Ecologies of Language Learning and Teaching:

Teacher Cognition of Language Learning Environments Beyond the Classroom

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Summary

How language teachers conceptualise their students' language learning environments, the teacher's roles within these environments, and the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning in particular may significantly influence what teachers do in the classroom.

This research explores language teacher cognition of language learning and teaching beyond the classroom and provides insights into teacher learning processes as a consequence of an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments. Teacher attitudes towards the inquiry process, the development of teacher beliefs about their students' learning environments, their subsequent actions in teaching, and their reconceptualisation of their roles are examined. This is achieved through a multiple case study design involving narrative and thematic analysis of multiple qualitative data sources using visual data, semi-structured face-to-face interviews, and reflective journals entries by the researcher.

Teacher participants drew mind maps to represent their conceptualisation of a good language learning environment. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the teachers prior to and following their engagement with student survey responses and a mind map drawn by their students each pertaining to their language learning practices. In that way, teachers were encouraged to adopt a holistic view of international students' language learning practices and their language learning environments beyond the classroom from ecological perspectives. This research method also promoted a deeper understanding of student learning ecologies.

Four key findings emerged from this research investigation. First, teachers varied in their conceptualisations of ideal student language learning practices and the necessary elements of a good language learning environment beyond the classroom. Second, the teacher inquiry with an ecological perspective prompted teachers to better understand

students' language learning practices beyond the classroom using emerging issues from student data. Third, teachers' ecological views increased their awareness of the relationship between student out-of-class language learning and teaching through extensive reflective practice in the course of the inquiry. It also further guided teachers to develop their beliefs and teaching ideas on how to link in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences, and then to reconceptualise their role in student learning. As such, this study demonstrated that teacher learning occurred throughout the inquiry process while working collaboratively with the researcher. Fourth, the openness of the teacher towards learning from new information, the degree of teacher agency in practice, and the teacher's emotions appeared to shape differences in the development of beliefs and teaching actions as outcomes of teacher learning.

Overall, this study suggests that teacher reflection on daily practices is effective for promoting their ecological perspectives of student language learning. Moreover, it is also effective in teacher inquiries into student learning to prompt reconsideration of student learning needs and their role in supporting student learning beyond the classroom.

Based on its findings, this study contributes to an academic understanding of ecologies of language learning and teaching, particularly the role of teacher ecological practices. This is supported by an inquiry into student learning in relation to student learning ecologies. In addition, the empirical evidence showing the development of teacher cognition towards the reconceptualisation of the teacher's role in their situated contexts demonstrates the effective use of an ecological framework in teacher cognition research.

Statement of Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "Ecologies of Language Learning and Teaching: Teacher Cognition of Language Learning Environments Beyond the Classroom" has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research written only by me. Any help and assistance I have received in my research work and the preparation of this thesis has been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: 5201600591 on 15th August 2016.

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Sydney, December 2018

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Glossary

Transcription Conventions

I	Interviewer (the researcher)
D, J, K, L, M, R, T	Initials of the teachers
,	Clause final intonation
.	Sentence final intonation
“ ”	Quotation
…	Longer pause
(something)	Researcher explanation
[…]	Researcher omission

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBD	Central Business District
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MA	Master of Arts
MRes	Master of Research
PD	Professional Development
RQ	Research Question
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter begins with details of the motivation for, and background to, the proposed study, including the emergence of the research problems. Following this is a description of the context of this study. The primary purposes of the study and its significance are then outlined, along with details of the theoretical framework and how it was applied. The chapter concludes with an outline of the content of the thesis chapters.

1.1 Motivation

The motivation to pursue a PhD. degree emerged from reflections on my own language learning and teaching histories. I started my career as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher working at Japanese public schools with students aged from 13 to 18 years. I then taught at a private English language school for children. I have also had great study abroad experiences (as a learner) in the United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand while aged in my 20s. I pursued a Master of Arts (MA) degree in TESOL in the UK because I wanted to develop my knowledge of teaching English, as well as my language skills by living in an English-speaking country. When I returned to Japan to teach at public schools, my confidence as a teacher was high as I was effective at classroom management and could implement interesting teaching ideas. However, my approach to teaching was not so different to the time prior to completing my MA. I was not able to apply what I have learned into practice, notwithstanding that I had gained rich theoretical and practical knowledge during the course.

The next chapter of my teaching career started at a university in Thailand. I was regarded as an experienced EFL teacher there, and I was delegated some responsibility to run English language teacher professional development projects as a member of the project

team. My experience of teaching English and collaborating with other teachers at the university in the professional development projects provided me with new learning and widened my views of language learning and teaching. It also raised many interesting queries and issues for consideration. It was at this time that I started to engage in serious self-reflection about what language learning and teaching means to me, what I understand teacher learning to entail and encompass, and in what ways I could grow as a professional.

The first consideration for reflection was on my teaching approach. I found it challenging to encourage students to make use of their time, including their engagement in out-of-class learning opportunities. I even tried to address the issue using a "project-based learning" approach. This included mini projects such as having the students interview local merchants or travellers about relevant issues and then presenting the project findings in class. There was also a 'mobile-learning' task whereby the students recorded a speech or created a narration for a video clip using technology. I also established an 'English Corner' to provide the students with a designated space for social face-to-face interactions with English-speaking staff, and so on. The students appeared to feel some pressure to acquire at least adequate English language skills to secure a future job due to the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015. The students however did not really appear to be highly motivated to do more than the required assignments. It was questionable as to whether the students actually extended their language learning efforts to contexts outside of the classroom, or whether they could develop autonomy as language learners as I wished them to achieve.

The second consideration for reflection was teacher learning and professional development. It was unclear to me whether the teachers learned what they had hoped to from their participation in the various projects and workshops we had organised. I was not even sure whether the teachers actually felt the need to change their teaching practices in the first place. Conducting classroom action research and having journal articles published

were strongly encouraged by the university, but many teachers did not know how to accomplish these outcomes. For me, it appeared that teacher participation in workshops was a way to ensure teacher learning and professional development, rather than the development of their teaching practices to enhance student language learning. Thus, key questions emerged such as; In what ways do language teachers can grow as professionals? What should we learn to enhance students learning and to support students to take ownership of their learning? It is from these considerations that my motivation to learn through PhD. research as part of my professional development emerged.

1.2 Background – A Research Problem and Queries

To tackle the first reflection query, during my Master of Research (MRes) degree I explored international students' conceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class English language learning. This was undertaken to develop a better understanding of what students think about their own learning and how they learn in their particular contexts. In addition, it provided insights into whether their conceptions changed as a result of the change in learning environment that comes with studying abroad (Kashiwa, 2015; Kashiwa & Benson, 2018).

The findings from my research showed that student conceptions of English language learning in their home environment were different to their conceptions while studying in Australia due to their out-of-class learning experiences. This led to the conclusion that environmental factors including the teachers play a crucial role in how students conceptualise learning English in both study abroad and study at home contexts. The change in student conceptions of English language learning due to increased opportunities to use English outside of the classroom allowed the students to perceive a stronger connection between in-class and out-of-class language learning. As such, the students appeared to perceive a wider range of environmental affordances for language learning, to

develop their sense of agency in the language learning process, and to enhance their metacognitive awareness. The findings also provided a better theoretical understanding of ecologies of language learning through the empirical study of how learners reconfigure their language learning environment beyond the classroom when in a new environment.

The study also found that the teachers' understanding of the students' conceptual change about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning when transitioning to a new learning environment was important. In particular, integrating the two contexts would help students to exercise more meaningful language learning practices and construct a better language learning environment. However, the teacher participants in my study would not be aware of these findings unless they read my published article or thesis. This is a shame because the teacher interviews (which were not examined in-depth, but part of the project) appeared to indicate a mismatch between teacher expectations of what students should do towards language learning in out-of-class contexts and the reality of what the students actually did. Indeed, the teachers appeared to be unaware of the struggles the students experienced trying to fit in to the new learning environment. As a result, the teachers were unable to clearly define the nature of their role in supporting student learning beyond the classroom.

Current literature also provides little explanation of teacher cognition of student out-of-class language learning practices and affords limited attention to the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning. The student interview data in my MRes study indicated that both teachers and teaching approaches influenced significantly (positively or negatively) how students conceptualised language learning. Therefore, teacher cognition of students' language learning environments should be given greater focus in contemporary research. The main considerations teachers give to students' out-of-class language learning practices and how these practices influence their language learning as a whole is crucial. As is what teachers believe about their role in student language

learning as these beliefs affect what they do in the classroom and the student learning outcomes.

The following research questions and objectives emerged from the reflection on my teaching and academic career:

1) What do teachers know and believe about students' out-of-class language learning?
2) Teachers should have increased awareness of students' out-of-class language learning and how the two contexts can be effectively integrated to enhance language learning cycle for the student.
3) Teachers should learn more about their students from the project than from the researcher as they are the ones who can make a difference in their teaching practices to support student language learning.
4) How would a deeper level of understanding of students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom affect the teacher recognition of their role in student learning?
5) What can I as a researcher contribute to the participants, both teachers and students?
6) In what ways can research bridge the space between research and classroom practices? (Mackay, Birello, & Xerri, 2018)

The present study has two aims: to explore language teacher cognition of language learning and teaching beyond the classroom and to provide insights into teacher learning processes as a consequence of an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments. Through the research process, I positioned myself as a co-investigator to assist the teachers to explore their students' language learning practices, and to navigate their learning during the research process.

1.3 Context of the Study

The research was situated in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector in Sydney. The ELICOS sector includes privately owned colleges, university-attached English language centres, and vocational colleges that mainly provide English language training to people intending to undertake further formal education (ELICOS). Sydney is one of the major ELICOS centres in Australia, with the number of international students from across the world (although dominated by the Asia Pacific market, accounting for 67% of all students) steadily increasing in recent years (English Australia, 2017).

Although English is the dominant language spoken in Sydney, with 87.7% of Sydney residents speaking only English at home, it is statistically evident that Sydney is recognised as a multilingual city. In fact, recent reports indicate that a range of languages other than English are spoken within families, communities, workplaces, and public spaces (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017; Chik, Benson, & Moloney, 2018). ELICOS students also contribute to the multilingual landscape of Sydney (Benson, Chappell, & Yates, 2018).

The statistical evidence highlighting the linguistic diversity in Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017) as well as the stories from my MRes study participants prompted me to think more deeply about the impact of the city's features on the international students' language learning practices, and their learning and living experiences as a whole. I wondered how the international students reacted to the multilingual features of Sydney, particularly given that many of them came with expectation that they would learn English by immersing themselves in the language of an "English-speaking country/city". How do they conceptualise their language learning opportunities and respond to their environment? How much do ELICOS teachers know about the out-of-class language learning environments of students? How involved are teachers in the out-of-class language learning practices of the students? Technology has

offered language learners greater affordances for language learning outside of the classroom, but how about affordances in multilingual Sydney?

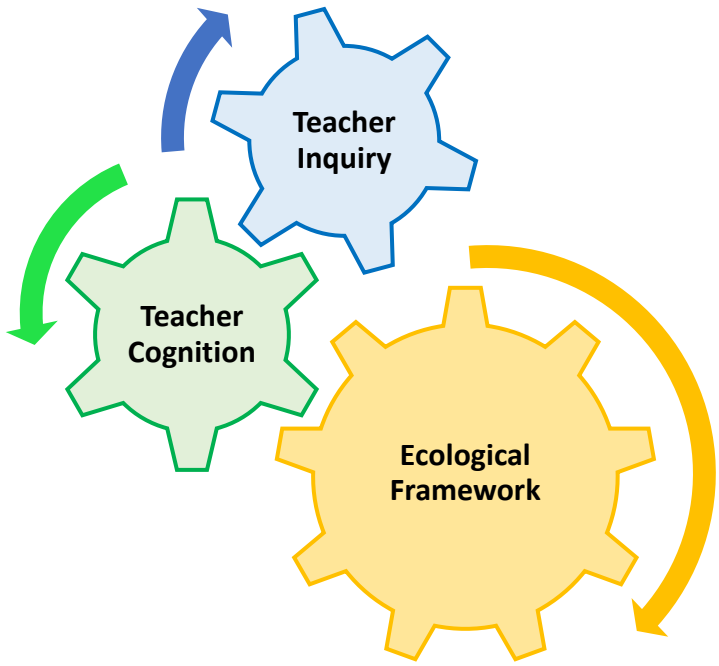
Consideration of language learning and teaching in this specific context guided me towards the identification of a narrower objective for my research investigation, with two key questions emerging: What do ELICOS teachers know and believe about the complex and dynamic language learning environments for international students in Sydney, and what do they do to support student language learning experiences in Sydney?

1.4 Key Integrated Aspects of the Study

The present study encompasses three integrated and interconnected aspects:

1. Teacher cognition as a focus area of study,
2. Teacher inquiry into student learning as a methodological approach, and
3. Ecologies of language learning and teaching as a theoretical framework.

Figure 1.1. Three key integrated aspects of the study



1.4.1 Development of Teacher Cognition through Inquiry into Student Learning

This thesis explores how teacher knowledge of student language learning beyond the classroom can influence the development of teacher cognition, including conceptions of language learning environments, and teacher beliefs about students' language learning practices beyond the classroom and the teaching actions required to facilitate such learning.

Teacher beliefs about students' out-of-class language learning practices particularly, and their beliefs about their role in supporting student learning beyond the classroom are explored by incorporating student information into the research process to examine how their beliefs develop as a result of their participation in the inquiry.

Teachers with several years of teaching experience may have more extensive subject-related knowledge and confidence in their teaching practices (e.g., classroom management practices) than teachers with relatively few years of teaching experience. This has implications for how intuitions deal with new classes. It is acknowledged that teachers' preferred teaching practices are shaped by their conceptions and beliefs about language learning and teaching. Moreover, that teachers apply their conceptions and beliefs to create safe, routine-like teaching practices that utilise similar teaching materials year by year without trying new things in the classroom. Teachers' personal lives change, and this may limit the time they have to devote to lesson planning and preparation. Designing and implementing practice changes then becomes more difficult due to the entrenched nature of the teachers' core beliefs about language learning and teaching, unless their beliefs are challenged by alternative experiences (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2017; Richards, 2015b). One may ask, however, is it okay for teachers to refrain from changing or developing their practices so as to maintain a familiar teaching process? The answer is clearly 'no' (Barduhn, 2002; James, 2001).

The ever-changing nature of language learning landscapes, ongoing developments in technologies which facilitate increased accessibility to the target language outside of the classroom, and the potential benefits of using such technologies for language learning have been the focus of much attention in recent years. Reflective teaching regards teacher professional development as "a lifelong process" (Nunan & Lamb, 1996, p. 120). It is therefore required more than ever to identify appropriate and effective teaching methods for implementation in today's classroom to match the evolving conceptions of language learning (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). In addition, teachers are increasingly expected to facilitate effective student learning through innovative and creative teaching practices. To achieve professional growth as a teacher, teacher inquiry into student learning through reflective teaching is required to redefine the meaning of learner-centred teaching (Nunan, 1988), including reconceptualising the role of the language teacher in student learning beyond the classroom.

1.4.2 Effective Teacher Learning for Professional Development

The present study aims to facilitate learning by the participating teachers and to better understand effective teacher learning for professional development.

It is recommended that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be initiated by the teacher for the purpose of improving student learning, and that an iterative approach to learning should be adopted by the teacher. As Hayes and Chang (2012) states, "At the heart of professional development is English teachers' willingness to open up their practice to public scrutiny" (p. 107). However, how to guide the teacher's willingness to learn or change, and how to ensure teachers achieve genuine professional development that enhances both teaching practices and student learning remain questions with unclear answers.

Borg (2015b) discussed two models with contrasting perspectives of in-service language teacher education: training-transmission and development-constructivist models. The training-transmission model refers to in-service training such as workshops or courses run by external agents. This model of teacher education can provide new knowledge for teachers to apply in the classroom, and several studies conducted worldwide have identified the efficacy and limitations of this approach. Regarding the limitations, they include the lack of a sustained, practical impact on teachers (Choi & Andon, 2014; Hayes & Chang, 2012; Kubanyiova, 2012; Lamb, 1995; Wang & Zhang, 2014), and the lack of participating teacher understanding of the meaning of such training (Jasper, 2006; Lee, 2011; Muijs et al., 2014). These limitations may emerge because the academic concepts and knowledge are not yet synthesised with the daily teaching and learning contexts of teachers (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

In contrast, the development-constructivist model represents "the classroom as a powerful site for teacher learning and systematic inquiry by teachers into their own practices as a key professional learning process" (Borg, 2015a, p. 543). Inspired by such ideas that emphasise a bottom-up process, the present study employs a teacher inquiry approach. This is in consideration of the fact that teachers are "at the centre of efforts" (p. 103) to learn and grow as professionals through their investigation into student learning (Mann, 2005). In addition, for the researcher to explore the development of teacher cognition as a potential mediating factor of teacher learning, this study examined teacher attitudes towards their engagement in the study project, their responses and reactions to the student information embedded into the inquiry, and their 'new' teaching actions as a result of their learning.

1.4.3 Ecological Framework

Ecologies of language learning and teaching was employed as a conceptual framework to formulate an adequate research design for the examination of the dynamics and interrelations of language learning and teaching beyond the classroom. Teacher cognition and teaching practices are vital part for both students and teachers to construct or reformulate language learning environments in relation to other interdependent elements of the environment. Therefore, the ecological framework played a significant role in the formulation of the entire research.

To navigate the teacher inquiry into student learning, teacher participants were encouraged to adopt the ecological framework to explore their students' language learning practices and environments in a holistic way. However, it was accomplished without formal learning of academic concepts or use of academic terminologies, but rather through the methodological approach. Therefore, the ecological framework was employed in the present research to support the researcher's examination of teacher development processes and as a lens through which the participants could view student learning.

The ecological framework is, to me, a way of extending the viewpoint from where one usually concentrates on language learning and teaching. It also provides a new way for teachers to reflect on their teaching and learning contexts more objectively. This increases their awareness of the relationship between what teachers do and the broader teaching and learning environment, and to understand that the change teachers make to their practices can influence student learning processes.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters: Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature to draw out the key components of the current research project. This includes the theoretical framework employed in this research and particular focus areas of research

study in the field. Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach and research design including the research settings, participant recruitment processes, instruments used for data collection, and methods for data analysis. Chapters 4 to 6 present the major findings of the study. The findings are discussed in relation to the broader literature and their impact and contributions to the field of language learning and teaching are provided in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 presents the conclusion to this thesis and includes the limitations of the study and the implications for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature and empirical studies relevant to the research topic. The purpose of the review is to discuss previous research findings relevant to the following two aims of the study:

1) To explore language teacher cognition of language learning and teaching beyond the classroom, and
2) To provide insights into teacher learning processes as a consequence of an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments.

The teachers' participation in the research inquiry aimed to stimulate reconsideration of the teacher's role in supporting student learning beyond the classroom and the best teaching practices to achieve this outcome. The findings from the literature review will also be used to inform the discussion of the main findings to emerge in the current study.

To draw out the key issues for discussion, this review of the literature encompasses four main focus areas:

1) A learning ecology
2) Language teaching beyond the classroom from ecological perspectives
3) Teacher learning and professional development
4) Teacher cognition and agency

It should be noted that due to the limitation of space, only selected studies which are closely related to the present study are reviewed, particularly on 'out-of-class language learning environment(s)' and 'teacher cognition and beliefs'.

2.2 Ecological Views – A Learning Ecology

The term 'ecology' was first coined by German biologist, Ernst Haeckel, in the nineteenth century. In 1866, Haeckel referred to ecology within the life sciences as "the totality of relationships of an organism with all other organisms with which it comes into contact" (van Lier, 2000, p. 251). In recent years, the notion of a learning ecology has been used across disciplines to investigate "the interrelation between an organism and other elements in an ecosystem and has been used as a metaphor to understand human phenomena, including psychology" (Menezes, 2011, p. 60). The concept of language ecology, or ecolinguistics, originated in 1972. Echoing Haeckel's concept, it was defined by Norwegian linguist, Einar Haugen, as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 2001, p. 57).

Barron (2004) defined a learning ecology as "the accessed set of contexts, comprised of configurations of activities, material resources and relationships, found in co-located physical or virtual spaces that provide opportunities for learning" (p. 6). She explained that "[e]ach context is comprised of a unique configuration of activities, material resources, relationships, and the interactions that emerge from them" (Barron, 2006, p. 195). In other words, learning takes place across settings simultaneously and individual learning ecologies emerge with all elements around them. In addition, learners themselves create or pursue activities outside the classroom in their environment.

Barron (2006) regarded all these dynamics of learning as an "individuals' overall learning ecology" (p. 195). In a similar vein, Brown (2000) described an ecology as "an open, complex, adaptive system comprising elements that are dynamic and interdependent. One of the things that makes an ecology so powerful and adaptive to new environments is its diversity" (p. 19). For him, a learning ecology is a collection of communities both formal and informal, physical and virtual, organised by individual learners through their interest, and constantly evolving to form individual learning

experiences. Similarly, Palfreyman (2014) posited that an ecology is a metaphor of looking at the learning situation as a system, "involving the interaction of various learners, teachers, materials, and other elements" (p. 176). This thesis adopts all of these notions of ecology and refers to it as an environment with a system involving complex and dynamic configurations of interrelations between various components to generate learning experiences.

2.2.1 Ecology of Language Learning and Teaching

The ecological framework applied in this study enables examination of the complexity and dynamics of language learning and teaching from a holistic perspective. Van Lier (2010) stated:

> An ecological approach aims to look at the learning process, the actions and activities of teachers and learners, the multilayered nature of interaction and language use, in all their complexity and as a network of interdependencies among all the elements in the setting, not only at the social level, but also at the physical and symbolic level. (p. 3)

Van Lier (2004) explained that "the ecological approach is not a single method or even theory, it is more of a world view and a way of working, and it can motivate a wide variety of research and practice" (p. 205). Kramsch (2002) described the ecology metaphor as the emergence of two different research approaches in applied linguistics; language acquisition and language socialisation:

> The metaphor, which captures the dynamic interaction between language users and the environment as between parts of a living organism, seems to offer a new way of bringing together frames from various disciplines to illuminate the complex relationship under investigation. (p. 3)

Kramsch emphasises that an ecological framework can highlight the "emergent nature of language and language learning, the crucial role of affordances in the environment, the mediating function of language in the educational enterprise" (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008, p. 26). As such, the ecological framework allows us to "rethink the

relationship of individuals and various learning environment beyond the classroom" (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008, p. 24).

The term 'contexts' is used to refer to the space where actors are situated. Emphasising an ecological perspective, 'environments' is used in this thesis to refer to "spatially grounded contexts of language use and language learning that are mapped out" (Benson et al., 2018, p. 23) both physically and virtually in the learners' life-worlds. I hope to navigate a broader and more relational view of the configuration of settings. Either 'contexts' or 'settings' is used to suggest a more specific and narrowed area within an environment/a space for life trajectories, or signifying limits and boundaries between other spaces and elements of language learning and teaching. However, it should be noted that a clear distinction has not always been made in the literature by other authors. Therefore, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably in this chapter.

2.2.2 Key Concepts of Ecology of Language Learning

The key concepts discussed within the ecological framework in this research are: context/environment, affordance and niche, agency, and time and ecology. In this section, definitions of each concept comprising the ecology of language learning are explained.

2.2.2.1 Contexts (Language Learning Environments)

The ecological framework points attention to the context of language learning and teaching. It also highlights the complex, dynamic, and emergent nature of the context which shapes the learning process, and which is shaped by the learner. As Leather and van Dam (2003) explained:

> There is *always* a context of acquisition that must be taken into account, and it is always complex, dynamic and in principle emergent. (p. 19, italics in original)

Luckin (2010) elaborated on the notion of context in her consideration of the contemporary technology-mediated environments of learners:

> Context matters to learning; it is complex and local to a learner. It defines a person's subjective and objective experience of the world in a spatially and historically contingent manner. Context is dynamic and associated with connections between people, things, locations and events in a narrative that is driven by people's intentionality and motivations. Technology can help to make these connections in an operational sense. People can help to make these connections have meaning for a learner. (pp. 29-30)

For Luckin (2010), the learner is at the centre of the context through which activities and interactions with people, artefacts, and environments are experienced. In addition, meanings are generated through such lived experiences. Therefore, the context is created by the learner through interactions. From this conceptualisation, Luckin (2010) introduced the Ecology of Resources model of context by identifying resources as constituting elements in a language learning environment. She also asserted that this framework was best for examining student learning needs (Luckin, 2008, 2010; Luckin, Clark, & Underwood, 2013).

Luckin (2008) regarded "a learning context as an *Ecology of Resources: a set of inter-related resource elements, including people and objects, the interactions between which provide a particular context"* (p. 451, italics in original). The Ecology of Resources framework she adopted in several projects enabled her to explore the relationships among various resources. In turn, it helped her to design technological interventions to link them and to identify the ways in which available resources, including the learners themselves, can best support their learning needs (Luckin, 2008, 2010; Luckin et al., 2013).

Also emphasised in the model is that the experiences individual learners at the centre of the Ecology of Resources bring with them impact the interactions of each element in the Ecology. Filters in the Ecology refer to constraints in learning situations. Identifying the relationship between resources and filters thus provides clearer directions on how to scaffold learning and to the adjustment that can be made to the learning situations.

Palfreyman (2014) described the components of constructing a language learning environment as variable 'resources': enabling resources (books, people), which more directly contribute to learning by providing access to learning resources, learning resources (knowledge, motivation), and discursive resources (approaches, expectations, identities). The latter involves more psychological variables and can influence how learners and teachers understand the situations and internalise the information related to a learning opportunity.

In relation to language teaching contexts, the promotion of learner and teacher autonomy from an ecological perspective is also discussed. Palfreyman (2014) conceptualised a learning situation as a system and referred to "the whole range of affordances which are accessed and drawn upon by learners as resources of various kinds" (p. 178). As such, Palfreyman (2006) argued that learner autonomy from an ecological perspective was "a developing awareness of these resources and of one's own use of them" (p. 354). He also describes it as "a capacity for *intentional use in context of a range of interacting resources toward learning goals"* (Palfreyman, 2014, p. 182, italics in original). Moreover, he stressed that the conditions are changeable within the development of learners in their lifetime:

> The autonomous learner will identify in her environment resources relevant to her purposes, make effective use of these, be open to new affordances in her environment and be able to adapt to changing circumstances by seeking out new resources or adopting new ways of using them for learning. (Palfreyman, 2014, p. 182)

White, Direnzo, and Bortolotto (2016) argues the three dimensions of distance language learning by highlighting the importance of understanding the complex nature of context: "the learner, the context and the interface established between each learner and their individual contexts, based on the actions they take and the interplay between themselves and their contexts" (p. 5). For the authors, context is defined from the learner-context interface perspective and includes:

> not only the features of the learning environment (such as learning spaces, target language sources, course work, assessment, sources of support) but also immediate features at any one moment (such as the task environment and interactions), which learners may identify as affordances and constraints in the moment. Working within the interface they have developed up to that point, learners both perceive and respond to features of the context in different ways, meaning that the context is highly variable for each individual, and dynamic, changing moment by moment. (p. 6)

Learner-context interface theory (White, 2009; White et al., 2016) aims to elucidate and accentuate the interplay of individual language learners as agents, the target language, and the contexts. It is particularly concerned with technology-mediated learning environments from an ecological perspective. A meaningful learning experience using the target language in a social context is considered a key element in constructing and contributing to the development of the interplay (White et al., 2016). With the emergence of research on the informal and private learner life-worlds, the relationship between such diverse language learning environments and language learning experiences has emerged as an important aspect for enquiry.

White et al. (2016) investigated Spanish learner's learning processes, the construction and negotiation of learning spaces, and the interaction between learners and the environment. They did this by identifying "the complex, emergent and mutually-constitutive relationship between technology-mediated contexts, language use and learners as individual agents" (p. 12) and argued the dynamic and complex nature of the ways of evolving the learning sites through everyday technology. The authors pointed out that the strands of the interface the learners demonstrated influenced "the learners themselves, their views of the learning environment, the actions they take as learners, and the ways they perceive, draw on and work with the affordances and constraints of the setting" (White et al., 2016, p. 13).

The temporal and dynamic dimension of the context is also emphasised as a characteristic of the learner-context interface. This implies that individual learner

perceptions and responses to the contexts are variable and the context features change over time as influenced by changes in other associated constructing elements (White & Bown, 2018).

Reinders (2014) also pointed out that "[l]earners tailor the environment with their preferred tools and use those tools in the ways that suit them, usually at times and in places convenient to them" (p. 15). The emergence of technology-mediated life styles has implications for the notion of 'seamless learning' to describe contemporary language learning. Indeed, mobile learning is characterised as "a learning style where a learner can learn in a variety of scenarios and in which they can switch from one scenario or context (such as formal and informal learning, personal and social learning, etc.) to another easily and quickly, with the personal device as a mediator" (Wong, 2012, p. 19). As such, arguments have been made for "mobile devices as a ubiquitous mediator" (Looi et al., 2009, p. 1131) in the creation of a personal 'learning hub' which provides affordances, learning activities, and resources for constructing individual learning environments (Looi et al., 2009; Wong & Looi, 2010).

According to Mercer (2016), "contexts (past, present and future anticipated) are simultaneously part of the current self system" (p. 19). As such, individual differences in forming an ecology of language learning is another key reason to give attention to context. Individual variations in the characteristics and contextual circumstances (Dörnyei, 2009) are highlighted as the interplay between learners and the environment that shape language acquisition processes. Variations in online out-of-class language learning experiences due to the uniqueness of individual learners were also reported in Sockett's (2014) study.

