Part I Issues and approaches in teacher education

The chapters in this section of the book provide a context for the collection as a whole by overviewing the major issues involved in designing teacher education programs for second language teachers. They provide a rationale for a range of activities and processes in teacher education, directed both at skills and techniques as well as more abstract principles and theory.

Richards in Chapter 1 outlines the dilemma for teacher educators who wish to derive principles for successful practice from empirical data rather than from speculation and who wish to equip teachers-in-preparation with both low-inference, readily learnable classroom skills as well as higher-level principles and decision-making skills. The dilemma as Richards sees it is that while low-inference techniques and teaching behaviors can be readily taught, their aggregation does not necessarily result in good teaching. Rather, good teaching is a complex, abstract phenomenon comprising clusters of skills, such as those relating to classroom management and lesson structuring. These cannot readily be atomized into discrete skills to be mastered separately. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that a balance needs to be struck between holistic and atomistic approaches to teacher preparation.

In Chapter 2 Gebhard, Gaitan, and Oprandy also consider the limitations of prescriptions on how to teach. They propose a multiple-activities approach to teacher preparation through which student teachers are provided with opportunities to investigate their own teaching and the teaching of others, to carry out investigative projects in their own classrooms, and to discuss teaching in a range of contexts. The multiple-activities approach is particularly effective in developing decision-making skills. To be fully effective, however, it is necessary for the teacher educator to be sensitive to interactions between teaching, observation, and investigation, and to make connections between these different activities.

Ellis examines activities in teacher education in more detail in Chapter 3, and provides an analytical framework for describing and developing activities. He distinguishes between *experiential* and *awareness-raising* practices, and illustrates the use of a wide range of activities that focus on different dimensions of teacher awareness and skill.

Despite difference in focus, all three chapters share some underlying

themes. All three point out the inadequacy of a prescriptive approach to teacher development in which a set of imperatives for practice are imported from outside the classroom. While the shortcomings of the prescriptivist approach are aired most comprehensively by Richards, they are also dealt with by Gebhard et al. and by Ellis. Given the inadequacies of prescriptivism, it is incumbent upon teacher preparation programs to work toward the ideal of the autonomous practitioner, that is, someone who is able to draw on knowledge and skills in making on-line decisions to solve problems that are unique to a particular teaching situation. In practical terms, these three chapters underline the importance of providing teachers-in-preparation with a range of experiences. Each provides a unique perspective on classroom action and interaction, while reinforcing the others to provide a much richer picture than if the classroom were explored from a single perspective.

1 The dilemma of teacher education in second language teaching

Jack C. Richards

One indication of the degree of professionalization of a field is the extent to which "the methods and procedures employed by members of a profession are based on a body of theoretical knowledge and research" (Carr and Kemmis 1983: 12). In second language teaching, teacher education programs typically include a knowledge base, drawn from linguistics and language learning theory, and a practical component, based on language teaching methodology and opportunity for practice teaching. In principle, knowledge and information from such disciplines as linguistics and second language acquisition provide the theoretical basis for the practical components of teacher education programs.

One interpretation of the development of second language teaching in the last twenty years or so is that a substantial degree of professionalization has taken place. Thus, the theoretical basis of the field has moved from the study of phonetics and grammatical theory – once considered a necessary (and sometimes sufficient) basis to launch a student into a career as a language teacher – to include the study of pedagogical grammar, discourse analysis, second language acquisition, classroom-based research, interlanguage syntax and phonology, curriculum and syllabus design, and language testing. Language teaching has achieved a sense of autonomy, with its own knowledge base, paradigms, and research agenda.

Yet if a primary goal of graduate teacher preparation programs is the preparation of effective language teachers, this claim to professionalism may be misplaced. While there has been an expansion of the theoretical concepts, research issues, and subject-matter content which constitute much of the field, few who are engaged in developing this knowledge base or research agenda would claim any direct relation between their work and the preparation of language teachers. Research or theory that deals with the nature of second language teaching per se is scant in the professional literature. While there is a body of practice in second language teacher education – based almost exclusively on intuition and common sense – until recently there has been little systematic study of

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second language teaching processes that could provide a theoretical basis for deriving practices in second language teacher education.

To prepare effective language teachers, it is necessary to have a theory of effective language teaching – a statement of the general principles that account for effective teaching, including a specification of the key variables in effective language teaching and how they are interrelated. Such a theory is arrived at through the study of the teaching process itself. This theory should form the basis for the principles and content of second language teacher education, which is thus dependent upon the following sequence: (a) Describe effective language teaching processes; (b) develop a theory of the nature of effective language teaching; and (c) develop principles for the preparation of language teachers.

