focused her on a specific aspect of her teaching, but that writing specifically about it in her reflective journal was not easy. In fact, she was not alone in finding journaling a challenge.

**Challenges with journaling**

Whilst the RQ had been defined for each participant in order to focus their enquiry, the tool for engaging in the RP itself was the reflective journal. Although the imperative for participants was to answer the RQ, it had been decided not to offer any specific instructions for exactly what to write in journals, beyond the explicit suggestion that they should write something after each class, in order not to restrict the reflection that would naturally occur. I will proceed by looking at accounts of what participants actually wrote in their journals, and then examine the process of journaling and how conducive it was to reflection.

In the group discussion, participants discussed what they wrote in their journals. Maryam described an informal, note-taking approach at the beginning: “For the first few lessons I just scribbled some stuff down and then I didn’t really think about it.” Whilst Maryam did not revisit what she wrote, Jane often did:
"Well, it was recording initially what I did in the class... it was not descriptive, like, 'How's the class?'; it was more like bullet points, like, 'What did I do as a record? This activity, this activity, this activity,' and then go back and say: 'Well, how did that work and what can I do for next time?'

Penny described a higher level of engagement with her journal:

"What I've learnt is, I found it useful to actually write what worked well and what didn't because after some time, if I don't do this, like, I forget about it. So, today, I tried a certain activity. It worked really well, really well. If I don't write it down, I forget about it and I stop using it. So, I find myself thinking all the time. Before, during, when taking notes, and after it."

Thus, participants, when left alone, approached the writing of their journal in different ways. All participants recorded classroom events, and some, but not all, would go back over their journal to reflect on what they had written. Rana was one of those who did not, and explained why:

"I think it's easier to record something than it is to reflect. I think that's a more natural behaviour. So, you do that and automatically, you just record. Well, I found that anyway."

Penny, another participant, explained how she did not feel the need to continually revisit the journal because she would remember what she wrote:

Trainer: "Did you ever actually look back over [the journal] during the course?"
Penny: "Not much, because I remembered it. I remember what I write because I had to think before class. During the class I take notes, after the class I write it in detail, so I found it useful actually."

Rana had suggested that journaling came as fairly natural behaviour for her. A closer look at others’ experiences with the journal, however, revealed this not to be the case for everyone. Penny described difficulties in answering the RQ in her writing:

"I found it difficult to write a journal because sometimes I drift away from the RQ. I just started writing descriptive writing: 'Today, we tried this. It worked…it didn't work.' So, it's difficult to answer the question. I just wrote what I liked, what I didn't like."

Others found that the very act of maintaining a journal was challenging. Maryam described how she gradually stopped writing:

"I think I did it immediately after I had done the class, sat down within that 15 minutes before I went to the next one and wrote it down quickly…until I forgot to do my journal…At the time, I was quite good, the first few lessons, and then it sort of dropped off."

Anna had a similar experience, but added how her study habits and recent arrival in- post let her down:

"It was difficult because, as I'm a teacher, I don't have very disciplined study habits. But also, I'm new and I'm finding it difficult just getting from class to class in 15 minutes. So, I didn't really spend enough time writing down."
These examples show mixed success with the journals, and that different participants wrote differing amounts. Entries in journals were frequently lists of classroom events and raw impressions of what did or didn’t work in class. Teachers reported that their lack of study habits and the intensity of the teaching schedule made it difficult to maintain the discipline of regular journaling, which is consistent with claims from other studies that the reflective process is not necessarily automatic, and needs to be carefully scaffolded by trainers (2.1.6).

Despite the difficulties, however, the passing of time appeared to lead participants to value the journal, and, in the case of those who gave up, regret not being more persistent with the discipline. Maryam spoke about this in the group discussion:

“I think about what you said about keeping a journal as opposed to not keeping a journal. I could still think about some activities and reflect back on those activities without the journal. However, it was good to have the journal just to say: ‘ah, yeah’, just to underline it or to find out common happenings or something. I could still do it, perhaps without the journal, but I think with the journal it could help a little more.”

Thus, journaling was ultimately seen as being a valuable exercise, even by those who initially struggled with it.

**Reflection emerged over time**

I have discussed the varied success of the journaling process and what participants actually recorded. Of particular interest is what did or did not constitute reflection within this process. Participants discussed what they
considered to be the reflective process and how it happened for them. Rana said:

"I'd record, then I'd look, and I'd be like: 'Okay, well, that's just something to think about when I'm lesson planning for the next one'. I didn't necessarily reflect. It was just something I said I've got to keep in the back of my mind. ... I found I wrote it down and was like: 'Right, remember that!'"

She describes a pragmatic approach to journaling in which she would record classroom events and make an effort to keep them in mind for the next class, but not necessarily subject her classroom practice to critical examination (Richards & Farrell 2005). Maryam reported a similar experience, despite finding it difficult to articulate:

"I did make a note to myself that I wasn't really reflecting at the time. I was just, I think you said 'stream of consciousness'. I was just like: bluhhh'. So, I wasn't really planning, reflecting, it was just: 'pshffft'"

It is notable here that she did not feel that she was reflecting at the time. This suggests that in many cases, reflection on teaching did not necessarily happen upon writing, or even directly afterwards. Rather it came later, and emerged over time. Anna summed this up succinctly during the group discussion: "It did take a while actually for me just to see things coming to effect and seeing how the classroom had changed."

So far, I have suggested that the journaling process and the RQ were of value to participants, but that evidence of substantive reflection was lacking. The
event from which much of this testimony is drawn - the group discussion - provided participants with the opportunity to look back over their journals and present their learning points from the course to colleagues. It appears that, as much as any other point in the course, it was this exercise that provided the opportunity for many participants to draw together strands from their journals and their teaching, and demonstrate to themselves just how much they had learnt. The following extracts from both the group discussion and the post-course questionnaires exemplify this:

Maryam: "I was just kind of writing what happened - that wasn't reflecting until today, until when I had to reflect, and then things came out"

Penny: "I found it interesting when I was doing the reflective part at the end… when I was preparing the presentation. I had to read and remember what I did - what worked, what didn't work. So, I was really happy to see that some items, like: 'Okay, today, what worked is… what didn't work is…'. It kind of reminds me what I should do every time or try something like that."

The following entry from the tutor journal at the very end of the course, gave a further perspective on this. That the reflective process had very much come together for participants on the last day was evident to the tutor:

"To my delight, everyone who came to the session found a lot of really valuable stuff, although it was interesting how in many cases it didn't actually come together until right at the end. The fact that I had asked them to prepare a five-minute talk was crucial, because those people
who didn't actually reflect on their journal during the course had the
opportunity to look back on it before the last session and gather their
thoughts. It was then that they realised that they had actually done a lot
- the act of looking back over all of it served to consolidate it all in their
minds."

This evaluation from participants suggests that journaling on its own may not
be enough to produce meaningful RP; even those who made good use of the
journal during the course described how the most powerful part for them was
the instruction to revisit it in order to summarise their findings. Whether or not
there was valuable reflection happening during the journaling process, it is
clear that participants required a clear opportunity to collate their thoughts for
the lessons learnt from reflection to make themselves evident to them. That is
not to say, however, that journaling was fruitless. Entries from the tutor journal
show evidence of “the cogs working” much sooner, as one critical event
exemplifies. Shortly after the first session of the course, one participant
attempted to pull out, citing various reasons. Fortunately, the situation was
resolved, and this entry picks up two weeks after that incident:

"The teacher who was resisting is now on track. There's been a
turnaround. Not only is she now managing to keep the journal, but she
has had a couple of breakthroughs with her classes - students coming
to her after class and discussing the learning process and their
involvement in it. She seems to be really working through her classroom
difficulties and making progress."
This shows that engagement with the reflective process coincided with apparently significant progress in answering her RQ.

**Collaboration emerged as a preferred option**

When discussing ways in which they reflected, some teachers gravitated towards collaboration as a preferred means to reflect. Anna said:

> "I found that worked really well was having the little conversations in the staffroom, like I had to come back and vent to Penny and Maryam. And Maryam, as well, was really helpful 'cause we had the same level. So, I think that process - reflecting, but speaking with people, and using them as a sounding board - I found that was more useful."

Anna, who neglected the reflective journal virtually from the start, found that her regular conversations with colleagues in the staffroom after class served as a surrogate for the written journal in some respects. She had transplanted a written version for a spoken one. When asked in the group discussion whether the RQ was present in guiding those discussions, she answered: "It did, definitely, focus me." This is indicative of a natural inclination to seek out collaboration with others as part of the reflective process, what Edge (2002) has called "continuing cooperative development" (see 2.1.5).

Participants gave evidence of the fact that collaboration enhanced the reflective process for them, both in the middle of the course and in the final group discussion. When asked to indicate the most valuable part of the course in the post-course questionnaires, one participant wrote: "The last session when we shared our findings, as we benefited from each other's ideas". Another stated that it was: "The opportunity to hear from fellow members of
staff - how they approached and solved issues”. The emergence of collaboration as an instinctive way for participants to reflect supports the view put forward in 2.1.5 that it can be a catalyst for the reflective process, and should form an integral part of RP.

Tutor reflections also appeared to sense the need for collaboration:

“I feel like I've slightly neglected people. Time has dragged on, and because of various trips and interruptions I haven't managed to sit down with people more than ad-hoc to find out how they're really getting on. I find myself nervous about what they're going to bring back, and whether they're going to report finding any value in the process at all. I find myself tempted to make adjustments to the course to meet what I think their perceived needs are (i.e. "10 activities to help with classroom management") and yet I also want to maintain the integrity of what I planned. It's not easy - perhaps it's symptomatic of a problematic interpretation of RP.”

Here, the lack of collaboration resulted in a lack of shared purpose. One can imagine that this "gap" would have been just as unsettling for the participants themselves, who were searching for answers just as much as the tutor. As if no further proof were required, another participant commented: "I would have been more inclined to have kept a journal if I'd listened to everyone else’s experiences."

In this section I have discussed the ways in which reflection occurred during the course. The findings suggest that alternatives to the traditional written journal may be helpful for some participants, but that the presence of a RQ,
and the process of articulating and refining it, can be valuable in guiding participants towards investigating a particular classroom phenomenon. Collaboration with peers in order to share experiences and solution to classroom problems (Richards & Farrell 2005) also appeared to be particularly useful for participants, evidenced by the positive response to the opportunity for group discussion at the end of the course.

4.1.2 What was the nature of the reflection?

I have discussed how journaling and reflection occurred on the course, and I will now look at what exactly the reflection centred on. The final group discussion provided participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences on the course, and provided an insight into the nature of the reflection that occurred. Maryam said:

"So what I learnt...about YLs was being more open to experimentation for myself 'cause I often go with, when things don't go well: 'This isn't going to work'. And then I just think: 'Oh God', but then you're surprised when it does...It dispelled any preconceived ideas about thinking that's not going to work."

Here, she speaks of experimentation in class and how that led to her challenging her existing beliefs about what will work with students (2.1.3). Rana discussed how she began to consider the pedagogical differences between adults and YLs, and how she noticed the need for structure in her lessons:

"I've taught young learners before, but my problem is I treat them too much like an adult class. I just teach them like I would adults. They're
smaller and younger, but still...I don't think I was aware enough of, you know...becoming a bit more 'teacher-like'! So, that's what I did...I thought about my lesson stages, you know, and recorded. They needed more structure - and that was the first conclusion I came to."

It is notable in this account how the teacher arrived with a degree of clarity at an important pedagogical conclusion about her teaching. The theme of experimentation continues with Penny's discussion of her students:

"I have an elementary [class]. And I have the same problem - they are not willing to work. They don't want to work with each other, boys and girls. They are not motivated at all. And, sometimes, when I said to work in pairs, one of them said, 'No, I don't work with girls.' It was a bit embarrassing, so what I found or what I've learned is, number one, using a variety of activities. So, at the beginning, I used to do like adults: give them a reading passage and say: 'Read and answer,' 'Who can answer number one?' It was so boring and they didn't say much. So I thought of just doing something different every time, like test-teach-test, and maybe give them the reading passage, and I asked them to generate questions themselves and swap papers and answer them. I asked one of them to do the role of the teacher so they can come to the board and check the answers and they nominate students, so that kind of motivated them somehow."