The language learning environment is one of the main concerns in the complexity system (Larsen-Freeman, 2012; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). As stated by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008):

> Embodied learners soft assemble their language resources interacting with a changing environment. As they do so, their language resources change. Learning is not the taking in of

> linguistic forms by learners, but the constant adaptation and enactment of language-using patterns in the service of meaning-making in response to the affordances that emerge in a dynamic communicative situation. (p. 158)

As such, the ecological approach is best suited for an examination of the complex and dynamic interactions of the language learning and teaching environment components, as van Lier (2004) has indicated:

> the ecological approach looks at the entire situation and asks, what is it in the environment that makes things happen the way they do? How does learning come about? Ecology therefore involves the study of context. In addition, things are happening all the time, in schools, classrooms, at desks and around computers. So ecology is also the study of movement, process, and action. (p. 11)

Although the importance of recognising the emergent and dynamic nature of the context/environment has been pointed out, along with the ample resources beyond the classroom available to learners, the environment itself does not guarantee 'learning'. Indeed, "the learner's interaction with these resources is mediated by various other factors" (Palfreyman, 2014, p. 177). One of the key drivers of learning in the environment is 'affordances'; namely, the possibilities for action "available in the environment to an individual, independent of the individual's ability to perceive them" (McGrenere & Ho, 2000, p. 179). In addition, emphasis should be placed on the pedagogical design to bridge in-class and out-of-class, and formal and informal, learning experiences via utilising the affordances beyond the classroom so that learners can shape a seamless learning environment (Looi et al., 2009).

2.2.2.2 Affordances and niche

Gibson (1979) introduced the concept of affordances, referring to "the fit between an animal's capabilities and the environmental supports and opportunities (both good and bad) that make possible a given activity" (Gibson & Pick, 2003, p. 15). A niche is defined as "a set of affordances" (p. 128) that refers "more to *how* an animal lives than to *where* it

lives" (Gibson, 1979, p. 128, italics in original). An ecological niche is also described as "the part of ecological space (defined by all combinations of biotic and abiotic environmental conditions) where the species population can persist and thus utilise resources and impact on its environment" (Polechová & Storch, 2008, p. 2). Affordances and niche are two pivotal concepts that help us to understand the reciprocity of the interrelation and the language learning and teaching mechanisms that take place in the environment (Menezes, 2011).

Affordances

The concept of affordances is applied in many disciplines such as Psychology, Sociology, etc. In terms of Applied Linguistics, Shotter and Newson (1982; cited in van Lier, 2000), explained affordances in the following way:

> In terms of language learning, the environment is full of language that provides opportunities for learning to the active, participating learner. The linguistic world to which the learner has access, and in which she becomes actively engaged, is 'full of demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablements and constraints – in short, affordances. (p. 253)

Technology is often identified as a mediating tool that offers learners more space and time beyond the classroom, also increases the learner affordances for autonomous learning (Barron, 2004, 2006; Lai, 2015a; Lai & Gu, 2011; Reinders & White, 2011). Environments in which there is increased social interaction such as non-formal social communities also enable learners to perceive affordances beyond the classroom (Murray & Fujishima, 2013; Murray, Fujishima, & Uzuka, 2014). Menezes (2011) illustrated the concept of affordances by claiming that "different individuals have different perceptions of the world and that the complementarity and interaction between individuals and the environment emerge from different social practices" (p. 61). Aronin and Singleton (2012) pointed out the importance of individual self-awareness of affordances and designing affordances within their environments:

> It is important that not only researchers and practitioners (teachers, educators, parents, community and political actors) but also language users and learners themselves should be

> aware of how to identify or, if necessary, design new affordances for language acquisition and learning. (p. 311)

For the investigation of learner beliefs, Bernat (2008) emphasised the 'situative' character of language learning, especially the concept of affordances, by viewing it from an ecological perspective:

> A key characteristic of any ecological approach is its contextualized or 'situative' character. Investigation typically focus on phenomena at the macro level (e.g., study of the school or classroom environment) and/or micro level (e.g., study of perceptions, affordances, and actions). *Affordances,* simply put, are opportunities for interaction which tie perception and attention to activity. In this view, context plays an important role and is not just something that surrounds language. (pp. 15-16, italics in original)

Regarding in-class language learning environments, the influence of physical classroom learning environments (e.g., Pielstick, 1988; cited in Williams & Burden, 1997) reveals that "it is the learners' perceptions and interpretations of their environments that will affect their learning" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 192). Moreover, every classroom has "a multitude of perceptions: all the participants, teacher and learners, perceive what is happening in their own particular way" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 198). All actors have perceptions of the ideal classroom environment which may in fact be different to the actual learning environment. In addition, there may be a difference/mismatch between the teacher's and the learners' perceptions of what the classroom environments should be like. As such, there is value in raising teacher awareness of individual variations in their perceptions of affordances when constructing learning environments. Furthermore, there are benefits to drawing the teacher's attention to the students' voices on their preferences and needs in the environment to better understand the notion of affordances (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Niche

An ecological niche is conceptualised as a relational position of animals/species within an ecosystem, with the necessary requirements for individual persistence and a functional and

ecological role in the ecosystem (Polechová & Storch, 2008). Menezes (2011) adapted Polechová and Storch's (2008) three conceptions of niche to language learning: "(1) niche as an environment mediated by language; (2) niche as a place to act in by using the language; and (3) niche as a language user position in a discourse community" (p. 63). Menezes (2011) pointed out that a learning cycle can occur "when one responds to opportunities for interaction, to demands and constraints, or to offerings and obstacles, reorganising and adapting themselves to the changing conditions in a niche" (p. 62). Language learners create niches by recognising the affordances offered to them in the environment beyond the classroom and by responding to them using the language (Menezes, 2011). In other words, learners need to recognise opportunities to learn the target language in the environment and to make use of the environment for learning.

The idea of individual differences in perceptions of a context, as well as their perceptions and awareness of affordances for language learning, relate to the concept of 'spatial turn' and distinguishing between 'space' and 'place'. Spaces, both physical and virtual, are transformed into places through actions and activities carried out by actors. The actors ascribe value to the space, in this case, the value to language learning (Cresswell, 2004; Murray & Lamb, 2017).

Zheng et al. (2018) explained that a community, which is "emergent, dynamic, place-making and ecological in nature" (p. 45), is created by people experiencing social events together and by assigning value to their participation. As such, 'values realizing permeates all of language occurring in shared social events and experiences' (Zheng et al., 2018, p. 47). Steffensen (2013) described such human behaviours of social interactions where language is used in a context as "ecological niche construction" (p. 219) by examining human problem finding/solving behaviours in real-life situations (at work place). A niche for language learning can thus be understood as the social construction of place where learners recognise the value of language learning by participating in social events in which

they perceive the affordance of their environment. Learners can transform digital spaces into learning places using everyday technology to realise affordances and construct niches through interactions. In turn, the learners can make sense of the value of the place for language learning and then develop autonomy while they enjoy doing things with technology (Chik, 2018a; White et al., 2016).

In consideration of the relationship between the learner, their ever-changing environment, and their perceptions of affordances and actions for crafting a learning niche, the next section discusses the role of agency in making it happen.

2.2.2.3 Agency

Agency is a prominent component of the ecology framework. Ahearn's (2001) definition of agency is often used; that is, "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (p. 112). Learners (and teachers) are therefore regarded as "social agents collaborating with other people and using the tools and resources available to them in their surrounding environment" (Kalaja, Alanen, Palvianen, & Dufva, 2011, p. 47). For van Lier (2010), agency plays a central role in learning. As such, he defines it as "movement, a change of state or direction, or even a lack of movement where movement is expected" (p. 4). Moreover, 'movement' includes physical, social, and intellectual activity. In this sense, van Lier (2010, 2011) asserts that teaching is guiding and promoting agency, and a major task of pedagogy is thus to create an agency-rich environment.

Gibson's (1979; cited in Withagen, de Poel, Araujo, & Pepping, 2012) conception of affordances is "opportunities for action that exist in the environment" (p. 251). Based on this conceptualisation, Withagen et al. (2012) argued that a relationship exists between affordances and agency by referring to Reed's (1993, 1996) accounts of the ecological theory of agency. The authors claim that affordances should be regarded not only as 'perceived action possibilities', but also as something that invites behaviour. In this way, it

is a demonstration of agency when people choose how to utilise the affordances within the environment.

In the field of Applied Linguistics, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) described learners as "people [with] human agency [who] actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning" (p. 145) from sociocultural perspectives.
Duff (2012) elaborates on the notion of agency from a sociocultural perspective as follows:

> People's ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation. (p. 414)

In relation to identity and autonomy in second language acquisition, Menezes (2013) indicated that agency is "understood as control over life" (p. 64), and that "identity and agency are two sides of the same coin" (p. 65). This complexity view implies that agency determines if learners can relate to the world around them. In turn, Menezes (2013) stated that "learner agency interacts with the environment and as such it may be influenced by affordances and constraints" (p. 65). Mercer (2011) also applied a complexity view of agency, stating:

> Learner agency exists as latent potential to engage in self-directed behaviour but how and when it is used depends on a learner's sense of agency involving their belief systems, and the control parameters of motivation, affect, metacognitive/self-regulatory skills, as well as actual abilities and the affordances, actual and perceived, in specific setting. (p. 435)

Viewed from a dialogical, relational, and socio-cognitive perspective, Dufva and Aro (2015) described agency as "emergent in the dynamic, continually fluctuating 'eventing' in time and place" (p. 37). Emphasis is placed on learner involvement in social interactions, learning experiences, and the emotions and values which shape the contexts and interrelationships therein. Aro (2016) also argued that learner agency is emergent and renegotiated over time in relation to the influence of learner-related interpersonal and intrapersonal factors within the given environment. A longitudinal study (more than a decade duration) of Finish learners of English conducted by Aro (2016) reported that

learner agency emerged and was renegotiated via their evaluation of the learning environment and felt experiences beyond the classroom.

Huang and Benson (2013) argued the interrelatedness of the three major concepts: autonomy, agency, and identity by clarifying the definition of each concept. According to the authors, agency carries "a focus on self-conscious reflexive learning actions while autonomy is concerned with a sense of being in control of the learning process" (Huang & Benson, 2013, p. 16). Therefore, agency could be considered as a prerequisite component or "a point of origin" (p. 34) for the development of autonomy (Benson, 2007). Applying Norton's (2000) definition of identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future"' (p. 5), Huang & Benson (2013) pointed out that "identity conceptualisation and construction can also be a point of origin for autonomy" (p. 22) and tie with autonomy as they evolve in tandem in a context (Chik, 2007). In other words, learner agency plays a crucial role in aligning learner autonomy with the construction and negotiation of identity.

Palfreyman's (2014) account of the pedagogy for learner autonomy applies Cook's (2007) terminology, 'learner/user generated contexts'. He suggests that by developing learner awareness of language learning outside of the classroom environment (which is more likely rich in resources, but where the learner has limited awareness of its possibilities for learning) and by guiding learners to reflect upon "how well they do (tasks), in what circumstances, with whom and why", "learners come to reframe experiences in their life outside the classroom as opportunities to practice and learn" (p. 187). A key point in the argument for the affordances of mobile technology in language learning contexts, Pachler, Bachmair, and Cook (2010) had pointed out that "very important in this context is for us the notion of agency, namely the creation by the user/learner together with other

relevant parties, such as teachers and peers, of situations conducive to the use of mobile technologies as frames for meaning making" (p. 65).

2.2.2.4 Time and Ecology

Timescales are highly relevant because language learning is considered as a "nonlinear, emergent process of meaning-making" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 7). Moreover, it is a perspective of the context-situated dimension in ecology of learning where the development of learning takes place over time and with variable changes in one's language learning pathway (Barron, 2010). Time and ecology (both discussed in this section) are other prominent elements concerning the construction of the temporal dimensions of a learning ecology (Barron, 2006; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Lai, 2017; Luckin, 2010; Wong, 2012).

As van Lier (2004) emphasises, ecological research should document "processes of actions, perceptions and learning unfold gradually over time" (p. 207). This is rather than simply capturing one-shot probes that consider individual language learning development within a longer lifelong learning timescale.

Regarding the changes considered as part of learning for human development, Lemke (2002) claimed:

> Fundamental change in attitudes or habits of reasoning cannot take place on short timescales. Even if short-term events contribute toward such changes, it is only the fact that they are not soon erased, do not quickly fade, and are reinforced by subsequent events which makes for the kind of persistent change we really mean by "learning." It is the longer-term process, including the effects of subsequent events, which determines for us the reality of basic human social development. (p. 75)

Evans (2007) points out that the language learning development occurs simultaneously across multiple levels and multiple timescales:

> Language development is no longer seen as a process of acquiring abstract rules, but as the *emergence* of language abilities in *real time*, where changes over days, months, and years and moment-to-moment changes in language "processing" are the same phenomena, differing only in their timescales. (p. 130, italics in original)

From a teacher education viewpoint, Wedell (2013) described how any diverse educational environment contains layers of context which are both visible (a physical place such as classroom, ethnicity) and invisible (culture, beliefs and expectations). Therefore, it should be concerned with "the point in chronological time" (p. 30) when describing it as aspects that change over time. He emphasised the importance of understanding the features of the environment where teachers (and learners) are situated. This is because they "can strongly influence what does and does not happen in classrooms" (p. 32), are useful for practicing to "make appropriate decisions in whatever situations arise" (p. 35) and, of course, can be used to support learners (Wedell, 2013). For Wedell (2013), having a better understanding of the diversity of contexts in which the language is taught, developing confidence in making instructional decisions in the classroom, and developing an understanding of teaching through reflection are all part of professional development of teachers as learners. That is, "learning teaching becomes a process of lifelong learning" (Wedell, 2013, p. 35).

In addition to the above key ecological framework concepts, the nature of individual differences should be kept in mind. This is because learners have their "unique repertoires of input and interaction" through variable contacts with the target language in their everyday life, especially their engagement in informal learning outside of the classroom (Sockett, 2014, p. 22). Sockett (2014) reminds us that each learner has "a highly individualised model of what English is and how it works, and subsequent formal learning experiences will be impacted by these unique perspectives" (p. 22).

2.3 Language Learning Beyond the Classroom

While classroom-based research on language learning and teaching is a long, well-established field, we have considerably limited understanding about language learning in out-of-class or beyond the classroom contexts. This is partly due to the rather messy,

discursive situations in which learning takes place across space and time. In addition, it is due to the limited access and controls teachers and researchers have for investigation (Chik, 2018b).

Reinders and Benson's (2017) ecological perspective is that "[learning beyond the classroom] LBC does not exclude the classroom but rather CONNECTS WITH it" (p. 563, emphasis in original). The authors described the field further as follows:

> LBC is not just a matter of learning away from the classroom but is rather, in many cases, an extension of classroom learning. Increasing our attention to LBC may, therefore, lead to a realisation that the classroom is less THE CENTRE of most learners' learning, than just one of many centres. (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p. 574, emphasis in original)

The scope of language learning beyond the classroom proposed by Benson (2011a) had four dimensions: location, formality, pedagogy and locus of control. Then additional dimensions; trajectory and a temporal dimension were added in Chik's (2014) exploratory study on second language learning practices through everyday digital gaming among young gamers in Hong Kong. The dimensions provide us a comprehensive framework to explore the nature of language learning beyond the classroom as context-situated, multiple, dynamic, temporal, and "highly dependent on the language being learned and the context of learning" (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p. 574).

2.3.1 Introduction

Studies of language learning have examined the benefits of learner engagement in out-of-class language learning activities in various ways (Benson & Reinders, 2011; Nunan & Richards, 2015). Along with the increased opportunities to access the target language outside schools through technology-mediated tools, for instance, potential benefits of out-of-class learning are widely explored in recent studies. This fosters greater learner autonomy, creates more affordances by expanding their learning time and spaces, involves more interactions with/in the outer world, develops linguistic skills, and makes learners

more ready to use the materials available. There has been a shift of emphasis in the research focus towards out-of-class language learning as an extension of in-class learning (Benson, 2013a). This phenomenon suggests that out-of-class language learning should not be dismissed as it can influence how languages are learned and the mechanism of the language learning environment as a whole.

2.3.2 Out-of-class Language Learning

In recent years, empirical studies have increasingly focused on out-of-class language learning. The study findings often argue that learner involvement in out-of-class language learning activities promotes the development of language skills and independent learning practices using the variable resources available. Such studies usually introduce creative teaching methods to enhance student engagement with the target language beyond the classroom contexts. In addition, they highlight the benefits of using existing everyday resources for the purpose of language learning. Some studies have a clear 'learning' purpose such as self-access language learning, and project-based learning (Grau & Legutke, 2015; Mercado, 2015); whereas, others focus on more informal, entertainment-like features. They include the use of digital games (Chik, 2014; Reinders, 2012), multimedia (e.g., YouTube, TV, movies) (Benson, 2016; Hanf, 2015; Sundqvist, 2011), social media (e.g., Facebook) (Beatty, 2015; Sockett & Toffoli, 2012) or out-of-class activities with social interactions to support autonomous language learning (e.g., English Café, English Corner) (Gao, 2009; Murray, 2014; Murray & Fujishima, 2013). Study abroad contexts are also the popular areas as learner potential for authentic language use and the different out-of-class language learning environment are significant (Cadd, 2015).

As such, a wide range of studies have illustrated that out-of-class language learning is highly variable and the choice of activities to engage with particular devices is different from person to person, and context to context (Stockwell, 2013). With increased attention

to out-of-class language learning, current literature provides a deep understanding of the characteristics of contemporary out-of-class language learning. However, since "out-of-class learning is only one component of learning (out of many others) and can make a greater contribution to learning when it is connected with in-class learning" (Lai, 2015b, p. 267), in-class and out-of-class language learning should be viewed as interrelated components. In turn, learners traverse their learning experiences in both contexts, which are individual language learning experiences. In other words, the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning should be highlighted from both the learner and teacher perspectives to create an effective language learning and teaching environment.

2.3.3 The Relationship Between In-class and Out-of-class Language Learning and Teaching

Empirical research studies continue to contribute to our academic understanding of the benefits of out-of-class language learning by bridging the gap between in-class formal learning experiences and informal learning experiences outside of school. However, less is known about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning.

Language teachers generally agree that in-class student language learning should be linked to future out-of-class activities. In addition, they acknowledge that students should spend more time outside of the classroom to revise what they learn in-class. Lastly, they argue that students should build up their vocabularies and practice listening and speaking in a self-directed manner to achieve higher goals. However, such links between in-class and out-of-class language learning are radically untheorized as there has been little research focusing on this aspect. There is much to explore about "the relationship between instructed language learning and L2 use outside of classroom contexts" (Higgins, 2009, p. 402) and vice versa; namely, learning a language outside of the classroom and using what is learnt during in-class or other situations. That is, less is known about the relationship

between classroom teaching, its effect on student learning, and its adaptation in other contexts to facilitate a learning ecology.

Eskildsen and Theodórsdóttir (2017) compared Canadian students' methods of constructing learning spaces inside and outside of the classroom through interactions with the target language (i.e., Icelandic). The authors argued the importance of breaking down the barriers between the two contexts. As a pedagogical enhancement, they suggested that the teacher bring the learners' out-of-class everyday language practices into the classroom to achieve real-life, locally contextualised and situated language learning. The Eskildsen and Theodórsdóttir (2017) study is limited to a discussion of speaking interactions. Moreover, the example in-class activity they included to resemble an out-of-class language learning experience was to invite local university students to participate in conversations with L2 students (the study instrument). However, to me, such an activity seems a special, impromptu event without integrating it into existing curriculum. Even though writing and reading were rarely demonstrated in out-of-class contexts, these skills could nonetheless still be developed if teachers were aware of the importance of breaking the barriers, and of coming up with creative teaching ideas.

The integration of in-class and out-of-class learning settings is emphasised because it helps to maximise the potential of out-of-class learning activities (Grau & Legutke, 2015; Webb, 2015). When the two settings are integrated, a synergy can be developed whereby the learning space is "jointly constituted by both the teacher and the learners" with possibly common structure of awareness of learning (Tsui, 2004, p. 185). Project-based language learning is regarded as one way to connect in-class and outside of the classroom learning and to make language learning more relevant and meaningful (Grau & Legutke, 2015). Through project-based learning, Grau and Legutke (2015) found that learners recognise in-class learning as the core learning space to provide them input, and then "they

themselves begin to bridge the gap between their exposure to English in their free time and the world of school learning" (p. 270).

Lai, Zhu and Gong (2015) conducted a research investigation of out-of-class English learning quality among middle-school students in China. The authors reported that helping students to engage in diverse out-of-class learning experiences, which are characterised as meaning-focused, can lead to a healthy balance of overall learning experiences with form-focused in-class learning in China. They also reported that parents (for this age group) and teachers are influential figures in how students construct holistic language learning experiences. Therefore, it is essential to "understand the importance of diversifying [the students'] learning experiences by selecting and using out-of-class learning activities and venues in ways that compensate for what is lacking in their in-class learning" (Lai et al., 2015, p. 300).

My previous study found that the integration of in-class and out-of-class language learning meant learners could perceive wider affordances and niches in their environments (Kashiwa, 2015). Learner metacognitive awareness of the language learning pathways and a pro-active attitude towards making use of the affordances and resources in the environment are the key elements to integrating the two contexts (Kashiwa & Benson, 2018). It is therefore important to further explore the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning. Teacher roles for linking the two contexts should also be investigated to guide their implementation in the classroom. In the examination of teacher perspectives of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning, it is also important to consider what teachers should be aware of when they make instructional decisions. For instance, the concept of affordances and niche, and the role of agency in language learning – both illustrated as the ecological framework – would be useful to understand the language learning and teaching environments constructs.

A useful ecological view of language learning is the idea that out-of-class language learning is the time and space expansion of in-class learning. Barron (2006) points out that the language ecology framework "highlights the need to better understand how learning outside school relates to learning within schools or other formal organizations, and how learning in school can lead to learning activities outside school" (p. 193). Technology is increasingly regarded as a useful tool to expand learning time and spaces. In addition, it is often viewed as a catalyst to fuse informal and formal learning which can enhance learner control over their learning experiences and the learning environment (Hall, 2009). As such, learner technology use outside of the classroom or teacher beliefs and behaviours towards the use of technology beyond the classroom have been explored from ecological perspectives (Lai & Gu, 2011; Lai, Yeung, & Hu, 2016).

In arguing for the reconceptualisation of learner autonomy due to the impact of technology in educational practices, Reinders and White (2016) emphasised "the lack of clear links between classroom and out-of-class learning" (p. 146). They did this by referring to the research outcomes reported by Reinders (2007) in his study on technology-supported self-access language learning and advising. Despite student and staff satisfaction regarding the use of self-access language learning resources to facilitate individual self-directed learning, Reinders (2007) found the students did not continue to use the program over the long term. He reported that the students appeared to have their mind set on particular learning styles and materials, and that there was a lack of validation and recognition of technology-supported self-access learning by students. Furthermore, he suggested the need to increase integration of self-access learning into the entire language learning experiences of learners by linking them with classroom-based learning (Reinders, 2007).

Sockett (2014) argued that the teacher's role is challenged by the significant changes in the relationship between learners and the learning environment outside of the

classroom. According to the author, there used to be a vague distinction between EFL and ESL contexts due to the presence of and the learner's exposure to the target language, especially via online activities. Sockett (2014) illustrated that in-class and out-of-class language learning are two different worlds due to the contradicting characteristics of language learning. He claimed that teachers should understand the language learning characteristics that students encounter. In turn, the new role of the teachers is to try "to build bridges between these two worlds" and "to fully embrace the value of such informal activities and their role as mediators between these two very different worlds" (p. 146).

It is widely recognised that out-of-class language learning experiences are part of the ecology of language learning and are linked to other elements of the overall learning experience. However, both learner and teacher beliefs about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning appear to remain ambiguous. In particular, how individual learners perceive the resources and settings around them to form a learning ecology, and how much teachers actually know about the students' formations of their overall language learning experiences beyond the classroom. Furthermore, the contributor roles of teachers should be further explored to identify better support for student learning beyond the classroom.

2.3.4 Study Abroad and International Education Research

This section reviews literature on language learning and teaching in study abroad and international educational contexts. This is an area within the field of language learning beyond the classroom research and is relevant to the context of the current study.

Language proficiency gains and improvements in one's ability to interact socially as derived from rich out-of-class language learning experiences in which learners are immersed in the target language are often highlighted in study/residence abroad studies (Freed, 1995; Kinginger, 2009b, 2013). For instance, studies report the development of

linguistic competence and intercultural understanding through socially mediated experiences and learner second language identity development due to study abroad (Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2013; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2011; Stewart, 2010). In addition, socio-pragmatic competence (Arnold & Fonseca-Mora, 2015; Benson et al., 2013) defined as "the ability to accurately interpret and appropriately express social meaning in interaction" and the "ability to analyse the sociocultural dimensions of social interaction in order to select appropriate forms" (Holmes & Riddiford, 2011, p. 377) is also demonstrated. Moreover, other studies discuss the individual differences in learning outcomes (Benson, 2012; Kinginger, 2011).

When viewing the study abroad experiences of learners as one phase in their language learning journey (Benson, 2011b), the change of language learning environment in both in-class and out-of-class contexts appears to be dynamic. Such studies on learning experiences beyond the classroom context contribute to our understanding of both the benefits and processes of language-related progress by highlighting the out-of-class experiences when residing abroad. However, less is known about the impact of the environment change, including in-class learning experiences, which tend to have different characteristics from home country in-class learning experiences.

In addition, more attention should be paid to how learners negotiate the differences in in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences as an impact of the change of environment, and to the teacher's role in assisting learners to reconfigure their language learning ecology. From an ecological view, the examination of learner formation of a learning ecology through everyday activities with people, and the interrelations of all elements in their environments can increase our understanding of language learning ecologies in this particular context.

Coleman (2013) argued that study abroad experiences should be viewed from the wider dimension as being embedded in learners' real life. In his study, learners valued their

study abroad experiences as a turning point in their life and responded that it impacted significantly on their language development as well as their personal, professional, and cultural experiences. Coleman (2013) also asserted the complexity of language learning environments, "recognizing that each individual variable interacts with every other variable, both singly and in combination, to create individual trajectories in which both person and context are in constant interaction and flux" (p. 29).

The notion that language learners benefit from studying abroad because they are immersed in an L2 has been challenged on the grounds that it is difficult to create the ideal environment. That is, an environment for the learners with rich exposure to the L2 or opportunities to use it by engaging in socially-oriented activities, ideally with native speakers outside of the classroom (Coleman, 2015; DeKeyser, 2007; Dewey et al., 2014; Tanaka, 2007; Umino & Benson, 2016).

Using the Daily Linguistic Questionnaire, García-Amaya (2017) examined the amount of L1 and L2 use during a six-week study abroad programme in Spain. His study found that learners' use of the L2 gradually decreased over time. As reported by García-Amaya (2017), this was primarily due to the lifestyle choices of the language learner; namely, establishing personal connections with L1 friends more than engaging in communication with native speakers such as host-family members. He argued the importance of the sustainable development of social networks that involve interactions in the L2 outside of the classroom. In turn, García-Amaya's (2017) suggestion to language teachers to promote such learner engagement is to introduce the students to local social groups to share their interests.

It is a fact that study abroad students nowadays can easily access family and friends in their home country for communicative exchanges via the internet or other technology-mediated platforms. As such, Coleman and Chafer (2010) pointed out that the frequent use of such communication tools by students tended to create a 'home' environment without

connecting them to the local environment. In turn, the use of such technology can influence the nature and outcomes of the study abroad experiences (Kinginger, 2008). Chang and Gomes (2017) also advocated the notion of 'Digital Journeys', arguing that the online behaviour of international students relies on the use of familiar digital platforms from their home country, even when searching for information in the host country. The authors pointed out that a vital role of social media for students is as a source for information and a way to maintain a connection to their home country while also helping them to expand their new network. Such behaviours however also potentially create barriers between the local students and the new online sites in the environment. Chang and Gomes (2017) also discussed the importance of understanding how international students access information to better support their transitions into the international education arena.

One of crucial elements of a learner's agentic action for constructing language learning environments is the role of emotions or affective experiences (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2009a, 2010). In Isabelli-García's (2006) study of US university students learning Spanish while studying abroad in Argentina, the learner's agentic actions to interact in local social networks were seen as a critical success factor. Specifically, it supported the students to maintain their motivation as they developed cultural awareness through their experiences. It also influenced their ability to deal with challenging situations and create learning opportunities which enhanced their language acquisition. Participants who lacked or gave up on such interactions in social networks and subsequently spent time with their L1 group showed frustration and negative attitudes towards the host environment and culture (Isabelli-García, 2006).

White and Bown (2018) investigated how affective experiences influenced the process of constructing language learning environments among North American female students studying abroad in Russia. The study examined the participants' social construction of the learning space and its influence on their out-of-class language learning

trajectories and found that emotions are an integral part of the interpersonal process of creating the environment. The authors provided robust evidence of an association between emotions and trajectories, which contribute to the learning environment moment to moment (White & Bown, 2018). Contrasting the two students, one experienced the joy of language learning through cultural contact with local people; whereas, the other felt 'otherness' as she experienced negative emotions and an inability to connect with the local people.

Although there appears to be an increasing focus on learner emotions in study abroad research, it is important to recognise that "emotions are central to how we construct our environment and experiences" (White & Bown, 2018, p. 32). Notably, how emotions influence learner choices and actions related to the creation or reconfiguration of a learning environment, "the reciprocal linkages between emotions and their antecedents" (White & Bown, 2018, p. 30) and teachers' beliefs about their supporting roles are less explored.

