Chapter 5

Teachers' Conceptions of Out-of-Class Interactions

5.1 Introduction

Language teaching and learning has been around for centuries. Despite its long history, however, people have been learning languages informally for much longer. This fact alone illustrates the importance of learners' out-of-class interactions (OCI) in the process of L2 learning. If learners are able to "pick up" a second language informally, then one might ask why it is necessary to investigate L2 teachers' beliefs or even L2 teachers for that matter. The answer to that question has to do with the fluency and quality of the second language learned. Unlike children learning a first language, second language learners without formal instruction are often unable to develop a "mastery of use," accuracy, or a complex structural proficiency in the L2 (Krashen, & Terrell, 1983; Prabhu, 1987; Widdowson, 1990). L2 educators, who are often divided theoretically on how L2 should be taught, tend to agree that L2 teachers have a significant role in assisting L2 learners to communicate with others in ways that are both meaningful and easily understood (Batstone, 1994; Cook, 1991).

Formal instruction and learners' outside interactions are two factors considered essential to successful L2 learning (Aiken & Pearce, 1994; H. D. Brown, 1994; Pennington et al., 1997). Considering that L2 teaching has been around for a very long time, it is not surprising that these factors have been topics of interest for centuries. For example, theories regarding how the mind develops through learning a second language have been traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans; whereas today's questions regarding formal study and informal language use are similar to those that arose in the teaching of French in the 16th and 17th centuries (Kitao & Kitao, 1996). However, to my

knowledge the Out-of-Class Interactions (OCI) study is the first investigation to focus specifically on EAP teachers' conceptions of out-of-class interactions experienced in actual classroom practice. This chapter presents: 1) background information on research into out-of-class interactions, 2) a categorical framework for understanding L2 teachers' conceptions of OCI, and 3) consistencies between these conceptions and the learning and teaching reported to occur in actual classroom practice[20].

Urgency for more information on L2 teachers' beliefs regarding key factors such as OCI has been expressed by a number of countries (including the US, Australia, and Canada) with rapidly growing immigrant populations (Grant & Westwood, 1996; Purdue, 1984). It has been suggested that in order to develop successful teacher training programs, it is paramount that we have an understanding of what it is that English as a second language (ESL) teachers know and practice (Canales & Ruiz-Escalante, 2000; Geva-May, 1998). Recently these calls have been expanded to include investigations of the relations between ESL teachers' conceptions, practice and learning (Bruer, 1994; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999b), both in accordance with established mainstream research (Martin & Balla, 1991) and in recognition of the importance that learner autonomy (Bowyer, 1995; Cotterall, 2000; Marshall & Torpay, 1996) and learner independence play in the field (Holec, 1985; Pennycook, 1997).

It is important to consider that learner autonomy does not mean "learner in isolation," and that interactions with others both in and outside the classroom are important to the process (Benson & Voller, 1997; Esch, 1997). For second-language teachers the purpose of supporting learner autonomy in L2 learning and use should be

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[20] A paper discussing the intial findings of OCI was presented at a conference during the analysis stage of the OCI study. The categories were further defined later however discussion points during the presentation assisted in framing some of the topics out lined in this chapter (Bunts-Anderson, 2003).

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to enable learners to: a) develop learning strategies, and b) act independently as users of the target language (Bunts-Anderson, 2000a). Learner autonomy has been the focus of a significant body of L2 research; however, the research has been criticised for focusing solely on the development of individuals' cognitive or metacognitive skills and not on learners' interactions with others (T. Garcia, 1995; Zeidner et al., 2000). As M. Williams and Burden (1997) claim, "Learners make sense of their world but they do so within a *social context*, and through *social interactions*" (p. 98; see also E. Garcia, 1988; T. Garcia, 1995; Jäverlä & Niemivirta, 1999). Still, the prominence given to supporting learners' self-regulated learning and the impact this has had on teaching practice is evidenced by the "self-access" time presently allocated by many private language schools and tertiary institutions[21] (Bunts-Anderson, 2000a; Bunts-Anderson, 2000c; Chun, 1997; Woods, 1996). In the course of developing learner autonomy the teacher's role is considered that of a facilitator, counselor to the learners, and manager in the learning process (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). The evident involvement of teachers in self-access centres and in supporting learners to develop individual learning strategies emphasizes the need to make more explicit the different sets of beliefs teachers hold about the nature of knowledge, the process of learning a second language, and their role in L2 learning.

5.2 Teachers and OCI Research

5.2.1 Overview of the Literature

In the field of L2 education much effort has been put into developing an understanding of teaching practices that support the interactions of students in the classroom and encourage learning activities and interactions outside the classroom.

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[21] As part of the National English Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) accreditation requirements, some

After an extensive review of the literature, no studies focusing specifically on teachers'

perceptions of students' out-of-class interactions and language learning/teaching were

found. The majority of related studies, however, appeared to fall into three groups that

include L2 teachers and OCI: 1) research on L2 teachers and methodologies that

support OCI, 2) teaching and learning L2 outside the classroom context (supporting

learner autonomy), and 3) research from a teachers' perspective regarding the role of

OCI in specific L2 learning situations. Following is a short summary of the types of

research reviewed, followed by specific studies as examples.

When we begin to review research on L2 teaching and OCI, we see that much

of it focuses on dominant language methodologies in the area of second language

learning. Examples include *Communicative Language Teaching, Immersion programs*

and the *Natural approach, Task-based learning,* and *Text-based teaching.* All have the

same desired outcome: the L2 learner being able to communicate successfully in real-

life situations outside the classroom. The goal of these methodologies is to make

explicit the connection between classroom practice and out-of-class interaction;

however, much of the research reported does not explicitly focus on learners' outside

interactions.

Some studies of methods and OCI report on teachers' understanding of a

particular methodology, e.g., Nunan's survey of teachers' perspectives of

communicative language teaching (Nunan, 1988). Others report on the effectiveness of

a particular methodology, e.g., Yim Ping Chuck's ethnography study on promoting

learner autonomy through "Exploratory Practice" (2003), a specific method or a

specific type of interaction style used by students or teachers. This study (available as a

lesson video clip) deals with safe talk in schools in South Africa (Chick, 2001). In

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institutions have allocated 5 out of 25 hours of tuition time to self-access (Thurlow, 1995)

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different ways learners' outside interactions are an element of these studies, but in none of those mentioned above or in the body of literature reviewed were teachers' conceptions of OCI purposely investigated.

Literature on investigations focused on developing learner autonomy outside the classroom was also reviewed. Some studies investigate how learners make use of outside resources—e.g., Chia and Ellis's (2003) survey of how students make use of a self-access centre. Others look at how teachers teach and learners learn outside of a classroom context, e.g., White's (2003) paper presenting learners' reflections on independent learning in distance education; or at how learners maintain or extend their language proficiency after formal study, e.g., Malcolm's (2003) questionnaire to English learners in Arab medical schools. In different ways these studies included the teacher as an element of research, and learners' outside interactions as the context. However, although some of the studies reported learners' reflections on learning outside the classrooms, teachers' reflections were limited to questions regarding the implementation of curriculum or programs believed to promote autonomy.

After reviewing studies of L2 teachers and OCI as a whole, it is apparent that little is known about what teachers perceive and believe regarding these out-of-class interactions in the process of L2 teaching and learning. This gap in our knowledge is highly significant. Developing a better awareness of what L2 teachers believe, think and do appears to be a logical next step for researchers and educators. This is evident when we review what is known about teachers' conceptions in other areas and when we consider the demand for this type of information in our own area of language learning. Recently, research coming out of a variety of theoretical traditions has started to seriously explore specific links between how learners engage in interactions and L2 learning itself (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). If we agree that teachers are active

participants in the learning process and that teacher beliefs relate to practice (Woods, 1996) then we also need to understand teachers' conceptions of these interactions.

5.2.2 OCI Studies and L2 Teachers' Roles

After an extensive review of the literature, I found no studies focusing specifically on teachers' perceptions of students' social interactions and language acquisition. However, the teachers' role was emphasised in three studies that clearly supported a focus on out-of-class interactions in language learning. Significantly, both 1) the teacher's perception of these interactions as salient to the learner and learning process, and 2) the teacher's willingness to address these interactions in practice, appeared to be instrumental to the success of the learning process.

Nunan (1996) in a Hong Kong study of an ESL class reported that the students who had kept a diary of their outside interactions extended the communicative networks in which they used English, and appeared to be more prepared to speak with strangers. Stoneberg (1995), in a study of older adult learners of Spanish in Central America, reported that those who focused on their out-of-class interactions had, on the whole, a noticeably higher language proficiency at the end of the course than those that did not. The third study, conducted by Polanyi (1995), investigated the social patterns of American students during a Russian language study tour in Russia. Polanyi reported that although the males and females had similar educational backgrounds on arrival, the males achieved significantly higher marks at the end. This result was attributed to the American men having higher levels of satisfaction with their outside interactions, and more opportunities to interact (often in the company of Russian women) outside the classroom, than the American women.

The impact of the teacher's role in encouraging learners' OCI is evident in Nunan's study (1996), as it was he (in the role of the teacher) that suggested the students keep a diary of their outside interactions and he that posed a weekly question, such as, "With whom did you speak English this week?" In Stoneberg's study (1995; she participated as a student observer) it was the teacher that designed daily tasks, in which the students were strongly encouraged to use structures studied in class with speakers of the target language community. In Polanyi's study (1995), the problems with the learners' interactions were attributed to differences in gender by both the researcher and the learners, and seemingly viewed as external and out of their control. Unlike the social satisfaction reported by the American men, the American women claimed dissatisfaction with their outside interactions, particularly in what they viewed as harassment from Russian men. No evident attempt was reported to have been made by the learners or their teachers to develop strategies to address these outside interactional problems.

The involvement of the teachers in the first two studies suggests that these teachers perceived out-of-class interactions to be important to the language learning process. When we consider these findings along with results of other studies (Bunts-Anderson, 2000a; Canales & Ruiz-Escalante, 2000; King, 1993), L2 teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of these out-of-class interactions in the learning process appears to relate to how much effort the teachers put into engaging learners in active learning experiences focused on these interactions. In retrospect, in Polanyi's study, for instance, if a teacher had assisted the American women with developing learning strategies to work on their social interactions, the results of the study might have been different.

5.3 The OCI Study

As this is a new form of inquiry in the area of ESL teaching/learning, this investigation does not build on previous research or conveniently fit into a clear gap identified through reviewing literature on language development or out-of-class interactions. Instead, I've attempted to address the issues of concern by applying knowledge and methodology developed in other disciplines. Phenomenography has been used for over 30 years to describe learning and for more than a decade to develop the understanding of teaching. This approach is very useful in developing categories that describe the ways teachers' experience teaching and learning in a specific situation. Phenomenography is particularly concerned with evaluating the "process" of the learning/teaching situation and describing what it was that the individual understood in that particular event (Marton & Säljö, 1976). When investigating phenomena such as out-of-class interactions that are not a designated subject of study, phenomenography allows the researcher to explore how these interactions are experienced in the situation rather than to elicit general knowledge that may or may not apply to practice.

It is logical to employ methods well established in other areas in an initial investigation. However, it should be stated that previous studies have shown that teachers' conceptions of learning and teaching are consciously altered in relation to the subject area (Trigwell et al., 1999). Therefore, it is not possible to simply transfer information on teacher perceptions and beliefs gathered in one subject area and assume its relevance to another. In general the subject of language is distinct in many ways from the teaching and learning of other subjects, owing to its social and communicative nature. The teaching and learning of a second language, in particular, involves developing cultural knowledge and understanding of the target language community, which differentiates it from other subject areas. These socially situated and context-

dependent properties of L2 teaching/learning suggest that the relations between teachers' conceptions of different phenomena, their teaching approaches, and the influence this has on students will also be unique and should be investigated as a subject on its own.

5.3.1 Context

The study investigates two questions:

What are the L2 teachers' conceptions of OCI?

What, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers' conceptions of OCI and their descriptions of actual teaching practices?

The Teacher Beliefs Study investigated these questions through exploring the OCI conceptions experienced in actual lessons and described by a group of 28 EAP teachers who were interviewed at the National Centre for Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR) at Macquarie University for approximately one hour. All participants were volunteers and had current or very recent experiences in teaching students at an upper intermediate to advanced level of English. The level of the students and the subject context was pertinent to the phenomenographic approach, as previous studies indicate that teachers' practices were altered with the perceived variation in subject area or in the ability of the students at a course level (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999).

Teachers of students at these levels were chosen because it has been shown that learners at lower levels of proficiency may have enough to do just to maintain communication, and lack the ability to focus on their own language forms and structures in their out-of-class interactions (VanPatten, 1996). Language researchers suggest that for learners to perceive, identify, and develop strategies to affect change in

their interactions, they must be at a higher level of proficiency (N. Ellis, 1993; Schmidt, 1990). The focus of the investigation on out-of-class interactions is particularly relevant as learners are more apt to be aware of their interactional problems in the course of communicating meaning (Long & Robinson, 1998; Pica et al., 1996). In a well-known study of learners at different levels of proficiency, J. Williams (1999) found that only the students at intermediate to advanced levels of ability were able to self-initiate learning repairs in their interactions, and thus were more likely to discuss their communication difficulties with their teachers.

5.3.2 Interviews

5.3.2.1 Format

Data for the OCI study was collected in the same interviews as the ICI study; therefore the interviews followed the same format reported in the previous chapter (for more detail see Section 4.3.3.1) In summary, the format pursued a framework of: 1) specific questions regarding context, 2) open-ended questions regarding actual lessons experienced, and 3) followed by questions seeking clarification or more detail. Teachers described their experience of a specific lesson and were encouraged not only to report but also to reflect on how they perceived the role of out-of-class interactions in the process of learning a second language. Participants were also asked to elaborate on their own role as teacher in a specific situation.

From this point, however, the format of the interviews for the ICI and the OCI studies diverged greatly. In the ICI study some description of ICI in specific lessons was inevitable because all subjects were taught in the learners' target language, English. However, in the OCI study, teachers' conceptions of out-of-class interactions did not always emerge naturally through teachers' reports of their experiences of

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teaching an actual lesson. In some instances there were no descriptions of learners'

outside interactions reported in entire lessons; in other descriptions OCI were

mentioned briefly, with little detail. In comparing the two studies, there was a

quantifiable difference between the natural emergence of ICI and OCI conceptions in

reports of the same classroom lessons, with 68 mentions of ICI in one section of a

lesson and 6 total mentions of OCI in the whole lesson across three transcripts (see

Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 *Difference in natural emergence of ICI and OCI in descriptions of lessons (sample of 3 transcripts)*		
ICI During description of 1 task in lesson (1/2 page-2 pages of 1 transcript)		**OCI** During description of whole (lesson 5 pages 13 pages of 1 transcript)
3 transcripts 　　　　Explicitly　　Implicitly		
Lower category range	10 　　　　　10	1
Middle category range	14 　　　　　15	0
Higher category range	8 　　　　　10	5
Explicitly = 32 Implicitly = 35 **Total** = ICI mentioned in one task described In 3 transcripts = **68**		**Total** = OCI mentioned in whole lesson description in 3 transcripts = **6**

In Table 5.1, the natural emergence of both interactions in three transcripts

(randomly chosen from across the ICI categorical range) is illustrated. ICI naturally

emerged numerous times across the course of the lesson; the second column of the

table depicts *explicit* description of ICI using words such as "talk," "said," "spoke,"

"asked," and "told"); and the third column depicts *implicit* description using terms such

as "argued," "negotiated," "worked it out in groups," "debated," and "communicated").

OCI emerged less frequently; the numbers illustrated in column four include all instances that occurred over the total lesson, not just one task. The OCI includes various descriptions, both implicit ("I grouped him with her because he lives with an Australian girlfriend and is a more confident speaker") and explicit ("He told us about a problem he had with his card [reiterating conversation with library staff] when we went to the library").

The separateness between the discourse that occurs in the classroom or in specified educational contexts and the discourse that occurs in the learners' outside world has been noted extensively in a number of publications (Breen, 2001a; Pennycook, 1997; Willing, 1989a). Considering that learners' outside interactions or experiences were not included in the curriculum for these EAP courses, the difference in natural emergence would be expected. Therefore to ascertain OCI conceptions across the group after describing their lessons, all participants were asked open-ended questions encouraging them to elaborate on how they experienced OCI in that specific lesson. In addition, as OCI were not a specified focus of these EAP courses, it is possible that the participants might hold a conception of outside interactions not apparent in a specific situation. Therefore, after the lesson had been described, all the teachers were asked to explicitly answer closed questions regarding learners' OCI.

