

THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Sara Packer for the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages were presented March 10, 2006, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Sara Packer for the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages presented March 10, 2006.

Title: The Magic of Teaching: The Delicate Balance Revealed in an Experienced Teacher's Reflections

Over years of teaching, I have searched for an understanding of the elusive dynamics of the classroom and have wanted to identify specific factors that shift the balance between positive and negative teaching experiences.

To investigate this topic, I used data from the PSU Lab School, a research project that uses audio and video technology to record ESOL classes. The data was a small subset of a large collection of teacher *debriefs*: short reflections recorded at the end of class on a daily basis by experienced ESOL teachers who teach English at the Lab School and also have roles as researchers, in collaboration with researchers from the university.

My analysis is an in-depth qualitative case study of these debriefs, generated during one ten-week class by one teacher. I transcribed each debrief and divided it into topics to find out what the teacher reflected on and how often each topic recurred. I studied the results both qualitatively (in context and in comparison to my own experience) and quantitatively (comparing frequencies of occurrence).

I analyzed days that were satisfying for the teacher and compared them to days that had negative aspects. Many of the positive classes shared characteristics such as a good balance between planning and flexibility; the ability to take advantage of teachable moments; stimulating student inquiries; and co-learning between teacher and students. The less satisfying classes had timing and scheduling conflicts; devastating interactions with individual students; and administrative nightmares, but they also had characteristics of positive classes as well.

Good days and bad days are a fluid construct that is personal to each teacher and each teaching situation, but I could still read the teacher stories in the debriefs and take their wisdom back to my own classroom to improve my teaching. I felt support from knowing that another teacher's experiences were similar to mine, and they helped me take the "bad days" less seriously.

The debriefs are a rich source of information about the topics that concern teachers. This information can be used in training new teachers and in supporting veteran teachers to persevere in the classroom.

THE MAGIC OF TEACHING:
THE DELICATE BALANCE REVEALED IN AN EXPERIENCED TEACHER'S
REFLECTIONS

by

SARA PACKER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Portland State University
2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank everyone at the Lab School and the Department of Linguistics at Portland State University who has supported me during this process. My special gratitude goes to Dominique Brillanceau, whose spirit has made a permanent impression on mine.

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GLOSSARY: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Debrief: Refers to the recorded audio reflections that both of the PRAs create after each class they teach.

ESOL, TESOL, and ESL

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages, used mainly to refer to teachers and classes in countries where English is predominantly spoken.

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, as in the MA TESOL program at Portland State University or *The TESOL Quarterly*. In reference to teachers, it means Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

ESL: English as a Second Language, used mainly to refer to teachers and classes in countries where English is predominantly spoken.

Note: ESL and ESOL are generally interchangeable. I use both, depending on the choice in the source material I am talking about.

Lab School: A classroom laboratory situation at PSU, where regular community ESL classes are audio- and video-taped for further study into how

adult students learn English. For further information consult www.labschool.pdx.edu.

NCSALL: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, funding source for the Lab School project. For further information consult www.ncsall.net.

PCC: Portland Community College. For further information consult www.pcc.edu.

PRA: Practitioner/research associate; there are two at the Portland State University Lab School. Half of their duties involve teaching English at the Lab School, and for this they are employed by Portland Community College. The other half of their duties revolve around their role as research associates. According to the description of the Lab School at www.labschool.pdx.edu, “...ESOL practitioners model effective instruction, mentor pre-service teachers, participate in ongoing research, and engage in local and national dissemination of the Lab School research findings.”

PSU: Portland State University. For further information consult www.pdx.edu.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Having worked for years as a trainer and teacher of adults in my longtime career field of Early Childhood Education, I have developed an ongoing fascination with the everyday dynamics of the classroom. This interest continues as I move into my new profession as a teacher of English as a second language.

I find that I can never predict exactly what is going to happen on any given day of teaching. Regardless of how well I plan in advance or how many times I have successfully done a tried-and-true activity, some days, and some class groups, do not conform at all to my expectations. This is not to mention the days when I don't plan well or decide to try something new. Variables like my own physical health, my ability to focus, my energy level, and my enthusiasm seemed to weave in a complex dance with numerous other factors. The variables include individual students in the class, their dynamic interactions with each other, the presence or absence of certain participants, the topic at hand, the time allotted for discussion, my choice of either lecture or small group format, the number of questions from students, how those questions affect other students, events in the outside world – the list is almost endless.

And there is occasionally something that I call *magic*, for lack of a better word. It's the only way I can describe that unknown essence on those

fantastic days when the whole of the class seems so much greater than the sum of its parts, and I soar out at the end on a cloud of boundless energy. The corresponding lack of magic makes itself known on the horrid days, when I slink away feeling like a dismal failure, or when a disparaging remark from a student crushes my self-esteem, or when a painstakingly developed activity designed to take an hour falls flat in five minutes.

Most of my days in the classroom are neither fantastic nor horrid. They usually strike a balance between successful teaching/learning and food for thought about possible improvements or new approaches. But the range of emotions I have experienced over time, and the mixed results with planned activities, has led me to search for a better understanding of the elusive dynamics of the classroom. I have often wondered if I could identify specific factors that work subtly or obviously to shift the balance between positive and negative teaching experiences.

One avenue of inquiry has been to seek out interchanges with other teachers to find out if they have had similar experiences. For example, I have been curious about how other teachers handle issues with challenging students. During my years in the classroom, I have had to process interactions with students which range from inspirational to devastating. I have noticed that when I approach my next day of teaching, the residue of negative interactions can affect the teaching/learning experience that results. My ability to work with (or around) problematic relationships with students has

grown as I gain teaching experience, but these incidents still have the ability to increase my tension in the classroom and decrease my satisfaction and enthusiasm. The magic of teaching is more elusive for me when my self-confidence is low, and I have felt the need for outside encouragement and advice.

Reflection in itself is a powerful tool for teachers, and even when I engage in solitary reflection I learn a lot. But when I hear myself think out loud about my own teaching, and teaching in general, in the presence of an informed and sympathetic colleague, and that person tells me her stories in exchange, it raises reflection to a new and more powerful level. If my experiences are reflected in my colleague's stories, I can move away from personal doubts and into a more confident stance as I consider what I now know to be a problem that is likely to occur in other classrooms. If this is not the case, my colleague can help me understand what I am doing to create the situation that concerns me and how I can change and improve. In most teaching environments, I have had very few opportunities to talk to other instructors about the art and craft of teaching, but those rare times were supportive learning experiences that I would like to repeat more frequently. I'm not alone in this perception; the literature about teaching tells the stories of other teachers who have experienced the same benefits from collegial sharing (see, for example, Block, 1996; Bryant, 2003; Gitlin, 1994; Murphy, 2001; Nikolic and Cabaj, 2000; Wells, 1994).

My desire for more communication with other teachers in order to understand the complex nature of teaching was rewarded in an unexpected way. Several years ago, while continuing to teach early childhood education at the college level, I entered the Masters program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at Portland State University. I was excited by my introduction to the Lab School, a research project that uses advanced audio and video technology to record regular community college ESOL classes. This format creates the potential for extensive analysis of how English as a second language is learned and taught.

Two highly experienced ESOL teachers not only teach English at the Lab School but also have complementary roles as researchers, in collaboration with the project's researchers from the university. The teachers' official job title is practitioner/research associate, or PRA. This arrangement, while still far from standard in educational research, reflects a growing interest in and validation of the importance of the teacher as a co-constructor of professional knowledge about curriculum and teaching/learning.

On a Lab School tour I was intrigued by the mention of teacher *debriefs*: an accumulation of hundreds of short teacher reflections recorded at the end of class on a daily basis by the two practitioner/research associates. I was already convinced that teacher reflection was valuable both as a personal exercise and for what it reveals about the nature of teaching (see, for example,

Bailey, 1996; Freeman, 1982; Katz, 1996; Nunan, 1989). The opportunity to listen to another experienced teacher's reflections was compelling.

I decided to make the debriefs the focus of my Masters thesis. At the time, the debriefs existed in audio form only, and I was the first person to start transcribing them. Over the past few years I have listened to and transcribed fifty reflective debriefs recorded by Lab School practitioner/research associate Dominique Brillanceau.

When I first listened to the debriefs, I focused mainly on the techniques and activities used by Dominique in her classroom. Gradually, my interests expanded from the concrete details of ESOL curriculum to broader issues involving the nature of the teaching experience. The contents of the debrief reflections drew me into a mental dialogue, forming a base with which to compare and contrast my own teaching (which has now started to include ESOL classes).

I have narrowed my thesis project down to the study of eighteen sequential debriefs, which represent the complete set of debriefs for the Level B class taught by Dominique during the ten-week term of Winter 2002. I divide each debrief reflection into predetermined topic categories to find out when and how often these topics recur. I study the results both qualitatively (in context, and also in comparison to my own experience with good days, bad days, and the complex magic of teaching) and quantitatively (comparing frequencies of occurrence).

The magic is there in these reflections, as well as the good, bad, and ordinary days. The wild successes, even at unexpected moments, contrast with the times of slogging along with little inspiration. As I listen to this very experienced teacher having a dialogue with herself about the day's events from her insider perspective, I find myself "living" her experience and at the same time analyzing what is happening at a distance, from a teacher/collegial outsider point of view. In turn, I can imagine that other teachers will benefit from this insider/outsider dialogue in the same ways that I have – questioning, confirming, and affirming their own experience - and will add their own personal interpretation of the classroom events discussed.

Over the past thirty years, educational research and theory has moved toward greater respect for teachers in the combined role of practitioners and also researchers into their own practice, and this approach is continually developing (Freeman and Richards, 1996). The value placed on the disconnected outside researcher has been slowly shrinking over that time, but it has by no means disappeared (Yates and Muchisky, 2003). The Lab School project validates the importance of the practitioner as researcher and is an exciting addition to the different types of communication possible between teachers.

The greatest benefit of an exchange of information between field practitioners lies in the exhilarating feeling that teaching at its most profound level is a shared experience between teachers even as we stand alone among

our students. I hope that through this thesis I can bring this experience to life for other teachers, so that our teaching is both firmly grounded in the wisdom of teachers' voices and also rises to the new heights of excellence that dialogue and collaboration can inspire.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

It is not the critic who counts; not the man [sic] who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena... who strives valiantly... who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions... who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly...

~Theodore Roosevelt

My thesis involves the analysis of one practitioner/research associate's diary-style recorded reflections about her own teaching and a comparison of the topics and themes that emerge as she teaches a ten-week class during the Winter 2002 academic term.

In this literature review, I first investigate the brief history and current beliefs about the importance of teachers as both practitioners and researchers, an approach to action research related to teaching that represents a relatively recent paradigm change in educational research. This new model calls for a less hierarchical relationship between outside researchers and teachers and proposes research collaboration with the teachers whose classrooms are being studied. When the outside researcher is also a teacher herself¹, there is an added layer of collegiality and understanding. The Lab School project fits into the trend toward a revised role

¹ When talking about teachers, I refer to them as women unless there is a reason to do otherwise.

for both researchers and teachers and a strong focus on teachers' knowledge and experience.

Next, I investigate the kinds of things teachers learn about their classrooms when they take on a research perspective. So far, much of the literature has been focused on the teacher/researcher's own personal and professional growth or improved practice in specific areas. The scope of the Lab School project expands the potential value of its teacher debrief reflections, because of the hundreds of debriefs made by two practitioners and because of the availability of video footage of the classes on which the debriefs are based. The view from the Lab School project perspective allows everything from a micro-analysis of a teacher's specific practice, through thoughts about how second languages are taught and learned, up to and including a broad analysis of the nature of teaching in general, regardless of subject matter.

The History and Current Importance of Teachers as Practitioner /

Researchers

For several centuries, academic and scientific inquiry have been dominated by Positivism, or the idea that there is an objective truth to be known about the world and that if researchers investigate carefully and methodically they can discover that truth (Greenwood and Levin, 2000; Harper, 2000; Schön, 1982). If true knowledge comes from researchers who

are not actually working in the field, what is the contributing role of practitioners who are doing that work? As Schön (1982) states, “In light of such Positivist doctrines... practice appeared as a puzzling anomaly” (p. 33). In other words, the messy reality of daily actions and interactions dilutes and distracts from the purity of scientific research findings and is not seen as important to the development of theory. In the Positivist model of education, teachers learn theory from academic researchers, either in the classroom or by reading journal articles and “how-to” guides that describe in detail how theory should be put into practice (Gitlin and Russell, 1994; Wells, 1994). This is almost always a one-way process; practitioners do not inform academics.

In the field of education, teachers have traditionally been entrusted with imparting knowledge to students and at the same time have been taught to rely on the knowledge of outside researchers rather than on their own instincts and observations as they gain experience. However, there is something about the art of teaching that resists efforts to subjugate it to the scientific method (Schön, 1982). In practice, teaching deals with an ever-shifting dynamic between people, environments, materials, and a variety of other factors that are hard if not impossible for outside researchers to measure and quantify. This has led, since the 1970s, to a new approach, which values the teacher as a researcher in her own classroom, observing and learning from her own teaching practices. She may be accompanied in this effort by teaching peers or research colleagues (Bailey, 1996; Block, 1996; Bryant, 2003; Gitlin, 1994;

LeCompte and McLaughlin, 1994; Murphy, 2001; Tsui, 1996; Wells, 1994; Zeyrek, 2001).

There has been resistance to the move from a strictly Positivist approach to an appreciation of the richness and value of the teacher's expressed wisdom about her own experience, known as *voice* (Gilligan, 1982). In many areas of research this distinction is made by differentiating between the etic (outsider) and emic (insider) perspectives.

Headland (1990) says that Pike, a linguist, "was the person who first coined the terms *emics* and *etics* and who first used them in print in 1954" (p. 15). Since then, the terms have increased in popularity and are used in a number of fields, including anthropology, linguistics, medicine, and psychology (Headland, 1990). This has led to a variety of uses and consequently of meanings of the terms in different contexts; however, in this study I am guided by Pike's (1990) explanation:

A person knows how to act without necessarily knowing how to analyze his [*sic*] action. When I act, I act as an insider; but to know, in detail, how I act... I must secure help from an outside disciplinary system. To use the emics of nonverbal (or verbal) behavior, I must act like an insider; to *analyze* my own acts, I must look at (or listen to) material as an outsider. But just as the outsider can learn to act like an insider, so the insider can learn to analyze like an outsider. (pp. 33-34)

Emic data has traditionally been suspect in the view of Positivist and quantitative researchers (Vidich and Lyman, 2000) because it is seen as too subjective, while the etic (expert outside researcher) perspective is seen as objective and therefore more worthy of consideration. However, the relatively

new field of education action research (Gitlin, 1994; Wells, 1994)

increasingly recognizes the emic perspective embodied in the teacher's *voice* for the insight it offers into the complex negotiation between professional training, teaching philosophy, planning, flexibility, experience, and on-the-spot decision-making that is the reality of teaching.

Teachers from a wide variety of classrooms are increasingly validated in the professional literature for reaching into their own experience and finding ways to express their thoughts about it. Freeman (1996) acknowledges two teachers of young children, Ashton-Warner (1963) and Paley (1979, for example, among many other books), as seminal in the development of an emic, insider voice that becomes self-critical and self-monitoring. Their painfully honest revelations about their attempts, failures, and successes as teachers are followed by subsequent reports of improved classroom practice and accompanying examples of experimentation and creativity in their classrooms.

Ashton-Warner (1963) is a teacher whose book reads in part like a diary and in part like a manual of ideas for early literacy. Her accounts of developing "creative teaching" methods, including "organic" reading, writing, spelling, and "key vocabulary" (pp. 27 -101) are instructive for any teacher and quite poignant as she reports the contrast between her success with children and her poor performance evaluation by school administrators, who fail to appreciate her innovative approach. Paley, trying to understand her own

deeply embedded racial attitudes in *White Teacher* (1979), says, in an example of her unflinchingly honest self-reflection, “I still needed to have black children justifying themselves by behaving better than whites” (p. 112). By allowing herself to voice her innermost feelings without protecting her image, Paley is then able to pull back, look at her reflections, and change her behavior in the classroom. Since Paley and Ashton-Warner give the raw data of their experiences before analyzing and classifying it, the reader is invited by their uncensored and personal commentary to reflect along with them before they draw their conclusions.

Freeman (1996) offers this interesting summary of the value of the kind of emic reflection done by Paley and Ashton-Warner:

The vulnerability of the teacher-researcher can be transformed into a strength which provides the opening for inquiry. ...For teachers, lapses in practice can offer windows through which to glimpse what is going on in their teaching. (p.104)

Nunan (1989, 1992) and Freeman, alone (1982) and with Richards (1996), emerge in the literature as strong advocates for increased attention to teacher reflection in the field of second language teaching, with multiple contributions on the subject. In noting that the recognition of teacher-as-expert is still not the norm, Freeman and Richards (1996) state:

Although it should be common sense to examine the teacher as pivotal in the enterprise of teaching and learning, to date questions such as these have been largely overlooked both in general educational research and in the field of language teaching. (p. 1)

To change this, Freeman and Richards (1996) envision both teachers and researchers engaged together in investigating the core issues of teaching, so that teacher education is a rich reflection of the theory and practice that inform teacher decision-making inside and out of the classroom. In particular, this would reveal the wide range of problem-solving resources that experienced teachers use as they literally “perform” the act of teaching – information not previously included in traditional research.

Nunan (1996) reports on his research in collaboration with teachers to investigate the true nature of teaching more accurately. He describes in one of his studies how he observed teachers and then reflected with them in various ways afterward, seeing himself as making “a modest contribution toward closing the gap between theory and practice, and between researcher and teacher” (p. 42) or between etic and emic perspectives. Nunan goes beyond the teacher/researcher partnership to include the voices of students as a critical part of the discourse; he describes himself (the researcher) as a “shadowy figure” with a partial voice, in the background, with “teachers and learners collaboratively constructing” (p. 53) the day-to-day classroom foreground.

The role of the researcher doesn’t go away in the new paradigm, but instead it embraces a more cooperative, empathetic approach which acknowledges the teacher as a peer. In return, the teacher does not abandon

her classroom, but she does assume the right to comment with expertise on what she has recorded and observed while teaching. In other words, the etic (outsider) and emic (insider) perspectives are encouraged in both roles. There are many ways that research and professional development can include both the etic and emic perspectives, as the following studies demonstrate.

Block (1996) is a researcher whose study shows this complex mixing and merging of etic and emic. The subject of Block's study is a teacher who observes both her students and herself from an emic insider position in the classroom from day to day. Then, by the act of reflective writing after class, the teacher gives herself the option of an insider assuming an outsider perspective. This role is then complemented by Block as the etic outside researcher who, by understanding the value of the teacher's reflections, becomes a facilitator who filters the resulting data and negotiates back and forth from objective to subjective as needed.

Zeyrek (2001), in his dual role of researcher and teacher trainer, embodies the etic and emic in one person and confirms the enhanced possibilities of this merged approach. He requests both structured and open-ended reflections from teachers and gleans "themes of interest" (p. 10) which he gives back for additional reflection.

Tsui (1996) is a mentor of new teachers and also a researcher, providing several layers of etic outsider observation to her report about mentoring a teacher in Hong Kong. Tsui provides the opportunity for guided

emic self-reflection as this teacher thinks about the results of implementing a new curriculum, listens to her students, modifies her practice, and reflects once more.

Bailey (1996) is another researcher who collaborates with teachers to help them develop an emic research perspective in order to understand what really goes on in the teaching process. She discusses the implications of her reflective conversations with seven experienced ESL teachers after observing them teach. She refers to the “*co-produced* outcomes of the post-observation interviews, where these teachers articulate, often for the first time, the operative principles that drive their in-class decisions” (p. 36, italics mine). Bailey portrays the role of the etic researcher as a narrator who helps retell the teachers’ stories.

The fluid exchange of etic and emic roles taken on by one person is reflected in a teaching/learning strategy called “Play-Debrief-Replay” (Wasserman and Ivany, 1988). This is a shorthand expression for doing, reflecting, and then redoing. Using the insights gained from reflection in a spiraling growth of understanding is a process also affirmed by Swartz (1994) and Bernard and Konjevic (1994).

This flexible interchange of etic and emic roles can occur between teaching colleagues. Murphy (2001) proposes that there is great value in teachers observing and learning from each other in the “search for multiple perspectives” (p. 509), further affirming the value of two practitioners

communicating with each other and analyzing teaching from both their own emic and each other's etic viewpoints.

Nikolic and Cabaj (2000) are teachers who refer to Wells' "communities of inquiry" (1994, p. ix) and offer support for the coordination of insider and colleague/outsider views when they say, "We are all certainly more motivated to engage in self-evaluation projects if our colleagues are involved" (p. 18). They expand on Murphy's (2001) idea by adding media to the tools that enhance communication between practitioners. They strongly support audio or video recording so teachers can subject their practice to careful and repeated scrutiny as they seek to expand and improve their teaching.

Oprandy, Golden, and Shiomi (1999) are also investigating the value of etic outsider research that includes emic teacher experience. They report on a project involving three people: an ESL classroom teacher, a researcher ("Robert" in the quote that follows), and a graduate student. Their comments elucidate the move away from the traditional researcher role:

Exploring teaching and learning with others helps Robert [the researcher] see through more than his own perceptual filter... Thus, he keeps from getting stuck in seeing schooling through the filter of his own professional training, personal teaching experiences, and biases. By rubbing up against others' ways of seeing teaching-learning, he can more easily and honestly explore anew the complexities and nuances of schooling. (p. 153)

It would be tempting to believe, from the literature written by researchers who actively collaborate with teachers, that this practice is generally accepted in the field. However, not everyone is equally enthusiastic

about the increasing interest in and emphasis on teacher reflection and teacher participation in research. In arguing against the reflective teacher training “revolution” advocated by Freeman, Richards, Nunan, and others, Yates and Muchisky (2003) state their opinion that this movement sacrifices second language acquisition content in favor of what they interpret as an exclusive emphasis on reflection and social context. From these remarks, it is apparent that there is still support for traditional reliance on university-based research rather than field practitioner knowledge. Their view rests on the notion that expanding the concept of ESL teacher training to include an analysis of teacher reflection automatically excludes an extensive base of practical language acquisition knowledge and explicit teaching strategies.

In reality, these strands of teacher education can be mutually informative rather than mutually exclusive. Bryant (2003), a college instructor with six years of teaching experience, speaks against the traditional approach supported by Yates and Muchisky when she says that she has learned more from her own her own mistakes in the classroom than from a “plethora of information about instructional research” (p. 103).

What Do Teachers Learn When They Take on a Research Perspective?

NCATE (2002), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, has teacher reflection established prominently as a goal in its professional standards for teacher education. NCATE standards state that

teacher training programs that hope to produce “caring, competent, and qualified teachers” need to “encourage collegiality, reflective practice... and collaboration” and that the professional teacher “should be able to... reflect on practice and act on feedback” (p. 4). The standards further state that faculty in teacher training programs should be “actively engaged as a community of learners” who “inquire systematically into and reflect upon their own practice” as part of their “lifelong professional development” (p. 36).

Proponents of teacher reflection as a basis for developing education theory and teacher training programs want to know if there is a sequential development pattern revealed in teacher reflections as teachers gain experience and if there are identifiable topics that teachers tend to cover in their reflections. The answers to these questions help us understand what teachers, researchers, and the field of education in general have to gain from teacher reflections.

Freeman (1982, pp. 26-27) delineates three stages of professional growth. For the novice teacher, the primary concern is “What do I teach?” For the teacher who is no longer a beginner, the primary concern is “How do I teach?” And Freeman expresses the experienced teacher’s issue as “Why do I teach what I teach, and why do I teach the way I do?”

However, as Nikolic and Cabaj (2000) point out, even experienced teachers cycle back through these three stages each time they are faced with a new or unique teaching situation, including each time they have a new group

of students. Nikolic and Cabaj further break down teaching concerns into macro decisions “so crucial they can make or break a class” and micro teaching skills that “...may not be critical, but they play a significant role in the classroom” (p. 14). Both of these “can lead to concrete ideas for improvement” (p. 15). They also mention the tension between (1) careful lesson planning, (2) the need for flexibility, and (3) the inevitability that things will go wrong at times in the classrooms of even the most organized teachers.

Creating a lesson plan and then deviating from it is a common classroom occurrence that nevertheless can leave teachers wondering what has “gone wrong” and why they haven’t accomplished what they set out to do. Bailey (1996, p. 15) uses teacher reflection to answer the question “Why do teachers depart from their lesson plans? In particular, what principles guide teachers’ decision-making?” She comes up with the following list of reasons (pp. 26-36) representing her etic (outsider) perspective on the emic reflections of seven experienced ESL teachers as she talks to them after observing their classes:

- Serve the common good
- Teach to the moment
- Further the lesson
- Accommodate students’ learning styles
- Promote student involvement
- Distribute the wealth [recognize/pay attention to a variety of students]

Bailey draws conclusions, co-constructed with the teachers she observes, about the critical junctures in the classroom that cause teachers to deviate from their lesson plans.

Murphy (2001) proposes the processing of emotions as another benefit of teacher reflection:

As a language teacher, have you ever finished all of your teaching for the day only to find your mind racing with thoughts about a lesson recently completed?... During such moments I find myself responding with a full range of emotion that includes not only excitement, joy, inspiration, and reassurance but also more troubling moments of boredom, annoyance, and even disappointment in myself. (p. 499)

Murphy talks about teacher decision-making, based in part on this compelling swirl of emotions that follows on the heels of a teaching experience, as “a vast, and as yet poorly understood, dimension of language teaching” (p. 501).

Nunan (1989) mentions the division of classroom activities into pedagogic (for classroom purposes only) and real-world (a replication of actual tasks that are required by life outside the classroom) as another important distinction that teachers think about as they analyze their own teaching. He also mentions classroom management - “maintaining control over the flow of events” (1996, p. 46) - and “pace, flow, tempo, and movement” (p. 49) being prominent in teachers’ reflections. As both teachers and researchers reveal patterns of this nature in teacher reflections, they can start to examine when, where, and why these concerns arise and how they are resolved.

Tsui (1996) reaffirms that teacher reflection sheds light on “familiar teaching routines” and helps teachers “see teaching and learning differently” (p. 105). This approach relates to the unexpected failure of a favorite teaching technique or activity that suddenly fails to accomplish its expected goal with a particular group of students on a particular day.

Katz (1996) adds teaching style and classroom culture (used here in the sense of norms and values) to the list of teachers’ concerns as they reflect on their teaching performance and on student reactions. This is important because it illustrates that teachers reflections will vary in content, based on their own beliefs and priorities. Thus, we could expect a teacher like Katz’s informant “Sara,” whose style places a value on personal relationships with students, to be perplexed and upset as she ponders her attempts to teach in the face of “dead silence.” Sara is forced in her reflection to conclude, “But it was one thing after another, one ploy after another to get them going, and interested, and it just didn’t seem to happen” (pp. 72-73). A second teacher, whose style includes lecture as her primary teaching vehicle, is concerned in her reflection about “efficiency” (p. 82) and whether she got her topic across, as indicated by whether students pass the quizzes.

Bryant (2003) is another teacher/researcher who reflects on her teaching style and is able to use her self-observations to make changes in her relationships with students. She talks about a mistake she made at a decisive moment in the classroom because of her desire for students to like her. Her

reflection is intimately connected with her personable teaching style and her reflections on the difference between being a likable instructor (which she wants to be) and a friend (which she decides is not appropriate).

The collaborative teacher/researcher approach encourages a depth of exploration about the art of teaching that goes far beyond a prescriptive method that determines which specific parts of the curriculum are taught each day. The complex topics that teachers negotiate and balance in the classroom as they teach include educational theory; philosophical perspectives on teaching; interactions with colleagues and administration; classroom norms; relationships with students; a personal sense of success or failure; how to measure learning; teaching style; the class as a whole vs. the individual students; and issues of whether, when, and how the teacher or the student controls the learning process.

These studies reveal three levels of benefit from teacher reflections. The first level involves the self-knowledge that evolves from thinking out loud or on paper about what one does at work every day. The second level involves a collegial exchange of thoughts, ideas, and emotions that breaks down teacher isolation and takes the emphasis off the personal. These recurring doubts about teaching performance are endemic to a system that puts one teacher in a classroom with a large group of students who have widely differing needs and abilities and who are judged to either pass or fail presumably on the merits of what the teacher has taught. The third level of

benefit comes from engaged conversation with a sympathetic outsider who can offer a new perspective and also point out issues that individual teachers have in common with each other in a diverse range of teaching situations.

Conclusion

My review of the literature confirms that the analysis of teacher reflection is a valuable and as yet relatively new area in the field of second language teaching. While the literature reflects a growing value placed on the contributions of the teacher as reflective researcher, the profession, the craft, and the art of teaching are still subordinated to advice from outside researchers, indicated by the fact that too many schools at all levels continue to place value on “teacher-proof” curricula. There is an ongoing lack of teacher training material that authenticates the experienced teacher’s *voice*, and there is still a need for more studies from a combined outsider/insider perspective that use personal reflection to reveal the truths about teaching and learning embedded in teacher’s stories. In my study I propose to add to the body of evidence that will support the notion of teacher practitioner/researchers as important experts on our own profession.

The uniqueness of the Lab School teacher debrief reflection data lies in the fact that a video of the relevant class can be viewed repeatedly by the teacher herself as well as outside researchers. This insures a complex interaction between emic and etic perspectives as both the ESOL teachers,

collegial outsiders (like me), and other researchers reflect, ponder, and review both the audio or transcribed teacher reflections and the video recordings of classes. This type of many-layered review and reflection is greatly facilitated by the existence of the Lab School. In addition, the data that comes from this source allows us to think about the etic and emic perspectives as two halves of a whole rather than two distinct approaches.

This leads me to propose the following guiding questions as a basis for my thesis.

Guiding Questions:

1. What does an experienced ESOL teacher choose to talk about when she has a free choice of topics and the mandate to create a short audio reflection immediately after finishing teaching?
 - a. Categories of topics
 - b. Frequency of each topic
2. Which topics indicate teacher stress?
 - a. Sources of stress
 - b. Teachers thoughts about resolution
3. Which topics indicate pride/joy?
 - a. Sources of pride and joy
 - b. Plans to expand or repeat
 - c. Ability of teacher to identify reason for success

Chapter 3: Methodology

Setting

The Adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Lab School, located on the campus of Portland State University, offers a unique teaching and research opportunity made possible through complex, multi-faceted video and audio recordings of classrooms where adult students are learning English as a second language. The original project was funded from 2001 to 2006, with classes beginning in September 2001.

The Lab School² is described in its brochure (NCSALL, undated) as follows:

The Lab School is a national state-of-the-art research center engaged in classroom-based research and professional development in adult ESOL... The Lab School at [PSU] establishes a special setting where university-based researchers, teacher trainers and adult ESOL service providers cooperate to conduct needed research... Digital audio and video recording of all ESOL classes in the Lab School makes it possible to conduct in-depth classroom research on second language acquisition and pedagogy. The Lab School is sponsored by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) and funded by the Department of Education. The Primary Investigator is Stephen Reder.

² The National Labsite for Adult ESOL (known locally as the Lab School) is supported, in part, by grant R309B6002 from the Institute for Education Science, U.S. Dept. of Education, to the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). The Lab School is a partnership between Portland State University and Portland Community College. The school and research facilities are housed at the university while the registration, curriculum, and teachers of the ESL students are from the community college.

The Lab School website (www.labschool.pdx.edu) and an article written by the Primary Investigator and other researchers (Reder, 2003) provide additional information.

The English classes themselves are offered through Portland Community College (PCC). PCC is the largest provider of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in the Portland area. It provides an integrated skills, outcome-based learning approach for adults, who attend classes 6 hours a week from Level A (beginning) to Level D (high intermediate). The Lab School project originally focused on Levels A and B only.

At the Lab School, two of the teachers are designated as practitioner/research associates, or PRAs. Half of their job involves teaching English to adult students at the Lab School, and for this they are employed by PCC. Their other duties relate to their role as research associates. According to the description of the Lab School at www.labschool.pdx.edu:

...ESOL practitioners model effective instruction, mentor pre-service teachers, participate in ongoing research, and engage in local and national dissemination of the Lab School research findings.

As part of the project, the practitioner/research associates are asked to audio-record a short reflection after each class they teach. Among project participants, and in this thesis, these reflections are referred to as *debriefs*.

Please refer to the glossary at the beginning of this document for definitions of abbreviations and specialized words used in the text.

Choice of Methodology: Definitions and Rationale

My analysis of teacher debriefs from the Lab School is best described as an in-depth qualitative case study of a large volume of materials generated by one specific practitioner/research associate whose reflections about teaching during a defined period of time are of significant interest within the limited boundaries of the academic term Winter 2002, the larger boundaries of the Lab School in general, and the wider world of second language teaching and teacher training. The following studies support my choice of this research process.

Qualitative Research

Silverman (2000) generally defines the purpose of qualitative research as “produc[ing] a set of cumulative generalizations based on the critical sifting of data,” and goes on to say that “at this level, many of the apparent differences between quantitative and qualitative research should disappear” (p. 5).

There is support for qualitative research that does not start out with a fixed hypothesis but rather is open to discoveries along the way. As Schön (1982) notes, “When someone reflects-in-action, he [*sic*] becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case” (p. 68). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) describe reconfiguring the format of their

study to accommodate unexpected findings. This idea was useful to me, since my analysis informed my methodology as well as vice versa.

The analysis and validation of reflective practice must rely on a type of research that is not purely numerical or statistics-based, and that type of research is qualitative investigation. This method is increasingly accepted as the only way to understand information from situations with a high level of human interaction and a number of possible interpretations of issues and concerns that arise. Teaching lends itself to qualitative analysis and to having teacher-practitioners as researchers who study their own experiences as data. There is also an emerging, largely female *voice* (Gilligan, 1982) that is still struggling to make itself heard in the area of teaching practice and reflection.

The Case Study Design

The case study design permits a focus on an individual, small group, or single entity that is seen by the researcher to be important in some way. Case studies typically involve one to several people, such as students or teachers (Maguire and Graves, 2001; Tsui, 1996), one small social unit, such as a classroom (Zeyrek, 2001), or even a larger unit, such as a whole school, if it is studied as a singular entity, for example among other schools in a district. A case study examines a specific entity with distinct boundaries (Stake, 1994) and is smaller in scope than an ethnography (Nunan, 1992).

In Stenhouse's 1983 typology of case studies (in Nunan, 1992), the *evaluative case study* is described as "a single case or group of cases studied at such depth as the evaluation of policy or practice will allow (usually condensed fieldwork)" (p. 77). In summing up, Nunan (1992) states:

...the case is a single instance of a class of objects or entities, and a case study is the investigation of that single instance in the context in which it occurs. The contextualized nature of the case study, along with the types of data collection methods which are typically used, make it similar in some respects to ethnography... A key issue for this type of research is the extent to which the insights generated by the study can be applied to other cases. (p. 79)

Analyzing Debrief Data with a Qualitative, Critical/Reflective

Research Design

As previously mentioned, the Lab School debrief data lends itself to qualitative research as defined by others. To begin, there are well-defined standards that govern the qualitative approach. Building on Silverman's description (2000), my study can claim (1) an honest, consistent gathering of data, whether that data consists of numbers or people's feelings; (2) a transparent exposure of methods and results, including those that do NOT support the original ideas, assumptions, or hypotheses; and (3) a genuine desire to expand the amount of knowledge in the world rather than to further my own personal agenda.

Many social researchers do not know what they will find when they start their research, and that is increasingly seen as contributing positively to the results (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Schön, 1982). A systematic

approach, coupled with an open mind, is the only way to discover and include these unexpected challenges. In analyzing the Lab School debriefs, I moved from my preliminary study, in which I considered the debriefs as a whole, to selecting a specific academic term for study, and then further narrowing that down to one teacher. Within the academic term I chose, certain students and classroom issues stood out as I examined each debrief both individually and as part of the whole term.

To establish reliability and validity for my study, I used several different checks and balances. The first important validation check involved my participation in a Research Seminar at Portland State for MA TESOL students with thesis topics related to the Lab School. The Seminar both influenced the development of my thesis and also provided the kind of consistent collegial oversight, professional feedback, and direction necessary to insure that my choices made sense. This group was originally conceived of and facilitated by the two principal researchers in the Lab School project, Steve Reder and Kathy Harris. Group members over time have included approximately ten graduate students with a wide range of understanding about and experience with Lab School teachers and students. I was a member of this Seminar for four school terms, from Fall 2002 through Fall 2003, and was active for six more months in the ensuing study group.

My choices of focus in analyzing the debrief reflections are necessarily subjective. However, Silverman (2000) advises that it's important to let

readers know that "...your approach... is one way of 'slicing the cake' and that other approaches, using other forms of data, may not be directly competitive" (p. 37). In other words, it is not automatically bad to have a personal lens. It is merely necessary to be scrupulously honest about it, as well as to provide transparency: others can look at the data and easily see why I made my choices, even if they don't agree with me. Furthermore, I have been guided by my colleagues in the Research Seminar (described above) as I made critical choices related to this study. This has helped to make my outsider perspective more informed.