In the international education arena (like the current study), some overseas students who study a target language for a relatively long period (compared to study abroad students who usually take a short-term English course) aim to pursue higher education or migration as a long-term goal (Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013; Robertson, 2013; Tran & Gomes, 2017). Therefore, the challenge for researchers is to better understand the role of learner agency in configuring and shaping the language learning environment through proactive practices beyond the classroom. This is particularly the case in a multilingual environment in the multimodal world where language use and learning are recognised as "emergent, dynamic, unpredictable, open ended, and intersubjectively negotiated" (THE DOUGLAS FIR GROUP, 2016, p. 19).

In the case of international education in Sydney, it is possible to map out an international student's daily activities for language learning beyond the classroom (e.g.,

geographic locations and social interactions) using a stimulated recall interview with a diary application on student mobile phones. Benson et al. (2018) illustrated the importance of exploring spatial dimensions which provide us a better understanding of an international student's agency and how it contributes to the creation of opportunities to use and learn English outside of the classroom. For instance, the authors use the narrative of Carita, a female Colombian student, to argue that contextual features influence a student's lifestyle and thus their language learning. Carita's agency assisted her to utilise her spatial dimensions and to construct social interactions in her language learning environment. Originally, Carita demonstrated a fixed weekday routine "within a spatial triangle of home, college and work" (Benson et al., 2018, p. 29). When she exercised her agency, however, particularly in her unique way of using technology-enhanced strategies (e.g., mobile applications), she overcame the spatial constraints and expanded her social interactions to provide more opportunities on weekends to use English outside the triangle.

The use of recent innovative research methodology to capture rich data on language learning practices beyond the classroom, and the exploration of spatial and social dimensions of language learning environments, have provided us a better understanding of where and how international students learn the target language. Moreover, it emphasises the importance of exercising agency to shape the language learning ecology. However, teachers' views of the everyday language learning practices by students and their construction of the environment beyond the classroom have not been afforded much discussion. Given the teacher's role to support students during the learning process, their exploration of the students' lives outside of the classroom should assist them to understand their students' needs and to identify ways to provide effective teacher support.

2.4 Language Teaching from an Ecological Perspective

Although "language teaching has always been seen as a preparation for out-of-class use of language" (Richards, 2015a, p. 5), the extent to which teachers are aware of the features of out-of-class language learning activities their students engage in is questionable. In addition, little is known about what teachers believe in regards to their role in supporting student language learning beyond the classroom. Balçıkanlı (2010) indicated that "language teachers have a crucial role to play in fostering learner autonomy by taking both out-of-class and classroom perspectives" (p. 91). The significance of the teacher's beliefs and teaching behaviours related to student learning both inside and outside of the classroom have also been emphasised in recent studies (Lai, 2015a; Lamb, 2008). Indeed, teacher support can shape both the quantity and quality of out-of-class language learning by students (Lai, Wang, & Lei, 2012). Exploring the language learning and teaching environments from a wide perspective, including the roles that learners and teachers play in the environment will therefore provide a better understanding of effective teaching approaches in the broader environment to facilitate language learning by the student.

Teachers are an integral part of the whole ecological system influencing student language learning. As such, teacher cognition is worthy of in-depth investigation to better understand the relationship between teaching and learning, and the teaching and learning environment.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the ecological framework allows us to explore the mechanism of language learning from a holistic perspective. Van Lier (2010) states that ecological research "looks at the full complexity of the entire process [of language learning and teaching], over time and space, in order to capture the dynamic forces that are at work" (p. 5). Although teachers are considered a crucial part of the ecology of language learning, their view of the environment, the role they play within the environment, and the relationship between the teacher and the environment have not been examined in depth

through empirical studies to date. In other words, language teaching from ecological perspectives is largely under-researched and requires more attention.

2.4.1 Classroom Teaching Practices

Context matters in language learning. Therefore, language instruction needs to be viewed as context-specific with an understanding of individual differences in characteristics of language acquisition process in relation to the surrounding language learning environment. As such, context matters in both teacher cognition studies and the formation of an ecological framework. This is because, as van Lier (2011) reminds us, language learning and teaching are highly situated in the context where learners and teachers reside:

> ecological approaches are concerned with situated cognition and agency. The situatedness (of both cognition and agency) can be drawn wide or narrow, as required by the phenomena in question. (p. 383)

Tudor (2003) viewed language teaching from an ecological perspective and argued that the reality of language instruction involves constraints of inner logic within one small class-ecosystem. Moreover, it is shaped by the perceptions and attitudes of all participants including students, parents, school administrators, and, importantly, teachers in their own right. According to Tudor (2003), to create an ecological perspective in practice, teachers should acknowledge that language teaching is fundamentally diverse. In turn, pedagogical decision making should be done according to the local realities of what language learning and teaching mean to the participants in their lives. It is also important for teachers to understand the dynamics of teaching-learning situations (Tudor, 2001). He concluded that "the essence of an ecological perspective on language teaching is precisely that it works with situations in their own terms and in the light of the dynamics which operate in these situations" (Tudor, 2003, p. 10).

According to Reinders and Benson (2017), changes in learning environments due to technology-mediated learning resources and the shift in attention towards active learner

agency in creating the learning environment means that a deeper understanding of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning is needed. In particular, the classroom must be viewed as one mode of language learning within an individual learning ecology; namely, the classroom as a 'third space' (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008). This notion points to a more fluid and dynamic conceptualisation of the classroom as part of an "interconnected web of learning opportunities" (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p. 574) and a place mutually created by both learners and teachers.

Anderson (2015) argued the importance of lesson planning for affordances and responding to affordances when teaching (in-class). As stated by the author, "we must be both proactive and reactive teachers, the catalysts of learning opportunities" (p. 230) to help learners to create an optimal environment. Anderson (2015) further claimed that the lesson plan pro forma used in teacher education to assess teachers of all levels and experience should be reviewed and changed to be affordance-based rather than outcome-based. This would highlight teacher awareness of learning opportunities in in-class teaching as the pro forma "influence and reflect our perceptions and understanding of the lesson event itself" (Anderson, 2015, p. 228). He defines learning opportunities as "potential acts of explicit or implicit learning that may occur during or as a consequence of the lesson [which includes] noticing, uptake, restructuring of the interlanguage, and proceduralisation of knowledge and metacognitive, affective and other factors that may lead indirectly to language learning" (Anderson, 2015, p. 231). Teachers describe their predicted learning opportunities and processes in the pro forma and then discuss what learning occurred and how well they facilitated student learning in the post-lesson discussion by reflecting on their classes. This use of the lesson plan pro forma enabled the teachers to recognise the importance of affordances, "the complexity of facilitating individual learning" (p. 234), through reflective practice (Anderson, 2015). Anderson's notion of affordances and learning environments limits in-class situations under teacher

instructions, although learning may be initiated by the learner. The teacher's extended understanding of affordances beyond the classroom may also help them to connect the language learning environments inside and outside of the classroom and to prompt learners to expand their learning beyond the classroom.

Dam (2003) made the criticism that "in spite of the fact that the teacher carries enormous responsibility in promoting learner autonomy, there has been somewhat less attention paid to her role than to that of her learners" (p. 135). In her study of 180 teachers in Amsterdam, Dam (2003) suggested that successful teachers are those who accept their responsibility to develop learner autonomy, or at least it is teachers who need to change in order to change their students' learning behaviours. Dam (2003) also asserted "the teacher's responsibility for establishing a learning environment where teachers and learners are jointly responsible for the outcome, whatever the school subject" (p. 135). Moreover, she stated that "learner autonomy develops not only in the classroom but also – and perhaps more importantly – in the teacher's own development and awareness as regards his or her role in the whole process" (Dam, 2003, p. 136). The teacher's role and responsibility for creating and maintaining a learning environment where learners can exercise their autonomy has also been emphasised by other authors (e.g., Benson, 2011c; Little, 2003; Murphy, 2008), who pointed out that teacher autonomy is important in achieving this outcome. However, such a learning environment is highly context-specific. In other words, the context where teachers and learners are situated is embedded in cultural or political constraints that can influence the nature of teacher autonomy to implement teaching practices and the nature of teacher professional development.

Emphasis was placed in the aforementioned studies on in-class teaching practices to exploit teacher awareness of learners' out-of-class language learning engagement and affordances within the environment. Teacher views of language learning environments beyond the classroom and their teaching practices to scaffold how students can adapt what

they learned in class to wider contexts should be explored as important aspect of teaching practice. As Richards (2015a) points out, "new roles emerge for teachers as learners become more actively involved in managing aspects of their own learning" (p. 20). The development of teacher agency is therefore the key to acquiring the necessary knowledge and teaching skills to adequately support learners. For Richards (2015a), "good teaching means preparing learners for learning both inside and outside of the classroom" (p. 21). This is a new aspect which should also be acknowledged in teacher education programmes. In addition, as Tudor (2003) and Palfreyman (2014) have suggested, teachers should acknowledge that the reality of student learning experiences is complex and diverse.

Lund (2006) recognised that learner technology-rich environments exist outside of school and that the students' real-life learning practices occur across settings. As such, he emphasised the need to design "a third space where new opportunities for language learning emerge" (Lund, 2006, p. 198). According to the author, this would function as a boundary zone connecting in-class and out-of-class language learning ('life-worlds') to support a richer learning experience. Consequently, Lund (2006) posited that the new challenge for teachers is to develop teaching expertise for didactic teaching across multiple contexts and time, and to have awareness and acceptance of variants of English in the world where learners reside.

2.4.2 Teachers' Roles

Adopting a holistic view of language learning environments raises issues regarding the role of teachers to support learners in the contemporary world. Van Lier (2011) offered a broad description of the teacher's role in the classroom from an ecological perspective, emphasising the connection between in-class learning and the student's life experiences:

> Ecology refers to ways of being in the world. Our students are in the world, but as language students, they are faced with new and often bewildering worlds, and it is the task of educators to help them construct their identity in it. For this to be possible, the things that happen in the classroom must be meaningfully (that is, in non-trivial ways) connected to

> the things that have happened, that are happening, or that may happen in the life of the students. (p. 392)

Although ecological theory does not provide teachers a blueprint for what they do in class, Kramsch (2008) suggests that it "does offer a new perspective on what foreign language educators should be in the business of doing" (p. 405). The author further explained:

> The 21st century is all about meaning, relations, creativity, subjectivity, historicity and the trans- as in translingual and transcultural competence. We should conceive of what we do in ways that are more appropriate to the demands of a global, decentered, multilingual and multicultural world, more suited to our uncertain and unpredictable times. (p. 406)

Kramsch (2008) stresses the importance of teacher awareness and consideration of the environment in which learners are situated for language learning. As such, the teacher's understanding of the relationship between student learning experiences and the environment has been accentuated. Also, a greater emphasis has been placed on rethinking and reconceptualising pedagogy to foster learner autonomy or self-directed learning. In addition, the process of learners acquiring new skills for use with particular resources such as online learning programmes at self-access centres in institutions is discussed in relation to the teacher's role from an ecological perspective.

With a focus on how to foster autonomous learning beyond the classroom using technology, Lai (2017) reviewed the current literature for its discussion of the teacher's role in facilitating learning beyond the classroom. The literature pointed to the importance of promoting student self-regulated language learning through in-class arrangements and modelling strategies. This is to enable the students to monitor their language learning processes or to allow the teacher to integrate explicit training strategies into the curriculum so that the students can enhance their language learning beyond the classroom (Kistner et al., 2010; Zhan & Andrews, 2014).

In addition, importance is placed on implementing tasks that are relevant to the students to help them perceive the link between in-class and out-of-class learning experiences, and to boost their motivation and capacity to utilise their learning environments beyond the classroom (Barron, 2006; Fukuda & Yoshida, 2013; Henry, 2013). Other authors emphasise the need to encourage learner reflective practice via project-based learning, and to raise awareness of the out-of-class language learning opportunities using everyday resources (Stolk, Martello, Somerville, & Geddes, 2010). Furthermore, teachers should facilitate 'seamless learning' (Chan et al., 2006; Looi et al., 2010; Wong, 2012; Wong & Looi, 2011) by interweaving out-of-class activities into classroom activities such as encouraging students to locate or create language learning materials from out-of-class contexts (Reinders, 2010; Wong, Chai, Aw, & King, 2015). Lastly, integrating technological resources into the lesson design (Lai, 2015a; Lai & Gu, 2011), facilitating learner uses of technology for independent learning by recommending learning resources and materials (e.g., websites), and by providing selections of them (Castellano, Mynard, & Rubesch, 2011; Deepwell & Malik, 2008) are also identified as important.

With the emphasis on the significant role that language teachers play in the student language learning experience, Kohonen (2003) argued the importance of promoting students' self-directed language learning as the prevailing learning culture in the school. In this context, teachers and students work together to develop a collaborative learning community. To create this learning environment, the author pointed out that three elements are necessary: teachers' critical reflection on their educational values, awareness of their role in providing the context for learner autonomy, and professional growth via teacher collaboration and professional autonomy. Kohonen (2003) stated:

> In such a critical-emancipatory paradigm, the teacher's role is that of a reflective practitioner. Teachers need to assume a critical stance in relation to their profession in order to understand the constraints imposed on their work by external circumstances. When necessary, critical reflection should also lead to a determined course of action. In

> accordance with an emancipatory interest in knowledge, teachers need to take charge of developing their professional skills, thereby becoming part of an interactive professional identity with the aim of fostering learning and personal growth. (p. 148)

As such, Kohonen (2003) undertook a four-year project which aimed to enhance "teachers' professional growth and socially responsible student learning by promoting a collegial school culture" (p. 148). Forty teachers from six schools participated in the project in which the researcher examined their professional growth via thematic interviews, professional growth portfolios, and the developmental essays they wrote each year. During the project, the learners created language learning portfolios, and the teachers developed their portfolios for the purpose of "increasing self-awareness and facilitating professional reflection" (Kohonen, 2003, p. 148).

The development essays were written by the teachers at the end of the school year based on their reflection records. Kohonen (2003) found that teachers enhanced their professional identity with deeper understanding of the students using reflective portfolios. The teachers appeared to develop self-understanding and change their professional beliefs. He discussed three components in the development of student autonomous language learning: "(a) personal awareness and self-direction, (b) awareness of language and communication, and (c) awareness of learning processes" (p. 153), which were consciously linked to the teacher's professional growth (Kohonen, 2003). The author therefore suggested that it is necessary for teachers to reflect on their professional identity to assist students to develop learner autonomy. In turn, "the teacher become a facilitator of learning, an organiser of learning opportunities, a resource person providing learners with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of the learning atmosphere and the learning space" (Kohonen, 2003, p. 154). Kohonen concluded his account by suggesting a new collegial culture of teacher professional development. He also stressed that teacher beliefs play a role in shaping their teaching practices, and that their professional growth has implications for students to develop their autonomy. As such, an appropriately supportive environment

where the teacher can feel safe to expose and modify their professional identity should be provided in teacher education.

The reviewed literature suggests teachers have multifaceted roles in supporting language learning and that their in-class actions influence learner behaviours, awareness, materials and strategies for language learning outside of the classroom. The teacher's role in facilitating students' self-regulated learning has expanded due to developing awareness of the potential benefits of out-of-class learning experiences based on the technology-enhanced life styles of learners. However, as scholars have stressed, teachers' perceptions of their roles and their understanding of how to implement strategies to promote language learning beyond the classroom effectively have not yet been well delineated or investigated (Lai, 2017).

Rather, notwithstanding the teachers' beliefs about the importance of learner autonomy, their failure to recognise their role to support student out-of-class language learning has been reported (Nguyen, 2011; Toffoli & Sockett, 2015). Teachers appear to perceive that they have limited responsibility for students' out-of-class language learning and so their role in linking in-class and out-of-class learning experiences is also perceived to be minimal (Lai, 2017; Lai et al., 2016). Therefore, the implementation of strategies by teachers to promote in-class learner autonomy such as utilising technology during class activities, being more actively involved in the student learning processes, and helping students to select appropriate learning materials outside of the classroom appears to be limited (Chan, 2003; Nakata, 2011).

Lai (2017) asserted that "it is important to present student voices to them (teachers) and confront them with the divergences in student expectancies and their own views" (p. 134). This will raise teachers' awareness of their prominent role in enhancing students' self-regulated language learning behaviours beyond the classroom because their support largely influences the quality of out-of-class language learning by the student and

their creation of language learning environments (Xu, 2015). Regarding teacher professional development for pedagogy related to learner autonomy, teacher training or teacher education with reflective practice have been proposed (Lamb, 2008; Smith & Vieira, 2009; Vieira, Barbosa, Paiva, & Fernandes, 2008).

For instance, for teachers to learn and practice their new role as facilitator of students' independent learning using self-access computer programs in Hong Kong, teachers themselves experienced independent learning via online courses (Hafner & Young, 2007). Hafner and Young (2007) reported that teachers re-evaluated their roles, beliefs and attitudes through a better understanding of independent learning and raised their awareness of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning. It can be a challenging role if teachers have not experienced these learning styles as learners, or they may get frustrated if their beliefs do not support such learning. Therefore, the authors argued that teachers need ongoing support which includes training sessions covering both philosophy of independent learning, and practical ways of facilitating learners (Hafner & Young, 2007). A wide practice repertoire, a commitment to continual learning, and the adaptation of one's teaching through classroom inquiry are now required of teachers to guide diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Students construct complex language learning environments with variable 'places' and ample opportunities for language learning activities beyond the classroom. In turn, White and Bown (2018) posed a further challenge to the investigation of teacher roles:

> How can teachers use such knowledge to enhance language learning and teaching processes? Significantly expanded notions of space, place and autonomous learning opportunities also invite researchers and teachers to recognise and attend to the salience and complexity of these constructs in order that understandings and actions may align more fully with students' lifeworlds. (p. 40)

Choi and Nunan (2018) reviewed recent empirical case studies to employ a project-based approach to language learning beyond the classroom. The authors argued that learning and activation (i.e., using the target language) can take place simultaneously, both

inside and outside of the classroom, particularly in communication-oriented settings. They also pointed out that dichotomising in-class and out-of-class learning is no longer useful. Rather, relational views and the pedagogical design that integrates the learning spaces inside and outside of the classroom can empower learning beyond the classroom and provide "fertile grounds for learners to behave in resourceful and creative ways" (Choi & Nunan, 2018, p. 60). The teacher's role is to encourage learners and to show them how they can take control of their learning beyond the classroom to become "active participants in their own language learning and activation" (p. 60). Choi and Nunan (2018) further discussed the importance of developing the autonomy of teachers to accept this responsibility. They argued that this is achieved by developing their understanding of the blended design and its implementation in their context, and teacher engagement in multimodal studies working with experts to develop their skills in implementing the project activity.

As such, great emphasis has been placed on the teacher's role in facilitating student learning beyond the classroom, their awareness of the value of resources outside of the classroom, their beliefs and approaches to learning, and how they help learners to construct and shape a whole learning environment. However, there are limitations around the research in this area (teacher cognition of learner autonomy and practices) (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Feryok, 2013). Moreover, studies have reported that teachers have a rather obscure understanding of their role in developing learner autonomy and teaching practices, and that there is a lack of teacher education and materials (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Lai (2017) has therefore asserted that the role of the teacher should be further examined and reconceptualised.

Thus, two emerging areas for exploration in this thesis are: the teacher's role in assisting learners to develop "optimal strategies for learning both within and outside the classroom" (Reinders & White, 2016, p. 145); and teacher cognition in this regard in

relation to their professional development. Teacher autonomy encourages action-based inquiry by teachers with reflective practice as a foundation for developing teaching practices to support learner autonomy (Feryok, 2013). The current research project is therefore designed to link this research project to an exploration of students' language learning practices and teacher professional development (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). The purpose is to create a space for teacher participants to learn about the reality of their students' language learning environments beyond the classroom:

> Teacher autonomy has been defined as the ability to improve one's own teaching through one's own efforts (see Lamb & Reinders, 2008). It therefore includes both the teacher's ability to make decisions about teaching and their own professional development. […] Teacher autonomy is also usually conceived of as including the ability to understand the students' learning needs and the ability to support them in their development towards autonomy. (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011, p. 16)

As stated by Reinders and Balcikanli (2011), the teacher's understanding of the student's language learning practices and needs is the starting point for them to recognise their supportive role. In addition, reconceptualising their roles as teachers can be crucial when learning to teach and can play an important role in (re)forming teacher professional identity (Beck & Kosnik, 2014; Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

2.4.3 Teacher Beliefs about Out-of-class Language Learning

Investigations in the literature on students' out-of-class language learning highlight the importance of creating links between classroom and out-of-class learning experiences. This suggests that teachers should pay more attention to bridging in-class learning and learner outside worlds, their interests, and experiences (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Although empirical research studies have increasingly focused on language learning beyond the classroom from learners' perspectives, little is known about teachers' perceptions, awareness and beliefs about language learning beyond the classroom. In addition, there is limited understanding of their beliefs about their role in supporting the learner's overall

learning experiences, the type of support teachers they actually provide students, and how classroom practices are influenced by teacher beliefs about a language learning ecology (Reinders & Benson, 2017). As Reinders and Benson (2017) posited below, teachers' awareness of students' learning experiences outside of the classroom plays a critical role for classroom teaching:

> Teachers' beliefs about the relationship between classroom learning and LBC can influence student learning, therefore, especially if they are unaware of what their students do outside the classroom, underestimate the amount of time and degree of engagement with LBC, or fail to capitalise on knowledge and skills that the students bring to class. (p. 571)

Teachers' awareness and perceptions of learner exposure to the Online Informal Learning of English (OILE) was investigated in French Universities (Toffoli & Sockett, 2015). The study indicated that although teachers are aware that learners may engage in OILE, it is a challenge for teachers to make use of this knowledge in their classroom practices. The authors described the difficulties associated with conducting studies on teacher cognition as the teacher themselves find it difficult to "make their beliefs about OILE explicit" (Toffoli & Sockett, 2015, p. 18). This is due to the complex dynamics of language learning and having to instruct students of different backgrounds and knowledge they bring into the classroom. Kramsch (2014) also articulated that the changing world also increases the pressure on language teachers to adapt their classroom teaching to changing learner needs:

> Yet there has never been a greater tension between what is taught in the classroom and what the students will need in the real world once they have left the classroom. In the last decades, that world has changed to such an extent that language teachers are no longer sure of what they are supposed to teach nor what real world situations they are supposed to prepare their students for. (p. 296)

A survey-based research study conducted in the tertiary education sector in Hong Kong examined teachers' perspectives on learner autonomy and their role in promoting it both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as student views on learner autonomy and

their out-of-class activities (Chan, 2003). Previous research conducted in Hong Kong (e.g., Balla, Stokes, & Stafford, 1991; Farmer, 1994) had reported that teacher-dominated education practices, the approach to learning (memorising words and texts for exams) endorsed in the sector, and the pressure of competitive examinations are constraints to accommodating learner autonomy. Chan (2003) demonstrated that teachers were aware of the nature and importance of learner autonomy. Nonetheless, their data indicated that the teachers believed it was their responsibility to make most of the language-related decisions, except out-of-class learning activities, because the students do not have ability to do so more effectively. Furthermore, Chan (2003) reported that the students also think that the teacher should be the main decision-maker, suggesting "a *less* positive teacher attitude to students' readiness to accept overall responsibility for their own learning" (p. 49, italics in original). There appeared to be a mismatch between teacher-suggested out-of-class language learning activities to students and what the students do in actuality.

For me, teachers' beliefs about their role in supporting learners to develop their autonomy beyond the classroom and learners' beliefs about effective language learning activities outside of the classroom (most likely independent), along with the limited attention given by teachers to students' language learning activities outside of the classroom, are crucial elements constraining the promotion of learner autonomy. In turn, further investigation into teacher cognition on the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning is necessary to explore alternative approaches to fostering learner autonomy.

This thesis therefore contributes to the limited research on teacher beliefs about language learning beyond the classroom and their role in supporting student language learning ecologies, and provides a new avenue for language teacher cognition research.

2.4.4 Bridging the Gap Between Teacher Beliefs and Learner Beliefs

The gap or mismatch between learners' and teachers' perceptions of language learning, and the teaching and pedagogical solutions for closing the gaps have been discussed to achieve more a learner-centred approach to student language learning (Gabillon, 2012; Nunan, 1995).

A study conducted at a Hong Kong university reported the adverse impact of teacher frustration and lack of motivation on the learning progress and outcomes of students due to the perceptual gap between teachers and learners regarding useful activities and learning styles (Peacock, 1998, 2001). While learners tended to favour more traditional learning and teaching styles (e.g., grammar exercises, individual learning), teachers tended to believe that pair or group work and communicative activities were more effective. Discrepancies between learner and teacher beliefs about language learning could result in learner dissatisfaction or frustration in in-class learning because they do not understand the rationale of the task as intended by the teacher (Block, 1994; Hawkey, 2006).

Differences between teachers and students regarding their expectations around the teacher's role in learning and teaching methods are also evident in relation to corrective feedback in class (Davis, 2003). In their study of student expectations of the teacher's role in supporting language learning with technology outside of the classroom, Lai, Yeung and Hu (2016) found perceptual mismatches between learners and teachers in "the degree of teacher involvement and the specific roles teachers could play" (p. 1). In their study, learners reported an expectation that their teachers would support their learning beyond the classroom with technology. For instance, they expected teachers to recommend learning resources and to demonstrate how to use them effectively. Lai et al. (2016) also found however that teachers tended to overestimate learner capacities and control over technology-mediated learning outside of the classroom.

Bernat (2006) investigated the possible misalignment between the beliefs about language learning held by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student and their teachers. The student participants were enrolled in the Academic English courses at an English Language Centre with the aim to gain entry into an Australian university. Using the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), four aspects of the students' and teachers' beliefs were explored: "foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, and learning and communication strategies" (Bernat, 2006, p. 153). Through quantitative analysis, the study elucidated the matches and mismatches in the students' and teachers' beliefs. For example, as reviewed in Peacock's (1998, 2001) studies, students placed greater emphasis than their teachers on more traditional approaches to language learning that focused on vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation practice. Moreover, the students believed that excellent pronunciation and repetition type of learning exercises are important; whereas, the teachers placed higher value on student exposure to the natural speech of native speakers outside of the classroom.

As a suggestion to minimise the misalignment between the students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning, Bernat (2006) pointed to the importance of the teachers being aware of the misalignment. This is particularly in relation to overseas students whose beliefs have been shaped by their past learning experiences and who may therefore experience 'pedagogical shock' (Woods, 2003) in the new language learning environment. In addition, further research is needed to explore the types of pedagogical interventions required to help bridge the gaps. It is highly recommended that teachers take part in classroom research to explore students' beliefs and needs, and to promote students' self-directed learning by explaining the rationales of tasks and materials to guide them to learn using new strategies (Gabillon, 2012; Savignon, 2002).

Reflecting the above literature, an inquiry by classroom teachers to understand the actual or real-world language learning practices and beliefs of students, and to explore the

possible mismatches between teacher and student beliefs are required. In turn, this is one of the primary objectives of the current research; namely, to provide insights into teacher learning processes as a consequence of an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments in order to support teachers to identify a bridge between teaching and learning, and an approach to teacher learning.

2.4.5 Ecologies of Practices

Ecology refers to "a system of relationships among organisms and between organisms and their environments" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 46). Based on this understanding, Kemmis and colleagues advocated a theory of ecologies of practices. Teacher learning within ecologies of practices is supported by the degree of autonomy and agency of the teacher, and the extent to which the inquiry into student learning effects professional practice (Hardy, 2016; Kemmis et al., 2014). The authors describe five practices in ecologies of practices that co-exist interdependently in the Education Complex: 1) student learning, 2) teaching, 3) professional learning, 4) leading, and 5) researching (Kemmis et al., 2014). Within the ecological configurations, changing practices in one domain results in changes or transformation in other domains. Based on this view, Kemmis and Mutton (2012) emphasised the importance of context; that is, physical space, time, and social spaces, where practices transpire with supporting arrangements. In other words, teacher learning via an exploration of student learning influences the development of teaching practices and provides resources for the development and reconfiguration of the student learning ecology.

The present study aims to promote teacher awareness of the extent to which an inquiry into student learning to improve teaching practices could support the development of interrelated elements of ecologies of language learning and teaching.

2.5 Teacher Learning and Professional Development

Teacher learning and professional development are the two closely related notions that emphasise knowledge and practice improvement to enhance student learning outcomes and/or the quality of education service delivery in institutions (Avalos, 2011). Effective professional development is defined "as structured professional learning that results in changes to teacher knowledge and practices, and improvements in student learning outcomes" (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017, p. 2). Teacher (professional) learning is defined similarly as:

> a product of both externally provided and job-embedded activities that increase teachers' knowledge and help them change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 2)

Teachers are considered as active, self-directed agents in their learning and professional development, or in facilitating educational change (Hoban, 2002; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). However, for teachers to become active and self-directed agents in learning, and to identify their queries for learning, cycles of reflective practice on their teaching experiences play a key role (Walker, 2002). Smith (2017) has posited that "teachers would need to be positioned as key decision makers about what mattered for their own professional learning" (p. 5). Facilitators of a teacher learning programme would then be encouraged to work WITH teachers. Therefore, teacher reflective practice and active participation should be firmly infused into the process of teacher learning.

This section discusses three major elements of teacher learning for methodological consideration in the current study: teacher research engagement, teacher inquiry into student learning, and reflective practice.

2.5.1 Teacher Research Engagement

Language teacher research engagement has been promoted internationally as one of the essential processes of professional development (Borg, 2010; Burns, 2010; Farrell, 2006).