Here, Penny described continual experimentation with different activities in order to find a solution to her problem of children not working with each other.
While Penny did not mention the role of her journal in the process, Jane spoke about how journaling helped her to understand different paces of learning:

"Initially, I recorded…what was working in this lesson. Why, perhaps, were some of the girls that finished really, really quickly, what was going on there…had I done something wrong with the weaker ones? Why were they not…? Looking back [I realised] that the activity worked well, the weaker ones succeeded, it's just that they were faster. So, I think it helped me realise that it's okay to have different paces of learning. Don't worry…if some finish reading quickly and some finish slowly because, initially, I thought maybe that it was because they didn't care about the task. Actually, I realised it wasn't that they didn't care; it was a little more difficult but they could achieve the goal in the end."

Participants, including expert teachers, could be seen to be hypothesising, experimenting, questioning choices, whilst being continually guided by the RQ, which is consistent with the strong form of RP as defined by Farrell (2007a). It is notable that a lot of this centred not around participants' own teaching, but in understanding their learners - a capacity typically developed by more expert teachers (Gatbonton 2008).

This was particularly evident in an account from Anna, who described the problem she was having with her class: "They didn't really see the point in communicative activities and they would just give one-word answers, and nothing more." She spoke of a number of ways she tried to encourage her students, which resulted in the following realisation: “And then I realised that I'm not relating it to their real lives and showing them the purpose of why we're
doing these little mini real-life situations in class - so that they can replicate them outside class."

This proved to be a critical event in her process of understanding her class - realising that she was not relating classroom activity to learners' lives. She went on to describe how she investigated how to exploit this discovery, and learned how an entire class dynamic can be influenced by one individual:

"I got them to do a lot of role-plays based on practical situations…a lot of various different dialogues. And that actually worked really well but they needed a lot of instruction checking, lots of modelling, lots of examples. And, at first, they were just copying my examples. They weren't very good at just taking something and running with it. But, that may have been a question of confidence with me and familiarity with the other students in the classroom, 'cause it did actually develop over time.

Another reason might be that Rasheed's the alpha in the class, who at the start was just constantly testing me and challenging me, but he went on holiday, and the whole class just turned around…but what I found amazing is that when he came back, he came in 45 minutes late, without his folder and just sat in the back of the class. But everyone else was involved in activities, and they were kind of shunning him and were kind of taking my side. Whereas before, they all took his side. So, I felt like I won them around a bit, which was great."

As with the previous examples from other participants, what is evident throughout this account is experimentation and hypothesising, actively looking for answers to a very specific question. This shows that the course was
encouraging participants to critically examine, take responsibility for, and make changes to many aspects of their practice, as might be expected from a strong form of RP (2.1.2). That the RQ was present and guiding teachers in their reflection was made clear by Anna, who commented:

“The RQ...really got me to focus and think about it from their perspective because I don't think I had really given them a purpose.”

Maryam described her frustrations with materials and how she began to see that students would respond better to things they produced themselves:

“The next two topics were about...American summer camps, which they don't have, and setting up a fair. So, culturally, that was bad. What that meant is that I had to do a lot of supplementing. And what I found when I supplemented is that students...responded well to things that they produced themselves. Most of all, if I gave them a guideline: "You produce it, you respond!"

She continued her account, and demonstrated the extent to which she was considering her learners' needs in her lesson planning:

"I think, you know, you get enjoyment or satisfaction out of seeing them happy and entertained. [But] do they always want to be entertained? Do they have to be entertained? Or, do they have to go out thinking: ‘You know, I actually learned something’?"

Here, through the reflective process, Mayam's beliefs about teaching and learning were clearly being brought "to the level of awareness" (Farrell & Benniss 2013:174). Her account of the process of understanding her learners
culminated in an event that happened later in the term, when she introduced to
the class a story from local culture, named *Joha*:

> “The biggest surprise was this Joha story that I used. And as soon as I
> put the picture on the board, they knew who it was. And they said,
> straight away who he was, and they were already thinking about the
> topic. And when I asked: ‘Do you like stories?’, they said: ‘Yes’. And
> they said they want stories that are from their culture, they don’t really
> want stories from other people’s cultures, they just want their stories in
> English. And then, from that, we did the play, which again, absolutely
> astounded me. They actually got up and played it out.”

The emotive language evident in the above quote demonstrates the power of
this realisation for the teacher, and the transformative effect that a deeper
understanding of her learners could have in her teaching practice.

Jane, an expert teacher, also gained insight into her classes. Here, she
describes the efforts she was making to differentiate tasks to effectively
engage all learners, and the process that she went through, gaining a crucial
insight into the mix of abilities in the class:

> “Okay, so my question was: How can I more closely meet the needs of
> stronger and weaker students. And I really enjoyed looking at the class
> from this point of view because it did make me look at the learners
> individually - what they like and what their learning styles are like.
> Which meant that I could kind of group them into two. I mean, literally,
> the stronger ones were pretty similar; the weaker ones were quite
> similar in that the weaker ones were just a little bit slower. It showed me
that it was a mixed ability class, and that they worked well in different ways. And so, particularly with the reading and writing that I wanted them to do, because there was some that could do that quite well, I would first of all give the stronger ones more to do, personalising it about their family, or something they could produce. Whereas the weaker ones would be just sticking to one task, maybe. But then also getting the stronger ones to come and actually sit with them. And this kind of helped me see the dynamics of the class in that kind of age group.”

While it is clearly problematic to establish the direct role of RP in the development of these techniques, such comments, if taken at face value, would appear to indicate that the reflective process was helpful in establishing them as important techniques for participants' own classroom management. The consistency of such responses across all participants and, as we shall see later, across various data collection tools, suggests a degree of reliability in drawing this conclusion.

In this section I have discussed the nature of the reflection that occurred as participants progressed through the course. This was unique to each participant, but much of the reflection appeared to centre on understanding individual learners, which in turn helped participants in some cases to set up tasks in such a way that engaged students more effectively. Many participants, through a process of questioning their beliefs about teaching and learning (2.1.3), demonstrated increased awareness of classroom management-related teaching skills (2.3), such as clear lesson structure and explicit task outcomes.
for students, which suggests that the combination of approaches in this course can contribute to improved classroom management.

However, when describing participants' learning and development during the course, it is also important to ask the question: "Would it have happened anyway?" In other words, whether participants would have learnt what they did from normal day-to-day teaching of their classes, irrespective of the course. I will now explore this question.

4.1.3 Difference in Gains

As a participant myself in the final group discussion, I began to notice differences in the content of what participants spoke about. Whilst some gave a detailed account of their journey, including their doubts and frustrations, others were more matter-of-fact about what they had learnt. Following the group discussion, I compared the transcripts with what participants had written in the pre-course questionnaires.

The case of one teacher, Jane, is of interest. When asked to summarise what she had learnt from her RQ, she said in the group discussion: "By preparing extra work for the stronger students, that pushes them in such a way that they're going to get more out of [the class]. Weaker students still achieve the same goal." She learnt about how to meet the needs of different ability levels by pushing stronger students with extra work, while still allowing slower students to achieve the original goal. While this is undoubtedly a valuable realisation in her teaching, it is interesting to compare this with what she wrote in her pre-course questionnaire. Describing her classroom management in a recent YL lesson at the time, she wrote:
"Having been able to closely assess different ways of managing stronger and weaker students over the course, I am finding it easier to plan activities for everybody, which match the strengths of everybody."

It is evident that, even before the course began, Jane already had a strong idea of how to meet the classroom challenges she had identified with this particular group. If it is the case that Jane began the course with this level of insight, doubts are inevitably raised about what she actually learnt about her practice as a result of this course and whether RP had anything to do with it.

Following this finding, I looked into the accounts of the other expert teacher, Penny. Before the course, she had written:

"I set up the classroom in a way that facilitated their learning and encouraged interaction between them. There were various roles and interaction patterns."

Describing the success of her classroom management in a recent YL lesson after the course, however, she gave the following account, which is notably similar to the first:

"There was a variety of interaction patterns; students worked individually to make some questions, they worked in pairs to match pictures with words, mingled to find answers to their questions. This was really engaging."

It is evident with both teachers that, having problematised an area of their classroom practice, they had a good idea of where the solution would lie. Although perhaps not yet possessing fully worked-out solutions, the answers
that they did eventually find during the course were very close to those identified at the beginning.

Indeed, I had suspected as much during the group discussion, and, mindful of the relationship between myself and the group - that they knew the aims of my research and may consequently be tempted to tell me what I wanted to hear - I began pressing participants on the extent to which the structured RP on the course was responsible for what they had learnt. Jane commented, with commendable honesty: "I probably would have reached the same conclusions anyway."

There was therefore limited evidence of direct classroom management gains for these particular teachers. The commonality between Jane and Penny, of course, is that they are the two expert teachers in the group (see 3.1). I discussed in 2.4 how expert teachers demonstrate a capacity to reflect on teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & Bransford 2005), and it follows that these teachers may not require an organised course to lead them to reflect, and consequently have less to gain from following one. Noticeably mature answers in the pre-course questionnaire from both of these expert teachers to the question "What does RP mean to you?" reinforced this. For example, Penny wrote: "It means thinking back about what I've done and looking for ways to amend, correct or build on the actions for future practice."

In stark contrast, there is evidence that RP brought something entirely new to non-expert teachers. Maryam, for example, wrote in her pre-course questionnaire: "I have never done any [RP] before, therefore I really have no opinion/experience of it", which suggests that she was meeting RP as a
concept for the first time. Indeed, we saw in 2.4 how non-expert teachers may have either had little meaningful opportunity to reflect thus far in their careers, or else are yet to develop the reflective capacity more commonly found in their expert colleagues (Tsui 2003). What is noticeable is the extent of the surprise expressed by these teachers at the transformative power of the reflective process - something that they had not suspected before starting. Together with the evidence of learning outlined in 4.1.2, this suggests that these non-expert participants might not have made the gains that they did without RP to guide them.

In this section I have discussed how expert teachers appeared to have fewer tangible gains from the RP process than their non-expert colleagues. Despite saying that they did indeed improve, deeper analysis shows that they were already aware of likely solutions to their RQs before beginning the course. This matches the definition of expert teachers given in 2.4 as having strong classroom management skills and a preoccupation with learner outcomes, which may therefore lead to diminishing returns from a course such as this which essentially aims to promote the habit of reflection, which they are likely to have already developed. Non-expert teachers, however, have been shown to benefit more. They appear to have encountered structured RP for the first time, and undergone tangible development as a result.

4.1.4 ACCEPTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

I have discussed the nature of the reflection and how non-expert teachers in particular appeared to ultimately benefit from the process. However, the research uncovered some interesting insights into how some participants
came to grips with RP. The following post-course feedback from Maryam reveals her reaction upon discovering what RP would involve.

"I went into this project on the basis that it was YL training and that I would be given the information. Honestly speaking, I was annoyed when at first I realised that I would be answering my own question!"

She was expecting a transmission model of training and did not like the prospect of RP. Another participant seemed to be struggling with similar issues, and this manifested itself in her attempting to withdraw from the course. Tutor intervention was necessary to "re-convince" her of the value of what was being proposed, as this extract from the tutor journal describes:

"Anna told me: 'I don't really get why we're going straight into a class with a research question - usually it would be a serious research process where you research the theory first. Also I'm really busy with my MA so maybe I should pull out.' She had not understood the real purpose of the reflective journal, believing it to be more of an academic research undertaking. We talked through the problems in her class (motivation) and drilled down on what the real problems were. We turned this into a nicely phrased research question, which reinvigorated her and sent her off ready to really try and understand the phenomenon."

In both cases, these participants clearly felt that the course was not relevant to their needs, despite a thorough orientation session and "hard-selling" of the prospective benefits. This is perhaps unsurprising, as resistance to RP was noted from other studies in 2.1.5. However, it is interesting to note that these
two particular participants appear to have undergone the most development as a result of the course. Such findings would confirm my speculation in 4.1.3 that non-expert teachers may not be naturally inclined to reflect, and yet stand to gain the most if they are encouraged to do so.

The above extract highlights how RP is far from being a concrete concept that automatically means one thing for all people, as suggested in the literature (Akbari 2007). If the consequence of RP being poorly defined is that teachers fail to see the value in it as a developmental tool, then there exists an imperative for teacher educators to make this clear. It is also evident from the above extract, and previous sections (4.1.2), that the presence of a RQ is a powerful focusing force which can help to make RP a more tangible proposition for teachers.