Reliability can be defined as "the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category... by the same observer on different occasions" (Hammersly in Silverman, 2000, p. 9). To accomplish this, I set aside large blocks of time to continuously categorize data (for increased consistency). I also categorized the same data on several different days and compared the outcome. This resulted in a few changes and additions, but for the most part I stayed with my original judgments.

Denny (in Nunan, 1992) says that case studies are more than objective accounts, and "must present sufficient data for the reader to draw conclusions other than those presented directly by the writer" (p. 77). The large quantity of debriefs (many hundreds) currently available for transcription satisfies the need for depth and breadth beyond the narrow focus of this study. Silverman (2000, p. 10) also mentions the problem of "anecdotalism," defined as a very

few data samples used to prove the researcher's point. This can happen either because "contrary cases" are not presented, or because there is only room for "telling examples" rather than a broad survey of all the data collected. I avoided this pitfall by quoting widely from all of the debriefs I studied. I cite the context for each fragment of data analyzed and provide full transcripts in Appendix A.

Two further issues of concern for researchers doing case studies are internal validity (defined here as having internal "truth" or integrity within the boundaries of the study) and generalisability, although this is not a de facto requirement for case studies (Nunan, 1992). The internal validity of my Lab School case study, based on exploring the salient issues for one teacher, is explicitly confirmed by the existence of the debrief transcripts for readers to examine independently. Also, the research of other graduate students, as well as that of the principle researchers in the Lab School Project, involving various aspects of the Lab School, are ongoing and offer the opportunity for alternate perspectives on the same data.

Generalisability is much harder to predict. This study is my personal perspective on one teacher, Dominique Brillanceau, reflecting on her work in one context. However, based on my own years of experience as a teacher, I recognized many familiar classroom moments and teaching dilemmas in the debriefs. Limited sharing with colleagues who teach has produced similar

reactions of recognition. I can only speculate that other teachers might have the same response.

Subject

Who is Dominique Brillanceau?

Dominique is from Poitiers, France. She came to the United States in 1975 as a high school exchange student. She has a TESOL teaching certificate and a Masters Degree in Adult Education, both from Portland State University. She started teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) at Portland Community College (PCC) in 1986 and has taught in a wide variety of PCC classrooms over the years.

Dominique is one of the two Lab School practitioner/research associates (PRAs) described above. Dominique was selected as a PRA based on the quality of her teaching and her years of experience as a regular ESL teacher in the Portland Community College system.

Dominique has requested that she be identified in this thesis by her name rather than a pseudonym (D. Brillanceau, personal communication, 2/6/2006).

Why Did I Choose to Study Dominique's Debriefs?

Initially, when I started listening to the teacher debriefs, I was working my way systematically through all of the debriefs for the same school term, listening to first one PRA and then the other. Early on, one of Dominique's debriefs, which described a particularly challenging day, caught my attention. I was curious to see what developed during her next few class periods, so I broke my pattern and listened to several of Dominique's debriefs in a row. In doing so, I became convinced that I was going to learn more by focusing on one teacher and following her unique train of thought and her lesson plans over time, as well as her interactions with the same students during the course of a term. When I met with both PRAs in the fall of 2003 to tell them about my project, Dominique was enthusiastic about having her debriefs analyzed.

Why Level B?

I listened to debriefs from both Level A and Level B, the student proficiency levels originally included in the Lab School project. In the Level A classes for beginning language learners, teachers are primarily focused on providing a nurturing learning space where the beginnings of communication in a new language can emerge. Participants may be in various stages of panic and disorientation, depending on the circumstances surrounding their departure from their native country, the time elapsed since their arrival in the United States, their age, and their previous experience with a formal school

setting. While I can state from personal experience that these beginnings are emotional and exciting and involve tremendous student breakthroughs that are thrilling for teachers, these very issues served to obscure the nuances of teaching in the debriefs of these classes. There was a sameness in the topics of teacher reflection that made them less interesting to me for my stated purposes in this thesis.

In contrast, the participants in Level B classes have developed a rhythm and routine as students. They have frequently been through several rounds of Level A, which is encouraged by PCC so that ESL students experience mastery without feeling overly pressured to succeed. They know what to expect when they come to class. They have learned enough English to start showing their individual personalities and needs. In the Level B debriefs, this is reflected in a greater depth and complexity of concerns and issues mentioned by the teacher, leading me to focus on Level B.

How Did I Choose Which Term to Study?

I chose to analyze Dominique's debriefs from one complete ten-week academic term, Winter (January to March) 2002. This was the second term that the Lab School was operating, so technical problems were largely resolved and debriefs exist for most classes.

Data Analysis

The debriefs are an integral part of the practitioner/research associate (PRA) role. This reflects a belief on the part of the research team that developed this grant, as well as NCSALL, the granting organization, that teacher reflection has a legitimate place in promoting greater understanding of second language teaching. There were no conditions or restraints given to the PRAs on the content of the debriefs. The PRAs usually recorded them immediately after the end of each class. While it is possible that Dominique Brillanceau (identified throughout the rest of this thesis as “DB”) is looking at a written copy of her lesson plan as she talks, the tapes have a spontaneous, heartfelt quality that does not sound practiced or scripted. The resulting transcripts are between 559 and 1509 words long (see Appendix B).

My primary analysis, based on Step 5 described below, is qualitative. I looked at the scope and nature of the debriefs, aided by their division into topic categories, and described what I understood to be happening in the classroom, based on DB’s reflections over the course of the academic term. This reflects Zeyrek’s (2001) approach of extracting “themes of interest” (p. 10) from the reflections of teachers that he mentors.

Nunan (1992) states, “[W]hile the case study, like ethnography, can utilize qualitative field methods, it can also employ quantitative data” (p. 75). The quantitative aspects of my study are small, but I used a limited amount of numerical data to compare and contrast the debriefs. As recounted in Step 6

below, I chose the comparisons, frequency counts, and visual representations that shed the most light on my qualitative data.

In referencing direct quotes from the debriefs throughout the rest of this thesis, I have replaced class dates with numbers from #1 to #18 (first to last debrief for the term) so the reader can easily see when in the sequence of classes the quoted comment was made. As described in Steps 2 (A) and (B) below, I divided each transcript into numbered fragments (phrases, sentences, or groups of sentences) in order to put discreet portions of each debrief into topic categories. Thus each quote is followed by a reference which includes the class number and the number(s) of the fragment(s) being quoted in parentheses, so that each can be traced back to its original location in the Lab School data. These reference numbers are in italics to separate them visually from the quoted text. In this system, for example, *#15 (4) – (10)* indicates that the quote is from Class #15 and includes fragments four through ten. Since the Lab School video and audio data are stored by date, Appendix C contains a chart cross-referencing class numbers and dates for researchers who would like to look at the original data. Appendix A contains all of the debriefs, divided into the numbered fragments that I use for reference.

Step 1: The transcribing process

To begin, I obtained a calendar of Winter Term 2002 (January 8 – March 15) and noted on it all the Tuesday and Friday class dates for DB's

Level B class. The term was 10 weeks long and the class met twice a week, for three hours each time, in the morning. There is no recorded audio for March 15, the last day of Winter Term. Additionally, I eliminated the January 25 debrief because it was recorded by a guest teacher. This resulted in 18 debriefs for the Winter Term Level B class.

Using the video/audio software from the Lab School, I located the data for each class and listened to DB's audio debriefs through headphones while seated at a computer. I transcribed as I listened, often going back three or four times to capture exactly what DB said. At the end of each session, I listened to the recording at least once more, correcting the written transcript a final time.

As I began this process, I made several decisions about what I would and would not include in the transcripts. I knew that I was interested in content rather than the exact nature of each speech event. In other words, I decided not to transcribe every hesitation and every false start. On the other hand, I wanted to make sure I stayed true to the content of the debriefs and did not alter them in any significant way. I also wanted them to be accurate enough so any subsequent reader could follow along without confusion. I inserted punctuation with the same concern for readability. In general, I left out stutters and false word starts but included anything that I could determine to be a syllable or part of a word. This is an example from the beginning of the Class #1 transcript that shows how I applied these decisions:

I can see the holes in their language, in the very base...in the... in the basis... it... it's just not there. #1 (3)

But anyway... This is what we did. I... We wrote... I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there. #1 (4) – (5)

In the course of my analysis, I developed an additional editing process that I describe in Step 7 below.

Step 2 (A): Choosing topic categories

I originally came up with 16 topics, based on my reading of the transcripts, my teaching knowledge and interests, and ideas from the literature. These are the categories I chose:

1. Intro/Wrap-up
2. What DB planned
3. What DB actually did in class
4. How the students reacted (as a group)
5. Individual students by name, or pairs/groups of students
6. DB's follow-up plans
7. What DB wants to change for future/ did change from last time she taught this topic
8. How DB feels physically / emotionally
9. Positive/negative assessment comments

10. Admin/Lab School related comments
11. Meta-reflection (larger educational, ESL, or teaching issues)
12. Timing and Scheduling
13. Building a learning community
14. DB and SB (the other PRA)
15. Teachable moments
16. Miscellaneous

I confirmed the intra-order reliability of this list by coming up with similar categories on two separate occasions, over a year apart: in February 2004, when I first started informally looking at this data and again in April 2005, when I was reviewing my material for the presentation of my Thesis Proposal. Another confirmation that my category choices address all of the topics covered in the debriefs is the fact that I used the “Miscellaneous” category only once.

If I had any doubt about where a transcript fragment belonged, I put it in more than one category. I tried to decide quickly and to not agonize over any decision. I have compensated for the subjectivity of this process by trying to make the reasons for my decisions as transparent as possible; by making sure readers can trace each fragment back to the original transcript; and by eventually arriving at a reasonably comprehensive grouping of fragments in each category in order to pick out trends, patterns, and sub-themes (Steps 4 and 5). As noted in Step 4 and Step 7 below, I sometimes revised my

category assignments. The fact that a number of transcript fragments could be placed in several categories indicates the complexity of the thought process that goes into teaching and subsequent reflection (see Chapter 4 for further analysis of this idea).

As I proceeded through my analysis, it became apparent that some of my categories were repetitive or overlapping. See Step 7 below for more information about how I handled this.

Step 2 (B): Dividing each transcript into topic categories

I read through each transcript and numbered each phrase, sentence, or group of sentences that seemed to fit into a single topic area. I call these numbered divisions *fragments*. I decided that every word in every transcript should be part of a numbered fragment so I could track it myself, as well as making tracking easy for anyone trying to follow my data. Sometimes I separated out discourse markers that I judged to have no content significance but that I wanted to number for tracking purposes. Two examples are “But anyway...” [#1 (4)] and “So” [#11 (26)].

Thus, using excerpts from the beginning of the Class #1 debrief as an example, this:

This is January 8, the very first day for Level B. I had 17 students, which is a great number, although it would be great to be able to fill the class with 24. I had several returning students, and out of those, there are two women who came sporadically last time, and I can see the holes in their language, in the very base...in the... in the basis... it... it's just not there. But anyway... This is what we did. I... We wrote... I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of

administrative thing – I had to check who was there. And I showed them how to do the attendance sheet. That went really well. #1 (1) – (7)

was divided into these fragments:

1. This is January 8, the very first day for Level B.
2. I had 17 students, which is a great number, although it would be great to be able to fill the class with 24.
3. I had several returning students, and out of those, there are two women who came sporadically last time, and I can see the holes in their language, in the very base...in the... in the basis... it... it's just not there.
4. But anyway...
5. This is what we did. I... We wrote... I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there.
6. And I showed them how to do the attendance sheet.
7. That went really well.

Table I represents my thought process as I numbered the fragments based on their potential topic category (-ies).

Table I: Fragments Numbered, with Category Rationale

Numbered section from transcript	Category (in "Bold") + Comments
1. This is January 8, the very first day for Level B.	"Intro/Wrap-Up" category.
2. I had 17 students, which is a great number, although it would be great to be able to fill the class with 24.	"Admin/Lab School" category.
3. I had several returning students, and out of those, there are two women who came sporadically last time, and I can see the holes in their language, in the very base...in the... in the basis... it... it's just not there.	"Individual students by name, or pairs/groups of students."
4. But anyway...	Discourse marker, numbered so I could exclude it from previous and subsequent remarks.
5. This is what we did. I... We wrote... I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there.	"What DB actually did in class." In reviewing this statement, I extracted out the last part ("...and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there") and also put it under "Admin/Lab School."

6. And I showed them how to do the attendance sheet.	“What DB actually did,” and also “Admin/Lab School.”
7. That went really well.	“Positive/negative assessment comments” (also kept with above narrative to which it refers).

Sometimes I divided up a narrative or story in order to factor out a fragment in the middle so I could put it in a separate category. From later in the same Class #1 transcript, here is an example, which also shows how I kept multiple sequential sentences in one numbered fragment if they related to the same topic. This is the section from the transcript:

So... so they had... so the first activity was for them to, in pairs – and it was very informal – they had to do the questions. And they did. And we corrected them. And they saw that as it was a collective effort: that some people had one piece of the question and others had the other piece. Which was...And then they saw that when I put it all together on the board they saw that they had been... that they could do it all together. And that’s... that... I find it very powerful. I’m not sure that they reflected on it in the same way, or if they did at all, but I think it is. Then I erased the answers, which were my personal answers about my personal life, so the only thing we had on the board were questions – and there were about ten or twelve questions, some of them very similar to one another, and then I gave them... It’s a pair interview. It’s a template that I designed, and it has an area for questions – just three columns – an area for questions, and there are no questions there, so they had to copy... They... they had to select 7 questions from the board and copy them down. That was the first step. #1 (17) – (19)

Table II shows the categories I chose.

Table II: Fragments Assigned to Categories

Numbered section from transcript	Category
17. So... so they had... so the first activity was for them to, in pairs – and it was very informal – they had to do the questions. And they did. And we corrected them. And they saw that as it was a collective effort: that some people had one piece of the question and others had the other piece. Which was...And then they saw that when I put it all together on the board they saw that they had been... that	“What DB actually did in class”

they could do it all together.	
18. And that's... that... I find it very powerful. I'm not sure that they reflected on it in the same way, or if they did at all, but I think it is.	"Meta-reflection"
19. Then I erased the answers, which were my personal answers about my personal life, so the only thing we had on the board were questions – and there were about ten or twelve questions, some of them very similar to one another, and then I gave them... It's a pair interview. It's a template that I designed, and it has an area for questions – just three columns – an area for questions, and there are no questions there, so they had to copy... They... they had to select 7 questions from the board and copy them down. That was the first step.	Continuation of "What DB actually did in class"

In order to compensate for this break-up of the narrative when the whole is also valuable, I have repeated whole stories as part of my Chapter 4 analysis to provide the reader with a complete recounting of individual incidents of significance.

At the end of this step the transcripts were still in the order that they were recorded, from beginning to end. Starting with Step 3, that was no longer the case.

Step 3: Putting the debrief fragments on topic category grids

Step 3 is an extension of Step 2, since I had topic categories in mind when I divided each debrief into numbered fragments. Step 3 involved creating a grid with the topic categories listed in order, and then going through each numbered and divided transcript and putting each fragment on the grid in its designated topic category(-ies).

There are two classes (column headings) on each grid, for readability. Table III is an excerpt from this step.

Table III: Fragments By Class Number on Topic Category Grids

Topic Categories	Class #14	Class #15
What DB planned	<p>I had wanted to do food this week, and... and... and the culture. And last... last Thursday we talked about what they missed, and one of the things missed is the food. (4)</p> <p>And so we talked about... today I wanted to bring it back to that, to the culture. (5)</p> <p>And I wanted to... I wanted to run a survey, and get them to understand what... or think in terms of surveys, because they... they know... they know what is of course... what a survey is.... But collect that kind of information and see what they could do with it. Write a sentence, or write a percentage, or anything like this. (6)</p> <p>I could have... OK. I... I could have run... I could have done something else with this, and I didn't. I thought... and then I thought about it, and I just didn't know what to do with the results. And maybe I don't have to do anything...(9)</p>	<p>I was not completely prepared this morning and... because I have to be somewhere at... at 1:00. (3)</p> <p>And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together. (5)</p> <p>But then the following activity, after the break, went just fine, because I had... it was planned a lot better. (21)</p>
What DB actually did in class, plus assessment comments	<p>So I began with a quick question, I gave an example, and... last night I did not eat French food. I ate Greek food out. I went out to eat. And so then they were... their quick question was, "What kind of food did you eat last night?" And then they had to come and tabulate the... the answers. (7)</p>	<p>I wanted to find out what they wanted to do for the next two weeks. And I wanted them to tell me where they speak English, and where they speak English the most. And so the first thing that I did was to sur... to... they surv... they were in pairs, and they surveyed each other. "When and where did you last speak English?" And that was...</p>

	<p>Then we went on to the review of frequency adverbs, and this was another survey but which was a little bit different. It was “before in your country” and it was about eating American food, eating your country’s food, eating other country’s food, or eating in a restaurant, and then now, what do they do. And what was the same, and what was different. (8)</p> <p>And then we read... we read a piece in <i>Collaborations</i>, and they had to... I read it to them, and then they had to fill in the blank, and then they had past and present on the board. And then they had to... and then they had to fill in. (11)</p> <p>They were really good. (12)</p>	<p>So that was practice speaking, and they I... they had to listen to their partner. And then they had to go and tally it on the board. The next thing that I wanted them to do was to write from that... the... the checks on the board – from this kind of table that came out of their language. (9)</p> <p>And that was a little bit too difficult, so I had to prompt it from them. (10)</p>
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At the end of this process, the transcript fragments were in topic category clusters rather than in the order in which they were originally recorded. Although I could still follow down one column and see all the comments for each class, tracking now became an issue. I resolved this by identifying each fragment by putting its number at the end as I cut and pasted from the previous documents.

Step 4 (A): Creating discreet grids for each topic category

This step involved combining in one document all the fragments in one topic category. For example, everything that related to the category “Individuals, pairs, and small groups of students” was now together in chronological order from first to last class (and in the order they were made in each debrief). Table IV is an excerpt from that topic category grid.

Table IV: All Comments in One Topic Category From First to Last Class (Excerpt)

Class #	Individuals, pairs, and small groups of students
#8	<p>...someone said, "My favorite time of day is when I ..." What di-, what did she say? "...when I, I am by myself." Or something like this. Anyway, so, sh-, they were... that person was using a time clause, which is an unusual thing. So I, I brainstormed other things...(9)</p> <p>M. is really making incredible progress. And that's just wonderful. (33)</p> <p>Z. has not asked me to slow down in any ways. (35)</p> <p>Y. is really coming out of her shell. (37)</p> <p>H. was funny. (38)</p> <p>YA. is really making great improvements, (39)</p> <p>and so is RA. (40)</p> <p>The young Korean women are not... ha-, have... already have a lot of this, so it's kind of review, especially for one of them. (41)</p> <p>It's... I know it's on the borderline boring, but... (42)</p> <p>And then there is V., who really tries everything very faithfully. (43)</p> <p>And then there is J., who didn't come for two times and didn't know what to do with <i>my</i> and <i>his</i> and <i>her</i> and <i>yours</i>. (44)</p>
#9	Nothing
#10	<p>I came to the realization halfway through class that the two Bosnians that I had were in that town that had the massacre in 1992. And I went and looked it up on the Internet at break time. And I shouldn't have done that. And there is a sadness to both these people which is... kind of... I'm, I'm just sensitive to it. Anyway, so, the, the, the em-, the emotional impact of realizing that, kind of impacted my teaching. I think that sometimes when we teach ESL we encounter people that a-, have gone through so much, that teaching, or even talking about very banal things, seems to be so small and so insignificant. (26)</p> <p>And RA. is really making lots of progress, just because he is paired up with one... with the Bosnian man, and he is only speaking English. And he's teaching this Bosnian man, because it's his second term. He's teaching him! (28)</p>
#12	J. asks very good questions. (10)
#13	<p>And R. mentioned folklore, which was an interesting word that not many people used... customs, and traditions - sort of things that they came up with. (24)</p> <p>And so that was interesting (25)</p>

I kept the fragments numbered and in sequence order, so I could see which fragments related to each other and formed part of a sequential story from the original transcript that I could reunite in the analysis process.

Step 4 (B): Determining sub-topics and identifying stories

I did this step manually, using the topic documents created in Step 4 (A). I read through each category many times (that is, every fragment in a particular category from the first to the last class). As I did this, certain sub-topics emerged for each category. For example, in the category “Individuals, pairs, and small groups of students,” it became clear that DB repeatedly mentioned students Z., R., V., and J. throughout the term, so I highlighted their names whenever they came up. I wrote down a list of these sub-topics to facilitate Step 5.

In addition, several stories stood out clearly, one of which appears in Table IV above [#10 (26)]. I was also able to clearly see days when there were no comments in this topic category, which gave me the idea of graphing each category to visualize patterns and trends better (see Step 6).

As I manually marked the topic category documents and made notes about sub-topics, I reverted to some Step 2 processing, placing fragments in new or additional categories. But for the most part, I stayed with my original decisions.

Step 5: Combining subtopic fragments and stories

Again cutting and pasting from the Step 4 documents according to my manual highlighting and notes, I created a final document for each topic category. Each fragment that fell under a subtopic was now listed as such, and story fragments were also reunited into their original whole sequences.

At this point in the sorting process, not all of the fragments appear; I eliminated the ones that did not fit into recurring themes. For this reason, tracking each fragment by both class number and fragment number became even more important. To track, I entered the class number ahead of the number for each fragment as I cut and pasted, still keeping them in chronological order from first to last class and in numerical order if there was more than one entry per class, so I could see DB's flow of ideas from the start to the end both of each class and throughout the term.

This is a sample of a Step 5 document, excerpted from the category "Meta-reflection" (sub-topics in bold):

Preparation vs. lack of preparation

For once I had everything copied the night before, and so what happens when I do that is that nothing is really... I'm still missing... I have everything to go by, but I'm still missing a... a few things. And so that was interesting, because I had... So in fact, in being more prepared, I'm a little bit less prepared, or I'm less involved with thinking about what I'm going to do. But I don't think it shows. #4 (2)

And this is something I made up this morning. #5 (5)

It was not a very thrilling TPR, maybe because I have done it for so many years. Maybe it takes the thrill out of it. But... I don't know.

That's just the way it is sometimes. The thrill is not there because there are things that need to be learned and taught. #6 (10)

I stretched this activity a little bit, which then got me kind off track maybe timing-wise. This was not a great timed session, for some reason, because... yeah, well, because I, I, I stretched here a little bit. And I... well, in some ways, because it was kind of necessary in the, in the... in the succession of things. It's very im-... It was quite... I wanted them to see what the change was, how different it was from their favorite time of day in their country. And that in itself would be a great piece of writing, if we could ever get to it using past tense. And maybe that's what I will ask them to do on Friday. But anyway... So that was... that was a little bit unplanned. #8 (12) - (15)

I was not completely prepared this morning and... because I have to be somewhere at... at 1:00. Anyway, I had... it... my life was very complicated this morning. And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together. And I think that someone looking at the class might find it interesting, but I didn't like the first half. #15 (3) - (6)

Missing Students (see Admin for Numbers, and Timing and Scheduling, Class #8)

I'm missing two people, so that was too bad. It would have been really... it's always hard, because then we have to catch up. And I was intending to use what they prepared to day for... as a follow-up for next time, so I don't quite wh... what will happen. But anyway... #6 (24)

...except that I was missing a couple of students, which was really irritating, which I think that you can hear in the video. #16 (18)

Didn't work

It did not quite work, and I don't know why. Because they had... Actually, yes, I know why. I had one pair too many, and so two people had two extra cards, and that didn't work. And by the time I realized it I could not just pick any two cards out, and it was not going to work. So anyway... #3 (27)

But by then, they... I don't know. Maybe I rushed them toward what we had to do? Or for them... I thought that I explained it thoroughly. Some of them just did it with no problem and were already writing a question for each *wh* word, and others were just like not understanding what to do with dates on the line. So I don't know. I don't know what the problem, if there is a problem, is. #5 (12)

So it was one... another one of those... today and yesterday were just days where it seems I can... I'm not screwing up on purpose, but it doesn't flow, or it's, it's not really going where... it's not... I don't know. And it's probably fine for the viewer. And when I debrief, I can see that everything I did was fine. It's just that... maybe it's not as interesting? Or... I guess prepositions are not very interesting. #7 (32)

The resulting documents formed the basis for my qualitative analysis and discussion in Chapter 4.

Step 6: Charts and graphs (the quantitative component)

The concepts from my data that were most useful when quantified appear in graphs throughout Chapter 4, in Chapter 5, and in the Appendices.

I chose the following as being most helpful in supplementing the qualitative data narrative:

- The categories from most to least mentioned.
- The number of words per debrief compared with the number of fragments divisions in each debrief.
- For each category, a chart of the number of mentions in that category over the eighteen class periods.
- A comparison of the two most-mentioned categories, “What DB actually did in class” and “Meta-reflections,” to show their roughly inverse order in frequency of mentions as the academic term progressed.

Step 7: Editing Quotes and Eliminating Overlapping Categories

As I reported in Step 1, I made a number of decisions about what and how to transcribe. I made additional editing decisions as I included debrief quotes in Chapter 4. For example, the following is an example from the original transcript:

I can see the holes in their language, in the very base...in the... in the basis... it... it's just not there. #1 (3)

But anyway... This is what we did. I... We wrote... I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there. #1 (4) – (5)

When editing illustrative quotes for analysis, I inserted punctuation, reformed sentences, and left out words from the transcript that I consider extraneous to the content. My goal was to transition from naturally occurring speech to the formal written word without losing or substantially altering meaning. Using the excerpt above, my editing resulted in the following:

I can see the holes in their language, in the very base [or] basis. It's just not there. #1 (3)

I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there. #1 (5)

My analysis led me to eliminate several categories as uninteresting; in other words, they did not contribute to my analysis of the complexities of teaching. An example of this is the category "Intro/Wrap-Up." Comments such as the following are typical of all the entries in this category:

Today is debriefing for January 29, and this is for Level B. #6 (1)
So... In any case, that's all for today. #6 (36)

Another example is the sole entry in the “Miscellaneous” category:

And I knew that before. It just refreshed my memory. #7 (6)

I also combined overlapping categories under more inclusive headings.

This resulted in the following final category list, from most to least mentioned:

1. What DB actually did in class
2. Meta-reflections
3. Positive/negative assessment comments
4. Individuals, pairs, and small groups of students
5. Timing and scheduling
6. DB's follow-up plans
7. Admin/Lab School related comments

The categories I eliminated or combined at this stage appear in Appendix D.

Step 8: Watching Two Class Videos

As a way of seeing the classroom experience through my own eyes as well as through DB's, I watched selected portions of the video recordings of two classes. I chose Class #5 because it was followed by a devastating interaction with a student. I chose Class #15 because DB mentioned in her debrief that she planned to watch the video herself to help with her research [#15 (42)].

Reliability Checks

To check reliability, I chose three debriefs because they stood out as particularly interesting and varied. They were Class #4, #7, and #18. Using the Step 2 (B) transcripts already divided into fragments, I asked two informed colleagues from the Lab School Seminar to independently categorize the fragments from these three debriefs, using my topic category list. I compared their categorizations with mine and found that in 85 per cent of the categorizations, at least one checker agreed with me, as shown in Table V.

Table V: Reliability Check

Total number of fragments analyzed in Reliability Check	116
Number of fragment categorizations where at least one checker agreed with me	99
Per cent of categorizations where at least one checker agreed with me	85%
Number of fragment categorizations where both checkers agreed with at least one of my choices	70
Per cent of categorizations where both checkers agreed with at least one of my choices	60%

Given the subjective nature of the categorization process, it was somewhat surprising that 85 per cent of the time at least one checker agreed with my category choice. On the other hand, both checkers agreed with me only 60 per cent of the time. These numbers show that the fragment categorizations lending themselves to dispute would actually be between fifteen and forty per cent of the total. This represents the margin of flexibility a reader could bring to a consideration of the quantifiable sections of my analysis.

Personal Interests and Bias

The Lab School debriefs interest me for reasons that have to do with my world view. They are like a window into a future time when teaching is truly about the co-construction of meaning between facilitators and with participants in the classroom (Freire, 1989; 2002). I look forward to the time when teachers will gain control of the teaching/learning process in a changing and more communicative system of higher education (Freeman and Richards, 1996; Nunan, 1992; Schön, 1982) that will enrich and intermingle the roles of teacher, researcher, and expert. I also see the debriefs as representative of women growing into their unique *voices* (Gilligan, 1982), not as minor players doing undervalued women's work but as professionals expressing the complex intricacies of one of the most important jobs in the world. These beliefs and opinions provide a backdrop for my study while also letting the words of one Lab School teacher speak eloquently for themselves. I am aware of these personal proclivities and have tried not to make assumptions about the debriefs because of them.

Also, my analysis is potentially affected by a fierce determination to protect the Lab School practitioner/research associates from any type of negative feedback. Others involved with the Lab School, including the PRAs themselves, have expressed similar concerns (Research Seminar feedback and personal conversations, November 2003). The project would not be possible without the willingness of these two women to expose the intimate

details of their teaching and personal reflections to the public view, extending into the future when the Lab School data are made available to other researchers outside Portland State University. This is where my own self-reflection and constructively critical eye, turned mostly toward myself, was valuable. I tried to recognize these protective feelings and thoughts as they emerged, I reflected on them with colleagues, and I made conscious decisions about what I did and did not pursue.

A related concern is my sympathy for teachers in general since I am one myself. Fine's (1994) statement about romanticizing the narrative to the detriment of the analysis struck a sensitive note. I have made every effort to maintain the integrity of my original purpose, but it has proved very difficult to remove myself from the data and from DB, to whom I have felt an increasing attachment and admiration with each re-reading of the transcripts. Rather than making any semblance of being objective, I hope that this transparent subjectivity will increase the value of my findings rather than decrease it, since each teacher's experience in the classroom is necessarily subjective, and co-learning among teachers can only be filtered through our own experiences and personal reflections.

Limitations of this study

One of the major limitations of my research is the clash of trying to quantify some aspects of the data and the necessarily subjective nature of

dividing and counting the transcripts. These documents are already one step removed from the original recordings and are written with conventions that I chose and then edited further for readability in the transfer from the spoken to the written word. Although I made every attempt to use consistent criteria as I divided and counted, my efforts are imperfect and my counts should be considered as a general overview rather than as rigidly replicable numbers. This is particularly noticeable in the section regarding positive and negative assessment comments. While even my imperfect counts in this area were revealing and afforded me the opportunity to revisit the debriefs from a different and useful perspective, I am well aware that another researcher might come up with very different numbers.

One example of an area where I saw room for dispute with my category choices is in my discussion of Class #7 in Chapter 4, under “Positive and Negative Assessment Comments.” At first, going by my original divisions, it appeared that Class #7 had only positive remarks. On re-reading the entire debrief transcript, two negative occurrences in DB’s description of the class stood out. Although they were not characterized by the same type of brief remark that I was counting, it seemed highly misleading to characterize Class #7 as completely free of negative comments. In the interest of maintaining the integrity of the discussion, I decided to change the count to reflect this and to discuss Class #7 with Class #4, in the section that talks about classes with mostly positive but several negative remarks. Any reader will note that my

counts are a construct that was affected by the act of analysis, and that the passage of time or a different perspective affects the numbers.

Another example from my analysis is my remark that the topic category “Timing” is mentioned nine times in Class #17. My divisions seemed artificial when I re-read the debrief, so I compensated for this by limiting my discussion rather than going back to the beginning and re-dividing the original transcript.

I made the choice of not discussing all the high and low points on the graphs that appear at the beginning of each topic analysis. This is because I had already covered some of the high and low points in previous discussions, and I also discovered that high or low counts did not necessarily indicate a debrief with interesting information for my analysis. The original debriefs, divided into fragments, are attached in Appendix A so readers can sort through some of this themselves. Throughout the process of sorting and categorizing, I have tried to let DB’s words shine through and speak for themselves.

Conclusion: An Affirmation of the Lab School Approach

Nunan (1992) concludes his discussion of case studies with an uncannily accurate description that almost appears to be targeted directly at the Lab School. It was inspiring to me in contemplating my study to read this affirmation as I move forward:

In the development of classroom-based as opposed to classroom-oriented research, it would be good to see the emergence of studies in which a number of data collection methods are employed. This would enable the researcher to obtain a more complete picture of the phenomena under investigation. For example, an investigation of teacher beliefs and classroom interaction should desirably include not only classroom observation, but also stimulated recall, teacher interviews, and teacher diaries. I would also like to see a more active role for classroom practitioners in applied research. The development of skills in observing and documenting classroom action and interaction, particularly if these foster the adoption of a research orientation by teachers to their classrooms, provides a powerful impetus to professional self-renewal. ...However, I also feel that such research, particularly if carried out in collaboration with university-based researchers, can do more than act as a tool for professional development. It also has the potential to extend the current research agenda, as well as give researchers access to a greater range of classrooms than is currently encountered within the research literature. (pp. 103-4)

Chapter 4: Analysis

[The] risk lies in the romanticizing of narratives and the concomitant retreat from analysis.

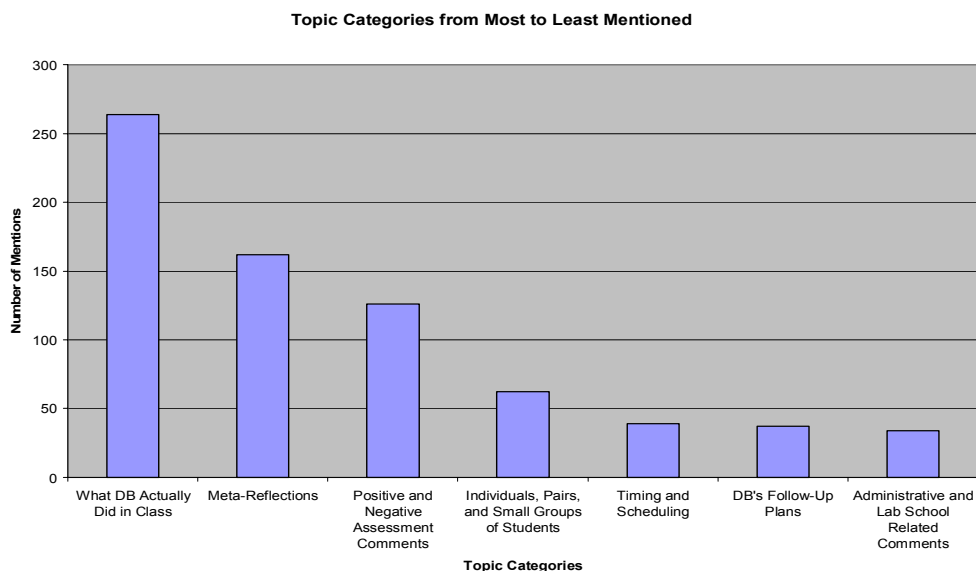
~Michelle Fine

Introduction

In this chapter I use the topic categories I developed in Step 2 (A) of my Methodology to discuss the eighteen debriefs from Dominique Brillanceau's Winter Term 2002, Level B, English as a Second Language class. Dominique is referred to in this discussion as "DB."

Figure 1 below shows the final combined categories in descending order, from most to least mentioned. I discuss each category in that order.

Figure 1



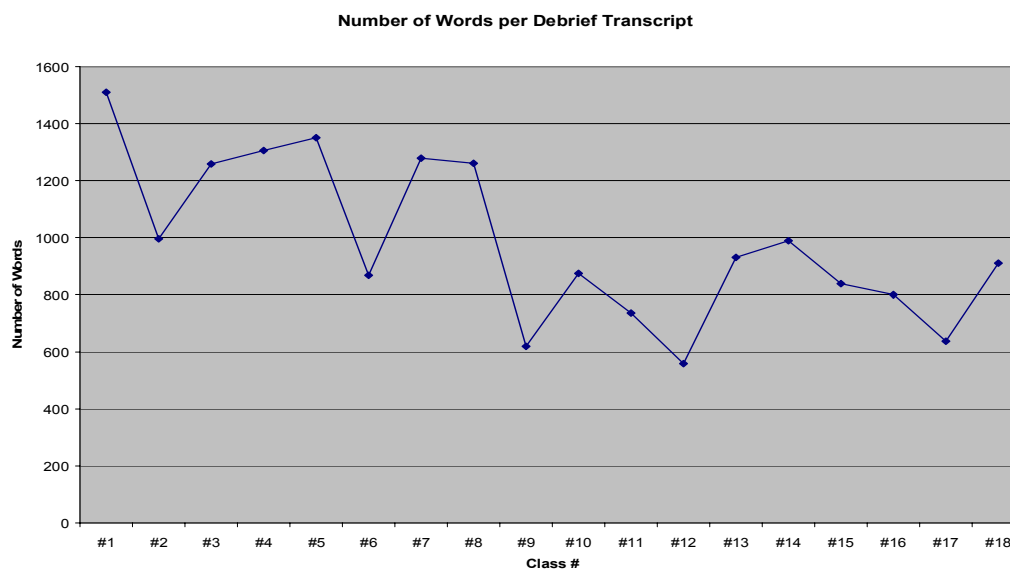
Within categories, I discuss subtopics or themes. I repeat debrief fragments and cross-reference between categories when it enhances the understanding of the teaching and reflecting process, especially in relationship

to good days and bad days and the complexity of thought that goes into every moment of teaching. I include longer stories (portions of a debrief that convey something significant about DB's teaching day), because I believe that sharing stories about teaching is an effective way to reflect on practice.