5.3.2.2 OCI interview questions

The first few minutes of the interviews began with questions regarding the type of class the teacher was teaching, and the learner demographics (for detailed schedule see Section 4.3.3.2; for excerpt of introductory demographic questions see Appendix C.1). Teachers were then asked to describe the primary focus or aims of the course and motivation or goals of the students who attended. All teachers were asked explicitly to

confirm if the students had the ability to communicate effectively outside the classroom. A quantitative difference in the words used by the teachers to describe their understanding of learners' ability to interact inside and outside the classroom was evident between the two studies. In response to the same question posed of both types of interactions, 352 words were used in responses referring to ICI and 742 words were used in response to OCI (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 *Difference in Words Used in Responding to the Same Question Posed of Both Phenomena*	
Question: *Do Students have the ability to interact inside the classroom?* **Question:** *Do students have the ability to interact outside the classroom?*	
ICI Response	OCI Response
352 words across the group	742 words across the group
Average 12.571 words in response per participant	Average 26.5 words in response per participant

There was also a difference in types of response in the ICI study. All participants responded with a brief affirmative regarding student ability (usually 1-5 words, sometimes followed with comments of students' assessed levels or an example (the average number of words used across the group was 12.57 words per participant). In the OCI study the average response was frequently longer (the average number of words used across the group was 26.5 words per participant). In contrast, the responses regarding student ability to interact outside the classroom varied from the affirmative ("Of course they have the ability") to the negative ("They do okay in class but I'm surprised at what they don't understand and can't say"), to uncertainty ("Um I don't know! Some of them might, others may not. Especially with these types of courses they are really so busy it's difficult for them to fit other things in)."

Teachers were then asked to describe a lesson they had recently experienced (see Appendix C.2). As the teachers were describing their own experiences, there were differences in how their experiences of OCI in situ were expressed. For example when describing conceptions of the role of OCI in teaching and learning, some teachers spontaneously included their reflections in their reports of lessons; others described their conceptions when discussing student ability; while others described their conceptions only when asked explicitly.

5.3.3 Methodology: Data

Data were collected and analysed using a phenomenographic research approach in the form of interviews. The interviews were audiotaped in duplicate and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then analysed as a whole to identify the conceptions that existed across the group. The transcripts were further analysed individually and those conceptions clearly described in a number of instances by the group as a whole, and individually, were retained for stability. The conceptions identified showed an increasing grasp of complexity in how these out-of-class interactions were experienced in situation. These differences in meaning or "variations" that came through in the participants' descriptions were further analysed.

In exploring the variations in how teachers experienced out-of-class interactions in actual teaching practice, a range of distinct categories emerged. These categories of description show a pattern of conceptual development that exists in a hierarchal form. These conceptions are described in a range from low-order to higher-order conceptions and include elements that have been previously described as Surface or Deep approaches to teaching/learning; such description aligns with research done in other areas (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Marton et al., 1993; Prosser et al., 1994).

5.4 Results: OCI Conceptual Categories

Four distinct categories of conceptions emerged that described differences in the ways these in-class interactions were perceived and reported by the teachers in specific lessons. In the less developed conceptions, OCI were described as generally beneficial to L2 learning and "socially or culturally beneficial" to the learners but completely "separate" from classroom teaching. In the more developed conceptions out-of-class interactions were also described as "socially and culturally beneficial" to the learners; however, OCI were perceived as not only beneficial to L2 learning but a "necessary" component. Almost in direct opposition to less developed conceptions, however, those reporting more developed OCI conceptions described learners' outside interactions and experiences as "related to" and supportive of the learning/teaching that occurred in the classroom. A brief list of OCI categorical descriptions, starting from less developed to more complex follows:

- *OCI are Outside of Class Focus*: Out-of-class interactions are beneficial but should be done in students' own time.

- *OCI are Outside of Class Focus Except in Assigned Tasks*: Out-of-class interactions are beneficial, but should be done in students' own time except when perceived as part of a task to encourage academic skills.

- *OCI are Outside of Class Focus But Actively Encouraged*: Out-of-class interactions are beneficial; students' outside experiences support learning and should be encouraged in class.

- *OCI are Related to Structures Presented*: Out-of-class interactions are beneficial and necessary, out-of-class and in-class interactions are mutually informing.

In an examination of the developmental sequence of the categories of description above, a pattern of relations between this group of EAP teachers' conceptions of OCI and teaching practices emerges. Teachers reporting less developed conceptions of OCI saw these interactions as separate from their classroom teaching and so left them out of actual lessons. Thus OCI were rarely discussed, and the inclusion of students' outside experiences were rarely evident; the learning through these interactions was not described, and the participant had to be explicitly asked about their beliefs regarding OCI. In comparison, teachers' reporting more developed conception of OCI often elicited students' outside experiences and discussed learners' OCI in connection with the learning described in a specific lesson.

5.4.1 Surface-Level Conception of OCI

> Interviewer: Do they ever talk to you about speaking to native or English speakers outside of the classroom?
>
> Participant: I do remember they have asked me this; I know that several students have come to me and have asked me what they could do in order to get to know these people. ... And what I've told them was that it would be easier for them if they joined a class here at the university; there are many things [such as] sports so they could do things together.
>
> I: Do they seem successful at that?
>
> P: Some people do but most people find it very difficult to start relationships or [to meet] Australians.
>
> I: And so you basically suggest that they get involved socially outside?
>
> P: Exactly!

The OCI interactions discussed in this excerpt are clearly described as a social activity. The students individually initiated discussion with the teacher on outside interaction, and the teacher's comment that "several students have come to me"

suggests that these discussions have not taken place in class or have been private interactions between a student and a teacher.

5.4.2 Deeper-Level Conception of OCI

> Participant: I always ask them ... how they're learning. I just make them aware that I like them to think about how they're learning and where they're learning and I get them to do naughty things like eavesdropping on buses just to pick up a word that's interesting. And just to be aware that there is a lot more out there that they can learn from. 8.30 – 11.30 [lesson time] is not really where the bulk of their learning is taking place—or hopefully it's not taking place only there. There is a lot more than here [in the classroom]. [I ask] them to bring it [what they've learned] back. When I do the eavesdropping session I always say bring back something you've eavesdropped [overheard].
>
> I: Do they usually bring back interesting bits?
>
> P: Yes, they do. That's good.

In this excerpt the initial task is an individual listening exercise; students were asked to bring back to class something interesting they learned outside of class and share it with their classmates. The teacher reports that the object of study in this task is to build students' awareness of "how" and "where" they are learning. The teacher asserts that the bulk of students' learning should occur outside the classroom and sees learners' OCI as supportive to in-class learning; however, examples of the OCI reported by students were not described. This suggests that although OCI are considered important to students' general language learning, they are also perceived as separate from the academic skill presented in the lesson. In the following excerpt, however, a closer tie between the students' OCI and the academic skills and structures of the lesson is evident.

Participant: It was interesting because today they were in groups of five and one was obviously leading the presentation. ... I couldn't tell who was leading because they were all participating, which is what I wanted. I didn't want to see whom that one person was that was leading ... as long as I saw everyone participating equally, the five of them, that was my aim. That was a good.

Interviewer: Can you give me an idea about what the presentations were about?

P: Oh they just chose them [topics] yesterday. ... In the presentations today, some talked about their homes, their home towns, one talked about gambling, another about transport, another one was talking ... about transplants.

I: How did they choose these topics?

P: [I asked] what is an issue that you feel strongly about, or what's something you would like to talk about. I wanted it come from them so that they would find it easy to talk. And then they could practice the presentation skills they will need later.

I: Okay. So you set up a practice session for them?

P: Yes, for tomorrow; and then they're being assessed on a [oral] presentation on Friday.

In this excerpt the class focus was on providing information on academic skills and structures needed for assessment of a future oral presentation. These skills were presented within the context of topics the students chose themselves. Some of the topics such as "their homes" or "hometowns" would clearly be based on students' outside experiences.

5.5 Relations Between Teachers' OCI Beliefs And Practices

In developing these categories, terms describing *Surface* or *Deep* approaches to teaching and learning were adopted from two well-known categorical frameworks—see Table 4.5.1, "Learners of Social Science" and "Academics' Conceptions of Science Learning"; and further, Marton and Booth (1997), and Prosser and Trigwell (1999).

The results from the study show patterns similar to the conceptual ranges reported in those previous phenomenographic studies. The conceptions identified range from limited to more complete conceptual understandings of the relations between OCI and L2.

Similar to the previous phenemenographic findings of learning and teaching in other areas, the types of teaching practices described in actual lessons correspond with conceptual development. Descriptions of more highly developed conceptions of OCI also report teaching practices generally believed to support learners' deeper approaches to learning. The following graphic illustrations depict how these EAP teachers' conceptions of OCI were described across the group of EAP teachers as a whole.
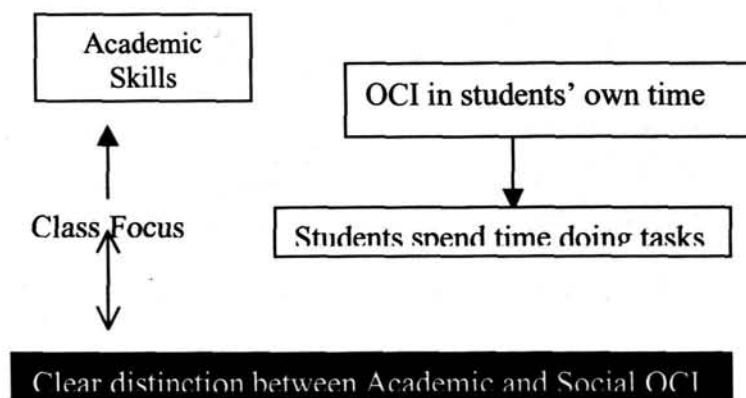
Out-of-Class Interactions Tables

- In the *Outside Class Focus* category OCI are viewed as completely outside of the learning and teaching experienced in specific lessons where the focus is to develop students' academic skills.

Illustration 5.5.1 A

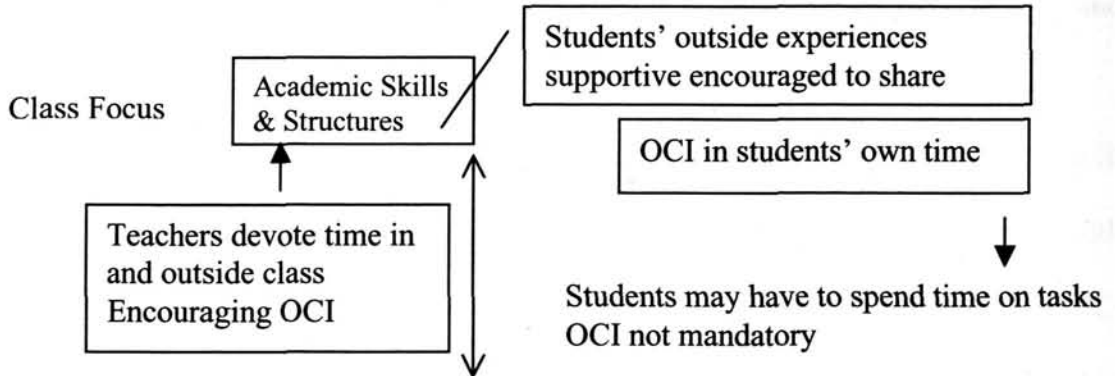| Class Focus	Academic Skills	OCI in students' own time

- In the *Outside Class Focus Except in Assigned Tasks* category, OCI are viewed as completely separate from the learning and teaching experienced in specific lessons where the focus is on developing students' academic skills, with the exception of OCI related to assigned tasks that students complete outside of the classroom.

Illustration 5.5.1 B

Academic Skills

OCI in students' own time

Class Focus

Students spend time doing tasks
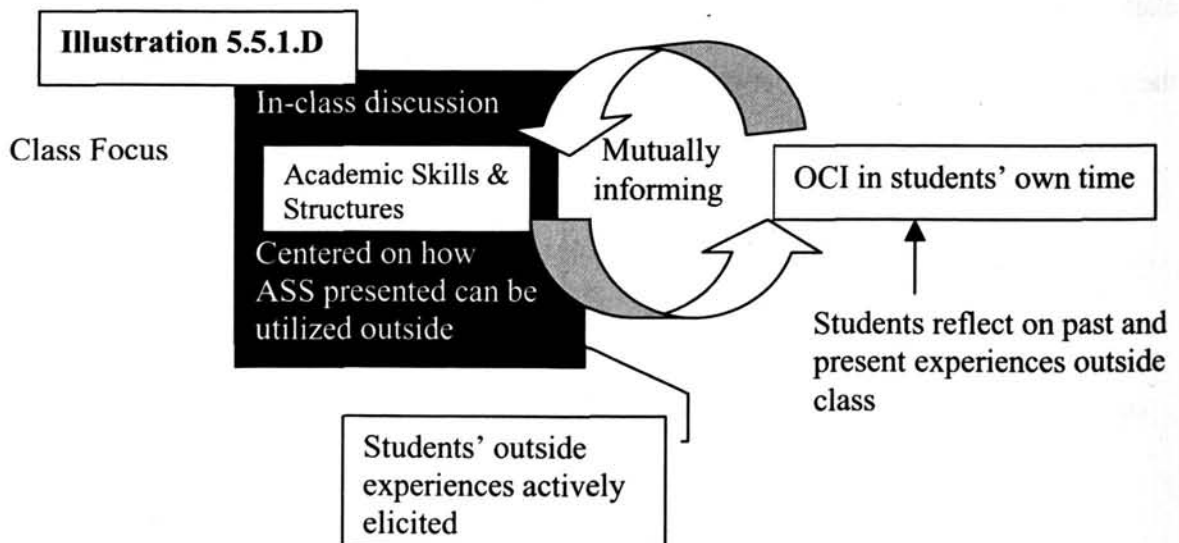
Clear distinction between Academic and Social OCI

- In the *Outside Class Focus But Actively Encouraged* category OCI are viewed as

separate from the learning and teaching experienced in specific lessons. However, the

focus of the lesson has expanded from the previous categories to one that is focused on

academic skills and structures. OCI are viewed as beneficial to L2 learners' outside

language learning and are encouraged. Learners' OCI are also seen as supportive to

classroom learning when shared. Unlike the preceding *"assigned tasks"* category,

there is no evident distinction between academic and social OCI.

Illustration 5.5.1 C

Class Focus

Academic Skills & Structures

Students' outside experiences supportive encouraged to share

OCI in students' own time

Teachers devote time in and outside class Encouraging OCI

Students may have to spend time on tasks OCI not mandatory

Distinction between Academic and Social OCI unclear

- In the *OCI are related to Academic Structures presented* category OCI are viewed as directly related to the teaching and learning experienced in specific lessons. The focus is on academic skills and structures, which in turn are viewed as directly related to the students' OCI and experiences.

Illustration 5.5.1.D

Class Focus

In-class discussion

Academic Skills & Structures

Centered on how ASS presented can be utilized outside

Mutually informing

OCI in students' own time

Students reflect on past and present experiences outside class

Students' outside experiences actively elicited

5.6 Variances in Conceptual Development Regarding the Ways EAP Teachers Perceive OCI: Consistencies and Differences

5.6.1 Consistencies

Four consistent conceptions of how EAP teachers viewed out-of-class interactions in the process of learning and teaching ESL were evident across the categorical range as a whole:

- Outside L2 use is perceived to provide beneficial language practice, particularly with native L2 speakers or classmates with a different L1.

- OCI in L2 are viewed as a means of socialisation and beneficial in developing learner understanding of Australian culture. Friendships or contacts made through OCI were thought to be a good support for learners.

- Initiating and maintaining OCI is conceived to be the learners' responsibility—*they must make the choice*.

- OCI are conceived to be beneficial to overall or general L2 learning.

5.6.2 Differences

Through analysing the group of descriptions as a whole, and exploring the differences in the ways that the teachers reported experiencing out-of-class interactions in the teaching and learning of particular lessons within an EAP context, three distinct differences were highlighted:

1. How teachers viewed the role of out-of-class interactions in the process of learning an L2.

2. How teachers viewed their own specific role within the learning process.

3. How teachers viewed the motivation of students to seek learning opportunities outside the classroom context.

In this section more detailed descriptions of the conceptual categories will be provided. Excerpts from actual transcripts will be used to illustrate the variations in ways that OCI are experienced throughout the range of conceptual development, and to contrast the teaching or learning approach reported to those previously published. To simplify the descriptions I have labelled the categories from "A" to "D," with "A" representing the least developed conception of OCI and "D" representing the most highly developed conception reported in the OCI study.

KEY: OCI are Outside of Class Focus category = A, OCI are Outside of Class Focus Except in Assigned Tasks category = B, OCI are Outside of Class Focus But Actively Encouraged category =C, OCI are Related to Structures Presented category = D.

