Teacher Educator's Reflective Practices: Uncharted Territories?

Vesna Dimitrieska, Ph.D.

23 February, 2018

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Overview:

- Study background
- Purpose of the Study
- Research Questions
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Significance of the study
- Limitations, Implications, Future Research
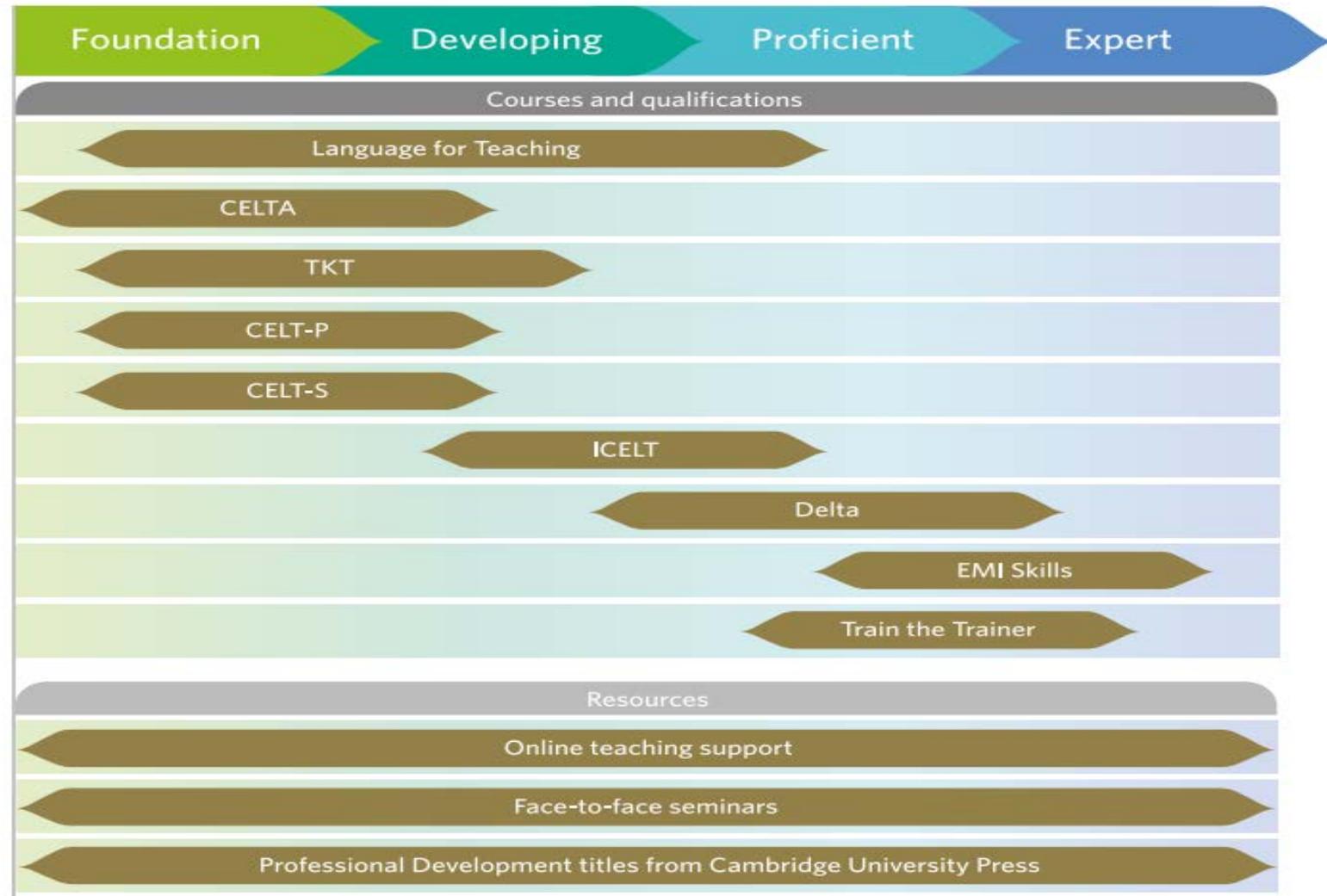
Study Background

- **The CELTA (=Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults)**

    -University of Cambridge English Language Assessments

    -full-time (4-week) or part-time (12-week) module

    -Content: 6 hours of teaching practice; 4 written assignments; continuous assessment

    -My role

- **Motivation**

    -personal connection & realization about lack of research conducted on these courses

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Cambridge English
Teacher Development

Our teacher development maps to every stage of the Cambridge English Teaching Framework

Foundation	Developing	Proficient	Expert

Courses and qualifications

Language for Teaching

CELTA

TKT

CELT-P

CELT-S

ICELT

Delta

EMI Skills

Train the Trainer

Resources

Online teaching support

Face-to-face seminars

Professional Development titles from Cambridge University Press

Purpose of the study

Broader research question:

to examine the nature of the **interplay** between **language teacher cognition/conceptualizations** and **teacher learning** in an intensive pre-service teacher training course

(idiosyncratic trajectories of individual teachers to guide instructional and developmental decisions of teacher educators)

Research Questions:

1. How do **teacher educator's/researcher's practices** & **reflexivity** affect the interplay between language teaching conceptualizations and teacher learning of the pre-service EFL teachers?