I have replaced class dates with numbers from #1 to #18 (first to last debrief for the term) so the reader can easily see where in the sequence of classes the quoted comment was made. Thus each quote is followed by a class number and the number(s) of the fragment(s) being quoted in parentheses, so that each can be traced back to its original location in the Lab School data. These reference numbers are in italics to separate them visually from the quoted text. In this system, for example, *#15 (4) – (10)* indicates that the previous quote is from Class #15 and includes fragments four through ten. Since the Lab School video and audio data are stored by date, Appendix C contains a chart cross-referencing class numbers and dates for researchers who would like to look at the original data. Appendix A contains all of the debriefs, divided into the numbered fragments that I use for reference. For details on this process, refer back to Step 2 (B) in Methodology, Chapter 3.

My transcriptions of the debriefs varied in length from 559 to 1509 words. Figure 2 shows the words per debrief over the span of all eighteen classes.

Figure 2



Discoveries that surprised me when I started this analysis

One of the things I discovered by dividing up the transcripts into categories is that some categories were more interesting or valuable than others, sometimes in ways that I didn't expect. Appendix D contains the texts and references for the categories that I combined with others or chose not to discuss here.

After my initial transcription of the debriefs, there were two categories that I remembered as being mentioned more frequently than they actually were. One is the category I designated for comments relating to the relationship between the two practitioner/research associates, called "DB and SB." Although the sole example in this category impressed me, it did stand

alone, to my surprise. It involves the interaction with student R. in Class #18, and I discuss it at the end of the section titled “Meta-Reflections.”

“Teachable Moments” is similar in that it loomed large in my mind but DB actually uses this specific phrase only once. There were many instances of DB’s spontaneous improvisations in class that could fall under this heading, but in fact she describes them with different words. I discuss this instance in Class #7 that DB labeled a teachable moment, toward the end of the section titled “What DB Actually Did in Class.”

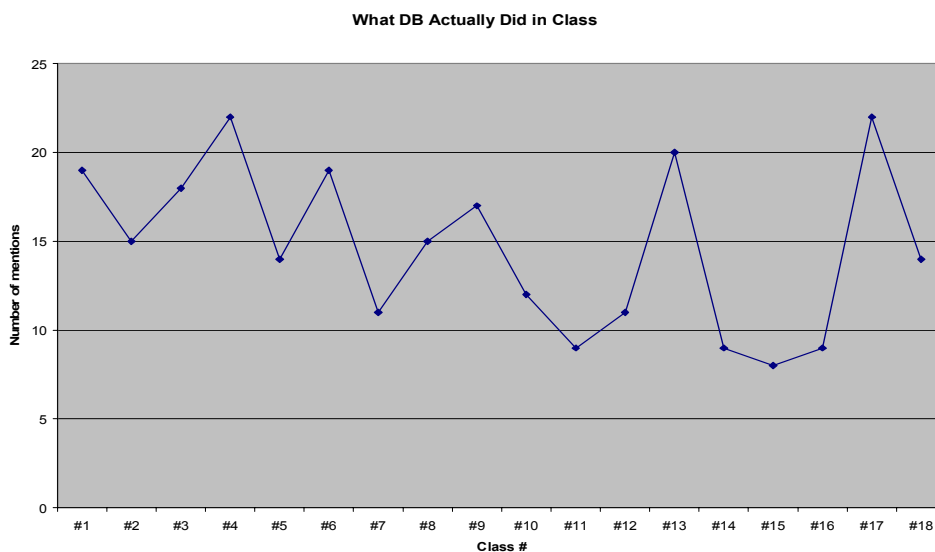
There was one category that surprised me because of its unexpected usefulness. When I began my process of dividing and sorting the debriefs, I was not really sure that there was any value in separating out the brief positive, negative, and neutral assessment comments that appear frequently throughout the debriefs. “That went really well” and “That was pretty neat” are typical examples. I went ahead with this division, under the assumption that it would be easier to correct the potential error of making too many divisions rather than too few. However, it turned out that counting these remarks, and then charting them, showed an interesting result: all the negative comments, which are few in total, occur at three times in the term – the second week, the fourth week, and during the last two weeks. This is discussed in the “Positive and Negative Assessment Comments” section below.

In the sections that follow, I discuss the rest of the categories, in order from most- to least-mentioned.

What DB Actually Did in Class

As might be expected, DB's reflective musing immediately after she finishes teaching a class is overwhelmingly concerned with what she actually taught. In fact, many of the other topic categories can almost be seen as asides, or as commentary relating in some way to the core of each debrief, which is her discussion of class content. This topic has 264 mentions, while the next most mentioned topic, Meta-Reflections or comments on larger teaching issues, has many fewer (162). Figure 3 reflects this.

Figure 3



The most frequently mentioned sub-topic in the category “What DB Actually Did in Class” could be called “I designed this activity.” I have bolded the parts of each fragment that refer to these creations, to highlight them for

the reader. I didn't do this in other sections where I thought the whole quote was significant.

DB mentions templates, passports, worksheets, texts, surveys, and her web site, that form her repertoire of materials she has created.

It's a pair interview. ***It's a template that I designed***, and it has an area for questions... They had to select 7 questions from the board and copy them down. That was the first step. Then they had to write down their answers and their partner's answers. #1 (19) - (21)

I gave them a small ***quarter of a sheet of paper which I have designed, and I call it a passport***. And this we're going to refer to throughout the class, and it's personal information which they're going to stick in their name tag so we can refer to it on a regular basis. #2 (19)

The sheet that I had designed around this very first page of reading had comprehension questions and then a part where it's the writing, but there are pointed questions which relate to the text in some ways. #2 (27)

I used ***a text I had made myself***. #5 (11)

I designed a work sheet. And there were three different things they had to talk about: their very first job in their country, and the place, and, and what they did, and what their job title was. And then when did come to the U.S., and what did they do as a first job in the U.S., and did they still have it. #10 (15)

I designed another survey, a very quick survey, in which I asked them to answer at the end of the session, whether they liked group work and whether they liked reading a novel. #15 (33)

I had them go to ***my web site***, and they got to see each other's countries... Then I showed them also ***a list of web sites which I have on there***. #17 (14) and (20)

She talks about ideas that come to her as she teaches:

It was spur of the moment that I saw the opportunity to contrast and compare the past tense, (which we did a little bit of last time) and the present tense. It was also very helpful to introduce adverbs of frequency: what one did last night, as opposed to what one usually does. #4 (5)

It took less time that I thought it would, so ***then I could see that they needed to produce it for themselves***, so that's when I went and got cards. ***And I added a little bit more to just handing out cards***. They need to start being able to ask people "Can I have this?" or "Can I have that?" So I made them say that. They had to come to me and ask for a card. And then again ***I made it up. I saw the need as we went along***. #4 (16) - (17)

And this is ***something I made up this morning***. #5 (5)

She adjusts her curriculum to incorporate new ways of teaching:

And I mindfully introduced the past, and I don't ever think I've done that before. I've always had two columns for the base form of the verb, and then the past tense form, and I did not separate regular and irregular. But I did this time, and it turned into a concept attainment exercise. #4 (21)

I tried a new thing with them this time, because it's very difficult for people to start reflecting on what they're learning. So this time the way I presented it was the most effective yet. I said, "I teach. You learn. What did you learn today?" And they were able to brainstorm new words as well as structures. #5 (20)

I thought that I would have them write a letter to their friend about their life in the U.S. And ***what came out was really incredible because most of it I had not taught***. #7 (27) - (28)

Well, luckily, wonderfully, fortunately enough, I had room there for a concept attainment, and ***this time I [had a] chance to do it right***, in which I demonstrated the wrong things about [the word] *can* and the right things about *can*. #9 (8)

I have never introduced process writing in such a simple, clear manner before. Pat on the back! #11 (7)

DB mentions brainstorms and elicitations from students as a teaching technique that she uses throughout the term. These are notable because by definition she can never know whether they will be successful (that is, if they will elicit the information she sees as important), much less what will surface when she opens up class discussion in this way.

I drew a diagram on the board, and I chose two out of the three stories, and they were women, and so we **brainstormed** what they had in common and what was different. #3 (21)

They were able to **brainstorm** new words as well as structures. #5 (20)

Then we **brainstormed** different rooms of the house, and that's when we began using their dictionary. #6 (12)

I wanted to find out what they wanted to do for the next two weeks. **And I wanted them to tell me** where they speak English the most. #15 (9)

Another series of comments is devoted various classroom techniques that DB describes as either more or less successful in the moment of use:

And I always circulate, which is pretty good. #2 (15)

It's a great springboard for writing; it's graphing. It helps people use the past, it helps with prepositions of place and time. It's really quite good. And I used a text which I made myself. #5 (11)

It was not a very thrilling TPR, maybe because I have done it for so many years. Maybe it takes the thrill out of it. But I don't know. That's just the way it is sometimes. The thrill is not there because there are things that need to be learned and taught. #6 (10)

I put on the board *wh* questions, and only the answers, [to] see what they remembered from forming the past tense, and questions with the past tense with verbs other than the verb *to be*. It was a little bit laborious until I went back and told them what the pattern was. Or I

tried to have them see what the pattern was. So that's difficult, and I don't know quite where to go with that, except that we need more practice, and practice, and practice, and practice in all different kinds of ways. Making questions, however, is a very difficult skill, and even in Level D, which is in two levels from now, it's not obvious that people know what to do or how to do it. And this was a little awkward, but it worked. I guess if you pretend that things are going to work, they just work. *[laugh]* #8 (17) - (21)

They didn't know what [the word] *suddenly* was, and there was quite a description of *suddenly*, and that fit. And we did the routine of writing the answers. But this time, since the comprehension of the text was a little bit more difficult, it took a while. And so therefore the piece that they could [have written in class] on their work life, they have to do it at home. And so I wonder if they will do it. And perhaps that will give us the springboard for next time. #9 (20) - (25)

A lot of the things that I did today felt like canned language. I'm not used to using so many handouts. #18 (6)

They had gathered [errors] from all their writing throughout the term, and they were common mistakes which they usually do, and I have thirty different examples of that. So I cut it and gave two per student so then when they were finished correcting it by themselves, they had to join someone who was also finished and discuss the error correction. #18 (12)

A further area of discussion involves the teaching decisions DB makes, based on her perception of the skills and ability levels of students, especially at the beginning of the term:

Some people made up their own questions. Even when I explained it to them again, they just thought that really what I meant was what they had understood, which is always a challenge. #1 (20)

I said that I wanted them to write at least six sentences, because Level B should be able to produce more. #1 (28)

Some of them did not have the concept of a sentence, so I'm sure that this is something I will have to work with quite a bit. #1 (33)

This was what I was trying to get at, which is always difficult with low-level ESL people: What do you hear and what do you write? #2 (16)

This is the most pieces of paper I've ever handed out, in a Level B, I think. But they like having that grammar. #6 (17)

Two stories illustrate the range of skills (featuring on-the-spot decision-making) DB calls into use when teaching, as well as the combined pleasures and frustrations of a day in the classroom:

(1) I wanted to just pair them up in a different way, and I wanted them to use present tense questions. I had different pairs of cards, and it was a black card going with a red card, the same number: a red nine going with a black nine. And so they had to stand up and practice the question, "Do you have a red nine?" if they had a black nine. And it was really interesting. It did not quite work, and I don't know why. Actually, yes, I know why. I had one pair [of cards] too many, and so two people had two extra cards, and that didn't work. And by the time I realized it, I could not just pick any two cards out, and it was not going to work. And then I gave them the diagram, and then they had to write the words that were the same, and then the sentences. I had a couple of pairs that did not understand what was happening, and I went over, and we talked about it, and everything was fine. And the results were quite good. I feel that the whole thing went really well. It was just really neat. #3 (25) - (30)

(2) They were reluctant to go to the board, and they did not go to the board at all for the dates. I had wanted someone up there to go to the board to do that. Then, since no one wanted to budge after I wrote a few of the questions they were telling me, I went and sat down and then told them to go and do it. #5 (16) - (17)

In the first example, DB's mistake in thinking through an otherwise well-planned activity nevertheless ends satisfactorily. In the second example, she counteracts student reluctance to participate by imitating their behavior and refusing to budge herself until students comply with her request. She is able

to use her sense of humor, combined with a kind of exasperated theatricality, to reverse the potentially downward spiral of an activity.

Another few remarks refer to things that DB planned but didn't do or had an opening to build on spontaneously but decided not to take:

One thing that I didn't do and that I had intended to, was to write the kind of expressions one uses in pairs when you're doing pair work. Students need to argue about what they want to say. They need to say "I agree, I disagree, Hmmm, I don't think that's right" and things like that which they just need to learn. I began writing it on a big poster paper, but I didn't do anything with it. #3 (11)

One thing that I had intended to do, and I didn't do, was to ask them "What's your favorite...?" ...your favorite color, so they would be able to use possessive pronouns. But I didn't do that. #7 (3)

I could have done something else with this, and I didn't. I thought about it, and I just didn't know what to do with the results. And maybe I don't have to do anything. #14 (9)

The first comment takes on larger meaning in relation to one of the defined foci of the Lab School project, which is pair work. In the second week of the term, DB is realizing that a student lack of vocabulary is keeping pair work from being as effective as it might be, but she is unable to carry out her idea at that moment in class. This is an interesting example of DB in her dual roles as practitioner and researcher and how this surfaces in the classroom.

The second comment focuses on the opportunity to pursue a curriculum goal, but it passes by and DB is unable to take advantage of the moment. The third comment is the reflection of a teaching dilemma, involving the need of the teacher to draw conclusions for the students, or to let them take away what

they can and make this point at another time. We have already seen that there are numerous times when DB does follow through with her original plans or spontaneously builds on an unexpected opening and creates an activity that fits perfectly with the teachable moment. In other words, the times that she does not do this are relatively rare.

A series of comments from Class #10 that surfaced in this category is a good illustration of the choices DB opens for herself during the teaching day:

And so that was my problem this morning. I came in, and I just wanted to do so many things that I just could not pick one thing. One thing that I was sure of, though, was that we would be doing a "Find someone who..." activity, and they would be practicing asking "Can you...?" questions, and then listen for the answer, and then write "Can" or "Cannot." #10 (4) – (5)

To flow into that activity, I wanted them to ask questions, because we ended last time asking questions about the story. #10 (7)

One of the things that wanted to do was to bring their work history into the classroom. Another thing was I wanted to bring their duties and skills and, and compare those, which is a very difficult concept to grasp. #10 (12) - (13)

The lack of focus that DB reflects in the first comment, as she enters the classroom, does not necessarily predispose this to be a bad day; in fact, most of the markedly good days have this quality as well (see "Positive and Negative Assessment Comments" below). Nevertheless, this day is neutral; DB sums it up by saying "This was an OK day" [#10 (25)].

The following two fragments involve a reflection on how DB learns from her own teaching and applies that knowledge to activities when she repeats them:

In the past I've never taught it that precisely, about the past. We always say "before" or "our new country" but then I have thought off and on, but never really implemented it, that if we say "in your country" then they associate the past with something that happened in their country. Well, the past can also be used for what they ate this morning. #3 (7)

And this particular worksheet had slight modifications from last term, because I learned from last term about a few holes that there were in the design of what I had made. #4 (12)

The sole entry that DB defines specifically as a "Teachable Moment" fits well here. The following story occurs four weeks into the quarter:

I think I actually began with a kind of a teachable moment. [It] was provided by a student, and she said, "My mother has 60" or 16 or something. [This] made me think that the verb *to be* with the age is not acquired by a lot of people in that class. And I knew that before. It just refreshed my memory. And the other thing is that I need to work with numbers with them. We'll have to do that, probably next week, because it was hard to hear the distinction between 16 and 60. And by hearing other people talking about other people's ages, I could tell that there were some holes in the knowledge there.

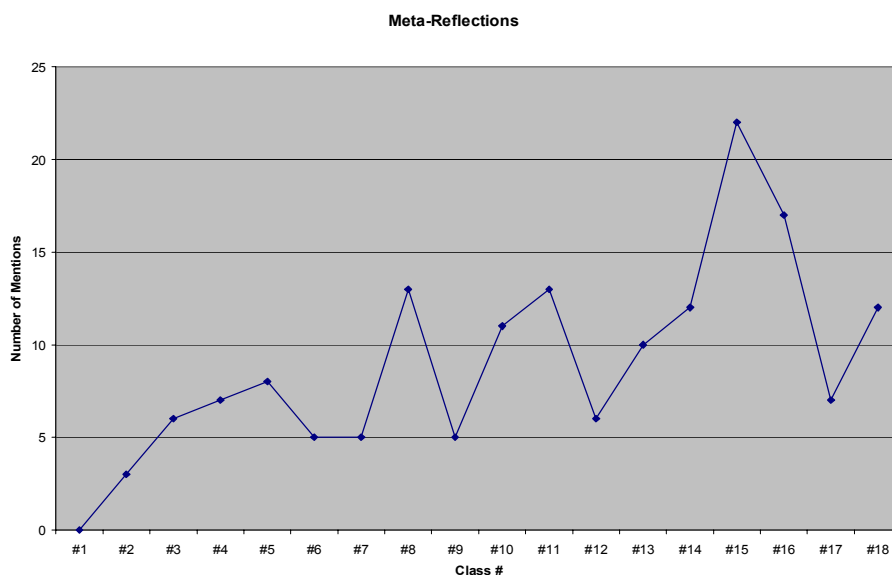
So they had to pair up, and they had to ask each other the question, "How old are you?" And then they had to report to a third person. "I talked to so-and-so. He is blah-blah-blah years old." And then when they were finished, and I went around, and I tested out to see what they were saying. It was very good, overall. I put the different ages in the classroom on a continuum. And what I was trying to do here was a survey of the class ages, which is always fascinating. But also I wanted them to start thinking about prepositions of place, and actually it's also a preposition of time – between and between. So we were doing this. And it was really quite fun. #7 (2) – (12)

The effect of just doing the right thing at the right "teachable" time has a ripple effect that pulls teachers through less inspired days.

Meta-Reflections

Throughout the debriefs, DB steps back, observes herself, her students, and her classroom, and reflects on what has happened. I have called these fragments meta-reflections, because she is talking about the nature of teaching and its inherent dilemmas and contradictions. There is only one debrief – the very first day of the term, Class #1 – where there are no comments that I classified as meta-reflections. Figure 4 shows the number of times this category comes up throughout the term.

Figure 4



One of the prominent topics in this category is preparation: how much to prepare, and how preparation is related to the success of the activity. The quick answer is that the two are not as related as teachers might hope. DB has taught each classroom subject multiple times over fourteen years of

teaching and is conscientious about preparing, but she sometimes wishes her level of preparation had been different.

At the very beginning of the debrief, DB reflects that perhaps there is such a thing as over-preparation:

For once I had everything copied the night before, and so what happens when I do that is I have everything to go by, but I'm still missing a few things. So in fact, in being more prepared, I'm a little bit less prepared, or I'm less involved with thinking about what I'm going to do. But I don't think it shows. #4 (2)

"I don't think it shows" could mean that students don't notice, or that a viewer can't tell on the video (references to this phenomenon, peculiar to the Lab School, recur in the debriefs). Nevertheless, DB herself notices some disequilibrium during the activity. It doesn't feel quite right, despite her being "more prepared."

In another instance, DB talks about an activity involving the use of pictures, which she prepared well, but the descriptive component of the activity, as separate from the grammar point in question, may be difficult for students who lack vocabulary despite their mastery of the concept she is teaching (the preposition *between*).

The danger with doing something like this, with low-level learners, is [this]: you provide a picture, [and] then they might be able to say "between" and show the objects, but not necessarily know the vocabulary within the picture. It was a risk I was running. #7 (16)

DB is willing to take this risk, but she can only hope that the outcome will be worth it, that the students will not be discouraged from coming back, and many

other concerns that simultaneously go on in her head as she negotiates each moment over three hours in class.

The following excerpt relates to a time that DB prepared, but the activity did not work out to her satisfaction, and as she reflects, she figures out why:

It did not quite work, and I don't know why. Actually, yes, I know why. I had one pair [of cards] too many, and so two people had two extra cards, and that didn't work. And by the time I realized it, I could not just pick any two cards out, and it was not going to work. #3 (27)

Sometimes when she gets to class, her perspective changes, her plans don't exactly fit, her timing is off, or the students don't respond as expected:

I had a couple of activities planned today, and it took me a while to get to the first one. It always does, because I just try to make everybody feel comfortable. #5 (3)

And then when we came back from break, I was wondering how to incorporate *do* and *did* with what we were going to do, and that part was not planned out tightly enough... or... I don't know. I don't know what it is with this group. #5 (9)

And so that was my problem this morning. I came in, and I just wanted to do so many things that I just could not pick one thing. #10 (4)

Other times, she is expecting to feel satisfaction or a "thrill" from a familiar activity that doesn't materialize, and this detracts from her perception of the activity's success:

It was not a very thrilling TPR [Total Physical Response activity], maybe because I have done it for so many years. Maybe it takes the thrill out of it. That's just the way it is sometimes. The thrill is not there because there are things that need to be learned and taught. #6 (10)

Sometimes, she has to recognize that her goals are unclear or that she hasn't planned sufficiently:

I stretched this activity a little bit, which then got me kind off track maybe timing-wise. This was not a great timed session, for some reason, because I stretched here a little bit. In some ways, it was kind of necessary in the succession of things. I wanted them to see what the change was, how different it was from their favorite time of day in their country. And that in itself would be a great piece of writing, if we could ever get to it using past tense. And maybe that's what I will ask them to do on Friday. So that was a little bit unplanned. #8 (12) - (15)

I was not completely prepared this morning because I have to be somewhere at 1:00. My life was very complicated this morning. And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together. And I think that someone looking at the class might find it interesting, but I didn't like the first half. #15 (3) - (6)

In the second example, DB sets high standards for herself and doesn't meet them, despite outward appearances (probably a reference to the ever-present video camera). She also acknowledges that personal constraints affect her teaching.

On the other hand, there are plenty of times that she doesn't exactly plan an activity, but a spontaneous attempt succeeds, based on a grab-bag of possibilities from previous experience that she can draw on at a given moment:

It was spur of the moment that I saw the opportunity to contrast and compare the past tense (which we did a little bit of last time) and the present tense. And it was also very helpful to introduce adverbs of frequency, what one did last night, as opposed to what one usually does. #4 (5)

I made it up. I saw the need as we went along. I wrote down the directions on the board, which was to write down six sentences with the adverbs of frequency. #4 (17)

As I said, the first activity was probably the best, and it was again, once more, quite unplanned. #11 (23)

There are other occasions when an activity does not have the desired result, unrelated to DB's planning process:

Today and yesterday were just days where I'm not screwing up on purpose, but it doesn't flow, or it's not really going where... I don't know. And it's probably fine for the viewer. And when I debrief, I can see that everything I did was fine. Maybe it's not as interesting? I guess prepositions are not very interesting. #7 (32)

I wanted to find out what they wanted to learn in the next two weeks, so I had put a few functions on that... and this is where I went wrong. I had them on my desk, and I forgot them, and so I tried to recall them, and I knew I was not recalling what I wanted to recall. So it was OK, but it was not great. #15 (14) - (16)

Today felt very disjointed. That's because I had to do conferencing, and I tried to teach at the same time. Well, that's not really possible. So that did not work very well, in my view. #18 (3)

And I know where I went wrong. It really bothers me, because I know how to teach this. I wanted to have something that would keep them occupied. And the wrong thing to do was to give them an info gap, which they'd never done before, and to give them vocabulary they had never dealt with before. I should just have given them a text to read, but I didn't. #18 (22)

In the first example, as in the previously mentioned fragment from #6 (14) regarding a TPR activity, some things that must be covered in the ESL classroom are hard to develop in an interesting way, even for an experienced teacher. And when DB says, "I'm not screwing up on purpose," this remark must reflect her high level of frustration as she tries to figure out what went wrong with the activity. If there is ever a time when DB does "screw up on purpose," it is not evident in these transcripts, but she is more than willing to

blame herself anyway. This is one of those moments in the debriefs where we get a glimmer of the personal and vulnerable side of teaching.

Other times, her instincts or her memory betray her. And timing, as well as students' differing ability levels, resurface as delicate balances:

The timing was not very good on my part. Maybe I spent too much time on some things and not enough on others. I probably should not have gone into the past tense right after break. But I felt that I did because the writing was going to be in the past. At the same time, we didn't have enough time to do the writing. #4 (27) and (29)

Everything I do during the 3-hour session, in which we do the reading and writing, pertains to the reading and writing in some way, so it doesn't matter whether it will be at the end or at the beginning. But that way at the beginning I'm sure that it will be a slower pace for some of them for whom this is the first time that they get to do such a reading and then writing the comprehension questions. The next time I need to take more time again. #4 (32)

The reason I had introduced process writing, I must say, is because it ends up being in the worksheet. They have to describe one of their job duties. And so I thought I hope I would first do this and then do it on the work sheet. But as it turned out, it took longer. #11 (27) - (29)

DB worries that she is rushing students through an activity and detracting from the results she hopes for:

Maybe I rushed them toward what we had to do? I thought that I explained it thoroughly. Some of them just did it with no problem, and others were just not understanding what to do. I don't know what the problem, if there is a problem, is. #5 (12)

And as I debrief, I realize that maybe I rushed through Sylvia's Story. What I could have done, and I didn't do, was to have them draw a diagram of what Sylvia's room looked like, because she gives a fairly good description. #6 (19)

We had a workshop to attend to in the afternoon, and that was really quite stressful to rush to do this, which was a new thing for a lots of

them, and then redirect to the computer lab, and then leave as soon as possible, not being done with our paperwork or anything, to go to this workshop on assessment. So that was a bit rushed, but I managed. #17 (22) - (28)

The following story starts out with timing and ultimately involves many layers of thought:

Then we had the reading. This is where I said that the timing was not very good, because my original intent had been to pair them up once they had written the questions in the past, and ask them of their partner, and then write a short paragraph about a partner. But by then, I really wanted to get to “Blue Moon Valley” [reading text] because it just has to be done. If I don’t do it one week, then we would be falling behind. And it is an interesting story, and it is good for them, and it’s a routine, so I just wanted to stick to this. One thing that I think, just to engage them, because I felt that maybe there was too much individual work this time. That was my sense, although I guess they spent the first hour in pair work, so I should feel OK about it. But then the reading of “Blue Moon Valley” was not really asking them for anything more than their reading and writing skills when they wrote about it. There were no real thinking skills involved. ...And the process in a cooperative learning activity is sometimes more complicated than the task itself, so we’ll see, but I need to alter that a little bit. #11 (12) - (16) and (18)

DB is simultaneously considering many questions to provoke her own process of analysis. What activity is the next logical one? When do I change my plan and when do I stay with my “original intent”? What are the consequences of breaking with an established routine? What if we “fall behind” - don’t cover the material that we’re supposed to complete during this term? Have I balanced “individual work,” “pair work,” and a variety of reading, writing, and thinking skills? How do I structure “cooperative learning” so that the form does not overwhelm the task or goal? What changes do I need to make for next time?

This is typical of the complexity of thought that DB puts into every segment of class time.

As DB reflects on the difficult issue of timing, she remembers another educator's remark and uses it to experiment with something different, in this case introducing a focused activity at the beginning of class, contrary to her usual procedure:

John Fanselow says "Try the opposite," so I just did. And it's OK. I think that there is something to say to have them really focus right away on something because then all their attention is there. I think attention wanes after three hours, although they're really incredibly focused. #8 (4)

The inevitable fact that adult students are usually not present at every class also affects learning and planning and provokes the following reflections:

I'm missing two people, so that was too bad. It's always hard, because then we have to catch up. And I was intending to use what they prepared today as a follow-up for next time, so I don't quite [know] what will happen. #6 (24)

Adult learners have many other things going, and people get sick. And you miss a time, and you've missed a lot. And so anything has to be self-contained. You cannot really carry over to the next day. And so I'm going to try to carry it over the next day, and see how it works. But that's really going to be like a major effort on my part, because it is usually not successful, because people who are not there today will come next time, and then they won't know what we are doing or how we are doing it. So I really have to plan it in a way that's, that's going to work and be integrated with the following lesson. #8 (27) - (30)

I was missing a couple of students, which was really irritating, which I think that you can hear in the video. #16 (18)

DB also thinks of lesson content (in the following examples, specific parts of speech) in more global terms (usefulness in the outside world of communication) rather than the mere success or failure of an activity in class. She once again remembers another educator's thought on the subject at hand and ponders her own experience in a completely different work setting as well as the learning level of the students:

I'm still thinking about this email that I got from one of the professors here at PSU, who was reminding, in the course of her email, that we should teach language that is useful. And actually I don't know if [the word] *can* is useful, talking about the possibility, but I remember that when I was working in a "Job-to-Work" or welfare program with non-native speakers, *can* was a big one. And the kind of language that goes around expressing ability or saying "No, I can't, but I can try" or "I can learn" is really a useful type of language. #9 (4)

Now, [the word] *still* was a challenge for everyone. It's such a small word, and yet it's such an incredible concept. And I don't know why we don't teach it any earlier. I think we usually do it in Level D, which in our program is much higher. It's in two levels from now. #10 (16)

Who the students are, and what they are ready and/or willing to do, is another area that occupies DB's meta-reflective thoughts:

Anyway, they're great. They're very willing to do unusual things that I don't know if every regular language classroom would do those kinds of things. #3 (33)

We need more practice, and practice, and practice, and practice in all different kinds of ways. Making questions is a very difficult skill, and even in Level D, which is in two levels from now, it's not obvious that people know how: what to do or how to do it. #8 (19)

I want to finish [the topic of] "work" this week, but because we have so many people, about a third of the class, that doesn't work, or has never worked, I thought that this time I would find something that would be applicable to work situations and other situations in the United States.

So those are cultural. It was very culturally oriented, and talking about different registers too. #13 (3)

How do you pair people for pair exercise, and should they be the same abilities, should they not be of the same abilities. Some people prefer working by themselves. #16 (19)

The presence of the Lab School video camera is never far from DB's thoughts. In previous fragments quoted above, she has made remarks such as "I don't think it shows" [#4 (2)]; "...someone looking at the class might find it interesting, but I didn't like the first half" [#15 (6)]; "...it's probably fine for the viewer" [#7 (32)]; and "I think that you can hear [my irritation] in the video" [#16 (18)]. I wonder if this may influence DB's reflective anxiety about not using a preferred method of teaching. Not only is she doing something that may not be currently in vogue in the profession, or that is not favored by the Lab School research team, or that strays from the proscribed curriculum, but everyone can see her doing it:

I think that one of my problems was to focus on something. And actually now that I have focused on a topic I feel that I'm kind of far away from the more "outcome-based" curriculum. And one way I'm going to solve that is to have them solve different problems in groups, which will be training for one of the performance tasks, which is to solve a problem in a group. #6 (28)

I never do anything very direct like this, and I felt like I was lecturing. And I felt like they were either getting it or not getting it. And they were practicing something that maybe was just going to go out their other ear as soon as they got out of class. Maybe yes, maybe no – who knows. #10 (11)

I'm a little uncomfortable with so many handouts. #13 (31)

It's more academic ESL than usual, but I think it gives them a good background for the structure, proper structure. #13 (36)

And 100% of them loved working in group, which always amazes me, because I don't care for it. #15 (34) - (35)

A lot of the things that I did today felt like canned language. I'm not used to using so many handouts. #18 (6)

Despite the frustrations, however, remarks about the rewards of teaching are scattered throughout the debriefs. These are the reasons that teachers keep coming back for more:

It ended up being a very good class. I'm just lucky to be creative, and I'm lucky that I have built my skills over the last 14 years, so that really helped out. #3 (5)

I tried a new thing with them this time, because it's very difficult for people to start reflecting on what they're learning. So this time the way I presented it was the most effective yet. I said, "I teach. You learn. What did you learn today?" And they were able to brainstorm new words as well as structures. #5 (20)

And what came out was really incredible because most of it I had not taught. Or I had never really [ex]plicitly taught. #7 (28)

So I do teach something, it seems, that students retain. That's always kind of nice to see. #8 (45)

I have never introduced process writing in such a simple, clear manner before. Pat on the back! #11 (7)

Between the time that we began answering basic comprehension questions and now, I've seen in all of them a real improvement in finishing the complete sentences – giving the answer in the complete sentence. So that has been really quite rewarding. #13 (34) - (35)

One of the most fascinating things about the debriefs is the complex negotiations that constitute each class and the many levels of thought that are condensed in DB's five-minute review of each three-hour class. Over and over, the debriefs present the evidence that no single act of teaching, much

less days, and terms, and years of teaching, can be reduced to a simple formula. Class #15 was a particularly varied day. Although fragments of this story have been already quoted, it is interesting to read through them as a whole. What did work and what didn't work are interwoven throughout the class.

I was not completely prepared this morning because I have to be somewhere at 1:00. My life was very complicated this morning. And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together. And I think that someone looking at the class might find it interesting, but I didn't like the first half. The second half was really incredible, but the first half was not that great. #15 (3) - (7)

I wanted to find out what they wanted to learn in the next two weeks, so I had put a few functions on that, and this is where I went wrong. I had them on my desk, and I forgot them, and so I tried to recall them, and I was not recalling them. I knew I was not recalling what I wanted to recall. It was OK, but it was not great. #15 (14) - (16)

I think it was difficult for some of them, because of the lack of structure or the lack of paper to look at. And perhaps I was changing directions, and I was changing language. It was not the same. And that was difficult to follow. #15 (19) - (20)

And what I had wanted them to do was group work. And this is really incredible, because it's the first I ever do group work.³ And they had to produce the summary of the story that we had read up until then. It actually was really quite amazing. I need to collect and scan each of the stories that were produced, and keep them as auxiliary materials, because it was really quite something. They did an incredible job. The group work was fascinating. And with the group work I'm always worried that someone will feel left out, and I try to assign roles, and the

³ DB (personal communication D. Brillanceau, 1/20/2006,) explains why this is the first time she is doing group work:

"When SB and I first came on at the Lab School, we were told that pair work was a major research strand. In fact, the furniture was chosen for pair work purposes. In addition to that, we were kept informed of the technology progress with microphones and recording. If there were more than 2 students, that is if there were a group of 3 or more, it was not only difficult to hear what was being said but it was difficult to see who had said what. Therefore, I stuck to pair work as it facilitated the research, and coding and transcribing.

"This was toward the end of the term and the rebel in me just told myself forget it: this is what I want to do. I'll do it because it is only one day out of many. It worked so well that I kept the posters on which each group had written the summary for years.

"The groups were larger than 3, 4 to 5 people."

only one that they stuck to was, one person wrote. I think there was some negotiation in there that was really quite interesting. Who was going to write? And then they took over, and it was really quite interesting. And we had never put the tables like this before. #15 (22) - (31)

And 100% of them loved working in group, which always amazes me, because I don't care for it. #15 (34) - (35)

Finally, one of the most poignant stories in the debriefs involves DB's meta-reflections on a conversation near the end of the term with a student who has been particularly draining:

I was counseling a student, R. I thought she would be ready for Level C, and she wants to stay in Level B. As I was talking to her, it came out that she doesn't want to stay with me. She has this thing about speaking too fast. I speak too fast. And she comes from SB's class, and she wanted to go back to SB's Level A because SB's speech is a lot more teacher-talk than mine. And it's slower. I don't teach that way because I think that a student should get used to regular speech because that's the way it is out in your life. And I don't think that we should let her do that because then it sets a precedent for people who want to switch to another class. So that was crushing. I try so hard, and I thought I had a good rapport with her. And she has made tremendous progress during this term. It was kind of a let-down. It's hard not to take things personally in this business, I think. #18 (32) – (36)

There is no denying the impact that this had on DB; she states clearly that it was “crushing” and “a let-down,” in great contrast to her usual upbeat mood.

Positive and Negative Assessment Comments

When I transcribed the debriefs, I was struck with the number of times during the recordings that DB made brief summing-up comments such as “So

that was interesting,” or “That went well,” and occasional neutral comments such as “That was OK” or negative comments such as “That didn’t work.” This lead me to create the topic “Positive and Negative Assessment Comments,” but I was not clear what I would gain from analyzing these short remarks as a separate category. However, the results of this count turned out to be revealing. Counting up and categorizing these remarks provide quantitative data that highlight several individual debriefs, and one cluster of debriefs, that stand out from the rest.