Borg (2010) asserted that language teacher engagement in research "has a potential to be a powerful transformative force in the work and professional development" (p. 391). Several studies have reported on the extensive benefits and positive impacts on teachers and their work, student learning outcomes, and on institutions and the broader community's educational practices, (Allwright, 2005; Borg & Sanchez, 2015; Hanks, 2015; Smith, Connelly, & Rebolledo, 2014). However, such research engagement remains uncommon for English language teachers (Borg, 2013; Edwards & Burns, 2016b), with few language teachers engaging in teacher research despite an increasing number of research studies on teacher research engagement.

The possible constraints or barriers to their engagement have also been reported such as time limitations, lack of sufficient support and collaboration at institutions/schools, lack of teacher awareness and motivation due to their beliefs or conceptions of research, contextual, political or economic factors, and the challenges to promoting engagement in such self-directed inquiry in settings other than higher education institutions (Rainey, 2000; Tran, Burns, & Ollerhead, 2017). Furthermore, the fact that most research has been conducted on university teachers rather than school teachers with a concentration on theory makes it difficult to implement in practice or to create a bridge between research(ers) and classroom practices/practitioners (Medgyes, 2017; Paran, 2017; Richards, 2006).

Paran (2017) argues the importance of communication between researchers and teachers to connect the research and practices to teacher continuing professional development. Paran (2017) states that "one powerful connection between research and teaching is the way in which teachers can research their own practice" (p. 505). For Paran, teacher research means that teachers "learn to think about their teaching and examine what they are doing in ways that may be different from what they were used to" (p. 505).

He emphasises that improvement of teaching should be "based on solid research evidence rather than on self-perpetuating intuitions and perceptions" (p. 507).

It must be noted that there is growing recognition of the benefits of action research among English language teachers in the ELICOS sector in Australia. This is where the current research has been set, with the participating institutions registered in the ELICOS sector. Since the foundation of the Action Research in ELICOS Program in 2010, funded by Cambridge English Language Assessment, several language teachers have developed their knowledge and teaching skills as professionals via participation in such programs (Burns, 2013, 2014; Edwards & Burns, 2016a, 2016b; Yucel & Bos, 2015). However, the level of interests in doing inquiry-based research varied among the participating teachers in this research study. Hence, none of the participants has joined the above-mentioned program, although some have had research experience in their careers with/without the collaboration of academic experts.

Teacher research, as characterised by Carter and Halsall (1998), "is undertaken by teachers, though sometimes with the support of external critical friends" (pp. 73-74). Based on my own attempts to be 'an external critical friend', this research project can provide participating teachers with an experience in research engagement. The researcher's support of the participants was essential to respect the time and effort they have dedicated to the research project. Their participation should benefit their ongoing professional development – "enhancing teachers' sense of professional role and identity" as well as achieving "better quality teaching and learning in classrooms" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 4). Furthermore, the process to achieve a better understanding of the students and to reflect on classroom situations and issues may lead the teachers to identify a focus area in their practice for further investigation. The hope is then to assist the teachers towards sustainable professional development (Burns & Westmacott, 2018).

2.5.2 Teacher Inquiry

Teacher inquiry is defined as a research method in which teachers reflect on and examine their practices for professional development. The general objectives are to enhance professional knowledge and to improve day-to-day teaching practices for the purpose of promoting student learning (Clarke & Erickson, 2003; Mor, Ferguson, & Wasson, 2015).

Beck and Kosnik (2014) argued that teacher inquiry research should be relatively informal but relevant to teachers' everyday work. As such, this allows teachers to perceive its feasibility in their context in relation to everyday classroom teaching and learning activities. Teacher inquiry research therefore encourages teachers to learn from their in-class experiences and then apply the outcomes of their learning to future lesson designs. In addition, Opfer and Pedder (2011) argued that from a complexity theory point of view, teacher learning is "embedded in professional lives and working conditions" (p. 376).

Teacher inquiry into student learning has been undertaken in the field of language learning and teaching as both a research approach and an element of teacher education. Clark, Luckin and Jewitt (2011) identified the key characteristics of teacher inquiry stated in the literature as "systematic, intentional, contextual, self-critical, practical, action-oriented, planned, evidence-based, evaluate, and shared" (p. 8). Other aspects of teacher inquiry research to have been studied include how to encourage teachers to adopt an inquiry stance throughout the research experience (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Zuidema, 2012), and how to promote professional development (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009; Dawson, 2007), and teacher autonomy (Castle, 2006). Integral to any teacher inquiry into student learning is the use of student information in the inquiry process (Hansen & Wasson, 2016). According to Clark et al. (2011), this:

> aims to engage teachers in developing a deeper understanding of the role, purpose and value of student data at both strategic and classroom levels, i.e. in relation to their own professional growth as teacher practitioners and in the alignment of their professional development activity with schools' strategic planning goals as a tool for sustained innovation and change. (p. 11)

Hansen and Wasson (2016) conducted teacher inquiry research using classroom-generated student information to investigate how to enhance student learning in technology-rich classrooms in Norway. Their study also aimed to identify effective technology-mediated teaching practice to inform teacher inquiry skills in initial teacher education programmes. Through individual interviews and focus group discussions, the authors investigated how teachers understand and use student data to improve their teaching (Hansen & Wasson, 2016). The data collection on student learning was not unified or structured. Rather, teachers shared and discussed the learning processes through the collected information (e.g., tests, assignments) and the implementation of new teaching practices.

The research project implemented by Hansen and Wasson (2016) revealed that uncertainty remains among teachers was to why some teaching practices worked, and others did not as they did not include focus questions to explore student learning. Furthermore, the teachers also lacked important research skills such as data analysis and data literacy including digital competence. Some authors (e.g., Dietz-Uhler & Hurn, 2013; Ferguson, 2012) have argued the importance of teacher inquiry into student learning using student information for professional development as well as a better understanding of the relationship between teaching and student learning, and their contexts. For this reason, Hansen and Wasson (2016) have suggested that teacher inquiry skills should be taught in initial teacher education programmes.

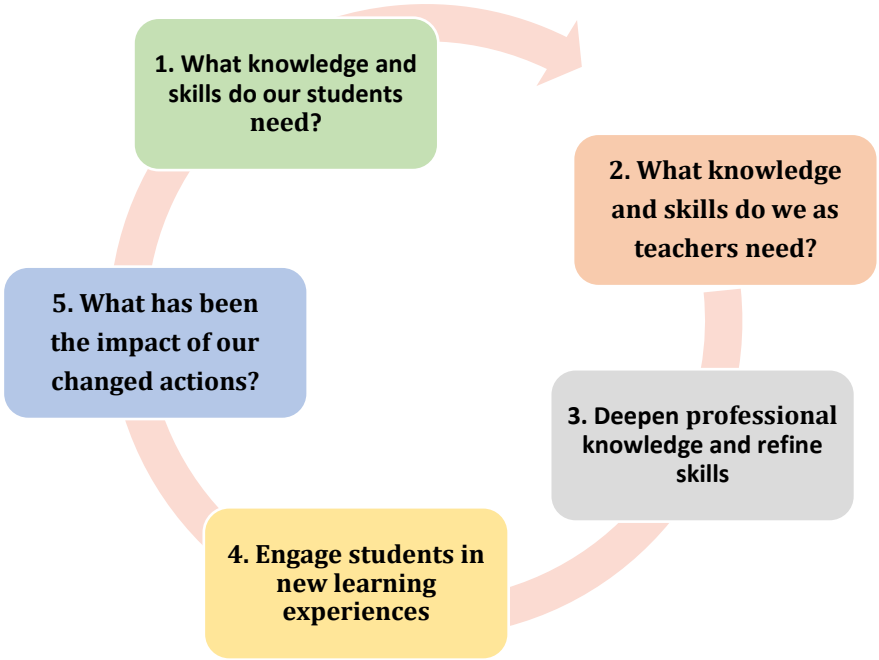
Girvan, Conneely and Tangney (2016) implemented a year-long professional development project to examine how adopting technology-mediated learning in laboratory environments at secondary schools in Ireland should guide pedagogical reform for 21st century learning and teaching. The authors explored the changes in teacher beliefs and classroom practices as a result of, as they call it, 'the experiential learning' involving

teacher self-reflections, observations of students, and interviews. Girvan et al. (2016) found that changes were evident in teachers' perceptions of their role as teacher in the classroom and how a classroom should be. The teachers transitioned from traditional teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches via teamwork and self-directed tasks. The authors posited that a deeper understanding of the students by the teachers provided "a foundation for their initial assumptions" (p. 137) and observed that student engagement in the activity and learning outcomes was "a key motivation for changing practice" (p. 137). The author suggested that adequate support by colleagues and senior management, and long-term engagement in professional development, would help to deliver more effective outcomes. However, the research also provided evidence of the effect of professional development through experiential learning (teacher inquiry), with a key element of self-reflection.

Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2010) endorsed collaborative approaches to teacher inquiry using informal online networks where teachers can post ideas, queries and problems related to their everyday teaching experiences for discussion. Zuidema (2012) also discussed the use of technology to encourage teachers to take an inquiry stance as part of a teacher induction programme. The author analysed the online messages exchanged by the study participants, and conducted interviews focusing on the participative actions of the teachers. Zuidema (2012) found that the teachers in the community-assisted inquiry environment shared their knowledge and experiences, and reconsidered and reframed their previous beliefs, assumptions, and values to enrich their understanding and to construct their teaching practices.

A model to represent the teacher learning cycle through inquiry into student outcomes has been developed by Helen Timperley (2008, 2011). The 'Teacher inquiry and knowledge-building cycles to promote valued student outcomes' (Figure 2.1), identifies five dimensions related to the way in which teachers engage in professional learning; namely, to build knowledge and to translate the new knowledge into practice.

Figure 2.1. 'Teacher inquiry and knowledge-building cycles to promote valued student outcomes'



(Timperley, 2011, p. 6)

Timperley (2008) states that "learning is cyclical rather than linear, so teachers need to be able to revisit partially understood ideas as they try them out in their everyday contexts" (p. 15). The cycle of inquiry starts with the identification of student needs by exploring the students' current learning situations, knowledge and skills, and future expectations. The teachers then explore what they can do more effectively to meet the students' needs with focused areas to work on. As such, teachers engage in professional learning through an inquiry into student learning using student information to identify the knowledge and skills they should have to better support student learning.

Furthermore, Timperley (2008) argues that unless changes in teacher beliefs emerge as a result of the professional learning initiative, changes in the teacher's classroom practice are unlikely to occur. Therefore, Stage 4 in Figure 2.1 is more critical and complex than it may appear to be. The author therefore suggested that close observation of one's day-to-day teaching assisted by supportive teams or colleagues is important to ensure

future teacher learning. Thus, collaborative and collegial learning among teachers via a focus on student learning outcomes can lead teachers to integrate learning into practice (Timperley, 2008).

The final dimension of the cycle is reflecting on and assessing the impact of the changed actions. Teacher adaptive expertise is developed within the learning process by learning "how to retrieve, organise and apply professional knowledge to specific teaching and learning problems" (Timperley, 2011, p. 21). Notably, Timperley emphasises that the iterative nature of the cycle – re-engaging the new inquiry cycle as professional learning – should continue and be embedded into the teachers' educational lives, rather than remain a one-off event.

The current project was designed to encourage teachers to actively engage in an exploration of their students' learning practices and environments. This objective emerged from consideration of the benefits of teacher research engagement and teacher learning, particularly via an inquiry approach, and following suggestions of the need to create a bridge between research and classroom practices. Furthermore, the current project attempts to promote an inquiry stance by teachers and a culture of teacher learning through inquiry for continuing professional development at the institution level.

Although the benefits of teacher inquiry practices have been pointed out, initiating such an inquiry is not an easy task. Such an inquiry involves decision-making about what aspects of student learning to investigate, the design of the inquiry and the sources to be collected from students, how the data is to be analysed and the implementation of pedagogical interventions (Vieira, 2007). It is important to avoid potential uncertainty among teacher participants while also offering a space to identify their own areas of interest in their examination of the student information. Therefore, the researcher should navigate the teachers through the inquiry so that the teachers can be guided on, and feel empowered as a teacher researcher (Kincheloe, 2003; Vieira, 2007).

Participatory research methods were therefore employed in this current study. Indeed, the inquiry project was designed using visual data produced by the participants to promote reflection on their roles as a teacher and to encourage active and collaborative engagement with the researcher throughout the research project (Mannay, 2010, 2016; Rose, 2016). As such, teacher inquiry into their students' language learning practices and learning how to improve day-to-day teaching practices for professional growth by reflecting on their roles are two teacher learning elements embraced in this research study.

2.5.3 Reflective Practice and Language Teaching

Teacher inquiry originated in John Dewey's advocacy of teacher reflective thinking and practice in education. It has evolved with the inquiry-based teacher research for professional development movement over recent decades (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hines & Conner-Zachocki, 2015; Oliver et al., 2018). Dewey defines reflection as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). Reflection, which plays a crucial role in language teaching, is regarded as an integral part of both pre and in-service teacher education worldwide (Bailey & Springer, 2013; Farrell, 2007; Richards & Farrell, 2011).

For Farrell (2007), teachers without reflective practice would most likely act on "impulse, tradition and/or authority rather than by informed decision making" (p. 2). The author then argued that better decision making in everyday teaching practices through "systematic and conscious reflections" (p. 2) is needed to increase teacher awareness and professional development (Farrell, 2007).

Farrell (2007) reviewed the three main types of reflective teaching practices introduced in the literature: (1) reflection-in-action, (2) reflection-on-action, and (3) reflection-for-action. To clarify, Farrell posited:

1. Reflection-in-action happens which teachers are teaching in class. According to Schön (1983), teachers use reflection-in-action when they come across events which they cannot apply their routines. Reflection-in-action is 'the ability to frame problems based on past experiences, a type of conversation that takes place between the practitioner and an uncertain situation at the time of the occurrence of that situation'.

2. Reflection-on-action involves thinking back what happened after their classes, and 'focuses on the cognitive processes of teaching'.

3. Reflection-for-action is, according to Killon and Todnem (1991, p. 15), 'we undertake reflection, not so much revisit the past or to become aware of the metacognitive process one is experiencing (both noble reasons in themselves) but to guide future action (the most practical purpose)'. Teachers can prepare for the future by using knowledge from what happened during the class and what they reflected on after class. (pp. 5-6)

A reflective teacher is described by Akbari et al. (2010) as "one who critically examines his/her practices, comes up with some ideas as how to improve his/her performance to enhance students' learning, and puts those ideas into practice" (p. 212). This is what Schön (1983; cited in Akbari et al., 2010) referred to as the cycle of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation.

Huttunen (2003) emphasised the importance of the teacher's ability to reflect on what they do to successfully implement the curriculum to develop learner autonomy. Huttunen (2003) described the process of teacher reflection as 'teacher planning learning':

> The role of teacher reflection takes on greater significance in this new scenario; indeed, teachers need to develop awareness of what they are doing at the metacognitive level. And when they acquire this heightened awareness, what they plan or evaluate in relation to their teaching leads them to decide what is relevant in the language learning environment they are in the process of creating. (p. 122)

Huttunen (2003) argued that teacher reflection and student reflection are two sides of the same coin: "the teacher cannot plan a stimulating learning environment without paying attention to learner reflection as well" (p. 122). Huttunen (2003) offered six phases of teacher reflection in the process of curriculum planning to generate "consistency and coherence in classroom learning activities" (p. 128). The process begins with reflection on the basic issues in language learning and teaching such as; "What to my mind is especially

important in language proficiency at the stage I am teaching? Why?" Building skills to successfully plan a curriculum, and being able to teach learners how to plan learning and to make sensible choices, allows the teacher "to build a learning environment suitable for the growth of learner autonomy" (Huttunen, 2003, p. 132).

Self-reflection is thus crucial in teacher learning. Nonetheless, difficulties and limitations are often stated regarding its efficacy towards implementing experiential teacher learning successfully. Indeed, the time-intensive nature of professional development and the hectic nature of school settings present challenges to professional development, even though teachers believe in its value (Girvan et al., 2016). In addition, the project itself should be well prepared and organised to ensure all the necessary steps and phases for teacher learning are in place. Thus, it is important to identify a feasible way to facilitate teacher research engagement via teacher inquiry into student learning. As Farrell (2017) has pointed out, the initiation of reflective practice by teachers to develop their teaching practices is important:

> what is really missing from the literature is the teacher's perspective on what they consider important about what they do, or research with teachers, by teachers, and for teachers so that they can become enlightened about their practice. (p. 29)

2.5.4 Professional Development

The various phases of teacher professional development have been identified by Tsui (2007) as non-linear in nature:

> 1. **Discovery/exploration**: 'coping with the multi-faceted nature of their work in the classroom'. 'Teachers are excited by the fact that they are now a teacher with their own students'. (p. 1053)
>
> If positive,
>
> 2. **Stabilisation**: where teachers consolidate their experience, become more concerned about the impact of their instructions on students, more flexible, and able to handle the unpredictable'. (p. 1053)
>
> 3. **Experimentation and diversification**: they begin to experiment with new ideas for teaching to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching. They have a heightened awareness

> of problems with the system and a desire to go beyond their own schools to bring about change.
>
> If negative,
>
> 4. **Self-doubt/reassessment**: the lack of impact of their efforts on the system could lead to disillusionment. Marked by a decline in professional investment and enthusiasm on the one hand, and by greater confidence, more tolerance and spontaneity in the classroom on the other' (p. 1054). Factors like the monotony of classroom teaching and unpleasant working conditions could also lead to a phase of self-doubt. (p. 1053)
>
> 5. **Disengagement**: can be identified near the end of teachers' career cycles – withdrawing and investing their time and effort elsewhere, as a result of disappointment with the system, or reconciling the discrepancy between what they had set out to achieve and what they have actually achieved'. (p. 1054)

Based on a reflective narrative by Marina, an experienced teacher in her 30s in Hong Kong, Tsui (2007) identified the factors in the phases in her teaching career which influenced her professional developmental pathway. Marina reflected on the early stages of her teaching career and the difficulties she experienced managing the students. She also reconceptualised what learning English means to students (a phase of exploration). Marina reflected on her experiences during the different phases of her career so far: her active engagement in learning for the development of student outcomes, both collaboratively and personally, and both formally and informally; and the opportunity she took to be a Panel Chair and how this resulted in the reconceptualisation of her teaching roles and her work as a professional. Tsui (2007) argued that professional development is non-linear and situated. 'Being situated' for her means:

> the development paths that teachers take depend on the ways in which they personally interact with their specific contexts of work, of which they are part, and the ways in which they see the possibilities that can be opened up for their professional learning. (p. 1064)

In addition, Tsui (2007) emphasised that professional development "is embedded in the process of improving student achievement" (p. 1064) through closely scrutinising student learning outcomes.

In relation to conceptual changes by language teachers for professional development, Kubanyiova (2014) posited three reflective processes to motivate teachers with a deep level of engagement in new theoretical ideas to improve their practices: (1) a focus on themselves and their teaching (who), (2) engagement with the values and meanings of teaching practices (why), and (3) visualising their desired teaching selves (image).

With reference to these three reflective practices, the present study attempts to inspire the teacher participants to adopt an ecological view as a new way of inquiry into student learning for professional development. Participants were asked to reflect on their beliefs about language learning environments beyond the classroom, the values and meanings of in-class teaching in relation to student learning outside of the classroom, and to visualise their ideal language learning environments including an image of their possible selves to support students in the environment.

2.6 Teacher Cognition

The concept of teacher cognition is defined as "what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Teacher cognition is therefore regarded as integral to student learning.

Teacher cognition and teacher beliefs are sometimes interchangeably used, or teacher cognition is regarded as an umbrella term which includes beliefs, conceptions, attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge. Teacher belief usually refers to teachers' "pedagogic beliefs, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching" (Borg, 2001, p. 187), whereas teacher cognition relates more to states and processes as well as development and changes through education or experiences of teachers (Feryok, 2010; Woods, 1996).

Teacher beliefs and conceptions are also considered intertwined concepts under the teacher cognition (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). In this thesis, beliefs refer to "an individual's meaning-making processes" (Allen, 2013, p. 135) while conceptions are regarded as a less mental representation but "rather a way of being aware of something" (Kalaja, 1995, p. 193). Both teacher beliefs and conceptions are highlighted in this thesis as key categories for investigating teacher cognition. How teachers conceptualise language learning and teaching beyond the classroom, and if teacher learning through inquiry into student learning could influence their re-conceptualisation of their roles, or changes in their beliefs about language learning and teaching are examined.

2.6.1 Complex and Situated Nature of Teacher Cognition

Teacher cognition has been recognised as "complex conceptual processes that were interrelated" (Burns, Freeman, & Edwards, 2015, p. 589). The teacher's prior experience as a language learner and her/his personal history have been also explored as they relate closely to cognition, shaping the professional identity of the teacher and their classroom practices (Borg, 2003; Flores & Day, 2006; Freeman, 1996). In addition, Day (1999) has claimed that "teachers' thinking and action will be the result of an interplay between their life histories, their current phase of development, classroom and school settings, and the broader social and political contexts in which they work" (p. 2). As Sakui and Gaies (2003) suggested, the process of lessen planning and teaching practices can be modified "by the way in which teachers understand classroom events" (p. 154). This suggests that teacher cognition is highly "situated, interpretive and dynamic" (Sakui & Gaies, 2003, p. 154).

As such, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) have claimed that teacher cognition studies in the field of Applied Linguistics have broadened our understanding of how:

> language teachers' practices are shaped in unique and often unpredictable ways by the invisible dimension of teachers' mental lives that have emerged from teachers' diverse personal and language learning histories, language teacher education experiences, and the specific contexts in which they do or learn to do their work. (p. 117)

However, one question remains unanswered: "How do language teachers create meaningful learning environments for their students?" (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 117). To explore this question, the present study encourages teachers to adopt a holistic view, recognising that language learning takes place beyond the classroom contexts (Benson, 2009; Benson & Reinders, 2011; Nunan & Richards, 2015). Moreover, it examines teacher cognition in relation to the situated contexts from an ecological perspective (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998).

2.6.2 Teacher Agency, Beliefs, and Emotions

Within the broad concept of language teacher research, teacher agency is identified as integral to understanding the full scope of language teaching. Researchers argue that teacher agency is part of the process of constructing the professional identity of the teacher, often within a narrative approach (Barkhuizen, 2016; Schutz, Hong, & Francis, 2018). It is also deemed necessary for the implementation of innovative practices at work (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, & Paloniemi, 2013). However, less is known about the role of teacher agency in teacher learning. Teacher emotion is also a relatively new research area in Applied Linguistics. This section attempts to explore the current insights to emerge from the literature into the interrelatedness of teacher agency, emotion, and teacher learning from ecological perspectives.

2.6.2.1 Teacher agency

Teacher agency is defined as "the capacity to participate and be responsible for their own learning" (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016, p. 318). For Toom, Pyhältö and Rust (2015), teacher agency is:

> willingness and capacity to act according to professional values, beliefs, goals and knowledge in the different contexts and situations that teachers face in their work both in classrooms and outside of them. (p. 616)

In a similar vein, Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) define teacher agency from an ecological perspective as:

> their active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions – for the overall quality of education. (p. 624)

Regarding the forces that shape language teaching practices, recent research has identified the complex characteristics of teacher agency in multiple contexts as important (Edwards, 2015; Toom et al., 2015). To clarify, Toom et al. (2015) have asserted:

> Teacher agency is suggested to be a key capability not only for facilitating student learning but also for continuing professional development, collaborative teacher learning and school development. (p. 615)

The definition of teacher professional agency often emphasises "commitment, responsibility, strong judgements, self-evaluation, connection to the common good and attention to what people do" (Edwards, 2015, p. 779). For Toom et al. (2015), agentic teachers are those who are pedagogical experts and capable of "intentional and responsible management of new learning at both individual and community levels" (p. 615).

Teacher professional agency also means "teachers' ability to act in new and creative ways, and even to resist external norms and regulations when they are understood to contrast or conflict with professionally justifiable action" (Toom et al., 2015, p. 615). Indeed, Toom et al. (2015) argued that teacher agency is constructed situationally "in the middle of dilemmas and uncertainties of professional pedagogical activities" (p. 616). In turn, they have suggested that little is known about the process of evolving teacher agency; namely, what factors, "personal and contextual or structural" (P. 616) can facilitate or sometimes resist the development of teacher agency. Edwards (2015) also stressed the importance of considering the culture for teacher agency research since differences in the teaching environment should be considered for the examination of teacher agency.

2.6.2.2 A teaching ecology

Language learner and teacher belief research usually adopts a cognitive or sociocultural perspective. However, Bernat (2008) proposed the ecological framework as a combination of both disciplines, prompting researchers to consider the "factors of space (physical, social and symbolic) and time (both past, present and future dimensions)" (p. 15). Taking this proposal into account, teacher beliefs should also be viewed in relation to spatial, time and ecological factors which shape the language learning and teaching environment.

The construction of teacher beliefs, the relationship the teacher has with the surrounding environment, and teacher beliefs about good teaching were explored by Ruohotie-Lyhty (2016) using the ecological framework. The study sample comprised eleven newly qualified Finnish foreign language teachers; that is, having three to four years of teaching experience only.

Based on the basic assumption in ecological theory that "individuals do not perceive the environment as it is, but as it is to them" (p. 151), Ruohotie-Lyhty (2016), explored the development of teacher professional beliefs during their participation in activities in their environment. She employed a discursive approach to draw out the complexity of the processes shaping teacher beliefs using interviews and reflective essays. This approach was adopted to be "sensitive to both the individual and shared aspects of beliefs, and to the dynamic and contextually-sensitive nature of beliefs" (p. 151).

The aim of the analysis was to explore "how the participants themselves perceived their environment and their agency and how they understood the significance of their environment for their beliefs" (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2016, p. 155). The author reported that the majority of participants did not initially perceive there to be many opportunities to put their beliefs about good teaching into practice in the environment; that is, they thought that the environment was restrictive. Their beliefs then changed, and they were guided towards more traditional ways of teaching (e.g., teaching techniques and preparation for the

standardised tests). The author also reported however that other teachers perceived their working environment to encourage them to try new teaching ideas and that "their ability to use the available affordances had grown" (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2016, p. 168).

Ruohotie-Lyhty's (2016) investigation of the relationship between the surrounding environment and its effect on teacher beliefs revealed that "it is not the environment directly, but the individual teacher's construction of the environment that significantly affects the teacher's beliefs" (p. 170). However, as the author identified, "the role of the environment itself" (p. 170) has become a question to be further explored. In addition, Ruohotie-Lyhty (2016) posed the question; "Why it is teachers construct their relationship with the environment in such different ways?" (p. 170), suggesting that this is also a possible area to be examined in regard to individual teacher beliefs and agency.

The current study aims to explore teacher agency in relation to teacher learning. This entails the development of teacher beliefs about their roles in student learning ecologies, the growth of affordances in teaching, and their ability to utilise them as a result of their understanding of student learning and situated contexts.

2.6.2.3 The emotional turn

The emotional turn is posited in the field of Applied Linguistics as "a critical account of the avenues of enquiry into emotions, and the ways in which topics such as motivation and beliefs have been reworked from a more affectively informed perspectives" (White, 2018b, p. 19). Recent studies have paid increasing attention to the role of affects and emotions in language learning and teaching (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Martínez, 2018; Song, 2016). In addition, emotions have been recognised as crucial components in the language learning and teaching processes as they are related to cognition - anxiety, motivation, beliefs, self-esteem, and associate with attitudes, behaviours and outcomes (White, 2018b). Emotions are characterised as individual experiences occurring in social interactions and as closely

related to the situated context (Maynard, 2002; Zembylas, 2007), beliefs (Aragao, 2011), rapidly-changing dynamic (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011), and as "an inextricable part of awareness, knowledge and the potential of and for action" (White, 2018b, p. 21). In addition, the affective experiences of the learner significantly influence their construction of the language learning environment and their autonomy in language learning (White & Bown, 2018).

The emotions of language teacher are also regarded as crucial to our understanding of their language teaching practices, identity, professional development, and implications for teacher education (Martínez, 2018; Song, 2016). Thus, emotions have been used as "a lens to explore teacher identity and change" (White, 2018a, p. 581).

Avalos (2011) also highlighted the complexity in teacher learning processes, particularly the cognitive aspects:

> Teacher professional learning is a complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change. (p. 10)

Adopting the view that emotion is central to agency, or that "serves as background to agency" (p. 17), White (2018a) examined the interrelationships between agency and emotions. Applying a dialogical lens, the author analysed teacher stance taking within their narrative accounts of conflict incidents in a social English class. The teacher was teaching refugees and immigrants in New Zealand. White (2018a) views (affective) stance taking as "an emergent, intersubjective process in which speakers construct relational orientations with other participants, reported accounts, acts and so on [that] simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the unfolding interactional context" (p. 4). White (2018a) asserted the complex and dynamic interplay of agency and emotions which emerged through interactions with others, and through experiences of lived events. Emotions can both enable and constrain agency. In her study, answerability in narrative accounts in particular

showed how the teacher's emotions influenced her agency when talking about classroom events.

In this thesis, teacher emotions as evidenced in their narrative accounts while reflecting on their classroom teaching experiences are analysed in relation to their degree of agency and its influence on teacher learning.

2.6.3 Change of Teacher Cognition

"Teacher change is behavioural and perceptual, that is, attitudinal and cognitive" (Pennington, 1995, p. 705). Pennington (1995) further explains:

> Teacher change and development require an awareness of the need for change- or at least of the desirability of experimentation- and of available alternatives. A teacher's awareness and knowledge of alternatives is colored by that teacher's experience and philosophy of teaching, which act as a psychological barrier, frame, or selective filtering mechanism. (p. 705)

There is evidence to suggest a failure in professional development programmes to motivate teachers to change classroom practices in order to improve student learning. For instance, Guskey (2002) argued that changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs derive from the positive outcomes of learning demonstrated by the students. Such 'outcomes' refer to a wide range of student behaviours including attendance, motivation, attitudes towards learning, and classroom participation. Student learning outcomes can be used as evidence by teachers to assess their teaching effectiveness. The outcomes of the assessment can then initiate change in the teacher's beliefs and actions. In other words, positive teaching practice experiences and witnessing student improvement can be a catalyst for changes in the teacher's beliefs about student learning. This is particularly the case for experienced teachers as new teaching strategies or practices will most likely not be implemented in the classroom if the professional development training does not include student feedback on their learning progress.