This chapter examines two approaches to the study of teaching from which theories of teaching as well as principles for teacher preparation programs can be developed. The first, a *micro approach* to the study of teaching, is an analytical approach that looks at teaching in terms of its directly observable characteristics. It involves looking at what the teacher *does* in the classroom. The second, a *macro approach,* is holistic (see Britten 1985a, b) and involves making generalizations and inferences that go beyond what can be observed directly in the way of quantifiable classroom processes. Both approaches can be used to develop theories of effective teaching and to derive principles for teacher education. However, they lead in different directions, and this is the dilemma of teacher education.[1]

The micro approach to teaching and teacher education

The principles of the micro approach to the study of teaching were developed from the study of the teaching of content subjects and were only subsequently applied to the study of second language teaching. In content-matter teaching, there is a long tradition of research into what teacher and teaching variables account for higher levels of learner achievement. This research began by examining teacher characteristics such as the teacher's interests, attitudes, judgment, self-control, enthusiasm, adaptability, personality, or degree of training to see how these factors influenced learning outcomes. Teachers were often evaluated according to how they matched profiles of good teachers derived from the opinions of experts, despite the fact that there was no evidence that teachers having these characteristics were actually successful in bringing

1 The terms *teacher education* and *teacher preparation* are used synonymously throughout this book.

about higher levels of learning in their pupils (Peterson and Walberg 1979; Ornstein 1985).

In the 1950s, a different dimension was added when research began to examine teaching rather than the teacher. The focus was on what the teacher *does* rather than what the teacher *is*. Systematic analysis of teacher–student interaction in the classroom, as well as other aspects of teacher and learner behavior, led to the development of systems for the coding and analysis of teaching in real time. The focus was on how effective teachers achieved their instructional goals and the kinds of processes they employed. Systematic observation of teachers indicated that

> when teachers are visited by observers trained to record their behavior accurately and objectively, appropriate analysis of the records reveals stable differences between the behaviors of teachers who are more effective in helping pupils grow in basic skills, as well as in some affective areas. (Medley 1979: 16)

Effectiveness was generally measured in these studies by higher-than-predicted gains on measures of achievement in math and reading. The emphasis had thus shifted to the behaviors of effective teachers and the relationship between teacher behavior (what the teacher does) and pupil learning. This became known as *process-product research*.

By the 1970s, after a decade of systematic observation of teachers, a number of aspects of effective teaching had been described and used as the basis for models of effective teaching (Joyce and Weil 1980). Once identified, effective teaching strategies could be incorporated into various kinds of training packages and pre- and posttraining differences assessed (Mohlman, Kierstead, and Gundlach 1982).

One characteristic of effective teaching that was soon identified was the teacher's use of questions. Questioning is one of the most commonly employed techniques in the teacher's repertoire. Elementary school teachers may ask as many as 150 questions per hour when teaching science or social studies (Gall 1970). Researchers were consequently interested in finding out how teachers use questions and what constitutes effective use of questions in the classroom.

Among the aspects of question use that have been investigated are (a) the frequency of low-level and high-level questions (low-level questions require recall of facts; high-level questions require synthesis, analysis, and critical thinking) (Winne 1979); (b) the degree to which students are encouraged to ask questions (Graesser and Black 1985); (c) the amount of wait-time teachers allow after a question (i.e., the length of the pause before which a student is called upon to answer a question) (Rowe 1974); (d) the amount of multiple-response questions used (questions to which at least three or four students may each provide a re-

sponse) (Gallagher and Aschner 1963); and (e) the number of times teachers repeat their own or student questions (Orlich et al. 1985).

The quantity and quality of questioning that teachers engage in is thought to influence the quality of classroom learning (Orlich et al. 1985). For example, higher-level questions are thought to facilitate better learning (Redfield and Rousseau 1981). The use of student questions rather than teacher questions orients instruction toward students. Increasing the wait-time after questions can lead to increased length of student responses, a greater frequency of student questions, a greater degree of student involvement in lessons, and more participation by slower students (Rowe 1974). Multiple-response questions encourage student participation in learning, while repetition of questions wastes class time.

The study of teachers' use of questions during instruction and the effects of different patterns of question use on student learning thus enables effective and ineffective question strategies to be distinguished. This information can then be used to teach teachers how to use more effective questioning strategies. A variety of training formats can be employed to modify a teacher's use of the desired instructional feature.

For example, the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development developed a minicourse designed to improve teachers' questioning skills. The components are a film, which explains the concepts, and training, which includes modeling, self-feedback, and microteaching. In field tests with forty-eight elementary teachers, there was an increase in redirection questions (those requiring multiple student responses) from 26.7% to 40.9%; thought-provoking questions rose from 37.3% to 52.0%; and the use of probing or prompting questions increased from 8.5% to 13.9%. At the same time, teachers' repetition of their own questions decreased from 13.7% to 4.7%, and the answering of the teacher's own questions by the teacher decreased from 4.6% to 0.7% (Borg et al. 1970: 82).