Words like *fine*, *great*, *interesting*, and *good* led me to classify comments as “positive.” The word *OK* figures in most of the neutral comments, and the context helped me decide that DB was reporting a moderately successful event: not a disaster but not a resounding success either. Remarks that I classified as negative usually reflect DB’s frustration with the outcome: “It was just a little bit hurried, and not quite organized in any way” [#17 (34)] or “It felt shattered, or very dispersed” [#18 (38)].

Table VI below shows samples from Step 4 (A) of my data re-organization (see Chapter 3), along with my classification of each remark. I chose these class days because they show a variety of remarks and include three of the four classes in the cluster toward the end of the term that drew my attention. Note that I categorized “it was interesting” comments as positive unless the context indicated otherwise.

Table VI: Samples of Data Reorganization and Classification for Positive/Negative Assessment Comments

Class #	Comment	Category
#13	<p>...I think I made it move along OK. (8) In the process they learned <i>it depends</i>, which was good. (9) And then we had people who deferred an opinion, and that was interesting as well. (10) And that was good, because it reviewed some very basic question-asking. (12) So that was really quite interesting. (17) I... it was... so it was interesting. (20) And that was really quite interesting because we learned... again we learned more vocabulary, "miss," and what are the things that they miss. (23) And so that was interesting (25) It went OK. (28) But this worked... this worked just fine. (33) So that has been really quite rewarding. (35) So... Anyway, it was a good class. That was great. (38)</p>	<p>Neutral Positive Pos/Interesting Positive Pos/Interesting Pos/Interesting Pos/Interesting Pos/Interesting Neutral Positive Positive Positive</p>
#16	<p>And that was really fun. (7) And it's just amazing. (11) so that worked OK, (17) But it was a little trying, there. (23) It's really incredible. (26) (<i>negative sense – SLP</i>) which is interesting to me... (30) So anyway, it was a very good class, and it was great. (41)</p>	<p>Positive Positive Neutral Negative Negative Pos/Interesting Positive</p>
#17	<p>This is, was an interesting day...(2) and that was interesting to me. (5) And that was interesting, (15) It was... it was a good class, up until the computer, and that was... a... a bit... a bit... I want to say disheveled. (33) It was a... just a little bit hurried, and not quite organized in any way. (34)</p>	<p>Pos/Interesting Pos/Interesting Pos/Interesting Positive + Negative Negative</p>
#18	<p>It was good... (5) so that didn't work very well. (9) These are great! (11) So this was really, this was really good. (13) So that was, I, I guess it was OK. (16) So, and, that, that did not work very well. (23) and that, I, I, and so, that, is was, it was, it was difficult. (25) Anyway, it was, it was OK, I guess. (37) It just, just, it just felt, very, I want to say shattered, or very dispersed, type of class. I don't really have the right word. (38)</p>	<p>Positive Negative Positive Positive Neutral Negative Negative Negative Neutral Negative</p>

Next, I organized my counts as shown in Table VII.

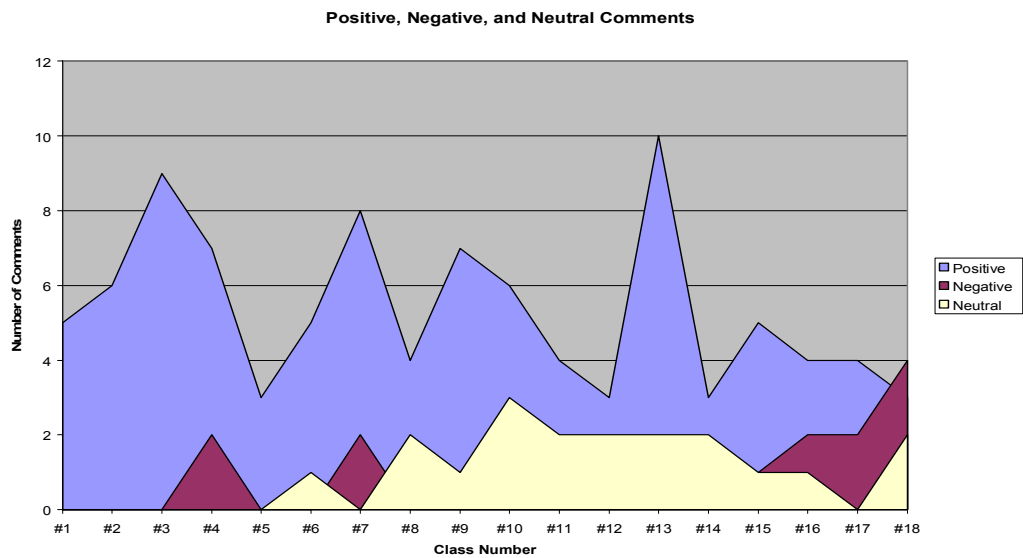
Table VII: Counts of Positive, Negative, and Neutral Assessment Comments per

Class

Class #	Positive	Negative	Neutral
#1	5		
#2	6		
#3	9		
#4	7	2	
#5	3		
#6	5		1
#7	8	2	
#8	4		2
#9	7		1
#10	6		3
#11	4		2
#12	3		2
#13	10		2
#14	3		2
#15	5	1	1
#16	4	2	1
#17	3	2	
#18	3	4	2

Figure 5 is a graph of the same data.

Figure 5



This visual image made it clear that there are far more positive comments overall and a very small number of negative comments. It is easy to see that the negatives are clustered together at the end of the term, with the exceptions of Class #4 and Class #7. There are peaks in the positive comments as well, notably Class #3 and Class #13. These indicated classes that might be atypical and worth analyzing. Neutral comments are spread throughout, and I chose not to pursue them in this analysis.

I wondered if the positive/negative peaks and valleys would correspond in any way to a generalized category of “a good day” or “a bad day” in DB’s teaching life. The good days are the ones that make teachers remember why we love teaching; we float out of the classroom on a cloud of energy and excitement. The bad days are the ones when all our self-doubts and vulnerability rise to the fore. I also wondered about the preponderance of positive comments. Is it possible that reflecting on the positive aspects of teaching is one of the things that keep teachers inspired? Or is this an extension of DB’s generally positive attitude?

I re-read the transcripts for the days when there were seven or more positive comments (Classes #3, #4, #7, #9, and #13). I chose the number seven as a dividing point because it’s the average number of mentions (126 mentions, divided by 18 classes). I also re-read the transcripts for each of the classes where there were negative comments, since there were only six of them (Classes #4, #7, and #15 - #18). It is also noteworthy that Classes #15 -

#18 are clustered in sequence at the end of the term, but even in this cluster there are never more than four negative comments (Class #18). Class #4 and Class #7 fall in both categories, the first with seven positive comments and two negative comments and the second with eight positive and two negative comments. They are also the only classes with negative comments as I have defined them here (brief summing-up assessments) until Class #15. This challenges the concept of a good day/bad day dichotomy, which remains elusive even after my analysis.

Based on this process, and using seven or more positive remarks, or any negative remarks, as a way of singling out specific classes, I am going to talk first about classes which had seven or more positive and no negative comments. Next, I'll look at the two classes that had more than seven positive comments and also two negative comments each. I will end with a discussion of the four classes at the end of the term with an escalating number of negative comments.

Days on which there are seven or more positive and no negative comments

Class #3 has nine positive assessment comments, scattered throughout the debrief. Reading through them as a group communicates the rising crescendo of positive feelings as DB recalls her day in class:

And it ended up being a very good class. I think that I'm just lucky to be creative, and I'm lucky that I have built my skills over the last 14 years, so that really helped out. #3 (5)
...that was interesting. #3 (9)

So that was quite interesting; it was great. #3 (14)
 ...and so that was good. #3 (16)
 It's great to have him being there. #3 (19)
 And that was interesting. #3 (22)
 And it was really interesting. #3 (26)
 ...and everything was fine. And the results were quite good. The whole thing went really well. It was just really neat. #3 (30)
 So it was actually a fascinating experience. I'm warming up to the class. #3 (32)

On re-reading the transcript of Class #3 in its entirety, I was struck immediately by the fact that everything did not go perfectly, but rather DB made the right choices and shifts in direction so that the students followed her flow, and potential disasters ended up as just the opposite. This is not entirely serendipity; as DB points out at the beginning [#3 (5)], she brings both her creativity and her fourteen years of experience and skill-building to each turning point in the class. Furthermore, the students were at their best, and DB describes them as being open to “unorthodox” and “unusual” activities which, she speculates, are perhaps not part of other language classes [#3 (33)].

Surprisingly, the class starts out on a shaky note:

I had a concept that I wanted to teach. And it's *the same* and *different*. It's really important for them to know, so that's what I set out to do. Prior to that I had wanted to do something more complicated which I didn't have time to implement before class time started, so by the time class started, I was flustered and didn't quite know where the class was going to go. #3 (3) - (4)

DB's teaching of the concepts *the same* and *different* during Class #3 took on a new flavor as it developed; she says “I've never taught it that

precisely” [#3 (7)]. Nevertheless, the activity did not seem complete to her.

She says, “I began writing [the expressions] on a big poster paper, but I didn’t do anything with it” [#3 (11)]. She mentions that this gap will inspire her to come back to the topic in her future planning, but DB does not really conclude her description of this activity with any specific comment or summing-up.

Being flustered and trying something new is followed by four very positive events. The first is working on learning mistakes, an activity which DB uses often throughout the term and which the students also seem to enjoy. Second, she recognizes the need for a change of pace: “I felt they needed to take a rest. I had explained quite a few things” [#3 (17)]. Third, she has a student who is asking good questions, so she feels challenged “in very positive ways” [#3 (20)] and can feel good about rising to the challenge so that all the students learn. This individual student, J., also helps DB keep a finger on the pulse of the class; if an inquisitive, verbal student is asking questions, there are probably other students who also appreciate hearing more about the topic but for whatever reason can’t or don’t ask questions in class. Last, the “change of pace” activity, involving reading and discussion, is also a success.

After the break, DB describes two activities which again were not perfect either in planning or in execution, but the net result was good. For the first activity, she “wanted to pair them up in a different way” [#3 (25)] but she miscalculated when she planned her pairing-up system and “It did not quite work” [#3 (27)]. As she continues the activity, “I had a couple of pairs that did

not understand what was happening” [#3 (29)] but she is able to talk them through their difficulties without disrupting the rest of the class. Despite these minor glitches, DB is able to say at the end of the activity that “the results were quite good” and “the whole thing went really well” [#3 (30)]. She sums up the class with the comment “So it was actually a fascinating experience. I’m warming up to the class” [#3 (32)].

It is challenging to isolate or classify the exact reasons why Class #3 worked so well, since on other days, similar events add up to a teaching experience that is less than satisfactory (see for example the discussion of Class #7 below). Nevertheless, the “magical” combination of DB’s creativity and the students’ positive attitude, including an individual student who interacts with specific grammar points in an exciting and stimulating way, combine in Class #3 to produce a very good day. This resonates with my own teaching experience: a strong connection with one student bridges the gap to the rest of the class, rather than alienating them, and creates a residue of positive goodwill for both teacher and students that lasts throughout the class and a long time after it is over.

Class #9 is interesting because it has one of the shortest debriefs (620 words) and still manages to include seven positive comments. At the start, DB again expresses a measure of uncertainty about what exactly will be taught, but she does start out with an idea in her mind about teaching useful language, and how the word *can* is useful in expressing ability at a job

interview, for example in the phrases “No, I can’t, but I can try” or “I can learn” [#9 (4)]. Again, chance plays a role in giving DB an opportunity to pull a teaching trick out of her repertoire at the right moment:

Luckily, wonderfully, fortunately enough, I had room there for a concept attainment, and this time I [had a] chance to do it right, in which I demonstrated the wrong things about *can* and the right thing about *can*. #9 (8)

In an activity that follows, there is also a measure of experimentation that works:

We’ve never done a listening exercise in which they have to listen to a different person. And so I’m going to do this more often if I can. It was good. #9 (12) – (16)

The last part of class, devoted to reading, involved “confusion in the text” and “ambiguity in the English language” which was “just a little difficult” and “more challenging” for students [#9 (19)]. The timing was off, and students had to take the writing component home instead of being able to complete it in class. Nevertheless, DB ends by saying, “It was a great class. They’re really quite, quite good” [#9 (28) - (29)]. Could it be the fact that the text unexpectedly provided a definition for the word *suddenly*, a problem word for students, that ended the class on an upbeat note [#9 (20)]? This seems like an improbable explanation in itself, although DB mentions vocabulary acquisition as a satisfying part of Classes #7 and #10, two other classes with lots of positive comments. There is something inexplicable that made this class work despite potential pitfalls.

Class #13 has ten positive assessment comments, more than any other class, but it still doesn't completely elucidate the mysterious qualities of a "good day." In fact, DB ends the debrief with two things that could have easily shifted the class in the other direction. First is her physical state: "I am tired, and I am sick" [#13 (29)]. Second is her use of two unaccustomed classroom techniques: "I'm a little uncomfortable with so many handouts" [#13 (31)] and "It's more academic ESL than usual" [#13 (36)]. But still, "It was a good class" [#13 (38)]. It has some of the characteristics of other good days. DB spontaneously uses a fact of classroom life to introduce her first activity:

As people were trickling in late, I kept on asking them for the reasons they were late, and that led into the worksheet that I have, called "Sorry I am late." #13 (5)

As in other classes, there is flexibility on DB's part to shift her planned activities and timing to flow with the class. She mentions some specific vocabulary gains, and a student whose vocabulary adds to the class:

R. mentioned *folklore*, which was an interesting word that not many people used. #13 (24)

There are also some new positive elements that didn't appear in the classes I've already analyzed. In her activity at the beginning of class, DB introduces a cultural component, asking people if the reasons for being late would be acceptable excuses in their countries of origin. In my teaching experience, this type of activity brings people together as they remember their first culture and learn to adapt to a new one. She also includes a successful

review of previous material, offering students the opportunity to feel competent and successful and therefore excited about the class. This includes her spontaneous move of going out during break and bringing back some native speaker graduate students for the class to interview with the questions they have been reviewing. Another possible key to the positive tone of the class is DB's planning. She tries a different approach to a common topic because she knows something about the individuals in the class:

I want to finish [the topic of] "work" this week, but because we have about a third of the class that doesn't work, or has never worked, I thought that this time I would find something that would be applicable to work situations and other situations in the United States. #13 (3)

Days that have seven or more positive assessment comments and also include negative comments

Class #4 has seven positive and two negative comments. It is an interesting combination of occurrences that, taken as a whole, do not add up to an entirely successful day. However, there are a number of positive highlights, accentuated by DB's generally cheery demeanor and her efforts to see positives whenever possible. There are basically three sections in the debrief that talk about problems, which range from over-planning to room temperature. The following is from the beginning of the debrief:

For once I had everything copied the night before, and so what happens when I do that is that I have everything to go by, but I'm still missing a few things. So in fact, in being more prepared, I'm a little bit

less prepared, or I'm less involved with thinking about what I'm going to do. But I don't think it shows.

I wanted to do adverbs of frequency, and then I wanted to read this second page for the book that we're doing. So in order for me to start putting things into perspective and also to get them geared to what was going to happen in class, I called it a menu, and talked about the four different skills that we would address.

Then I did a line-up with "What time did you wake up this morning?" and "What time do you usually get up?" And I think it was spur of the moment that I saw the opportunity to contrast and compare the past tense, which we did a little bit of last time, and the present tense. It was also very helpful to introduce adverbs of frequency, what one did last night, as opposed to what one usually does. So it was really interesting, to me.

Then we had a big dead... I don't know... I've had a lot more lively – 100%, 0% - type of thing before. This is to address adverbs of frequency, and percentages of time for which we use them. I think it was fine, but maybe they already know it, or maybe I was expecting more, but actually they probably were just soaking it in and trying to make sense of what was happening, is probably what it was. #4 (2) - (10)

The concept of over-planning is interesting, and certainly not one that most teacher preparation courses deal with. On "positive" days, DB has both planned and kept enough leeway to give herself the option of changing activities as she goes along. This didn't happen to a helpful degree during Class #4. But then she follows the over-planning statement with a description of a successful "spur-of-the-moment" activity which combines a review with new material. This is the type of thing that generally characterizes a good day.

However, this is immediately followed by an exercise where DB loses the students. It's puzzling to her, since she's had success with this activity before, and the "big dead" response is thus surprising and also an apt description of a devastating feeling for teachers. Students' glazed eyes, blank

looks, and failure to engage leave us with no explanation and no alternative but to plunge ahead and hope that the next activity brings people back to participation. As DB is quick to note, the “big dead” response is not necessarily an indication of failure; perhaps the students are just trying to take in a new concept and don’t understand enough yet to respond. But in the moment it certainly feels awful to the teacher orchestrating the class.

This is followed by several successful activities, including an opportunity for DB to be creative: “I made it up. I saw the need as we went along” [#4 (17)], a successful writing activity [#4 (18)], a good opening for a follow-up activity [#4 (19)], and a successful concept attainment activity that DB presents in a brand-new way [#4 (21) – (24)]. These are all components of good days.

But next there is a timing issue:

And then we did the reading and then the questions and then the writing. Now ... the timing was not very good on my part. Maybe I spent too much time on some things and not enough on others. I probably should not have gone into the past tense right after break. But I felt that I did because the writing was going to be in the past. #4 (26) - (27)

DB has a logical, curriculum-based reason for spending class time on the past tense: to prepare students for what they will encounter in the subsequent writing activity. But it doesn’t work out – the timing feels wrong. And she goes on:

I'm asking them to express themselves in the past, but at the same time we didn't have enough time to do the writing, and so I sent them home with writing, and that will be their homework. So we'll see what they come up with. And if they don't get it done, as I said to them, they'll have to do it in class. #4 (28) – (30)

These few sentences imply a variety of unexpressed yet troubling issues about homework and class attendance that DB also mentions elsewhere:

Adult learners have many other things going, and people get sick. And you miss a time, and you've missed a lot. And so anything has to be self-contained. You cannot really carry over to the next day. And so I'm going to try to carry it over the next day, and see how it works. But that's really going to be like a major effort on my part, because it is usually not successful, because people who are not there today will come next time, and then they won't know what we are doing or how we are doing it. So I really have to plan it in a way that's going to work and be integrated with the following lesson. Or I could just lop it. So that's another thing. #8 (27) - (31)

Will the students actually do the homework? What if people who are absent today come next time without the homework? What if some students do it and some don't? How much will DB have to think on her feet and how much can she plan in advance? The seemingly small issue of timing in this class is already extending itself to the next class. This is something that DB will probably worry about over the next few days and try to compensate for in her planning, but it is an ongoing issue. The whole day is altered if the lesson plan is based on the (possibly false) assumption that everyone has prepared for what comes next. Yet planning to do the homework in class means that the few diligent students who have already done it will be bored – the very students who are probably the most fun when they are engaged. As DB

records the debrief, she is anticipating the planning necessary for the class that will follow this one and that will require some forethought.

Deferring an in-class activity to homework actually happens fairly often, including in the very positive Class #9:

Since the comprehension of the text was a little bit more difficult, it took a while. And so therefore the piece that they could write on their work life, they have to do it at home. And so I wonder if they will do it. #9 (22) – (24)

All the unknowns that are brought into play when this happens do not necessarily create a bad day in retrospect, although they affect DB's thought process as she looks back in retrospect on the class in her debrief. And despite my speculation above, in the debrief for Class #5 four days later I can find no mention of how this homework and planning dilemma worked itself out. Class #5 has its own serious challenges (discussed below), so perhaps homework was not the main thing on DB's mind when she debriefed.

The last paragraph in the Class #4 debrief sheds some more light on the downward spiral of the class despite a number of positive moments:

J., the person who's been challenging at times, in a positive way, was very quiet today. The light still doesn't work, which is a problem. It's really dark in that room. I don't like it. And it's hot. It's too hot. There's nothing we can do about it, apparently. #4 (36) – (37)

A student who usually inspires DB's teaching when he speaks up and makes her feel connected to the whole class has been "quiet." The physical setting is less than ideal (the heat possibly accounting for the "big dead" experienced

earlier). The debrief goes on to end with several positive remarks about the students, but this has been a day that provoked a mixed reaction from DB.

Class #7 had eight positive and two negative comments, and its negative aspects are not immediately apparent. In fact, Class #7 has some striking similarities to classes with lots of positive comments, most notably Class #3. From the start, the class is not perfect; DB begins with an almost word-for-word repetition of a phrase from the Class #3 (11) debrief when she describes “one thing that I had intended to do, and I didn’t do” [#7 (3)]. She had planned to start a routine that would be carried through in each class, and she gets sidetracked in a positive way by what she sees as “a teachable moment” [#7 (2)]. As in Class #3, with student J. who asks stimulating questions, this student’s error (“My mother *has* 60”) helps DB recognize that “The verb *to be* with the age is not acquired by a lot of people in the class” [#7 (5)]. Again, thanks to her creativity, experience, and ability to meet an immediate conversation need of her students, she spontaneously develops an activity that is “very good, overall” [#7 (9)] and “really quite fun” [#7 (12)], and also sequences nicely into her next activity.

However, DB once again starts out with some hesitancy:

This and the following activity were not really planned as such. What I had planned was slightly different, although the outcome would be the same. #7 (14)

Nevertheless, the results are good. She starts with one of her popular error correction activities (a variation on the one in Class #3) and moves on to a pair exercise in which she takes a calculated risk – and wins. Here is her description:

I gave each pair a picture, and I modeled it, and I said, “Do you see something in your picture that would relate to [the word] *between*?” And as I modeled it, I was showing them what I wanted. I wanted them to construct a sentence with actually all the prepositions which we had been talking about, by looking at a picture. And the danger with doing something like this is that with low-level learners, you provide a picture, but then they might be able to say [the word] *between* and show the objects, but not necessarily know the vocabulary within the picture, which was a danger. It was a risk I was running of doing. So I made sure that as I was giving out the different pictures, I said, “What is this? Do you know everything? Do you know all the words in the picture?” And I’m not sure they were really understanding, but they were eager to begin. And so I gave them the word that I wanted them to write a sentence with, relating to the picture. And they did. And they went through the whole prepositions through there. And it was really quite good. #7 (15) - (18)

DB mitigates the known risk of the activity – the limited vocabulary of the students – by providing vocabulary words as she passes out the pictures. This is presumably something she has planned as a way to compensate for vocabulary difficulties she observed when she did the activity previously. She explains the activity well, and creates excitement among the students, who experience success with their positive results.

As in Class #3, DB has a pair of students whose interaction could be problematic, due to their very different educational levels, but it works out and produces two “fascinating” [#7 (21)] writing samples to compare. Also similar

to Class #3, she changes the pace at the right moment, and launches into a reading and writing activity that includes a routine that students like, and a free writing exercise that amazes DB because the students have leaped ahead of her teaching in their writing abilities:

I thought that I would have them write a letter to their friend about their life in the U.S. And what came out was really incredible because most of it I had not taught. Or I had never really [ex]plicitly taught. So I guided them a little bit at the beginning of the writing exercise... So this was really quite interesting, and some of the writing is really quite incredible. So I'm quite happy with it. #7 (27) – (31)

And yet, despite these positive remarks, DB ends with a discontented remark about the flow of the class. This is a reflection about the nature of teaching as well as a “negative” remark. Given the context of the entire debrief and its generally positive tone, it is something of a mystery why DB sees the class as problematic:

So today and yesterday were just days where I'm not screwing up on purpose, but it doesn't flow, or it's not really going where... it's not... I don't know. And it's probably fine for the viewer. And when I debrief, I can see that everything I did was fine. It's just that maybe it's not as interesting? I guess prepositions are not very interesting. #7 (32)

DB's tone of voice on the audio tape as she records the section above is definitely subdued in comparison to the upbeat feeling in the first part of the debrief, but she rallies and ends on a more positive note, planning for the coming week and remarking that the students are “really good. They're just very patient, and very willing, and they work really hard” [#7 (35)].

Class #4 and Class #7 both have timing and “flow” in common as problematic issues, but also have many of the characteristics of positive classes as well. It seems that the complexity of issues that DB negotiates in each class, and the delicate balance between them, affects the good day/bad day dichotomy. So far, however, it is not clear where one ends and the other begins. Perhaps this is where the neutral comments come into play. Good days and bad days have a long stretch of neutral territory, rather than a sharp dividing line, between them.

Days on which there are negative comments as well as fewer than seven positives

The last four classes with debriefs in this term form a cluster of escalating negative comments and go from mostly positive (with one negative comment) to more negative than positive comments for Class #18.

Class #15 is an interesting day, a combination of positive and negative comparable to Classes #4 and #7, discussed previously. Because the positive comments relate to the second half of the day, the debrief ends on a neutral or upbeat note, suggesting that what happens in the last part of the class affects the tone of the debrief (discussed further below). These are excerpts from the first and second parts of Class #15:

First half:

It's been a long day already, and it's not even one o'clock. I was not completely prepared this morning because I have to be somewhere at 1:00. My life was very complicated this morning. And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together. And I think that someone looking at the class might find it interesting, but I didn't like the first half. The second half was really incredible, but the first half was not that great. #15 (2) – (7)

The next thing that I wanted them to do was to write from this kind of table that came out of their language. And that was a little bit too difficult, so I had to prompt it from them. #15 (9) – (10)

I wanted to find out what they wanted to learn in the next two weeks, so I had put a few functions on that... and this is where I went wrong. I had them on my desk, and I forgot them, and so I tried to recall them, and I was not recalling them. I knew I was not recalling what I wanted to recall. It was OK, but it was not great. #15 (14) – (16)

I think it was difficult for some of them, because of the lack of structure or the lack of paper to look at. And I was changing directions, and I was changing language. It was not the same. And that was difficult to follow. #15 (19) - (20)

Second half:

The following activity, after the break, went just fine, because it was planned a lot better. And what I had wanted them to do was group work. And this is really incredible, because it's the first I ever do group work. #15 (21) – (23)

It actually was really quite amazing. #15 (25)

It really was really quite something. They did an incredible job. The group work was fascinating. With the group work I'm always worried that someone will feel left out, and I try to assign roles, and the only one that they stuck to was, one person wrote. I think there was some negotiation in there that was really quite interesting. Who was going to write? And then they took over, and it was really quite interesting. #15 (26) – (30)

And we had never put the tables like this before. And then they left the tables the way they were, to finish reading the story. #15 (31) – (32)

I designed another survey, a very quick survey, in which I asked them to answer at the end of the session, whether they liked group work and whether they liked reading a novel. And 100% of them loved working in group, which always amazes me, because I don't care for it. #15 (33) – (35)

It was great. I think it's valuable data that was collected in the end and as I said, the second half is just fascinating to me, and I hope I get to do some research on that. At least watch and try to figure out what I would like to retain on that. So, in any case, must run to a workshop, and I'll talk later. #15 (39) – (44)

Class #16 has a relatively short debrief (800 words) and is again a combination of positive and negative. First we have a successful activity plus the popular learning mistakes; so far, so good.

I had them practicing. "What are you going to do this afternoon?" I had a whole-class activity with "Find someone who..." in some ways. And that was really fun. They did really well. This is the first time I introduced it the way I did, and it was very quick and to the point, and they got it. And it's just amazing.

Then I did three learning mistakes. I just wanted them to affirm that kind of construction that we had just looked at. And so I did the three learning mistakes on the board, and we fixed [them]. #16 (6) – (12)

This is followed by a test preparation activity that DB sees as necessary but does not provoke student or teacher excitement and uses an uninspiring teacher-fronted method:

And then I prepared them for the test by showing them a couple of paragraphs written by students last term, and also looking at the scoring guide that I devised. Their eyes were glazing over. I was showing them and I was telling them and there was no question, really. #16 (13) – (15)

Next, she tries to carry out a planned activity that would have worked

better if all the students had been present:

I lined them up, and what I needed to do was to have Hispanics, which are half, on one side and the other students on the other side so they would be paired up with the person not speaking the same language. That worked OK, except that I was missing a couple of students, which was really irritating, which I think that you can hear in the video. #16 (16) – (18)

This is followed by an interaction between two students that tests DB's ability to implement her planning and keep the class under control (not a pleasant task when it involves rebellious adults). However, it does provoke an interesting reflection about the nature of pair work that DB will probably be able to use in future class planning and in her Lab School research:

Then it was really interesting because I think that it really needs to be looked at for pair work, and how do you pair people for pair exercise, and should they be the same abilities, should they *not* be of the same abilities. Some people prefer working by themselves.

So I had this problem with J. and A. where they had a different understanding. One wanted to do the questions together, and the other one really didn't want to. I told them they could do either way, and that they would be able to answer in short answers, and then they still would have to ask their partner, and still write a short paragraph. And so they seemed to resolve their differences. But it was a little trying, there. #16 (19) – (23)

Next, V. throws DB off with his pattern of forming "horrific questions" [#16 (24)]; his inability to transfer his grammar knowledge to his speaking puzzles DB and she is unsure how to help. This is frustrating since she likes him; he helped her out after Class #5 (see below). This frustration involving V. is positively balanced by DB's decision to partner herself with another student

who has trouble working in pairs; this is a good choice, and during this activity “the group work [and] the language [were] really incredible” [#16 (35)].

However, the whole second half of the class is taken up with the end-of-term language placement test, which the students find “difficult, and it’s supposed to be difficult” [#16 (38)] but standardized tests are also difficult for us as teachers. We can’t help wondering if we’ve taught everything we possibly could, in the best possible way, to help students succeed on the test. In addition, DB is having “some difficulty” with the new scoring guide [#16 (39) – (40)]. Nevertheless, at the very end she says, “It was a very good class, and it was great” [#16 (41)].

Class #17 has one of the shortest debriefs and also goes up and down from positive to negative. The class starts out with a good learning mistake activity [#17 (6)], but DB has planned to give a test and is really just using the activity to bide time and wait for late students to arrive [#17 (7) – (8)]. This could be frustrating, as she wonders how many students will actually be present to participate in the creative listening/ reading/ writing assessment she has devised, starting with a story she made up about her own father [#17 (8)]. However, it passes without either positive or negative comments.

The next activity involves computers and is a mixed experience involving both frustration and excitement. DB says:

It was the first time we did computers in that class. I was a little frustrated because I didn’t even have a computer myself to show them, and I felt very fortunate to have quite a few computer users... so they

were paired with those who didn't really know. ...For some of them it was magical. ...It was kind of exciting. #17 (10) - (13), (18), (21)

But immediately following:

That was really quite stressful to rush to do this, which was a new thing for lots of them, and then redirect to the computer lab, and then [I had to] leave as soon as possible to go to this workshop on assessment. #17 (23) – (26)

Three days later she is able to return and finish the debrief:

It was a good class, up until the computer, and that was a bit – I want to say disheveled. It was just a little bit hurried, and not quite organized in any way. #17 (33) – (34)

The long gap between teaching and recording the debrief is unusual, and after three days DB's lingering impressions are of stress and hurrying.

Administrative and professional obligations, such as the need to assess student skills, introduce them to the computer, and then herself rush off to attend a workshop, impinge on the flow and timing of the class. The absence of appropriate classroom technology – a computer for the teacher – provides additional frustration, alleviated only by the fortuitous happenstance that some people in the class are familiar with computers and can help others. It is another indication of the delicate balance that can make or break any given activity, regardless of planning.

Class #18 is plagued throughout with another administrative requirement that does not flow well as DB tries to teach the whole class and at the same time counsel individual students as they plan their upcoming classes:

Today I felt very disjointed. That's because I had to do conferencing, and I tried to teach at the same time. Well, that's not really possible. So that did not work very well. #18 (3)

As the class develops, DB feels dissatisfied with her teaching materials and the amount of work she accomplishes:

A lot of the things that I did today felt like canned language. I'm not used to using so many handouts. ...I got to conference with only one student, so that didn't work very well. #18 (6), (8) – (9)

She starts out feeling positively about the next activity, which she uses often and which students enjoy: "Then we did the learning mistakes. These are great!" [#18 (10 – (11))]. Still, as she thinks about it, her opinion changes:

One critique that I have about this particular activity is that thirty [learning mistakes were] too overwhelming. Maybe it went too fast. I should have probably done fifteen today and then fifteen the next day. But I didn't. So I guess it was OK. #18 (15) – (16)

For some reason, in her memory, her assessment of this activity goes from great to just OK in the time that it takes for her to describe what happened.

The next part of the class bogs down in administrative details, a failed activity, a clueless student, and a personally difficult conference. First, DB explains:

I had to have the students sign the consent form, which is a new consent form. That was interesting, but it's paperwork, and I just wanted to get to conferencing. And I wanted to introduce the dialogue. And then I wanted to introduce the info gap.

Well, I did all of that. I introduced the dialogue. But it's not really a dialogue, it's more common expressions used to make an appointment, to request an appointment, to decline, to disagree, and so on and so forth. And they didn't know what to do with that language. They had no idea. And I know where I went wrong. And it really bothers me, because I know how to teach this. I just wanted to have something that would keep them occupied. And the wrong thing to do

was to give them an info gap, which they'd never done before, and to give them vocabulary they had never dealt with before. I should just have given them a text to read, but I didn't. So that did not work very well.

Z., as usual, didn't know what was going on, and so that was difficult. And it was frustrating. Frustration was high, and I had to keep on talking to people who were on their own. And I had to advise them and give them different options for classes with PCC besides our own here. #18 (17) – (27)

Z. is a problematic student anyway, and this fruitless attempt to engage her in an already imperfect activity is followed immediately by another difficult interaction with a student. This is the “crushing” conference with student R., already previously quoted, when R. tells DB that she speaks too fast [#18 (32) – (38)].

This debrief contains four negative remarks in total, and again, it was recorded after the interaction with student R. had intervened between the class and the recording. “Crushing” and “shattered” [#18 (35), (38)] are strong words of defeat. It seems like such a shame to approach the end the term with a day full of administrative nightmares as well as a hurtful student complaint. However, my familiarity with DB through these debriefs suggests that she will find the strength to shake this experience off philosophically, or perhaps even put it to good use, and in a few weeks will be her usual enthusiastic, positive self, ready to begin a new term and to face and welcome new challenges.

This leads me to speculate about the relationship between the end of class and the tone of each debrief. I have already mentioned that the last

thing on DB's mind when she leaves class, such as a troubling interaction with a student (see, for example, Class #5, discussed below) or preoccupation with student absences, homework, and planning for the next class (see, for example, Class #4 and Class #8) can create a negative tone in a debrief despite a generally positive class time. This can be noted in DB's brief summarizing comments about the students and the class as a whole, which change abruptly in content between Classes #1-4 and Class #5.

- Class #1: It's going to be a very interesting class. They seem to all be willing to pair up with people from other countries, so that will be great. #1 (15) - (16)
That was pretty neat! #1 (22)
I think it was very good. #1 (40)
- Class #2: They're very eager. It's a fairly nice homogeneous group. #2 (5)
It went really well. #2 (12)
That went really well. #2 (17)
So that was pretty good. #2 (28)
They're very willing, and they're really good, and they're very helpful, and they're very eager – they're just great. #2 (30)
- Class #3: So that was quite interesting; it was great. #3 (14)
The results were quite good. The whole thing went really well. It was just really neat. #3 (30)
It was actually a fascinating experience. I'm warming up to the class. #3 (32)
They're great. They're willing to do unorthodox... not unorthodox, but unusual things. #3 (33)
- Class #4: It was really interesting to me. #4 (6)
That went well. #4 (13)
That was good. #4 (15)
It was really good. #4 (22)
That concept attainment there worked really well. #4 (24)
The community is developing. #4 (35)
They're learning very well. #4 (39)

They're very good. #4 (40)

And now here is Class #5. Recall that DB had a confidence-shaking experience with a student after Class #5 but before recording the debrief:

Class #5: As I've mentioned before, this has been a class that does not automatically jell. I enter the room and I feel that they're just sitting there and waiting for me to give it all to them, and I really don't have it all. #5 (2)
 I don't know what it is with this group. #5 (9)
 I don't know what the problem, if there is a problem, is. #5 (12)
 They were reluctant to go to the board. #5 (16)
 This was a very positive time. #5 (21)
 I'm just wondering what I'm doing with this class that is just not jelling the way it did last term. #5 (29)
 I need to think about those guys a little bit more. #5 (32)

The solitary positive comment is buried in an avalanche of uncertainty. What happened to the "eager" students of the first four classes? Why does she think she has said before that the class is not jelling? One clue to the good day/bad day dichotomy lies here. This is the interaction that DB describes after Class #5:

Z. came to talk to me after class and tell me once more that I should speak slower, and that she does not understand, and that she wants to learn English, and she cannot learn English unless she understands, so then she can write down and read. And so I really need to speak slower. This is the second time she's bringing it up. And she had R. with her.

Anyway, this was kind of a difficult thing for me. Yes, I will speak slower, but I don't speak that fast to begin with. I felt put on the spot, and my self-confidence kind of lapsed.

V. stayed and was working on something and copying, and he said something that was really interesting. He overheard the conversation with Z. and R. and he said (he was talking about Z.) that she looks at her dictionary and so that she is not always listening to me 100%, which makes it difficult for her to understand.