Kubanyiova (2012) investigated the conceptual changes among eight EFL teachers during an in-service teacher development programme. From ecological and complex dynamic theoretical perspectives, the study showed "teacher conceptual change as a complex process emerging from the dynamic interaction of diverse and interconnected agents in the social cognitive systems in which teacher activity is embedded" (p. 191). It also provided insights into and multi-dimensional nature of teacher cognition development; namely, the temporal, spatial, and emotional dimensions, along with the way in which the process integrates a sense of self and identity (Kubanyiova, 2012).

Using the Language Teachers Conceptual Change (LTCC) framework, Kubanyiova (2012) identified multiple routes of teacher development; namely, 'Couldn't-agree-more', 'Nice-but-too-scary', 'I've got to teach differently', and 'Nice-but-not-for-me'. The author argued that even though teacher development courses or particular trajectories are not always the cause of teacher change, the "multiple reasons for change or lack thereof" (p. 191) could influence teacher cognition change at any time and in any settings in which the teachers are situated (Kubanyiova, 2012).

A number of factors can enable or hinder teacher conceptual change regarding classroom practices. They include teacher motivation to join and commit to professional development activities, level of self-esteem, images of ought-to selves and ideal selves, the heuristics constructed by prior beliefs and theoretical knowledge, and emotional dissonances following new input and experiences. As such, Kubanyiova delineated teachers' complex and dynamic cognitive development with an emphasis on the temporal and context-specific dimensions of teacher cognition research from what Ushioda (2009) called a "person-in-context relational view" (p. 215). The Kubanyiova (2012) study has shed light on the dynamics of teacher change involving complex, non-linear processes. It also offered insights into the conditions that inspire teacher learning and methodological considerations for teacher cognition research.

In the project implemented in this current study, teachers were provided with student feedback on their learning and asked to reflect on their teaching practices. As such, this research project includes students' reflective responses on their language learning experiences within the process of teacher reflective practice. It should be noted that the term 'development' rather than 'change' is used in this thesis more to stress the process of growth in teacher thoughts, actions and behaviours displayed at different stages in the research process.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the ecological perspectives were identified as the overarching framework for adoption in this thesis. This chapter has also argued the central aims and needs of the present study by reviewing literature in the relevant areas; namely, a learning ecology, language learning and teaching beyond the classroom, teacher learning, and teacher cognition and agency.

Existing literature recognises the power of student learning outside of the classroom and the emerging shift in attention towards language learning and teaching beyond the classroom. In turn, it calls for a need to reconceptualise teacher roles to support student learning beyond the classroom. In addition, there is the impact of teacher cognition and teaching practices within the landscape of language learning and teaching. As such, the importance of teacher learning about student learning beyond the classroom from an ecological perspective was also suggested. However, problems related to teacher uncertainty about effective ways to adapt out-of-class resources and learning experiences into in-class teaching remain. Similarly, the role of teacher learning within the ecosystem, and how to reconceptualise their role in integrating in-class and out-of-class learning experiences have also not yet been resolved.

2.7.1 Research Aims

In response to the unresolved questions posed earlier, the current study aimed to:

- Explore teacher cognition of language learning environments beyond the classroom context, and
- Provide insights into teacher learning processes as a consequence of an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments, for teachers to identify their supporting role in student learning beyond the classroom.

Regarding the methodological implications, the present study attempted to provide the participating teachers with a learning opportunity to access the following benefits:

- Experience research engagement with the researcher through teacher inquiry into student learning,
- Gain an understanding of the ecological perspective as a method of inquiry into student learning, and learn reflective practice methods for recognising the relationship between language learning environments and teaching practices, and
- Hopefully, improve teaching practices as a result of their participation in the current project.

2.7.2 Research Questions

The three research questions below are drawn out for the investigation. The study is situated in the context of the ELICOS sector in Sydney, involving both teachers and international students learning English at the ELICOS schools.

RQ. 1: What are ELICOS teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom?

RQ. 2: How do teachers respond to students' feedback on their language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom?

RQ. 3: How does participation in an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments influence teachers' cognition?

a) What changes in cognition are observed?

b) How do teachers learn?

The following chapter provides methodological approach and research design used in the study for answering the above research questions, also detailed descriptions of the research contexts.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Research Design

This chapter illustrates the methodological approach and research design chosen to examine the research questions set out in Chapter 2.

This study employed qualitative research paradigms using multiple data sources to answer the research questions in depth. In 3.1, an overview of the methodological approach is provided including details of the two major conceptual frameworks applied. This is followed by 3.2, which describes the research settings and participants, also clarification of the ethical issues concerning the recruitment process. The employment of multiple narrative case studies with multiple data sources are discussed in 3.3, including clarification of how trustworthiness was achieved in the study. Details are provided in 3.4 of the main methods and instruments used for data collection from the teacher participants; namely, mind map drawing, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and researcher reflective journals. The validity of the research instruments along with the justification for their choice are also provided; as is the data collection sequence and timeline. In 3.5, the methods and instruments used to collect data from the student participants are described; namely, questionnaire and a mind map drawing activity, along with how they were incorporated into the semi-structured interviews with teachers. Section 3.6 outlines the data analysis procedures including the coding processes and the justification for their use. Reflexivity in the research project focusing on the researcher's intended position and awareness during the entire study is discussed in 3.7. This chapter concludes with a brief summary.

3.1 Methodological Approach

Holiday (2010) states that "[t]he basic aim of qualitative research is to get to the bottom of what is going on in all aspects of social behaviour" (p. 99). Qualitative research reflects "a need to study a group or population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, or silenced voices", and aims to facilitate "a complex, detailed understanding of the issue" (Creswell, 2013, p. 48). Using qualitative research paradigms, the current research explores the development of teacher cognition and their understanding of students' language learning environments beyond the classroom from an ecological perspective. It also provides insights into the learning processes experienced by the teachers through their engagement in teacher enquiry during this project. Ecological perspectives provide both a framework for this study as well as a way for teachers to explore and conceptualise student learning.

The following sections illustrate the two main conceptual frameworks applied in this study; namely, *3.1.1 Teacher Inquiry Research*, and *3.1.2 Ecological Framework*.

3.1.1 Teacher Inquiry Research

Teacher inquiry was employed as a framework in this study to guide teacher learning for professional development (Clark et al., 2011; Timperley, 2008). Teachers' reflective practice as well as active participation in exploring and understanding their students were the two main focus areas of this approach.

3.1.1.1 Reflective practice

Teacher and student reflective practice were embedded into the research project process. Both explicit and implicit methods of teacher reflection in particular were encouraged during each activity.

Figure 3.1. Expected teacher learning process via reflective practice

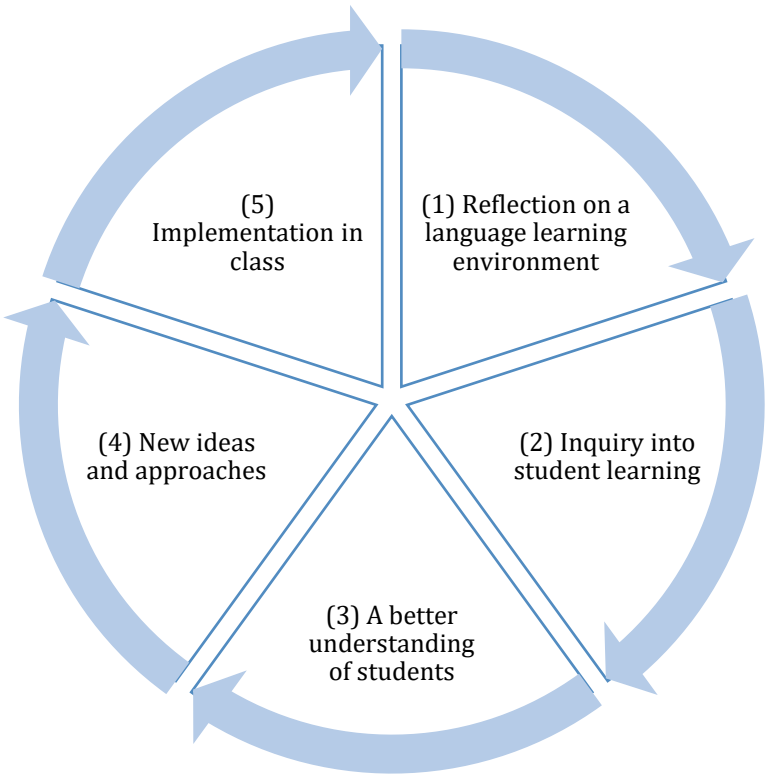


Figure 3.1 above illustrates the expected learning process by teachers via the reflective practice designed for this research project.

1) Teachers would find a focus area or puzzle in their own teaching by thinking about 'a good language learning environment' and reflecting on everyday practice.
2) Teacher inquiry in student learning takes place via the collection of information from the students.
3) Student information provides the teachers with a better understanding of their students and they again reflect on their teaching, thinking about what they could do or adjust in their current teaching practices to support student learning. Discussions with the researcher would provide another point of view.
4) Discussions with the researcher combined with engagement in reflection would support teachers to think of new approaches and ideas for future practice.

5) They would implement the new teaching ideas in their classes when appropriate, and then assess the students' responses to the new activities to determine if they achieve the desired outcome. Teachers would engage in reflective thinking again to examine their teaching methods and strategies in order to identify teaching solutions to better meet the learning needs of students.

3.1.1.2 Participatory research method

The decision by a researcher to adopt a participatory approach to the research investigation can provide the participants with more control over the research process. In addition, in this research project it promoted teacher reflection and active collaboration with the researcher (Mannay, 2010, 2016; Rose, 2016). The potential benefits of active teacher engagement and reflection from adopting a participatory approach were taken into account when designing the project. In turn, the research method included using the visual materials (i.e., mind maps) produced by the participants.

Teacher-led research such as action research or exploratory practice (Hanks, 2015) are often encouraged to support professional development. This is because teachers can benefit from the integration of research, learning and teaching for professional growth when implementing with initiating learning project (Burns, 2015). In contrast to typical teacher-led research however, the topic of the project at the centre of this research investigation was initiated by the researcher, who was encouraged to adopt an ecological perspective to direct the project. In addition, the project was designed with the belief that the teachers' sense of inquiry could be increased by using their own drawings as one of the sources for their reflective practice. In this way, they are reflecting on their own reflections, rather than perceiving their participation as helping the researcher to simply collect data.

The decision by the teachers to participate in this project confirmed their willingness to enhance their vocation. This reflects Lankshear and Knobel's (2004) notion

of "self-motivated and self-generated systematic and informed inquiry" (p. 9) as the nature of teacher research. Moreover, it is considered as the participants' first step to their research engagement. Lastly, allowing teachers the flexibility to make decisions about the ways to conduct the activities with the students could enhance their sense of ownership in the learning outcomes of the students.

3.1.2 Ecological Framework

There are two ecological perspectives applied as a conceptual framework in the current study. One stream is applied to frame the research as whole. That is, the ecological perspective represents the researcher's standpoint for exploring language teachers in relation to key concepts and themes. As reviewed in Chapter 2, the key concepts of the ecological views allow the researcher to explore teachers' cognition of language learning environments beyond the classroom in a holistic way, as well as the interrelations of all the elements that make up the learning environment. As Kramsch and Steffensen (2008) pointed out, one of the methodological challenges of ecological approach is that it "offers more internal validity (appropriately called ecological validity) but less reliability and inordinately less generalisability or external validity" (p. 25).

The other ecological perspective stream is applied to teacher inquiry, which aims to encourage teachers to better understand student learning ecologies. In other words, this ecological perspective was applied to encourage the teacher participants to see student learning beyond the classroom, as well as a way of seeing language learning teaching in a relational and holistic way. Therefore, teacher learning in this study includes both learning about student learning ecologies to support better teaching, and learning through the ecological views on language learning and teaching as an alternative approach to teacher learning. As such, the present study was designed with the two methodological approaches, to navigate the entire process of research as well as to provide benefits to participants.

3.2. Settings and Participants

3.2.1 Settings

The study was set in two English language schools in Sydney, Australia: A University English Language Centre (hereafter, ELC), and a private institution located in the Central Business District of downtown Sydney (hereafter, CBD College). A diversity of teachers in from the two different school cultures was expected. Therefore, different dimensions of teacher cognition development as a phenomenon within a particular context were anticipated.

There were five main differences between the two institutions.

1) Geographical location of the institution.

The physical environment in which the students lived as well as their lifestyles were most likely different due to the different physical environments in which the institutions were situated.

2) Student demographic characteristics.

The ELC is attached to the university, suggesting that the students here may have already chosen this university as the location to study for their degree after completing the English language learning programme. Alternatively, the students may be on an exchange programme from their university. CBD College is not attached to a university, even though some students may be aiming to complete further study at a university. The students may also have received a recommendation from an agency in their home country to attend the institution because it meets their living and study requirements (e.g., budget, location, nationality ranges, etc.).

3) Course curriculums and timetables.

The ELC curriculum is basically structured as a five-week block course. The students are allocated to either the morning (9:00-12:45) or the afternoon (13:00- 16:45) courses. CBD

College courses are structured as a day-time class (9:00- 14:45) and evening class (16:30-20:30). Students who attend the evening class typically work during the day.

4) Institutional culture.

Cultural differences would emerge due to the three differences discussed above. In addition, school marketing methods to recruit students may be different for various reasons including different target nationalities, connections to agencies etc.

5) Researcher-participants relationship and participants' perceptions of 'research'.

The researcher was familiar with some of the ELC staff and the institution appears to be accustomed to being involved in research project with staff at the university. Conversely, the CBD College appeared to have had relatively little involvement in research projects excepting individual teachers' past research experience when completing their degree.

3.2.1.1 English Language Centre (ELC)

The ELC was founded by the Australian Government in 1990. More than 1,000 students graduate from the Centre every year. ELC "offer[s] a wide range of English language programs including General English, Academic English, Study Tours, TESOL Teacher Training, and professional English courses", and "provide[s] discipline-specific preparation programs for future university students" (University Website). The ELC is located on the campus of the university, which is approximately 30 minutes away from the city centre. Students share campus facilities with other university students from the Bachelor to PhD programmes. Students can use the university facilities such as the library and computer rooms. Apart from the ELC resources available, the ELC students can participate in university events and join community clubs such as sporting events, conversation groups, and so on.

A large proportion of the student population is from Asian countries, especially mainland China. There is a Self-Learning Centre at the ELC to support the students and to

provide extra courses and workshops. Textbooks and books are available for the students to borrow there. Several computers are also available, along with a few staff members to assist the students.

The sign-up sheets for the workshops are posted on the notice board. The classroom was designed in a modern way. A projector and a computer are set, the walls of the classroom can be used as white board so that both students and teachers can write (and erase) easily. Colourful, movable chairs are in each classroom allowing the students to move easily for group work. The excursions are designed and organised mainly by class teachers and include trips to beach, museums, parliament, historical sites, etc.

3.2.1.2 CBD College

The CBD College is located in the heart of Sydney, with school building surrounded by office buildings, shops and restaurants. The college and courses are Australian government registered, including a wide range of English courses and vocational courses. English courses are also accredited by the National ELT Accreditation Scheme (NEAS). CBD College provides morning and evening classes to accommodate different student preferences (working students tend to choose evening courses).

The student body represents diverse nationalities, but many are from South American countries. There is a good mixture of different nationalities in each class (i.e., from Europe, South America, and East and South East Asian countries). The students also represent different age groups, and most are working, except for the short-term study students.

Classroom sizes could be described as 'quite cosy'. Long tables and chairs are set for a maximum of 20 students. It is not easy to move around. A projector and a lap-top computer are available in each classroom. There are posters and advertisements in every classroom. Information about optional classes (e.g., writing, conversation classes) is made

available every Friday, and a poster introducing the various online applications, and vote/feedback to teachers are also in the classroom. There is a kitchen where the students can heat up their lunch and spend some time chatting with friends and teachers.

Some teachers take their classes on an excursion, but activities are provided and advertised frequently. Students from any classroom or courses who are interested can join the activities, often with teachers. There is a special staff member in charge of organising all out-of-class activities. A calendar of activities (BBQ, local festivals, table tennis, yoga, barista certificate course, etc.) is posted on each classroom wall.

3.2.2 Participants

3.2.2.1 Teachers

Participants in this research study comprise a total of ten English teachers from two institutions. Five teachers from the ELC participated in the first phase of the research project for a period of twelve to fifteen weeks. Then the five teachers from CBD College went through the same process. Teachers were recruited on a voluntary basis without any target population established or strict criteria applied to the selection process. The teacher samples were therefore a mixture of gender, age range, countries of origin, educational and teaching backgrounds, and courses being taught at the time of recruitment. The only criteria for eligibility was teaching experience of more than three years. This minimum limit was applied because such teachers are presumably able to reflect on their past teaching experiences and tend to have clearer beliefs about language learning and teaching to articulate.

The recruitment of teachers with diverse personal backgrounds and learning/teaching experiences enable comparisons to be made regarding their beliefs about language learning. It is anticipated that their beliefs and teaching approaches vary

due to the differences in the environments in which they previously learned or taught English, or due to their current working environment.

Table 3.1 below shows the participants' background information: institution, gender, countries of origin, teaching and educational backgrounds, and research experiences. Pseudonyms were used to identify the participants. All were highly experienced ESL teachers with over 10 years or more of teaching experience, except Maureen, she had had three years of ESL teaching experience.

Table 3.1. Participants' background information

	Participants	Institution	Gender	Country of origin	Education/Teaching and research backgrounds
1	Jesse	ELC	F	Australia	Taught migrants in AUS, overseas (Indonesia), teacher training course for Chinese teachers of English
2	Lisa	ELC	F	UK	TEFL in AUS, overseas (Japan), MA in Linguistics, teacher research project
3	Maureen	ELC	F	Australia (Lebanese background)	Primary education degree, teacher research project
4	Molly	ELC	F	Australia	Taught migrants in AUS, overseas (East Timor), teacher research project
5	Thomas	ELC	M	Australia	Overseas (Japan), GE at ELC in the past, recently mostly Academic classes
6	Dan	CBD	M	Australia	Overseas (Japan, Korea), various ESL courses in AUS
7	Kathy	CBD	F	Australia	Overseas (Germany), various ESL courses in AUS, Coordinator, IELTS examiner
8	Luke	CBD	M	New Zealand	Overseas (China, Korea), GE only, no degree hold
9	Monika	CBD	F	Poland	Overseas (UK), both ESL and Russian, Secondary school in AUS, various ESL courses in AUS
10	Roberto	CBD	M	Brazil	Overseas (UK, South Africa), both academic and GE in AUS, MA in Linguistics, MA in Translation

3.2.2.2 Students

Although the main focus of this research is on the teachers, the study sample also comprises students learning English. This is for the purpose of collecting student information as a data source to examine teacher learning. The samples comprised the students the teacher participants were teaching at the time of the study, around 15-20 students from each class. They were recruited on a voluntary basis and were required to complete a questionnaire and participate in a mind map drawing activity as a part of their class work (or outside of the class). The students were assured that they were not obligated to participate in the activities related to the project and that it was not included as part of their course evaluation. They were then asked to sign a consent form in the understanding that their participation in the study was voluntary.

The students' level of English, course being studied, and length of stay in Australia were not specified because the main focus of the project was on the teachers. The student sample represented various countries around the world. In total, 170 students participated in the project.

3.2.3 Ethical Issues and Recruitment Procedure

In accordance with the ethical guidelines issued by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, participants' privacy and research confidentiality were respected throughout the research process (Appendix G). Initial contact with the directors of institutions mentioned earlier was made via the researcher's supervisor to gain permission to conduct research with students and teachers at both institutions. Following permission, teacher recruitment was undertaken with the assistance of the directors of the institutions. The advertisement (Appendix H) which stated the aims of the research project and the information about activities involved was forwarded to relevant teachers through the directors, enabling the researcher to avoid approaching participants directly. The teacher

participants and their students were assured that there were no risks involved in participating in the project, and that all activities related to the project remained confidential.

3.2.3.1 Recruitment Phase 1: English Language Centre

Information about the aims and benefits of participating in this research project (written by the researcher) was emailed to relevant teachers via an academic staff member at ELC to invite them to participate. An advertisement for the project was also posted on the notice boards at the institution.

Participants were assured that participation or non-participation would not affect their evaluation in the institution. They were also informed that participation was on a voluntary basis. Successful participants were then contacted via email to arrange a first short face-to-face meeting with the researcher to explain in detail what their participation involved, the research timeline, and documents used during the project (i.e., a consent form for students, the student questionnaire, and a mind map sheet). Signed consent was obtained from all teacher participants during face-to-face meetings on the first day. The participants were provided with a copy of the Consent Form (Appendix I and J). They were assured that any information or personal details gathered during the study was confidential, that no individual is to be identified in the study or in future publications, and that they could withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

3.2.3.2 Recruitment Phase 2: CBD College

Given that the researcher was not as familiar with the system at CBD College compared to the ELC, more care was taken with the recruitment process so as not to disturb their managers and work processes. Consultation began with the academic manager whereby all details of the project (e.g., schedules, teacher involvement, student involvement and the

like) were outlined. The manager showed great interest in the project even though it was not so common for the institution to get involved in such a research project.

A different recruitment procedure was adopted at CBD College than at ELC because the manger preferred to select potential teachers rather than advertise the project to all teachers at the institute. The selected teacher participants (who agreed to join the project) were then contacted directly to schedule the initial meetings and interviews. Consent to participate was obtained using the same process employed with the ELC participants.

Consent from the students at both institutions to participate was also obtained before engaging in the aforementioned activities in the classroom or outside of the classroom. The students were also given the assurance of data confidentially.

3.3 Research Design: Multiple Narrative Case Study

This study employed a multiple case study design involving narrative and thematic analysis of multiple qualitative data sources. Cases were treated as both individual teacher participants and the process of inquiry for each teacher. Narrative inquiry was used particularly when longitudinally analysing the development of teacher cognition and the process of teacher learning through inquiry. As such, the examination from ecological perspectives with a focus of time and ecology was achieved. The next sections illustrate the theoretical views on both methods, Multiple Case Study (3.3.1) and Narrative Inquiry (3.3.2), respectively. The design for collecting multiple data sources for triangulation, and the overall data collection procedure with timeline are also explained (3.3.3).

3.3.1 Multiple Case Study

Case study research concentrates on "optimizing understanding of the case rather than to generalize beyond it" (Stake, 2008, p. 120). It is commonly used for qualitative research as a strategy for investigating "a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in its real-world

context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and contexts may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 2).

Hood (2009) described a case in qualitative research as "a bounded system comprised of an individual, institution or entity and the site and context in which social action takes place, the boundaries of which may not be clear and are determined by the scope of the researcher's interests" (p. 69). Although the boundaries may not be easily drawn, such research is considered as a "contextual study, unfolding over time and in real settings" (van Lier, 2005, p. 205).

The advantage of a multiple case design is that it is considered a more compelling and more robust type of study (Yin, 2014). Adopting a replication strategy (Yin, 2014), a multiple case study can yield "similar results (a literal replication)" and/or "contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (a theoretical replication)" (Yin, 2014, p. 57). As such, selected cases with a close attention to their contexts and activities are examined to understand the cases as a phenomenon, and as a process of change/development rather than a generalisation of them (Casanave, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Duff, 2008; Stake, 2008; Swanborn, 2010).

A multiple case study design is therefore best suited to the current study and its aim to understand the development of the cognition of teacher (10 individual cases) over time in particular settings. It is also appropriate for a study of the links between the process of their cognition development and teacher learning as cases. Exploring both individual teacher development and the process of their inquiry through cross-case analysis can enhance transferability to similar contexts and deepen our understanding of teacher cognition development and teacher learning as a phenomenon (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

3.3.2 Narrative Inquiry

Webster and Mertova (2007) describe narrative inquiry as "human stories of experience [that] provide researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories" (p. 1). It is "a way of doing research that focuses on the stories we tell about our lives. These stories are about our *experiences* of life – the meaning we make of the events we live or imagine in our future lives" (Barkhuizen, 2015, p. 169, emphasis in original).

Narrative approaches have been widely used in the field of language learning and teaching as a powerful tool for understanding the depth of individual teachers and learners' lived experience in relation to their (re)construction or negotiation of their identities (Barkhuizen, 2016, 2013; Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014; Canagarajah, 2012; Coffey, 2010; Pavlenko, 2007). Narrative inquiry also allows researchers to explore how teachers' beliefs have been affected by their past learning and teaching experiences, and how they would most likely reflect to their current teaching practices. Their stories contain emotions, constraints, expectations and future visions. They can therefore provide us with a better understanding of how teachers make sense of their lived experience and how they reconstruct or negotiate their identity as a teacher in the particular contexts in which they are now situated (Barkhuizen, 2015; Liu & Xu, 2011).

Within the field of Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE), narratives are often used as a vehicle for investigating changes in teacher identity and power and teaching practices, and as a powerful tool to enhance teacher professional development (Barkhuizen, 2016; Johnson & Golombek, 2011). According to Johnson and Golombek (2011):

> When narrative is used as a vehicle for inquiry, as is the case in SLTE, it functions as a powerful mediational tool that makes explicit, in teachers' own words, how, when, and why new understandings emerge, understandings that can lead to transformed conceptualizations of oneself as a teacher and transformed modes of engagement in the activities of teaching. (p. 490)

Narrative inquiry ignites a cognitive process in teachers by engaging them in narrative activity. It "enables teachers to interpret and reinterpret their experiences and to articulate the complexities of teaching while stepping back from the hermeneutical processes in which they normally engage" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p, 487). "It gives them increasing control over their thoughts and actions; grants their experiences enriched, deepened meaning; and enables them to be more thoughtful and mindful of their work" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, pp. 6-7).

The current project aims to encourage teachers to engage in reflection on their teaching and their experiences of participating in this project. Narrative inquiry assists the researcher to examine the cognition changes in a group of teachers in a particular setting. It is also a process of individual teacher cognition development and learning over time during this particular project.

3.3.2.1 Narrative analysis

Writing narratives of individual teachers by combining multiple non-narrative data sources into a cohesive, structured story was used in this study as "an intermediate outcome" (Benson, 2013b, p. 244) for further analysis. Therefore, narrative writing itself was a method for triangulation, as well as a process of data analysis. Written narratives were used for cross-case analysis to identify the common themes and patterns in the learning processes across individual narratives. In this study, a thematic analysis was conducted on all aforementioned data sources along with triangulation, first focusing on individuals.

3.3.2.2 Paradigmatic analysis of narrative

Paradigmatic analysis of narratives was undertaken to achieve "an examination of the data to identify particulars as instances of general notions or concepts" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 13). Individual teacher narratives were used to examine both the teachers' cognition, and

the patterns in their learning processes. The aim of the examination was to identify emerging themes and issues to discuss as phenomena for subsequent cross-case analysis.

NVivo 11 software was used for the cross-case analysis for both the interview scripts and mind maps. The coding distributions of individual participants were compared for the aspects that shaped individual teachers' beliefs, as well as for any shift in those beliefs by the later stage of the research project. A more detail explanation of the coding processes, thematic narrative analysis, and paradigmatic analysis of the narratives is provided in section 3.6.

3.3.3 Multiple Data Sources

Through using multiple data sources, "the insights from one source can be tested in analysis of others or through different approaches to data collection and analysis" (Benson, 2014, p. 158). The five major methods for studying teachers' beliefs are: oral accounts, self-report instruments, observation, written accounts, and visual methods (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003). This study employed multiple data sources from both teachers and their students as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Multiple data sources from teachers and students

Teachers	Students	Researcher
▪ Mind map x 2 ▪ Interview x 3	▪ Questionnaire ▪ Mind map	▪ Reflective journal

Although class observation is often used as a major source for data collection in teacher cognition studies, it was not included in this study to avoid the potential for teachers to decide not to take part in the project. The issue of "reactivity- changes in the behaviour of those being observed" (Borg, 2015b, p. 495) was taken into account. In addition, the current research does not seek for (mis)matches between the teacher's reported views and actual classroom practices. With the understanding that teachers'

practice change would be a result of their cognitive structure change (Johnson & Golombek, 2011), this investigation focuses on the development in teacher cognition rather than the actions in the classroom. Johnson and Golombek (2011) point out:

> [A person's cognitive structure change] emerges over time and depends on the agency of the person and the affordances and constraints embedded within the person's environment. Thus, from a sociocultural theoretical perspective, conceptual development represents not only change in thinking but also change in activity. (p. 489)

The main focuses of this research are on exploring language teacher cognition of language learning and teaching beyond the classroom and providing insights into teacher learning processes as a consequence of an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments. Therefore, research instruments were chosen in consideration of these outcomes and to support the integration of all data sources. For the purpose of clarifying the meanings from different points of view, multiple data sources were employed and analysed for triangulation (Duff, 2008; Flick, 2014; Silverman, 2010; Stake, 2006).

3.3.3.1 Triangulation

The triangulation of data sources in qualitative research enhances data validity and reliability (Silverman, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007; Yin, 2018). For Cohen, Manison and Morrison (2000), triangulation is an "attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint" (p. 112).