The RQ, despite being reported by teachers as central to their development on the course, was not easily formulated in most cases, and required significant tutor support, as the following extract from the tutor journal demonstrates:

"I was taken aback by the difficulty in nailing down good RQs for each participant. They really didn't know how to do it and it made me think about how much practice it's taken me to learn the value of a narrow focus, and to actually get there. The time I'd set aside in the session wasn't sufficient. I had to follow up individually after the session and spend significant time talking with participants to understand the problems they were having in class and work through the process (with them) of defining a question that not only gets to the heart of their problem, but also gives them a good chance of finding good answers."
This highlights the real need to handhold people through the process. Ideally they need to leave that first session with total confidence about what they're about to get stuck into.”

This shows that participants had difficulty in problematising their classes. That is, they knew there was a problem, but could not necessarily trace the source, and needed tutor support to narrow it down (2.1.6). This was perhaps the most direct instance of tutor intervention in the course, as had this not happened, and had the participants not ended up with a narrowly focused RQ, the results of the programme may have been very different. It would be an interesting focus of future research to investigate the extent to which the RQ influences the outcomes of RP.

In this section I have noted that it was challenging to convince non-expert teachers of the value of RP, perhaps because they were encountering reflection as a developmental tool for the first time, but that they stood to benefit most from the experience. The tutor, although having a very hands-off role throughout most of the course, played a pivotal role in helping participants problematise their classes and defining a RQ, and then in following up in the early stages of journaling and helping them stay on task. This finding confirms claims in 2.1.6 that the tutor’s role is central to ensuring that RP is successfully initiated. I feel that is important to note, though, that the eventual sense of accomplishment experienced by teachers as a result of their development on the course was palpable; while participants may struggle initially and even fail to carry out the procedural tasks that have been set, it is that very struggle which demonstrates the significance of the process to teachers when overcome. Too much tutor intervention might have restricted that.
In the next section I will answer the question of whether RP can make teachers themselves more confident to teach YLs.

4.2 CAN RP MAKE TEACHERS FEEL BETTER EQUIPPED TO TEACH YLs?

In 4.1, evidence of both conceptual and practical pedagogical development was discussed. I described the extent of the critical analysis of participants' teaching practice, that much of this centred on an in-depth understanding of learners, and that many participants developed a number of practical techniques to use in their classroom as a result of the course. I also described how there appeared to be diminishing returns from RP for expert teachers.

With this being the nature of the RP that happened under these conditions, I will now ask whether teachers who have been through this process actually feel better equipped to teach YLs. I will answer this by using two criteria: direct testimony from participants about their development, and evidence of having learnt practical techniques for the YL classroom.

4.2.1 DIRECT TESTIMONY

In the course evaluation questionnaire, participants all described the course as benefitting them. Rana, for example, addressed the issue directly of how useful the course was for learning about classroom management:

"It was just like something I never had before, because I suppose I'm like everybody - 'Oh yeah, I got my CELTA! Great. Teach!' You know, and so it was really good for me. I'm by no means brilliant at it now - not even good, I would say - but I can feel...more confident. I'm a bit more in control."
While there was no empirical verification that her classroom management skills improved, her statement nevertheless left little doubt that she felt better equipped to teach YLs.

Participants were also asked various questions about the course, and the quantitative data of interest was from questions 1, 2 and 4:

1. The course is what I expected

2. The course is proving beneficial for me

4. I feel better prepared to teach YLs as a result of this course

The graph in figure 3 shows that while some participants were expecting the course to be as it was, others were taken by surprise at the reflective nature of it.

![This course is what I expected](image)

Fig.3 - "The course is what I expected"

Figure 4 shows that, regardless of any difficulties in engaging with RP (4.1.4), all participants found the course to be ultimately beneficial.
Figure 5 shows that while some participants felt better prepared to teach YLs as a result of the course, three did not discern any clear improvement.

4.2.2 INTERPRETATION

When looking at individual responses to the questionnaire, an interesting pattern emerged. Figure 6 plots individual answers to two questions: "The course is what I expected" and "I feel better prepared to teach YLs", and it can be seen that there is an inverse correlation between the responses to them. In other words, those participants for whom the course was "as expected",
derived fewer benefits. Those who were expecting the course to be different (i.e. meeting RP for the first time), eventually felt better prepared to teach YLs as a result.

Although the number of participants is perhaps too small to claim high reliability in this regard, the correlation between expectations and learning from the course would appear to support claims in 4.1.3 that non-expert teachers stand to gain the most from structured RP.

![Expectation vs. Benefits](image)

**Fig.6 - Expectation vs. benefits of the course**

### 4.2.3 PRACTICAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**Expert teachers**

We saw in 4.1.2-3 how expert teachers discussed their learning on the course and how they had found answers to their RQs. However, from the responses to questionnaires and contributions to the group discussion, there was little
evidence that their answers, whilst undeniably good, were the result of anything more than the RP they would have undertaken naturally during regular teaching. This is not to say that there were no tangible outcomes to the course for these teachers, merely that it was not possible to establish a link between the course itself to those outcomes.

**Non-expert teachers**

In 4.1.4, I highlighted the case of Maryam and Anna, the two non-expert teachers who displayed resistance to the course once it had been initiated. As a last piece of evidence for the transformative potential of RP for non-expert teachers, and its ability to make teachers feel better equipped to teach YLs, I will now complete the picture of these two participants.

Maryam had written about her frustration at realising she would "be answering [her] own question". However, in her course evaluation questionnaire, she went on to describe the value she came to see in the process: "I have found it a valuable experience and something that needs to be conducted on a regular basis."

Anna, who made numerous attempts to withdraw from the course and ended up barely keeping a journal, responded in the following way after hearing other participants talk of what they had learnt from their journaling in the group discussion:

"I can tell. You guys seem to have your thoughts a little bit, well, more structured than I do. I think it would have probably helped, I would have managed to get a lot more out of it if I had had a journal. But, no, it still worked. I think some good still came out of it."
Here, she appears to regret not embracing the process more from the beginning and recognises the potential for improving her practice. These quotations, the self-deprecating nature of which suggests a degree of honesty, appear to speak to the transformative potential of RP for non-expert teachers. Anna also spoke of practical outcomes to the course for her and gave a clear account of what she had learnt as a result of the exercise:

"In my [instruction checking] I kept saying, 'Why are we doing this? Is this to develop your reading skills or your writing skills?' I hadn't really done that before. I think they saw that the activities we were doing were more relevant to them. Also, I spent a lot more time setting up the activities and explaining the purpose of them. But then, I took more of a backseat after I had given them the modelling. And I was perhaps a bit more patient. But, I mean I was a little bit icy, I guess, with them. I started to say: 'Look, if you can't do this in class, then you're not going to get anywhere,' and I took that kind of line with them...rather than before, being a bit more like: 'Why aren't you doing this? Poor me, please!' So, they appreciated the hard-line."

The teaching techniques and qualities she mentions (e.g. taking care over setting up and explaining the purpose of tasks) are fundamental to YL classroom management (4.2.3), and must surely have been an important development for her as a YL teacher.

In this section I have discussed how there appear to be real and tangible benefits from RP for YL teachers. In light of participants' accounts of developing practical techniques for YL classroom management, I can say with
some confidence that, at least for non-expert teachers, RP can make teachers feel better prepared to teach YL classes. This is clear both from both an external reading of participant reflection from across the data collection tools, and the views expressed by teachers themselves, which, together, paint a convincing picture. However, it is difficult to say exactly what element of RP was responsible for this development, as various reflective tools worked for participants in different ways. The one element which seems to have contributed most to meaningful reflection was the act of identifying and narrowing down a RQ, and it is not clear if meaningful reflection would have been possible without this.

4.3 HOW DID PARTICIPANTS VALUE THE PROGRAMME AND WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE TO THE COURSE?

I have discussed the nature of the reflection that occurred on the course and the extent to which RP can make teachers feel better equipped to teach YLs. Of course, everything that occurred during the course was a result of the way in which it was setup. As part of the final stage of the AR framework in which this research was conducted, it was necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the course with a view to plan improvements for future iterations. I will now address this using evidence from the perspectives of both the participants and the trainer.

4.3.1 VINDICATION BY PARTICIPANTS

As the course had been designed to up-skill new YL teachers, it was important to me that it have validity for participants in all senses, as they would be taking
the course as busy teachers with a full-time teaching schedule, and it needed to support rather than hinder their arrival to post.

Participants agreed that the structure of the course was appropriate for the setting, with Anna (one of those who struggled most in the beginning), stating: "It definitely works within context." When this is taken together with the lack of negative evidence and the developmental gains made by participants reported earlier in the chapter, there is a strong case that the course was effective in achieving its aim of preparing teachers to teach YL classes.

4.3.2 COURSE IMPROVEMENTS

There were, of course, elements of the implementation that could be improved, and participants were asked to offer their suggestions.

Regular collaborative opportunities

As a result of their desire for more collaboration (2.1.5), participants' primary suggestion was to have shorter, more regular gatherings, or even a "buddy" system, to provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue. The following exchange demonstrates their conviction on this point:

Anna: "Maybe, if you had a shorter session, so you said: 'Right, in two weeks, you are going to get together for twenty minutes and discuss how far you've come,' I would have been more inclined to have kept a journal after having listened to everyone else. But make it short, or ten minutes, or even just pair up—"

Jane: "—Like you said...have a buddy with it, particularly if you know someone's got the same questions, or even if you've got someone to
share what you’re going through, even if it’s just a completely different question."

Tutor: “And that makes complete sense because, just like those of you who wrote in the journal quite frequently had a big record to look back on, I guess it works exactly the same. Like, you were talking about how your journal, in a way, was conversations. So, if that was more structured and you had more regular meetings about it, it would have had the same effect as if you'd been keeping the journal.”

Jane: "Yes, exactly."

Anna: "Better, yeah."

The innovation suggested here would primarily support non-expert teachers, by offering the opportunity to "check-in" from time to time and not be working entirely alone (Mann & Walsh 2013).

**Alternatives to written journals**

For the tutor, there remained an element of dissatisfaction with the reflective journals, as the following extract from the tutor journal makes clear:

“*The issue of the journals is intriguing. Some people are just getting on with it, others seem to find it like pulling teeth. Yet I can see they’re all getting value from it … and yet I don’t want it to be a chore. Is it better to scrap the written journals in favour of something they’d prefer, or should I just crack down and say: ‘You’ve got to do it, and I’ll be checking up on you’?*”
As this suggests, it is not clear that reflective journals are the most appropriate means to record class events. That is, they have been shown to be valuable, but that is not to say that another format might not be even more conducive to effective RP. This may be a case in point of what can happen if journaling is institutionalised - becoming an "increasing chore" (Mann and Walsh 2013:299). No clear solution to this issue emerged during the study and would require further investigation.

The suggestions made in this section all have a common theme, namely that of _support_, which was identified as important in 2.1.6. Whether getting started, or in the throws of the course, the above recommendations came directly from those intimately involved in the study and would help support future participants in their enquiry.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have considered the nature of reflection that occurred on the course, whether RP can help teachers feel better equipped to teach YLs, and ended by describing practical suggestions from participants for improving the course. In the next chapter, I will summarise the implications of the research, limitations to what I can claim, and evaluate the study.
5. **IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND EVALUATION**

I will begin with the implications of the research, which can be taken as recommendations for both the improvement of the course, and for those working in similar contexts.

5.1 **IMPLICATIONS**

This research has sought to understand the nature of the reflection that happened when the course was run in my local context with a specific group of participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have stated that, when conducting qualitative research, one "cannot specify the external validity of an enquiry; he or she can provide only thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (p.316). Thus, while it is clearly problematic to generalise from this into other contexts, the events reported in this study nonetheless illustrate the importance of certain factors in teachers' ability or willingness to engage in RP, and may have implications for those wishing to promote RP in their own context.

Evidence presented in this study suggests that RP as a teacher development tool can have some success with non-expert teachers, leading to both conceptual insights and practical classroom techniques, but is likely to have considerably less impact on their expert colleagues. Findings have demonstrated that RP can make teachers feel more confident and better equipped to teach YLs by leading them to critically analyse their practice, and should therefore be considered as a component in YL teacher education initiatives.
Firstly, the process of problematising a class and developing a relevant and sufficiently focused RQ is likely to impact greatly on the reflective process undergone by a teacher. It should not be taken for granted that teachers possess the necessary skills to do this, and, consequently, the role of the tutor becomes central to the implementation of the course. Tutors looking to facilitate RP should expect to be "hands-on" in the beginning stages of a programme, particularly in helping participants through the process of defining a suitable RQ. Tutors should also consider how to deal with the fact that RP may not initially have face validity for participants and this may manifest itself in resistance. Care should therefore be taken to present the programme in an appropriate way and tutors should be prepared to guide participants into the habit of journaling. A clear definition, at the start of a course, of exactly what is meant by RP, may also help.