Category A. OCI are viewed as separate and distinct from in-class teaching, where the focus is to provide information on academic structures. In this category teachers report that they will sometimes initiate discussions on learners' outside experiences as an "ice-breaker" to develop rapport between teacher-student and student-student.

> ***Excerpt 1.*** Participant: I find especially on Monday when I go in, I try to elicit from them what they've done on the weekend, and I don't find them very [pause] cooperative. They don't seem to want to talk about that. They seem to want to get into the work. Why do I do that? (Pause) Partly because I want to build up a relationship with them, um, that's a lot of it actually. Because I don't want them just to be a room full of faces and names.

In this category, in-class discussion of OCI is initiated by the teacher in a surface approach to teaching; this is termed a "teacher focused teacher activity" where the intent is to transfer information (Prosser et al., 1994). However, the object of this transference is to build rapport; the OCI and the in-class discussion of them are perceived by the teacher and possibly by the students (as suggested in the following excerpt) to be unrelated to the subject of study.

> P: They don't want speaking, they want writing. They don't want the type of social interaction that happens outside the classroom.

Category B. As in Category A, OCI are viewed as separate and distinct from in-class teaching where the focus is to provide information on academic structures.

> ***Excerpt 1.*** Interviewer: Do you know how much your students interact with native speakers or people speaking English outside the classroom?
>
> Participant: Not really. My general understanding is that it's quite difficult for overseas students at Uni, which I guess is the context they are going into, to find friends that aren't overseas students. I do suggest, one girl was saying, "Oh I need to know how to ring up a real estate agent and I said, "Well ring one up!" I think it was a bit beyond her at the time, but it was a case of, you just have to try. … I suppose I don't really encourage them to interact outside the classroom.
>
> ***Excerpt 2.*** P: Umm what these students come to speak to me about is really difficulties they are having with assignments and how to (pause) well, essentially tasks or assignments and help with materials and concepts. Not so much about social interaction outside.

However, it is believed that targeted OCI tasks related to the academic concepts presented and/or students' academic area can assist students in developing contacts in their field of study. Accordingly, some (mandatory) OCI are integrated in course tasks.

> ***Excerpt 3.*** P: They are forced to interact out of class with tasks. But all I see is product; I don't get to see the process.

Category B differed significantly from Category A in that there was an evident distinction between two types of OCI, described as either social or academic by nature. The academic interactions were related to course tasks that required the learners to interact with others in their field of study to complete their in-class research project. This distinction appears to relate to practice, as the teachers report actively providing advice on initiating and maintaining these specific academic contacts but little is mentioned in lessons regarding outside interactions.

> ***Excerpt 4.*** P: We can say please talk to native speakers, but unless we tell them how, they won't.

Category C is similar to Category A and B; OCI are viewed as separate from the academic skills presented. Unlike the previous categories it is believed that learners themselves are motivated to improve their own outside interactions and

actively seek advice. Teachers report that knowledge of academic structures in itself is insufficient and OCI should be actively encouraged. It is believed that through these interactions learners build the confidence they will need to function and communicate successfully in future academic environments.

Excerpt 1. Interviewer: So when students ask, what's the one thing I can do to really improve, what do you say?

Participant: Well I tell them they are here in Australia and they can profit from it. They can listen to music, watch TV, and listen to the radio. They obviously can and I encourage them to meet people who do not speak the same language so that they can communicate in English. ... Several have come to me and asked what they could do in order to get to know people. I've told them it would be easier if they joined a class here at university. ... I also encourage them to use the safe environment of the classroom and practice their language skills with classmates.

Within Category C, teachers often report that learners' problems with OCI are discussed in class and that students are also encouraged to share outside experiences with the group.

Excerpt 2. Participant: I bring their lives into the classroom. Yesterday three girls were having problems flatting [sharing accommodation] outside of class; it was affecting the group we discussed it and worked it out in class.

Excerpt 3. Participant: A lot of their outside experiences, problems just come out in conversation. Most of the problems are cultural, not language, like not taking many showers a day, food, the shops aren't open at night, and interacting with other people.

As in the previous categories, in Category C teachers perceive OCI to be separate from the subject of study; however, OCI are viewed as important to the students' overall learning; thus time is provided in class to practice these skills. An increasing complexity in conceptual development is indicated by the teaching approaches adopted. When the object of study is to acquire the concepts presented, the teacher adopts "a teacher focused student activity" however, the students are also encouraged to interact in and out-of-class to develop their own concepts with "student focused student activities" (Prosser et al., 1994).

Excerpt 4. P: We do activities [in class]; I try to get them to think about ways of improving English in their own time.

An increased complexity or deeper approach to learning is also indicated, with learning described both as "applying" and "understanding" the material presented, with outside interactions and experiences described as supportive of the process (Marton et al., 1993). Some of the participants describe an "ideal" situation and understanding of deeper approaches to learning but talk about difficulties in context or "external" factors that interfere with a focus on OCI in actual practice.

Excerpt 5. Participant: Ideally I would like to do more things outside of class, bring it all together. We tend to be very focused on classroom situations.

Category D. Unlike the previous conceptual categories, with this category OCI are conceived to be related to the academic skill presented. Out-of-class interactions and experiences are the context in which students develop and change their own conceptions of language skill development and academic structures.

Excerpt 1. Participant: I always try to emphasize learning outside the classroom ... and emphasize the fact that if they are not applying it outside the classroom then they are basically never going to progress. And [I] try to make them as independent as possible. So encouraging them to do things like talk to little old ladies on the bus, basically do anything to enjoy learning the language outside of the class. Use English to do things they like doing and make it part of their life.

Excerpt 2. P: The hardest thing is to work out the real issues in a classroom. If there aren't any real needs what is the point? ... I mean you need to find out where the excitement is. ... The excitement of English but it's the excitement of actually learning and finding out things, English is the means (pause) but it's not only just for English it's for yourself as well you've got to know who you are, where you come from and what you are doing.

In Category D many of the reported lessons describe the interactions in and outside of class as mutually informing. Class discussion was centred on problems or experiences students had outside of class, or how the academic skills discussed in class could be or were utilised in their real world outside.

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> **Excerpt 3.** Participant: As a class you find difficulties on how to deal with those problems and you go through that like (questions posed to students), "What did you find difficult; what strategies did you use to deal with"

In Category D the teaching/learning of academic structures is viewed as directly related to the students' OCI and experiences. The classroom was described as a "forum" where the intent was for students to discuss, build upon and change their conceptions. The teacher described his/her role as an "informer" with the intent of helping students to link the academic structures to their own "real world." The teaching approaches adopted "student focused student activities" have been previously reported as those that are most supportive of deeper learning (Prosser et al., 1994).

> **Excerpt 4.** P: I encourage them to take every opportunity [outside class]. They need to begin to think in English to progress.

The conceptions of how learning through the use of the OCI and experiences were also more complex than those described in the previous categories, with learning reported as "applying," "understanding" and "seeing something in a different way." This conception fits in with previous research on deeper approaches to teaching and learning (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Marton et al., 1993).

> **Excerpt 5.** Participant: Well I still try and give them advice on what to do outside of the classroom. Or if I see them making ... just lists of words and translating them into their first language. ... I talk about my experiences [teachers' experience learning English as L2] and get them to discuss as a whole, you know, what are the benefits in this [approach to learning] or the benefits in maybe another ... talking about different ways of learning, really.

5.7 OCI Study and Teachers' Role

One of the most frequently cited articles in the past decade regarding changes in how the role of second language teachers is perceived, from teacher-centred to student-centred, is King's "From sage on the stage to guide on the side" (1993). In the OCI study many of the participants described their role as "guiding the learners to do

something"; however, when that "something" was learners' OCI, participants' descriptions of roles differed.

Those teachers that described a conception of OCI as completely separate from the focus of a lesson (or even the course as a whole) also frequently described these interactions as specific skills that students needed to acquire elsewhere.

Interviewer: Do those [learners' OCI] come into the course that you are teaching?

Participant: No they don't really. I mean if there were time then I would be setting, as homework out of class, tasks that involved interaction, but at this school no. ... The student focus is so heavily on being able to do as well as they can under university assessment. We don't do the speaking skills, particularly the ability to interact on what I call everyday level. The only thing that we [do] is, they have to participate in discussions at university, so we do look at various forms of turn taking, ... we look at cross cultural differences ... and how to get a turn within a meeting and hold it and pass it on. How to really actively listen and demonstrate that you are listening to other people within that discussion—we teach that—at least I do.

I: You said that from society's point of view speaking is a very important skill.

P: The most important.

I: As a teacher what do you think about speaking?

P: I think generally ... because these students are going to university that's all they are interested in. I think generally, when you say speaking and listening, that ability to interact in an oral interaction is an important thing because it is the basis on which most individuals are judged. How you speak, much more than what you say, is absolutely critical. And so for most students it's therefore the key skill.

I: Do you notice that a lot of the students who come here initially don't have the skills to speak in what you term everyday language.

P: No, they have non—I would say almost none of them, even advanced students.

In this first excerpt the teacher reports that OCI is a "key skill" for the learners but not an element of the course. However the type of interactions needed to "do well

in university assessment" is broken into a set of skills, and the teacher's role is described as directly teaching or guiding students to learn those skills within the course.

Those teachers that described OCI as separate from the focus of a specific lesson but important to students' general L2 learning frequently described ways in which the learners were guided to approach these outside interactions in their own time. Often these participants would report on suggestions they had given to encourage students to interact outside of class.

> Participant: [My role] is basically deciding what the student needs. And that need could be absolutely anything. It could be a need for confidence, it could be a need for extra help, and it could be a need for how do I use the library? My role would be in supplying that and, well, designing a task that says this is how you use the library and this is what we do in the library and it's okay to go to the desk and ask that particular person something; they are there for you to ask them. See they don't know that. It's amazing at times the things that they're not aware of, the systems that they don't know how to access.

In this second excerpt the teacher reports his/her role as responding to learners' needs. If a need had to do with something outside of class but was held generally by the class as a whole or was related to the focus of the class, then tasks would be developed to respond to that need.

The second excerpt continues below with a description of individual students' initiating discussion of OCI with the teacher privately outside of the classroom. The teacher reports his/her role as "guiding" the students to services outside of class that can be accessesed to meet those needs.

> Yes I often direct students to the ILC (Independent Learning Centre) because when I was doing the individual consultations they said, but you know I want to improve my speaking, you know where do I do that? I guided them to the conversation classes held at the ILC and I said, hey look, these people get together and they have conversations on these topics and this one person conducts it and you can go there and this is something you can access.

Those teachers that described OCI as connected to the academic structures or skills presented in class often reported instances of learners' OCI as part of the in-class discussion. These teachers also frequently describe ICI and OCI as mutually informing.

Participant: One of them had this story about Japanese-Americans being interned in World War II while their children were actually fighting as US soldiers. I just picked up on that so even though I had materials ready, I thought, gee that was really interesting so I asked them to tell me about it. ... So they actually related the story to me about this couple. Then I ... mentioned to them [that] there were Japanese citizens interned in Australia during World War II as well. They asked, why? So I said, "What do you think?" So then we talked about would this be a natural occurrence ... if you are not a citizen of that country? I probably spend a lot of time also with my students making them ... think about things, too—why things might happen or, you know, try to get them to look at situations differently.

In the third excerpt the teachers' role was reported as guiding the learners to see something differently or to develop individual concepts. A focus on learning through interaction appears to be the primary "object of study" in this situation, as the teacher readily put aside the materials he/she prepared to present when the students became engaged in the discussion. The differences in teachers' roles reported in these three excerpts consistently relate to how these teachers describe OCI in the process of learning and teaching a second language in a specific situation. All describe their role as guiding the learners to do something; however, how the learners are perceived or perhaps even expected to approach these OCI contrasts greatly in these classroom situations: from 1) OCI not being approached at all (a conception that interaction for university assessment and "everyday interaction" are separate), to 2) OCI approached as tasks designed to meet specific needs (OCI needed to meet specific needs, e.g., how to access the library or improve individual speaking), to 3) OCI approached as the context in which learners engage in the process of learning L2 and academic skills and structures.

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5.8 Summary

One of the strongest criticisms of current research on L2 teachers' beliefs is the lack of patterns amongst groups of teachers in which to base future research. The purpose of the investigation discussed is to uncover what Prosser and Trigwell describes as "a relationship between the person experiencing and the object experienced" (1999, p. 13). In this case the person experiencing is the teacher, and the object experienced is the teaching of language through learners' out-of-class interactions for the purpose of increased language development in an EAP context.

At the beginning of the OCI study reported in this chapter, two specific questions were posed: What are L2 teachers' conceptions of OCI; and what, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers' conceptions of OCI and their descriptions of actual teaching practices? The results of the study reported show that, across the group of 28 EAP teachers investigated, four very distinct conceptions of OCI were evidenced. Classroom experiences reported by participants, across the range of categorical descriptions, strongly indicate patterns and consistencies between the teaching practices reported by these EAP teachers and the OCI conceptions that emerged from their experiences.

In developing a categorical framework of EAP teachers' conceptions of OCI, I believe that a clear hierarchical pattern, easily accessible to both educators and researchers, has emerged. This research suggests that teachers with more highly developed conceptions of out-of-class interactions more actively utilise these interactions and students' outside experiences in their classroom teaching. This conclusion provides support for the theories that exist in other areas and have begun to emerge in our own—that these teachers' beliefs are not only highly influential but relate to the actual teaching and learning of a subject. These findings are also useful in

developing our understanding of learner autonomy and the relationship between learning in and outside the classroom, and are particularly applicable in the area of L2 teacher training.

Chapter 6

Differences between EAP Teachers' Experiences and Conceptual Development: In-Class and Out-of-Class Interactions

Chapters 4 and 5 presented two categorical frameworks describing the conceptions of in-class and out-of-class interactions and classroom practices, among 28 Australian teachers of EAP (English for Academic Purposes). In this chapter, differences in experiences reportedly relating to the conceptual development of both types of interactions will be explored[22]. While teachers' conceptions of in-class interactions consistently related to teacher training, their conceptions of out-of-class interactions were reported to be strongly associated with their own experiences of learning and teaching a second language. This chapter will look at how the 28 EAP teachers themselves attributed their own conceptual development of both phenomena to different experiences; these differences will be explored: 1) as they occurred in the situated experiences of teaching an EAP lesson, 2) in teachers' spontaneous descriptions of teacher training and L2 learning experiences, and 3) in comparing the ways experiences were reported across transcripts as a whole and across ICI and OCI categories of description.

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[22] A paper that discussed differences in experiences described for both phenomena by the participants was presented as a general overiview of some of the points here at a conference to promote discussion on the findings   Bunts-Anderson (2004/2005), "Differences between teachers' experiences and beliefs: In and out-of-class interaction in second language learning relations to practice. Cuba paper, Common Ground Conference publication. Initial acceptance currently in final refereeing process. Abstract available: http://learningconference.com/Background (International Journal of Learning. Common Ground Publishing, http://commongroundpublishing.com)

6.1 Differences in Experiences

Why is it necessary to understand the differences between second language teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding in-class and out-of-class spoken interactions in second language learning? The primary reason is that both phenomena are considered important to the success of learning a second language (L2), although they are often discussed and researched as separate factors. Another reason is that while much has been published from the theorists' and learners' perspectives, information on the views of teachers, who are also active participants in the L2 learning process, are conspicuously lacking (S. Borg, 2003b). L2 teachers' beliefs must have some influence on how these interactions are approached in the classroom; but do they influence how their students approach these interactions outside the classroom context? A growing number of researchers coming from a variety of perspectives believe that what teachers think and do not only influences what is taught in classrooms (Burns, 1992) but may also influence how learners approach their own learning (Almarza, 1996; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). While this is a relatively new perspective in L2 educational research, in mainstream educational research the influence of teachers' beliefs has been a focus of research for more than twenty years, and a philosophical topic for much longer.

> **There can be no significant innovation in education that does not have at its centre the attitudes of the teachers. The beliefs, assumptions, feelings of teachers are the air of the learning environment; they determine the quality of life within it.**
> —Postman and Weingartner (1969), *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*

In practice, L2 teachers are actively encouraged to promote these interactions, but what are the beliefs and experiences that underlie the approaches they choose to

adopt? When questioned, teachers often report to be using teaching approaches that encourage and support student interactions with one another in the classroom and sometimes outside it. It has been reported that what these teachers say may not always be what they do in actual classroom practice, and that what is termed "communicative" isn't always evident (Allwright, 1979; Nespor, 1987; Nunan, 1989). At the same time, there have been a number of studies (usually small case studies or individuals' reflections) that have reported successful language learning outcomes that were highly influenced by the teachers' ability to encourage learners' interactions with others (Allwright, 1979; Bunts-Anderson, 2000c; Kolb, 1984). Over the past 20 years much research effort has gone into investigating the types of questions, tasks, and activities teachers use that appear to encourage students to interact and participate in and outside the classroom. Research has provided an understanding of classroom teaching methods; however, we know very little about the thinking behind what it is that L2 teachers actually do (Woods, 1996).