Webster and Mertova (2007) assert the need to establish new ways of viewing validity and reliability in narrative research as the inquiry is concerned with "individual truths [rather] than generalizable and repeatable events" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 89). Given that narrative inquiry was employed as a research method in this study, Polkinghorne's (1988) notions of validity and reliability have been adapted. Validity refers

to the strength and trustworthiness of the data as well as the ease of access to the data; whereas, reliability refers to "dependability" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 176).

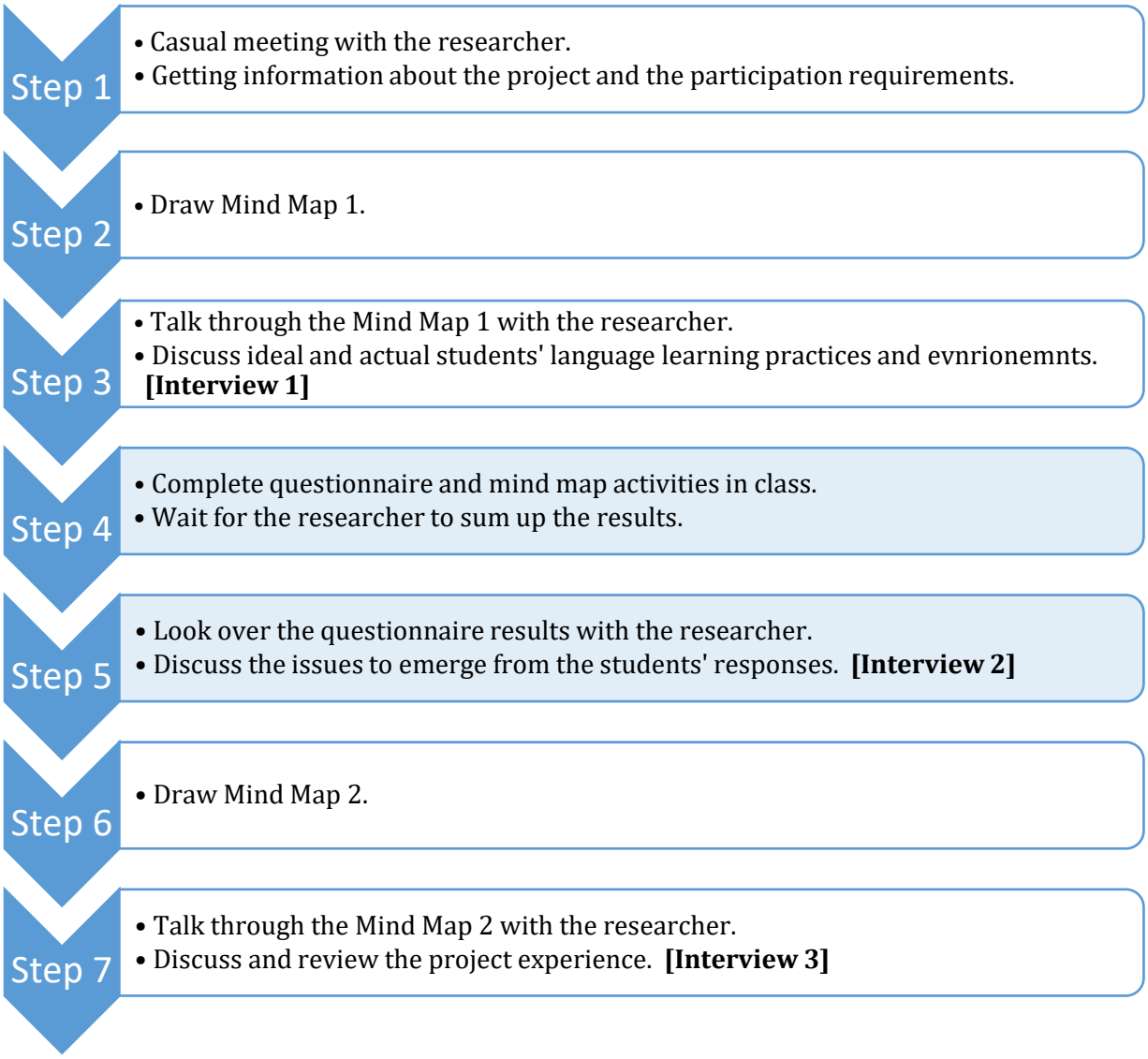
To provide a more accurate interpretation of the development of teacher cognition and the processes of teacher learning in this research, triangulation of the different modes of teachers' thoughts, particularly through visual elicitation, was performed (Copeland & Agosto, 2012; Silverman, 2010). Borg (2006) states that "because cognitive change may take the form of a reorganisation in content, rather than just changes in the content of what is known" (p. 327), identifying the change as well as process of change should be the objective, not only from the oral reports of teachers, but also through visual mind mapping. It is also important to be aware "that different research instruments have different levels of sensitivity in detecting various types of change" (Borg, 2006, p. 327).

The following sections provide detailed explanations of the data collection procedures and instruments, and the justification for their use.

3.3.3.2 Data collection sequence

The flow of the research project was designed to guide teacher learning. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the steps of the research activities. Following the recruitment process described earlier in this chapter, ***Step 1*** was initiated. This involved the first casual face-to-face meeting between the researcher and the participants. This meeting included the provision of more detailed information to the participants regarding the purpose of the project, and was also an opportunity to start building a rapport as co-researchers.

Figure 3.2. Steps of research activities



Step 2: *Draw Mind Map 1 on 'a good language learning environment'*

The first participation activity for the teachers, prior to the initial interview with the researcher, was to draw a mind map on 'a good language learning environment'. Teachers were able to brainstorm their beliefs and visually represented their ideas through deep reflection on their past teaching experiences.

Step 3*: Interview 1*

Interview 1 focused on understanding teachers' conceptions of language learning and teaching, their learning and teaching background, and their beliefs about students'

language learning practices beyond the classroom. The teachers talked through their ideas as reflected in Mind Map 1.

Step 4: *Collecting student information, collaboratively*

The teacher participants and the researcher collaborated to administer a questionnaire and mind mapping activity in class (1 or 2 classes for each teacher). Students reflected on their daily activities (where, when, with who, with what) for language learning and visually represented their language learning practices and surrounding environments.

Step 5: *Interview 2: Teacher inquiry into student learning*

Following the collection and summary of the student information, the second round of teacher interviews were conducted. The teachers had access to information about their students' language learning practices and their beliefs about the language learning environment beyond the classroom. The teachers could also compare their ideas with those of the students. The role of the teacher in the language learning process was discussed and it was expected that the interview process would stimulate the teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices.

Step 6: *Draw Mind Map 2*

The teachers drew a second mind map prior to the final interview. Based on Mind Map 2, the teachers reflected on the development of their beliefs as a result of their increased understanding of the students' perceptions of language learning.

Step 7*: Interview 3: Summing up teacher learning and reflection*

The final interviews with teachers focused on their thoughts about the teacher inquiry process and their experiences of participating in the project. The teachers explained the contents of their Mind Map 2 to the interviewer and how it was different to their Mind Map 1. This provided the opportunity to gain insights into the teachers' cognition development after reflecting on the data produced by the students.

3.3.3.3 Timeline

Table 3.3 below presents the timeline for data collection. As mentioned earlier, the study sample comprised five teachers from two different institutions. Each phase of the data collection process took approximately 12 weeks.

Following the induction session with the teacher participants (conducted mostly with teachers individually, although one session was done as a group due to the teachers' schedules), the teachers were asked to draw Mind Map 1 before Interview 1 (conducted between Weeks 1 and 2). The teachers brought their Mind Map 1 to the first interview to talk through it with the interviewer. Weeks 3 and 4 were spent collecting student information. The researcher attended the teachers' lesson to assist with the administration of the questionnaire and the mind map drawing activities. During Weeks 5 and 6, the researcher collated the student questionnaire data and conducted a brief analysis of the students' mind maps to discuss with the teachers at Interview 2 (held during Weeks 7 and 8). Weeks 9 and 10 were set aside as time for the teachers to reflect on their experiences. Weeks 11 and 12 (the final two weeks) were set aside as a wrap-up session. Teachers were asked to draw Mind Map 2 to explain their thoughts and to bring it to the final interview for discussion.

Table 3.3. Data collection timeline

	Teacher mind map	Teacher interview	Student questionnaire and mind map
Weeks 1-2	x	x	
Weeks 3-4			x
Weeks 5-6			
Weeks 7-8		x	
Weeks 9-10			
Weeks 11-12	x	x	

3.4 Data Sources for the Teacher Participants

3.4.1 Mind Map Drawing

This section illustrates the purpose of, and justification for, employing the mind map drawing method combined with interviews in this study. This includes an explanation for the choice of mind maps as a particular source of visual material as data.

3.4.1.1 Visual research method

The use of visual methodologies or visual materials as data sources are common in the fields of Sociology or Social Science. The types of visual materials used for qualitative research include photographs, videos, and drawings (e.g., Margolis & Pauwels, 2011; Pole, 2004; Rose, 2012; Stanczak, 2007). The materials are often used in an exploratory manner, "to discover things the researcher had not initially considered" (Banks, 2007, p. 17).

Bagnoli (2009) suggests that "the inclusion of non-linguistic dimensions in research" can be used as a way of accessing and representing daily experiences at different levels. This is because everyday events and experiences sometimes cannot be easily expressed in words, since they are "made of a multiplicity of dimensions, which include the visual and the sensory" (p. 547). Given that the "visual is also spatial" (Emmison, 2011, p. 238), the analysis of visual data in this study allowed for reflections on, and discussions about, the relevance of items which constitute the language learning environment.

Indeed, the use of participant-generated visual materials (e.g., photographs) during interviews promotes participant reflection on their everyday life and taken-for-granted assumptions as "it gives them a distance from what they are usually immersed in and allows them to articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain implicit" (Rose, 2016, p. 316). In other words, it can increase participants' sense of control over the research process, as well as facilitate self-exploration through reflection, and enhance the relevance of data (Liebenberg, 2009). The potential benefits of using visual materials to facilitate

interview discussion were considered in this study because it would help the participants and the researcher to expand on or deepen the level of discussion on the issue under investigation. It can also increase the validity of the data as it presents as evidence of the visual representation of ideas and beliefs (Glegg, 2018; Liebenberg, 2009).

In the field of language learning and teaching, Borg, Birello, Civera, and Zanatta (2014) combined a visual data source with interviews to examine the impact of pre-service language teacher education at primary schools in Spain. The authors posited that drawing could "serve as a valuable awareness-raising strategy" (p. 5) for the participants by promoting their reflection on their beliefs about language learning and teaching in their context. Moreover, "drawings would provide insight into the trainees' beliefs in ways" that other sources alone would not (Borg et al., 2014, p. 5). Weber and Mitchell (1996) state:

> Drawings offer a different kind of glimpse into human sense making than written or spoken texts do, because they can express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-through, [and] the sub-conscious. (p. 304)

Drawing provides participants with a different mode of expression, allowing the researcher to capture their "visual representations of experience, knowledge, perception, or memories" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, the drawings were used as a support tool during interviews, rather than as an artefact for interpretation, as is often the case in therapeutic contexts:

> Learning to visualize the concepts, processes, and requirements of research may help us to understand how the choices we make are connected to our relationship with the environment, our health, and the role of wealth. In one way or another, these choices are often connected to our attainment of a meaningful life. By providing a visual record of how you understand a topic at one moment in time, maps allow a means to capture understanding in the short term. They can also assist in longer term reflection, reconsideration, and more meaningful learning. (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 9)

Narrative inquiry research increasingly employs visual methods "as an additional and complementary approach" (Chik, 2017, p. 5). Although participant interview is likely the most common technique for data collection in qualitative research, multiple data

sources as modes of data collection are also considered. Multimodal narratives are an example of a combination of sources, particularly visual materials such as photographs (Nikula & Pitkanen-Huhta, 2008) or drawings (Kalaja, Alanen, & Dufva, 2008; Kalaja, Dufva, & Alanen, 2013) in which participants describe or represent something about themselves. Giroir (2014) used student-designed L2 photo-narratives which combined class observations and individual interviews in her ethnographic study of two Saudi learners' negotiations of their positionality in a host community in the United States. Kalaja et al. (2013) collected drawings or self-portraits from EFL learner and teacher participants to undertake an analysis of their language learning and teaching experiences.

As pointed out by Borg (2015b), "drawings provide a limited basis on which inferences about teachers' beliefs can be made" (pp. 497-498). Mind maps drawing was included as a visual method for data collection in the current research, and participants' oral commentaries on the mind maps were elicited in the individual interviews. As such, this research project chose mind map drawing rather than other types of visual materials to facilitate teachers' reflection on their language learning environments. The next section elaborates the potential benefits of the use of mind map as a visual data source for this research.

3.4.1.2 Mind map as a visual source

The mind map functions as "a powerful graphic technique which provides a universal key to unlocking the potential of the brain" and "can be applied to every aspect of life where improved learning and clear thinking will enhance human performance" (Buzan & Buzan, 1995, p. 59). A mind map drawing is considered as a free style approach to mapping ideas by encouraging participants to create associations between texts and images after brainstorming their ideas around a topic (Davies, 2011).

Although an increasing number of research studies have applied maps or visual elicitation in both quantitative and qualitative research (Nesbit & Adesope, 2006), there still is a paucity of information about the presentation and explanation of findings (Wheeldon, 2010). The use of visual methods such as diagrams, concept maps, relational maps, or knowledge maps are increasingly recognised for research or learning purposes in multiple disciplines (Kinchin, 2014; Maréea, van Bruggenb, & Jochemsc, 2013; Nesbit & Adesope, 2006; Poole & Davis, 2006; Tzeng, 2010). Mind maps are also considered to be "structurally more flexible and often less formal" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 5) than other visual methods, although they all share similar theoretical considerations; namely, "to provide a visual representation of dynamic schemes of understanding that exist within the human mind" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 6).

There are limited empirical studies to have employed a mind map as a visual source of research (Tattersall, Watts, & Vernon, 2007; Wheeldon, 2011; Whiting & Sines, 2012). Thus, mind maps "might be seen as a new form of visual interview or as another way to conceive of an unobtrusive or perhaps less intrusive measure" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 13). This is particularly the case in the field of Applied Linguistics. In terms of qualitative research, mind maps can be used "as a means to gather unique, personal, and user-generated data to explore perceived relationships and unfiltered associations" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 5). They are also a powerful data source to draw out deeper insights of teacher cognition of language learning environments via an unsolicited reflection of their teaching and learning experiences (Wheeldon, 2011; Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009). A mind map drawing can also be used during interview to stimulate or probe the 'backstage' of participants' experiences, thoughts and beliefs (Crilly, Blackwell, & Clarkson, 2006). As such, it provides an alternative to traditional interview methods that often solicit "a rehearsed form of narrative that precludes more spontaneous answers" (Hathaway &

Atkinson, 2003, p. 162). This research study also anticipated that the combination of multiple data sources would enhance the validity of the results (Wheeldon, 2010).

In order to explore teachers' preconceptions of the language learning environment from a holistic perspective, and to examine teachers' beliefs about their teaching practices to support student learning – their principles of teaching if you like – the teachers were asked to draw a mind map of 'a good language learning environment'. It was anticipated that via this exercise the teachers would visualise the key elements that they considered important to construct a good language learning environment.

During the induction session, the researcher provided the teacher participants with an instruction sheet which included the theme of the mind map, the basic steps to drawing a mind map, a couple of models, and more elaborate version of the steps suggested by Buzan (2011) (Appendix A). This session aimed to both ensure mutual understanding of what 'a mind map' looks like, and that the teachers had a clear understanding of how to instruct the students to engage in a mind map drawing activity during a lesson at later stage of the project. A sheet was also provided to participants for them to use to draw their mind map. The sheet had a simple design with a frame and the task written on the top; *Please draw a mind map of 'a good language learning environment'* (Appendix B). The researcher avoided the provision of explicit information about the concept of out-of-class language learning to teachers so that they could freely draw out their thoughts. The teachers were asked to draw a mind map both at the initial stage of the project and prior to Interview 3 to examine any changes of their beliefs. As such, the teachers could reflect on their beliefs at a deeper level.

3.4.2 Individual Face-to-face In-depth Interviews

Interviews are used in qualitative research as a primary way of understanding the participants' views and experiences of the world. Participants are asked "to unfold the

meaning of their experiences" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1), and "the meaning that they make of that experience" (Seidman, 1991, p. 3). Interviewing is also recognised and widely used as a method for data collection in the field of language learning and teaching; that is, "for accessing personal perspectives on language learning and teaching in situated contexts" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 16).

The present study draws on the notion of interviewing "as a socially-situated encounter in which both interviewer and interviewee play active roles" (Roulston, 2011, p. 348), and that the interactions between them create the narrative social world (Miller & Glassner, 2011). In turn, it employed face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews as the main method for exploring teachers' beliefs and views on language learning and teaching. An interview guide with a set of questions was prepared in advance to allow the researcher to navigate the interview to cover the topics based on the research questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) (Appendix C). The interview questions were generally open-ended to develop a natural conversation with interviewees, and to provide the flexibility to elicit further information or to seek clarification on answers (Richards, 2009; Silverman, 2010).

Given that interviews draw out people's thoughts and feelings in retrospective and reflective ways, and provide the opportunity to elicit personal stories (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013), in-depth interviews in particular allow participants to engage in "flexible and free flowing interaction" (Morris, 2015, p. 3) and to express their experiences and story in their own ways. In addition, conducting the interviews in three stages enabled the researcher to capture the participants' development of cognition and to observe their behaviours over the research period. Moreover, it provided an opportunity for both the participants and the researcher to reflect (Mann, 2016). Each interview was approximately one hour duration and all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim with the participant's

consent. Details of the focus areas canvassed during each interview are illustrated in the following sections.

3.4.2.1 Interview 1

The initial interview was conducted to explore the teachers' beliefs about language learning environments prior to their participation in the research project. It was also taken as an opportunity for the researcher to build a rapport with the interviewee. The following areas of focus were canvassed in Interview 1:

1) Teaching background and beliefs about students' language learning practices outside of the classroom,
2) Conceptions of 'a good language learning environment' using the mind map drawing to guide the discussion,
3) Beliefs about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning and teaching,
4) Concerns about students' language learning practices outside of the classroom, and
5) The roles of teachers and the teaching approaches to support language learning beyond the classroom, and the common challenges they experienced.

3.4.2.2 Interview 2: Responsive Interview

Responsive interviewing is a qualitative interviewing style which "emphasises the importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and interviewee that leads to more give-and-take in the conversation" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 37). This approach "includes an understanding of the potential value of interviewer self-disclosure" (Minikel-Lacocque, 2018, p. 5) for yielding richer conversation, although it is not something the interview should always have. The responsive interviewing approach was selected for the second interview because the topic of discussion was based on the interviewees' views

of the student data, rather than answering a set of questions (Flick, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). One of the benefits of responsive interviewing is that participants can "gain greater insight into their lived experiences through the process of the interview" (p. 5). In turn, it provides the researcher with a deeper level of understanding of the participants.

Interview 2 was conducted after collecting the students' feedback on their language learning practices and the learning environments via questionnaire and mind map drawing. The researcher discussed with the teachers their understanding of the student data. In this way, the researcher sometimes raised issues of interest rather than just listening to the teachers express their opinions and thoughts. It is important to note however that the teachers' topics of interest related to the student data, and their feelings and impressions were more highly valued than the researcher's interests as the information was collected from their own students at their institution. The probes for more information during the interview were spontaneous to elicit additional details and more in-depth illustrations of the teachers' thoughts on particular issues.

3.4.2.3 Interview 3

The overall purpose of Interview 3 was to provide the teacher participants with the opportunity to reflect on their experience of participating in the inquiry research and to sum up their beliefs. The teachers were given a few weeks after Interview 2 to think about their experiences and to draw Mind Map 2 prior to Interview 3. There were five focus points for elicitation in Interview 3:

1) The development of teacher beliefs about students' language learning practices outside of the classroom, and the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning and teaching,
2) Current conceptions of 'a good language learning environment' using the Mind Map 2 to stimulate the discussion,

3) Comparisons of the ideal language learning environment and their understanding of the students' actual learning environments,
4) The roles of teachers and teaching approaches to support language learning beyond the classroom and the main challenges they experienced, and
5) Reflection of their experience of learning through teacher inquiry during the project.

Some of the focuses in Interview 1 were deliberately repeated in Interview 3 so that the interviewee could reflect on their initial thoughts and compare them to their current ones. In other words, the teachers were encouraged to reflect on the development of their thoughts, then summarise their beliefs about language learning environments and their experience of participating in this research project.

3.4.2.4 Reflexivity in Interviews

Reflexivity is defined as "being thoughtfully and critically self-aware of personal/relational dynamics in the research and how these affect the research" (Finlay, 2012, p. 319). Notably, it is recognised "as a crucial strategy in the process of generating knowledge by means of qualitative research" (Berger, 2015, p. 219). As such, it has received increasing attention in research papers (Mann, 2016; Rabbidge, 2017). For Haynes (2012):

> reflexivity is an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes. (p. 72)

Researchers need to recognise the sensitivity of "the role of the self in the creation of knowledge" and "take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation" (Berger, 2015, p. 220).

Reflexivity during the interviews was understood as co-constructed, collaborative dialogues with the participants. The positioning of myself as interviewer was also

important as the interviewees were particularly self-aware not only during the course of interviews, but also during all correspondences via emails about meeting schedules and casual chats. Reflexivity was also apparent during the analysis and interpretation of the interview data (Cunliffe, 2003; Mann, 2016; Talmy, 2011).

Mann (2016) argues that the three main reflexivity parameters during interviews in qualitative research are context, co-construction, and sensitivity. It is important to recognise that interviews are co-constructed social interactions between the interviewer and the respondent within a particular social context, particularly an in-depth interview format (Foley, 2012). Mann discussed the importance of reflexive consideration of how the context of the interview was set up; how the participants were recruited; their understanding of the nature of the interview, tasks, or the purpose of the research; and the process for analysing interview data. In addition, in relation to the analysis, the choices of particular methodology and theories which influence the research are also articulated.

In terms of sensitivity towards the relationships with research participants, the importance of building a rapport with the interviewee is often stressed (Seidman, 1991). To build a rapport, it is often suggested that the interviewer should allow some moments of personal, self-disclosure such as sharing information about one's life experiences, opinions and beliefs (Foley, 2012; Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Mann, 2016).

The second interview in this study based on the summary of the student information may have demonstrated the most sensitivity among the three interviews. The researcher deliberately used self-disclosure by sharing points of view on the student data when relevant to promote a dialogic effect. This can develop the 'co-researcher' relationship with the teachers by discussing and analysing the data together. However, to avoid asserting too much influence over the participants' views, I also positioned myself as a person learning about the students, whereby the participants were the 'teachers' (Foley, 2012) informing me about their students. The teachers might also have positioned

themselves as 'learners' to some extent as they were discovering insights about student learning and possibly their own beliefs and opinions via interactions with the researcher (Foley, 2012).

To maintain reflexivity awareness during the research project, a reflective journal was maintained along the way. The journal was used to note down my thoughts and feelings about the interactions, particular conversations, or incidents I had with the teacher participants during the process (Haynes, 2012). Further details are provided in the next section.

3.4.3 Researcher's Reflective Journal

As a vehicle to examine the reflexive dimension of my research, a journal was kept by the researcher to record reflections on the interactions with each teacher participant applying a critical lens to reflexivity, embodied felt senses, and so on (Finlay, 2012).

This reflective journal was subsequently treated as a data source for analysis in its own right. The reflective notes included a summary of each meeting, how collaboratively the class activities were done, what I thought about the attitude of each participant towards the project or particular activities, the possible impact of the researcher's beliefs on the participants, the relationship with the participants, and my feelings and analysis of my own positioning (Berger, 2015; King & Horrocks, 2010; Takeda, 2012). It generated details of the nuanced reactions by participants and the multiple dimensions of both the participants' and the researcher's positioning in this research project.

The reflective notes are used mainly for narrative analysis to describe the individual teacher's attitudes towards the research activities from the researcher's point of view. Therefore, some of the quotes from the journal are reported in the findings.

3.5 Student Information

As previously explained in this chapter, this research project aimed to examine teacher learning through inquiry related to students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom. Therefore, student data was used as an information source for the teachers to learn more about their students in general, not just for the purposes of this study. To glean adequate and relevant information about the students' actual language learning practices and beliefs, two data sources were chosen for use.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to access information about the students' out-of-class language learning activities, their perceptions of the usefulness of the in-class and out-of-class learning activities, and their overall reflections of learning English in Australia. This information was regarded as crucial to exploring the students' 'real-world' language learning activities beyond the classroom, to understanding their thoughts about language learning in a study abroad experience, and to identifying the type of students' needs to be supported by teachers or institutions.

Table 3.4 below provides brief information of the numbers of respondents from the two institutions, class numbers, and the courses in which the student participants were enrolled. As seen in the Table, there was a relatively equal balance achieved in number of total participants from each institution, gender distributions, and the mixture of class types. Even though the sample represents only a small segment of the student population at the institutions, this is of no great concern as the purpose for collecting student data was that the teacher participants could better understand their *own* students. It was not to collect institution-wide student data to represent the student body for management purposes, for example.

Table 3.4. Questionnaire respondents

Institution	Respondents	Classes	Class types
ELC	N = 78 (Male: 37, Female: 37)	N = 7	General English: 2, Academic English: 3, Diploma Foundation: 2
CBD College	N = 72 (Male: 33, Female: 39)	N = 6	General English (Daytime class: 4, Evening class: 2)

3.5.1.1 Creating the questionnaire

The aim was to develop a study instrument to explore students' language learning practices beyond the classroom and perceptions of their learning experiences in international education. The questionnaire was designed after consulting sources from related research studies. This included the questionnaire used by Sockett (2014) to investigate learners' online informal learning activities in France, and Hyland's (2004) surveys on student teachers' engagement in out-of-class language learning in Hong Kong. In addition, some questionnaire items were drawn from a previous qualitative study by this researcher, which investigated learners' conceptions of language learning beyond the classroom (Kashiwa & Benson, 2018). Other research papers and website information (Briggs, 2015; Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004; NEAS, 2016) were also sought to carefully examine the use of vocabulary, and the structures of questions associated with out-of-class learning activities.

The questionnaire was designed for language learners (including beginner level learners). As such, the language was simplified by excluding the use of academic words not within the 2,000 most frequent words based on Longman Communication 3000, and Cobb's Web Vocabprofile [http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/], an adaptation of Heatley, Nation and Coxhead's (2002) RANGE and FREQUENCY programs [http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspx]. Although it was anticipated that the student sample would include various nationalities, the questionnaire was not

translated into all possible first languages. This was to avoid any misinterpretation by the researcher when attempting to translate the intended questions into many different languages (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Harkness, 2008). It was also anticipated that it would not be feasible to pilot each translated version of the questionnaire in a rigorous way (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

The layout of the questionnaire, its length (it was estimated that it would take around 20 minutes to complete), density, and wording of the instructions were carefully considered at the design stage. Moreover, because this could have been the first experience of answering a questionnaire for many of the students, a pictorial representation of one of the Likert scales was included to facilitate their understanding of how to answer the questionnaire items (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). The focus of the investigation and the expected information to be collected in each part of the questionnaire are summarised in Table 3.5 below. (Please see Appendix D for the full questionnaire.)

Table 3.5. Content of the questionnaire

	Focus	**Purpose of investigation**
Parts 1 & 2	- The frequency of activities using English beyond the classroom in their daily lives - Students' beliefs about the usefulness of activities for learning beyond the classroom	- Identify the types of activities the students actually engaging with. - Understand how the students evaluate the value of those activities for language learning.
Part 3	- Students' perceptions of the roles of homework	- Understand the type of homework the students think is useful. - Determine whether the students are satisfied with the amount of homework they do.
Part 4	- The challenges and struggles experienced by the students during both in-class and out-of-class language learning situations	- Identify what particular activities and aspects of learning the students feel are most challenging in the two contexts. - Identify where the students think that they can further improve their English.
Part 5	- Demographic information	- Collect data on the students' first language, gender, age group, courses, length of stay, previous study abroad experience, accommodation status, part-time jobs status

In Part 4 of the questionnaire, two open-ended items were included. The first item sought the students' opinions of their language learning and the types of activities they would like to do more of to improve their English. The second item sought the students' opinions of the positive and negative aspects of living and studying in Australia to gain insights into their overall study abroad experience.

3.5.1.2 Piloting the questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted with a small group of students (n = 7). One of the student participants was not familiar with the field of Applied Linguistics, nor academia, and previously studied at the ELC. After reviewing their feedback on the questionnaire items, language use, and format, the necessary changes were made to the questionnaire. It was then piloted again with a larger number of students (n = 30) currently studying English at the ELC with permission from the head of the academic department and the class teacher.

Advice was also sought from a statistics specialist at the Department of Statistics, Macquarie University on how to summarise the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to format logical rating scales. Academic staff at the ELC also offered the researcher suggestions on how to revise the expressions used in the questionnaire so that they are more familiar to the student. The wording of questionnaire items, the example answers, and the order of the rating scales were subsequently reconsidered and revised to avoid possible confusion for the students. The data collected from the pilot test was summarised using SPSS and a basic report was produced. This also helped to elucidate a simple and clear way to report the data to future teacher participants.

Minor changes were made to the questionnaire items after examining the pilot results before it was finalised for use in the main study. It was relatively easy to develop items focusing on the students' in-class or out-of-class language learning activities. What was more challenging for the researcher was to ensure the items would draw out a holistic

picture of the students' language learning environments and to examine students' perceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning.