Tutor intervention, however, is not straightforward, and tutors should take care to allow participants to retain ownership of the process. They must take care to act as a facilitator rather than an instructor (Bailey 2006), perhaps through a strategy of asking probing questions in order to steer participants, rather than simply providing them with answers. The setting of regular "catch-up" meetings with participants in the early stages might also help to ensure the tutor is aware of any emerging issues and can respond accordingly.

Whether the reflective journal should be considered a necessary component of structured RP is less clear. Whilst there is little doubt over the importance of the RQ, the means of journaling itself is something for which I have been left with more questions than answers. Non-expert teachers experienced some difficulty with journaling and sought out other means to reflect, notably in the
form of short conversations with colleagues. However, these same participants eventually appeared to regret not persisting with their journals. Providing different options for the format of journaling, such as through audio or smartphone apps, might better cater to participants with different preferences, and this has been suggested by other authors (e.g. Mann & Walsh 2013).

The design of a course based on RP should create regular opportunities for collaboration, as participants have been seen to naturally seek out and highly value such opportunities, and reflecting in solitude may feel limiting for teachers (Mann & Walsh 2013). The opportunity to regroup at the end of the course to share and discuss findings also appears to be of high value to all and would make for a valuable part of any training initiative. Regular collaboration has precedent in previous research, such as Cady, Distad and Germundsen's (1998) study in which novice and experienced participants were brought together in RP groups eight times over the course of a school year. I have outlined the implications for others who may wish to run RP in similar contexts, but these implications, and the results of this study, must be seen in light of the following limitations.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

The limitations that follow point to what I was not able to establish in this study.

Although participants on the course spoke in detail about their learners, this research has focused on the teachers themselves. Consequently, one major limitation of the study is that I cannot claim that learning and development undergone by participants on this course resulted in improved learning outcomes for the students themselves. Indeed, all claims of teacher
development have been based on a small sample of five participants, each with specific RQs, which, in turn, were based on their individual needs and classes. This is, therefore, a narrow study which has not been able to answer Griffiths' (2000) call for empirical evidence of improved outcomes for students. There were no pre- or post-course classroom observations, which might have provided an opportunity to assess whether the pedagogical advances that teachers spoke of were actually evidenced in practice. The study also relied heavily on data from the group discussion, in which participants looked back over many weeks of teaching and journaling. Whilst I have no reason to doubt the reliability of the reflection that happened in that session, it was nonetheless entirely retrospective in nature, and an obsession with the past has been criticised for being too prevalent in RP (Birmingham 2004). The addition of opportunities to capture "reflection-in-action", or collaborative reflection such as the regular gatherings suggested in 4.3.2, would have added a different dimension to the research.

I would like to emphasise once more the importance of the individual RQs to the entire study. It was clear from data that the RQ governed and guided much of participants’ reflection. However, it is possible that a different set of participants with different RQs (with a different pedagogical focus, or even different wordings) may have returned entirely different results, and a different study may have shown, for example, that expert teachers stood to gain just as much from such a course as those with less expertise. This, in turn, may have led to an entirely different evaluation of the nature of the RP, the success of the reflective journals, and other aspects of the course. The existence of clearly defined RQs in this study has adopted Brock, Yu and Wang’s (1992)
suggestion of narrowing the focus of journals, and participants were very much focused on problem solving. Mann and Walsh have cautioned that a narrow focus may be limiting (2013), and, indeed, it is not possible to say from this study if participants would have had broader gains without RQs to focus them. There were also many parameters to the course - such as session timing, available YL classes, time available for journaling - which were set either arbitrarily, or based on institutional or circumstantial constraints. Any variation in these parameters may have produced different results.

I will now evaluate the effectiveness of the research process as a whole.

5.3 EVALUATION

I described in chapter one how this project would constitute part of an AR project in which, having designed the course, I would pilot and assess how to improve it for future implementation. Whilst the piloting of the course constituted the action part of the AR cycle, the research process described in this study formed the observation and evaluation stages of the cycle (2.2). The implications presented in 5.1 point forward to the planning (the final part of the cycle) required to make appropriate changes to the course and deliver it once again as part of a fresh AR cycle. I am satisfied that the research has validated the course as being beneficial and that the recommendations given offer constructive criticism with which to improve learning for participants.

The tools chosen for data collection worked well and captured informative data for answering the RQs. However, I cannot claim that this was planned with such clarity. It was certainly the case that the data collection tools taken together served to paint a detailed picture of events on the course, and
in-so-doing offered an element of triangulation to my interpretation, thereby increasing reliability. For this I feel somewhat fortunate. Perhaps this was inevitable for a qualitative study with a subject as ambiguous as RP, but, nevertheless, I feel that the design of the research did ultimately enable me to answer my RQs in reasonable depth. Indeed, if I were to repeat the study, I would seek to make changes to the course content first and foremost (based on suggestions in 5.1), rather than to the research tools, which I feel did justice to the study. Further data collection in this context would, I fear, have been disruptive to participants and have relied a little too much on goodwill than might be desirable. However, more regular collaborative opportunities built into the course would certainly have allowed for more frequent (and relatively unobtrusive) data collection, and would have reduced my reliability on data from the group discussion. Throughout the study, I have presented evidence of RP resulting in teacher development, but there was a lack of specificity about which reflective tools contributed to that development (4.2.3). As a consequence, my difficulty in evaluating the processes involved in RP on this course may leave me open to accusations, outlined in 2.1.8, of presenting results in “flabby, vague and unhelpful ways” (Mann & Walsh 2013:296).

As both the researcher and the course tutor, my role in the study is of significance. I had an existing professional relationship with all participants, and it is inevitable that this proximity also brought something to bear on the proceedings, the outcomes, and my analysis and interpretation of the findings. Results should therefore be read in this light. It would make for an interesting comparison to run a future course with an independent tutor.
For myself, as a teacher educator, I have gained insight into the complexity of RP and the challenges involved in setting it up as a structured YL training solution. The highly personal nature of this enquiry for teachers gave the role of the tutor particular significance, and I have learnt that no intervention may be too small in bringing about sizeable changes. I finish this study no less confident about the potential of RP to impact on teachers' professional development, but much more aware of the challenges involved in implementing it in practice. As a researcher, I have undertaken a qualitative study of this scale for the first time and learnt much about the complexity and challenges involved in designing a substantial research project and the handling of qualitative data. This experience will inform all research I come to do in the future.

In this chapter I have discussed the implications and limitations of the study, and evaluated the research from a personal and professional perspective. I end with the conclusion.
6. **CONCLUSION**

This research has reported on one stage of an AR project, which involved the piloting of a teacher training course for YL teachers in the BC Doha. Three research questions were asked:

1. **What kind of RP occurs when this course is set up and run in my local context?**

2. **Can RP make teachers feel better equipped to teach YLs?**

3. **How did participants value the course and what improvements could be made to the programme?**

All three questions were answered. Findings showed that reflection happened in a variety of ways and matured over the period of the course. Participants derived great value from problematising their classes and defining a RQ, and collaboration with colleagues, highlighted in the literature review as being of importance to RP, emerged as one of participants’ most highly valued elements of the course, as they actively sought out opportunities to reflect on classroom issues with colleagues. Participants had mixed success with reflective journals, but came to value them as a tool for reflection and organising their thoughts on teaching and learning.

As a result of the course, many participants developed a deeper understanding of their learners and discovered practical techniques for managing the YL classroom. Whilst all participants appeared to benefit from the course, non-expert teachers in particular (2.4) demonstrated a positive
transformation, and ended the course feeling better equipped to teach YLs. However, non-expert teachers did have trouble accepting RP as a valid training solution, and coaching from the tutor was pivotal in helping them overcome this in the early stages of the practice. Expert teachers, on the other hand, appeared to gain less from the course.

The course itself worked well within the context for which it was intended, and proved to be a feasible solution for training alongside a full teaching timetable. The main suggestion for improving the course was to provide more opportunities for collaboration (2.1.5). Further research is needed to better understand some phenomena that emerged during the course, in particular the role of journals in facilitating RP.

I personally have little doubt that developing the capacity to reflect is one of the most important developments a teacher can make, and I have seen evidence in this study that a structured course such as this can make teachers feel better equipped to teach YLs, within what is a relatively short period. The fact that this training does not require substantial time commitments from staff is also an advantage. In addition, I see no reason why the developmental potential from such training should be limited to the YL classroom, and would suggest that RP has a meaningful role to play in SLTE in general.

In conclusion, I look forward to acting on the results of this AR project to improve the course for the future, and to learning more about the potential role of RP in SLTE.
7. REFERENCES


Bartlett, T. [deleted to meet unbranded submission criteria] (2012). Understanding teachers' concerns about YL teaching in one British Council teaching centre: a qualitative case study. Unpublished master's study, [citation deleted to meet unbranded submission criteria].


8. APPENDICES
APPENDIX A - INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTATION

Please prepare a presentation of approximately 5 minutes to your peers, outlining your experiences during the course. Please cover the following areas:

• Your research question and chosen class
• The value (or not) of keeping a reflective journal
• What you learnt during your research (i.e. what answers did you find to your research question?)
• Peer observation - what you learnt from watching a peer
APPENDIX B - PRE- AND POST-COURSE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Describe in full the success or otherwise of your classroom management in the last YL lesson you taught.

2. What elements of classroom management are most relevant to your YL classes?

3. What does reflective practice mean to you?

4. How can reflective practice help you in your professional development?

Given before and after the course.
Appendix C - Course Evaluation Form

Course evaluation form

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1-5, where:

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

1. The course is meeting my expectations  

2. The course is proving beneficial for me  

3. I have a constructive relationship with my tutor  

4. I feel better prepared to teach young learners as a result of this module  

If I were to take this course again, I would change…  

The most valuable part of the module was…
APPENDIX D - TRAINER REFLECTIVE JOURNALS  
[Presented "as-is" - has not been edited]

Ran out of time at the end of the session and couldn't finalize research questions. Left it for follow-up one-to-one later. The next day, two participants tried to get out of it, saying "I wonder if I shouldn't pull out because my YL class doesn't have any problems and I don't think I'll get anything out of it." In this case, I retargeted it by asking him about his adult classes, and he said "that's a funny one because I have two E2 classes - one is a dream, but the other one is a nightmare because a few loud characters disrupt the class". This was a A1 classroom management problem which he was genuinely interested in investigating so I was able to turn it round by ditching the YL thing and giving him an adult class to focus on.

In another case Anna said: "I don't really get why we're going straight into a class with a research question - usually it would be an iterative process where you research the theory first. Also I'm really busy with my MA so maybe I should pull out."

She hadn't understood the real purpose of the reflective journal, understanding it to be more of a serious research undertaking, perhaps because currently doing an MA. We talked through the problems in her class (motivation) and drilled down on what the real problems were, and landed on "learners understanding the purpose/outcome of my communicative tasks". We turned this into a casually-phrased question "How can I set up my activities in such a way that students understand the purpose and outcome of the task?" which reinvigorated her and sent her off ready to really try and understand the phenomenon.

All this was despite my explaining the research methodology and nature of the reflective journals carefully during the session. It's new for them - they need handholding - action needs to come first, attitude change second.

I was taken aback by the difficulty in nailing down good RQs for each participant. They really didn't know how to do it and it made me think about how much practice it's taken me to learn the value of a narrow focus, and to actually get there. The time I set aside in the session wasn't sufficient. I had to follow up individually after the session and spend significant time talking with participants to understand the problems they were having in class and work through the process (with them) of defining a question that not only gets to the heart of their problem, but also gives them a good chance of finding good answers. This highlights the real need to hand-hold people through the process because of the challenging nature of it. Ideally they need to leave that first session with total confidence about what they're about to get stuck into.

**Check-in after one week**

The same participant who had suggested she drop out last week today said that she hadn't been doing the reflection. She said: it's all in my head, I can remember everything from the lessons. Also: I've only got 15 minutes between lessons so I don't really have time.
I explained the rationale behind being sure to make brief notes quickly after every lesson, and she understood. She's clearly resisting and doesn't appear to have bought into the initiative. She's also by far the least experienced teacher.