6.1.1 In-Class and Out-of-Class Interaction in L2 Education

Although differences were reported in how in-class and outside interactions were perceived and approached in specific situations in the ICI and OCI studies (presented in Chapters 4 and 5), the 28 EAP teachers as a group reported a belief that interactions both inside and outside the classroom were beneficial and necessary to successful second language development. This belief is supported and often expressed in general L2 learning/teaching literature, where it has been claimed that the primary goal of L2 teaching is to help students learn how to communicate "meaning" in the outside world (R. Ellis, 1997).

The dominance of Communicative Language Teaching methods in teacher training programs and in classrooms around the world illustrates the desire of educators to link what is taught in classrooms to the learners' outside world. In these teaching approaches it is believed that the teacher can support learners' ability to express meaning through using "real life" texts and materials, designing tasks that mirror or include outside interaction, and considering and tailoring curriculum to meet the learners' individual needs (Nunan, 1989). Clearly, all spoken interactions with others is considered important; however, when we review L2 literature and observe actual classroom practices, there is an evident tendency to view in-class and out-of-class interactions as separate phenomena, with a heavier emphasis on in-class interactions. Perhaps this comes from a scientific and/or practical stance that spoken interactions in class can be somewhat controlled while those that occur outside cannot. Whatever the reasons, the focus of many L2 teaching programs and L2 investigations is to support learning through increasing the quantity and quality of classroom interactions.

In some ways this predilection of L2 educators to emphasize classroom interactions appears to run counter to what we know about language learners' beliefs regarding their own L2 learning. That is, while language learners often concur that opportunities to interact in class are beneficial, they also claim that in-class interactions alone are not enough (K. E. Johnson, 1995). A number of studies conducted on learners after completing their education overseas, report that students believe that it is their ability to interact outside of the classroom that is the most important factor in their overall language learning success (Nesdale et al., 1995). Obviously, while L2 educators claim that spoken interactions with others is an important factor in learning a second language, there appear to be differences in how in-class and out-of-class interactions are perceived and emphasised.

6.1.2 Interactions in L2 Learning

A heavy focus on interaction with others in L2 education is understandable, because in many second language classrooms—particularly those in countries where the language is spoken (as in the case of the thesis presented)—the language used to teach is also the subject to be learned (Aalsvoort, 1999). In the past many students learned second languages in formal settings where the opportunities to learn the language outside the classroom were, at best, limited, and in many cases nonexistent. Globalisation, easy access to transportation and to target-language electronic sources has now changed this situation so that today, there is a large and ever-increasing number of students choosing to study overseas in countries where the target language is spoken. These students now have opportunities to learn and interact both inside and outside the classroom.

As educators we need to develop our understanding of how both types of spoken interactions relate to the actual learning of a second language (Candlin & Mercer, 2001). In response to continual findings on how learners learn, the focus on how second languages are taught and how these interactions are approached methodologically is changing. L2 teachers are now encouraged to help students construct meaning, develop concepts and become aware of their own learning processes (Freeman & Richards, 1993). In the literature the role that spoken interactions are believed to play in L2 learning has developed over time from a general view that interactions equal talk, talk is practice, and "practice makes perfect," to the more recent "social" perspective that it is through these interactions with others that thought and speech connect or that learning occurs (Lantolf, 2000). In teacher training, L2 teachers are encouraged to "engage the learner" through these interactions and

involve them in processes of learning and teaching (Pica, 1998). Again, while this perspective on learning in general is not new (see quote below) our need to better understand how teachers perceive the role that spoken interactions play in L2 teaching and learning is increasingly more apparent.

> **Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand.**
>
> **—Native American saying (http://www.inspirational-quotes.info/teacher-quotes.html)**

Involvement in the challenge of L2 learning/teaching today means having the ability to communicate or express meaning. Clearly both in-class and out-of-class spoken interactions with others are considered important to the process of second language learning. The impact of learners' beliefs and experiences on how they approach learning through L2 interaction has been well documented (Breen, 2001b; Kolb, 1984). It follows that the beliefs and experiences of L2 teachers, as active participants in the process, must also have some sort of influence on the practices they choose to adopt in encouraging spoken interaction, and on the types of interaction they emphasise. The importance of looking at the thinking that lies behind the practices L2 teachers adopt is expressed eloquently in the following quote.
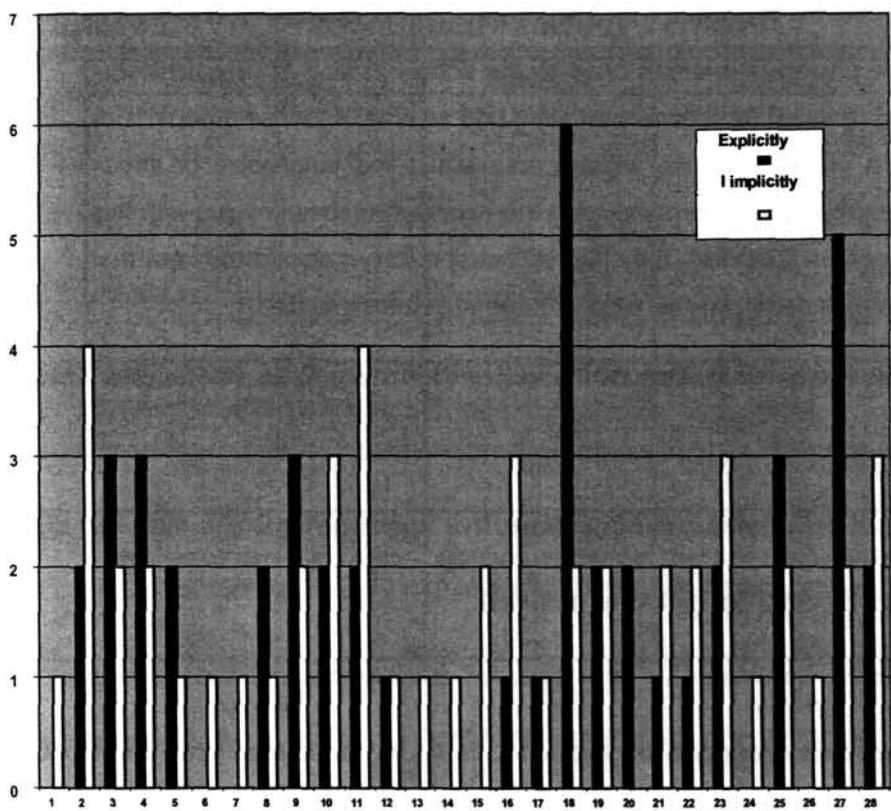
> **It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think … . To the extent that observed or intended teaching behavior is "thoughtless," it makes no use of the human teacher's most unique attributes. In so doing, it becomes mechanical and might well be done by a machine. If, however, teaching is done and, in all likelihood, will continue to be done by human teachers, the question of relationships between thought and action becomes crucial.**

—National Institute of Education (1975), Teaching as Clinical Information Processing (Panel 6, National Conference on Studies in Teaching): National Institute of Education. Retrieved Dec 1, 2004, from http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/~edu-sbo/quotes.htm

6.2 Experiences: Formal Teacher Training and Personal

Across the EAP group, two very different types of experiences were reported by the participants to be associated with their beliefs regarding interactions in second language learning. In the specific situations of lessons reported in the studies, all 28 of the participants explicitly or implicitly described their beliefs and practices regarding in-class interactions to be based on or impacted by formal teacher training (Graph 6.2.1). However, only 1 out of 28 teachers interviewed attributed their beliefs regarding out-of-class interactions to formal training experience. In this one instance where an association between OCI conceptions and teacher training was explicitly described, the teacher referred to the benefit of using students' outside experiences in an in-class discussion: "From my own experience in teacher training I learned how to seek out adult learners' experiences."

Graph 6.2.1. EAP teachers: teacher-training descriptions in ICI

Graph 6.2.1 illustrates the number of times the term "teacher training" was used or a specific type of teacher training was named in individual transcripts across the group of 28 EAP teachers. When discussing ICI in their experiences of teaching and learning in a specific lesson, the term "teacher training" was explicitly mentioned (dark bars on graph) 46 times; the maximum number in one single transcript was 6 times. It was appeared to be implied (white bars on graph) 51 times; the maximum number in a single transcript was 4 times. For more detail on individual transcripts see Appendix D.1)

Notably, even in instances when teacher training was explicitly mentioned, there were variations in how teacher training was perceived in that instance. For example when discussing experiences associated with ICI conceptions, in some

instances it was reported that a particular method learned in teacher training was directly applied:

> An in-service person [a speaker hired by the school as part of a professional development program for teachers on staff] had an idea of "sense groups." For example in a group of words, which words would you emphasize or stress when speaking? I decided to experiment this approach (sense groups) with this class and I reckon it worked; they [the students] quickly grasped the idea that meaning changes depending on what is stressed in the sentence.

In other situations when describing ICI within a specific lesson, the teacher would report an awareness of teacher training rather than the direct application of a particular method: "I was trained in communicative approach so I use that, but also I try to use what I think best from different methods."

The distinction between the two types of interaction and the corresponding differences in experiences reported by the teachers to be associated with their beliefs suggests that while in-class interactions were a subject often discussed in teacher training programs, out-of-class interactions were not. A distinction between ICI and OCI was also noticeable in the different ways that teachers referred to these interactions when the teaching and learning that occurred in the lessons was described. When describing situations where ICI was present, teachers often used terminology specific to the field of L2 education (see Table 6.2.2).

Table 6.2.2	*Professional Teaching Terms: ICI*		
	methodology	**teaching**	**learning**	**subject**

	methodology	teaching	learning	subject
1	task-based, brainstorm	set-up activity, check understanding	identify main points, motivated, product	writing skills, summary, academic structure (2)
2	using your own experiences as building blocks	evolving, guiding, facilitating, exploring	linking new with real world, ownership	vocabulary (10), academic structures
3	PPP, content based	elicit tasks, present	product, produce	academic structures
4	methods, mixed approach, systemic, communicative	supportive	motivated, structure, ability	academic structures, concepts
5	a warmer, task	model	topics, ownership	academic skills
6	scaffolded, problem solving, teacher-centered, student-centered	supportive, syllabus, built trust, motivational tools	student groups and pairs, work together, analyze, actual learning-produce something	essay writing
7	activities, introduce tasks, exercises	repetition, scanning, prediction, learner topics, group activity, elicit	presentation skills, intonation, pronunciation	oral presentations
8	phenology, communicative	students needs, adapt materials, give feed-back	self-correct, approach (3), register	essay
9	building on what they thought they needed, lots of class discussion, pair work	individual consultation, group task, error correction	negotiation, error correction	exam preparation
10	warmer, exercise, focus, brainstormed, activity (2),	co-teacher, student needs, curriculum development	critical thinking, critiquing, student levels	vocabulary (5)

Table 6.2.2 contains randomly selected samples from 10 out of the 28 transcripts in the study. The table illustrates the terms these teachers used when describing a lesson. The use of terms such as "brainstorm" (discussing ideas together as a class), "feed back" and "error correction" (input from teacher and peers on spoken interaction), "negotiation" and "register" all provide information on how the teachers perceive the purpose of ICI. Terms like "analyse," "link," "present," "produce," and "repetition" suggest what the teachers perceived was learned through the ICI. The teachers' use of well-known L2 teaching terms not only indicates what was happening

with ICI in a specific situation, but also acted as a type of short hand underlining the teachers' awareness of L2 methodologies and theory. Many L2 terms referring to specific teaching practices were evident across the transcripts as a whole. For example, the term "text" in reference to Text-Based Teaching was used 38 times; the terms "task based" 5 times, and "task" 70 times, to refer to Task-Based Teaching; the terms "model" 12 times and "structures" 29 times, suggesting that the Present, Practice and Produce (PPP) model was prevalent as well. The whole term "PPP" was only used 3 times, but the terms were used separately multiple times across transcripts to describe particular situations. (For details of lessons described by all 28 teachers, see Appendix D.2.) This use of professional terms when describing specific lessons was consistent across the group, and not only when discussing methodology, teaching, learning and the subject of the lesson; it was also particularly evident in how the group of teachers described what was taught and how (see Table 6.2.3).

Table 6.2.3 *Professional teaching terms ICI and OCI*

	new knowledge	pre-existing knowledge	materials
1	writing structures, vocabulary (2)	not good at accessing, learner weakness	tapes, overhead projector (OHP), model
2	vocabulary , academic structures	vocabulary revision	visuals, topics, articles,
3	structures		handouts, visuals
4	vocabulary (5)	they have experience	OHP, visuals, listening
5	new topics, concepts, vocabulary, abbreviations	learner's personal experience	exercise sheet, white board
6	new topics	had minimal skills	essay questions, topics
7	predicating was a new concept, presentation structure, culture		internet, OHP, board, worksheet
8	vocabulary/ structures	knowledge	
9	understanding meaning, skill building	reinforcing understanding	students own writing, topics, questions
10	new words (4)		
11	start thinking in L2, academic structures	less English than expected, concept of being resourceful	support materials, overheads, photocopies, models (5), OHP (2),
12	case studies, concept development	honing skills, dragging in language knowledge	extracts, authentic materials
13	to turn a phrase, topics	cultural beliefs	OHP, board
14	academic structures, essays		worksheets, blackboard games, overhead
15	presentation skills, grammar	students had never thought critically about anything	taped lecture, critical thinking skills, topics, correction activities using their sentences, newspaper article

Across the group teachers also used professional teaching terms when describing what was taught (new knowledge). Terms like "vocabulary," "predicting," "turn a phrase" and "presentation skills" again provide some indication of how the teachers perceived the role of ICI in these situations. There were also terms used when teachers discussed the type of materials used to present knew knowledge or introduce a topic, such as "OHP" (overhead projector) and "blackboard," which indicate visual presentations of materials but do not refer directly to either type of interaction.

In comparison to the multiple ways in which teachers' perceptions of ICI were stated, teachers' perceptions of OCI were less explicit during actual descriptions of

lessons. An indirect link between L2 learning outside the classroom and classroom discourse could be interpreted through the use of terms like "authentic materials," "newspaper articles," "Internet," as they suggest an awareness of using teaching materials that represent *real world* contexts, or linking what was taught in class with the outside world. However, the use of these terms might simply denote an awareness of popular teaching methodologies rather than providing insight into the teachers' perspectives. The teachers' perspectives of OCI in these situations are unclear.

When the teachers referred to students' pre-existing knowledge and experiences (which naturally include OCI) in the process of describing a specific lesson, there were two notable differences in the ways ICI and OCI were addressed. First, there was a notable lack of reference to OCI in the 28 transcripts (some containing descriptions of multiple lessons within one class); only 11 transcripts contained any reference to pre-existing knowledge. Secondly, there appeared to be a difference in the language that teachers used in reference to OCI; instead of shorthand professional terms used when describing ICI, the teachers frequently used phrases such as "they have experience," "dragging in language knowledge," and "reinforcing understanding." These phrases suggest that the teachers have some awareness of a connection between OCI and classroom discussion, but the purpose of OCI in those situations is not clearly stated. Table 6.2.3 illustrates a randomly chosen sample from 15 transcripts of the 28 teachers interviewed. For details regarding the terms and phrases all 28 used in reference to ICI and OCI when discussing lesson materials, new knowledge and pre-existing knowledge, see Appendix D.3.

In contrast to the explicit association reported between ICI conceptions and teacher training illustrated above, when discussing out-of-class interactions, the participants consistently referred to personal experiences. Out-of-class interactions, if

mentioned in the process of describing a lesson, were most often introduced by the teacher spontaneously when discussing a personal experience outside of the situated lesson, and were often referred to in a narrative form. Table 6.2.4 presents a sample of introductions to narrative forms that 10 of the 28 teachers used to describe experiences with OCI. Across the group as a whole, not only was there a difference in type of experiences described in relation to the interactions (ICI professional teaching terms and OCI personal experience), there was also a difference in the way these experiences were described.

Table 6.2.4	*OCI in Personal Experiences: Narrative Form*

1 "I found that one student changed the dynamic of the class...**I had one student that I taught**...he was also aware of...I had this class..."

2 "my students will tend to support each other because...I had an old student who wanted to come back to me...**so they are recalling the situation**...we got to talking about...so **the student told me about**......I guess I was thinking of perhaps when I was learning...I enjoy

3 "when I started my TESOL teaching course...I noticed, like, one day a few weeks ago...I had one student that stayed back after class...**maybe it's because I used it more because I traveled a bit**...

4 " I started learning...I used to tell them...It was important for me to..."

5 "well I was in...so the most helpful thing I think was...I had a..."