2. How do **pre-service EFL teachers interpret** the CELTA course experience **in relation to their LT conceptualizations**?

3. What are **the factors** that influence each pre-service EFL teacher's interplay between language teaching conceptualizations & teacher learning?

4. How do **pre-service EFL teachers perceive the interplay** between language teacher conceptualizations and teacher learning **during and after** the CELTA?

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Research Questions:

1. How do **teacher educator's/researcher's practices** & **reflexivity** affect the interplay between language teaching conceptualizations and teacher learning of the pre-service EFL teachers?

2. How do **pre-service EFL teachers interpret** the CELTA course experience **in relation to their LT conceptualizations**?

1. What are **the factors** that influence each pre-service EFL teacher's interplay between language teaching conceptualizations & teacher learning?

1. How do **pre-service EFL teachers perceive the interplay** between language teacher conceptualizations and teacher learning **during and after** the CELTA?

Definitions:

- **Language teacher cognition (LTC) /Conceptualizations**: what teachers know, believe, & think about teaching (Borg, 2003)

- **Teacher learning**: a process of acquiring, applying, and perfecting the language teaching skills

- **Interplay between LTC and teacher learning**: the entire process through which teachers become aware of their change/growth related to language teaching, aimed to help them see how their knowledge, beliefs, & thinking is transformed as a result of teacher learning

- **Language teacher identity**: broader concept; resulting from the interplay between LTC and teacher learning

Literature Review:

A.   Language Teacher Identity

Miller (2009): the relational, interactional, and constructed nature of the features of identity that are performed in context

B. Language Teacher Cognition

Borg (2003); Johnson (2009); Woods (1996)

C. Teacher Learning

Teacher training vs. teacher development

Teacher change and professional growth

Clarke & Hollingsworth (2002): professional growth as a learning process that is inevitable and continuous ("change sequences" & "growth networks"); idiosyncratic nature

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Theoretical/Analytical Framework:

Farrell's Framework for Reflecting on Practice (2015)

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978)

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Farrell's Framework for Reflecting on Practice (2015)
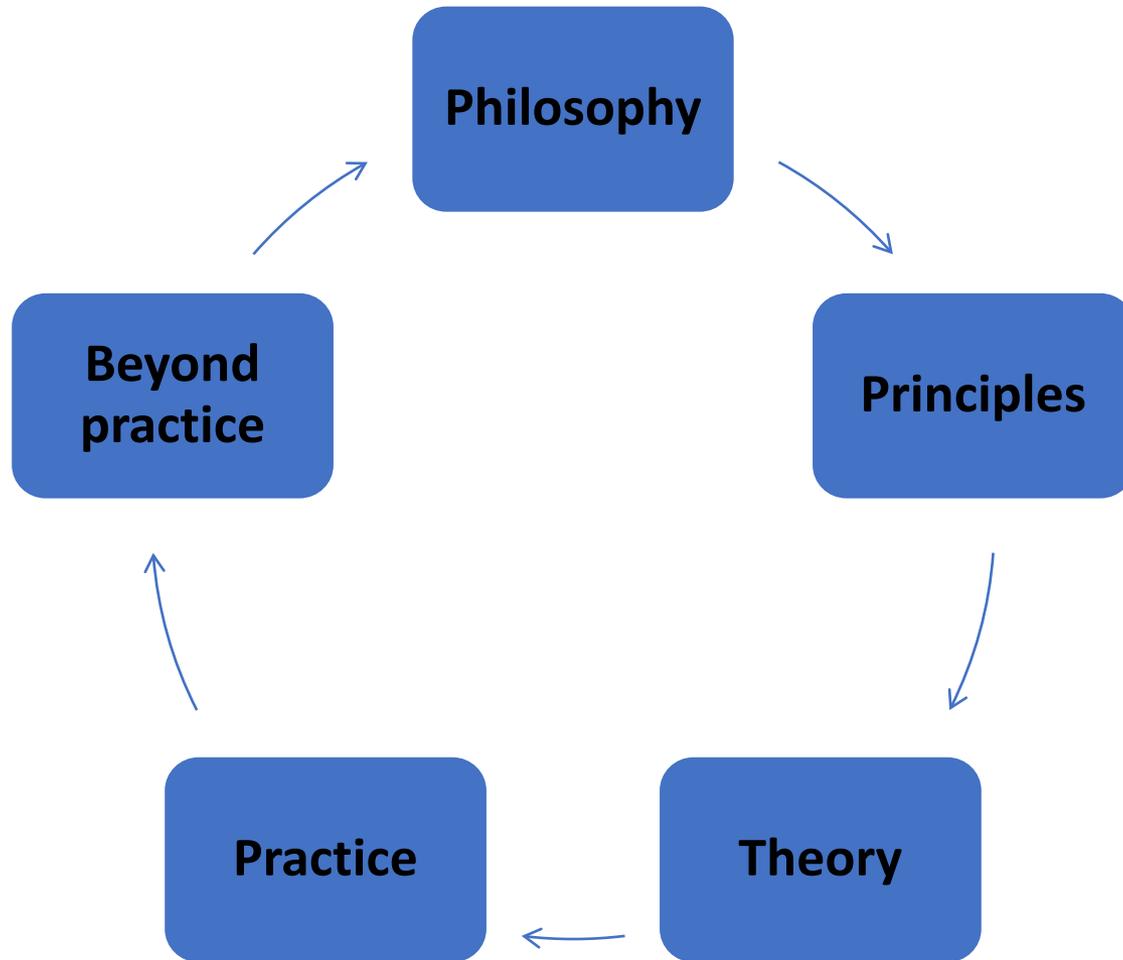
Research Methodology