And this was very interesting to me because I was getting comfort from a student. Not comfort, but I was getting a different view from a student in the same audience, and I thought that he had reflected, and it really allowed me to have a different perspective on it. Next time, I'm going to take away her little computerized dictionary, and I'm going to put her with someone who doesn't speak English, and I'm going to put her away from J. because I think they feed into each other as far as not understanding, which is not true. He does understand, and he's very clever. He doesn't speak very much, but he's very clever. He hasn't been speaking a lot. So that was really interesting.

And then V. said something that made me feel better. He expressed it almost correctly. He said, "Two weeks ago I could not understand you. Now I understand most of it." So that was really comforting. Anyway, that has shaken me a little bit, and I'm just wondering what I'm doing with this class that is just not jelling the way it did last term. #5 (22) – (29)

It takes a while for teachers to recover from experiences like this. Class #6 has no general comments about the students and is not a particularly notable day according to my "Positive and Negative Assessment Comments" tally sheet, although DB describes it as "good." Then in Class #7, a week after Class #5, things are on the upswing again, with lots of positive comments including this remark at the end: "They're really good. They're just very patient, and very willing, and they work really hard" [#7 (35)].

DB's assessment of her impact on students is necessarily subjective.

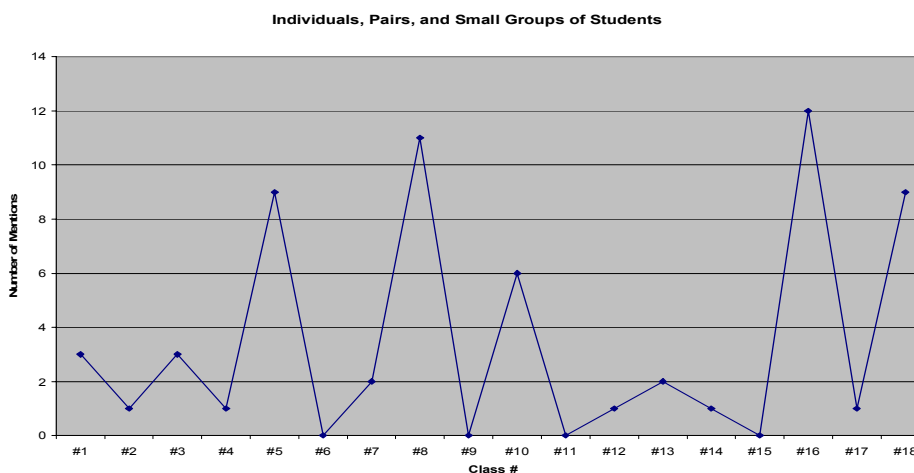
Teachers are always thankful for mature, reflective students like V.

Individuals, Pairs, and Small Groups of Students

There are 17 students in the class [#1 (2)]. Of these, DB mentions twelve by name at least once, and four of those four to six times. She refers to several others by ethnic group: "the Cuban woman [#1 (29)]; "the Korean

women” [#8 (41)]; and “the two Bosnians” [#10 (26)]. Figure 6 reflects the number of times per class DB singles out students by name or refers to pairs or small groups of students as separate from the whole class.

Figure 6



DB also makes general comments or remarks that take in the whole class, such as “They were missing the language to express what they *used to do*” [#12 (15)] or “It was a bit laborious until I went back and told them what the pattern was” [#8 (18)]. This coincides with my experiences as a teacher. In every class, there are students who stand out for some reason and others who contribute to the group dynamic but whose names and significant personal characteristics fade into the whole.

DB’s comments tell us why certain students attract her attention and how that contributes to good days and bad days. Her remarks also highlight the complexity factor. As DB is talking about what she actually did in class,

how that relates to larger educational issues, and what is the best follow-up to consolidate student learning, she is also observing individual students and thinking about how she can tailor the class to their needs and learning style.

I will focus on the three students who figure most prominently in the debriefs, and conclude with three stories.

We have already encountered student J. in previous categories.

Although he can be challenging, it is mostly a positive experience for DB. This is what she says about J. over the duration of the class:

One young man from El Salvador just drew a blank and said, "I can't do it." And I went over it and we talked about it, and he's missing some very basic things. And his speaking is pretty high. And he'll get there. He's very sharp, and he could see where the holes were. And by the end of the class, he was asking questions. He also did over his biographical 3 x 5 card to put on the map at the very end. #1 (12)

J. from El Salvador is very inquisitive, and is asking... I don't know if he knows that they are grammar questions, but they're very pointed questions, and it helps me clarify. He's just a very... very sharp young man that has had no prior English classes, and so anything that he knows is from what he has learned in the streets [and] on the job. So he's really quite analytical. It's great to have him being there. He's going to be my challenge, and I will rise to it, because he's challenging me in very positive ways. #3 (18) - (20)

J., the person who's been challenging at times – not challenging, but I mean in a positive way - was very quiet today. #4 (36)

I'm going to put [Z.] away from J. because I think they feed into each other as far as not understanding, which is not true. He does understand, and he's very clever. He doesn't speak very much, but he's very clever. He hasn't been speaking a lot. #5 (26)

And then there is J., who didn't come for two times and didn't know what to do with *my* and *his* and *her* and *yours*. #8 (44)

J. asks very good questions. #12 (10)

So I had this problem with J. and A. where they had a different understanding. One wanted to do the questions together, and the other one really didn't want to. I told them they could do either way, and that they would be able to answer in short answers, and then they still would have to ask their partner, and still write a short paragraph. And so they seemed to resolve their differences. But it was a little trying, there. #16 (20) - (23)

J. has a higher level of spoken English than some of the other students in the class. He is comfortable asserting himself and does not hesitate to ask questions. He also figures as a participant in two stories involving other students whom DB names. At one point he gets a little overly involved with problematic student Z., and he has a clash with student A. during a pair activity that causes DB some grief, but she usually welcomes his contributions. When he is quiet, DB misses his input. When he comes back after an absence, his ability to contribute is dramatically impacted. He is a student that DB counts on to support her teaching and to liven up the class.

We have also met student Z. before, most notably when she speaks to DB after Class #5 and tells her that she doesn't like DB's speaking style. She is mentioned only a few more times by name, once in a positive way that suggests she may have gotten over her criticism: "Z. has not asked me to slow down in any ways" [#8 (35)]. However, she has continued to be problematic throughout the term, as we find out in the Class #18 debrief: "Z., as usual, didn't know what was going on, and that was difficult" [#18 (24) – (25)]. Z. has also at one point tried to enlist J. as a compatriot in not

participating in class. We get a picture of Z. as a divisive student who perhaps compensates for her inability to perform in class by telling DB that she speaks in a way that Z. can't understand.

Student R. seems to be student Z.'s friend, since she accompanies her to complain to DB after Class #5 and repeats this complaint in her counseling session with DB during Class #18. However, as distinguished from student Z., student R. has shown promise during the class, so her negative assessment of DB's teaching is "crushing... I thought I had a good rapport with her. And she has made tremendous progress during this term" [#18 (35)]. I wondered if student Z. had been involved in convincing student R. to make this complaint. Together, these two have been responsible for some very difficult moments for DB during the term.

Student A. is mentioned twice by name, both times in relation to pair interactions. One has to do with student J. and is quoted above. The other time is in this story:

What was interesting in one of those writing samples is that it's a pair, but it's a very uneven pair: O. and A., and they got along really well. [A.] is well-educated, and his written English is almost perfect, and he's very dedicated. But O. probably has much lower education, and some literacy issues, I think. So this was really interesting, for me to see their two very different pieces of paper, whereas they had constructed it together. And that is just fascinating to me. #7 (20) - (21)

The second story, involving student RA.'s interaction with a less advanced student, elucidates one of the most satisfying moments in teaching:

And RA. is really making lots of progress, just because he is paired up with the Bosnian man, and he is only speaking English. And he's teaching this Bosnian man, because it's his second term. He's teaching him! And it's just fascinating to watch. #10 (28) - (29)

"The Bosnians" figure most prominently in a story that is really more about DB than about them as students:

I came to the realization halfway through class that the two Bosnians that I had were in that town that had the massacre in 1992. And I went and looked it up on the Internet at break time. And I shouldn't have done that. And there is a sadness to both these people which is kind of... I'm just sensitive to it. Anyway, the emotional impact of realizing that, kind of impacted my teaching. I think that sometimes when we teach ESL we encounter people that have gone through so much, that teaching, or even talking about very banal things, seems to be so small and so insignificant. #10 (26)

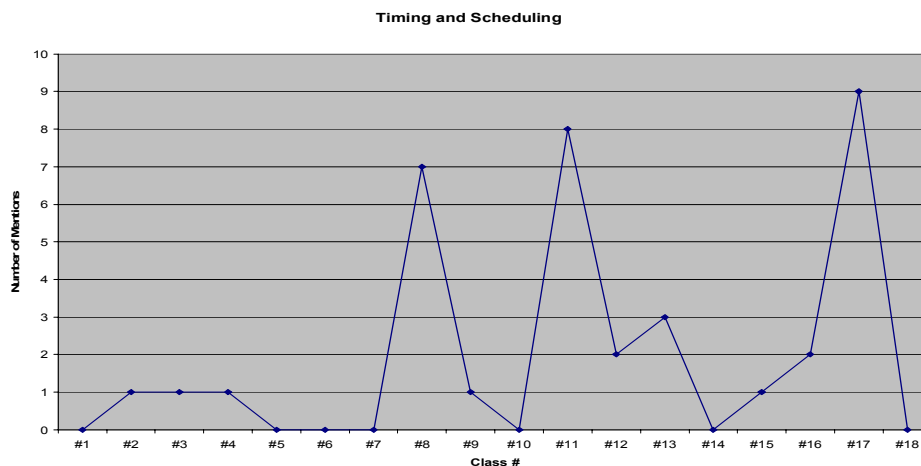
This is a poignant example of how seriously DB takes her students and their past experiences. It is this type of compassion, even though here it might have been ill-timed, that leads her to develop sensitive and relevant classroom activities that acknowledge who her students are at a deep level.

The students who stand out enough in DB's mind to get mentioned by name are the ones who are challenging, puzzling, inspirational, or unique in some way, or who cause her to question herself and delve deeper for answers than she might have otherwise. The rest of the class can be handled as a group, but these students need somewhat specialized treatment.

Timing and Scheduling

It is interesting to note that in almost half of the classes (seven out of eighteen), there are no entries in the “Timing and Scheduling” category. But when it does come up, it’s important. Figure 7 shows the classes where this category is mentioned.

Figure 7



I will discuss the three classes that show up as peaks in Figure 7, because I think that timing issues can contribute to the complexity factor – one more possible concern in a teacher’s mind as she negotiates through her day in the classroom.

In Class #8, there is a definite focus within the debrief on timing and the future schedule of the class in DB’s mind:

I think attention wanes after three hours, although they’re really incredibly focused. It’s the second time, I think this week - or was it last Friday as well? - that I have a hard time sending them on break. #8 (4) - (5)

I stretched this activity a little bit, which then got me kind off track maybe timing-wise. This was not a great timed session, for some reason, because I stretched here a little bit. And in some ways, it was kind of necessary in the succession of things. #8 (12)

Again, the problem was with timing, because the one thing that they got to was their own answers. #8 (25)

That's where I think it is really difficult. It's a three-hour class, and so what do you do in a three-hour class? You can certainly connect it from other class sessions. And as a rule, you should. Otherwise it would be all disconnected. And I really do that. But at the same time, that three hours has to be really self-contained, because they're adults. And adult learners have many other things going. And people get sick. And you miss a time, and you've missed a lot. And so anything has to be self-contained. You cannot really carry over to the next day. And so I'm going to try to carry it over the next day, and see how it works. But that's really going to be like a major effort on my part, because it is usually not successful, because people who are not there today will come next time, and then they won't know what we are doing or how we are doing it. So I really have to plan it in a way that's, that's going to work and be integrated with the following lesson. Or I could just lop it. So that's another thing. #8 (27) - (31)

In re-reading the entire debrief, it's not clear why timing figured so prominently on DB's mind. Her description of the class reveals a mixture of successful and neutral activities, interrupted by her remark that "I guess if you pretend things are going to work, they just work," followed by a laugh [#8 (21)]. Her ending remarks, which focus on individual students, are very positive despite the preoccupation with timing, and leave the impression that Class #8 was a good day:

M. is really making incredible progress. And that's just wonderful. I lost one student to work – day shift. And otherwise I only have 16 right now. And it's just great. And it's a right proportion. Z. has not asked me to slow down in any ways. It's a good class. Y. is really coming out of her shell. H. was funny. Y. is really making great improvements, and

so is RA. And then there is V., who really tries everything very faithfully. And then there is J., who didn't come for two times and didn't know what to do with *my* and *his* and *her* and *yours*. So I do teach something, it seems, that students retain. That's always kind of nice to see. That's all. They're a great class, and really dedicated, hard-working. And it was good. #8 (33) – (48)

Class #11 also has a focus on timing:

It went well, but the pacing was a little off, or something was not quite right. #11 (3)

Then we had the reading [and] this is where I said that the timing was not very good, because my intent, my original intent, had been to pair them up once they had written the questions in the past, and ask them of their partner, and then write a short paragraph about a partner. But by then, I really wanted to get to "Blue Moon Valley" [reading text] because we do it, and it just has to be done. If I don't do it one week, then we would be falling behind. And it is an interesting story, and it is good for them, and it's a routine, so I just wanted to stick to this. One thing that I think [is] just to engage them, because I felt that maybe there was too much individual work this time. That was my sense, although they spent some time – I guess they spent the first hour - in pair work, so I should feel OK about it. #11 (12) – (15)

This debrief ends on a less positive note, with DB describing herself as tired and sick [#11 (21)], pleased with the first activity in class but a little uncertain about what students had accomplished after that [#11 (23) – (31)]. Class #11 is a neutral day, with a few high points.

Timing is mentioned in Class #17 nine times, which is more than in any other class, although the remarks are brief. They center around the need to go to and then quickly leave the computer lab and DB's need to rush off to a workshop immediately after class. It is part of the cluster of classes toward the

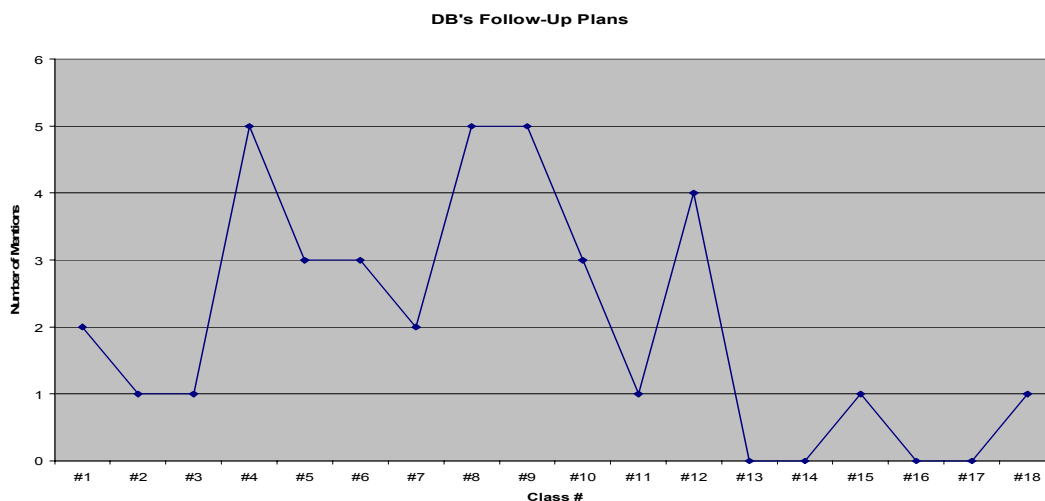
end of the term that escalates toward the negative, and perhaps timing issues contribute to that overall trend.

Some of the timing comments over the duration of the term have to do with the location of the break in the flow of the class. I recognize this from my teaching experience: a break is welcome, but there is always the fear that a “big dead” [#4 (8)] before break will result in students leaving during break and not returning. This feeds into the homework problem already discussed: if students leave early, they may return to the next class unprepared to participate. It also has to do with the energy level of the class as the three-hour time period wears on. Timing is a factor in DB’s discussion of activities and the general flow of classes, but even bad timing is not enough to bring a generally good class to grief.

DB’s Follow-Up Plans

This category is interesting because it highlights another concern that is constantly at the back, if not the forefront, of DB’s thoughts. It involves the relationship of the lesson in progress to future lessons and required curriculum. These thoughts can blossom in the debrief reflection process and form a concrete link in planning from one class to another. Figure 8 reflects the number of mentions per class in this category.

Figure 8



One clear sub-topic involves routines: reading and writing every Friday afternoon [#2 (22)]; the text *Blue Moon Valley* [#5 (15)]; the weekly question “What is your favorite...?” [#6 (19)]; and the practice of students answering a question about the text and then writing the answer on the board [#7 (22) - (23)]. There are also options for new routines: “We’ve never done a listening exercise in which they have to listen to a different person. And so I’m going to do this more often if I can” [#9 (12) - (13)].

There are two examples of the planning ahead that happens in conjunction with the teaching of the moment:

I sent them home with writing, and that will be their homework. So we’ll see what they come up with. And if they don’t get it done, as I said to them, they’ll have to do it in class. I will begin Friday morning by reading the text, and then we will go from there, and we’ll go on our regular based lesson, so they can really work on it and actually this was [related]. Everything I do during the 3-hour session in which we do the reading and writing, pertains to the reading and writing in some way, so it doesn’t matter whether it will be at the end or at the beginning. But that way at the beginning I’m sure that it will be a slower pace for some

of them for whom this is the first time that they get to do such a reading and then writing the comprehension questions. And those comprehension questions, the next time I need to take more time again. That's what I'm saying, is that in this whole thing, they could work in pairs, and go and write it on the board, as opposed to me writing it on the board. I want the whole sentence, not just the answer, but just the whole sentence, so they can start writing in a way that they're really using the structure really tightly. #4 (30) - (33)

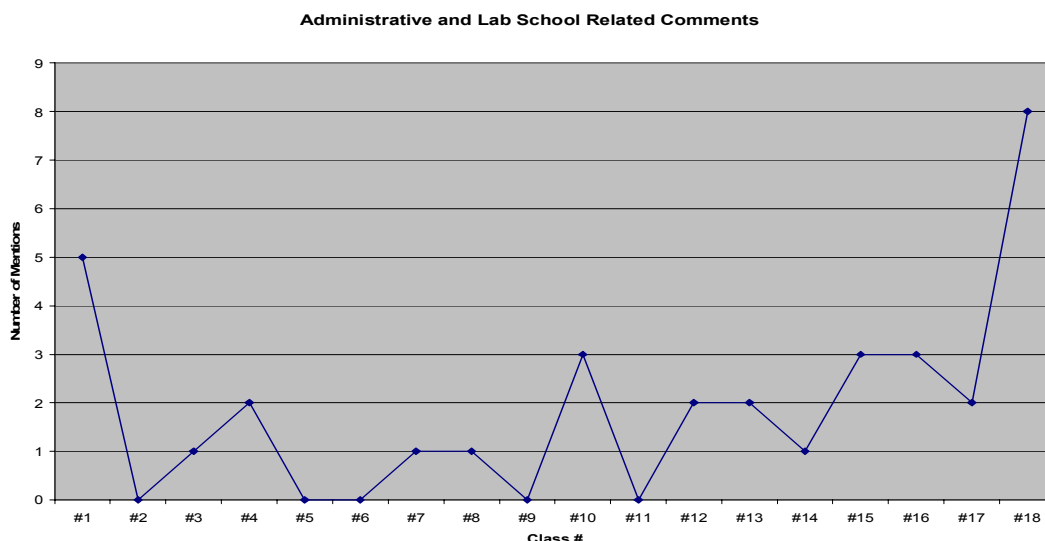
So next time I think that next time I'm going to alter the questions. I think I'm going to divide them in groups and give one question to one group, and then have a cooperative learning activity set up and see how that works. I'll have to think about it quite in advance. And the process in a cooperative learning activity is sometimes more complicated than the task itself, so we'll see, but I need to alter that a little bit. #11 (18)

This again highlights the delicate balance and the complexity of thought that contribute to the dance of teaching.

Administrative and Lab School Related Comments

Administrative comments are clustered around the beginning and end of the term and have to do with enrollment forms, testing, and conferencing, mostly related to Portland Community College. The need to do these chores can tip the balance of a good day, depending on how invasive they are and how appropriate to students' language level. Concerns relating directly to the functions of the Lab School show the same pattern, reflected in Figure 9.

Figure 9



A representative entry follows:

Then when we came back, we did the administrative course handout. We have to do that, and I'm not sure sometimes... The only thing that is really important for them to know on this, really, is my phone number so they can call, and then some objectives of the class, which are formulated in such a way that I'm not sure that they understand. But anyway, it had to be done, so I did it. #1 (23) - (24)

The intrusion of administrative tasks into the teacher's day is an unwelcome but necessary part of the job.

Less invasive and more interesting to DB herself is the need to make sure the technical equipment is functioning properly and more importantly to keep the goals of the Lab School in mind as she works. The former irons itself out after one comment on the first day [#1 (8)]. The latter flows throughout the entire term, with many comments on taking writing samples and highlighting pair work. It also involves DB's dual role of practitioner/research associate.

This category highlights yet another area that is ever-present in DB's mind as she plans, teaches, and reflects. It makes her life busy and complicated, but it never seems to be the focus of a bad day.

Watching Two Class Videos

I watched selected portions of the video recordings of two classes in an effort to spot correspondences between what actually happened in class and DB's subsequent debrief. I chose Class #5 because it was followed by a devastating interaction with a student. I chose Class #15 because DB mentioned in her debrief that the first half of class was unsatisfactory but the second half was great and that she planned to watch the video herself to help with her research [#15 (42)]. This is an area that is rich in opportunities for comparison and deserves far more attention than I was able to give it.

As I watched the videos, I was immediately reminded of the two dissatisfied students who tell DB she speaks too fast and DB's subsequent rationale in her debrief, compared to what I was seeing and hearing as I watched. Since the related interactions with these students figured prominently in my analysis of good days and bad days, I decided to focus on this aspect of my video observation as most relevant to my study.

As previously discussed, student Z. [#5 (22)] and student R. [#18 (32)] both complain that DB talks too fast, and their interactions with DB on this topic are quite a blow to DB's self-confidence. DB responds to this in a debrief

by saying that "...I don't teach [using teacher-talk] because I think that a student should get used to regular speech because that's the way it is out in your life" [#18 (33)].

In the two class videos I watched, one in Week 3 and one in Week 9 of the academic term, I observed DB using a combination of "regular speech," slow speech, stock phrases and interactions, and numerous repetitions of the same thought at various speeds with alternate vocabulary; writing her spoken words on the board; using physical gestures; and several other strategies to help students understand what she is talking about.

For example, about an hour into Class #5, she specifically talks to student Z. in an effort to draw her out and get her to answer a question. She repeats the question, "Z., how do you usually get to school?" four times at different speeds, and then twice more until Z. answers "Bus." DB praises Z.'s attempts to answer.

In Class #15, DB does seem to be painfully extracting even minimal responses from students, as she reports in her debrief. She tries everything she can think of to accommodate them, going from a request that they write a paragraph with a partner to settling for someone – anyone, please! – to come up with a few words to complete a sentence that she has repeated numerous times and written on the board. And yet three classes later, student R. tells DB she can't understand her and would rather go back a level than be in her class again.

This opens up an interesting area of consideration relating to teacher reflection and the benefit of being able to use peer observation and video to open up new perspectives on what happens in class. Students Z. and R.'s criticism of DB's talking speed was so different from my own observation that I wondered if another factor could be influencing their reaction to DB. DB notes that she and SB, the other practitioner/research associate, do have different teaching styles and that student R. comes from SB's class [#18 (32)]. Or perhaps Z. and R. are responding with bias to the fact that DB is not a native speaker, despite her fluency (Lippi-Green, 2003).

Conclusion

The Class #14 debrief provides one gem that is unique among the debriefs for this term and struck me as a good way to conclude my analysis. DB describes a dream she had the previous night, that a colleague has encouraged her to add to her reflection. This contains more than one quarter of the total words in the debrief, which may explain why on this day DB didn't cover other topics that usually interest her:

Yesterday afternoon we had an incredible workshop with Gail Weinstein, and I've admired her work for years, and I knew that she would be coming to the Lab School this morning and looking at the class. Of course none of this is supposed to affect my teaching. But I was told that I should probably put my nightmare right before I woke up this morning into the debrief.

In my nightmare I had woken up at a quarter to nine at my home for a nine o'clock class, and my usual classroom had been taken by someone else. And I was put in a classroom where I was not being video-taped, and where Gail wouldn't be able to watch me from the

window. Also I was wearing tights and a T-shirt, which is highly unprofessional, and the worst of it all was that they didn't match.

Then in the classroom there was not white board but there was a green board, and there was a piece of chalk there which was a square piece of chalk, and it did not write on the board. I had no books, and I couldn't get to the books because SB's class was locked. Then I had about six young Russian men who kept on talking to each other and interrupting me and trying to figure out what I was saying by talking to one another.

So that was my nightmare, and I think that's a nightmare that any teacher may have. #14 (2)

I agree that this is the quintessential teacher's nightmare, and should be added to the folklore of the corresponding student nightmare of wandering around school, unable to find the correct classroom, and realizing to your horror that you still have your pajamas on. It also shows how DB keeps her sense of humor intact and minimizes herself-importance, two characteristics of teachers who can work through the bad days as well as the good ones and return for the next day of challenges and inspiration.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

*They say you can bear anything if you can tell a story about it.
~Sue Monk Kidd*

I started out this study wondering if I could gain a better understanding of the factors that underlie the magic – or lack thereof – in daily teaching. Using the reflections of a creative, experienced teacher over the course of one term, and filtering her thoughts through my own teaching experience and outsider analysis, I sorted out some factors that shed light on the good day/bad day dichotomy.

I am also interested in the complexity of thought that goes into each fragment of the teaching day: the many levels of classroom reality that DB negotiates during any given activity. This is something that I refer to as the dance of teaching or the delicate balance of each day in the classroom. These ideas are related to good days and bad days. The balance can shift almost imperceptibly, and in the teacher's mind a neutral or negative feeling changes to one of hope and inspiration, or vice versa.

This is ultimately important to the world of schools and teaching, not only in second language classrooms but in all venues where there is teaching and learning, because teacher burn-out is a stark reality. It happens to brand-new teachers and veterans of many years in the classroom. It is to everyone's benefit if good teachers can make it through the bad days and live to tell their stories, laugh about them, and go on to teach/ learn again. Dominique Brillanceau is a good model of this process in action.

In my analysis I said that sharing stories about teaching is an effective way to reflect on practice. This is because we remember good stories long after we first hear them, and they also help us remember similar incidents in our own experience that we can examine and analyze in a new light. Stories help teachers make contact with each other's teaching and create connection in what can be a very isolated – and isolating – job. I believe that some of the conclusions I was able to draw from the debrief data were fueled by the power of DB's stories, which I have used to continue refining the distinction between the roles of insider and outsider and to mingle these two perspectives to the best advantage of both. As a result, I stepped into a relationship with the debriefs that has already been transformative for me as a seasoned teacher and that I predict will continue to exert its effect on me far into the future.

In this chapter I am going to relate my analysis to the literature previously discussed and draw conclusions from the debrief topic categories I talked about earlier. Next, I suggest some implications for teachers and researchers, touch briefly on the limitations of my research, and propose directions for future study.

The Relationship of My Analysis to the Literature Review

As I indicated in my literature review, while there is a relatively new movement in education to view teachers as experts and co-researchers on the

events in their own classrooms (Freeman, 1982 and 1996; Gitlin, 1994; LeCompte and McLaughlin 1994; Nunan, 1989 and 1992; Wells 1994) there is still a strong reliance on wisdom generated outside the classroom, typically from university researchers. But as Schön (1982) points out, and as my study of DB in the classroom reiterates, there is something about the art of teaching that resists efforts to subjugate it to the scientific method. Even after the “critical sifting of data” suggested by Silverman (2000, p. 5), the patterns that emerge are difficult to pin down precisely or quantify.

A study of DB’s debriefs highlights again and again the delicate balance that is the dance of teaching. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow are interrelated in many ways, and when one thing goes out of balance (such as the number of students who are absent, or the room temperature, or the lack of a computer for the teacher, or activity materials left by accident back at the office) other things must be rapidly and spontaneously brought in or invented to restore the balance. This sometimes succeeds and sometimes works less well.

Bailey (1996) portrays the researcher as a narrator who helps retell teachers’ stories. This retelling of DB’s reflections, using my own lens as an experienced teacher, helps to underline her point. The reflection process is often (and in the case of the debriefs is certainly) a monologue. The addition of my analysis and point of view created a dialogue, even if it was not face-to-face and in real time, that enriched and rounded out the original reflections.

Additional readers will continue to expand the conversation. This harks back to Pike's (1990) distinction between *etic* and *emic* and his statement that "...the outsider can learn to act like an insider [and] the insider can learn to analyze like an outsider" (p. 34).

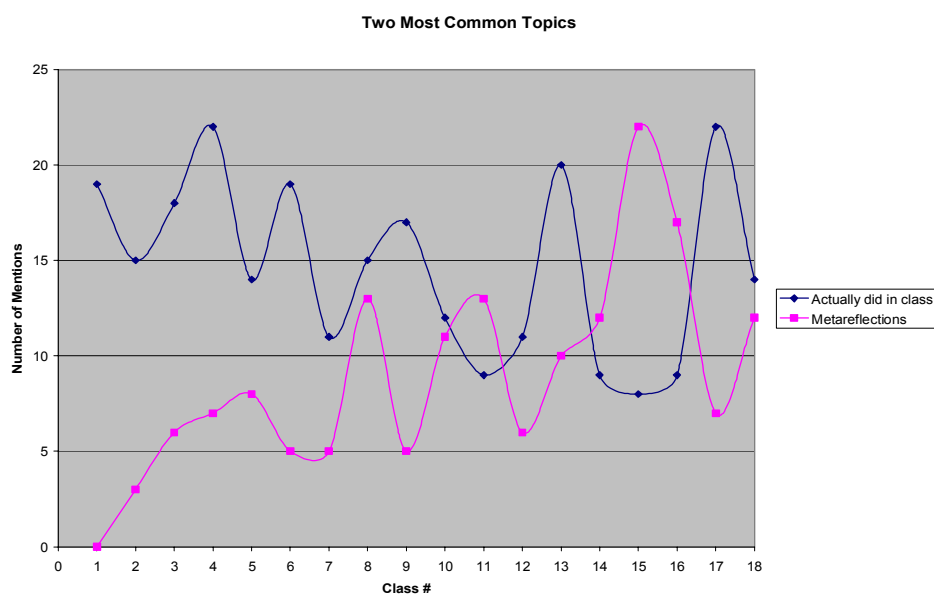
Bryant's (2003) statement that she has learned more from her own mistakes than from a "plethora of information about instructional research" (p. 103) is clearly illustrated by DB's reflective process. The idea that "This didn't work, and I think I know why, and here is what I will try next time" is repeated frequently in the debriefs. Creative and experienced teachers such as DB, with a wide variety of resources at their disposal, are continually negotiating the balance between multiple daily challenges from students, vagaries of the physical and emotional environment, and the realities of the teaching/learning process itself.

In looking back at Freeman's (1982) three stages of professional growth, I prefer to see continually recycling classroom concerns regardless of the experience level of the teacher. Freeman explains the evolution from novice to experienced teachers' concerns as moving from what to teach, through how to teach, to finally the larger issues of why a teacher has chosen to teach a particular topic in a particular way. However, as Nikolic and Cabaj (2000) point out, and as my analysis of the debriefs has affirmed, experienced teachers cycle back through Freeman's (1982) three stages each time they are faced with a new or unique teaching situation, including each time they

have a new group of students. DB, after fourteen years of teaching, still devotes a large portion of her reflective thought to what she actually taught, with meta-reflection on the nature of teaching being her second most prominent topic. My analysis shows these two topics being inextricably intertwined, although Freeman's order is confirmed in the mini-universe of a single academic term.

It is interesting to note the roughly inverse relationship between these two categories, which together occupy most of DB's thoughts as she debriefs. The heavy emphasis on what happened in class (the category with the most mentions) slowly declines after the first half of the term, with a few exceptions, while the number of meta-reflections (the category with the second most numerous mentions) gradually increases in the second half of the term. Figure 10 shows this relationship.

Figure 10



In other words, DB's primary concern is what to teach during the period when she is becoming more familiar with the students and their learning styles and abilities. As these become known quantities, possibly following the rhythm of similar academic terms, meta-issues – the “why” questions, as Freeman (1982) puts it – can rise to the fore.

This comparison also illustrates how the frequency counts that appear throughout this study inform the analysis. The frequency counts are *emic* in that they are a tally of insider acts; they inform the *etic* or outsider analysis because they allowed me as the researcher to take these spontaneous acts and discover that they are not merely in a random relationship to each other. The inverse relationship of the two frequencies sheds light on the flow of DB's thoughts throughout the term when seen from my outsider's (*etic*) perspective.

Conclusions from the Discussion of Debrief Topic Categories

The existence of the debriefs, and their analysis in research such as mine, can be one tool in creating links between teachers, even though this link may not be direct but rather mediated by the written word.

My examination of “Positive and Negative Assessment Comments” led to one of the most satisfying parts of my analysis. It allowed me to choose a few debriefs and compare them to each other in a way I might not have otherwise. This resulted in more speculation about the validity of the good day/bad day dichotomy.

The lines between a good day and a bad day are almost always blurred, although during the term a few days do stand out at one end of the spectrum or the other. Most good days have their share of mishaps, and most bad days have a number of positive highlights. A good example of this is DB's interaction with student Z., who comes in after class to tell DB that she doesn't speak slowly enough. DB has an understandably strong reaction to this interaction; it is "crushing" and "a let-down." From my own teacher experience I could imagine this type of interaction affecting me well after the moment had come and gone. "Am I good enough?" is a frequent doubt even among experienced teachers.

However, even as DB records this blow to her self-esteem, she is not totally focused on herself. She is thinking about how this student's request will set a precedent for the school, the educational rationale underlying the way she speaks in class, and the student's progress. She knows that she can and will recover from the personal aspects of this interaction, and this will happen best if she focuses on the meta-meaning of her conversation.

I have already experienced the positive effects of studying the debriefs in my own teaching, as I simultaneously taught in an ESL classroom and interacted with DB through her debriefs. I experienced the "big dead" student response [#4 (8)] as discussed under the category "Positive and Negative Assessment Comments" and was able to say to myself, echoing DB's thoughts, that maybe students were internalizing what they had learned and

were not yet ready to respond. It helped me depersonalize the moment.

A teacher and colleague who was one of my data reliability checkers had a similar reaction. She laughed out loud as she read the debrief and said, “I know all about the ‘big dead’!” It is incredibly affirming to have the support of a teacher such as DB in acknowledging this as part of the teaching experience and providing the wisdom and support to move on.

The days that seem the most successful overall to DB when she debriefs contain at least a few of the following elements, with variations in content and sequence:

- A combination of pre-planning and flexibility, in which DB uses her creativity and experience to deviate from the strict sequence or implementation of her plan
- A willingness to interject both spontaneous and planned activities that she has never tried before
- A deliberate change of pace in the sequence of activities
- A focus on acquiring and practicing new vocabulary
- An interested student whose involvement stimulates both DB and the rest of the class

- Activities that both challenge students and also provide them with a high probability of success
- A feeling of excitement and “co-learning” between DB and the students

In contrast, bad days have timing and administrative issues, activities that do not result in the intended teaching goal, disturbing interactions with students, and/or the teacher’s less than ideal state of health or energy, but they usually have at least a few of the “good day” characteristics as well. It becomes clear that the concepts of a “good day” and a “bad day” are fluid constructs that are personal to each teacher as she grows and changes with each hour, day, and year of teaching experience.

Nikolic and Cabaj (2000) mention the tension between (1) careful lesson planning, (2) the need for flexibility, and (3) the inevitability that things will go wrong at times in the classrooms of even the most organized teachers. This turns out to be an excellent description of what I found in my analysis of the debriefs.

As revealed by an analysis of the category “What DB Actually Did in Class,” a specific amount of preparation before class is not on the list of “good day” highlights above. Despite DB’s years of experience, the “correct” amount of preparation is still a mysterious factor. No clear-cut guidelines emerge in this regard. The debriefs highlight DB’s creative approach to teaching, which

cannot be reduced to a formula. A fourteen-year classroom veteran, DB continues to rework her materials, techniques, and curriculum and to invent new ones, sometimes on the spur of the moment to enhance the learning that she sees taking place. It confirms the constant need for teachers to adjust their materials to fit their goals and activities, as well as to accommodate a particular group of students, or an individual student, or the dynamics of the class on a particular day.