6 "**you know we started talking about**...I came myself from a...**this was in the mid X's**..."I remember learning...I remember having..."

7 I felt part of a team...now I remember...I told them to go...from living over there and going to school...I also really enjoyed the...**my impressions are**..."

8 "and that was sort of a cautionary tale for my students...I didn't have enough of...It was a very backward situation....I wasn't a good learner...and I thought why is that?"

9 I felt part of a team...now I remember...I told them to go...from living over there and going to school...I also really enjoyed the...my impressions are..."

10 "there was one student...he was telling us...that was one example...I have seen the differences in students...there was this one girl...it was very interesting...**now I am speaking from personal experience** ...it's not my belief but something from my own experience..

11 "**I remember what my own learning was like**, I had opportunities....well it was an..."

12 "I'm thinking back to a previous class...**I had an experience**...I find it difficult myself too..."

13 "sometimes I think... there was this girl...when I was...."

These experiences were often told in a story-telling fashion or narrative and often-included references to the past such as "I had a previous class" or "this was in the mid-X's". Teachers would describe an OCI perception in relation to an individual student, in terms such as, "I had this impression," "I had one student that I taught," or "there was this one student ... he was telling us ..." Teachers also mentioned specific experiences that occurred with their current students and OCI in previous lessons: "You know we started talking about" or "so they are recalling this situation." Most frequently when describing OCI, teachers described their own experiences as a L2 learner: "I wasn't a good learner," "Now I'm speaking from personal experience," and "I remember what my own learning was like" (for a larger sample of narrative introductions across the group, see Appendix D.4. Although some indication of the teachers' perspectives regarding the role of OCI in specific L2 emerged through narratives of specific L2 teaching experiences ("With the outside tasks a lot of learning goes on retrospectively [with students] looking back on at their interviews in their reports"), the situations where the EAP teachers' perceptions of OCI were most explicit occurred through the teachers' spontaneous descriptions of their own personal L2 learning experiences:

> My beliefs about learning are reflected in the way I teach, from my own experience the way I think that languages are learnt. That's why I encourage them to interact with native speakers. I think it is really through interaction in a genuine context and situation out there [that learning occurs].

The difference in experiences reported to be associated with ICI and OCI beliefs were particularly noticeable when the teachers described how they viewed learning or teaching in a specific situation. For example, when discussing in-class interactions, the EAP teachers often illustrated their beliefs as being generally held by L2 teachers: "There is widespread use of communicative teaching approaches; I've taught in a communicative way for ten years"; or, they would refer to shared

experiences and shared beliefs using plural nouns ("teachers," "educators") or pronouns ("we" or "us") to denote that a reported belief or experience was commonplace: "We were told that it is good to have students participate in interactions" or "overall we [teachers] focus on all four skills; here [in this course] it is reading and writing, yes mostly writing and some speaking." When describing their beliefs regarding out-of-class interactions, the EAP teachers linked their concepts to their own individual experiences, expressed the association as an opinion or a personal belief, and would use a singular pronoun ("I" or "you") to represent the individuality of the experience: "What happens in class is fine, but if you don't use it outside anywhere, it'll go in one ear and out the other"; "I think every teacher should learn another language. Teachers who don't, often use things a learner wouldn't understand."

6.3 ICI and Associated Experiences: Teacher Training

As previously stated, all 28 teachers interviewed reported some awareness of the relation between their teacher training and their beliefs regarding in-class interactions; for example, "I'm very conscious of trying to apply stuff I learnt [in teacher training]: focus on interactions, learners' individual needs, group work, pair work." However, there also appears to be a pattern between how the teachers viewed teacher training, additional experiences, and the complexity of the conceptions reported (see Table 6.3.1).

Table 6.3.1 *Specific Instances of L2 Teaching Training and Development: 28 EAP Teachers and ICI Categories*														
ICI Categories of Description														
Category A			Category B			Category C			Category D			Category E		
EAP Teachers	Instances of LTT	Additional Experiences	EAP Teachers	Instances of LTT	Additional Experiences	EAP Teachers	Instances of LTT	Additional Experiences	EAP Teachers	Instances of LTT	Additional Experiences	EAP Teachers	Instances of LTT	Additional Experiences
4	5	1	12	24	3	6	10	4	3	3	5	3	12	7

Total EAP Teachers = 28

Total Instances of Experiences as Learner in Teacher Training = 54

Total Additional Experiences in L2 Teacher Development = 20

Categories A & B = 16 T Total AELTT= 4	Category C = 6 T Total AELTT= 4	Categories D & E = 6 T Total AELTT= 12

Table 6.3.1 illustrates visually that general teacher training and practices fall across the range; however, experiences beyond teacher training are concentrated in the sections of the range where more developed conceptions were described. Although the majority of teachers' transcripts (16) were allocated in categories A and B, the number of additional experiences as learners in teacher training (AELTT) or further L2 teacher development (4) was the same as in category C, which was allocated only (6) transcripts. The total number of the first three categories (8) is significantly less than that of categories D and E, which together were allocated only (6) transcripts but reported 12 AELTT. The types of additional experiences across the group also varied somewhat, with 4 experiences of additional studies taken at university, specific experiences in teaching that influenced teachers to critique specific L2 literature or methodologies, individuals applying concepts learned in professional development

programs after teacher training to their own practices, and individual study in areas of interest pertaining to L2 teaching.
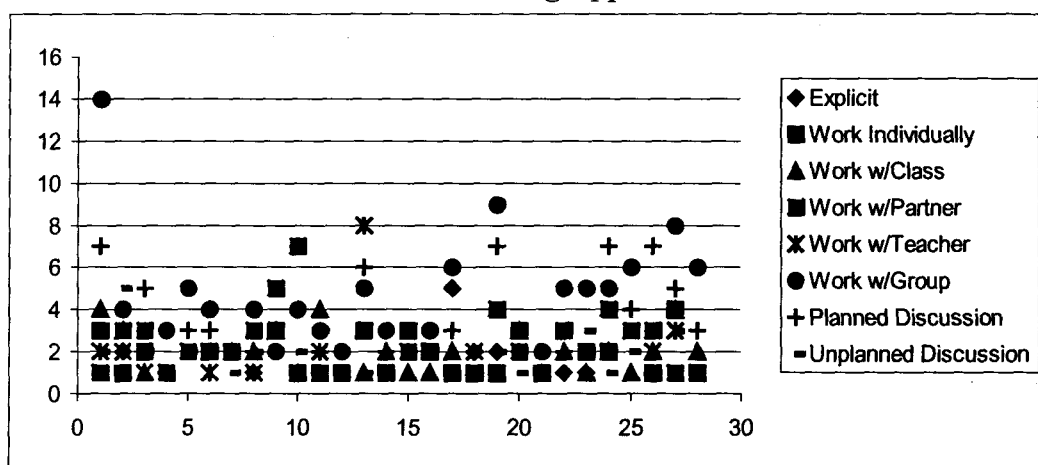
There also appeared to be differences in how much influence teacher training was thought to play, in individual practices that varied with complexity of ICI conceptual development. For example, when less developed conceptions were reported, these beliefs and practices were described as heavily influenced by specific methods or teaching practices commonly reviewed in teacher training, such as: "Talk is one of four skill areas to be developed," or, "Learners learn through actively participating in discussion and through problem solving tasks." In some situations the teacher's personal experience as a learner of a specific teaching approach in teacher training was described.

> *Excerpt:* Teacher in teacher training. "Well one of the subjects we [student teachers] did was taught in a communicative way. So through their teaching methods [in the course] I learned about how to do the communicative teaching approach and group work, encouraging groups to think independently, I mean going round to support them. So, through their [teacher trainers'] teaching method of us, I learnt how to apply that teaching method in the classroom.

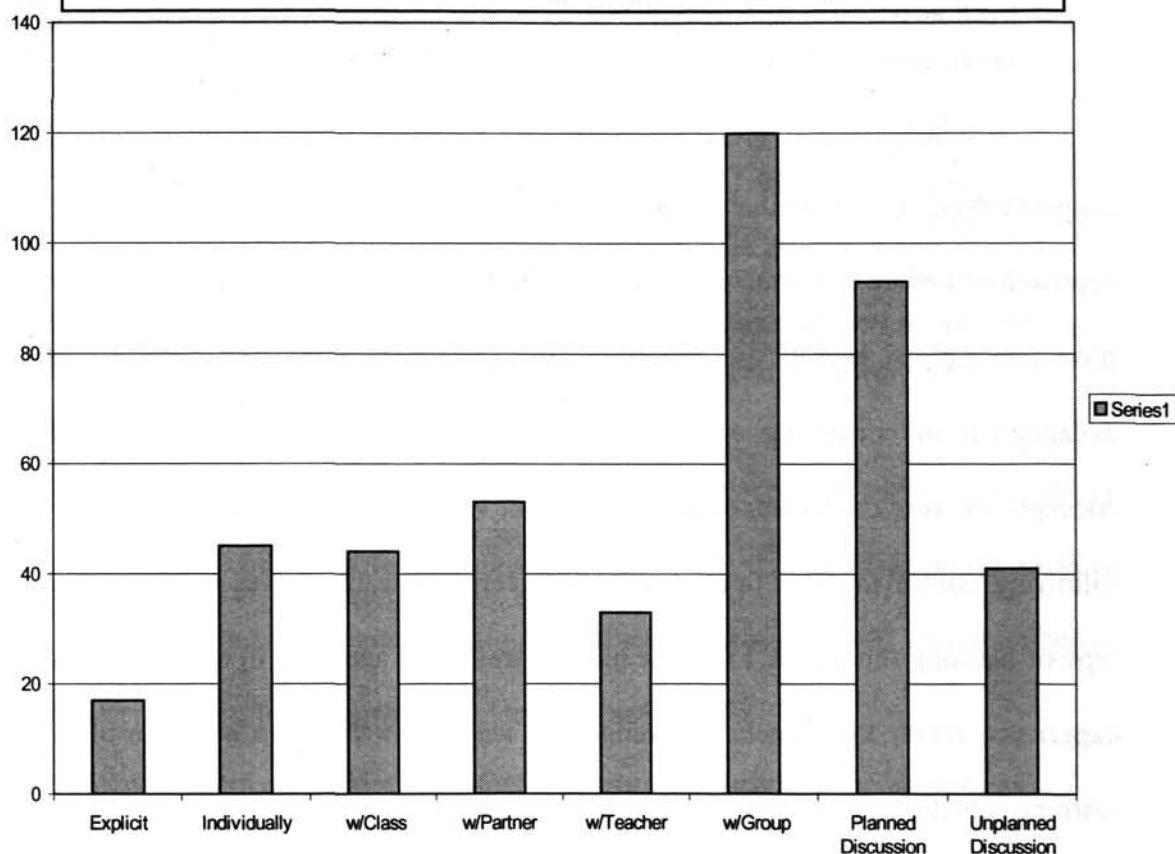## 6.4 Described Teaching Practices and Teacher Training

The most prominent teaching approach described in the interviews in connection with teacher training was communicative teaching approaches (CTA). In Table 6.3.2, CTA are distributed evenly across the range, with no apparent difference between the number of times CTA are mentioned and the conceptual complexity described in the ICI categorical descriptions.

Table 6.3.2 *Communicative Teaching Approaches 28 EAP Teachers*

Legend:
- ◆ Explicit
- ■ Work Individually
- ▲ Work w/Class
- ■ Work w/Partner
- ✖ Work w/Teacher
- ● Work w/Group
- + Planned Discussion
- − Unplanned Discussion

In the lessons described across the group, the term "communicative" in describing communicative teaching approaches was used explicitly 17 times (see Graph 6.3.3). Communicative methodologies were referenced in the teachers' descriptions of organization of in-class discussion: individual interaction with the teacher addressing the class was mentioned 44 times, ICI with the teacher and the class as a whole were mentioned in 45 situations, ICI with students working in pairs was mentioned 53 times, ICI with a student and a teacher was mentioned 33 times, and the largest number of ICI described in lessons was reported to occur between students working with other students in small groups organized by the teacher (126 times). Although the teachers frequently described lessons as communicative or "interactive", topics for discussion during classroom discourse were described as planned by the teacher 96 times. In all the lessons, unplanned discussion (unexpected interaction that occurred) was mentioned 41 times; this included comments from individual students, conversations between individual students, and topics initiated by students and sometimes the teacher.

Graph 6.3.3   *Communicative Approaches Mentioned in Lessons*
Explicitly and Implicitly

One interesting note, however, which perhaps attests to the dominance of these approaches in the field of L2 teaching and learning, is that all 28 EAP teachers explicitly reported either using CTA or multiple instances of communicative methodologies despite having negative experiences when they themselves as learners had been taught communicatively. This paradox is illustrated in the following excerpt:

> When I started my TESOL course, I found it so hard because we were doing this group work and I would come home at the end of the day and think, "What did we do, anyway?" It was like we hadn't done anything. I got friendly with another person around the same age as I was, and I rang him up a few times, and he would say the same thing ... what did we do? We [both teacher trainees] had trouble knowing what we had done because it wasn't given to us. They [teacher trainers] would give us a task like we were students in a language class and it was done so that we would experience the topic through doing the task; but they wouldn't teach us these are the facts and these are what you have to know. I'm more used to it now but I'm still not very good at being in groups. I am more comfortable with the teacher standing in front and

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lecturing and I take notes, because that is the way, I was educated. ... In my own classes [as L2 teacher] I encourage active learning in groups and I know I'm not supposed to stand up and talk in front of the room, so I avoid that as much as possible—even though that is not what I'm used to; it is not how I was taught [prior to teacher training].

Similarly, when more developed conceptions were reported, participants acknowledged the prominence of "student-centred" learning and communicative approaches; however, common pedagogies were presented more as individual beliefs or practices: e.g., "I myself use communicative classroom tasks that serve a purpose, pedagogical in conveying a concept or a principle." When more developed ICI conceptions were described, often more weight was given to experiences outside of or following teacher training. In the following excerpt the teacher gives an example of one type of learning through ICI that the teacher was made aware of in a specific teaching experience rather than teacher training. The teacher provided an example of an ICI learning situation experienced in a question-and-answer session following a student's presentation in class:

He [speaking of a student in the lesson with good written skills but weak listening and speaking skills] interviewed a professor here and he stood up and gave a fairly effective presentation, fairly fluent, and I did hear from him later that it was rehearsed for about 10 hours, and there were discussion questions and we had this fairly fluent spoken presentation, and then he says, any questions please ask me, and there was a particular question which was related to the main topic ... and he looked up and he looked around, and he looked at me and the student repeated the question, and he said oh X, and his answer was very much risk-taking, and he uttered the name of the subject of his interview research project—people laughed and he felt a bit embarrassed but he got on with it ... and he was using a lot of the other students as gatekeepers;[23] they didn't mind providing that role, and to some extent I encouraged it because if they [the other students] could convey an understanding to him I could be sure that they were making progress, and it was also a mechanism for him to take in the knowledge, not a desirable one,

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[23] "Gate keeping" is a term used when a learner uses others to help support or fill in steps during the process of building or explaining a concept.

but an effective one. That was very simple evidence of the extent to which competency[24] in using a second language, receiving and producing, as a way of gauging success in the learning process.

Interviewer: So how do you see the learning on the parts of the other students in encouraging him in this situation?

Participant: In plain terms, if you can teach something, you probably know something about it, but also there is a dynamic—if you are suddenly forced or obliged to explain something, you have to be able to articulate it, which means that you have to have a coherent form in your own mind; and it's a little bit like the tail wagging the dog in that instance that forces the students to encode knowledge in order to convey it to another person, and it's a very effective dynamic, I think.

Where teachers described specific situations in teaching practice that could be termed "communicative," how learning was perceived in that situation was associated with experiences outside of teacher training, and teacher training itself was described as having very little influence on an individual's practices.

Whether I am the student or the teacher, I learn as much from the students as they get from me. I really feel that way—there are fifteen teachers in this classroom [referring to L2 students]; that is one of the benefits of teaching adult learners.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your training has influenced your teaching?

Participant: My original training did not equip me for the classroom itself; my training was in terms of subject content.

6.4.1 Consistent Concepts of L2 Teaching and Learning in Lesson Descriptions

The concept of L2 learning as a "set of language skills"[25] was also distributed across the range, illustrating the prominence of this belief in the field of L2 teaching and learning; however, a connection to this concept and teacher training was not explicitly stated in the interviews, as the connection between CTA and teacher training

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[24] "Competency"—although this term refers to specific abilities and is used differently in various areas of L2 learning, here it refers to learning occurring through the successful use of the language.

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was. Although there were no apparent differences in how teachers reported experiencing these skills or ICI conceptual development, the situations in which specific skills were reported ranged from a very general awareness of language skills, to an individualised experience of a particular skill, to detailed accounts of how each skill was targeted in a particular teaching situation.