Study Design: qualitative, case study model

Rationale: the nature of the phenomena studied

Research Paradigm: **interpretive paradigm** (reality is socially constructed); **constructivist perspective** ("ontologically relativist, epistemologically subjectivist and methodologically hermeneutic and dialectic", Guba & Lincoln, 1989)

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Participants

Participant:	Educational Background:	FL learning experience:	Pre-CELTA teaching experience:	Post-CELTA teaching experience:	Native/ Non-Native Speaker Status:
Emma (trainee teacher)	BA in Technical Theater	French, Korean, Arabic	N/A	Language school in Korea	NS
Tom (trainee teacher)	BA in Political Science	Spanish, Korean	3 years in Korea	Language school in Mexico	NS
Anna (trainee teacher)	BA in Anthropology	Spanish, Arabic	2.5 years in Korea	Language school in Mexico	NS
Vesna (teacher educator/researcher)	CELTA tutor; PhD candidate	English, French, German, Serbian	16 years of ELT; 6 years as a CELTA tutor	N/A	NNS

Participants

Participant:	Educational Background:	FL learning experience:	Pre-CELTA teaching experience:	Post-CELTA teaching experience:	Native/ Non-Native Speaker Status:
Emma (trainee teacher)	BA in Technical Theater	French, Korean, Arabic	N/A	Language school in Korea	NS
Tom (trainee teacher)	BA in Political Science	Spanish, Korean	3 years in Korea	Language school in Mexico	NS
Anna (trainee teacher)	BA in Anthropology	Spanish, Arabic	2.5 years in Korea	Language school in Mexico	NS
Vesna (teacher educator/researcher)	CELTA tutor; PhD candidate	English, French, German, Serbian	16 years of ELT; 6 years as a CELTA tutor	N/A	NNS

Research Sites:

Stage 1: **Authorized CELTA center, USA** (during the teacher training)

Stage 2: **private language schools in South Korea and Mexico** (after the teacher training)

Data Collection: Sources and Stages

Data Source:	Stage (One or Two):	When:
Semi-structured interviews (2): *Interview #1*	Stage one	first week of CELTA course
Interview #2	Stage two	1.5 years after the CELTA
Observations: *Non-participant observations of teaching practice* (21)	Stage one/two	During the CELTA and 1.5 years after the CELTA
Participant observations of group debriefing sessions (16)	Stage one	During the CELTA
Documents: *Application form*	Stage one	2-3 weeks before the CELTA
Pre-interview task	Stage one	2-3 weeks before the CELTA
Lesson plans (9 per participant, 27 in total)	Stage one	During the CELTA
Self-reflection forms (9 per participant, 27 in total)	Stage one	During the CELTA
Written assignments (4 per participant, 16 in total)	Stage one	During the CELTA

Data Analysis:

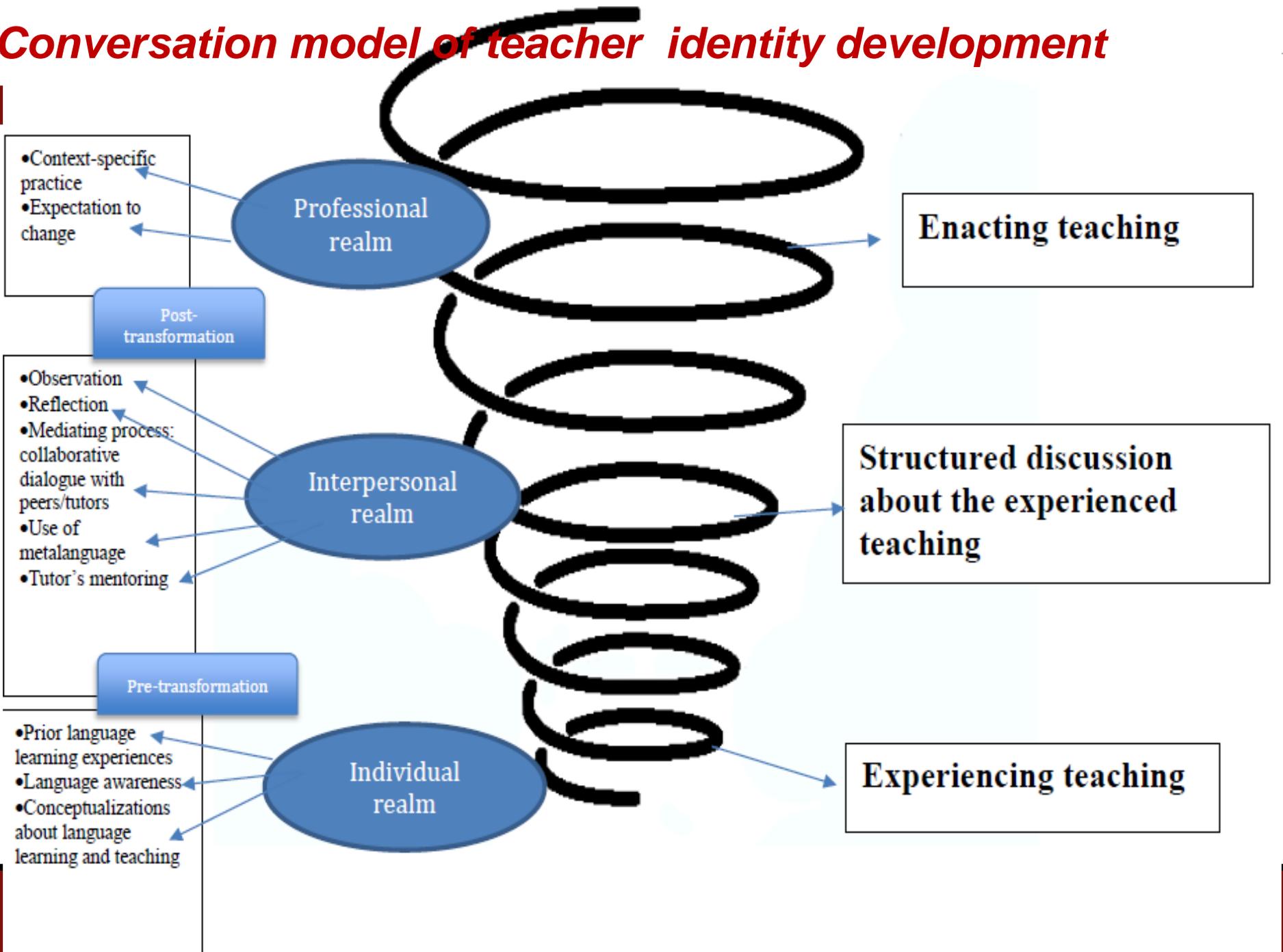**Unit of analysis:** every individual case (every individual trainee teacher)

Phase #1: Within-case Analysis

Phase #2: Cross-case Analysis

Model of teacher identity development:

Conversation model of teacher identity development

Conversation model of teacher identity development

- Context-specific practice
- Expectation to change

Professional realm

Post-transformation

- Observation
- Reflection
- Mediating process: collaborative dialogue with peers/tutors
- Use of metalanguage
- Tutor's mentoring

Interpersonal realm

Pre-transformation

- Prior language learning experiences
- Language awareness
- Conceptualizations about language learning and teaching

Individual realm

Enacting teaching

Structured discussion about the experienced teaching

Experiencing teaching

Findings: My practice

A.Awareness- raising practices:

◆   student engagement

◆   the need to be selective in teaching

◆   trainee teachers' language awareness

◆   ways to present/practice target structures

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Awareness-raising practices: student engagement

V: Just think, at this stage, we are looking for… Last week we were looking for rapport, for grading the language, TTT [teacher talking time], their needs, but now, we are looking more for how you manage the whole learning, whether you are facilitating the learning or hindering the learning; then, what's the pace, what's your timing, are you using the context well and how you are stating your aims, too. So, it's not just how you are teaching, it's the whole package. And, Jennifer, do monitor more, because I think you need to be more aware, to know more how well they are doing, during the controlled practice.