**Back on track**

The teacher who was resisting is now on track. There's been a turnaround. Not only is she now managing to keep the journal, but she has had a couple of breakthroughs with her classes - students coming to her after class and discussing the learning process and their involvement in it. She seems to be really working through her classroom difficulties and making progress.

Lesson: needs regular follow up with participants at first

When Anna's peer observation was cancelled because of teacher sickness, I overheard her saying "it's totally fine, it's not even for me anyway, it's for [deleted to meet unbranded submission criteria] masters". I felt shocked and offended. I was later told by someone else that this was said in jest - let's hope that's the case.

The issue of the journals is intriguing. Some people are just getting on with it, others seem to find it like pulling teeth. Yet I can see they're all getting value from it ... and yet I don't want it to be a chore. Is it better to scrap the written journals in favour of something they'd prefer, or should I just crack down and say: "You've got to do it, and I'll be checking up on you"?

I feel like I've slightly neglected people. Time has dragged on (it's been 5 weeks - 2 longer than planned), and because of various trips and interruptions I haven't managed to sit down with people more than "on the hop" to find out how they're really getting on. I find myself nervous about what they're going to bring back, and whether they're going to report finding any value in the process at all. I find myself tempted to make adjustments to the course to meet what I think their perceived needs are (i.e. 10 activities to help with classroom management) and yet I also want to maintain the integrity of what I planned. It's not easy - perhaps its symptomatic of a problematic interpretation of RP.

It's interesting the number of things that get in the way when you're trying to run a course during term time and on top of teaching load. It's good to base it on practice, but not having dedicated time set aside for it really can be a drag. Eg:

1. No suitable classes available (lewis pulled out)
2. Busy teachers (no peer obs)
3. Difficult to schedule sessions
4. Trainer commitments eg business trips (little follow-up with trainees)

Although I was nervous about the session, I was delighted with how it went.
Because I wasn't so much in contact with people about how it had been going,
it was slightly unknown what they would come and say in the session. To my delight, everyone who came to the session found a lot of really valuable stuff, although it was interesting how in many cases it didn't actually come together until right at the end. The fact that I had asked them to prepare a 5 minute talk was crucial, because those people who didn't actually reflect on their journal during the course had the opportunity to look back on it before the last session and gather their thoughts. It was then that they realised that they had actually done a lot - the act of looking back over all of it served to consolidate it all in their minds.
Male Speaker (M): I want it to be completely open. So, if you think the whole thing's a load of drivel and a complete waste of time, then I encourage you to say so. K, and likewise, you know, it's not, this is not the time to hold back or say what you think I want to hear. You know, it's really trying to get to the bottom of everything. So, what I want to do, I want to dive straight in and I want to start with just kind of going around and talking about what we've got from this whole exercise. And I gave you a list of things to think about.

????: Yeah, yeah.

M: So, maybe we can just go around in a circle. I encourage you to ask questions. So, if you want to pick someone up on something, or ask for more explanations or you're just curious about something, feel free to jump in. There's no clock in this room, oh yea, there is.

????: There is, yes.

M: I'm thinking like five minutes each. Might be less, might be more. So, let's just see what comes out of it. I'm really just interested just to hear what's gone on.

F1: Do you want us to [???] that little list that you gave us?

M: Yeah, yeah. If that helps, yeah. Take it away.

F1: Okay, my view to look out was about how can I make students more aware of the purpose and benefits of communicative tasks? And why did I do this? Well, generally, I've always felt there was a reluctance or resistance to participate in communicative activities. And this generally shows itself in, kind of, body language. That sort of thing. Almost like a non-verbal response or is a generals kind of lethargy. Or, they just answer with one-word answers.

F2: Which group was this [???]?

F1: What?

F2: Which group was it?

F1: I used a senior PI-4. So, yeah. So, these kind of minimal response things, one word, these things--I did things like mingle exercises, I did ask the question and answer the question--even I wrote the question out for them, and the subject was school holidays: "What'd you do on school holidays? Where'd you go? dit-dit-dit..." One word. That was it. And, this class particularly--why did I choose them?--well, basically they were a tough crowd. Right from day one, they're just like faces. Very, very, I don't know. They weren't bad, they weren't bad kids.

F?: [???]
F1: Yeah, lumps. Yeah, and a mix, as well. I mean, they got older boys, older girls, and younger boys and younger girls, so there was a mix of everything there. There's quite a bit disparity between their ages and their physical sizes and stuff. They were quite mixed. Anyway, so, dit-dit-dit-dit, what did I learn from this exercise? The first thing was that the timezone booked does not relate to the level or the culture of this...

F3: Seems that the communicative activities you were using from the book...

F1: I don't have any communicative activities in the book. And, I just felt that the--I had health, which was okay. "Should, shouldn't" for health. And we did stats and language about what's wrong, what's the matter. But the next two topics were about school holidays, which sounded okay, but then it went on to summer camps, which--American summer camps, which they don't have--and setting up a fair.

F?: Oh yeah, I got the same, if that makes you feel... horrible.

F1: So, culturally, that was bad. But anyways, what that meant is that I had to do alot of supplementing. And, the stuff that I used to supplement was things like--sorry, this is a student's reponse... What I found when I supplemented is that students responded, they responded well to things that they produced themselves. Most of all, if I gave them a guideline, you produce it, you respond. So, we did the Taboo game and we just did a circle-like sport. And they had to think of nouns, verbs, adjectives, people, [???], sports. And they write them down, brainstorm those. And then we write some on a a piece of card and paper. And then they had to take them in, and they had to say it, and you had to be able to guess it. So they already produced the vocab and then they had to produce it again. And they got quite into this because it was something they could take out of themselves anyway. They semi-contributed to it, anyway. The other thing like that was stories that are country-relevant to them. And the biggest surprise was this Jo-ha story that I used that's on the British council Brit-Lit thing. And as soon as I put the picture on the board, they knew who it was. And they said, straight away who he was, and they were already thinking about the topic. And when I asked, "do you like stories?", they said "yes". And they said they want stories that are from their culture, they don't really want stories from other people's cultures, they just want their stories in English. And then, from that, we did the play, which again, absolutely astounded me. They actually got up and played it out.

M: So you got them to act out the story? F1:

Yeah.

M: Wow.

F1: Yeah, it did help one of the more outward-going ones, did help, and they all did it after he got everyone up to do it. But they actually got up and role-played. They also produced their own general knowledge quiz. And, things like Pictionary, they did the words first and they drew them on the board. All that stuff, they generated themselves. So, what I learnt from that,
basically, about young learners was being more open to experimentation for myself cuz I often go with, when things don't go well: "This isn't going to work." And then I just think, "Oh, God," and then you're surprised when it does. And afterward s, it, like, dispelled any preconceived ideas, as well, thinking that's not going to work. And...

M: Can you say some more about that?

F1: Again, I think I went it with this Jo-ha story and it looked like a nicely set out thing, activity, and it was. And they said, in there, that the first thing was: get them to draw a cover for the story of the book. So, I was like, "ah, that's nice and safe. Let me do that." But then when I looked at it, I thought, right, I didn't want to act it out. I didn't think they would. But, they did. And, I said to them once, I said to them afterwards, "did you like that?" And they said, "yes". And I said, "what did you do from that?" And they told me they did some writing, some speaking, and listening. And they did everything. And I said, after that, "did you like it?" But they had already been kinda "hmmm"-group, which I didn't think would respond to that at all. But they did. [???] it's kind of [???] I think up to myself, as well, is kind of stop worrying about entertaining.

M: Okay. What does that mean?

F1: Well, again, I wouldn't say for that example, I went in with Ja-ho and I think, you know, you get enjoyment or satisfaction out of seeing them happy and entertained. Do they always want to be entertained? Do they have to be entertained? Or, do they have to go out thinking, "you know, I actually learned something?"

M: What's the answer do you think?

F1: Ideally, both. [laughter]...question I can't answer.

M: You know, there is an answer. I mean...

F?: I think it depends on the student. F??:

Depends on the student.

F?: ...and students would want to be entertained; Another student would be happy coming out thinking, "okay, that wasn't, like, the most exciting, but I've learnt so much...

F???: Yeah.

F?: ..and they take something different, y'see.

F???: A special chance I was trying to relate it to the fact that were coming up the end of term and they were gonna have block tests, and they're gonna have end-of-term tests, and I kept trying to relate it to the fact that what you're doing now is going to help you with your tests. I don't think I stressed enough, or the link wasn't made strong enough.

M: So, remind us again what your research question was.
F1: How can I make students more aware of the purpose and benefits of communicative tasks?

M: If I said you had to answer that question in one sentence now, what would you say?

F1: Get them to produce it.

M: And how does that help them to become more aware of the purpose of the task? I mean, it definitely does, as you've found, but why do you think it? What is it that makes that so effective?

F1: Because I think they will see that they'll be able to produce a fuller answer to a stimulus or a question or something. And I think they will want to, rather than just this one-word thing.

F?: And they can sort of see the processes, I suppose, that meet, you know, the requirements of any question, I think. Because they can actually see the parts that make up the answer.

F1: Yeah. Yeah. And I also saw within that, as well, there's also, I think, a competitive element that helps, as well. So, if they're, you know, producing a question for another person to answer, or they're trying to find something, there's a lot of motivation in that.

M: Is it the doing those things actually makes them realize the benefits of the reason that they're doing the things? Or, is it just because they enjoy it, they end up doing it anyway? Do you see what I mean?

F1: Yeah, I think I have to. I think certainly having a competitive element makes them realize the purpose of [???], whether it's a--

M: Okay.

F1: --answer to a game or an exam, there's a competitive element helps there.

F????: I guess they feel the necessity, as well, to put something forward cuz there's peer-pressure, so they feel, "oh, I've got to do this," whereas if you just spoon-feed them and say, "right, here's a question: what's your answer?", they don't feel the impetus.

F1: Yeah, and peer-pressure was very, very--you're right, when this guy said, "C'mon, everyone. Let's get up and have a go," cuz he's got that attitude, and it kinda did create the peer-pressure. And by the time the second group had done it, the third group [???], "could we do it now, teacher?"

M: Fantastic. Okay. And how--to what extent do you think keeping a journal helped you with that?

F1: At the time, I was quite good the first few lessons and then it sort of dropped off.

M: Yeah.
F1: And I did make a note to myself that I wasn't really reflecting at the time, I was just, I think you said, a stream-of-consciousness. I was just like, "Buhhh," I was just kind of writing what happened; that wasn't reflecting until today. Until when I had to reflect and then things come out.

F???: It felt good to have uh, yeah...

M: So, the journal was the record that allowed you to reflect on it afterwards.

F?????: Yeah, I don't think I'd be there. I was the same. F?????: Mine was kind of like that.

M: Did you all find same or similar thing?

F???: I think it's easier to record something than it is to reflect. I think that's a more natural behavior. So, you do that and automatically, you just record. Well, I found that, anyway.

F?????: Yeah, [??]

F???: And then, it's taking another step and looking at it from a different angle, and saying, "what am I supposed to be doing with that?"

M: So there's two voices, two parts to the equation.

F1: I think cuz when you're [??], I think I did it immediately after I had done the class, sat down within that [fifty] minutes before I went to the next one and wrote it down quickly. So, I wasn't really planning, reflecting. It was just, "pshfftt."

M: Just get it out there. F1:

Down, yeah.

M: But it's good that you did because--

F?????: [??] then it needs to have the clearer memory of what you did.

M: Fantastic. Thanks [Essa], that was great. [Rana]?

Rana: Okay. Well, my question was, how can I adopt my classroom tasks and lesson stages in such as way as to improve a learner behavior? Okay. So, because I felt my classroom management was somewhat wanting...

F????????: I can't imagine that with you. Everyone is just like--

Rana: But I think my problem is with young learners, I don't have that--I've taught young learners before, but my problem is I treat them too much like an adult class. I'm too, you know, I just teach them like I would adults. They're smaller and younger, but still... [??] is [??] when you know this... And, I don't think I was aware enough of, you know, maybe trying to teach 'em, becoming a bit more teacher-like. Do you know what I mean? So, I decided so what I use for the lesson stages--so, that's what I did. So, I tried out, I thought about my lesson stages, you know, recorded. And so what I thought was they
needed more structure. And that was the first conclusion I came to because I was teaching them more like adults. So, it was like going, general feedback, you know, "let's brainstorm". Okay, they're seven. It's just that all the best [will] in the world, it just doesn't work, okay. So, I decided they needed more structure; that was the general line I was taking. So, then I just--

M: Did you go in with that? Or, did you...