In the following three excerpts teachers described a general awareness of learning as a set of skills. In the first two examples the teacher reports awareness but describes the building of individual learners' language skills as separate from the overall focus of the course. In the third example the teacher reports that developing learners' general awareness of their own language skills is the result of focusing on L2 use in class.

> *Excerpt 1:* We [teachers on the course] teach them [learners] mainly writing strategies, and it's all task based—they go out and do it. Improvement in [written] structure is easy to see as their language becomes clearer. Still it is difficult to improve skills [individual language skills] when your focus is not on the skill itself but on the application of it.

> *Excerpt 2:* The focus of the course is to develop academic skills, not language skills.
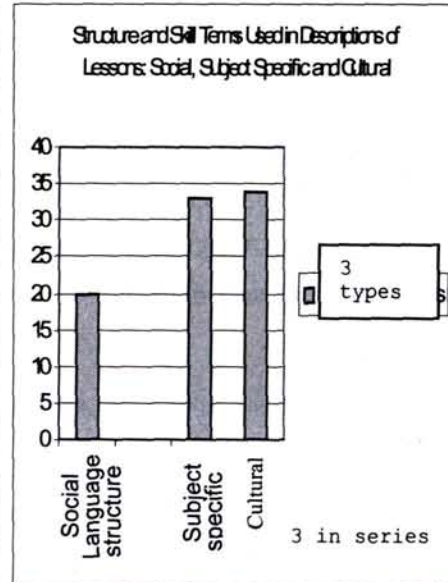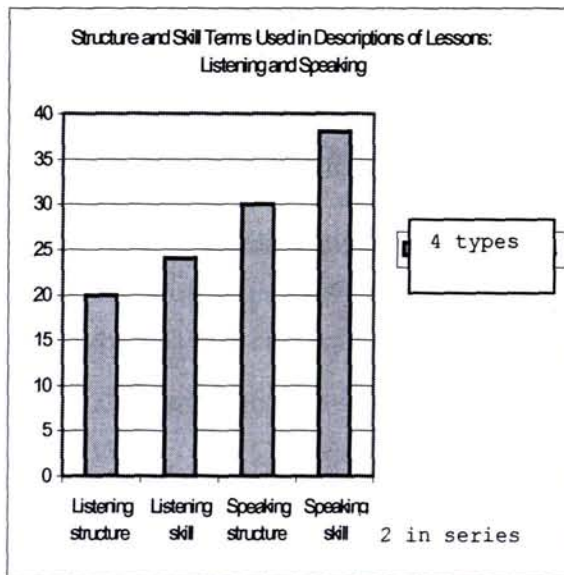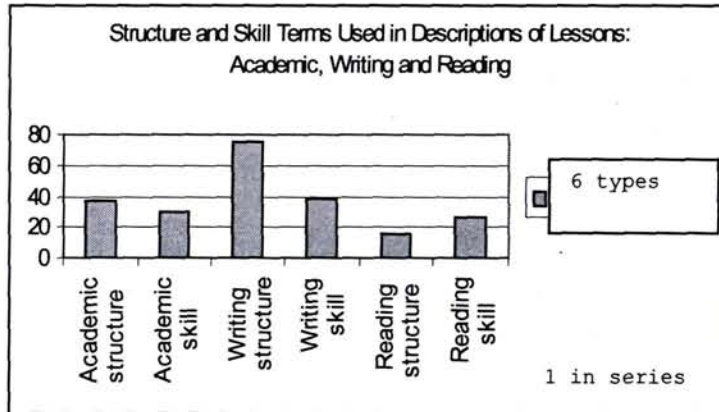
> *Excerpt 3:* I forbid the use of L1, and over a period of weeks, there is noticeable progress. A partial cause of this is adherence to language policy, and the students can begin to formulate their own ideas, conceptualisations [in the L2]. This affects other fields—not just an awareness [the learners' awareness] of language skills of language skills and literacy skills, but of other things.

In Chart 6.3.4, the use of the terms used by teachers to refer to specific types of skills (mentioned 162 times) and structures (mentioned 190 times) are illustrated. Understandably, the terms most often used to refer to the subject taught or learned was "Academic" structures (37 times) and skills (36 times). In reference to the set of four

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[25] The term 'Language skills' in general refer to students' L2 proficiency in four areas; reading, writing, speaking and listening.

language skills, "writing" structures (75 times) and skills (38 times) were the terms most prominently used; in contrast, the terms "speaking" structures (36 times) and skills (33 times) were used less frequently. However the additional use of the term "social language" and "subject specific" again suggest a perception that there was some differentiation between types of interaction that were considered to be part of the class and those that were not. References to subject-specific information appeared to include all instances of learning and teaching and were not limited to spoken interaction. All instances of social language pertained to "new" information presented in the lesson (21 times); the terms "structures" or "skills" were not used to describe information students brought into the class from outside experiences. Similarly, while there was awareness across the group of teachers that students brought experiences from a variety of cultures into the class, and that there was a need for students to better understand Australian culture, these instances were not referred to as skills or structures either.
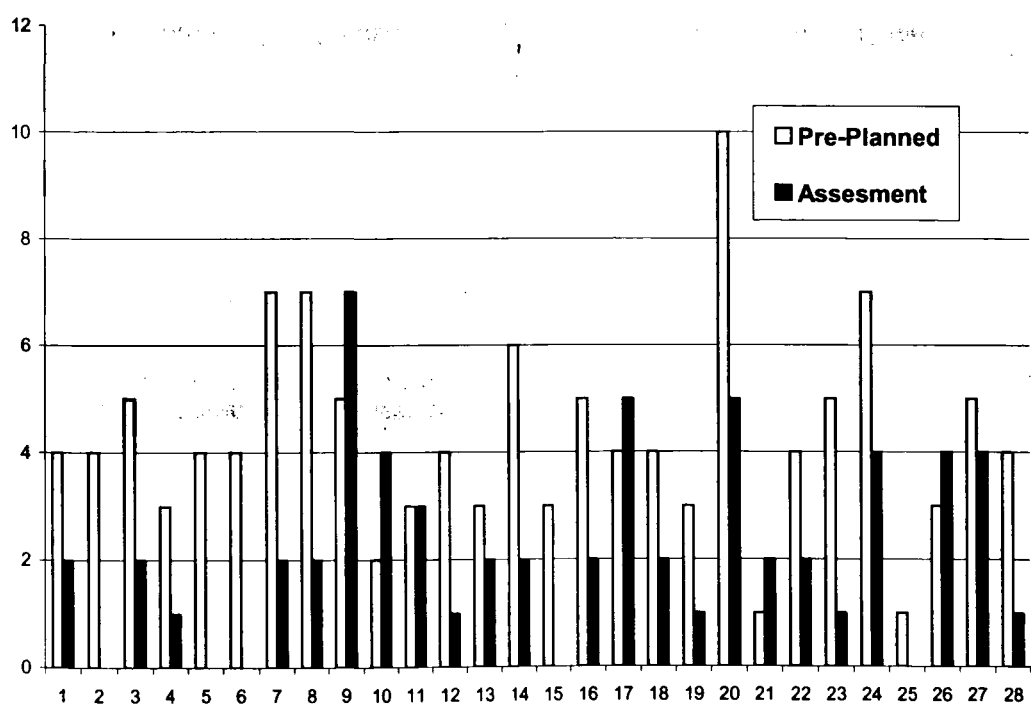
Chart 6.3.4 *Skills and Structures in Descriptions: Series of 3*

Structure and Skill Terms Used in Descriptions of Lessons: Academic, Writing and Reading

6 types

1 in series

Structure and Skill Terms Used in Descriptions of Lessons: Listening and Speaking

4 types

2 in series

Structure and Skill Terms Used in Descriptions of Lessons: Social, Subject Specific and Cultural

3 types

3 in series

Concepts of L2 teaching as a set of tasks were also consistently described across the group (see Graph 6.3.5). Pre-planned tasks were described in all lessons, for a total of 120 learning or teaching instances; where the term was expressly used, the maximum number of times the term "task" was used in any one transcript was 10, and the minimum was 1. The purpose of the tasks described varied, with some described as "warmers," "practice," "preparation," "presentation," "review," "to build rapport," and so forth. The way that a particular task was viewed from the teacher's perspective also

influenced which tasks were later assessed; out of the 120 tasks described, only 61 were later described as assessed. All assessed tasks pertained to situations where teachers described experiences in which student's understanding, or the ability to reproduce or use new information provided in the course, were evaluated. Tasks were described as assessed by the teacher, the teacher and the student, the teacher and other students, or the class as a whole. In two instances, tasks were described as assessed by other teachers not present during the lesson described. The maximum number of times the term "assessment" was used or explicitly described in a single transcript was 7; however, neither terms for assessment or claims that assessment had occurred were evident in any of the lessons described in 5 out of 28 transcripts.

Graph 6.3.5   *Task Based Teaching: Descriptions of Lessons*
28 EAP

6.4.2 ICI-Associated Experience and Learning Styles: Learners

Variation between the teachers' awareness of students' individual learning styles and conceptual development of ICI was also apparent. When less developed conceptions of ICI were reported, associated teaching practices were often described by the participants as linked with their teacher training as were the benefits of presenting materials in different ways to appeal to individual learning preferences. This is illustrated in the following excerpt, where the teacher describes the ICI in an actual lesson. This case could be categorised as a less developed conception of ICI, as the spoken interaction is viewed as a teaching activity with the purpose of involving students in the activity (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed description of ICI and teaching approaches); however, there is no evident difference described between the students learning individually or with others. In this situation the students were provided a model, and the ICI that occurred in the group context was described as motivational rather than part of the learning process; however, it was reported that the teacher, through a "needs analysis,"[26] used grouping, as the learners' preferred learning style.

> Participant: Basically we went through the text and read it .... I wanted them to be aware that when we give advice these are the structures we use. So, after modelling the text together I basically gave them another problem ...
>
> Interviewer: So when you were doing this writing task was it individually or together?
>
> P: No, I had them in groups of three. Some of them really do work quite independently but it might be two or three, and the rest really need pushing. Basically, they were to share advice like the one [the model] they had seen. And they basically talked with each other and in the end formulated this letter on an overhead.

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[26] A "needs analysis" refers to a survey or questionnaire given by the teacher either orally or in written form with the purpose of assessing what the students' L2 needs and subject needs are so that the curriculum can be designed to match the needs of the students.

Interviewer: And how did you see learning in this situation? Why did you group them?

P: First of all because I think that some of them wouldn't be able to do it on their own. Because I see ... that, they just hope the exercise will just pass and then they might not have anything on their sheets, you know? So, if they are in a group they don't have the pressure to perform to such an extent and they tend to have a go. And I just think it's a good thing for them to work in groups. By the way I did a survey to find out what their preferred leaning style is, and I found out they prefer to work in groups and in pairs instead of being on their own.

I: What reasons did they give for that?

P: They didn't give any reasons.

I: So in this situation how did you see learning occurring?

P: Well I think it was just an opportunity for them to apply the structures that were modelled to them and I guess it's kind of testing what they know.

In situations where more developed conceptions of ICI were reported, the teacher also described the learners' need to look at things in different ways; however, the emphasis was less on presentation and more on how learners developed their own conceptions: "The focus is on building concepts not vocabulary through discussions they learn experientially." Often when more developed conceptions of ICI were reported, details regarding specific types of interactions in specific situations and how these interactions impacted learning in a variety of ways were described. In the following excerpt where the teacher clearly describes the learning process that occurs individually and through interactions with others, the ICI conception reported is more developed than that described in the previous sample.

Participant: Well there was a reading comprehension task, where they had to read a news report and answer comprehension questions ...

Interviewer: Was that done individually, or in pairs, in group work?

P: I usually encourage students to work in pairs; I think that they learn a lot from each other.

I: How do you think that students learn together?

P: Sharing vocabulary. I might know one word, you know another, and we try to make sense of a sentence, for example. Even comparing their answers, if they are the same or totally different then they might ask why have you got a different answer.

I: In that particular situation when they were doing their reading comprehension, what was your role, what were you doing?

P: I was ensuring they were on task and understood what they were supposed to do; I encouraged them to use dictionaries if they weren't sure and helped them with pronunciation. I usually present words in context, vocabulary in context. Some don't have dictionaries so it's harder; sometimes I have to help them when they want to use words in a different sentence, different context or substitute it with another word. I think that working in pairs also replaces the teacher; they've got a partner to help them.

I: So you see yourself as someone who is helping them through the process?

P: Facilitating the learning process. I like them to discover things, I just lead them in the right direction and I try never to give answers if I don't have to; I want them to discover answers for themselves. I won't say no that's wrong ... the answer is ... . I'll question—does anyone have something different or something to add?

6.4.3 ICI-Associated Experience and Learning Styles: Teachers

Undoubtedly there are differences in the way these teachers conceived of ICI and how they associated their experiences of these interactions as related to the individual students' learning styles and the L2 learning process. There also appeared to be some variation in how teachers experienced their own learning preferences as learners themselves. For example where less developed conceptions of ICI were reported, participants sometimes claimed that they taught in ways that they themselves enjoyed as learners; these experiences were also sometimes described as "general practice employed to meet a general aim," as illustrated by the phrase, "That is what *we* are trying to achieve" in the second to last statement in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 1. Participant: I put everything in the letter on the overhead and did the error correction so everyone could see.

Interviewer: Do you find that sort of exercise, where the mistakes are corrected for everyone to see, helpful?

P: Yes definitely, I think for these students visuals are fantastic. I like to use a lot of cartoons and images to start off with just to get them focused ... get their interest.

I: How do you see yourself as a learner? Not necessarily as a language learner but as a learner in general? Do you prefer visual or oral presentation yourself?

P: I think I prefer visual because if you have a text you can always go back to it. Oral is so out of control, you know, if you only hear it once and you can't go back to it. I prefer a text so I can go at my own pace.

I: Okay. What about group work do you like learning in groups?

P: Personally, I thought it wasn't very successful in school because of the attitude of some people. ... If you had a good group then it can be useful but in general, if you don't find people that share your learning style it can be a bit of a task.

I: Yet within this class you were teaching students were in groups for about a third of the task?

P: Yes but that's a different rationale; you were talking about learning in general, I was thinking about a big assignment [teacher's experience as university student] not as language learning.

I: Do you think it's different in a language learning sense?

P: In terms of language learning it's [working in groups] good for them because they can practice the language and it isn't so teacher-cantered. I mean that's what we [L2 teachers] are trying to achieve, is independent learning with the teacher as presenter or motivator. ... If they practice the language within a group of people who don't speak the language perfectly, at least they get some practice.

I: So do you see interaction in the classroom as a form of practice?

P: Definitely yes. Basically, they can talk and try out things without being judged by the teacher.

In the second excerpt another teacher describes the experience of connecting an individual learning preference to a particular teaching approach that has been very effective. As in the first excerpt, the teacher originally characterises the teaching

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approach as one that is "widely adopted"; however, the teacher then clarifies that this is an individual opinion rather than fact.

> *Excerpt 2.* I am a person who likes some sort of formula or patterns. I learn when I see things in a certain way when there is a model.... . When I first saw the teaching learning cycle[27] it wasn't until I was doing my masters [after teacher training and experience as L2 teacher]. I actually thought this really makes sense to me. This is probably what I do. I was thinking at the time this is what I do, but now that I see it in a model, I've got it; I really understand; and you know, this is a good way of teaching. I think I base all my lessons on that theory. If I thought about why I do that then I guess it's a common underpinning for most people's methodology these days. I'm assuming that; I really don't know. I have no evidence to say that that's what all teachers do, but I imagine that is what they do; I see a lot of success coming from that.

When more developed conceptions of ICI were described, teachers reported that their own learning preferences were less influential. These teachers' own learning preferences were described as having much less of an impact on their teaching practices: "I am analytical. I try not to impose my learning style and am very aware of not being too academic in my approach." This held true even when the participants were discussing how they preferred to learn when describing their personal experiences as L2 learners.

> *Excerpt: Teacher's experience as L2 learner and personal learning preference.*
>
> Interviewer: So how about yourself, your own learning—have you learnt any other languages yourself?
>
> Participant: My first language is [X] so English is my second language actually.
>
> I: So when you look back at your own experience what was the most beneficial thing to you in learning English?
>
> P: It's ironic; I think the most beneficial thing was the fact that I didn't use a dictionary. I was a child and I was learning through interaction and listening a

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[27] The teaching learning cycle refers to a L2 teaching method where material are "presented" by the teacher, "practiced" in class and then "produced" by the students themselves.

lot. I think that's okay for kids; I don't know if that would work for young people or adults.

I: Do you think your own experience affects your teaching practice? Is that why you encourage interaction in the classroom?