3.5.1.3 Limitations

The administration of the questionnaire in the research project had the following limitations, as explained when the researcher presented the summary at Interview 2:

1) Strict consistency in the way the questionnaire was administered at the ELC could not be achieved as how it was administered depended on the teacher. For instance, some students completed the questionnaire as in-class work assisted by the teacher or the researcher; whereas other students were asked to complete the questionnaire for homework.
2) There was also some confusion among the respondents about the use of electronical devices (e.g., *email* was listed as an example of a non-electronical device activity, which is odd.)
3) The respondents tended to skip questions which required writing.
4) Some respondents might find some of the items too difficult to comprehend.
5) The summary of the results was not divided into particular student groups (e.g., course types, length of stay, gender, etc.). Therefore, the teachers could not gain insights into student group categories.

The above limitations were considered in relation to the use of the instrument in the future project. Therefore, they are not limitations related to the teachers' ability to gain a reasonable picture of the students' language learning practices. A summary of the questionnaire results which included statistical data, lists of written answers, and demographic information was shown to the individual teachers.

3.5.2 Mind Map Drawing Activity in Class

The mind map drawing activity was employed as a tool for teacher inquiry into student learning for four reasons:

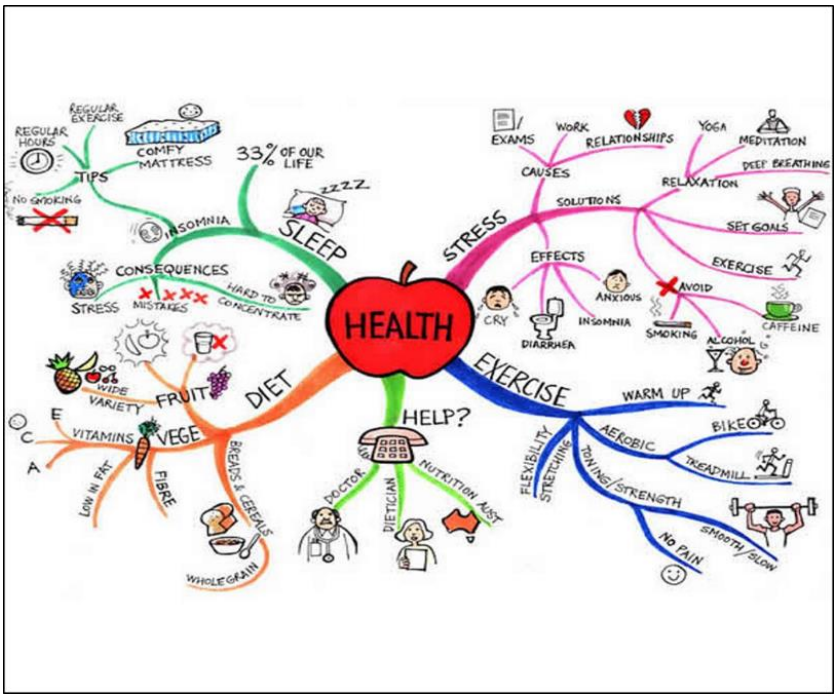
1) To increase teachers' awareness and understanding of students' language learning practices outside of the classroom from an ecological perspective.
2) To provide teachers with a possible (and enjoyable) tool for language learning, potentially as a pre- and post-drawing activities (e.g., brainstorming, group discussion) to be integrated into ordinary classroom activities.
3) To allow students to display and describe their language learning practices in Sydney, and to reflect on their language learning experiences to determine if what they are doing provides language practice and development.
4) To allow second language learners to express their thoughts in English in a novel and easy way compared to a face-to-face interview.

Lai's (2015b) interview questions on university students' perceptions of technology use outside of classroom in Hong Kong was used as a guide for the mind map drawing instruction. In her study, interviewees were asked to draw an image of their current language learning environment and the follow up questions were then asked based on their visual products. The researcher, in the current study, instructed the students on how to draw a mind map using PPT slides (Appendix E) in their class in the presence of their class teachers (i.e., teacher participants). This activity was carried out with one or two of their classes during the study period, and a total of 170 mind maps were collected from the two institutions.

The theme of the mind map provided to the students was *Activities to improve my English in Australia: Let's think about all the activities you do here. How do the things connect to the development of your English skills?* Students were encouraged to draw freely to

represent their current (or planned future) language learning activities, and their experiences of studying abroad by thinking about *people, resources/materials, places, and things you can do to improve your English skills.* The phrase 'mind map' was used rather than 'picture' or references to other types of maps (e.g., concept maps). Figure 3.3 below presents the sample mind map shown in class. The basic steps for drawing a mind map were also provided to the students using PPT slides as instruction (below):

Figure 3.3. Sample mind map shown to the students



Instruction

1. Draw and write your central idea, "Activities to improve my English in Australia" in the middle of a paper.
2. Draw your second and third level ideas which connect to the main idea using connecting branches.

   Example: people, resources/materials, places, and things you can do to improve your English skills

3. Continue branching out and linking your ideas with supporting details.

The researcher provided the worksheets (Appendix F) and colour pens. The researcher explained the aim of the activity and the procedure, and encouraged the students to draw freely. The class teachers then decided whether to do the activity in class or to assign it to the students as homework. Only one class teacher assigned the task to the students as homework due to time restrictions. Some teachers integrated the activity into the lesson sequence including pre/post-group discussion or presentations.

3.5.3 Student Data Analysis

The questionnaire responses and mind map drawings were the data sets collected from the student participants to facilitate the teacher inquiry into students' language learning practices and their perceptions of their language learning environments.

A summary report of the student data was generated for use with the teachers during Interview 2. The questionnaire results were separated by institution and analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively using SPSS software. A statistical summary was generated for the questions with Likert scales, and qualitative analysis was employed for the open-ended questions. The open-ended question responses were analysed to identify the key themes in the students' responses. Frequently mentioned ideas were used as variables in SPSS and a number was listed to indicate their frequency. However, all comments were listed, even if only mentioned by one respondent.

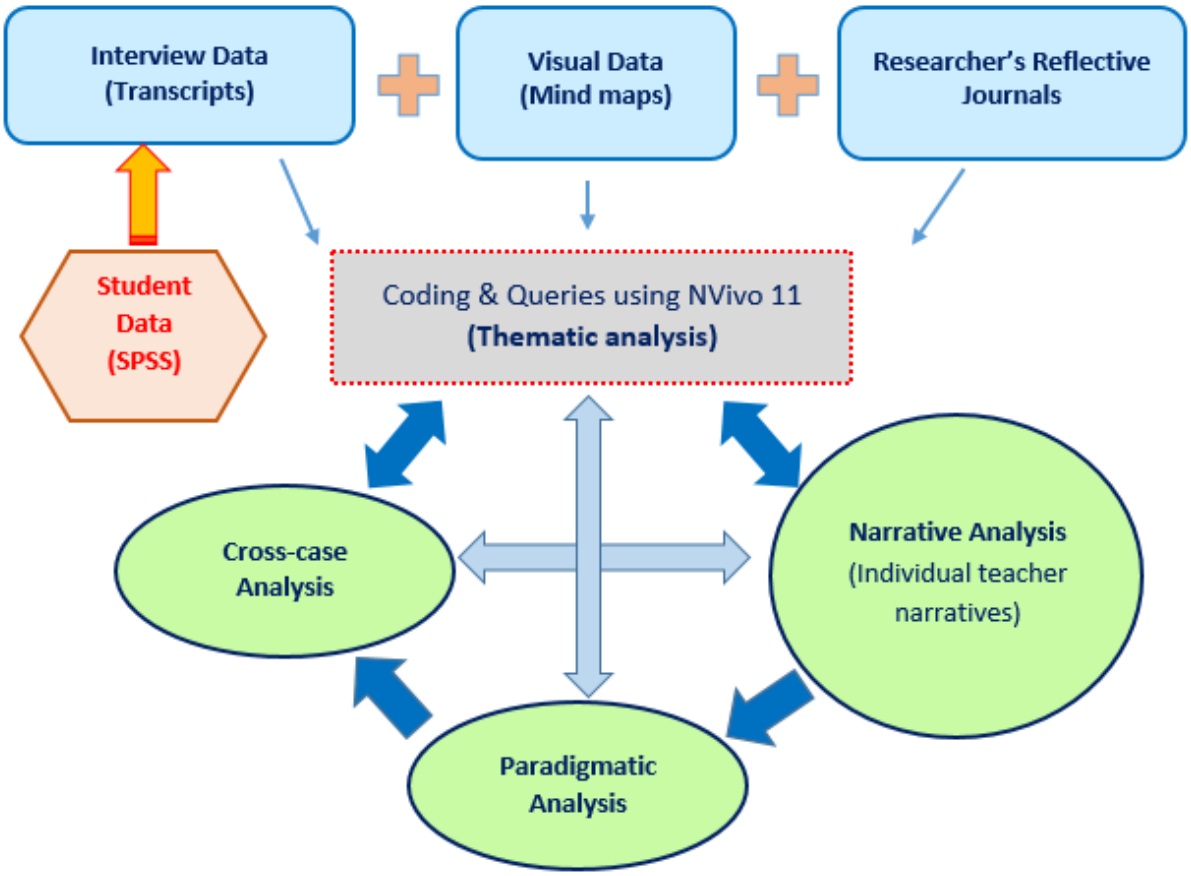
Based on the results, summary reports for each institution were written separately according to the sections of questionnaire (Appendix K and L). Teachers were shown only the data relevant to their institution at Interview 2 to discuss the overall picture of the characteristics of the students at each institutions. The summary report was treated as data to facilitate teacher inquiry into the students' language learning practices and perceptions of their language learning experiences beyond the classroom. Teachers were shown only the mind maps of the students in their class during Interview 2 to analyse the students'

visual representations of their language learning practices. No prior analysis of the mind maps was performed by the researcher[1].

3.6 Data Analysis

This section illustrates the data analysis methods and procedures used in the present study. First, the connections between the research questions, data sources and data analysis procedures are explained (3.6.1). How the students' data was incorporated into the data collection process is also explained. As represented in Figure 3.3, the interview analysis (3.6.2) and coding (3.6.3) procedures are first explained. This is followed by a discussion of how narrative analysis (3.6.4), paradigmatic analysis of the narratives, and cross-case analysis (3.6.5) were used to identify the main findings.

Figure 3.4. Data analysis procedure



[1] The students' mind maps were analysed after the project using NVivo 11 software. The qualitative analysis focused on the characteristics of the students' language learning practices as well as their perceptions of their learning environments. The results will be presented as a journal article.

3.6.1 Mapping out the Research Questions, Data Sources, and Data Analysis

This section illustrates how multiple data sources were mapped onto the research questions, and how the data sources were analysed to answer to the research questions.

Table 3.6. Data sources, research question, and analysis

RQ	Data Sources						Analysis	CH #
	T IT	T Maps	S QT	S Maps	R J	N		
RQ 1: Teachers' initial beliefs	x (IT-1)	x (Map 1)			x		Thematic, cross-case	4
RQ 2: Teachers' responses to students' info.	x (IT-2)		x	x	x		Quantitative + qualitative (thematic)	5
RQ 3: Teacher cognition change and learning processes	x (IT-1,2,3)	x (Map 1 &2)			x	x	Thematic, narrative, paradigmatic, cross-case	6

T IT = Teacher interviews; T Map = Teacher mind maps; S QT = Student questionnaire;
S Map = student mind maps; R J = Researcher's journals; N = Teacher narratives; CH# = Chapter number

For Research Question 1, following the coding process, the related data on the teachers' initial beliefs were illuminated. Teacher Interview 1 and Mind Map 1 data were mainly used, along with the teachers' accounts in Interviews 2 and 3, which referred back to their initial thoughts. Thematic and cross-case analyses were undertaken. The emergent themes are discussed in the Findings (Chapter 4) in this thesis.

For Research Question 2, the teachers' responses to the student data were captured as a source for teacher learning. The students' questionnaire results and mind maps were incorporated at this stage to contrast teachers' initial beliefs and student information, and how the teachers reacted to it. Teacher Interview 2 responses and the student information were main data sources, however the teachers' accounts of the influence of the student

data accessed during Interview 3 were also drawn out. The themes reported in Chapter 4 are then discussed in Chapter 5.

For Research Question 3, the development of the teacher cognition as well as the teachers' learning processes were investigated using all the teacher data sources including individual teacher narratives. The two mind maps and the teachers' interview comments were compared and described in individual narratives with the focus on the development of their cognition. The patterns in the development of their cognition were further analysed via paradigmatic analysis of narratives and cross-case analysis to identify both group and individual characteristics.

Another focus was on the teachers' learning processes, with an emphasis on teachers' reflective accounts on the entire research experience. In relation to the patterns characterising the degree of teacher agency, cross-case analysis was undertaken to gain insights into the teacher learning processes. Narrative format is used in Chapter 6 to present the findings of teacher change as part of teachers' lived experiences.

3.6.2 Interview Analysis

This research project adopted Kvale's (1996) six steps for analysing interview data: "categorization of meaning, condensation of meaning, structuring of meaning through narratives, interpretation of meaning, and ad hoc methods for generating meaning" (p. 187). The sixth step, re-interviewing is covered within process of conducting three interviews with participants, which allowed them to refer back to previous conversations for self-correcting if necessary.

Kvale's "Six Steps of Analysis" (1996, pp. 188-190, italics in original) were adapted for the interview and subsequent in-depth analyses when:

> 1) ... the *subjects describe* their lived world during the interview.
> 2) ... the *subjects themselves discover* new relationships during the interview, see new meanings in what they experience and do.

3) ... the *interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets* the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and "sends" the meaning back.
4) ... the *transcribed interview is interpreted by the interviewer*, either alone or with other researchers.
5) … in a "self-correcting" interview, the subjects get an opportunity […] to elaborate on their own original statements.
6) ... it was necessary to extend the continuum of description and interpretation to include *action,* in that subjects begin to act from new insights they have gained during their interview.

3.6.3 Coding Process

All qualitative data were stored and organised in the NVivo 11 software program for the analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). NVivo assisted the researcher to not only manage a large amount of data for systematic coding, but also to facilitate a deep level of data analysis. In this section, the coding process is elaborated with example codes and (sub) categories, and themes.

Before individual narrative writing, the interview data and teacher mind maps were analysed thematically through four major coding stages for qualitative research (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Charmaz, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2016);

Stage 1: Provisional coding and selective coding (lumping and splitting the data);

Stage 2: Axial coding for managing the codes;

Stage 3: Analytic memo writing for developing themes; and

Stage 4: Case analysis using a matrix query

The four coding stages are elaborated on with example codes (NVivo Nodes) in the following sections.

3.6.3.1 Stage 1: Provisional coding and selective coding

As a 'start list' of codes, some codes were determined by the focus of the research questions. The interview transcripts were first segmented into chunks, providing sufficient context including interviewer prompts. Therefore, the text passages were coded by

lumping them with the focus of the interview questions. Then, the chunks of conversations were re-coded by splitting them into constituent components with smaller codes (line-by-line coding). The codes for such meaning units emerged from the content of the texts.

Smaller codes were added accordingly as different perspectives or topics arose. For example, *curriculum development* was added under *teacher challenges and implications* when a teacher talked about this topic while others did not. Also, when more detailed differences in meanings were identified, the previous coding was ensured if the coding was consistent across transcripts. Interview 2 included more prompts during the discussion with participants based on the student information. The themes therefore emerged from the discussion rather than the interview questions. Through many cycles of coding and re-coding, multiple codes were sometimes used for a single passage of text.

Larger categories were then created to organise a number of codes into a broader concept. Examples of the larger categories include *Teachers' views on out-of-class activities, Concerns about students' learning behaviours, Relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning, Teachers' support and roles,* and *Teacher learning*.

3.6.3.2 Stage 2: Axial coding for managing the codes

Code labels were reconsidered again to ensure that each code adequately represented the idea in the passage within the broader concept. After looking at the list of NVivo Nodes, the codes were re-positioned and merged if they indicated the same or similar meaning. The teachers' mind maps were also coded thematically. Texts and images in the mind maps were coded according to what the text indicated about the language learning environment, They were then categorised into broader concepts; 1. Activities, 2. People, 3. Resources, 4. Settings and locations, 5. Student learning, 6. Teaching, and 7. Life issues (finance, health). Given that the participants framed their mind maps around their own concepts, the codes were participant-generated/centric (Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009). Although the codes

captured the participants' understanding of the concepts, further analysis and interpretation of the coded data, and summary of the emergent themes were conducted together with interview analysis to avoid decontextuality (Copeland & Agosto, 2012). Participants' oral explanations of their mind maps during the interviews were triangulated with the mind map analysis and other sources later in the narrative analysis to more accurately understand the teachers' thoughts.

3.6.3.3 Stage 3: Analytic memo writing and developing themes

As a reflection of coding, memos were written to generate codes or categories "not just as a significant word or phrase you applied to a datum, but as a prompt or trigger for written reflection on the deeper complex meanings it evokes" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 44). This process allowed the researcher to consolidate the meanings of codes and to recognise the themes related to the conceptual framework. In this way, the analytic coding process familiarised the researcher with the data, and guided her the investigation of the insights they offered into teacher cognition and reflection.

Also included in the coding procedure was cross-case analysis to develop themes among the cases. The teachers conceptualised a good language learning environment according to three collective patterns: (1) Learning Quality Focused, (2) Out-of-class Focused, and (3) In-class Focused. In addition, the following themes related to the teachers' initial beliefs emerged, which are discussed in Chapter 4:

1) Students' language learning practices beyond the classroom;
2) Students' attitudes towards language learning outside of the classroom;
3) The relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning; and
4) Teachers' roles in student learning beyond the classroom.

3.6.3.4 Stage 4: Case analysis using a matrix query

Stage 4 was undertaken as part of the preparation for the narrative writing analysis. Visual representations (e.g., charts and graphs) of the code distributions from NVivo assisted the researcher to "seek out a core theme" (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 116) that individual teachers described both orally and visually. This helped to structure the storylines of the individual narratives, and to "identify the main characters in the narratives" (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 115). Moreover, as helped to indicate what issues were more often discussed both as a whole and within one theme. For example, *Teacher learning* had six smaller nodes describing different types of learning. Visualising the weighting of code ratios was useful because it went beyond just quantifying how many times they mentioned ideas related to teacher learning to characterise *how* they learned.

All the teacher data sources and researcher's reflective journals were gathered to create a descriptive story of each participant based on the emerging themes. The following section outlines the narrative inquiry data analysis stage. In addition, how the researcher moved on from analytic coding to narrative analysis and then to paradigmatic analysis of the narratives is illustrated.

3.6.4 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis was performed to explore how the teachers' cognition of language learning and teaching developed. The themes to arise from the coding process became the 'bones' of the individual teacher's story. Narrative writing as a strategy provided further analysis of the data through writing (Benson, 2013b). Moreover, data triangulation combining multiple data sources was used "to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake, 2008, p. 133).

The salient themes identified from Stage 4 were; (1) teacher beliefs about student language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom, (2) development of

teacher beliefs through reflection and learning, and (3) teacher challenges on supporting students and their implications. Teacher narratives[2] were written with a focus on the particular themes the individual teachers highlighted, as well as based on the comparisons made between the two mind maps. However, to ensure consistency across the narratives for later cross-case analysis, all narratives had the following structure:

1) Teacher profile
2) The development of beliefs based on the comparison of the two mind maps (both from the teachers' and the researcher's points of view)
3) Challenges and implications for future professional development
4) Overall attitudes towards the project
5) Researcher's reflective notes on teacher research engagement

The researcher's reflective journals were also a part of the data set for narrative analysis and used as an additional perspective of the teachers' attitudes towards engaging in research for learning.

3.6.5 Paradigmatic Analysis of Narratives

Using the narratives as an intermediate source of data, paradigmatic analysis of narratives was performed by synthesising and examining the common issues discussed by the teachers as evidenced in the emerging themes. The particulars of the teachers' cognition development along with teacher learning were also explored through the paradigmatic analysis.

Differences in the degree to which the teachers develop their cognition and the degree of teacher agency to influence teacher learning emerged through cross-case analysis using all the data sets including narratives. The emerging patterns in the processes

[2] Each teacher's original narratives are available upon request to the researcher.

of teacher learning in relation to cognition development are discussed by representing five selected narrative case studies in Chapter 6. The narratives highlight the following aspects to address RQ. 3 in a narrative format.

- What are the changes seen during and after the teachers' participation in inquiry into students' practices and environments? (e.g., the level of awareness, the development of understanding, new ideas for teaching approaches)
- In what ways did the changes occur? (e.g., reflection, integrate new information into initial beliefs and reframe initial beliefs, reformulate actions in teaching)

The narrative representation of the outcomes of case studies in Chapter 6 itself is treated as a deeper stage of narrative analysis.

3.7 Reflexivity in Research

As discussed in 3.4.2.4 in regard to the issues of reflexivity, particularly during interviews, it is important to emphasise that consideration was given to two more aspects of reflexivity during the entire research process.

The researcher was aware that the participants got to know many things about her and that this knowledge could have an effect on the research process. For instance, the participants were aware that the researcher was a female, non-native English speaker, and Asian PhD. student (working on the project for her degree), along with the identity of the academia supervising her, their status in their working institutions, along with their cultural, educational, and teaching backgrounds and beliefs, participation attitudes, nature of the interactions with her, their age and gender, and so on. Although the researcher considered this current research project a collaborative social experience with the participants, and positioned herself as a co-researcher who is also an English language teacher, how each teacher actually considered her was a puzzle. They might not see the researcher as she presents herself to them or their perceptions of her or how they position

themselves might change depending on how the rapport develops throughout the course of the project.

In addition, regarding the co-constructed nature of interview data, Finlay (2012) argues that researchers must be aware of and "distinguish reflexively between a life story that is *lived* and one that is *told* and then *retold* by a researcher" (p. 322). This is because the stories told by the interviewee are presented as retrospective reflections of their reality, and the findings we see as interpretations and analyses of the stories heard are likely to be different from those of another researcher. Furthermore, Riessman (2003) states that "individuals negotiate how they want to be known in the stories they develop collaboratively with their audiences in interview situations. Social actors shape their lives retrospectively for particular audiences" (p. 8). As such, the fact that the participants tend to represent themselves favourably to the researcher in their stories were taken into account during the research process. This was to ensure the researcher's objective position and to increase the rigour of the project (Haynes, 2012).

3.8 Summary

This chapter presented the methodological approach and design of the research project. A multiple narrative case study design was adopted for the present study to explore language learning and teaching from ecological perspectives. Justifications for the methods selected to answer to the research questions were provided, including the choices of multiple data sources, instruments used for data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Mind map drawing activities and one-on-one interviews were employed to examine teacher learning (cognition development), and to elicit teachers' views on student learning ecologies. This allowed for the emphasis in the research project to be on teacher inquiry for student learning from ecological perspectives. Researcher reflective journals played a role in exploring the depth of the teachers' cognition development over time, and allowed the

researcher to maintain reflexive considerations throughout the research project. Data was collected from the students only to be used as sources to better understand teacher learning. Nonetheless, the preparation and implementation of the questionnaire and mind map drawing activities were carefully undertaken to gain valuable data to discuss with the teacher participants.

Analysis of the collected data sets from initial coding through to cross-case analysis (six steps in total) was undertaken to provide comprehensive and reliable answers to the research questions. The findings from the data analysis are discussed in the following chapters according to the Research Questions.

Chapter Four

Teachers' Initial Conceptions and Beliefs

This chapter aims to answer the first research question as posed in Chapter 2.

RQ. 1: What are ELICOS teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom?

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the teacher participants' conceptions of a good language learning environment and their beliefs about students' language learning practices and environments. This exploration was undertaken prior to accessing insights from their students, so that the development of their beliefs could be further examined.

The data sets utilised for the investigation of the teachers' initial beliefs were:

- Teachers' Mind Map 1 on 'a good language learning environment',
- Interview 1 based on the mind maps, and
- Accounts in Interviews 2 and 3 where teachers revisited and referred back their initial thoughts.

A detailed analysis of the core components of the Mind Map 1 drawn by the teachers is provided in 4.2. The mind map was a visual representation of each teacher's underlying conceptions of a good language learning environment. To better understand the teachers' collective conceptualisations of a good language learning environment at this initial stage, the shared components are grouped into three patterns and their characteristics are elaborated on with sample mind maps.

In the discussion of the teachers' interview responses, their critical views are grouped under four themes (4.3). This was done to highlight the contrasts in the teachers'

beliefs about the features of a good language learning environment and their beliefs about the students' actual language learning practices. A summary is then provided of the teachers' shared and unique beliefs about the features of a good language learning environment, along with their beliefs about the students' actual language learning practices and environments (4.4).

4.2 Visual Conceptions of 'a Good Language Learning Environment'

This section presents the teachers' visual representations of their conceptions of a good language learning environment beyond the classroom. Focus is placed on an analysis of the Mind Map 1 drawn prior to Interview 1. The mind map activity was designed to encourage reflection and brainstorming by the teachers to visually depict their beliefs. It was also used as stimuli or a rehearsed version of their narratives for the interview with the researcher. The mind maps provide insights into the complex ways in which their ideas are shaped by existing beliefs from past experiences. The structure of the mind maps, choice of components, and the combinations of components and their arrangement of them can imply the individual teacher's holistic conceptualisation of the ideal environment for language learning beyond the classroom. It also reveals the elements and features of language learning in the environment that they regard as important, the extent to which they give consideration to student language learning outside of the classroom and provides access to their views on their teaching. In other words, analysis of the patterns to emerge from the mind maps provides insights on the teachers' focus of attention in language learning and teaching, and a holistic view of language learning environments through spatial representation.

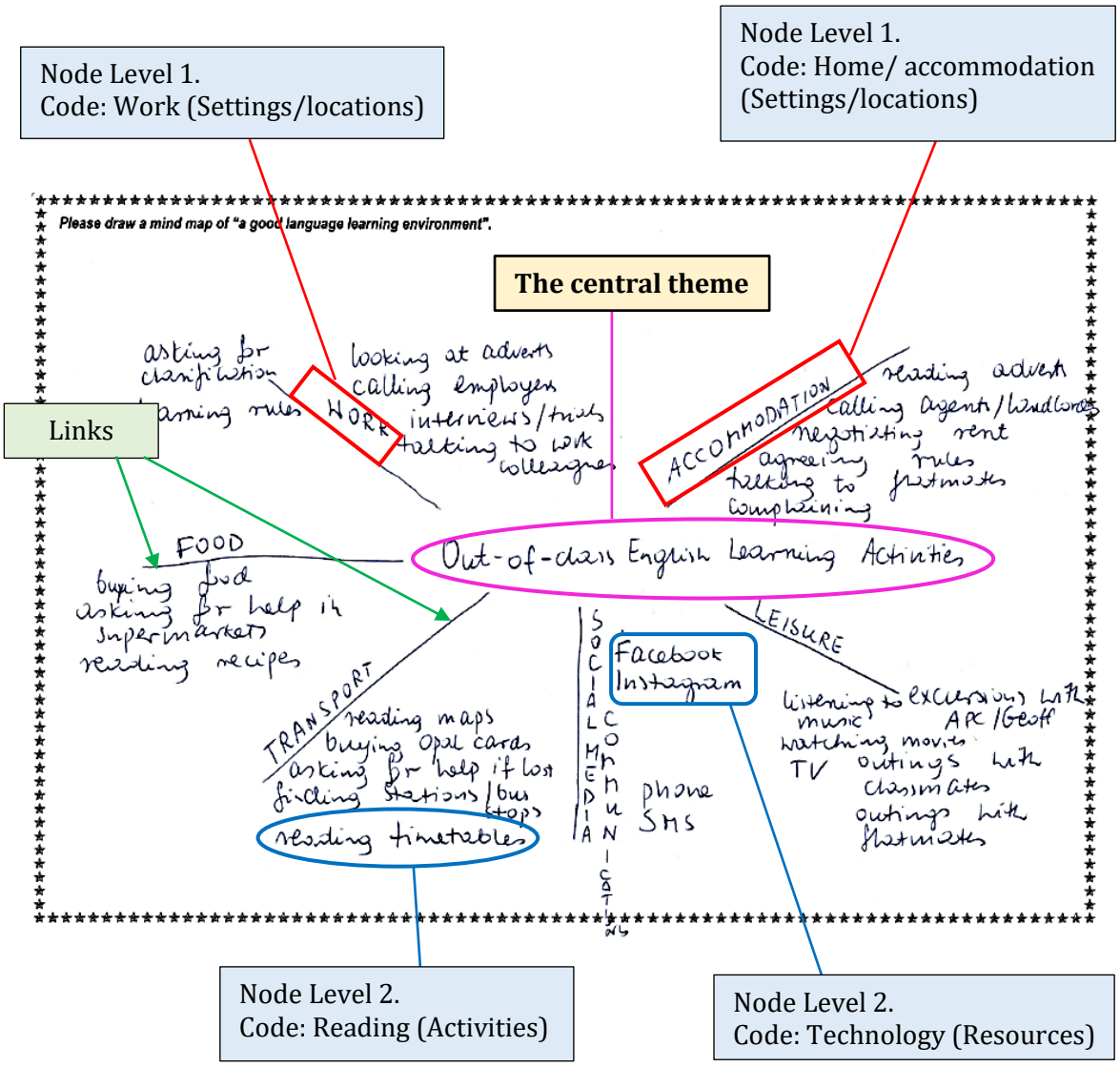
Given the teachers were asked to draw a mind map on 'a good language learning environment', the concepts the teachers chose to include in the mind maps provide clues to their beliefs about the components that support language learning. For example, if a

teacher included several locations on the mind map and what the student was doing in English, it may suggest that the teacher conceptualises student language learning environments as multiple in nature and where learning takes place through diverse activities. In addition, if a teacher writes a word such as *motivated* to describe the students' attitudes, it may suggest that the student's positive attitude is also a supporting component of language learning in the environment.