Other dimensions of the instructional process that have been found to make a significant contribution to student learning include time-on-task and feedback. Time-on-task, or *engaged time*, refers to time during a lesson in which learners are actively engaged in instructional tasks (Good and Beckerman 1978). For example, Teacher A and Teacher B are both teaching the same reading lesson. In Teacher A's class, learners are actively engaged in reading tasks for 75% of the lesson, the remaining time being taken up with noninstructional activities such as taking breaks, lining up, distributing books and homework, and making arrangements for future events. Students in Teacher B's class, however, are actively engaged in reading for only 55% of the lesson. Not surprisingly, studies of time-on-task have found that the more time students spend studying content, the better they learn it. In one study (Stallings

and Kaskowitz 1974), the students with the highest levels of achievement in a reading program were spending about 50% more time actively engaged in reading activities than the children with the lowest achievement gains. Relatively simple procedures can be used to train teachers to monitor their own teaching (e.g., audio recording of their lessons) and to help them increase the ratio of engaged time to classroom time.

How the teacher gives feedback to students has also been examined. Feedback can include praise, picking up an idea suggested by a student and developing it, suggestions that something should be corrected, or criticism. Berliner (1985: 147) suggests that "the first three forms of feedback have been associated with more effective teachers." These kinds of strategies can therefore be used as models in teacher preparation programs.

While studies of this kind have identified some of the strategies employed by successful teachers in content classes, such information does not necessarily help us identify what it takes to be an effective second language teacher. The goals of instruction in language classes are different from those of content classes, and as a consequence, the strategies adopted by teachers to achieve these goals will vary. Long and Crookes (1986) point out the need for psycholinguistically motivated studies of instruction in second language classrooms – that is, studies that are informed by constructs drawn from second language acquisition theory.

A pioneering project of this kind (Long et al. 1984) focused on ESL teachers' question patterns and wait-time. These were selected as independent variables on the basis of their assumed contribution to the quantity and quality of classroom language use, both of which are essential to second language acquisition. The dependent variable was the kind of input and interaction that resulted from manipulating question patterns and wait-time. A simple training module was developed in which teachers were taught the differences between display questions (those for which answers are known in advance) and referential questions (those for which answers are not known) and the advantages of providing longer wait-time after questions. Teachers' question use and wait-time before and after training were measured, and "it was found that the training modules affected teaching behaviors, and that the new behaviors affected student participation patterns in ways believed to be significant for these students' language acquisition" (Long et al. 1984: vi).

A basic assumption of process-product approaches to the study of instruction is that teaching can be characterized by recurring patterns of behaviors. The teaching process is viewed in terms of the repertoire of strategies (e.g., control of question patterns and wait-time) employed by the teacher during instruction. The goal of teacher preparation is to impart these strategies as competencies to teachers-in-preparation. This is sometimes referred to as competency- or performance-based teacher

education, which "assumes that the effective teacher differs from the ineffective one primarily in [having] command of a larger repertoire of competencies – skills, abilities, knowledge, and so forth – that contribute to effective teaching" (Medley 1979: 15). Teaching is viewed as a kind of technology, and the teacher educator's task is to get the teacher to perform according to certain rules.

In second language classrooms with instructional goals in the domain of oral proficiency, the relevant behaviors are verbal phenomena. In order for the researcher to be able to characterize and quantify these behaviors in a micro approach of the kind described here, phenomena are selected that can be readily operationalized. These are referred to as low-inference categories, that is, categories whose definitions are clearly enough stated in terms of behavioral characteristics that the observers in a real-time coding situation would reach high levels of agreement, or reliability. Question types and wait-time, for example, are unambiguous categories that are easy to identify and quantify because they reflect a straightforward form-to-function relation. Recognition of examples of the categories does not depend on making abstract inferences. These low-inference categories can be contrasted with a category such as "indicating a lack of interest in a topic," in which the relationship between form and function is less direct. This is a "high-inference category," the recognition of which depends on more abstract inferences.

The microanalysis of teaching depends on the identification of low-inference categories of teacher behavior that are believed to contribute to student learning (G. Brown 1975). While categories of this kind relating to oral language proficiency are fairly readily identifiable (e.g., teachers' questioning patterns, the ratio of teacher talk to pupil talk), it is not clear from current second language acquisition research or other research that these same categories would also be relevant to the study of instruction in second language reading, writing, or listening comprehension.