Rana: Yeah, well, that's--So when I was thinking about what I needed to do to adopt my lesson stages, I said, "okay, they need more structure." So then I broke that down and went, "how am I going to put my structure into my lesson stages?" And, so what I did was I started to do marking, sitting at the desk. So I said, "right, when you're finished, come out, everybody queue, be quiet and stand in line." And, they loved it. They were all like, "okay," and back and forth and, "okay," and, "he's pushing," and okay, there never was more than seven in the class at one time. I don't know how you'd manage it with a class of sixteen, but with that number, they loved it. They couldn't get enough of it. Toilet breaks. I came down on toilet breaks. [???] "Teacher, water! Teacher, toilet! Blah, blah, blah..." So, basically, in one lesson, I'll have two breaks. One lesson went an hour and a half. I've got [junior starters] today. And they know it's not at a set time, but they know, maybe say, after two or three activities, they know I'll say to them, "does anyone want any water? Do you need to go to the toilet? You can go now." And then they all go. And so that means, every so often, there's like, "teacher, water? Teacher, toilet?" And it also means you can just say, "no, wait." And the [except that] "teacher teacher teacher!" But they accept because they know at some point they're gonna get that break. So, it means I find that they manage to focus a lot more. And, when they're really insistent--it didn't happen often--but you know, say, for example, when I was... cuz that was the other thing I did, cuz I started to structure my lessons a lot more like, so I would know in my head, after two or three activities, I'd give 'em a toilet break. Then, afterwards, [???] two or three, then we've got another toilet break. And then, last part of the lesson. If I said to them, for example, "we're going to use the red book," they would be like--so they really liked the red book, which is the phonics book--so they'd be like, "when, teacher, when?! Can we use it now? Can we use it now? When do we use the red book? When do we use the red book?" And, I say, "okay. Do you see the clock? When that number there says 'ten', we use the red book." And they're like, "okay!". And then they forget! They forget! They stop looking after a few minutes, they stop looking, but you've given them that sort of, like, that limit and so they know it's coming up. So, that's it. And, also, I think because outlining the lesson--because I said, "how can you outline a lesson to seven-year olds. Do you know what I mean? Whatever. Are we gonna look over: 'can't can't plus infinitive' whatever, right?" So, I just said, like, I broke it down to, "we're going to look at blue book, we're going to listen from white book, we're going to write from red book, and then, game." And they're like, "okay!" So, I just, like, broke it down like that, and now they're like, "okay!" And I'm like, "what color book now?" "Red book, teacher. Okay." So, that's how I don't even go into functions because they're junior starters today, you know, but, so that's it. And also, as part of that outline, I've also started explaining a bit more what I want and what the consequences will be if they don't do it. So, quite often, I like to finish with a
game and activity. And I say, "if you're not quiet, you don't pay attention with red book, no game after." So, that gets them a bit more... You just have to keep repeating that message. I say, "oh, did I say I wanted quiet? So, quiet work? Game. Not quiet work? Blue book." "Huh!? No blue book!" They hate the blue book. "Teacher, boring."

[Laughter and group conversation]

Rana: The last thing is follow through on punishment because at first I was a bit too wishy-washy with punishment. Again, it's easier because I had a small class. For sixteen, I don't know how it would work. So, they were misbehaving, I said, "fine, we're not playing outside." And then went, "huhh!?" And I went, "no. We're inside now." And it was the girls, the girls were being naughty. And I said, "boys, your behavior very good. No problems. But we're not playing outside because of the girls." I said to them why. The boys were like, [imitates grumbling], and the girls were [???].

M: So, consequences.

Rana: Yeah, consequences. I'm not saying it a lot improved their behavior, but--and it made me feel more in control of the class, instead of just like them, they were sort of bossing me around. For the adopting my tasks, for my differentiation, I felt that was a little bit--I didn't feel that was as good because it's time-consuming and because you never know what students are going to turn up and what time. So, you can differentiate a task, so you can go with a task and you know that it's going to get a certain person. You'll differentiate for them, but then they're not there for the first twenty minutes when you're doing it. [???] So, I find the task differentiation, I find that really difficult. But, I did find--

M: Is that task differentiation something you went in there saying, "I have to learn how to differentiate tasks?"

Rana: It was something I wanted to practice doing because I don't do it enough.

M: Because it was really interesting, very interesting the difference what you and Maryam talked about. Because Maryam focused, because of the difference in age group, I think. You talked alot them and what they need. Whereas, you found that what's effective is structure, external structure. But talk a little about how the process of keeping a journal and the reflective nature of it actually led you to discover those things.

Rana: Well, the journal, it was like Maryam said. It was keeping a record, which helped me to reflect and made me think, "okay, well, maybe next time I'll try that." And then, it was--that was it. It was just like recording into what worked, what didn't work, and then just going on.

M: What happened in between you writing down the words and what didn't work to you [???]

Rana: Well, I just sort of look at it. I just sort of recorded it, then maybe--I didn't look, and then I would look at it maybe. I'd record, then I'd look, and I'd
be like, "okay, well, that's just something to think about when I'm lesson planning for the next one." I didn't necessarily reflect. It was just something I said I've got to keep in the back of my mind. But I will say one thing.

M: Sounds like reflecting to me.

Rana: Oh, is it? Is that what reflecting is? Well...

M: Well, again, it's the process of having written something down stick with you that maybe wouldn't have stuck with you if you hadn't written it down in the first place.

Rana: Yeah, okay.

M: Did you find yourself going back to what you'd written? Or, did you just write it down and think, "right, I have to remember that."?

Rana: I found I wrote it down and was like, "right, remember that."

M: Okay.

Rana: That's just what I did. But I did find--yeah, because I made a note about reading, and I thought, "yeah, I gotta differentiate reading." So, reading was easier to differentiate. And the outdoor tasks, as well. Those were easy, far easier to differentiate than the actual book tasks. So, [??]. Plus, I observed Jane, as well, but I don't know if we've got time to talk about that.

M: Just quickly because [??]

Rana: There was a good example of differentiation with Jane because she offered to help at break, which I thought was very nice. So, there was a student who was really behind all the others, and so she said, "you know what? We'll do this in the break." So that was [??] not leaving them behind but making them feel included, so I thought that was quite good, even though [??] we're coming back to time-consuming. Jane used a countdown, which I thought that was really for giving structure, so there was, like, "three, two, one." And then there was an activity where Jane asked the students, she said, "you've got to throw the ball. You choose the basket." And I thought that was good. I said, "ah ha! To get the students to differentiate themselves." So, I think you give them activities where they choose where they are on the scale,

M: Yeah.

Rana: ...and that sort of takes time off of you because you don't need to worry about them, about getting it right or wrong for them.

F???: How does that work? [??]

F???????: And, yeah, it's exactly the same class, yeah, and it's like, "can and can't." But, there's always the danger that you don't want to, like, embarrass anybody if they can't, but they're a nice group, so they can kind of, like, take it.
But yeah, that is one of my themes, was meeting the needs of stronger or weaker students that, even in ability--

M: Okay.

F???????: ...worked quite nicely. So, bigger box in a smaller box. And you like, throw the ball, like, "can you throw the ball into the box?"

M: Right.

F???????: But they can choose, if they felt they were good at throwing--

M: And they can go for the smaller box.

F???????: Or, they can go for the safer option with the bigger box.

M: Okay. That's great. I've get a move on so we don't run out of time.

F3: Okay, my question is: How do the different elements of my tasks and activities affect student’s engagement? I have a young adults class, Elementary Four. And I have the same problem: they are not willing to work. They don’t want to work with each other like, boys and girls—they are not motivated at all. And, sometimes, they said, work in pairs, one of them said, "No, I don't work with girls." It was a bit, like, embarassing, so what I found or what I’ve learned is: number one, using a variety of activities. So, at the beginning, I used to do like adults: give them a reading passage and say, "read and answer. Who can answer number one?" To a [??chicken purrs??], it was so boring and they didn't say much. So I thought of just doing something different every time, like test-teach-test, and maybe give them the reading passage, and I ask them to generate questions themselves and swap papers and answer them. I ask one of them to do the role of the teacher so they can come to the board and check the answers and they [nominate] students, so kind of motivated them somehow. Another thing is the competitive element. Okay, they like that part a lot. Like, when it comes to competitions between boys and girls, when we do book writing and [??peer prediction??], they like that part a lot. The third thing is games, whether they are online games or just [??taboos??] or back to the board thing, all of them love this part a lot; whether boys, girls [??] are ready to want to beat them. To challenge each other. And, the last thing is kinesthetic activities. They do enjoy this part and they are willing to participate. So, sometimes as we're discussing, like, [??random??] dictation, I can give them--I cut the reading passage into lines, and in groups, they try to put it into order. So, all these kinds of activities, like, you'll put the questions around the room [??] corrected, so they get involved in this one. So, what I found useful, or the elements, are: variety, games, competitive elements, and kinesthetic activity.

M: Remind us of your question one more time.

F3: The different elements of my task and activities that affect the engagement.

M: Okay.
F3: So, these are the ones that I tried and I found that they worked. What I've learned is--I found it useful to actually write what worked well and what it didn't because after some time, if I don't do this, like, I forget about it. So, today, I tried a certain activity. It worked really well, really well. If I don't write it down, I forget about it and I stop using it. So, I find myself thinking all the time. Before, during, when taking notes, and after it. And I've even thought of having, kind of, a book, or a recipe book, where I can write the activities and techniques that worked for me. So, every time I have this age group where I want to do a reading activity, I can have something at hand. And, I found it interesting when I was doing the [???] the end. Oh really, are you [???] with that? It was really good.

M: Which part are you talking about?

F3: Sorry?

M: Which part are you talking about?

F3: I mean, like, when I do reading activities, they cutted in line, and do this... You know, certain activities that you find they work.

M: Okay.

F3: So, I found that it was really useful.

M: But you said this already reflective part at the end, [???]

F3: I mean when I was preparing that presentation--

M: Oh, so when you were looking back over the journal.

F3: --I had to read, yeah, and remember what I did...

F?????: Yeah.

F3: ..what worked, what didn't work. So, I was really happy to see that some items, like at the end of each, like, what they say, "okay, today, what worked is... what didn't work is..." It kind of reminds me what I should do every time or try something like that. I found it difficult to write a journal because sometimes I drift away from the research question. I just start writing descriptive writing. "Today, we tried this. It worked, it didn't work. So, it's difficult to answer a question. I just write what I like, what I didn't like.

M: Did you think the question even having the question in the first place is even a good thing?

F3: It is. But it is difficult to stick to it. Yeah, it is, so you have something you want to answer it, so you have a goal in mind. But, when I write it, I just think of myself--

F?????: Everything that went good, yeah.

F3: [???] Yeah, classroom management: maybe try this later. If it was related to the question, but it seems to [???] me as a teacher at the end.
M: So, did you find actually--so you said you did the reflective bit right at the end, but did you ever look back over it actually during the--

F3: Not much because I remember it.

M: That's the same for everybody, then. Everybody does.

F3: I remember what I write because I have to think before class, during the class I take notes, after the class I write it in details. Yeah, so I found it useful, actually.

F?????: She did.

F3: And when I observed [Janette], I was happy to see that the same elements that I thought of--like, competitive elements, games, and kinesthetic activities--it worked as well for her class, so it's kind of confirmed what I found out [??], so...

F1: Then there's that [??] definitely hear that. What I learned is that using the book usually meant, "Uhhh..." I didn't want to do it. And, even handouts; handouts were okay cuz I think they felt comfortable with because they could put their head down, they could just answer the questions. It's a comfort with handouts, but ultimately, it didn't really [??generate??] anything. Didn't generate any enthusiasm and stuff unless it was a word puzzle, I suppose, I don't know, but even that [??] heads down, and it's like, whatever.

M: Thank you. That's great. Jane?