Awareness-raising practices: student engagement

V: Just think, at this stage, we are looking for… Last week we were looking for rapport, for grading the language, TTT [teacher talking time], their needs, but now, we are looking more for how you **manage the whole learning**, whether you are *facilitating* the learning or *hindering* the learning; then, what's the pace, what's your timing, are you using the context well and how you are stating your aims, too. So, **it's not just how you are teaching, it's the whole package**. And, Jennifer, do monitor more, because I think you need to be more aware, to know more **how well they are doing**, during the controlled practice.

the need to **move from teacher-centered classrooms** to activities/lessons that are **more student- and learning-centered**

Awareness-raising practices: opportunities to practice the target structure (plan and lesson)

V: And, providing opportunities for enough practice. Maybe for TP8 and 9, it'll be important to see, "OK, they did the speaking [activity], but **was it enough**?" or "They wrote, but **was it enough**? Did they have **enough practice of that in the lesson**?" **Can you tell that they had enough practice**? Maybe, for example, you managed to finish on time, and you managed to finish all of the activities, but **was it enough**? Because sometimes the plan, everything can look great in a plan, but then, in reality, it's different. Of course, it could be different with different groups, but **we have these students in mind** and that's what we are doing. (Debriefing Session for TP#7).

Findings: My practice

B. Trainer talk:

◆ modeling

◆ eliciting

◆ asking questions

◆ providing explanations

◆ using examples

◆ using praise and encouragement

◆ providing strategies

◆ making connections

Findings: My own reflexivity

Insights related to my instructional practices as a teacher educator:

- Types of modeling

Findings: My own reflexivity

Types of modeling:
How to set up tasks
How to ask concept checking questions
How to elicit
How to use marker sentences
How to use various feedback strategies
How to correct errors
The thinking the trainee teachers should engage in

Findings: My own reflexivity

Insights related to my instructional practices as a teacher educator:

- Types of modeling

Insights related to Cambridge principles and expectations:

- Use of translation
- Technicality about not allowing the trainee teachers to use other visuals

Insights related to my researcher/teacher educator identity:

- Expectation from the participants about the transformative nature of the CELTA
- Insecurity about being the non-native speaker of English

Findings: My own reflexivity- insecurity about being the non-native speaker of English

Vesna: …and, by the way, "by foot"?

Peter: Yeah.

Maria: [laughs] Yeah, we say that, "we get there by foot", but you are right, they need to say "on foot". *[Maria is aware of why I'm bringing this issue up. She had previous teaching experience and may have encountered this rule in the books she had used, even though she does not say so.]*

Vesna: Which is more *[frequent]?* We are teaching them the most frequent one.

………

Vesna:…but for me, that was…. It was just, like, when I learnt English, "you go by car, by plane, by ship, but ON FOOT!" *[sharing what I was taught as a language teacher, both from the grammar books and my English teachers]...* and, I'm like, "OK, wait a minute!"*[sharing what I thought in the moment Peter used 'by foot' in his teaching] [everyone laughs].* I know that is possible, but I know that the most frequent one is "on foot". (Debriefing Session for TP#6)

Summary of findings:

- The crucial role teacher educator's own reflexivity plays on their own practice and growth

- Reciprocal and bidirectional nature of teacher learning

Trainee teachers ⟷ teacher educators

Implications and Future Research:

Implications for teacher educators:
- Types of instructional and reflective practices conducive to teacher growth and teacher development

- Types of relationships between teacher educators and teachers that promote the spirit of professional and personal growth beyond formal training

- Relationship dynamic between NNS teacher educators and NS trainee teachers

- Theorizing the learning/development of teacher educators

- Effectiveness of the reflective conversation model of teacher identity development

Implications and Future Research:

Implications for EFL and language teachers in general:

- study findings pertinent to their own contexts

- study findings to help them make sense and reconstruct some of their conceptualizations related to language teaching, language learning, and teacher learning

- become familiar with novel ways to engage in teacher learning processes

- Examine the application of the model among other language teachers

Questions?

- vdimitri@indiana.edu

Thank you!