Another way to look at the information in the debriefs is using the list (in bold below) that Bailey (1996, p. 15) came up with to answer her question “Why do teachers depart from their lesson plans?”

- **Serve the common good:** DB has her focus on the pulse of the class, as reflected in her many comments about how the class has reacted to a given lesson or activity.
- **Teach to the moment:** This is illustrated in DB’s many shifts in lesson plan, spur-of-the-moment inventions, and spontaneous activities.
- **Accommodate students’ learning styles:** DB’s decision to “rebel” and plan a group activity (in contrast to the Lab School’s emphasis on pair work) is a good illustration of this; and she reports that the students love group work.
- **Promote student involvement:** DB’s willingness to deviate from her plan to answer student’s questions (as in the case of

student J.) or incorporate perceived needs in a lesson (as when a student's personal story about a birthday leads DB to reflect on students' gap in expressing age and saying numbers) encourages her students to speak up.

We already know that DB uses activities that she thinks of as tried and true but that may be less than successful with this particular class, for example the failed TPR activity from Class #6 (10) and the boring prepositions from Class #7 (32). These experiences presumably lead over time to the rethinking and reconfiguring of these activities – maybe over the course of several academic terms – until they evolve into a new form that DB experiments with, as in the examples quoted in my analysis. During this process she is open to the idea that the forms she is testing may go through various manifestations before they achieve the success she hopes for. This could account for part of the puzzlement in teasing out the factors that go into the good day/ bad day dichotomy. The excitement of trying out an activity that is still under development might more than compensate for the fact that it is not yet fully evolved and successful.

Regarding the “teachable moment,” how easy it would have been – and how perfectly justified – for DB to see this as an unwanted interruption, to push ahead with her lesson plan, and maybe to tell the student to see her after class. And in other instances, she may do just that, although it doesn't show

up in these debriefs. This is an example of what I call the magic of teaching: when we pick the right door and stride through with perhaps unwarranted confidence and with unexpectedly great results.

These examples are in stark contrast to the myth that pre-packaged, 365 days of teacher-proof curriculum can take the guesswork out of teaching or can replace practitioner creativity. Teachers enjoy exchanging and reading about interesting classroom approaches to a variety of problems, but at any given moment, in any unique group of students, a preconceived idea may or may not work out as planned. This includes fresh ideas invented by the practitioner herself, with her own class of students in mind. Theory and practice are in constant dialogue in the most successful teaching environments, as shown by DB's constant interweaving of meta-reflections in the debriefs.

The category "Meta-Reflection" showed its valuable role in providing teachers with a perspective on the classroom. At one point, we get a glimpse of this process in action as DB uses the reflective process to get an answer to something that happened in class:

It did not quite work, and I don't know why. Actually, yes, I know why. I had one pair too many. #3 (27)

This works for teachers both as they reflect alone and also with colleagues, but unfortunately in most teaching situations very little time is provided for either activity. This is why, even though classes may be held in buildings

bustling with classrooms and activity, I have referred to teaching as an isolated and isolating act. New teachers especially need extra time to debrief with supportive peers and mentors.

Relationships with students (Individuals, pairs, and small groups) was another category that increased my understanding of the good day/bad day continuum. A creative teacher like DB, with fourteen years of experience, can be thrown into self-doubt by the remarks of even a marginal student such as Z. J. asks clever, challenging questions and DB feels inspired; Z. makes a careless, self-serving criticism and shakes DB's self-confidence.

In addition, a teacher's positive feelings about a student's learning may not coincide with the student's perceptions. This is not to call into question DB's reliability in assessing her class, but it does serve to point out the delicate balance between positive and negative assessments of class in the teacher's mind. For example, DB has felt a rapport with student R. and has observed her progress. Then, in her counseling session during Class #18, R. tells DB that she speaks too quickly, and R. wants to move to another teacher's class, even if it means going back a level. DB is understandably shaken by this interchange and wonders what has caused this disconnect. Each student's personality and perceptions about how they want to learn deeply affect the dynamics of each class session and the teacher's feelings about herself. One student can make a big difference and create – or negate – the positives of any given day.

In addition, several entries demonstrated that a teacher's mood at the end of a class session can cause her to walk away with negative feelings about the experience despite many positive highlights. This affects the enthusiasm that goes into planning the next class and the apprehension a teacher might feel – and convey to students – as she walks into the classroom for the next class session. A downward spiral in this regard can create a frame of mind that causes a teacher to be overly self-critical and to add minor teaching mishaps to her growing feeling of incompetence. DB again provides a model where a combination of humor, positive planning, experience, creativity, and meta-reflection immediately start spiraling her back up to a positive frame of mind.

Limitations of This Study

One of the major limitations of my research is the clash between quantifying some aspects of the data and the necessarily subjective nature of dividing the transcripts into fragments and counting them. The transcripts are already one step removed from the original recordings and are written with conventions that I have chosen and then further edited for readability in the transfer from the spoken to the written word. Although I made every attempt to use consistent criteria as I divided and counted, my efforts are imperfect and my counts should be considered as a general overview rather than as rigidly replicable numbers.

I also made the choice of not discussing all the high and low points that appear on the charts for each topic. My goal was to examine every high and low point in each topic category that added new information to the discussion. For this reason, the original debriefs, divided into fragments, are attached in Appendix A so readers can sort through some of this themselves. Through all of this I have tried to let DB speak for herself.

Implications for Teachers and Researchers

As DB's eloquent debriefs indicate, work in the classroom with students is only part of the teaching picture. Reflection, alone and with others, and participation in the research whose results influence classroom activities and curriculum content, is essential in order to attract good teachers to all levels of education and to keep them inspired and active once they get there. While new teachers may need more mentoring and support, veteran teachers also need substantial time for the planning, reflecting, and interaction with colleagues that makes their time in the classroom successful in the long term both for them and for their students and magical in small but extremely important and sustaining moments.

Researchers, writers of educational guidebooks and curricula, and experts in education can do the field an invaluable service by taking the focus off foolproof, teacher-proof curriculum and placing it on the resources and

environments that optimally support teachers in the creative management of the balancing act of teaching.

Directions for Future Study

The body of debriefs as a whole is vast, containing the reflective thoughts of two teachers over several years as they taught multiple levels of English as a Second Language. These debriefs are supplemented by actual classroom videos, and student work samples, as well as an increasing number of studies based on Lab School data, so the possibility of substantial cross-referencing exists. First and foremost would be the goal of increasing knowledge about how teaching evolves and how learning for both teachers and students progresses. This includes the continuing dialogue that current and future teachers can establish using the debriefs as a basis for discussion. The analysis of these debriefs through multiple perspectives will add to their depth and usefulness to other teachers.

Another focus could be a compendium of good teaching ideas. DB's comments on how she structures each class and how she carries out specific activities are of interest to new teachers or teachers looking for a new approach to specific topics. The video data from the classes when these ideas are carried out are an additional source of information about the relationship of planning, preparation, and implementation.

The Modified Sustained Silent Reading experiment, which continued over the course of one academic year at the Lab School, offers a rich source of data about how such classroom interventions affect teaching, both during and after their implementation. One area of further study could involve a contrast of content in the debriefs before, during, and after this experiment.

An analysis of teachers as peer researchers is another area of study. The details of successes and areas for improvement in the Lab School project could inform future projects.

While the debriefs lend themselves to qualitative study, they also contain material that could support a great deal more quantification than I have offered here.

Finally, my discussion of the relationship between the debriefs and the videos of class sessions has been minimal. There is a lot of room for richness and depth in the comparisons that these two bodies of data could provide.

Conclusion

It has been an unqualified privilege to have access to the Lab School debrief data, to meditate on and study the nature of teaching, and to deepen my understanding of myself as a teacher and the dynamics of the classroom. This study, and all the ones that follow it, are indebted to the willingness of the two practitioner/research associates to make themselves vulnerable to

analytical scrutiny outside of their control. This is valuable to other teachers in the same way that Ashton-Warner's (1963) and Paley's (1979) published reflections about teaching can be used as an opportunity to get a rare view into another teacher's classroom and compare one's own experience to theirs.

As Freeman (1996) comments:

The vulnerability of the teacher-researcher can be transformed into a strength which provides the opening for inquiry. ...For teachers, lapses in practice can offer windows through which to glimpse what is going on in their teaching. (p.104)

I would add that "lapses in practice" form just a small part of the wisdom to be gained from reading the Lab School teacher debriefs. I have found that DB's good day/bad day stories resonate strongly with my own classroom experiences, despite our very different subject matter and teaching situations. However, I believe that the greatest value in sharing these stories comes not from establishing an exact one-to-one correspondence in details of content, but rather in modeling a procedure that has satisfying results for teachers in general. To use myself as an example, after doing this study I am better at extracting my own stories, examining them honestly but with humor and patience and the knowledge that no teacher is infallible. I'm more tolerant of my mistakes, and I'm better at separating out the magical and not-so-magical moments - the things truly beyond my control - from the things I can and must change to improve teaching and learning in my classroom.

The reflective process can best be described as a spiral. As it cycles around, it may frequently revisit the same issues and concerns, but always from the fresh perspective of new teaching experiences and, hopefully, with the wisdom acquired from other teachers' stories. The communication of joy and perseverance in the face of discouraging moments can lift us beyond our own stories and remind us to anticipate the wonderful days of magic in teaching.

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APPENDIX A: Debriefs Divided Into Numbered Fragments

Class #1: Tuesday January 8, 2002
Teacher Debrief: Fragments
Level B / Room 206

8. This is January 8, the very first day for Level B.
9. I had 17 students, which is a great number, although it would be great to be able to fill the class with 24.
10. I had several returning students, and out of those, there are two women who came sporadically last time, and I can see the holes in their language, in the very base...in the... in the basis... it... it's just not there.
11. But anyway...
12. This is what we did. I... We wrote... I wrote my name on the board, and then I had to do some kind of administrative thing – I had to check who was there.
13. And I showed them how to do the attendance sheet.
14. That went really well.
15. Was... Had to do the microphones, and now they have to be on... red has to be on the right side, and yellow on the left side. So that's a little... that was a little bothersome at one point because I wanted to pair up people and they were going to be paired up the on one side. The two microphones – yellow and red – were going to be paired up on the yellow side. So I don't quite know how to deal with this. I need to ask the ... the management team what the... what the repercussions are of that.
16. Then I did something which I like to do. I put on the board many... about... oh, about ten or eleven facts, all over the board. And they're... they're very short. They're just... there were dates, there were places, they were... just different things. And what the students have to do, they have to come up with the question.
17. So for the new people, who don't know me, this was very interesting. I could see that there was some puzzlement. This must be... I guess this must be quite unusual in an ESL class. I...
18. My returning students had no problem doing it. I'm not sure that all of them had done it before, but they know my s... my teaching style, and so they could see what I wanted.
19. One young man from El Salvador just drew a blank and said, "I can't do it." And I went over it and we talked about it, and he's may... missing some very basic things. And his speaking is pretty high. And he'll get there. He's very sharp, and he could see where the holes were. And he was... by the end of the class, he was asking questions. He also did over his bio... biographical 3 x 5 card to put on the map at the very end.
20. So everybody is getting used to this rather unusual – I guess – unusual way of dealing with first time, instead of being... I don't know... given

the book? Or page...sss... you know... given the page number?
Or something... or they weren't... Some of them were taken a little
aback by what was happening.

21. They seemed to all be at the level...
22. It's going to be a very interesting class.
23. They seem to all be willing to pair up with people from other countries,
so that will be great.
24. So... so they had... so the first activity was for them to, in pairs – and it
was very informal – they had to do the questions. And they did. And
we corrected them. And they saw that as it was a collective effort: that
some people had one piece of the question and others had the other
piece. Which was... And then they saw that when I put it all together on
the board they saw that they had been... that they could do it all
together.
25. And that's... that... I find it very powerful. I'm not sure that they
reflected on it in the same way, or if they did at all, but I think it is.
26. Then I erased the answers, which were my personal answers about my
personal life, so the only thing we had on the board were questions –
and there were about ten or twelve questions, some of them very
similar to one another, and then I gave them... It's a pair interview. It's
a template that I designed, and it has an area for questions – just three
columns – an area for questions, and there are no questions there, so
they had to copy... They... they had to select 7 questions from the
board and copy them down. That was the first step.
27. Again, people who... some people made up their own questions. Some
people just had an idea of what I had said was right, and even when I
explained it to them again, they just thought that really what I meant
was what they had understood, which is always a challenge.
28. Then they had to write their answer. The... the... the template I have is
very detailed and very... well, not very detailed, but very simple, and
the directions are just very simple and... and easy to follow. Then they
had to write down their answers and then they had to write down their
partner's answers. So we ended up with questions, answers with I, and
answers with he, or she.
29. That was pretty neat!
30. Then when we came back, we did the administrative thing about...
what's it called... course handout. We... we have to do that, and I'm
not sure sometimes, it's... The only thing that was... that is really
important for them to know on this, really, is... is my phone number so
they can call, and then some objectives of the class, which are
formulated in such a way that I'm not sure that they understand.
31. But anyway, it had to be done, so I did it.
32. And then we moved on to something that was slightly different from
what I had... from what I had planned. What I had planned was... and

- then we do... before... before we went on... they wrote their nametag and what I had planned, is that in the nametag, which is a piece of... of a... is a big card, folded in half... What I had planned is that inside I was going to give them something that... it looks... it's a little bit like a passport type of questions: name, addr..., just different things... things about themselves. And eventually I will want it. But I had forgotten it in the office,
33. so what we did instead, which was just fine, we... I gave them 3 x 5 cards – I wish they had been lined, but I didn't have them in there.
 34. I'm happy that I had... very fortunate that I had some of those cards on hand anyway.
 35. And I asked them... I showed them on the board, on the map, where people in Level A lived, and where I was from, and I told them what the contents of the Level A cards were, which was three... three very simple sentences. And I said that I wanted them to write at least six sentences, because Level B should be able to produce more, and have one card per person. So that took a little while to settle in.
 36. The Cuban woman just wanted to say things that were not personal. She wanted to say, my family is beautiful, or... they were things that just... she just... I was trying to get her to write down...
 37. and basically, wa...
 38. the only thing they had to do was copy a few of the sentences that were i... the answers of the pair interview in the... in the "I" column, in the personal column. So it was really the whole thread of the class followed personal information.
 39. And... and... and this was a good way of generating the questions and doing the answers and then writing the answers as a sentence.
 40. And some of them did not have the concept of a sentence, so I'm sure that this is something I will have to work with quite a bit.
 41. So they wrote... they wrote on the cards, but one thing that they had to do before they left was... ooo... go by me... had to go by me, and...
 42. This was someone who just signed in. I can't believe this. I'm still here. This really bothered me... So I was just interrupted.
 43. They had to go by me, and I checked their 3 x 5 card. I corrected it and I gave them a second card, a blank card, where they had to correct the... the correct... the... write down the correct information, and they had to go and tape it on the board.
 44. It's just interesting – really fun, and
 45. I'm going to use this to do "find someone who..." using the information that is particular to some of them.
 46. And then that was it. That was the full class.
 47. I think that they.... I think it was... I think it was very good. There is a lot to learn. So we just assessed, in some ways, today.

Class #2: Friday January 11, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debrief for the 11th of January.
2. This was the second time we met and the end of the first week,
3. and the room is very warm, and it's... well, it's affecting my teaching. It's very difficult to regulate the heat, in this old building, and I've had a headache for the past 24 hours.
4. But nonetheless, I had a pretty well-planned lesson.
5. And they're very eager. It's a fairly nice homogeneous group.
6. The only thing that might be a little different is... I have one Korean woman who is... she's very quiet, but then she compensates by writing. Her... All her written work is... is almost perfect. So it's very helpful.
7. So we began... I told them what the routine was, and check their names and write the date.
8. And that's... they're just getting there. They're also using for the first time...
9. It's a change from Level B where we say, "Tomorrow will be..." as opposed to "Tomorrow is..."
10. So anyway...
11. and then I plunged right into... it's a kind of a "find someone who" but... anyway, this time I designed this.... There are nine questions, and then three that are blank, and that's for them to finish. And it's really working on *do you* and *are you*, so it's the present tense, and then I had made a dialogue box where they could say... answer, and then write... answer and write. And I explained... sorry. I explained what... what they had to do, and a little bit of the grammar.
12. And it was... it went really well.
13. S... when...
14. Most of them had never done this, so they didn't really quite know what to do, and they just thought they had to fill out... they didn't read the directions, which very, you know, simply says, Ask the questions, one for each classmate. So they... and then once we established that they had to... for each question, they had to talk to one classmate, Then they got there.
15. And I always circulate, which is... which is pretty good.
16. It went really well, and I think that I bro... the way I broke it down is... this is the... maybe the... not the best I have done but it's just certainly one of the better ways of doing it – is breaking it down. Giving them the questions as opposed to asking them to formulate the questions, then ask the questions, then get the answer. Also, this breaks down the listening to what someone says. If someone says "Yes, I am," then what do you write down? Do you write down "Yes, I am" which would be incorrect, or did you

write down “Yes, he is” or “Yes, she is”? And so this was... this is what I was trying to get at, which is always difficult with low-level ESL people. What do you do...What do you hear and what do you write?

17. So that went really well,
18. and then I... then we... we brainstormed.
19. Then we looked at... excuse me... we looked at some of the questions that they made, and I made a very explicit grammar lesson after that, on the verb *to be* and all the other verbs. Then there was just a few more minutes before the break, and I gave them a very sh... small quarter of a sheet of paper which I have designed, and I call it a passport. And this we're going to refer to throughout the class, and it's a... quite a passport. And it's actually... it will be... it's personal information which they're going to stick in their name tag so we can refer to it on a regular basis. And it includes things that they will find on forms, such as birth date, first name, last name, and things like that,
20. so that's... that's pretty good.
21. Then we went on break, and... let me see...
22. and we began what I want to do every Friday afternoon, which is reading – reading and writing.
23. So I... this is the most structured class I've had about getting to... or the most conscious effort... most conscious reflective effort that I have made to finding that there is... wri... listening and speaking and reading and writing.
24. Anyway, we're reading a very short novel... it's a... based on two hundred words. The reading was easy. It was... to begin with, the very first page... and it was simple, but then once they got to the comprehension questions, that was a little bit more difficult, because what I wanted was them to answer with... with a full sentence.
25. Then they had free writing, and they had to write and write and write and write and write, and write for 15 minutes. Which is...
26. This is inspired by the fluency reading and fluency writing... the more people write, the more they will write. And I think that I believe that it's true.
27. So the... the... the sheet that I had designed around this very first page of reading had comprehension questions and then a part where.. it's the writing, but there are pointed questions which relates to the text in some ways. For example, the... the text was about someone who lives with her grandmother, and the... the... in the writing I ask them to talk about who writes and how... I'm sorry. Who works, where do they live, and who do they live with, and so on and so forth.
28. So that was pretty good.
29. This has been... It was... It is just the first week, and it's... I'm not yet in the groove of things. And it's... and I'm tired already, which is not good, because there are nine more weeks to go.

30. And they're very willing, and they're really good, and they're very helpful, and they're very eager – they're just great.
31. I just need to get a little bit more excited.
32. But they understand really well, and...
33. anyway, it's been great.

Class #3: Tuesday January 15, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. So this is the debrief for January 15th.
2. This is the third day that I meet with Level B people.
3. I had the... the... I had a concept that I wanted to... to teach. And it's *the same* and *different*. It's really important for them to know, so that's... that's... that's what I set out to do.
4. Prior to that I had wanted to do something more complicated which I didn't have time to implement before class time started, so by the time class started, I was flustered and didn't quite know where the class was... was going to go.
5. And it... it ended up being a very good class. I... I think that it's... I'm just lucky to be creative, and I'm lucky that I have built my skills o... my skills over the last 14 years, so that really helped out.
6. So this is what we did. We worked a lot on *same* and *different* and *opposites*, just instilled those concepts in them, and since we had practiced present tense questions last week, I wanted them to go into the past, and this...that's what we did. We... I began writing, *Did you... Did you... Did you... Did you...* and I took different examples, and
7. in the past I've never taught it that precisely, about the past. We always say "before" or "our new country" but then I have thought... I've been thinking... or I have thought off and on that... but never really implemented it, that if we say "in your country" then they associate the past with something that happened in their country. Well, the past can also be used for what they ate this morning,
8. so I described it and made a line on the board. And so that's what I was doing, that it can be applied as well as... from the... about this morning, last week, and last month, last... last year. And so they...
9. that was... that was interesting.
- 9a. That... so they...they... practiced those questions, and they were not supposed to write anything at all.
10. Then I paired them up, and they had to write one question for each pair.
11. One thing that I didn't do and that I had intended to, was to write the kind of expressions one uses in pairs when you're doing pair work. Students need to clarify, students need to argue about what they want to say. They need to say "I agree, I disagree, Hmmm, I don't think that's right" and things like that which they... they just need to learn. And so I did not.... I began writing it on a big poster paper, but I didn't do anything with it.
12. Since we do so much pair work, I'm going to come back to it and collect those... those expressions, over the course of the next ten weeks.
13. Then we did what I call learning mistakes. And... I collected the cards and wrote a few of the sentences on the board... just kind of neat. It was kind

of a... what we call a “concept attainment” type of activity, because they had written “Did you do... Did you go swimming *on* last weekend, or *in* last weekend or *in* last month,” and so I asked them to look at what I had written in the first place, and then they... so they saw that, and they... they began to see the differences. And then they took away *in* or *on* or whatever it was that was... and then they saw there was nothing between the action and *last*.

14. So that was quite interesting; it was great,
15. and then I did others as well. There were some spelling mistakes
16. and so that... that was good.
17. Then I... I felt that they needed to take a rest. I had explained quite a few things.
18. J. from El Salvador is very inquisitive, and is asking... I don't know if he knows that they are grammar questions, but they're very pointed questions, and it helps me clarify, or it helps me... he's just a very... very sharp young man that has had no prior English classes, and so anything that he knows is from what he has learned in the streets, which – on the job. So he's... he's really quite... quite analytical.
19. It's great... great to have him being there.
20. He's going to be my challenge, and I will rise to it, because he's challenging me in very positive ways.
21. Then we had... I had them then change the focus and be really quiet, because they'd been really thinking. S...An... And so they read on page 13 in “Collaborations” which is three very short stories, and what I wanted them to do is to look at what these people had in common, so again, so we could bring similarities and differences between the different characters. I drew a diagram on the board, and I had... I chose two out of the three stories, and they were women, and so we brainstormed what they had in common and what was different. It is a ... what's it called? A Venn Diagram? I think that's what is...yeah, that's what it is. Venn? A Venn diagram: two circles that intersect, and in between, the... what... the part that intersects is what they have in... in common. And then we wrote sentences from what the words were, and we used “both” and then we used “but.”
22. And that was interesting.
23. They were... these were very simple sentences, but again I think that it's teaching us simple structure, very simple structure.
24. Then we had a break.
25. And after the break I paired them up. I wanted to just pair them up in a different way, and I wanted them to use present tense question. And what I did was, I had different pairs of cards, and it was a black card going with a red card, the same number: a red nine going with a black nine. And so they had to stand up and ask for... and practice the question, “Do you have a red nine?” if they had a black nine.

26. And it was really interesting.
27. It did not quite work, and I don't know why. Because they had... Actually, yes, I know why. I had one pair too many, and so two people had two extra cards, and that didn't work. And by the time I realized it I could not just pick any two cards out, and it was not going to work. So anyway...
28. And then I gave them the diagram, and then they had to write the words that were the same, and then the sentences. And the product...
29. I had a couple of... of pairs that did not understand what was happening, and I went over, and... and we talked about it,
30. and everything was fine. And the results were quite good. They... I... I feel that it went... the whole thing went really well. It was just really neat.
31. I have asked our work-study to scan these so we can start documenting the... their writing and perhaps the co-scon... co-constructing of knowledge and writing.
32. So that's... it's... was actually a fascinating experience. I'm warming up to the class.
33. Anyway, they're... they're great. They're very willing to do unorthodox... not unorthodox, but unusual things that... I don't know if every regular language classroom would do those kinds of things. And in ESL it seems like we're... we're just always raking ground, so anyway...
34. That's all for today.

Class #4: Friday January 18, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debrief for... this is the fourth time we've met, Level B, it's January 18th.
2. For once I had everything copied the night before, and so what happens when I do that is that nothing is really... I'm still missing... I have everything to go by, but I'm still missing a... a few things. And so that was interesting, because I had... So in fact, in being more prepared, I'm a little bit less prepared, or I'm less involved with thinking about what I'm going to do. But I don't think it shows.
3. Len... so I did... the things that I wanted to do was, I wanted to do adverbs of frequency, and then I wanted to read this ... this second page for... the book that we're doing. So in order for me to start putting things into perspective and also to get them geared to what was going to happen in class, I called it a menu, and talked about the four different skills that we would address.
4. Then I did a line-up with "What time did you wake up this morning?" and "What time do you usually get up?"
5. And I think it was spur of the moment that I saw the opportunity to contr... contrast and compare the past tense, which we did a little bit of last time, and the present tense. And also... it was also very helpful to introduce adverbs of frequency, what one did last night, as opposed to what one usually does.
6. So it was really interesting, to me.
7. But anyway...
8. Then we had... and it was a big dead, and I don't know... I've had a lot more lively – 100%, 0% - type of thing before.
9. This is to address adverbs of frequency, and percentages of time that wh... for which we use them.
10. So I don't know... I... I think it was fine, but maybe they already know it, or I could not get... or maybe I was expecting more, but that's... actually they probably were just soaking it in and trying to make sense of what was happening, is probably what it was.
11. Then they had to pair up to practice the question "How often do you..." and we practiced that.
12. And this... this particular worksheet had slight modifications from last term, because I learned from last term about a few holes that there were in the design of what I had made.
13. Then... and that went well,
14. and they were able to design their own question "How often do you...?" and then design it. In the process, they are learning the word sequence for

present tense, int... interrogative form, and with any verbs other than “to be.”

15. So that was... that was good.
16. Then I saw... I think it took less time that I thought it would, so then I could see that they needed to... that they had acquired it and then they needed to produce it and they needed to produce it for themselves, so that's when I went and got cards. And I added a little bit more to just handing out cards. They need to start ask... being able to ask people “Can I have this?” or “Can I have that?” or any time that we... I mean, we use this quite often... or this... this structure. So I made them say that. They had to come to me and ask for a card.
17. And then again I... I... I made it up. I saw the need as... as we went along. I wrote down the directions on the board, which was to write down six sentences with the adverbs of frequency.
18. At this point, I want to keep all their writing, and I... this writing was... was interesting in some ways, but I... I probably cannot keep everything and scan everything. It seems a bit ridiculous. But this was interesting,
19. and actually I'm going to use the content to maybe make a “Someone who...” for next time, I'm not quite sure. But it will be a kind of a... of a good follow-up to this.
20. Then we went on break.
21. And I mindfully introduced the past, and this time, I've – and I don't ever think I've done that before – I've always had two columns for the base form of the verb, and then the past tense form. And I always had the... anything that... that... when the verbs came as a list I... I did not separate regular and irregular, but I did this time, and it turned into a concept of -tainment ex... attainment exercise,
22. and it was really good, actually.
23. And then I asked them to make sentences orally as they came up with the form or if they knew the form, they had to come up and write it on the board.
24. So I really liked that – that concept attainment there worked really well.
25. The one thing that did not...
26. And then we did the reading and then writing... and... and then the questions and then the writing.
27. Now, there was... the timing was not very good on my part. Maybe I spent too much time on some things and not enough on others. I probably should not have gone into the past tense at the beginning of... right after break. But I felt that I did because the writing was going to be in the past.
28. I'm asking them to express themselves in the past,
29. but at the same time we didn't have enough time to do the writing,
30. and so I sent them home with writing, and that will be their homework. So we'll see what they come up with. And if they don't get it done, as I said to them, they'll have to do it in class.

31. So... so this is what I'm going to do next time and I told them, I will begin Friday morning by reading the text, and then we will go from there, and we'll go on our regular based lesson, so they can start... really work on it and actually this was attached...
32. I mean... everything I do it... during the 3-hour session in which we do the reading and writing, pertains to the reading and writing in some way, so... so it doesn't matter whether it will be at the end or at the beginning. But that way at the beginning I'm sure that they... it will be a slower pace for some of them for whom this is the first time that they get to do such a reading and then re... writing questions – the questi... comprehension questions. And it ca... those comprehension questions... I'm pretty... I... I want to know... I... the next time... I... I... I need to take more time again.
33. That's... that's what I'm saying, is that in this whole thing, is that they would... they could work in pairs, and go and write it on the board, as opposed to me writing it on the board, and I... I'm pretty picky. I want the whole sentence, not just the answer, but just the whole sentence, so they can start writing in a way that's... they're really using the structure really tightly.
34. So... That's it, I think. I don't think I have any more things.
35. The... the community is developing.
36. J., the person who's been challenging at times is – not challenging, but I mean in a positive way, has... was very quiet today.
37. The light still doesn't work, which is a problem. It's really dark in that room. I don't like it. And it's hot. It's too hot. There's nothing we can do about it, apparently.
38. And... So now...
39. and they're learning. They're learning very well.
40. This is... they're very... very good.
41. So. That's all.

Class #5: Tuesday January 22, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is debriefing for the third week of January, the third week of the term, Level B, January 22nd.
2. As I've mentioned before, this has been a class that does not automatically jell. They just... I enter the room and I feel that they're just sitting there and waiting for me to give it all to them, and I really don't have it all.
3. But... anyway, I had a couple of activities planned today, and I got... it took me a while to get to the first one. It always does, because I try to create... I just try to... it's like small talk. I just try to make everybody feel comfortable. And we had a new person today, from Bosnia, and so in the process, I...pe... students practiced their questions, personal questions, but they also learned "welcome," which I don't know if everyone knows that, but... And then we also learned some clar.... expressions to clarify what the person is saying if we don't understand, or so on and so forth.
4. Then we went into the first activity, which was *did* or *do*. We've been working on using *did* or *do*, the past tense or the present tense.
5. And this is something I made up this morning.
6. And they had to write *did* or *do* on the lines, and... and they... then they had to answer it.
7. Or some of them were already... Some of them are ahead of the game, and I think that... I that there is a wide... well, they were pretty homogeneous, now that I remember that that's what I said in my first debriefing lesson. But there seemed to be a wide range of... not necessarily of skills but of learning abilities, and I think that I would attribute that to different educational background, perhaps. I'm not quite sure.
8. Anyway, so we did that, and then they had to practice the questions with a partner, and then they... and then they also had to make up their own. So we did this.
9. And then when we came back from break, I was wondering how to incorporate *do* and *did* with what we were going to do, and that's... that part was not planned out tightly enough... or... I don't know. I don't know what it is with this group.
10. I introduced them to the concept of *lifeline*, which is something that I... that I always do in my classes.
11. It's a great springboard for writing, it's graphing, it's... it helps people use the past, it helps with prepositions of place and time... Anyway, it's... it's really quite... it's good. And I used a text which I made myself, and...
12. But by then, they... I don't know. Maybe I rushed them toward what we had to do? Or for them... I thought that I explained it thoroughly. Some of them just did it with no problem and were already writing a question for each *wh* word, and others were just like not understanding what to do with

- dates on the line. So I don't know. I don't know what the problem, if there is a problem, is.
13. Prior to that we'd been talking about... for... so, they read it, I read it. And then we talked about the verbs, the different verbs, and... and about a few... a few... let me see. So anyway... and then we... we wrote the questions, the questions for each *wh* word. And then they put to work their... their new skills with *did*.
 14. And some of them got it, and others didn't.
 15. And then when I pointed out to them, for example, "When did she started to go to school?" that they had to take the *ed* in *started*, because that's why we had a helper, so the helper would carry the *ed*.
 16. But anyway... So did this. They were reluctant to go to the board, and I don't... they... So they did not really go to the board... they did not go to the board at all for the dates. I had wanted someone up there to go to the board to do that.
 17. Then, since no one wanted to... to budge after I wrote a few of the questions they were telling me, I went and sat down and then told them that... to go and do it. I... So they did that.
 18. At some point during the class also, I think it was at mid-break, I talked about what we had learned, and they looked at what they had learned, and they learned quite a bit.
 19. And that was really interesting for me to see.
 20. But I tried a new thing with them this time, because it's very difficult for people to start reflecting on what they're learning. So this time the way I presented it was the most effective yet. I said, "I teach. You learn. What did you learn today?" And they were able to brainstorm and as... new words as well as structures. And...
 21. So this was... this was a ... this was a very positive time.
 22. This woman came... Z. came aft... to talk to me after class and... and tell me once more that I should speak slower, and that she does not understand, and that she wants to learn English, and she cannot learn English unless she understands, so then she can write down and... and... and read. And so I really need to speak slower. This is the second time she's bringing it up. And she had another... she had R. with her.
 23. Anyway, this was kind of a... a difficult thing for me, because I feel that she... Yes, I will speak slower, but I don't speak that fast to begin with. I felt put on the spot, and my self-confidence kind of lapsed.
 24. V. stayed and was working on something and copying, and he said something that was really interesting. He said, "Well, she..." He overheard the conversation with Z. and R. and he said, "Well, she is..." (he was talking about Z.) that she looks at her dictionary and so that she is not always listening to me 100%, so... which makes it difficult for her to understand.

25. And this was very interesting to me because I was getting comfort for... from a student... not comfort, but I was getting a different view from a student in the same audience, and I thought that was just very... he... he... he had reflected, and it... it really allowed me to have a different perspective on it, which will help me with...
26. Next time, I'm going to take away her... her little computerized dictionary, and I'm going to put her with someone who doesn't speak English, and I'm going to put her away from J. because I think they feed into each other as far as not understanding, which is not true, because he does understand, and he's... he's... he's very... he's very clever. He doesn't speak very much, but he's very clever. He hasn't been speaking a lot.
27. So that was really interesting.
28. And then V. said something that made me feel better. He said... He expressed it almost correctly. He said, "Two weeks ago I... I could not understand you. Now I understand most... most of it." So that was really comforting.
29. Anyway, that has shaken me a little bit, and I'm just wondering what I'm doing with this class that is just... it's just not jelling the way it did last term. Or else I just have to take it for what it is. It's just the way the... the mood of this class will be. It's just going to be... it's just going to be like that, I guess.
30. So anyway, that's... that's my story.
31. I think that next time we'll... we'll... we'll have an interactive activity to begin with, and I'm wondering if we'll have... We need to keep on continuing on the... with the book, but I don't know.
32. Anyway, I need to think about those guys a little bit more.
33. That's all.

Class #6: Tuesday January 29, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. Today is debriefing for January 29, and this is for Level B.
2. This was an interesting day. It was full.
3. I usually have three long... three activities I can basically... I have basically two before break and then one after break. They... they feel very connected.
4. This was unusual because there were a lot of small activities. They were chunks that were all geared toward the same goal. One, I told them that we're going to talk about housing but they... I wanted them to practice a lot with prepositions of place. What we did was kind of fun. I... I've wanted to do... well, I've... I... they need to know Portland's outline and... and I just wanted to review that with them. And then it was like a survey where they had three questions,
5. and then they learned the word *initials* and I don't think I've ever taught the word *initials* before. And that was rather a... a... spontaneous thing on my part.
6. But I wanted them to track down how many people lived in certain places and... and where they were. So this was... this was a survey that ended up being quite visual, and then we debriefed on it.
7. Then we brainstormed prepositions of place and I was showing them where I was putting my pen, or whatever it was... my note... note... my name card.
8. And then we did a TPR,
9. and then I had a student teach, which was OK.
10. It was not a very thrilling TPR, maybe because I have done it for so many years. Maybe it takes the thrill out of it. But... I don't know. That's just the way it is sometimes. The thrill is not there because there are things that need to be learned and taught.
11. And it's actually a very efficient way of teaching it because they do it... they hear it, they do it, they understand the command, which is right before being able to produce it on their own, which was going for... to be for them to describe their favorite room.
12. Then we brainstormed different rooms of the house, and that's when we began using their dictionary.
13. They have a red dictionary which was given to them as a free book, which is kind of nice.
14. And then... now let me see... and then I... I realized as they were pairing up, and that I wanted to make sure that they knew what their partner's name was, that they didn't know or they had forgotten, or anyway they needed to practice, the possessive adjective. And they need to do that every... weekly.