However, even if it were possible to identify relevant categories of teacher behavior in different kinds or aspects of second language programs, would the nature of effective teaching have been identified? As many observers have noted, effective teaching cannot be described only in terms of low-inference skills or competencies (G. Brown 1975). Higher-level categories are also necessary to a theory of teaching.

The notion of time-on-task, for example, is an obvious category for identification and treatment in teacher preparation programs: It is simple to identify and measure, and it is an aspect of teacher performance that should be easy to modify. But time-on-task is closely related to other dimensions of teaching, such as classroom management. A well-managed class is one in which time is well used and in which there are fewer distractions resulting from poor discipline or a poorly structured lesson.

Classroom management, however, is not a low-inference category but an aspect of teaching that has to be inferred by observing a teacher for a period of time in a number of different settings. It may take different forms, varying in nature from one teacher to another. Classroom management cannot be reduced to a few discrete components to be imparted to teachers in a short, one-shot training session.

Likewise, even a simple skill such as the use of referential questions versus display questions is dependent upon knowing when one kind of question might be appropriate. As Medley (1979) observes,

> the ability to ask higher-order questions is a competency; clarity is not. There are times when higher-order questions are inappropriate, when the teacher who can ask them should not do so; there is no time when clarity is inappropriate. Research in teacher competencies must take account not only of how teachers behave, but when and why they behave as they do. (p. 16)

This essentially is the dilemma of teacher education. While low-inference behaviors can be taught effectively and efficiently to teachers-in-preparation, these competencies do not in themselves constitute effective teaching. They are linked to more complex aspects of teaching, categories in which it is much more difficult to train teachers but which are essential to a theory of teaching. Let us now consider these aspects of teaching.

The macro approach to teaching and teacher preparation

An alternative approach to the study of teaching and to the development of goals for teacher preparation programs is the examination of the total context of classroom teaching and learning in an attempt to understand how the interactions between and among teacher, learners, and classroom tasks affect learning. This can be called a holistic approach, since it focuses on the nature and significance of classroom events and involves both low-inference and high-inference categories. Such an approach implies different goals for teacher preparation:

> Holistic approaches work towards training goals not all of which can be broken down into individually verifiable training objectives, and they stress the development of personal qualities of creativity, judgement and adaptability . . . The formulaic or prescriptivist nature of a mere "vocational training" approach to [teacher training in TESOL] is contrasted by holists with an "education" in more general principles. (Britten 1985a: 113)

This view of teaching is reflected in research on effective instruction. In a comprehensive survey of the research on effective schooling, Blum (1984: 3–6) summarizes effective classroom practices as follows:

1. Instruction is guided by a preplanned curriculum.
2. There are high expectations for student learning.
3. Students are carefully oriented to lessons.
4. Instruction is clear and focused.
5. Learning progress is monitored closely.
6. When students don't understand, they are retaught.
7. Class time is used for learning.
8. There are smooth, efficient classroom routines.
9. Instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs.
10. Standards for classroom behavior are high.
11. Personal interactions between teachers and students are positive.
12. Incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellence.

This approach to the study of teaching – often termed direct, or *active*, teaching (the latter term is used here, since the term *direct teaching* has also been used in connection with the DISTAR program [Carnine and Silbert 1978], which treats only low-inference behaviors), is based on studies of effective teachers of content subjects, particularly at the elementary level. However, there is also evidence that the notion can be applied to certain kinds of second language settings as well (Tikunoff 1983). Rosenshine (1979: 38) describes active teaching as follows:

> Direct instruction refers to academically focused, teacher-directed classrooms using sequenced and structured materials. It refers to teaching activities where goals are clear to students, time allocated for instruction is sufficient and continuous, coverage of content is extensive, performance of students is monitored, questions are at a low cognitive level so that students can produce many correct responses, and feedback to students is immediate and academically oriented. In direct instruction the teacher controls instructional goals, chooses materials appropriate for the student's ability, and paces instructional episodes. Interaction is characterized as structured, but not authoritarian. Learning takes place in a convivial academic atmosphere. The goal is to move the students through a sequenced set of materials or tasks. Such materials are common across classrooms and have a relatively strong congruence with the tasks on achievement tests. Thus, we are limiting the term "direct instruction" to didactic ends, that is, towards rational, specific, analytic goals.

According to the theory of active teaching, several dimensions of teaching account for the differences between effective and ineffective instruction (Doyle 1977; Good 1979). These include classroom management, structuring, tasks, and grouping.

Classroom management refers to the ways in which student behavior, movement, and interaction during a lesson are organized and controlled by the teacher to enable teaching to take place most effectively. Good managerial skills on the part of the teacher underlie many of the aspects of active teaching in Rosenshine's description. As noted previously, a