Jane: Okay, so my question was, how can I more closely meet the needs of stronger and weaker students, that they're getting something a bit like differentiation throughout the whole thing. And I think I really enjoyed looking at the class from this point of view because it did make me look at their learners individually: what they like and what their learning styles are like? Which meant that I could kind of group them into two. I mean, literally, the stronger ones were pretty similar; the weaker ones were quite similar in that the weaker ones were just a little bit slower. [??] It showed me that it was a mixed ability class, that they worked well in different ways. And so, particularly with the reading and writing that I wanted them to do because there was some that could do that quite well, I would first of all give them the stronger ones more what to do, personalizing it about, you know, their family or something they could produce that then kind of take home parents. Whereas the weaker ones would be just sticking to one task, maybe. But then also getting the stronger ones to come and actually sit with them. And this kind of helped me see the dynamics of the class and even in that kind of age group. Some of them were willing to work with others and some of them weren't. And it didn't matter if they were boys or girls. You know, there was some boys that didn't want to work with other boys, and there were some girls that didn't want to work with other girls. So, it was kind of interesting to see how you could pair them up in different ways.

M: So, just let us write this down a little bit. So you said, you kind of spread the class into two.
Jane: Yeah.

M: Physically? Or.. Jane:

No.

M: Just in your mind?

Jane: Just in my mind, in terms of ability with English. But then, other times there were. It would be a little more where the slow ones would maybe find comfort sitting together, working at the same pace, so they could actually see people around them are working at the same speed...

M: Then, how did that--

Jane: ...they don't feel, you know, uncomfortable that someone's finished and they haven't finished and, like, "oh my god". Particularly, a younger age where maybe they don't understand that it's okay; they do work at different speeds. I think within that unit, they then actually appreciate sometimes the stronger ones coming over. And, particularly, the girls were actually really nice in trying to help the slower ones. So, it wasn't much physically in the room, it was more kind of in my head.

Rana: Did you give them the same tasks? The strong ones and the weak ones?

Jane: They would start off with the same tasks, that everybody's got the same thing that then... I mean, quite often, there were some things on the learning [???] kids website, where maybe we would watch something and then you got worksheets that go with it, but it's got two or three different sections. And so you'd start everybody off with the first section and then some of them would be taking more time because they're just processing things more, so they're all--they are just kind of wandering off in their minds somewhere. Particularly at the end, they'll be a nice productive thing. And so it could just be that for the weak ones, when they eventually get there, they draw something. But, with others, they can actually do it about, "this is my mother. And this is my sister," and kind of just broadening it a little bit more for them.

F?????: Different outcomes.

Jane: But also, because that was my task, knowing that I would have more tasks available for the stronger ones because some of them would do things really quickly.

M: Do you feel like you found--is that for you a clear-cut answer for your research question?

Jane: I think so, yeah.

M: So, talk about how the process of keeping the journal led you to that, if it did?

Jane: Well, again, it was recording initially what I did in the class and then being able to go back and think, "Ok, well..." Initially, I recorded until I came
away, what was working in this lesson. Why, perhaps, were some of the girls
that finished really, really quickly, what was going on there that I hadn't--had I
done something wrong? with the weaker ones, why were they not? Looking
back and realizing that the activity worked well, the weaker ones succeeded,
it's just that they were faster. So, I think it helped me realize that it's okay to
have different paces of learning. Don't worry about if some finish reading
quickly and some finish slowly because, initially, I thought maybe that it was
because they didn't care about the task. Actually, I realized it wasn't that they
didn't care; it was a little more difficult but they could achieve the goal in the
end. And so, not to worry about their interest in the task, it just took them
longer to do it. And so, ultimately, they wanted to do it; just some were
quicker and some were slower.

M: So is that--

Jane: That's what helped me realize that because they were less motivated.
And even one student would try to scribble things quickly, or color things in
quickly, and I would think, "why? Why aren't those taking more time?" But
actually, through it, and with a little bit of encouragement, he would then
actually take a bit more time over it and a bit more care.

M: If I'm hearing you correctly, within that class, there were a lot of moving
parts.

Jane: Yeah.

M: And, the fact of writing it all down helped you to figure out what those
moving parts were.

Jane: Yeah, yeah.

M: Do you think you would have got there--I don't mean this to be a leading
question--would you have got to where you've got now by just teaching, and
not going through that process of writing? Or--

Jane: Well, yes--

M: --would you have gotten there quicker or slower.

Jane: --[?] having taught young learners for a long time, I think it kind of
helped, you know, reinforce certain things, but I've had different environments
with young learners, as well, where there always was a teacher's assistant.

M: Right.

Jane: So, even with the stronger ones, you can maybe even give them a bit
more attention that way--

M: Okay.

Jane: --but you know the other ones have got support. M:

Yeah.
Jane: So, I think it was nice to clarify in my mind and organize it in that way.

M: Okay. One more thing I was going to ask you--uh, just going from my head--

Rana: Was it time-consuming?

Jane: Yeah, it was a bit more, because then when I realized that there was some that were gonna take a bit more time, that meant that I'm gonna half the class that have done things really, really quickly that there's still a sense of achievement. But it did mean that, for the stronger ones, there was--what am I going to do that's going to push them more and more within the content and language of the class?

M: So then, you were actually looking back over the journal quite frequently it sounds like?

Jane: Yes, to actually sort of make me realize more closely what was working as a whole for the group, but then also what was working individually.

M: So then, I would understand if you said to me, "I didn't have time to do look back at what I have written." So, do you just have loads of free time? Or--

Jane: No. Definitely not!

M: So how did you make it work? How did that happen, being able to go back and look over it? Was it that what you wrote was short?

Jane: Yeah. It was not descriptive like, "how's the [??halves??] ?" It was more like bullet-points, like, "what did I do as a record? This activity, this activity." And then go back and say, "well, how did that work and what can I do for next time?"

M: So, we're gonna [?? bullet-points ??]

Jane: That's to say, I don't know whether just because it's on a Saturday, I've got [???] once a week, as opposed to being [?? sub-ting ??] into--

M: But you did it slightly different. Did you do it that half-way during the break and after the lesson? Is that what you did?

Jane: Yeah, yeah. But I still, in between the first lesson and the second lesson during the three hours, I didn't go back and look at it there, really, my mind, I would have to do it as a unit.


Anna: Right, well, my research question was for the same level as Esther's--

M: Which is?

Anna: Pre-intermediate four.

M: Senior [?? Pre - M ??] four.
Anna: Yeah, well, young adults.

F?????: Regent four.

F3: Yeah, young adults but mine is elementary four.

Anna: My research question was: How can I assess a task in such a way that it students understand the purpose of the activity and the outcome?

M: So, the same as Maryam's question.

Anna: Very similar, but your's was more communicative focused. That's the reason why I chose this.

Maryam: Your's was before; mine was after, really. I was trying to get them to sort of see the value of it, to make them engage in it.

Anna: Yeah, but it was for the same reason. It was that they didn't really see the point in communicative activities and they would just give one-word answers, and then nothing more. And it was really difficult to get things out of them. So, I tried a couple of different things. First, I decided I would give them a lesson which was just purely from-the-book and was just worksheet after worksheet after worksheet. And then, at the end, I said, "how did you all enjoy that class?" There was a lot of worksheet, there wasn't any talking, was there? And there, like, "no..." And then, I showed to them a picture of a traditional classroom with everyone with their heads down in singular desks, and another one where they're all engaged and chatting. And I said, "which classroom would you prefer?" And that kind of got the message home.

F???: That's good.

Anna: Yeah, yeah, it was a good idea. And then, another thing. And still, whenever I gave them a communicative activity, for example, one time we did a board game, recently. It was on mixed tenses. And the topic was holidays, and you have a [?? get ??], you pick up a card, answer the question, for example, "where did you spend your last holiday?", and they'd give a one-word answer, like, Dubai. And then, I realized they're still not getting it. I said, "could you just give a little bit more information?" And they said, "yeah, but that's all the question asked me for; it was 'where'." And I said, "what I'm trying to do is develop your conversational skills. Imagine if your friend asked you that question, and you just said, 'Dubai,' the conversation would fall flat." And then I realized that I'm not releasing it to their real life and showing them purpose of why we're doing these little mini real-life situations in class so that they can replicate them outside the class. So, I said, "imagine if you were travelling, for example, and someone tried to strike up a conversation with you. You wouldn't be able to develop a relationship with them in another language. And, in this classroom situation, it's all practice for the outside world." And then, I got them to do a lot of roleplays based on practical situations like, for example, I had to buy a ticket--well, at lot of various different dialogues. And that actually worked really well but they needed a lot of instruction. They needed to give me lots of [?? icy cues/ICQ's ??], lots of modeling, lots of examples. And, at first, they were just copying my examples. They weren't very good at just taking something and running with it. But, that may have
been a question of confidence with me and familiarity with the other students in
the classroom cuz it did actually develop over time. Another reason might be,
is that Rasheed's the alpha in the class, who at the start was just constantly
testing me and challenging me, and he went on holiday, and the whole class
just turned around--but what I found was which was amazing is that when he
came back, he came in forty-five minutes late, without his folder and just sat in
the back of the class, but everyone else was involved in activities. And they
were kind of shunning him and were kind of taking my side. Whereas before,
they all took his side. So, I felt like I won them around a bit, which was great.
And in the next class, he was a lot more, "teacher, teacher, can you tell me
what I've missed?", and he was as defiant--

M: And why did the happen?

Anna: Well, because I think they saw that the activities we were doing were
more relevant to them. Also, I spent a lot more time setting up the activities
and explaining the purpose of them. But then, I took more of a backseat after
I had given them the modelling. And I was perhaps a bit more patient. But, I
mean I was a little bit icy, I guess, with them. I started to say, "look, if you
can't do this in class, then you're not going to get anywhere," and I took that
kind of line with them and I was a bit more, like, "c'mon, now. Buck up."
Rather than before, being a bit more like, "why aren't you doing this? Poor
me, please!" So, they appreciated the hardline.

M: They did.

F?????: Did you bring your [?? eyelets ??] in?

Anna: I did, yeah.

F?????: [??] conversation, I was like, "you should've played your [??
eyelets ??] card.

Anna: Yeah, no, I did. I said it a lot and I kept saying it. An [?? eyelets ??] examiner, as well. If you don't extend your answers, then they're just going to
switch off, and you're not going to get any marks. And I actually had a class
with him, which might have helped with motivation, as well, where we looked at
the speaking part of the [?? eyelets ??], and I gave example
questions--answers to questions, one word answers as opposed to longer in
more detail answers, and that kind of struck a chord, as well. I did keep
saying, "in an [?? eyelets ??] exam... ," cuz that's what gets through
to--obviously relating it to real-life experiences outside the classroom, but also
[?? eyelets ??] really seems to get them motivated.

F?????: You play the [?? eyelets ??] card

Anna: Yeah, totally, so the [?? eyelets ??] card.

M: Wow.

Anna: But the [???] find the question was great. It really got me to focus
and think about it from their perspective because I don't think I had really given
them a purpose for the test. Also, in my IECQ's, I kept saying, "why are we
doing this?" Is it speaking activities to develop your reading skills or your writing skills cuz I hadn't really said that, and I kinda kept talking about fluency or accuracy, and I hadn't done that before.

M: Okay. So what would've happened if you didn't have that question, the research question?

Anna: I wouldn't have been as focused. I wouldn't have been thinking, "okay, explain the practice, explain the outcome," as much. I probably would have gone off in different directions.

M: Okay, so then talk a little about the journal process and how, whether it was easy for you or hard for you?

Anna: It was difficult because as I'm a teacher, I don't have very disciplined study habits. But also, I'm new and I'm finding even difficult just getting from class to class in fifteen minutes. So, I didn't really spend enough time writing down. I find that the research question was great because it was in the back of my mind, and I think of an idea and try and do it. Also, about what I found that worked really well which was having the little conversations in the classroom, like I had to come back and vent to [Saho] and Maryam. And Maryam, as well, was really helpful cuz we had the same level. So, I think that process: reflecting but speaking with people--

M: Okay.

Anna: astounded.

M: So, this is really interesting because... So, the journal didn't work for you, for various reasons, which is not your fault--as you said, it can be time-consuming--but it sounds like you kind of went through a process of keeping that journal but just by having conversations.

Anna: Yeah, definitely, there definintely was a process.

M: And so what extent was your research question in your mind going back and venting to Esther?

Anna: Well, thinking about how these setting up tests communicates the purpose of it--

M: Just wondering to what extent, the fact that the question was there sort of focused you at all? Or, whether it didn't.

Anna: It did, definitely focus me. And even the process, as well, of narrowing it down cuz I was thinking, "I got a problem in my classes. They're not really doing what I want them to do. Why is that?" And having to think it all through and coming to just finding something that I could focus on, and work on, and narrowing it down. That was really good mental exercise.