P: Yes, definitely. I feel that I have more empathy for the learners. I feel like I really understand but I don't know if my classroom teaching methods are reflecting that—like what happened earlier—I said I encouraged a lot of pair work and interaction and dictionary use, but I don't think I did that when I was young.

In the previous section we have looked specifically at the experiences that were reported to be associated with the ICI conceptions that emerged from the ICI study presented in Chapter 4. Specifically we looked at the variation of experience reported across the group when individuals described an association between practice and experiences in teacher training: the prominence of CTA and the four language skills and individual learning styles of both students and teachers were also explored. In the following section the experiences reported to be associated with the OCI conceptions described in Chapter 5 will be presented.

6.5 OCI and Associated Experiences

In contrast to the impact of teacher training on teachers' beliefs regarding in-class interactions, descriptions of out-of-class interactions were attributed to individual teaching experiences, and most frequently to the teachers' experiences as second language learners themselves—which fits in with research on how L2 teachers developed expertise (Tsui, 2003). The group as a whole claimed that teacher training had little or nothing to do with how they viewed out-of-class interactions and second language learning. In the OCI study it was generally reported that out-of-class interactions were beneficial to second language learning; teachers across the range of

categorical description frequently observed that those students who were motivated and sought out opportunities to interact outside of the classroom often had better learning outcomes than those who did not.

Despite a general conception regarding the importance of OCI to second language learning, there were obvious differences in how these teachers approached interactions in the classroom. In situations where less developed conceptions of OCI were described, the teachers viewed these interactions as separate from their classroom teaching and so left them out of actual lessons. Thus OCI were rarely discussed, and the inclusion of students' outside experiences were rarely evident; these interactions were not described, and the participant had to be explicitly asked about their beliefs regarding OCI.

> **Less developed OCI conception:** Interviewer: Are you aware of them interacting outside the classroom?
>
> Participant. Well, I've asked some of them and unfortunately most of them stay with their own nationality. Not all of them ... . But they are mixing an awful lot with each other. So I feel most of their interaction is with each other.

In comparison, teachers reporting a more developed conception of OCI often elicited students' outside experiences and discussed learners' OCI in connection with the learning described in a specific lesson.

> **More developed OCI conception:** Participant: I got them to think of ideas of how to improve their writing outside of class. Because Monday we looked at how to improve their vocabulary; yesterday we did improving listening and speaking. They had two groups, one was a secretary in each group, they had to come up with ideas, and they came up with some great ideas!
>
> Interviewer: Were they discussing their own problems outside of class or ... generalising?
>
> P: Both. It was the kind of thing you would expect, like diary writing, that sort of thing they are familiar with in their own country, but they also thought of situations when they're using writing that I hadn't thought of, like text messaging on mobile phones and sending emails. They had some problems with emails, the shortened versions and emails with abbreviations. Yesterday I

was talking about [how] listening shouldn't be a passive activity; it was good to try to make something more active. You watch a movie and then talk to someone about that movie, and they said we could write [writing problems] it down in a journal and brainstorm about it in class.

As with the differences reported in conceptual development regarding ICI, with OCI the various ways these interactions were perceived appear to influence the actual teaching practices adopted. The complexity of conceptual development regarding out-of-class interactions, however, appeared to be influenced by how these outside interactions were perceived and experienced by the teachers in their own L2 learning. All 28 of the participants interviewed had experienced learning a second language themselves. This was a coincidence, as it was not required for employment and was not a requirement to participate in the study (all participants were volunteers). This coincidence, however, is understandable and representative of the population, as many of the teachers in this study and in L2 research in general claim that it was their experiences in learning a second language themselves that attracted them to their careers.

As a group, many of the participants claimed that as L2 learners they had little or no opportunity to interact outside the classroom themselves, as they had studied in countries where the second language was not spoken. However, in situations where more developed conceptions of OCI were reported, the participants often related experiences where they had actively sought out any opportunities to interact with speakers of their L2, despite the difficulties. When less developed conceptions of OCI were described, participants who had visited or lived in countries where their second language was spoken claimed that their opportunities for OCI were limited, or for various reasons they as students had not been motivated to interact outside the classroom. Similar experiences of limited OCI were reported by teachers who described more developed conceptions of OCI; however, in these situations participants

often described a belief that it was those (sometimes rare) opportunities to informally interact outside the classroom context that most influenced their own learning; and in their own teaching practice they would actively encourage students to seek out those OCI opportunities.

Intriguingly, it appears that conceptual development of OCI related more to an awareness of the teacher's own learning style or their students' learning experiences than to the proficiency the teachers achieved in their L2. For example there were some teachers who had learned their second languages at home or in other countries at a young age, who were unable to recall their own L2 learning processes and were more heavily influenced by their learning experiences in teacher training.

> *Excerpt 1.* Participant: All I know is that when I did my course, the lecturer said go learn another language; it will give you another perspective. But I was so young I don't think I remember much about it. (Teacher in teacher training as language learner)

> P. I lived in South Africa where we had to do Afrikaans at school for 12 years. And I learnt Hebrew at school until I was 13. [OCI:] I didn't socialise with Afrikaans people ever but I would have to use it when I would go into a shop. We used to hate it because it was just a subject—it was a chore; we didn't like it. And Hebrew wasn't fun. I didn't really want to; my parents sent me. I didn't really want to go after school to learn Hebrew. (Teacher's experience learning L2 at a young age)

There were also situations where participants had reported highly developed conceptions of both ICI and OCI and also reported negative L2 learning experiences, but claimed that those experiences highlighted the importance of OCI in the second language learning process.

> *Excerpt 2.* Participant: I used to be pretty good at Chinese because I worked there for four years as well. In London, it was a very traditional, classical type of course. Classical isn't even spoken at all and very stylised text, and modern only went up to 1945. I had one conversation class a week. [When I went to China] it was so embarrassing. I mean I had tons of difficulty because of the script and the way we had learnt it. We couldn't say things like, "Where is the

canteen?" We hadn't been corrected on our spoken so we'd picked up poor pronunciation habits. It [OCI] was limited for political reasons. I was quite lucky I had a job, a couple of months in England taking around the Shanghai Opera group, which were 60 people. (Teacher's L2 experience)

Others reported negative language learning experiences themselves but claimed to be highly influenced by observing the role these interactions had played in others' L2 learning through their own teaching experience. In the following three excerpts a teacher reports a belief regarding the benefits of bringing learners' outside experiences into classroom discussion. This is followed by a perception influenced by past teaching experiences regarding the differences between the quantity and quality of outside experiences of adult migrant learners (taught in the past) and young adult L2 learners in a university context.

Excerpt 3A. Participant: Because that is what they need for their life, it's what they need for out of class and it gives them a safe situation, environment to practice it and there is a chance for other students to help each other.

Excerpt 3B. P: I've spent a lot of time teaching migrants; the main difference is that migrants are bringing their out-of-class experiences to class very much. Whatever level it is ... . They're using English with their children's education, talking to schools, looking for work, whatever—we work with anything they bring to class and also try to use materials that will help them in their out-of-class tasks.

Excerpt 3C. P: In the past I have taught half migrants and half international and even at that time there is much less to use for the international students for their out of class stuff. And I suppose and that's what I'm finding here, the international students I have here seem to be very similar to the group that I had in the last centre. And some of them maybe they haven't been here too long so they haven't got any history of experience, some of them, it depends where they are living. If they are in home stays, they've got a bit more contact with Australian families. But if they are staying with relations and sharing a flat together with people of the same language group, then there are fairly limited resources. Some of them are young and they don't actually go out that much.

There were also teachers who said they tried to help students avoid the mistakes they as learners had made in their own second language learning approaches. In some

instances where more developed conceptions of OCI were reported, these teachers would describe their learning preferences as a L2 learner as "poor" or "inadequate"; however, they claimed that the experiences had been beneficial in informing and improving their own L2 teaching practices. In the following excerpt the teacher reports a personal experience of a learning approach that he/she used as an example of what not to do with his/her students, or of a learning approach to avoid.

> I like linguistics more than languages in a way I like the technical side of it. I recall my experience of being on a train in Japan and hearing Japanese that I couldn't understand around me. That's made me empathetic with my students, I think. The empathy comes from experience.
>
> Interviewer: Did you study Japanese prior to living there?
>
> Participant: By myself from a grammar book; basically my grammar was pretty good before I went but I couldn't speak Japanese very well at all. I never really acquired much speaking ability actually. So, I learnt myself formally in a very dry way. I tell my students that it takes time that they can't expect to be fluent in four weeks. It all comes heterogeneously. It's a very chaotic situation learning a language; it's not a matter of progression, linear progression. I emphasise that to them. It comes from all kinds of sources. You shouldn't confine yourself to one book, or one approach or one teacher or this person; be open to everything. Just jump in there. Which I didn't do in Japan enough— that's why I say to them, "Don't waste your chances."

In the next excerpt the teacher reports that, as a L2 student experiencing teaching methods that were unsuccessful in his/her L2 learning, he/she consciously has chosen not to adopt such methods in their own teaching practice.

> Interviewer: And as far as your teaching goes, do you find that having learned languages yourself affected your teaching at all?
>
> Participant: I'm sure it has, I mean, it sounds so negative but things to avoid— you know, I've been quite aware of language methods that are used in the degree and I wouldn't go near them.

In the previous sections the experiences reported to be associated with the OCI conceptions described in chapter 5 were presented. In comparing those experiences that participants of both studies described as associated with both ICI and OCI conceptual

development, the contrast between types of experiences reported are highlighted: broadly speaking, ICI are often attributed to some type of teacher training, whereas OCI conceptions which also are attributed to teaching experiences are most frequently associated with teachers' individual experiences outside teacher training.

Despite these differences in experiences reported to be associated with this group of L2 teachers and the variations in how these two types of interactions were perceived (described in detail in Chapters 4 & 5), the conceptual development of beliefs regarding both in-class and out-of-class interactions appears to show some interesting consistencies—notably between the most prominent ICI and OCI conceptions described in each transcript, and the individual teacher's experiences learning a second language.

6.6 Consistencies Between Experiences of L2 Learning and Conceptual Development: Qualitative and Quantitative comparisons.

The various ways in which the participants had learned their second languages appear to influence how they perceived both OCI and ICI. There were some strong consistencies in second language experiences reported across the group. For example, in addition to all 28 participants reporting personal experience as L2 learners themselves, all also described situations where L2 learning had occurred primarily in a formal context (in a language classroom). The group as a whole reported that a significant proportion of the time they had spent in learning a L2 had been spent in formal classroom situations. Notably this was true not only of participants who had studied a L2 as a formal subject in school ("I'm Canadian so I studied French all the way through to grade 11"), but also for those who had learned multiple languages ("At school we can't graduate unless we have two languages"), and those whose L2 was

English ("I started English when I was fourteen ... because I wanted to start the subject of English at school"). The group as a whole described studying 89 second languages, and although not explicitly asked prior to the interview, the periods of times spontaneously reported when describing specific L2 learning experiences ranged from 2 weeks to 11 years (Table 6.5.1).
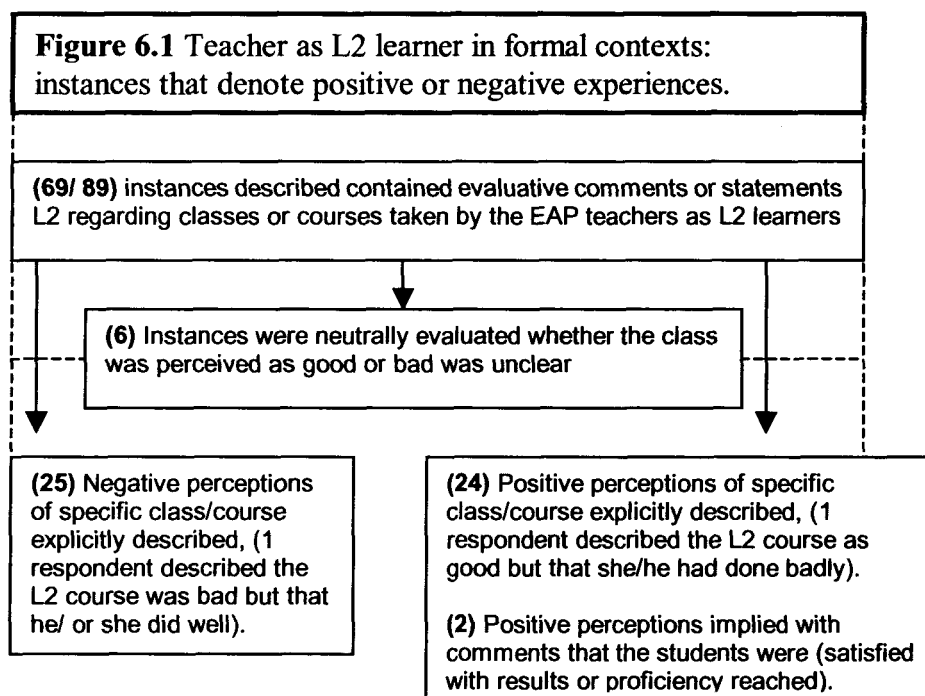
Table 6.5.1	Overview of Teachers as Language Learners	
Number of Teachers Interviewed	**Total Number of Second Languages Reported Studied**	**Range of Time Reported For Study (All Types)**
28	89	2 weeks to 11+ years

Out of the 89 L2 languages described, all 28 teachers described at least one experience of studying a second language in both informal and formal classroom contexts (Table 6.5.2). Those experiences labelled as "instances" were separated and grouped into different categories of study. Some L2 experiences were reported as solely formal (in a classroom context, 84 instances) others as solely informal (outside of the classroom context, 79 instances) and others a as a combination of formal and informal approaches to learning through content. Each experience described by the teacher in a different context was counted as a separate instance; however, the quantity of time and the quality of L2 study varied dramatically; descriptions included a one-week crash course in the L2 prior to a holiday, completing a degree in the L2 over a 4-year period, or taking formal classes at a language school in the target language country. There was also variation in reported opportunities to interact inside or outside of the classroom. For example, four teachers described 5 instances of learning an L2 in a "content situation" (e.g., studying French as an L2 and taking a course on French Literature in

France) and in "immersion situations" where all subjects studied were taught in the L2. In these situations it could be expected that opportunities for spoken interaction were high. Conversely, eleven instances of L2 learning situations labelled "self-study" were descriptions of experiences undertaken individually and situated in contexts that did not provide opportunity for spoken interaction with others (e.g., "studied grammar books," "read (L2) newspapers," or "listened to travel language tapes"); these instances were separated from the data, which was then further explored for situations where teachers reported specific instances of ICI or OCI in their L2 learning.

Table 6.5.2	Different Types of Study		
89 Second Languages Studied			
Instances of Formal Classroom Study*	**Instances of Learning Through Content**	**Instances of Self-Directed Study**	**Instances of Informal Study**
84	5	11	68
(28 Teachers)	(4 Teachers)	(8 Teachers)	(28 Teachers)
*Includes Three Instances of Immersion			

The total instances of formal classroom experiences described by the EAP teachers were further explored to look for any patterns across the group regarding how the teacher perceived their own formal learning experiences. Out of the 89 formal learning instances described, twenty of the descriptions did not include any comment regarding whether the teacher perceived a specific class or course experience to be good or bad; six of the comments or statements provided were neutral and did not include any indication of how that instance was perceived (Figure 6.1). As a group the experiences of specific classes and courses were split, with 25 explicitly negative perceptions described, 24 explicitly positive perceptions described, and a further 2 perceptions positively implied.

Figure 6.1 Teacher as L2 learner in formal contexts: instances that denote positive or negative experiences.

(69/ 89) instances described contained evaluative comments or statements L2 regarding classes or courses taken by the EAP teachers as L2 learners

(6) Instances were neutrally evaluated whether the class was perceived as good or bad was unclear

(25) Negative perceptions of specific class/course explicitly described, (1 respondent described the L2 course was bad but that he/ or she did well).

(24) Positive perceptions of specific class/course explicitly described, (1 respondent described the L2 course as good but that she/he had done badly).

(2) Positive perceptions implied with comments that the students were (satisfied with results or proficiency reached).

In contrast, there was consistency across the group regarding the teaching methodologies they had experienced. All the teachers made general negative comments regarding the teaching methodologies they had experienced as L2 learners, either in specific classes within a course, or for the whole course. Eleven out of the twenty-eight teachers described specific reasons why they perceived the teaching methodology in a specific situation as negative (see samples below):

It was teacher-centred, not meta-linguistic approach and not language labs.

They taught us only grammar; I wanted to learn how to speak.

There was not enough opportunity to speak, no speaking tests and the opportunity to actually use the language was limited.

The teacher's pronunciation was terrible and there wasn't any feedback on errors.

The teacher was intimidating, [he] expected us to answer difficult questions in front of everyone in [the L2]; we [students in class] were all scared that he would call on us that day!