15. So weekly I'm going to have a "What is your favorite?" ...blah, blah, blah, and it's a question they have to answer. The way it's... is... it's done... the way I did it... is really quick and easy, and a great mixer, and a great community builder. "What is your favorite room?" You pair up – "What is your favorite room?" Then you have to talk to a third person and re... relate, to that third person, what the first person said, by following a certain patter... pattern, "I talked to...." ...which forces them to use the past, "his" or "her," blah blah blah, blah blah blah. OK. So, anyway...
16. so that was kind of fun,
17. and then we did some grammar. We... there is... this is the most pieces of paper I've ever handed out, in a Level B, I think. But they like having that grammar. It was... it's very basic, describing and using *there is* and *there are*. It was very simple.
18. And then we read Sylvia's Story.
19. And as I debrief, I realize that maybe I rushed through Sylvia's Story. What I could have done, and I didn't do, was to have them draw a diagram of what Sylvia's room looked like, because she gives a fairly good description.
20. But we jumped right into drawing a diagram of their favorite rooms, since they had talked about it. And they all did it. Some of them was very elaborate.
21. And then they had to answer some questions, which are pre-writing questions on describing one's favorite rooms.
22. So... anyway...
23. This was... this was a good class.
24. I'm missing two people, so that was too bad. It would have been really... it's always hard, because then we have to catch up. And I was intending to use what they prepared to day for... as a follow-up for next time, so I don't quite wh... what will happen. But anyway...
25. That's it!
26. That was a good class.
27. I think we're just moving right along.
28. I think that one m... my... one of my problems was to focus on something. And actually now that I have focused on a topic I feel that I'm kind of far away from the more "outcome-based" curriculum. And one way I'm going to solve that is to have them solve different problems in groups, which is part of... which will be training for one of the performance tasks, which is to solve a problem in a group.
29. So... In any case, that's all for today.

Class #7: Friday February 1, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. Today is the debrief for February 1st, and it was the Level B class.
2. Where to begin... I think I actually began with a kind of a teachable moment.
3. One thing that I had intended to do, and I didn't do, was to ask them "What's your favorite...?" so they would be able to... your favorite color, so they would be able to use possessive pronouns. But I didn't do that.
4. In fact, I need to do that for next time, because I want this to be a routine, as I mentioned last time.
5. So what we did instead was... It was provided by a student, and she said, "Today is..." "My, my mother has..." or I think that she said, "My mother has 60" or 16 or something. So... which made me think that first of all, it's... the, the, the verb *to be* with the age is not acquired by a lot of people in that class.
6. And I knew that before. It just refreshed my memory.
7. And the other thing is that I need to work with numbers with them. We'll have to do that, probably next week, because she... It was hard to hear the distinction between 16 and 60. So... And by hearing other people talking about other people's ages, I could tell that this was not... that there were some holes in the knowledge there. So...
8. But what they had to do was... It was a, it was a warm-up activity, and they had to pair up, and they had to ask each other the question, "How old are you?" And then they had to report to a third person. "I talked to so-and-so. He is... blah year-... blah blah years old."
9. And then when they were finished, and I went around, and I tested out to see what... what they were saying – it was very good, overall –
10. I put the different ages in the classroom on a continuum. And what I was trying to do here was to get another kind of a survey of the class ages, which is always fascinating.
11. But also I was... I wanted them to start thinking about prepositions of place... and actually it's also a preposition of time – between and between... So... so we were doing this.
12. And it was really quite fun.
13. And then we moved on to... I wanted them to... Is this what I did? Yes. I wanted them to think about different prepositions, and then I wanted them to write two differ-... two... So we... I elicited the, the prepositions from them, and then they, each pair – I put them in pair – had, was given one preposition to write about. And they had to write two sentences about it, in, in... regarding something in the class.
14. This was a little bit... This was not really... This was not what I had planned, so it did not... I don't know. This, and the following activity, were

- not really planned as such. What I had planned was slightly different, although the outcome would be the same.
15. So what followed this... well, after they, they went and wrote each sentence on the board, and we corrected it, then I each gave... I gave each pair a picture, and I said... I modeled it, and I said, "Do you see... do you see something in your picture that would relate to 'between'?" And I, as I modeled it, I was showing them what I wanted. I wanted them to construct a sentence with actually all the prepositions which we had been talking about, by looking at a picture.
 16. And the danger with doing something like this is that you may provide - with low-level learners - is, you provide a picture, but then they may be able to talk about the pictures in terms... they might be able to say "between" and show the objects, but not necessarily know the vocabulary within the picture, which is... which was a danger. It was a risk I was, I was running of doing.
 17. So I made sure that when I was... as I was giving out the, the different pictures, I said, "Do you know..." you know, "What is this? Do you know everything? Do you know all the words in the picture?" And I'm not sure they were really understanding, but they were eager to begin. And so I gave them the word that I wanted them to write a sentence with relating to the picture. And they did. And they went through the whole prepositions through there.
 18. And it was really quite good.
 19. I've got some of the writing samples.
 20. What was interesting in one of those writing samples is that it's a pair, but it's a very uneven pair: O. and A., and they got along really well. But he, he is well-educated, and his written English is almost perfect, and he's very dedicated. But O. has, probably has some... lower e-... much lower education, and some literacy issues, I think. So this was really interesting, for me to see their two different, two different pieces... very different pieces of paper, whereas they had constructed it together.
 21. And that is just fascinating to me.
 22. Then the next thing that we did, when we came back from break, is that we... we read the story. And then we did the... they answered the question, and then they go on and write the ques-... the, the answers on the board.
 23. This has been... this is a routine I really like,
 24. and I think that they really like. It's... They're getting quicker with it. They usually work by themselves, although I've encouraged them to work with other people.
 25. They know they have to write out the whole answer, which is not the case, but at least they... their comprehension is there.
 26. And... and the interesting part is... The most interesting part of that is the "write for 15 minutes."

27. And this time I had chosen - since the girl in the story writes to her grandmother every day - I, I thought that I would have them write a letter to their friend about their life in the U.S.
28. And what came out was really incredible because most of it I had not taught. Or I had never really implicitly taught. So I tried to... well, I guided them a little bit at the beginning of the writing exercise, but by letting them know that they could write about their routine, they came to class, and the-, their work, and...
29. So this was... it was really quite interesting,
30. and the, and the... some of the writing is, is really quite incredible.
31. So, I'm... I'm quite happy with it.
32. So it was one... another one of those... today and yesterday were just days where it seems I can... I'm not screwing up on purpose, but it doesn't flow, or it's, it's not really going where... it's not... I don't know. And it's probably fine for the viewer. And when I debrief, I can see that everything I did was fine. It's just that... maybe it's not as interesting? Or... I guess prepositions are not very interesting.
33. But... in any case... I will be back... We will be back to housing, and prepositions of place, for next week. And we will be doing neighborhoods, so they're... they talked about where they lived, and now they're going to talk about the neighborhood, and situations... situating different things.
34. And... that's it.
35. They're really good. They're, they're just very patient, and very willing, and they work really hard.
36. So... that's it.

Class #8: Tuesday February 5, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is debriefing for the 5th of February.
2. I put out the lesson plan on the board, and... and we were continuing from... continuing a few things from times before.
3. Something that I usually don't begin with are their learning mistakes. I like to begin with one of those ice breakers. But today I just thought I'd try something different.
4. John Fenselow says "Try the opposite," so I just did. And it's OK. It's OK. I think that there is something to say to have them really focus right away on something because then their... all their attention is there. I think attention wanes after three hours, although they're really incredibly focused.
5. It's the second time, I think this week - or was it last Friday as well? - that I have a hard time sending them on break.
6. So... I don't know.
7. So I'm beginning with their learning mistakes, and this was from previous writing. And this was going to lead them into the next activity, which was favorite... their favorite time of day. And again we wanted to practice... I wanted them to practice *my, his, her, your*.
8. And then... and that was interesting
9. because what happened when I modeled it, someone said, "My favorite time of day is when I ..." What di-, what did she say? "...when I, I am by myself." Or something like this. Anyway, so, sh-, they were... that person was using a time clause, which is an unusual thing. So I, I brainstormed other things. I had them... I elicited from the students other answers, which would be right at the level of other people who are not as sophisticated, and just one word, or.... "My favorite time of day is in the evening" or things like that. So that was much easier. And they had it on the board as a reminder.
10. The interesting piece of that, which I hadn't thought about... well, first of all I hadn't thought about, this... compound sentences, so that was interesting.
11. But the next thing, that in debriefing, I could see that they needed to be reminded to change the personal pronoun in the next sentence. Otherwise it wouldn't work. Then I thought that I would ask... have them...
12. I stretched this activity a little bit, which then got me kind off track maybe timing-wise. This was not a great timed session, for some reason, because... yeah, well, because I, I, I stretched here a little bit. And I... well, in some ways, because it was kind of necessary in the, in the... in the succession of things.

13. It's very im-... It was quite... I wanted them to see what the change was, how different it was from their favorite time of day in their country. And that in itself would be a great piece of writing, if we could ever get to it using past tense.
14. And maybe that's what I will ask them to do on Friday. But anyway...
15. So that was... that was a little bit unplanned.
16. But then I wanted them to start thinking about the past, and changes. Then I gave them a piece of ... I gave them a text, which was... which is simple, and really... really to...just simple. But it, it... but just a notch above, that they could learn some new ca-, vocabulary. So we did, we did that.
17. And then I put on the board *wh* questions, and only the answers, and see what they remembered from forming the past tense, and questions with the past tense, that ... with verbs other than the verb *to be*.
18. It was a little bit laborious until I went back and told them what the pattern was. Or I tried to s-... have them see what the pattern was.
19. So that's difficult, and I don't know quite where to go with that, except that we need more practice, and practice, and practice, and practice in all different s-, kinds of ways. Making questions, however, is a very difficult skill, and... even in Level D, which is in two levels from now, it's not obvious that people know how... what to do or how to do it. So.
20. Then... and this was a little awkward, but it worked...
21. I guess if you pretend that things are going to work, they just work. *[laugh]*
22. I looked... we did all the questions on... from the text, but then I erased *he* and changed it to *you*. And some other questions we changed because they were... it would not be really appropriate to ask your partner, or they were too text-pas-, specific. But most of them worked,
23. and that was really interesting.
24. Then I gave them what I have, which is called a pair interview. It's a template, and it's really... it's really easy. You just have to write the questions, and then write the answers, and then write your partner's answers.
25. And, and again, the problem was with timing, because the one thing that they got to was their own answers.
26. And I'm not sure that they got to their partner's answer.
27. So the next thing I guess would be for them... and that's where I think it is really difficult. It's a three-hour class, and so what do you do in a three-hour class? You can certainly connect it from other class sessions. And as a rule, you should. Otherwise it would be all disconnected. And I really... and, and I do that. But at the same time, that three hours has to be really self-contained, because they're adults. And adult learners have many other things going, or.... And people get sick. And you miss... you miss a, a time, and you've, you've missed a lot. And so anything has to be self-contained. You cannot really carry over to the next day.

28. And so I'm going to try to carry it over the next day, and see how it works.
29. But that's really going to be like a major effort on my part, because it is usually not successful, because people who are not there today will come next time, and then they won't know what we are doing or how we are doing it.
30. So I really have to plan it in a way that's, that's going to work and be integrated with the following lesson.
31. Or... I could just lop it. So that's, that's another thing.
32. Let me see.
33. M. is really making incredible progress. And that's just wonderful.
34. I lost one student to work – day shift. And otherwise I only have 16 right now. And it's, it's just great. And it's a, it's a right proportion.
35. Z. has not asked me to slow down in any ways.
36. It's a good class.
37. Y. is really coming out of her shell.
38. H. was funny.
39. YA. is really making great improvements,
40. and so is RA.
41. The young Korean women are not... ha-, have... already have a lot of this, so it's kind of review, especially for one of them.
42. It's... I know it's on the borderline boring, but...
43. And then there is V., who really tries everything very faithfully.
44. And then there is J., who didn't come for two times and didn't know what to do with *my* and *his* and *her* and *yours*.
45. So, so I do teach something, it seems, that students retain. That's always kind of nice to see.
46. That's all.
47. They're a great class, and really... really dedicated, hard-working.
48. And it was good.
49. We'll see.

Class #9: Friday February 8, 2002
Teacher Debrief: Fragments
Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debrief for Level B, on February 8th.
2. Let me see...
3. We began with *can*.
4. I... I'm still thinking about this email that I got and... from one of the professors here at PSU, who was reminding, in the course of her conversation... in... in the course of her email, that we should teach language that is useful, and... And actually I don't if *can* – C-A-N – is useful, talking about the possibility, but I remember that when I was working in a "Job-to-Work..." ...is it "Job-to-Work" or welfare program, where we... with non-native speakers, *can* was a big one, and the kind of language that goes around, expressing ability. or saying "No, I can't, but I can try" or "I can learn" is really a useful type of language.
5. So I... in any case, I introduced *can* and then I had... Really quickly, I had the question, "What can you do?"
6. And they're familiar with *can*. There were some things that they were not quite sure of.
7. But in the process of asking other... the other person what can they do, they had to write one thing that they did well. And so they wrote their partner's answer on the... on the board.
8. Well, luckily, wonderfully, fortunately enough, I had room there for a concept attainment, in which... and this time I chance to do it right... in which I demonstrated what... the wrong things about *can* and the right thing about... the right things about *can*.
9. So let's see if that sticks.
10. That should be really interesting.
11. Page... and then we did, out of *Grammar In Action*, Book 2, we did a paired exercise where they had to talk about wh... where they learned English, and can they understand the teacher. Anyway, that was... it was a worksheet, which was interesting, but it was a springboard for a listening exercise on page 97 of the same book. And this was interesting.
12. We've never done a... a listening exercise in which they have to listen to a different person.
13. And so I'm going to do this more often if I can.
14. It's... it's good for them.
15. And they did the listening exercise,
16. and it wa... it was good.
17. And then we went on break.
18. And then we rad... we read "Blue Moon Valley." We read page 8 and 9.
19. They were... this is the first time that there is some confusion in the text. And I can see why, and I don't know... It's not because it's poorly wi...

written. It's because of the ambiguity of the English language, I think. But the different characters... one new character was introduced, and Don, right away, and then it was... it was just a little difficult for them. It was more challenging this time than any time.

20. So... so we did the vocabulary, and they didn't know what... excuse me. They didn't know what *suddenly* was, and there was quite a description of *suddenly*, and that fit.
21. And we did the routine of writing the answers.
22. But this time, since the comprehension of the text was a little bit more difficult, it took a while.
23. And so therefore the piece that they could write on their work life is not... they have to do it at home.
24. And so I wonder if they will do it.
25. And perhaps that will give us the springboard for next time... for the next time,
26. so that should be... that should be good. That should be interesting.
27. And that's all.
28. It was a great class.
29. They're really quite, quite good.
30. I don't have really anything to report.
31. That's pretty good.
32. So that's it!

Class #10: Tuesday February 12, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debriefing for the 12th of February,
2. and it went OK.
3. I was not... we're doing "work," and there is so much to cover in "work." And... it's, it could, I could dedicated a whole term to "work," I think. And maybe that comes from the fact that I worked for a welfare-to-work program, Steps to Success, and... with ESL, very low level ESL students. And we talked about work, and personal information, and all that good stuff, for weeks.
4. And so that was my problem this morning. I came in, and I just wanted to do so many things that I just could not pick one thing.
5. One thing that I was sure of, though, was that we would be asking... we would be doing a "find someone who..." activity, and they would be practicing writing... they would be practicing asking "Can you...?" questions, and then listen for the answer, and then write "Can" or "Cannot."
6. [yawns] Excuse me.
7. But before we did this, I just wanted to get back to... To flow into that activity, I wanted them to ask questions, because we ended last time asking questions about the story.
8. And so I wrote some answers, and then they made up the questions, and those were very basic questions, which was just to get their mind working.
9. After we did the "can," I did...it was rather a, like a straight grammar lesson on "How can..." is the same as "Know how to..."
10. And this was quite interesting.
11. I never do anything very direct like this, and I felt like I was lecturing. And I felt like they were either getting it or not getting it. And they were practicing something that maybe was just going to go out their other ear as soon as they got out of class. Maybe yes, maybe no – who knows.
12. Then... I... one of the things that I... many things that I wanted to do was to contrast... was to bring their work history into the classroom.
13. Another thing was I wanted to bring their duties and abilities... duties and skills and, and compare those, which is a very difficult concept to grasp.
14. [yawns] Excuse me.
15. And so I had a small... I had a... I designed a work sheet. And there were three different things they had to talk about: their very first job in their country, and the place, and, and what they did, and what their job title was. And then when did come to the U.S., and what did they do as a first job in the U.S., and did they still have it.
16. Now, *still* was a challenge for everyone. I don't know why we don't... It's such a small word, and yet it's such an incredible concept. And I don't know why we... we don't teach it any earlier than... I think we usually do it

- in Level D, which in our program is much higher. It's in two levels from now.
17. Anyway, I was able to explain it to the few people who asked me what it was.
 18. And so that went fine.
 19. And then inte-... so they interviewed their partner,
 20. and, and they, and they were very engaged.
 21. And I think that the pair work is going to be very... Listening to the pairs is going to be just fascinating.
 22. And... and then they had to write a short paragraph about their partner.
 23. It is actually one of the performance tasks that we have, is to ask questions, make questions, ask questions, and then write a short paragraph about different people.
 24. So anyway, so we'll see.
 25. This was an OK day.
 26. I came to the realization halfway through class that the two Bosnians that I had were in that town that had the massacre in 1992. And I went and looked it up on the Internet at break time. And I shouldn't have done that. And there is a sadness to both these people which is... kind of... I'm, I'm just sensitive to it. Anyway, so, the, the, the em-, the emotional impact of realizing that, kind of impacted my teaching. I think that sometimes when we teach ESL we encounter people that a-, have gone through so much, that teaching, or even talking about very banal things, seems to be so small and so insignificant.
 27. In any case... They're just... everyone in there is just great.
 28. And R. is really making lots of progress, just because he is paired up with one... with the Bosnian man, and he is only speaking English. And he's teaching this Bosnian man, because it's his second term. He's teaching him!
 29. And it's just fascinating to watch.
 30. I wish he had had the microphone today.
 31. It would have been great.
 32. Maybe I can get it on him next time. So...
 33. Anyway... That's it for today.
 34. It's incredible.
 35. They cannot... They really need practice on *his*, *her*, and *my*.
 36. It's, it's, I know it's that, like, one of the last things to be acquired now.
 37. Now that I know that, I'm not... Maybe I shouldn't insist upon it so much, or... I don't know.
 38. It's interesting.
 39. OK. That's enough for today.

Class #11: Friday February 15, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is debriefing for February 15th, 2002. This is for my Level B.
2. The overall... the... the... overall, it went really well.
3. Again, I think that... it went well, but the pacing was a little off, or... or something was not quite right.
4. One thing that happened that I had not really planned is the way that the process... introducing the process writing went, and how it took off.
5. And then I am collecting pair writing work.
6. And anyway, that went really well,
7. and I have never introduced process writing in such a simple, clear manner before. Pat on the back!
8. Anyway, then I asked each pair to write something that they do every day. And they had to write it by steps.
9. And it was just... they were really quite amazing.
10. Then we went on to do the... the work... worksheet that I had created about the work situation with their... their... their work situation before, work situation in their country, and work situation in... in the U.S. if they have a work situation in the U.S. And then they had to... to answer those, and then they had to... and they had to change the questions into the past.
11. And that was a little mind-boggling again, for some of them.
12. Then we had the reading of... this is where I said that the timing was not very good,
13. because my intent, my original intent, had been to pair them up once they had written the questions in the past, and ask them of their partner, and then write a short paragraph about a partner.
14. But by then, I wanted t... I really wanted to get to "Blue Moon Valley" because we do it, and it... it just has to be done. If I don't do it one week, then we would be falling behind. And it is an interesting story, and it is good for them, and it's a routine, so I just wanted to stick to this.
15. One thing that I think, just to engage them, because I felt that there wa... maybe was not... maybe the... maybe there was too much individual work this time. That was my sense, although they spent some time – I guess they spent the first, mmm, hour - in pair work, so they should... it should have been... I should feel OK about it.
16. But then it... the reading of "Blue Moon Valley" – it... it was not really asking them for anything more than their reading and writing skills when they wrote about it. There was n... there was no real thinking skills involved.
17. Then I asked them...
18. So next time... I think that next time I'm going to alter the questions. I think I'm going to give one question to... I'm going to divide them in groups

- and... give one question to one group, and then have a cooperative learning activity set up and see how that works. I'll have to think about it quite in advance. And the process in a cooperative learning activity is sometimes more complicated than the task itself, so we'll see, but I... I need to alter that a little bit.
19. And then for their writing, I just told them to write. And I gave them two choices. One was, "How do young people get married in your country?" and the other one was to write about their own work in their country.
 20. And so I haven't... I don't know if I... whether I will see it or not. So we'll see.
 21. I'm very tired. I am sick. I don't feel well, and I'm very happy that it's the weekend.
 22. All in all, given my... my state here, it... it went OK.
 23. As I said, the first activity was probably the best, and it was again, once more, quite unplanned.
 24. The way it took off was just great.
 25. Well, it was planned, but not to that extent.
 26. So.
 27. The reason I had introduced process writing, I must say, is because it is... it ends up being in the worksheet. They have to describe one of their job duty.
 28. And so I thought I hope I would first do this and then do it on the work sheet.
 29. But as it turned out, it took longer.
 30. And then on the worksheet, I don't know what they did.
 31. So... anyway... I'm signing off.

Class #12: Tuesday February 19, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is debriefing for Level B, February 19, 2002.
2. And we're still working on the topic "work."
3. There's a lot to do there.
4. And I felt last week that I touched upon it but I didn't completely finish two different activities. And so this was their chance to... this was... this... a chance for us to wrap up today on this here.
5. What I began with was inspired by an activity that there was in *Collaborations*, and I wanted them to... I wanted to tap into their knowledge and have them produce three sentences: "In my country I was...", "Now I am...", and "I would like to..." What I had to do first was to explain "I would like..."
6. and this was really quite interesting because I had not anticipated introducing formal language. I called it polite.
7. Hence the demonstration of different registers, as you can see on the video.
8. Then I had to explain the difference between "I would like a cup of coffee" and "I would like to..." plus the verb.
9. And that was really interesting too.
10. J. asks very good questions.
11. And so after I had... after I had introduced that and I had brainstormed and written a few occupations, then they did it.
12. And then we moved into the conversation matrix, which basically was to communicate what they had just written. The first thing they had to do was to write the questions to the question... the questions to the... to each word that was in the category. Then we went on break.
13. This took quite a while... and then we went on break. I had thought it would go faster, but I think with the explaining of "I would like to..." it took a little while longer.
14. After break, I wanted, as I said, to bring the whole thing together and wrap up in way that... It was some writing by themselves where they had to answer questions about their past work and... and write it in a paragraph form. I really wanted them to use the past.
15. It was very fortunate that I got a chance to talk to each individual, because what they were missing was the language to express what they used to do, what their duties were. And so I got to help out quite a few.
16. Then that was the... that was the whole time,
17. I... and I co... we collected those students' writing.
18. They will be scanned so we can compare them with the writing which we collected last Friday, which had been generated by a pair. So just to

compare the... the writing at the same time, but one is a pair writing, and the other one is individual writing.

19. I think we're gon... we're done with the... with "work."
20. The last we will do will be about problems. And... problems and making excuses. And then we will be done with that.
21. Next week we will begin with shopping for different things.
22. And... so... That's what we'll do.
23. It went well.
24. I'm low energy today and don't feel good,
25. and so the class seemed to be low energy.
26. And it's not because they're not hopping up and down that they're not learning.
27. I have... I have learned that over the years.
28. So. Anyway, this was OK.

Class #13: Friday February 22, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is debriefing for February 22nd. This is regarding Level B,
2. and we began with...
3. I want to finish “work” this week, but because we have so many people... we have about a third of the class that doesn’t work, or has never worked, I thought that this time I would find something that would be applicable to work situations and other situations in the United States. So those are cultural. It was very culturally oriented, and talking about different registers too.
4. But we began with looking at the calendar of March and looking at when the testing dates were, and the last day of class.
5. Then, as people were trickling in late, I kept on asking them for the reasons they were late, and that led into the worksheet that I have. And this was... it’s called, “Sorry I am late.” And we did... whether it’s... it was about whether it’s a good reason or not a good reason. There were ten reasons that were listed. And we did... the debriefing took a little bit of time,
6. but in the process they learned some words.
7. What I did with th... the debriefing process for this particular activity: I listed all the countries that we have in the classroom and wrote down what people thought was acceptable in their country or not – yes or no. So that’s what this activity is, on the board.
8. I thought it was going to take too long, but I think I made it move along OK.
9. In the process they learned *it depends*, which was good.
10. And then we had people who deferred an opinion, and that was interesting as well.
11. Then the next thing I did was from the same book, and it’s called “My Life Is An Open Door.” And it’s a list of different topics, and there’s just a list: marital status, age, salary, rent, cost of new car, etc., etc., including religion, love life, future plans, and politics. And it’s to see whether it’s OK to talk about it in your country or in the U.S. And the first thing we did before going to class was... before going on break... was to make a question for each one of these.
12. And that was good, because it reviewed some very basic question-asking.
13. So we...
14. I wrote down all the questions on the board, and they... and made sure that there was comprehension of every single term.
15. Then we went on break, and during the break I... I found two of the graduate assistants who gladly volunteered their services to be interviewed by the students with some of those questions. I just thought that this would be a real fun exercise; just to bring the outside world into the classroom is kind of nice. And for them to also to talk to an American person and see if

- it's, you know, if they're... if they'll understand. So... and what kind of answer they will give them. So... so we did that.
16. Two of them came, and... a man and a woman. And it seemed that the questions to the woman were slightly different than one for the man.
 17. So that was really quite interesting,
 18. and I think they enjoyed that.
 19. Then we moved into "Blue Moon Valley" but before we... my introduction to that was to bring them back to what had happened last time. And... and we went on from there.
 20. I... it was... so it was interesting.
 21. There was an element of prediction which ended up being wrong.
 22. Then they wrote for 15 minutes and... so they answered the questions, and then they wrote for 15 minutes. And this time I wanted them to think of the time they decided to come to the U.S. and when did you first think about it, where were you, what time of the year was it, what... why did you want to come, what are the things you miss about your country.
 23. And that was really quite interesting because we learned... again we learned more vocabulary, "miss," and what are the things that they miss.
 24. And R. mentioned folklore, which was an interesting word that not many people used... customs, and traditions - sort of things that they came up with.
 25. And so that was interesting
 26. and their writing is very good,
 27. and it... they're going to be collected.
 28. It went OK.
 29. I am tired, and I am sick,
 30. and so I minimized the amount of work.
 31. I don't know if that shows, because with so many handouts, I guess. And I'm a little uncomfortable with so many handouts,
 32. and... and I'm not used to just creating more from what they say.
 33. But this worked... this worked just fine.
 34. As I've said before, there is some good in them just reading and answering those comprehension questions. And... and between the time that we began answering basic comprehension questions and now, I see a real... I've seen in all of them a real improvement in finishing the complete sentences – giving the answer in the complete sentence.
 35. So that has been really quite rewarding.
 36. It's just getting into the... it's more academic ESL than... than usual, but it... I think it gives them a good background for the structure, proper structure.
 37. And I think that they remember some of those words, and they do understand some of... they... there are some of the expressions in the reading that they can certainly apply to themselves.
 38. So... Anyway, it was a good class. That was great.

Class #14: Tuesday February 26, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debrief for February 26th.
2. Yesterday afternoon we just... we had an incredible workshop with Gail Weinstein, and I've admired her work for years, and I knew that she would be coming to the Lab School this morning and looking at the class. Of course none of this is supposed to affect my teaching. But I was told that I should probably put my nightmare right before I woke up this morning into the debrief. In my nightmare I had woken up at a quarter to nine at my home for a nine o'clock class, and my usual classroom had been taken by someone else. And I was put in a classroom where I was not being videotaped, and where... where Gail wouldn't be able to watch me from the window. Also I was wearing tights and a T-shirt, which is highly unprofessional, and the worst of it all was that they didn't match. Then in the classroom there were not white board but there were a green board, and there was a piece of chalk there which was a square piece of chalk, and it did not write on the board. I had no books, and I couldn't get to the books because SB's class was locked. Then I had about six young Russian men who kept on talking to each other and interrupting me and trying to figure out what I was saying by talking to one another. So that was my nightmare, and I think that's a nightmare that any teacher may have.
3. In any case [laughs], my class went really well, or so I... I... I think.
4. I had wanted to do food this week, and... and... and the culture. And last... last Thursday we talked about what they missed, and one of the things missed is the food.
5. And so we talked about... today I wanted to bring it back to that, to the culture.
6. And I wanted to... I wanted to run a survey, and get them to understand what... or think in terms of surveys, because they... they know... they know what is of course... what a survey is.... But collect that kind of information and see what they could do with it. Write a sentence, or write a percentage, or anything like this.
7. So I began with a quick question, I gave an example, and... last night I did not eat French food. I ate Greek food out. I went out to eat. And so then they were... their quick question was, "What kind of food did you eat last night?" And then they had to come and tabulate the... the answers.
8. Then we went on to the review of frequency adverbs, and this was another survey but which was a little bit different. It was "before in your country" and it was about eating American food, eating your country's food, eating other country's food, or eating in a restaurant, and then now, what do they do. And what was the same, and what was different.

9. I could have... OK. I... I could have run... I could have done something else with this, and I didn't. I thought... and then I thought about it, and I just didn't know what to do with the results. And maybe I don't have to do anything. I think it's just getting them thinking about surveys, and... in English, and the different ways of filling them out. And... It's almost a very practical skill to have, because people have to fill out opinion surveys a lot and certainly... what is it called?... feedback forms or whatever. So...
10. and this was also to make them culturally aware of what... of eating habits.
11. And then we read... we read a piece in *Collaborations*, and they had to... I read it to them, and then they had to fill in the blank, and then they had past and present on the board. And then they had to... and then they had to fill in.
12. They were really good.
13. They had to hide the... the... the text and fill in the blanks, as a... as a... as a... fill in the blanks, as a... as an exercise.
14. Then from... from there, we went on to talking about holidays, and I wanted to bring it back to food. But first I wanted to talk about holidays, and when were the holidays in their country.
15. And this would have been a whole lesson, actually, because there was a lot of language there which kind of disappeared in the content area, which... So the content really sub... subverted the structure in some ways.
16. And the content was to identify all holidays, and the date of those holidays.
17. Then they... then they had to... and then there was a piece of reading, about a holiday from my country – a piece that I had written.
18. And then I asked them to... I did a grid on the board, of what was in the stories, which would guide them to... which would guide them in writing their own. And it was about food, writing about food and... in one's favorite holiday.
19. So... anyway, it went OK.
20. I am very tired,
21. and this week is a very busy week at the Lab School.
22. And... Things went well.
23. It seems like it could have been better, but it was OK. So...
24. One of my students, Z., got sick in the middle of... and... and went and threw up, and... and... another student was quite concerned.
25. And... anyway, so... so... anyway... and...
26. I think it was good.
27. There was a lot of communication.
28. Was there a lot of language taught? I don't know. I'm just relying on the fact that maybe communicating and negotiating meaning... maybe they learned something.
29. We covered the four skills, and anyway, it was...
30. it was OK....

31. A very good group.

Class #15: Friday March 1, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debriefing for Level B, and it is March 1st.
2. It's been a long day already, and it's not even one o'clock, so...
3. I was not completely prepared this morning and... because I have to be somewhere at... at 1:00.
4. Anyway, I had... it... my life was very complicated this morning.
5. And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together.
6. And I think that someone looking at the class might find it interesting, but I didn't like the first half.
7. The second half was really incredible, but the first half was not that great.
8. And I...
9. I wanted to find out what they wanted to do for the next two weeks. And I wanted them to tell me where they speak English, and where they speak English the most. And so the first thing that I did was to sur... to... they surv... they were in pairs, and they surveyed each other. "When and where did you last speak English?" And that was... So that was practice speaking, and they l... they had to listen to their partner. And then they had to go and tally it on the board. The next thing that I wanted them to do was to write from that... the... the checks on the board – from this kind of table that came out of their language.
10. And that was a little bit too difficult, so I had to prompt it from them.
11. And I think that they were sensing my... needs in this with the... with the steps that we're going to follow.
12. And anyway l... it's...
13. they did fine.
14. But then I wanted to find out what they wanted to learn in the next two weeks, so I had put a few functions on that...
15. and this is where I went wrong. I had them on my desk, and I forgot them, and so I tried to recall them, and I was not recalling them. I knew I was not recalling what I wanted to recall.
16. So, anyway, it... it was OK, but it was not great,
17. and then they came up with others.
18. In any case, they want to practice making an appointment at the doctor, they want practice talking about health, and they want to practice making small talk. So that's what we'll cover the next two weeks.
19. I think it was difficult for some of them, because of the lack of structure or the lack of paper to look at.
20. And perhaps... and I was changing directions, and I was changing language. It was not the same. And that was difficult to follow.

21. But then the following activity, after the break, went just fine, because I had... it was planned a lot better.
22. And what I had wanted them to do was group work.
23. And this is really incredible, because it's the first I ever do group work.
24. And they had to produce the summary of the story that we had read up until then.
25. And... and it actually was really quite amazing.
26. I need to collect... I... I need to collect and scan each of the stories that were produced, and... and keep them for... as auxiliary materials for the... for... for this here, because it ... it really was really quite something.
27. They did an incredible job.
28. The... the group work was fascinating.
29. And I was very worried that... with the group work I'm always worried that someone will feel left out, and I try to assign roles, and the only one that they stuck to was, one person wrote. And that was... I think there was some negotiation in there that was really quite interesting. Who was going to write? And then they took over,
30. and it was really quite interesting.
31. And we had never put the tables like this before.
32. And then they re... they left the tables the way they were, to finish reading the story. And this was the last time that we talked about the story.
33. And it... they... and I... so I designed another survey, a very quick survey, in which I asked them to answer at the end of the session, whether they liked group work and whether they liked reading a novel.
34. And 100% of them loved working in group,
35. which always amazes me, because I don't care for it.
36. Then... so they did that,
37. and then I also collected their writing.
38. So that was really... really quite neat.
39. And it was... so it wa... wa.. it was great, it was...
40. I think it's... it's valuable data that was collected in the end
41. and I... as I said, the... the second half is just fascinating to me,
42. and I will... I hope I get to do some research on that. At least watch, and... and try to figure out what I would like to retain on that. So, in any case...
43. must run to a workshop,
44. and I'll talk later.

Class #16: Tuesday March 5, 2002
Teacher Debrief: Fragments
Level B / Room 206

1. This is debriefing for March 5th, 2002. This is regarding the Level B.
2. I knew that basically the class would be split in two, before break and after break, and before break would be with the future, with *going to*...
3. I wanted to introduce it because it had been introduced in the last page of the book that we read for this term.
4. And so it seemed like a seamless type of transition for that.
5. And then the... the other half of the class, after break, would be the... the test.
6. And... So I went from there, and so I introsh... I introduced it, with the future, and quoted the... what had been on the... in the story before, and then I had them practicing. We looked at the construction and then we... of... of the structure, and then we... I had them practicing. "What are you going to do this afternoon?" And then we... I had a whole-class activity with "Find someone who..." in some ways.
7. And that was really fun.
8. They did really well.
9. This is the first time I introduce it the way I did, and it was very quick and to the point,
10. and they got it.
11. And it's just amazing.
12. Then I did three learning mistakes. I just wanted them to affirm that kind of construction that we had just looked at. And so I did the three learning mistakes on the board, and we fixed it.
13. And then I prepared them for the test by showing them a couple of paragraphs written by students last term, and also looking at the scoring guide that is devised for that test – that I devised.
14. I'm not sure whether their... their eyes were glazing over.
15. This was basically... I was showing them and I was telling them and there was no... there was no question, really.
16. Then... and when we came back, I... I... lined them up, and what I needed to do was to have Hispanics, which are i... the... the... half, about half of them on one side and the other students on the other side so they would be paired up with the non-, the person not speaking the same language. Then...
17. so that worked OK,
18. except that I was missing a couple of students, which was really irritating, which I think that you can hear in the video.
19. Then it was really interesting because the... and I ...I think that it really needs to be looked at for pair work, and how do you pair people for pair

- exercise, and how... should they be the same abilities, should they *not* be of the same abilities. Some people prefer working by themselves.
20. So I had this problem with J. and A. where they had a different understanding. One wanted to do it... do the questions together, and the other one really didn't want to. But they were going to...
21. so I, I told them they could do either way, and that they would be able to answer in short answers, and then they still would have to ask their partner, and still write a short paragraph.
22. And so they seemed to resolve their differences.
23. But it was a little trying, there.
24. V., who is so good with grammar, ha... has horrific questions.
25. They're the worst questions, I think, of the group.
26. It's really incredible.
27. So I don't know what to do with that.
28. Which goes to show that he has been practicing his grammar a lot.
29. He is not able to transfer it,
30. which is interesting to me, at least not yet.
31. Or maybe he was very nervous.
32. That's another thing: what do we do with people who... who... do really well, but then once it gets applied, just don't know how to transfer that knowledge.
33. So I don't know. Let me see.
34. Y. – Y., the, the older Korean woman, was by herself, and I felt that it was OK for me to be her partner, and she got to work by herself, which I think is less stressful for her. She gets a headache really easily. And so I worked with her part of the time.
35. Anyway, the... I... and one... another thing that I wanted was I wanted the cameras... I mean... microphones all over the place, because the group work was... the, the language was really incredible.
36. So, anyway...
37. That's all.
38. They found the test difficult, and it's supposed to be difficult.
39. Now the scoring guide, wha... to which... Tha... that's what we're trying to establish in our program now, is, what is the criteria for going beyond,
40. and I'm having some difficulty with that.
41. So anyway, it was a very good class, and it was great.
42. And... that's it!