Maryam: I think about what you said about keeping a journal as opposed to not keeping a journal. But having a task in mind, I was going to say, the first few lessons, I just scribbled some stuff down and then I didn't really think about it--and until I forgot to do my journal. So, when it came to today, the point of
today, and looking at the questions that you asked, thinking, "can I answer them now that I've either got a journal or haven't got a journal?" I could still think about some activities and reflect back on those activities without the journal. However, it was good to have the journal just to say, "ahhhh, yeah", just to underline it or to find out common happenings or something. I could still do it, perhaps without the journal, but I think with the journal it could help a little more.

Anna: No, I can tell. You guys seem to have your thoughts a little bit, well, more structured than I do. I think it would have probably helped, I would have managed to get a lot more out of it if I had had a journal. But, no, it still worked. I think some good still came out of it.

M: So then, what would you say to me--let's say I was going to run this whole thing again with another bunch of people in six-months time--what would you say to me to say to someone else in your situation--if we agree that it is helpful to some extent to keep that journal, what could be done differently to actually make it practical?

Anna: You could give them examples or research questions, "what we got from it?" That would help. And then, maybe, if you had a shorter session, so you said, "write, in two weeks, you are going to get together for twenty minutes and discuss how far you've come," because I would have been more inclined to have kept a journal after having listened to everyone else. But make it short, or ten minutes, or even just pair up--

Jane: Like you said, like have a buddy with it, particularly if you know someone's got the same questions, or even if you've got someone to share what you're going through, even if it's just a completely different question.

M: And that makes complete sense because, just like those of you who wrote in the journal quite frequently had a big record to look back on, I guess it works exactly the same. Like, you were talking about how your journal, in a way, was conversations. So, if that was more structured and you had more regular meetings about it, it would have had the same effect as if you'd been keeping the journal.

F????: Yes, exactly.

Anna: Better, yeah.

M: Great. That's really interesting. I want to go around quickly, I did this with Maryam and I've forgotten everyone else. I'd just like you to say what your research question was and then a very quick, one-sentence answer to that question. I think you said it already, or was it Rana?

Maryam: Yes, could you forget? How could you make the students more aware of the outcomes of their activities? I guess, producing it was more about motivating them to do it, but aware of the outcomes?

M: Is that the same because you had alot of answers, though. Were your answers to that question or did the answer chain-develop in your mind?
Maryam: I think what you said first then worked my way through it.

M: So, if someone said to you now, Maryam: how can I make my students more aware of

the outcomes of the task? I guess what that question is what Anna said. What was your question.

Anna: It was that's it: How can I set my tasks up so that they understand the purpose and outcome of the activity?

M: Which means: How can I make the outcomes more successful?

Maryam: Yeah, I think that's it. Yeah, and I think it's to get them to produce most of the exercise. Or, like, give them the parameters or give them the target. Get them to contribute more.

M: Great stuff.

Rana: How can I adopt my classroom tasks in lesson stages in such a way to improve learner behavior? Structure. And differentiation.

(Polish): Different elements that affect most students' engagement. Variety, competitive parts, [??] or according to their learning style. Visuals, kinesthetic activities, or whatever.

Jane: How can I more closely meet the needs of stronger and weaker students in a class? Producing more work for the stronger students that pushes them in such a way--they're going to get more. Weaker students still achieve the same goal.

Anna: So, to understand the purpose and the outcome, just being more explicit from the outset--

M: About.

Anna: --about the purpose, and releasing it back to real-life and making it more relevant. Showing them that what they do in the classroom is gonna actually help them in the real-world. And doing it in a variety of ways: the [?? eyelet ??] card, meeting a stranger on a train.

Maryam: Also, there's pictures. I think what you did there is you set the target right from the start. You can either have this glass or this glass: do you either wanna pass your [?? eyelet ??] test or do you wanna be able to communicate outside? So I think you set those three goals and guided them right from the start. This is where you're aiming.

Anna: Yeah, and I think that--I mean, I didn't do that this year, but I know that it's one of the checklist requirements is explaining our method of teaching, the dynamic teaching. And I think maybe doing that with a picture and really explaining the benefits of dynamic teaching.
M: It's interesting, isn't it? What you see on a registered checklist and what it means to you when you're actually investigating a genuine problem [??], but that's where it comes from. That's what it's there for.

Maryam: I don't think I could explain that to students. I don't think it's necessary for us to explain that to students that this is our teaching method. I think this is what we're aiming for. I think what you're saying was clearer to them. Look, these are the eight goals and that's how we get there. "We're gonna teaching you dynamic" [??]

M: I mean, part of that is also just like, as you were talking about getting your students to understand why they're doing certain things, getting them to say what kind of classroom they want. Part of the reason that's on the checklist is because you actually have teachers verbalizing it. And the idea is that you've got the same kind of [??] there. If you have to explain something, then you end up more likely to do it. But anyway, it's a bit of a tangent. What I have heard all of you say is the fact that is having the research question, whether or not you stuck to it, all the time, or whether or not you managed to actually to answer it by writing was good to focus you on the task and how [??] went about it. So what we're going to do now is to think about, look back on what you've just done. It's been five weeks. I didn't intend it to be that long. If it had been two or three weeks, would of it been as effective?

Maryam: I think yes.

Anna: Although it did take a while actually for me just to see things coming to effect and I had the [??] classroom to change. I don't know.

M: So maybe about a month. So, I want you to think about--Actually, to be honest, I'm amazed at how many concrete answers you will come up with to your questions is absolutely, really impressive. But it's never the end, is it? So, I want you to write down now, what in your mind is your most burning question or thing that you want to solve yourself.

F???: About [??] learners?

M: In the class [??]

F???: [??] to the question, or... about [??]

M: Anything at all? It could be something completely different. It could be something that's come out of the research that you've done. But, just take a second to think about: is there anything about teaching that kind of group that I just don't have an answer to? Or, I want to have an answer to.

Maryam: It's not so much a question, it's perhaps an action.

Anna: Yeah, I feel like that. Feel like something I'm trying to maintain.

Maryam: I feel like there's something I'm trying to include in it.

M: Whatever gets you fired up the most. If you can't think of a question, it could be something you don't understand. Something that just confuses your, or you draw a blank.
M: Okay, very quickly then.

Maryam: These are things I want to concentrate on more: creating relevance to the student, whether it's a cultural relevance, practical relevance, or an academic relevance. And the next one, coming from Rana, was creating and establishing routines, especially with young learners. I don't think I do that enough and from what you're saying, that's something I want to work on.

M: Great.

???: My one is learning autonomy, as in, thinking for themselves, and not being spoon-fed. How can I promote it? How can I get them to do it?

???: Mine is the topics that are relevant to them. And to their culture, and that involves all of them or encourages them and to communicate and say something rather than just one word. And, learn autonomy as well.

Jane: I think it's keeping attention with young learners. You know, at any given day, one lesson they can be focused really, really well. And then, another day, they're just pinning off the walls, and you think--

M: There's only so much you can do about that.

Jane: But I think it would kind of come down maybe to at least a variety, a couple of activities, where it's gonna maybe push them a bit more. Where, maybe it's because it's too easy or too difficult then, you know, either way.

M: Okay.

Anna: Yeah, mine was still their attitudes are not being de-motivated by their attitudes and realizing that if you do make things relevant and give them enough variety and autonomy, then you can change the attitude. But it is quite hard work, I think because it's constant isn't it, because they're so inclined to just give you that face. But make that a motivating thing rather than de-motivating.

M: So what's your question?

Anna: I put lots of things here. I don't know! I think that the relevance is something that's really come out for me, and cultural relevance, because other teenagers that I've worked with. We've done a lot--It's been a lot more international. And the topics I've thrown at them just aren't working with these ones, so I think that would be worthwhile having an [inset] about that.

Rana: Do you know, as well, though, I think a lot of it has to do with whoever, because you don't get the same, I don't want to say, obtuseness--I don't know how to say it politely. But you don't get the same--it's important to be cultural relevant, don't get me wrong, but you do find with the higher levels, they are definitely more switched on about what's going on around them. Like, whereas, here, if it's not happening in Dubai, "ehhhhh..."

Anna: Who cares?
Rana: And that's the thing, and I think it is. That's not to say your upper/higher levels should'n't be culturally relevant, but I do think it is especially important for lower levels. That's an obstacle you come up far more against then when you've got to intermediate three or four, I find personally.

Anna: No, you're right, cuz I've got intermediate four with young adults and we discuss all kinds of things.

M: That's why one of these five or six British council teaching skills is most relevant to what you're talking about.

???: Know your learners?

M: Yes, understanding your learners. That's why it's there, for that very reason.

Anna: And that takes time.

M: That's why when you've been here for a couple of years, things just get so much easier. Because you just go in there, know what you can talk about that's going to work. Not as much comfort is you're you, but...

Jane: It will get easier.

Maryam: When you ask them what you want to talk about, they don't know.

Anna: They don't know.

Maryam: Yeah, you never get an answer back. You do have to, [???] saying, everyone sits together and says this is what we talked about and this is what worked well because I think think ever asking them, they can never think of-

M: What situation in life would you ever walk up to someone and say, "what do you want to talk about?"

Maryam: I do say, especially with the adults, is there any vocabulary you need to look at? The only ones I got responses back was our PI-4 class. We got travel and sports. Travel from the girls, sports from the boys. So, I can do it a little bit on that. Yeah, but any examples in the book where it goes into music, it would never be Arabic music. [???] pop stars that are not or anything, so it's just...

Anna: So, if we do get together and [?? collate ??] all our activities that [??], like Jonah and the Whale, that would be really useful.

M: Sure. That could be a good piece for someone's learning plan, next year, to create a resource of topics that work.

Rana: And [??] the lower level, as well. Because you're adding that into the mix. It's just not a cultural--ah, it's tough.

M: There's a lot going on. There's an awful lot going on, I mean, to a certain extent. I think you're right; it is a question of time. But, then again, the more
you do this type of inquiry, the quicker that goes. Ah, you gotta go, so feel free to.

???: Okay, well, thank you.

M: Before you go, these little Post-it notes. I gave them to you as Post-it notes for a reason--what do you think it might be?

???: For the next session.

M: Stick 'em on your monitor and keep it there. This could work it's way into your learning plan for next year. But even if it doesn't, like just what you were saying, having that question articulated up somewhere--it's gonna work.

???: Thank you, bye-bye.

M: So, that whole thing took literarlly, exactly twice as long as I thought it was going to. But I think that was all absolute gold. Do you remember what the topic of this [??] was?

???: Classroom management.

M: It's classroom management. I'm wondering how far, the stuff that you've looked at is classroom management. What do you think?

Rana: I think, personally for me, it [?? reminds ??] me of classroom management 101.

M: Right.

???: Like, really, it was just like, something that I never had before because I suppose I'm like everybody, just, "oh yeah, I got my [??], okay, great. Teach." You know, and so, it was really good for me. And, I, by no means, brilliant at it now, but I can see--not even good, I would say, but I can feel--

M: But you're better.

???: --and I feel more confident. I'm a bit more in control. But, I was lucky because it was a good class. Trying that with sixteen senior elementarys? We'll see how it goes. But at least I've got some [??].

M: But they're principles. The only other thing I say is that things you're talking about are particularly relevant to juniors. All the kind of strict rules and framework, you absolutely need those for juniors. But, I think you have to take a little sort of different [?? tack ??] when they get older.

???: You think?

M: I mean, the principles are the same, maybe, but if you tried that with a group of upper-intermediate adults--
???: I wouldn't need to. This is the thing. So, I think I take your point, but I do feel like elementary-level seniors, I think I would feel like--I would still be doing the same.

M: But I guess it depends whether the problem is behavior or whether it's just not giving it--

???: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's all this, but at least I feel more equipped.

M: What about you, a question, Maryam, because your's wasn't--to what extent was your's related to classroom management?

Maryam: It's an active [?? team ??] within classroom management. I wouldn't say it is as closely linked as what Rana is saying, but I would put it in that category.

M: I think it is because part of classroom management is setting up tasks, and part of setting up tasks is giving instruction. But, it's also making them understand what the tasks are and why you're doing it. Yeah, it's not as clear a part of classroom management. Because, the question is if that's not in place, problems [???] emerge, everything. So, how about you? What was your question again? Just remind me.

???: [???] the elements and activities at a future engagement.

???: Yeah, it doesn't have a direct link, but again, it's related somehow, like if they are engaged, they will be, like, working in pairs, groups, motivated.

[1:07:03.0]

LIMIT REACHED - END TRANSCRIPTION.