> My negative experience came down to the teacher. ... I put in a lot of work but I was nervous just driving there.

> Well in the formal learning situation, there were a lot of things I didn't find beneficial. I used to sit there and think—ah, I [as a L2 teacher] could do it better.

There were also nine instances where teachers contrasted a positive experience with other experiences of teaching methodologies that had been described as negative to clarify a particular perception (see samples below):

> The teaching methodology was not consistent but there was more speaking (compared to previous experience described), which was positive.

> That class was good [contrast to negative experience described]; the teacher was good, had a good accent, and the books were communicative like [book topic] going to market and useful things.

> In that class we used [L2] [contrast with previous experience where ICI was limited] but the reading and writing was limited.

> The teacher was good [in contrast to previous situation]—(she/he) set up tasks were we could talk but didn't push us beyond our ability.

Notably, all of the teachers also reported limited experiences interacting in the classroom, and many expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the ICI they had experienced. Only 21 out of 28 interviewed explicitly mentioned ICI within the specific formal learning instances described. Out of the 89 formal learning instances reported, only 24 instances included some description of ICI as part of L2 classroom experience; 5 described L2 learning through content situations rather than general L2 courses, and the quantity and the quality of the remaining instances where ICI was described was not clear. Of the remaining instances of formal learning ICI interaction, 9 were explicitly described as limited; 22 were explicitly reported as not part of the experience; and in the remaining 35, mention of ICI was either unclear, not evident, or from the teachers' perspective did not apply (e.g., when discussing learning L2 grammar in L1); see Table 6.5.3.

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Table 6.5.3	EAP Teachers Formal L2 Learning: ICI		
Instances of In-Class-Interaction (ICI)			
89 Instances of Classroom Learning and Learning Through Content Were Reported*			
(Out of 28 Teachers)			
ICI Included As A Part of the Course: Yes	**ICI Included As A Part of the Course: Limited**	**ICI Included As A Part of the Course: No**	**ICI Included As A Part of the Course: Unclear - N/A**
24**	9**	22	35
(21 Teachers)			
4 Teachers – 5 Instances of ICI, were in a Learning-Through-Content Situation, which may have affected the quantity of ICI in those courses			
** Note that one respondent gave two answers for one instance of learning.			

Across the group, there appeared to be some variation in how ICI were perceived by the participants in their own language learning. Frequently in those instances where ICI was described as included as part of the course, comments were brief; and although a negative or positive impression might be implied, the teacher's perspective of his/her experiences with that ICI were unclear:

> We didn't do any speaking—well maybe a little but not much.
>
> Talk was very stale. Not dynamic.
>
> [Speaking was] really difficult because she [the teacher] doesn't have a good ear for pronunciation.
>
> I was too young to take advantage of it [spoken interaction] in school or outside.
>
> My teacher said I had a good accent but I never really used it.

When instances of ICI emerged during a teachers' description of a learning experience, the interviewer would prompt the respondent to clarify the interaction; but again, while a positive or negative impression was described, many of these responses did not clearly describe the teachers' perception of the ICI experienced:

Positive Implied:

One-to-one was good, but group work would not have been good.

Yes lots.

I learned through interaction.

Negative Implied:

There was a lack of support. It was a required subject. I hated it.

Not much. (It was) grammar rules and rote learning: pretty difficult and boring

Very sterile, not used to talk.

In situations where less developed conceptions of ICI were described, there was variation in how the limited ICI were perceived. The ICI taught in the French class were not ideal in that the variety of L2 was French Canadian, and not French from France.

Some participants reported that as L2 students they had felt uncomfortable interacting inside the classroom and they described either relief at not having to interact there, or intense stress in situations when it was required.

Wonderful, but I was embarrassed because my level was so low.

Interaction with teacher in Italian felt like being put on the spot ... listening okay, but responding in [L2] very difficult.

When it was my turn I was not understood well, and I became really frustrated, and that was the experience of the others [other L2 students] as well.

The most detailed descriptions of ICI in formal settings were in the L2 learning experiences that spontaneously emerged:

Was making some progress in a formal classroom setting, but with a largely enthusiastic teacher and a class that was very supportive.

Went to a different class and this didn't work.

So, what stands out to me is that a good teacher is important, but a group dynamic is really important to me.

The experience of being completely involved in a language is important.

The minute you enter [school name], you cannot speak any other language unless you're dying. Being totally immersed like that was really important. It (being immersed) helps in any language-learning situation. ... I was learning through interaction and listening a lot.

Talking was difficult but very good. My level was lower than the rest of the people. So it was a challenge learning at a level that was a little above mine. It was a good foundation.

It was a class like here. Not academic, but in the sense that you have students from all over the world and you are put in this one classroom with the speaking activities, listening activities, exactly as it is now, and all my friends were English speakers. I never really made the effort—and I could have, it would have been easy enough. They were very nice people. I do understand what it's like to be in another country and just not able to speak your own language.

I think you need a good mix of media and a lot of opportunity to build your skills. Like we (L2 students) couldn't even, weren't allowed to role-play. I had it as a major and we (L2 students) suggested a role-play and the teacher would write down on the board what words we were supposed to use. I thought, she is killing every activity that we are trying to do.

All teachers reported dissatisfaction with the quality and quantity of the ICI experiences they had had (see Table 6.5.4) in at least one formal learning instance. This occurred in situations where ICI were described as included in the course:

[In the immersion program] we learned oral first, then content, but actual speaking was limited; it was just content, really.

And also where ICI were not included:

Dark Days where you were taught to learn a language but not to speak it.

In such instances (when a student is formally studying L2), ICI would be good to have, but the problem here (Australia when participant was studying L2 in general

education) was the quality level. What they (language teachers) learned how to speak was quite bad. During that time, they (L2 education system) still focused on reading, not on interacting.

Table 6.5.4 *EAP Teachers' Responses to ICI in Formal L2 Learning*

55 Responses to ICI or Lack of ICI				
Positive Response to Presence of ICI	Negative Response To Presence of ICI	Positive Response to Limited or No ICI	Negative Response to Limited or No ICI	Response Unclear or N/A
20*	**2**	**1**	**20***	17

Note that one respondent gave two answers for one instance of learning (e.g.: ICI positive to the extent it was included, negative to the extent it was limited)

It is not surprising that, since all 28 teachers interviewed reported limited interaction inside the classroom in their formal L2 learning experiences, as learners they would most probably attribute their language learning process to other factors. One notable variation was in the descriptions of personal learning preferences in their own L2 learning experience. In situations where less developed conceptions of ICI were reported, teachers frequently described their L2 learning as being highly influenced by their individual learning preferences, aptitude for grammar, learning from written texts, or learning through content (reading newspapers, listening to TV or to tapes in their L2). On the other hand, in situations where more developed conceptions of ICI were reported, teachers' individual learning preferences were mentioned less frequently.

6.6.1 Formal Learning: OCI

There were consistencies across the whole group when participants described their experiences with OCI, in conjunction with their formal language learning in the classroom, as limited. The majority of teachers reported having no OCI experience in connection with formal classroom learning. The main cause for limitation on OCI in their formal learning experiences was that the formal learning experiences had taken place in countries where the L2 was not spoken. Some claimed that opportunities to interact outside the classroom had been possible but that as L2 learners, they had not been motivated to do so for political or social reasons. Others (usually those that had taken language as part of general education requirement) described experiencing the second language as a subject rather than a means of communication outside the classroom.

One difference that was highlighted when considering these negative experiences with the OCI categories was that in situations where more developed conceptions of OCI were reported, participants also frequently claimed that their formal language experiences were negative. However, in contrast to the individual learning styles highlighted in the less developed conceptions, in the more developed conceptions teachers credited their informal experiences—either through interacting in class with classmates in their L2, or seeking out and finding situations were they could interact with others in their L2—as being most beneficial to their L2 learning.

> P: I haven't travelled. I had to have informal practice in that I deliberately sought out speakers of those languages here in Australia.
>
> I: And in these first three contacts [OCI opportunities described by participant], what did you find most helpful to your language learning?
>
> P: Taking the initiative and practicing outside of class. Finding things to do, doing more than the homework, doing heaps more than the teacher asked. I

sought out speakers [L2 speakers]. Put an ad in the paper and found a way to practice.

6.6.2 Informal Learning: OCI

I didn't have those opportunities so I had to work really hard to improve my speaking skills later when I realised that I wanted to do something with English.

Interestingly, all the teachers described situations where opportunities to interact outside of the classroom had occurred (Table 6.5.5). The majority of these opportunities were associated with individuals' endeavours (as in the excerpt above) rather than as part of the formal L2 learning experiences.

Table 6.5.5	28 EAP Teachers as L2 Learners: OCI	
67 Instances of Informal Learning Through Out-Of-Class Interaction (OCI)		
(Out Of 28 Teachers)		
OCI: Yes		OCI: More Limited Amounts
50		17
OCI in Target Language Country	OCI Not In Target Language Country	OCI Location N/A
46	19	3

Out of the 28 teachers interviewed, 67 situations were described where the teachers as L2 learners had opportunities to interact outside the classroom; 17 of these instances included OCI opportunities in very limited amounts (e.g., asking directions while on holiday, speaking to a relative in L2 in infrequent phone calls, ordering at a restaurant, etc.). Many of the teachers as L2 learners had sought out opportunities on their own to travel to countries where the L2 was spoken. These teachers often described their OCI opportunities as limited in quantity because the period of time

spent overseas was short ("I was only there for eight weeks," "I stayed for a month," "I lived there for a year," "We stayed there for four months," and so on).

Again, there appeared to be consistency across the group, with all of the teachers interviewed describing instances of informal OCI as beneficial to their L2 learning (Table 6.5.6). There was variation across the group not only in the quantity of opportunities described but also in the quality of the OCI experienced. Some described experiences of living in countries where OCI opportunities were available, but where lack of ability or political and social reasons restricted use. Others reported unlimited opportunities for OCI.

Some descriptions of restrictions follow:

Ability:

Opportunity for speaking was good, but I was limited because my level was so low.

I went to [country]; it was positive, but I was not motivated. I didn't have to interact a lot because my friend [who had higher L2 proficiency] could translate for me.

I lived in [country] for a short time. People made an effort to understand me but my proficiency wasn't good.

Socially:

I did an exchange for one year at a university in [country]. The big problem was I didn't get to practice outside of class. I didn't have many friends and I lived in sort of an isolated place.

I was a foreigner living in [country] and I couldn't speak [L2] well at all, so the [nationality] reacted negatively towards me.

A large proportion of my [nationality] friends/acquaintances wanted to speak English [L1], which they spoke at a higher level than my [L2].

Political:

I worked in [country] for 4 years. But socialising outside of school was limited for political reasons.

I didn't socialise with the [nationality] people ever, but I would have to use it when I would go into a shop.

Unlimited:

I married a [nationality] woman/man so I had unlimited opportunities to interact at home.

I lived in [country] in a small town. No one spoke English so if I wanted to buy something or eat I had to use [L2].

I used [L2] almost exclusively for all childhood interaction for out-of-class activities.

I went on an exchange program [in middle school]. I had to speak [L2] at school; my homestay family was also really supportive—they would ask questions and let me practice.

Although the reasons and factors described as limiting OCI in the L2 varied, only 1 out of 67 instances of OCI reported was described as negative. Forty-eight of the instances were described as positive experiences beneficial to the teachers' L2 learning processes (Table 6.5.6). None of the teachers described limitations on OCI as positive, and 8 described specific restrictions as negative. This indicates that across the group and generally across both ranges of categorical descriptions, OCI were perceived to benefit L2 learning.

Table 6.5.6	*EAP Teachers as L2 Learners: Responses to OCI*			
OCI was Positive	OCI was Negative	Limitations on OCI: Positive	Limitations on OCI: Negative	Response to OCI Unclear or N/A
48	1	0	8	13
* Two Subjects indicated a Positive attitude to OCI, and a Negative attitude toward Limitations on OCI				

6.6.3 Consistencies and Differences in Experiences Described

In this chapter some of the differences and consistencies between experiences reported to influence the teachers' own learning experiences and teaching practices were illustrated—qualitatively with excerpts, but also, in a limited way, quantitatively with counts of word usage, number of instances reported, and types of responses. Consistencies emerged across the group in the ways ICI and OCI were described in specific lessons and in the different ways that these interactions were approached in actual lessons. All 28 teachers described formal and informal L2 learning experiences and specific opportunities to interact inside and outside the classroom (rows 1, 3, 4 and 5 Table 6.5.7).

Differences between how ICI and OCI were perceived emerged in the ways that teachers expressed their perceptions of both phenomena (ICI experiences were commonly described using professional teaching terms, whereas OCI experiences were commonly described as personal experiences in narrative form (row 2, Table 6.5.7). There were also general patterns across the ranges of categorical descriptions. At all levels of ICI categories, teacher training and prominent L2 methods were used as support for teaching practices reported in lessons. However, situated experiences beyond teacher training were more frequently apparent in transcripts where deeper-level ICI conceptions were reported. At all levels of categorical descriptions the teachers' prior experiences in teaching and learning were spontaneously described. Yet situated experiences that were portrayed as influential to a particular learning situation or a specific belief were more evident in circumstances where deeper-level conceptions of ICI and OCI were present in the transcripts (see column 3, Table 6.5.7).

Table 6.5.7 *Summary of Consistencies and Differences in Experiences Across Transcripts*			
ICI consistently emerged in EAP teachers' descriptions of experiencing specific lessons (unprompted)	OCI emerged less frequently in EAP teachers' descriptions of experiencing specific lessons (25X across 28 transcripts)	Differences between how ICI and OCI were perceived and approached across categories of description.	
ICI TT= 28/28 Exp. 46X Imp. 51x 1.CTA, 2. Skills/ Structures 3 TBT	OCI TT= 1/28 Exp. Described 1x	A B C D I E	General TT prominent methods used as support
			Specific experiences beyond TT more frequently described
ICI 28/28 teachers' perceptions commonly expressed in PTT	OCI 28/28 teachers' perceptions commonly expressed in narratives	A B C D I E	ICI and OCI as events or instances distinct from learning and teaching experienced in lesson
			Specific teaching and learning experiences within the lesson and outside lessons were described.
All teachers described formal L2 learning experiences: ICI (limited) TA (Unsatisfactory)	All teachers described at least 1 informal L2 learning experiences: OCI (limited)	A B C D I E	ICI and OCI experiences were described as influential factors in L2 learning experiences
			Specific ICI and OCI experiences, personal or observed, were described as influencing a particular belief.
All teachers described ICI in formal learning (limited).	All teachers described OCI in informal learning (limited)	21/28 teachers described 20 instances of ICI as beneficial and limited ICI as negative. 28/28 described OCI as beneficial and limited OCI as negative.	

6.7 Summary

An exploration of the similarities between categorical frameworks and the differences in experiences reported to be associated with individual's conceptual development of both phenomena suggests that highly developed conceptions of ICI and OCI are informed by experiences outside current teacher training.

This chapter has looked at the findings of a comparison of two studies that investigated the relations between the conceptions held by a group of L2 teachers regarding in-class and out-of-class interactions and classroom practices. Three notable findings were presented and discussed. The first was the variation between how these interactions were viewed in the second language learning/teaching process and how these interactions were associated with different experiences. This is an important finding, as conceptual development regarding OCI appears to be heavily influenced by experiences outside teacher training (Woods, 1996). The second finding suggests that L2 teachers' conceptual development of both phenomena appear to be closely related. Both these findings have important implications for the area of teacher training.

The third and most significant finding was that a comparison of the categorical frameworks suggests a variety of consistencies between teachers' beliefs and the actual classroom practices they adopted, illustrated through excerpts of the actual lessons and practices reported across the group (see Chapter 4 and 5, Illustrations 4.5 A-E and 5.5.1 A-D). This is important because teachers who reported highly developed conceptions of these interactions also adopted teaching strategies and classroom practices that are believed to support learners' deeper approaches to learning. This finding has implications for classroom practices and may be a small step towards developing and understanding the relations between what L2 teachers believe and what they practice, which in turn may influence how the learner approaches their own learning.

The categorical frameworks presented in Chapters 4 and 5 (developed through research methods extensively used in other areas) present L2 teachers' beliefs in a different perspective. Previous research on L2 teachers' beliefs has predominantly focused on reflections of individual teachers (Altrichter et al., 1993; Wallace, 1991). This type of research has been instrumental in informing our understandings of the

complexity and uniqueness of the L2 classroom. However, if research can assist in developing an understanding of the conceptions that exist across a group of teachers regarding factors considered to be important to the actual processes of learning, this will have very practical and useful implications for the field of L2 teaching (S. Borg, 2003b). Future investigations should look into further exploring the relations between teachers' experiences, conceptual understanding and practices presented here.