Class #17: Friday March 8, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debriefing for March 8th, Level B.
2. This is, was an interesting day...
3. It was in two parts, really, and... three parts.
4. The first part was to see what they were going to do with self-correction,
5. and that was interesting to me.
6. We had done this group work the week before where they had summarized the story we had been reading, and I wanted them... I wanted to see how they would correct themselves, and how they would correct others. So I re-formed the groups, and I put the posters up, and then I had them identify what the mistakes were, and it was amazing how much they could find, how mu... how many mistakes they could find, from the week before.
7. So I gained some time, and I got... and then a few more people arrived,
8. because I was going to give a test, and this was "Listening, Reading, and Writing." And I had made up a story about my own father, and I had left words out. And the listening part was that I read out loud, and then they had to fill in the blanks for the missing words. And then they had to read it, and they had to graph it, then they had writing to do with this.
9. And I put the two questions on the board.
10. Then after that we had computers, and it was the first time we did computers in that class.
11. I was a little frustrated because I didn't even have a computer myself to show them,
12. and I felt very fortunate to have quite a few computer users... to begin with in the classroom,
13. and so they were paired with those who didn't really know.
14. I had them go to my web site, and... and they got to see each other's countries.
15. And that was interesting,
16. that... that they could do pair work.
17. They... I wanted them to show their partner where they used to live, so they... all they had to do was click on the name of their country, and click there, and there was a map that appeared.
18. For some of them it was magical.
19. For M. from Bosnia, he just... he just *loved* looking at the... at that map and showing his partner.
20. Then I showed them also a list of web sites which I have on there, and ...
21. Anyway, it... it... it was kind of exciting.
22. We have... we had a workshop to attend to in the afternoon,
23. and that was really quite stressful to rush to... to do this,
24. which was a... a new thing for a lots of them,

25. and then redirect to the computer lab,
26. and then leave as soon as possible, not being done with our paperwork or anything, to go to this workshop on assessment.
27. So that was a bit rushed,
28. but I managed, and...
29. So my debrief is done... three days later.
30. And over the weekend I built the B students – these Level B students – their portfolio, whereby they have... I have collected sample writing throughout the term. And so what I'm doing now, it's a kind of a... an analysis of their writing in some ways, and I'm telling them what... where they need to... to... what they need to work on after writing. And then this is going to help me show them their strength and their weaknesses, and also it will help me tell them where they're going to go next term.
31. So we'll see.
32. That's it.
33. It was... it was a good class, up until the computer, and that was... a... a bit... a bit... I want to say disheveled.
34. It was a... just a little bit hurried, and not quite organized in any way.
35. So anyway, that's it.

Class #18: Tuesday March 12, 2002

Teacher Debrief: Fragments

Level B / Room 206

1. This is the debriefing for March 12th.
2. This is the last week of class for Level B.
3. Today I was very, felt very disjointed. That's because I had to do conferencing, and I tried to teach at the same time. Well, that's not really possible. So that did not work very well, in my view.
4. So we began anyway, we began... I had surveyed them last week, and they wanted to talk about health. They also wanted to do, talk about, learn about small talk. And so I gave them a walk-around with "Did you...?" questions on it related to health, to begin with. ...
5. It was good...
6. but a lot of it, a lot of the things that I did today felt like canned language. I'm not used to using so many handouts, and I certainly did.
7. So we did that for a while,
8. and I ju-, and I got to conference with only one student,
9. so that didn't work very well.
10. Then, the, we did the learning mistakes.
11. These are great!
12. They, I gather, had gathered them from all their writing throughout the term, and they were common mistakes which they usually do, and I have thirty different examples of that. So I cut it and gave two per student so then when they were finished correcting it by themselves they had to join someone who was also finished and discuss the error correction.
13. So this was really, this was really good.
14. Then they corrected on the overhead, which I provided them with, and then we debriefed as a whole class.
15. One critique that I have about this particular activity is that I think that it was, thirty of them were, it was too overwhelming. Maybe it went too fast. I should have probably have done fifteen this, today, and then fifteen the next day we meet. But I didn't. I, I had all of these things. But some of them were repeats of another.
16. So that was, I, I guess it was OK.
17. The next thing we had to deal with was that we had, I had to have the students sign the consent form, which is a new consent form. ...
18. And, so that was interesting, but it's paperwork, and I just wanted to get to conferencing.
19. And I wanted to introduce the dialogue.
20. And then I introduced, I wanted to introduce the info gap. Well, I did all of that. I introduced the dialogue. But they're, it's not really a dialogue, it's more common expression used to make an appointment, to request an appointment, to decline, to disagree, and so on and so forth.

21. And they didn't know what to do with that language. They had no idea.
22. And I know where I went wrong. And it's, it really bothers me, because I, I know how to teach this. I just had, I wanted to have something that would keep them occupied. And the wrong thing to do was to give them an info gap, which they'd never done before, and to give them vocabulary they had never dealt with before. I should just have given them a text to read, but I didn't.
23. So, and, that, that did not work very well.
24. Z., as usual, didn't know what was going on,
25. and that, I, I, and so, that, is was, it was, it was difficult.
26. And it was frustrating. Frustration was high at, and...
27. And I had to keep on talking to people who were on their own. And I had to, I had to advise them and give them different options for classes with PCC besides our own here.
28. I think the info gap ma.. may have worked. I will have to look back at the, at the video and see what kind of language was used.
29. That, that will be interesting.
30. And so, and then, the last thing we had to do was to plan, to plan the party for Friday. So that's what we'll do.
31. ...I think that's it.
32. As I was counseling a student, R. – and I thought she would be ready for Level C, and she wants to stay in Level B. But as it came, as I was talking to her, it came out that she doesn't want to stay with me. She has this thing about speaking too fast. I speak too fast. And she comes from SB's class, and she wanted to go back to SB's Level A because SB's speech is a lot more teacher-talk than mine. And it's slow, slower.
33. And, but, I don't teach that way because I think that a student should get used to regular speech because that's the way it is out in your life.
34. So, and I don't think that we, we should let her do that because then it sets a precedence for people who want to switch to another class.
35. So that, that was, it was crushing. I, I try so hard, and I thought I had a good rapport with her. And she has made tremendous progress during this term, and... It was kind of a let-down. So...
36. It's hard not to take things personally in this business, I think.
37. Anyway, it was, it was OK, I guess.
38. It just, just, it just felt, very, I want to say shattered, or very dispersed, type of class. I don't really have the right word.
39. So anyway, that's it.

APPENDIX B: Number of Fragments vs. Number of Words per Debrief

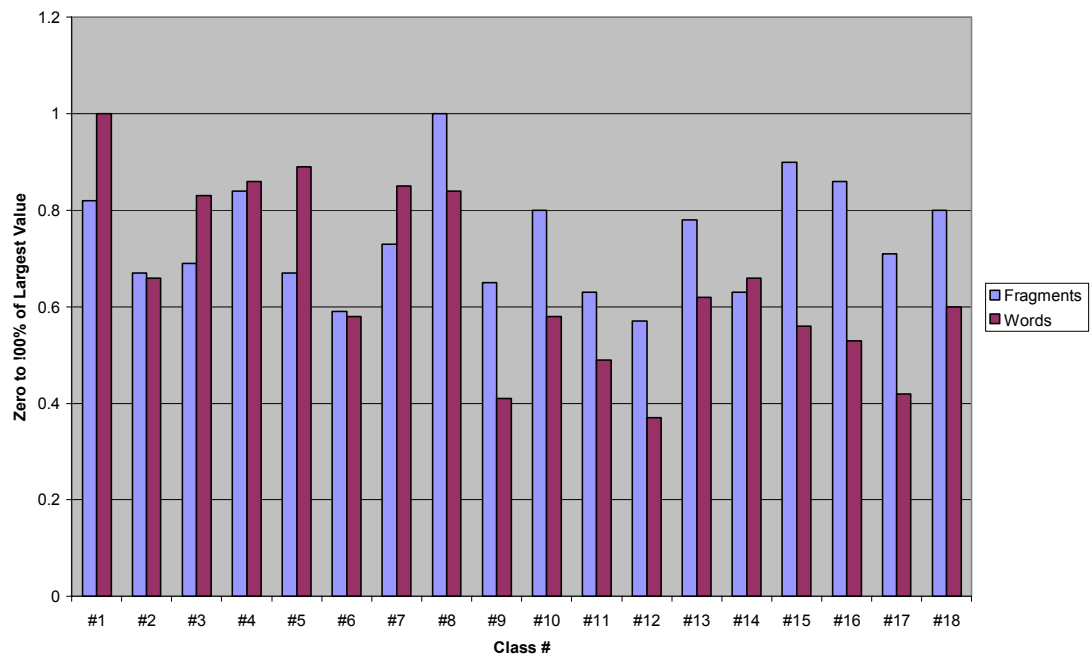
Number of Fragments vs. Number of Words per Transcript

Also see following graph

Divisions = # of separate phrases / sentences / paragraphs each transcript is divided into

	Fragment Divisions	%	# Words	%	Comments
Class 1	40	82	1509	100	Highest # of words Fifth highest # of divisions
Class 2	33	67	996	66	
Class 3	34	69	1259	83	
Class 4	41	84	1305	86	
Class 5	33	67	1350	89	
Class 6	29	59	868	58	
Class 7	36	73	1278	85	
Class 8	49	100	1261	84	Highest # of divisions Fourth highest # of words
Class 9	32	65	620	41	
Class 10	39	80	875	58	
Class 11	31	63	737	49	
Class 12	28	57	559	37	Lowest number of divisions and words
Class 13	38	78	931	62	
Class 14	31	63	989	66	
Class 15	44	90	839	56	
Class 16	42	86	800	53	
Class 17	35	71	638	42	
Class 18	39	80	910	60	
Averages:	654/18=33		17724/18=985		

Comparing Fragments to Words Per Debrief



APPENDIX C: Converting Class Dates to Class Numbers

Winter Term Level B 2002: Converting Class Dates to Class Numbers

January 8	Class #1
January 11	Class #2
January 15	Class #3
January 18	Class #4
January 22	Class #5
January 29	Class #6
February 1	Class #7
February 5	Class #8
February 8	Class #9
February 12	Class #10
February 15	Class #11
February 19	Class #12
February 22	Class #13
February 26	Class #14
March 1	Class #15
March 5	Class #16
March 8	Class #17
March 12	Class #18

APPENDIX D: Topic Categories I Eliminated or Combined

APPENDIX D: Topic Categories I Eliminated or Combined

As I explained in Step 7 of my Methodology, I eliminated or combined some of my original topic categories during the analysis process. The following table indicates the original and final categories. This is followed by the complete texts for each category that I did not specifically discuss in the body of my thesis, shown in bold in the left column of the table.

During the process of assigning categories to each fragment, I sometimes decided that specific fragments belonged in more than one category. Therefore the reader may recognize some of the “eliminated” fragments below because they were discussed in the thesis text under another topic category.

Original Categories (BOLD indicates eliminated categories)	Final Categories (In order from most- to least-mentioned)
<p>17. Intro/Wrap-up</p> <p>18. What DB planned</p> <p>19. What DB actually did in class</p> <p>20. How the students reacted (as a group) (briefly discussed in “Individual students by name, or pairs/groups of students”)</p> <p>21. Individual students by name, or pairs/groups of students</p> <p>22. How DB plans to follow up</p> <p>23. What DB wants to change for future/ did change from last time she taught this topic</p> <p>24. How DB feels physically / emotionally</p>	<p>8. What DB actually did in class</p> <p>9. Meta-reflections</p> <p>10. Positive/negative assessment comments</p> <p>11. Individuals, pairs, and small groups of students</p> <p>12. Timing and scheduling</p> <p>13. How DB plans to follow up</p> <p>14. Admin/Lab School related comments</p>

<p>25. Positive/negative assessment comments</p> <p>26. Admin/Lab School related comments</p> <p>27. Meta-reflection (larger educational, ESL, or teaching issues)</p> <p>28. Timing and Scheduling</p> <p>29. Building a learning community</p> <p>30. DB and SB (the other PRA) (included in “Meta-Reflections”)</p> <p>31. Teachable moments (included in “What DB actually did in class”)</p> <p>32. Miscellaneous</p>	
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Complete text of categories I eliminated

“Intro/Wrap-up”

Class #	Fragments
1	This is January 8, the very first day for Level B. (1) And then that was it. That was the full class. (39) I think that they.... I think it was... I think it was very good. There is a lot to learn. So we just assessed, in some ways, today. (40)
2	This is the debrief for the 11 th of January. (1) This was the second time we met and the end of the first week, (2)
3	So this is the debrief for January 15 th . (1) This is the third day that I meet with Level B people. (2) That’s all for today. (34)
4	This is the debrief for... this is the fourth time we’ve met, Level B, it’s January 18 th . (1) So... That’s it, I think. I don’t think I have any more things. (34) So. That’s all. (41)
5	This is debriefing for the third week of January, the third week of the term, Level B, January 22nd. (1) That’s all. (33)
6	Today is debriefing for January 29, and this is for Level B. (1) So... In any case, that’s all for today. (36)
7	Today is the debrief for February 1 st , and it was the Level B class. (1)

8	This is debriefing for the 5 th of February. (1)
9	This is the debrief for Level B, on February 8 th . (1) And that's all. (27) I don't have really anything to report. (30) So that's it! (32)
10	This is the debriefing for the 12 th of February, (1) Anyway... That's it for today. (33) OK. That's enough for today. (39)
11	This is debriefing for February 15 th , 2002. This is for my Level B. (1) So... anyway... I'm signing off. (31)
12	This is debriefing for Level B, February 19, 2002. (1)
13	This is debriefing for February 22 nd . This is regarding Level B, (1)
14	This is the debrief for February 26 th . (1)
15	This is the debriefing for Level B, and it is March 1st. (1) must run to a workshop, (43) and I'll talk later.(44)
16	This is debriefing for March 5 th , 2002. This is regarding the Level B. (1) So, anyway... (36) That's all. (37) And... that's it! (42)
17	This is the debriefing for March 8 th , Level B. (1) So my debrief is done... three days later. (29) So we'll see. (31) That's it. (32) So anyway, that's it.(35)
18	This is the debriefing for March 12 th . (1) This is the last week of class for Level B. (2) ...I think that's it. (31) So anyway, that's it. (39)

“What DB Planned”

Class #	Fragments
1	And then we moved on to something that was slightly different from what I had... from what I had planned. What I had planned was... and then we do... before... before we went on... they wrote their nametag and what I had planned, is that in the nametag, which is a piece of... of a... is a big card, folded in half... What I had planned is that inside I was going to give them something that... it looks... it's a little bit like a passport type of questions: name, addr..., just different things... things about themselves. And eventually I will want it. But I had forgotten it in the office (25)
2	But nonetheless, I had a pretty well-planned lesson. (4)
3	I had the... the... I had a concept that I wanted to... to teach. And it's <i>the same</i> and <i>different</i> . It's really important for them to know, so that's... that's... that's what I set out to do. (3) Prior to that I had wanted to do something more complicated which I didn't have time to implement before class time started, so by the time class started, I was flustered and didn't quite know where the class

	<p>was... was going to go. (4)</p> <p>One thing that I didn't do and that I had intended to, was to write the kind of expressions one uses in pairs when you're doing pair work. Students need to clarify, students need to argue about what they want to say. They need to say "I agree, I disagree, Hmmm, I don't think that's right" and things like that which they... they just need to learn. And so I did not.... I began writing it on a big poster paper, but I didn't do anything with it. (11)</p>
4	<p>For once I had everything copied the night before, and so what happens when I do that is that nothing is really... I'm still missing... I have everything to go by, but I'm still missing a... a few things. And so that was interesting, because I had... So in fact, in being more prepared, I'm a little bit less prepared, or I'm less involved with thinking about what I'm going to do. But I don't think it shows. (2)</p>
5	<p>But... anyway, I had a couple of activities planned today, and I got... it took me a while to get to the first one... (3)</p>
6	<p>I... I've wanted to do... well, I've... I... they need to know Portland's outline and... and I just wanted to review that with them. (7)</p>
7	<p>One thing that I had intended to do, and I didn't do, was to ask them "What's your favorite...?" so they would be able to... your favorite color, so they would be able to use possessive pronouns. But I didn't do that. (3)</p> <p>This was a little bit... This was not really... This was not what I had planned, so it did not... I don't know. This, and the following activity, were not really <u>planned</u> as such. What I had planned was slightly different, although the outcome would be the same. (14)</p>
8	<p>So that was... that was a little bit unplanned. (15)</p>
9	<p>Nothing</p>
10	<p>And so that was my problem this morning. I came in, and I just wanted to do so many things that I just could not pick one thing. (4)</p> <p>One thing that I was sure of, though, was that we would be asking... we would be doing a "find someone who..." activity, and they would be practicing writing... they would be practicing asking "Can you...?" questions, and then listen for the answer, and then write "Can" or "Cannot." (5)</p> <p>But before we did this, I just wanted to get back to... To flow into that activity, I wanted them to ask questions, because we ended last time asking questions about the story. (7)</p> <p>Then... I... one of the things that I... many things that I wanted to do was to contrast... was to bring their work history into the classroom. (12)</p> <p>Another thing was I wanted to bring their duties and abilities... duties and skills and, and compare those, which is a very difficult concept to grasp. (13)</p>
11	<p>One thing that happened that I had not really planned is the way that the process... introducing the process writing went, and how it took off. (4)</p> <p>...because my intent, my original intent, had been to pair them up once they had written the questions in the past, and ask them of their partner, and then write a short paragraph about a partner. (13)</p> <p>But by then, I wanted t... I really wanted to get to "Blue Moon Valley" because we do it, and it... it just has to be done. If I don't do it one week, then we would be falling behind. And it is an interesting story,</p>

	<p>and it is good for them, and it's a routine, so I just wanted to stick to this. (14)</p> <p>As I said, the first activity was probably the best, and it was again, once more, quite unplanned. (23)</p> <p>The way it took off was just great. (24)</p> <p>Well, it was planned, but not to that extent. (25)</p>
12	<p>And I felt last week that I touched upon it but I didn't completely finish two different activities. And so this was their chance to... this was... this... a chance for us to wrap up today on this here. (4)</p> <p>What I began with was inspired by an activity that there was in <i>Collaborations</i>, and I wanted them to... I wanted to tap into their knowledge and have them produce three sentences: "In my country I was...", "Now I am...", and "I would like to..." What I had to do first was to explain "I would like..." (5)</p> <p>and this was really quite interesting because I had not anticipated introducing formal language. I called it polite. (6)</p>
13	<p>I want to finish "work" this week, but because we have so many people... we have about a third of the class that doesn't work, or has never worked, I thought that this time I would find something that would be applicable to work situations and other situations in the United States. So those are cultural. It was very culturally oriented, and talking about different registers too. (3)</p>
14	<p>I had wanted to do food this week, and... and... and the culture. And last... last Thursday we talked about what they missed, and one of the things missed is the food. (4)</p> <p>And so we talked about... today I wanted to bring it back to that, to the culture. (5)</p> <p>And I wanted to... I wanted to run a survey, and get them to understand what... or think in terms of surveys, because they... they know... they know what is of course... what a survey is... But collect that kind of information and see what they could do with it. Write a sentence, or write a percentage, or anything like this. (6)</p> <p>I could have... OK. I... I could have run... I could have done something else with this, and I didn't. I thought... and then I thought about it, and I just didn't know what to do with the results. And maybe I don't have to do anything...(9)</p>
15	<p>I was not completely prepared this morning and... because I have to be somewhere at... at 1:00. (3)</p> <p>And I was not completely prepared, and I was trying to bring a few things together. (5)</p> <p>But then the following activity, after the break, went just fine, because I had... it was planned a lot better. (21)</p>
16	<p>I knew that basically the class would be split in two, before break and after break, and before break would be with the future, with <i>going to</i>... (2)</p> <p>I wanted to introduce it because it had been introduced in the last page of the book that we read for this term. (3)</p> <p>And so it seemed like a seamless type of transition for that. (4)</p> <p>And then the... the other half of the class, after break, would be the... the test. (4)</p>
17	Nothing
18	Nothing

“How Students reacted as a Group”

Class #	Fragments
1	<p>So for the new people, who don't know me, this was very interesting. I could see that there was some puzzlement. This must be... I guess this must be quite unusual in an ESL class. I...(10)</p> <p>My returning students had no problem doing it. I'm not sure that all of them had done it before, but they know my s... my teaching style, and so they could see what I wanted. (11)</p> <p>So everybody is getting used to this rather unusual – I guess – unusual way of dealing with first time, instead of being... I don't know... given the book? Or page...sss... you know... given the page number? Or something... or they weren't... Some of them were taken a little aback by what was happening. (13)</p> <p>They seemed to all be at the level...(14)</p> <p>It's going to be a very interesting class. (15)</p> <p>They seem to all be willing to pair up with people from other countries, so that will be great. (16)</p> <p>Again, people who... some people made up their own questions. Some people just had an idea of what I had said was right, and even when I explained it to them again, they just thought that really what I meant was what they had understood, which is always a challenge. (20)</p>
2	<p>And they're very eager. It's a fairly nice homogeneous group. (5)</p> <p>And that's... they're just getting there. They're also using for the first time...(8)</p> <p>Most of them had never done this, so they didn't really quite know what to do, and they just thought they had to fill out... they didn't read the directions, which very, you know, simply says, Ask the questions, one for each classmate. So they... and then once we established that they had to... for each question, they had to talk to one classmate, Then they got there. (14)</p> <p>And they're very willing, and they're really good, and they're very helpful, and they're very eager – they're just great. (30)</p> <p>But they understand really well, and... (32)</p>
3	<p>I had a couple of... of pairs that did not understand what was happening, and I went over, and... and we talked about it, (29)</p> <p>Anyway, they're... they're great. They're very willing to do unorthodox... not unorthodox, but unusual things that... I don't know if every regular language classroom would do those kinds of things. And in ESL it seems like we're... we're just always raking ground, so anyway... (33)</p>
4	<p>So I don't know... I... I think it was fine, but maybe they already know it, or I could not get... or maybe I was expecting more, but that's... actually they probably were just soaking it in and trying to make sense of what was happening, is probably what it was. (10)</p> <p>...and they're learning. They're learning very well. (39)</p>
5	<p>As I've mentioned before, this has been a class that does not automatically jell. They just... I enter the room and I feel that they're just sitting there and waiting for me to give it all to them, and I really don't have it all. (2)</p> <p>Or some of them were already... Some of them are ahead of the game, and I think that... I that there is a wide... well, they were pretty</p>

	<p>homogeneous, now that I remember that that's what I said in my first debriefing lesson. But there seemed to be a wide range of... not necessarily of skills but of learning abilities, and I think that I would attribute that to different educational background, perhaps. I'm not quite sure. (7)</p> <p>And then when we came back from break, I was wondering how to incorporate <i>do</i> and <i>did</i> with what we were going to do, and that's... that part was not planned out tightly enough... or... I don't know. I don't know what it is with this group. (9)</p> <p>I introduced them to the concept of <i>lifeline</i>, which is something that I... that I always do in my classes. (10)</p> <p>But by then, they... I don't know. Maybe I rushed them toward what we had to do? Or for them... I thought that I explained it thoroughly. Some of them just did it with no problem and were already writing a question for each <i>wh</i> word, and others were just like not understanding what to do with dates on the line. So I don't know. I don't know what the problem, if there is a problem, is. (11)</p> <p>And some of them got it, and others didn't. (14)</p> <p>But anyway... So did this. They were reluctant to go to the board, and I don't... they... So they did not really go to the board... they did not go to the board at all for the dates. I had wanted someone up there to go to the board to do that. (16)</p> <p>Then, since no one wanted to... to budge... (17)</p>
6	But they like having that grammar. (23)
7	<p>And by hearing other people talking about other people's ages, I could tell that this was not... that there were some holes in the knowledge there. So... (7)</p> <p>And then when they were finished, and I went around, and I tested out to see what... what they were saying – it was very good, overall – (9)</p> <p>...and I think that they really like. It's... They're getting quicker with it. They usually work by themselves, although I've encouraged them to work with other people. (24)</p> <p>They know they have to write out the whole answer, which is not the case, but at least they... their comprehension is there. (25)</p> <p>They're really good. They're, they're just very patient, and very willing, and they work really hard. (35)</p>
8	<p>...I think attention wanes after three hours, although they're really incredibly focused. (4)</p> <p>It's the second time, I think this week - or was it last Friday as well? - that I have a hard time sending them on break. (5)</p> <p>So... I don't know. (6)</p> <p>It was a little bit laborious until I went back and told them what the pattern was. (18)</p> <p>And I'm not sure that they got to their partner's answer. (26)</p> <p>They're a great class, and really... really dedicated, hard-working. (47)</p>
9	<p>And they're familiar with <i>can</i>. There were some things that they were not quite sure of. (6)</p> <p>They were... this is the first time that there is some confusion in the text. And I can see why, and I don't know... It's not because it's poorly written. It's because of the ambiguity of the English language, I think. But the different characters... one new character was introduced, and Don, right away, and then it was... it was just a little difficult for them. It was more challenging this time than any time. (19)</p>

	<p>So... so we did the vocabulary, and they didn't know what... excuse me. They didn't know what <i>suddenly</i> was, and there was quite a description of <i>suddenly</i>, and that fit. (21)</p> <p>And so I wonder if they will do it. (24)</p> <p>They're really quite, quite good. (29)</p>
10	<p>Now, <i>still</i> was a challenge for everyone.... (16)</p> <p>and, and they, and they were very engaged. (20)</p> <p>And I think that the pair work is going to be very... Listening to the pairs is going to be just fascinating. (21)</p> <p>In any case... They're just... everyone in there is just great. (26)</p> <p>It's incredible. (34)</p> <p>They cannot... They really need practice on <i>his, her, and my</i>. (35)</p>
11	<p>And that was a little mind-boggling again, for some of them. (11)</p> <p>And so I haven't... I don't know if I... whether I will see it or not. So we'll see. (20)</p> <p>But as it turned out, it took longer. (29)</p> <p>And then on the worksheet, I don't know what they did. (30)</p>
12	<p>It was very fortunate that I got a chance to talk to each individual, because what they were missing was the language to express what they used to do, what their duties were. And so I got to help out quite a few. (15)</p> <p>...and so the class seemed to be low energy. (25)</p> <p>And it's not because they're not hopping up and down that they're not learning. (26)</p>
13	<p>...but in the process they learned some words. (6)</p> <p>In the process they learned <i>it depends</i>, which was good. (9)</p> <p>And then we had people who deferred an opinion, and that was interesting as well. (10)</p> <p>...and I think they enjoyed that. (18)</p> <p>...and their writing is very good, (26)</p> <p>...and it... they're going to be collected. (27)</p> <p>And I think that they remember some of those words, and they do understand some of... they... there are some of the expression in the reading that they can certainly apply to themselves. (37)</p>
14	<p>They were really good. (12)</p> <p>There was a lot of communication. (27)</p> <p>A very good group. (31)</p>
15	<p>And that was a little bit too difficult, so I had to prompt it from them. (10)</p> <p>And I think that they were sensing my... needs in this with the... with the steps that we're going to follow. (11)</p> <p>...they did fine. (13)</p> <p>...and then they came up with others. (17)</p> <p>In any case, they want to practice making an appointment at the doctor, they want practice talking about health, and they want to practice making small talk. So that's what we'll cover the next two weeks. (18)</p> <p>I think it was difficult for some of them, because of the lack of structure or the lack of paper to look at. (19)</p> <p>And perhaps... and I was changing directions, and I was changing language. It was not the same. And that was difficult to follow. (20)</p> <p>They did an incredible job. (27)</p> <p>The... the group work was fascinating. (28)</p> <p>...And then they took over, (29)</p> <p>And 100% of them loved working in group, (34)</p>

	...which always amazes me, because I don't care for it. (35)
16	They did really well. (8) and they got it. (10) I'm not sure whether their... their eyes were glazing over. (14) ...the group work was... the, the language was really incredible. (35) They found the test difficult, and it's supposed to be difficult. (38)
17	...and I felt very fortunate to have quite a few computer users... to begin with in the classroom, (12) For some of them it was magical. (18) ...which was a... a new thing for a lots of them, (32)
18	And they didn't know what to do with that language. They had no idea. (21)

“What DB wants to change for the future/did change from the last time she taught this topic”

Class #	Fragments
1	Nothing
2	Nothing
3	in the past I've never taught it that precisely, about the past. We always say “before” or “our new country” but then I have thought... I've been thinking... or I have thought off and on that... but never really implemented it, that if we say “in your country” then they associate the past with something that happened in their country. Well, the past can also be used for what they ate this morning, (7)
4	And this... this particular worksheet had slight modifications from last term, because I learned from last term about a few holes that there were in the design of what I had made. (12) And then again I... I... I made it up. I saw the need as... as we went along. I wrote down the directions on the board, which was to write down six sentences with the adverbs of frequency. (17) And I mindfully introduced the past, and this time, I've – and I don't ever think I've done that before – I've always had two columns for the base form of the verb, and then the past tense form. And I always had the... anything that... that... when the verbs came as a list I... I did not separate regular and irregular, but I did this time, and it turned into a concept of -tainment ex... attainment exercise, (21)
5	But I tried a new thing with them this time, because it's very difficult for people to start reflecting on what they're learning. So this time the way I presented it was the most effective yet. I said, “I teach. You learn. What did you learn today?” And they were able to brainstorm and as... new words as well as structures. And... (20)
6	I usually have three long... three activities I can basically... I have basically two before break and then one after break. They... they feel very connected. (3) This was unusual because there were a lot of small activities. They were chunks that were all geared toward the same goal. (4) ...and I don't think I've ever taught the word <i>initials</i> before. And that was rather a... a... spontaneous thing on my part. (9) ...this is the most pieces of paper I've ever handed out, in a Level B, I think. (22)

7	Nothing
8	Something that I usually don't begin with are their learning mistakes. I like to begin with one of those ice breakers. But today I just thought I'd try something different. (3) John Fenslow says "Try the opposite," so I just did. And it's OK. It's OK. I think that there is something to say to have them really focus right away on something because then their... all their attention is there. I think attention wanes after three hours, although they're really incredibly focused. (4)
9	We've never done a... a listening exercise in which they have to listen to a different person. (12) And so I'm going to do this more often if I can. (13) It's... it's good for them. (14)
10	Nothing
11	Nothing
12	Nothing
13	Nothing
14	Nothing
15	And this is really incredible, because it's the first I ever do group work. (23) And we had never put the tables like this before. (31)
16	This is the first time I introduce it the way I did, and it was very quick and to the point, (9) ...and they got it. (10) And it's just amazing. (11)
17	Nothing
18	Nothing

"How DB Feels Physically /Emotionally"

Class #	Fragments
1	Nothing
2	and the room is very warm, and it's... well, it's affecting my teaching. It's very difficult to regulate the heat, in this old building, and I've had a headache for the past 24 hours. (8) This has been... It was... It is just the first week, and it's... I'm not yet in the groove of things. And it's... and I'm tired already, which is not good, because there are nine more weeks to go. (29) I just need to get a little bit more excited. (31)
3	Prior to that I had wanted to do something more complicated which I didn't have time to implement before class time started, so by the time class started, I was flustered and didn't quite know where the class was... was going to go. (4) I'm warming up to the class. (32)
4	So I don't know... I... I think it was fine, but maybe they already know it, or I could not get... or maybe I was expecting more, but that's... actually they probably were just soaking it in and trying to make sense of what was happening, is probably what it was. (10) At this point, I want to keep all their writing, and I... this writing was...

	was interesting in some ways, but I... I probably cannot keep everything and scan everything. It seems a bit ridiculous. But this was interesting, (18)
5	<p>As I've mentioned before, this has been a class that does not automatically jell. They just... I enter the room and I feel that they're just sitting there and waiting for me to give it all to them, and I really don't have it all. (2)</p> <p>Anyway, this was kind of a... a difficult thing for me, because I feel that she... Yes, I will speak slower, but I don't speak that fast to begin with. I felt put on the spot, and my self-confidence kind of lapsed. (23)</p> <p>And this was very interesting to me because I was getting comfort for... from a student... not comfort, but I was getting a different view from a student in the same audience, and I thought that was just very... he... he... he had reflected, and it... it really allowed me to have a different perspective on it, which will help me with... (25)</p> <p>And then Vladimir said something that made me feel better. He said... He expressed it almost correctly. He said, "Two weeks ago I... I could not understand you. Now I understand most... most of it." So that was really comforting. (28)</p> <p>Anyway, that has shaken me a little bit, and I'm just wondering what I'm doing with this class that is just... it's just not jelling the way it did last term. Or else I just have to take it for what it is. It's just the way the... the mood of this class will be. It's just going to be... it's just going to be like that, I guess. (29)</p>
6	Nothing
7	This has been... this is a routine I really like, (23)
8	So, so I do teach something, it seems, that students retain. That's always kind of nice to see. (45)
9	Nothing
10	<p>...[yawns] Excuse me. (6)</p> <p>[yawns] Excuse me. (14)</p> <p>I came to the realization halfway through class that the two Bosnians that I had were in that town that had the massacre in 1992. And I went and looked it up on the Internet at break time. And I shouldn't have done that. And there is a sadness to both these people which is... kind of... I'm, I'm just sensitive to it. Anyway, so, the, the, the em-, the emotional impact of realizing that, kind of impacted my teaching. I think that sometimes when we teach ESL we encounter people that a-, have gone through so much, that teaching, or even talking about very banal things, seems to be so small and so insignificant. (26)</p>
11	<p>I'm very tired. I am sick. I don't feel well, and I'm very happy that it's the weekend. (21)</p> <p>All in all, given my... my state here, it... it went OK. (22)</p>
12	<p>I'm low energy today and don't feel good, (24)</p> <p>...and so the class seemed to be low energy. (25)</p>
13	I am tired, and I am sick, (29)
14	I am very tired, (20)
15	<p>It's been a long day already, and it's not even one o'clock, so... (2)</p> <p>Anyway, I had... it... my life was very complicated this morning. (4)</p> <p>And 100% of them loved working in group, (34)</p> <p>...which always amazes me, because I don't care for it. (35)</p>
16	But it was a little trying, there. (23)
17	I was a little frustrated because I didn't even have a computer myself to

	show them, (11) ...and that was really quite stressful to rush to... to do this, (23)
18	Today I was very, felt very disjointed. That's because I had to do conferencing, and I tried to teach at the same time. Well, that's not really possible. So that did not work very well, in my view. (3) And, so that was interesting, but it's paperwork, and I just wanted to get to conferencing. (18) ...and that, I, I, and so, that, is was, it was, it was difficult. (25) And it was frustrating. Frustration was high at, and... (26) So that, that was, it was crushing. I, I try so hard, and I thought I had a good rapport with her. And she has made tremendous progress during this term, and... It was kind of a let-down. So... (35) It's hard not to take things personally in this business, I think. (36)

“Building a learning Community”

The... the community is developing. #4 (35)

“Miscellaneous”

And I knew that before. It just refreshed my memory. #7 (6)

Complete text of categories I combined with other topic categories

“DB and SB (the other PRA)”: discussed in “Meta-Reflections”

As I was counseling a student, Reina – and I thought she would be ready for Level C, and she wants to stay in Level B. But as it came, as I was talking to her, it came out that she doesn't want to stay with me. She has this thing about speaking too fast. I speak too fast. And she comes from Sandy's class, and she wanted to go back to Sandy's Level A because Sandy's speech is a lot more teacher-talk than mine. And it's slow, slower.

And, but, I don't teach that way because I think that a student should get used to regular speech because that's the way it is out in your life.

So, and I don't think that we, we should let her do that because then it sets a precedence for people who want to switch to another class. #18 (32) - (34)

“Teachable Moments”: discussed in “What DB actually did in class”

I think I actually began with a kind of a teachable moment. [It] was provided by a student, and she said, “My mother has 60” or 16 or something. [This] made me think that the verb *to be* with the age is not

acquired by a lot of people in that class. And I knew that before. It just refreshed my memory. And the other thing is that I need to work with numbers with them. We'll have to do that, probably next week, because it was hard to hear the distinction between 16 and 60. And by hearing other people talking about other people's ages, I could tell that there were some holes in the knowledge there.

So they had to pair up, and they had to ask each other the question, "How old are you?" And then they had to report to a third person. "I talked to so-and-so. He is blah-blah-blah years old." And then when they were finished, and I went around, and I tested out to see what they were saying. It was very good, overall. I put the different ages in the classroom on a continuum. And what I was trying to do here was a survey of the class ages, which is always fascinating. But also I wanted them to start thinking about prepositions of place, and actually it's also a preposition of time – between and between. So we were doing this. And it was really quite fun. #7 (2) – (12)