4.2.1 Analysing Mind Maps as Visualised Teacher Beliefs

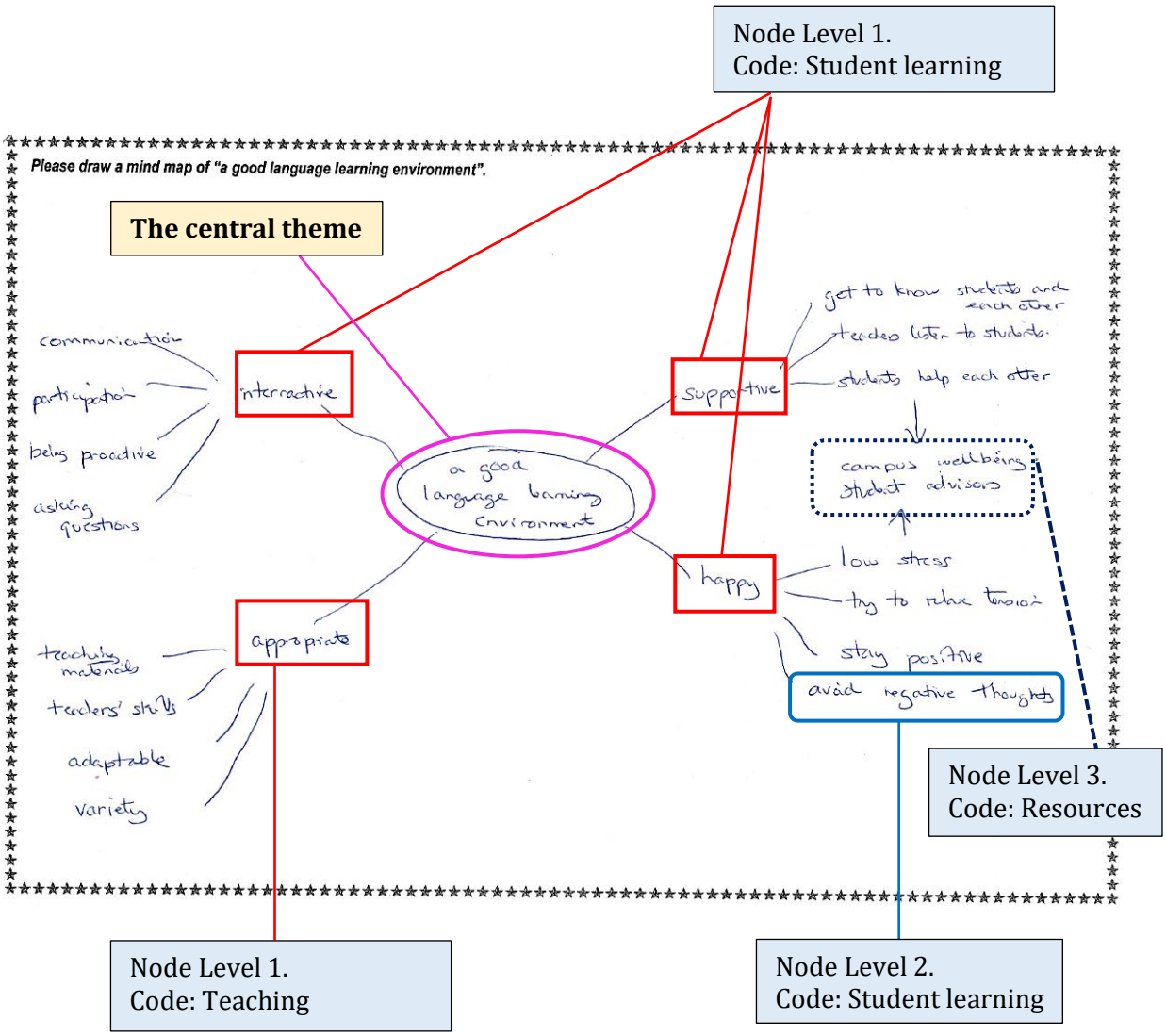
In terms of the process of analysing the teachers' mind maps, the starting point was to define the vocabulary to use to describe the parts and structure of the mind map by. This was done by adapting the vocabulary used to describe concept maps in other research. In this thesis, the concepts presented in the mind map, usually with circles or boxes with labels, are called 'nodes' (Fox, McCormick, Procter, & Carmichael, 2007; Novak & Gowin, 1984; Pearson & Somekh, 2003). Nodes are identified as Level 1 or 2, or possibly 3 or more according to the extent to which the ideas are expanded upon or detailed. The linking lines or arrows between the nodes to designate the relationships among the concepts are called 'links' (Morfidi, Mikropoulos, & Rogdaki, 2018). Using Figures 4.1 and 4.2 as sample mind maps, the coding processes the researcher followed to identify the texts as nodes with a hierarchical structure are as follows.

Figure 4.1. Mind map coding sample 1 (Monika's Mind Map 1)



Monika stated, *Out-of-class English Learning Activities* as the central theme of the mind map. *Accommodation, Leisure, Social media communications, Transport, Food,* and *Work* are coded as Node Level 1 because they are directly connected components with links. *Facebook* and *Instagram* are coded as Node Level 2 and written under Node Level 1, *Social media communications*. *Reading timetable* is also Node Level 2 and written under Node Level 1, *Transport*.

Figure 4.2. Mind map coding sample 2 (Lisa's Mind Map 1)



Lisa stated, *a good language learning environment* as the central theme of her mind map. *Supportive, happy, appropriate,* and *interactive* are coded as Node Level 1 and linked to the central theme. Node Level 2 codes are written with links from each Node Level 1. For example, *avoid negative thoughts* is a Node Level 2 connected to Node Level 1, *happy. Campus wellbeing* and *student advisors* are coded as Node Level 3 and show links from the Node Level 2.

The following section illustrates the coding steps more in detail and how the emerging themes and patterns are identified from the analysis.

4.2.2 Mind Map Coding Process

As the first step, all the images in the mind maps were thematically analysed using NVivo 11 to understand the teachers' visual representations of concepts (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012). The analysis process from Step 1 to Step 3 as illustrated below was undertaken to identify the dominant concept that each teacher applied to 'a good language learning environment'. The analysis also sought to identify any patterns in the conceptualisations among the 10 teachers.

Step 1: Identify what components are identified in the texts; as illustrated in the coding samples of Monika's text discussed earlier: *Accommodation* was coded as *Home/accommodation, Facebook* was coded as *technology*, and *Reading timetable* was coded as *reading.*

Step 2: Group the NVivo Nodes according to their meaning. In Monika's case, *Home/accommodation* and *Transport* were grouped under *Settings/locations, technology* was grouped under *resources*, and *reading* was grouped in *activities.* In Lisa's Mind Map 1, *Interactive*, *supportive* and *happy* were grouped under *student learning.* Six categories then emerged as the main components of the mind maps: (1) Activities, (2) People, (3) Resources, (4) Settings and locations, (5) Student learning, (6) Teaching, and (7) Life issues.

Step 3: After representing the levels of nodes/concepts in a hierarchical order from Node Level 1 (the main components) to Node Levels 2, 3 etc. (the sub-components), the distribution of individual teachers' concepts was summarised (see Table 4.1) using the seven coding categories identified in Step 2.

Table 4.1 presents three distribution patterns for Node Level 1 emerged from the individual teachers' first mind maps, identifying the main components of a good language learning environment: Learning Quality Focused (emphasising student learning processes, attitudes), Out-of-class Focused (emphasising the settings and activities outside of the classroom), and In-class Focused (within 'in-class' represented as a Node Level 1).

Table 4.1. Three Node Level 1 distribution patterns

	Learning Quality Focused			**Out-of-class Focused**			**In-class Focused**			
	Dan	**Lisa**	**Molly**	**Luke**	**Monika**	**Roberto**	**Thomas**	**Jesse**	**Maureen**	**Kathy**
1. Activities						Activities				
2. People						People	Friends	Classmates	Student Teacher	Teacher Motivated students
3. Resources		Campus wellbeing Student advisors	Online			Materials				Reliable +useful resources
4. Settings and contexts			Galleries & museums	Leisure Transport Employment Food Accommodation Visa requirement, Money Health	Accommodation Leisure Social media communications Transport Food Work	Places	Home Classroom Leisure time	Home Classroom Community	Wider community	Study area
5. Students' learning	Student feelings Processes & principles Results	Supportive Interactive Happy	Interaction Linguistic & social competence Meaning & purpose				Study group	Study habits		
6. Teaching		Appropriate						Teachers		
7. Life issues								Health Finances		

The teachers' visualisations of a good language learning environment appeared to be highly complex and diverse. This is evidenced in the way the mind maps were structured with particular emphasis on the constituting concepts. For example, Dan, Lisa, and Molly (Learning Quality Focused group) concentrated on aspects of student learning as main components. Yet, Luke, Monika, Roberto (Out-of-class Focused group) emphasised the contexts for language learning outside of the classroom. Moreover, Thomas, Jesse, Maureen, and Kathy (In-class Focused group) appeared to emphasise the in-class elements.

The following section explores each pattern in more detail, including an analysis of Node Level 2. The emphasis teachers placed on particular components is examined in relation to the extent (how much/far) they expanded on the ideas coded as Node Level 1. Also examined was the amount of information the teachers provided in the mind maps and their use of space on the paper. Node Level 2 outcomes also assisted the researcher to ensure the meaning of Node Level 1. For example, Luke's Node Level 1 *Health, Visa requirement* and *money* were interpreted as *4. Settings and contexts* because he appeared to be referring to a language learning context. As he expanded, Node Level 2 activities such as *buying medicine* and *going to a doctor* seem to indicate activities and interactions in English. Yet Jesse's Node Level 1 *Health* was connected to *exercise, sleep,* and *diet* (Node Level 2 outcomes) because they appear to refer to the students' health rather than language learning practices. In this case, *Health* was therefore categorised as *7. Life issues*. However, at this stage, it is hard to confirm what the teachers precisely meant for each concept without conducting interviews for verification, as discussed in a later section.

4.2.3 Teachers' Conceptions of a Good Language Learning Environment

This section explores the teachers' concepts of a good language learning environment as constructed in their first mind maps. As discussed above, the teachers' mind maps collectively appeared to represent three main aspects of a language learning environment.

However, individual differences in the diverse combinations of elements were also evident depending on their particular area of attention. Therefore, individual differences within the aforementioned groups together with the group differences are explored in each section.

4.2.3.1 Learning Quality Focused

Dan, **Lisa**, and **Molly** put greatest emphasis on the quality of student learning and the learning processes. They did not describe in their mind maps any/many specific activities that the students should be doing beyond the classroom. Their shared conceptions of a good language learning environment were focussed on learning quality, which included the students' attitudes, emotions, and how they are supposed to learn.

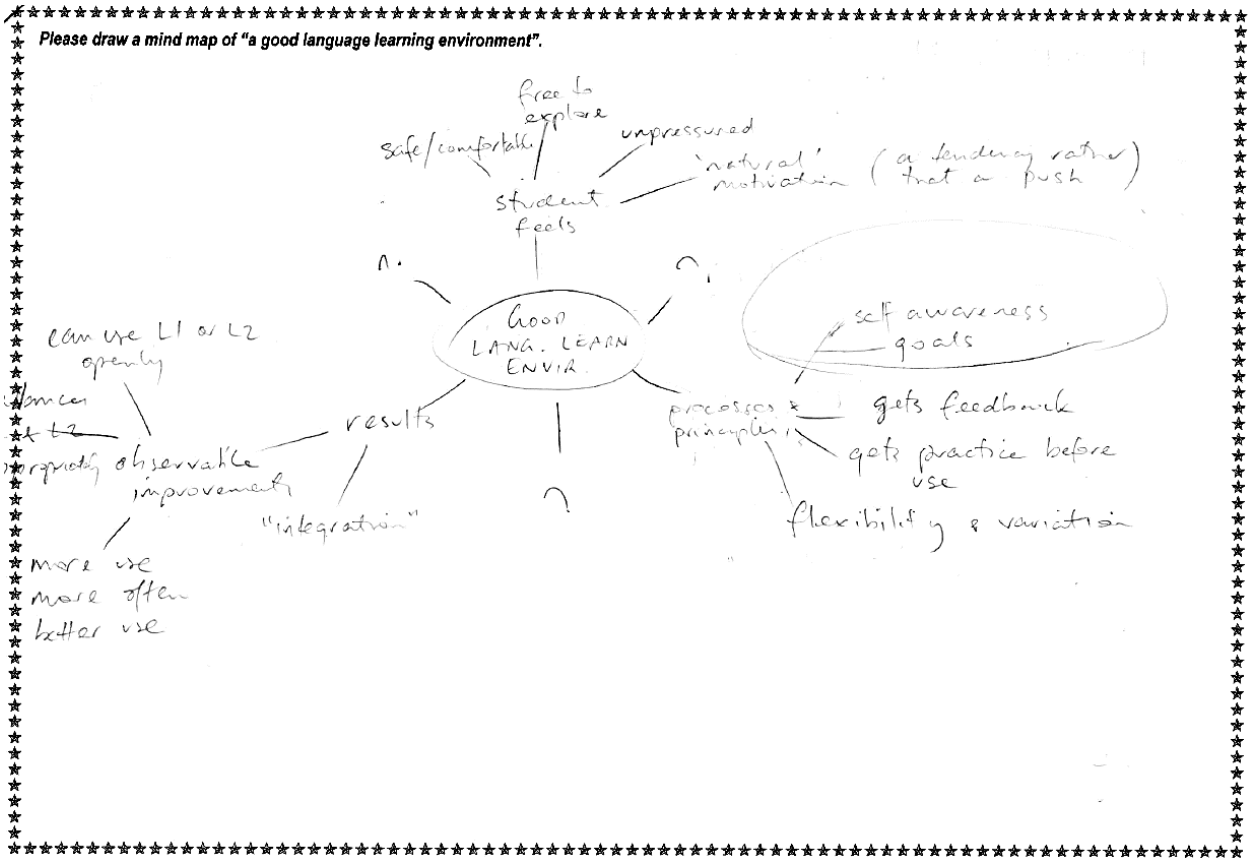
Table 4.2 below includes the Node Level 2 analysis. As mentioned earlier, the texts in the mind maps were coded thematically, focusing on the meaning of the texts. It was possible for codes to be assigned to multiple themes simultaneously. In Lisa's case for instance (Figure 4.2, p. 7), *campus wellbeing* and *student advisors* were linked to both *supportive* and *happy.* The two outcomes were interpreted as resources to support ideas for student learning, and then coded as *3. Resources*. They were also coded as *2. People*, however, only one of the codes was chosen for inclusion in the Tables to simplify the result.

Table 4.2. Learning Quality Focused: Node Levels 1 & 2 distributions

	Dan	Lisa	Molly
1. Activities			
2. People			
3. Resources		Campus wellbeing Student advisors	**Online** (online communities, projects & mini research tasks – presentations)
4. Settings and locations			**Galleries & museums** (parks & nature walks – animals & plants – beaches) "Meaning & purpose through nature & the arts!"
5. Student learning	**Student feelings** (safe/comfortable, free to explore, unpressured, natural motivation) **Processes & principles** (self-awareness, goals, gets feedback, gets practice before use, flexibility & variation) **Results** (can use L1 or L2 openly, balances L1 & L2 appropriately, more use, more often better use, integration)	**Supportive** (get to know each other, students help each other) **Interactive** (communication, participation, proactive, asking questions) **Happy** (low stress, try to relax tension, stay positive, avoid negative thoughts)	**Interaction** (positive space - individual & group work) **Linguistic & social competence** (confidence) **Meaning & purpose** (connectedness - raising awareness, motivation – likes/dislike, hobbies, dreams, enjoyment)
6. Teaching		**Appropriate** (teaching materials, teachers' skills, adaptable, variety) Teachers listen to students	
7. Life issues			

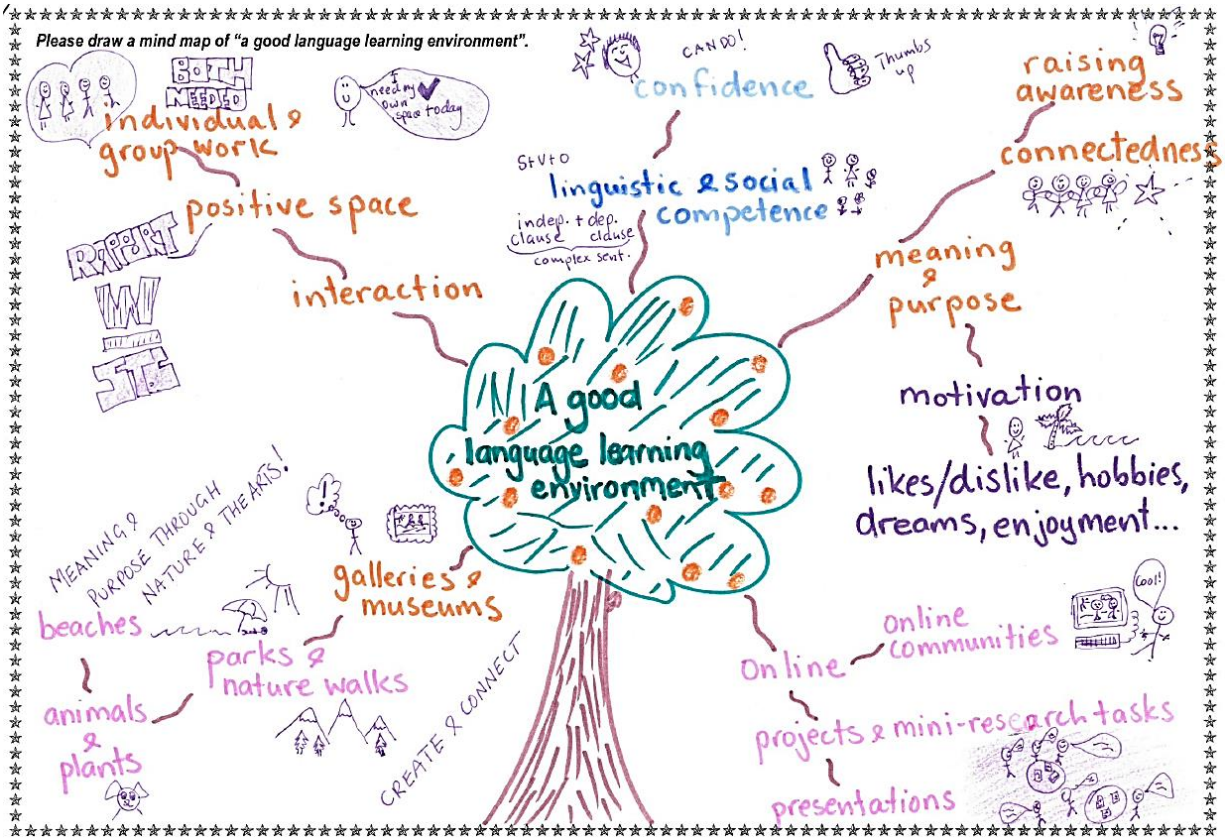
*Node Level 1 in bold

Figure 4.3. Dan's Mind Map 1



Dan's Node Level 1 and Node Level 2 outcomes were all about student learning. He described them using three concepts; *student feelings, processes & principles,* and *results.* The expanded ideas in Node Level 2 seem to support each aspect on student learning. *Student feelings* consists of emotional elements such as *safe/comfortable* and *unpressured; Processes and principles* consists of practice methods and student attitudes such as *self-awareness*; and *Results* comprised the outcomes of the students' learning practices as evidenced in their attempts to balance their first language (L1) with their use of English as their second language (L2).

Figure 4.4. Molly's Mind Map 1



Molly's Mind Map 1 (Figure 4.4) also emphasises student learning as seen in Node Level 1 outcomes *meaning and purpose, linguistic and social competence* and *interaction*. This implies the conditions and qualities of learning and the learning processes. The descriptions to support these ideas such as *raising awareness* and *motivation* seem to overlap with Dan's concepts. The other Node Level 1 outcomes, *online*, categorised as *3. Resources*, and *galleries and museums* categorised as *4. Settings and contexts*, were not shared with the other two teachers. However, the amount of information and Molly's way of arranging them in the space provided could imply that she placed the greatest emphasis on student learning qualities and processes.

For Lisa, the Node Level 1 outcome, *Appropriate,* was considered to be *6. Teaching*, as Node Level 2 outcomes were all about teaching-related ideas such as *teaching materials, teachers' skills, adaptable,* and *variety*. This concept was not shared with the other two

teachers, however Lisa's emphasis appeared to be placed on student learning, particularly the emotional aspects.

4.2.3.2 Out-of-class Focused

Luke and **Monika** emphasised out-of-class settings and contexts as the main components, and then expanded on their ideas with detailed information on the activities, people, and resources related to the settings described. It is notable that they both interpreted the task focus as out-of-class learning activities/environments, as evidenced in the central theme identified in their mind maps. Luke's central theme was *Learning English outside of the classroom* (Figure 4.5), and Monika's central theme was *Out-of-class English learning activities* (Figure 4.1 in p. 6). **Roberto** was also included in this group because the supporting ideas under each concept appeared to mostly refer to out-of-class elements, even although his main concepts appeared across four different aspects.

Table 4.3. Out-of-class Focused: Node Levels 1 & 2 distributions

	Luke	Monika	Roberto
1. Activities	Buying a ticket, reading timetables, asking for directions**,** filling out application forms, finding an apartment, ordering food, going to a doctor, etc.	Reading adverts, calling agents/landlords, listening to music, watching movies, asking for help reading timetables, buying food, talking to work colleagues, asking for clarification, etc.	**Activities** (reading/writing posts on social networking sites, gaming, watching movies, travelling, looking for jobs, hanging out, banking, giving/asking for information, shopping, reading/listening to the news, etc.)
2. People	Bar staff, bus/taxi drivers, waiters, landlords, roommates, agents, officials, bank tellers, doctors, workmates, etc.		**People** (teacher/classmates, flatmates/landlord, colleagues/boss/customers, friends, partners, strangers, student services)
3. Resources		Facebook, Instagram, Phone, SMS	**Materials** (product labels, social networking sites, textbooks, internet/websites, songs, apps, etc.)
4. Settings and contexts	**Leisure** (parties, pubs clubs, **Transport** **Employment** **Food** (supermarkets, restaurants) **Accommodation** (hotels, homestay, apartment) **Visa requirements, Money** (bank accounts, currency) **Health**	**Accommodation** **Leisure** **Social media communications** **Transport** **Food** **Work**	**Places** (virtual worlds, bank, barber, hospital, cinema, night clubs, gym, street, school, work, home, pub/bar/restaurant)
5. Students' learning			
6. Teaching			
7. Life issues			

*Node Level 1 in bold

Luke and Monika drew similar mind maps to a large extent in terms of the components included and their arrangement of the map. For both participants, Node Level 1 outcomes were mostly about *4. Settings and contexts*, and Node Level 2 outcomes were expanded with possible activities in each setting. The similarities were seen both in Table 4.3 and their mind maps presented below.

Figure 4.1. Monika's Mind Map 1 (revisited)

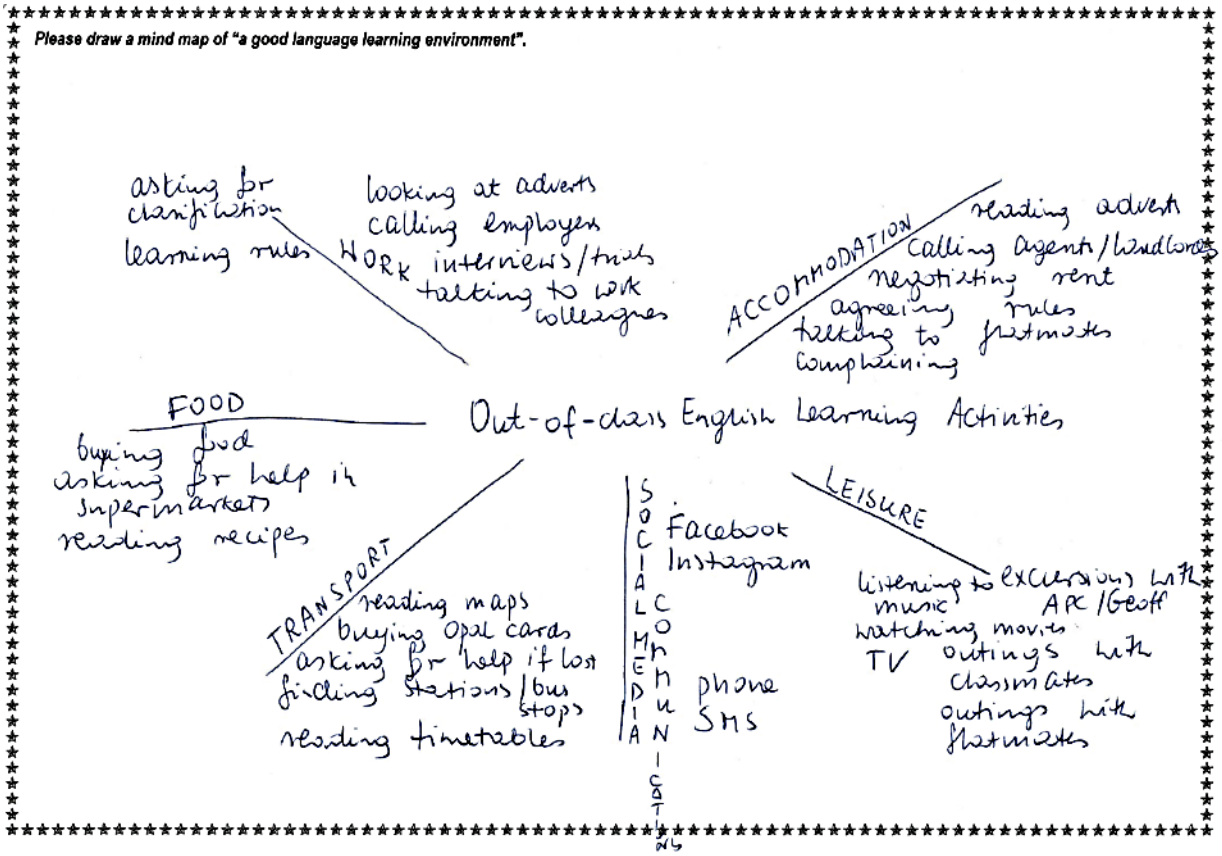
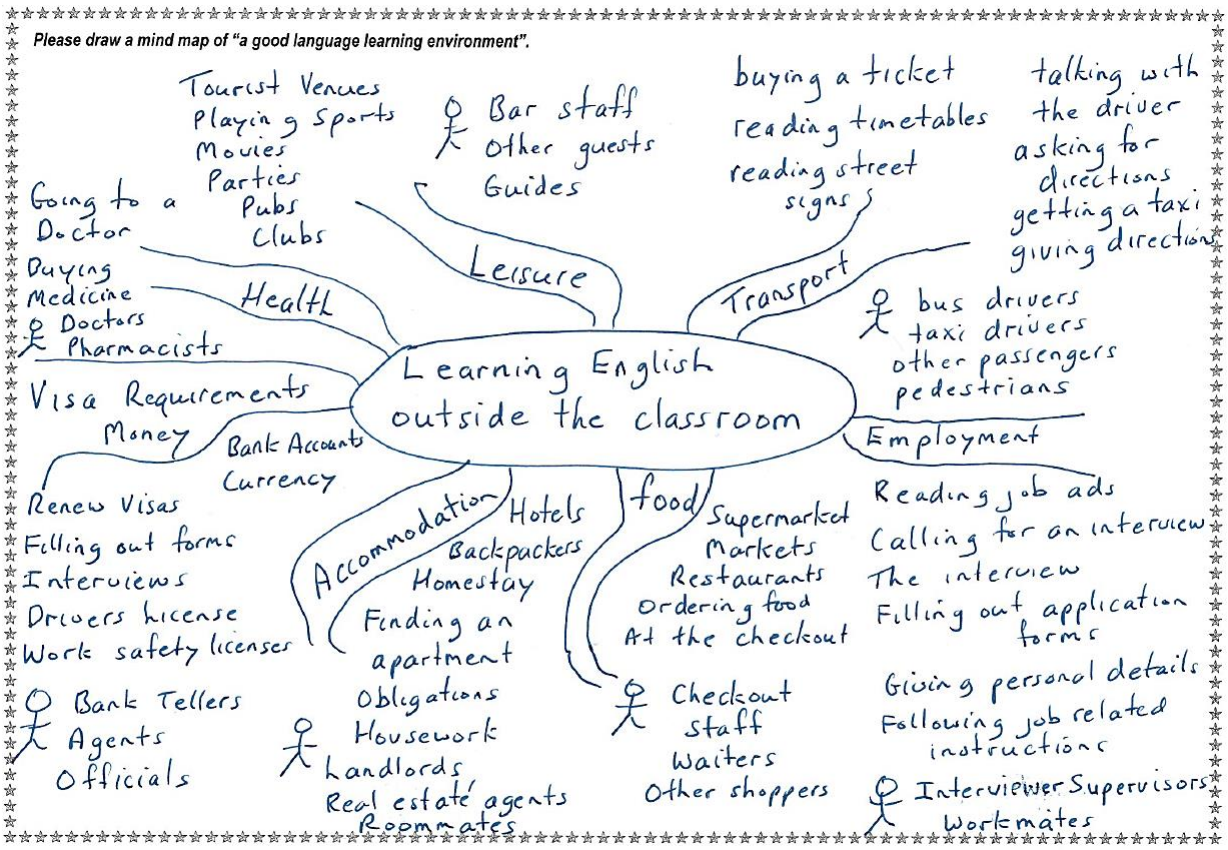
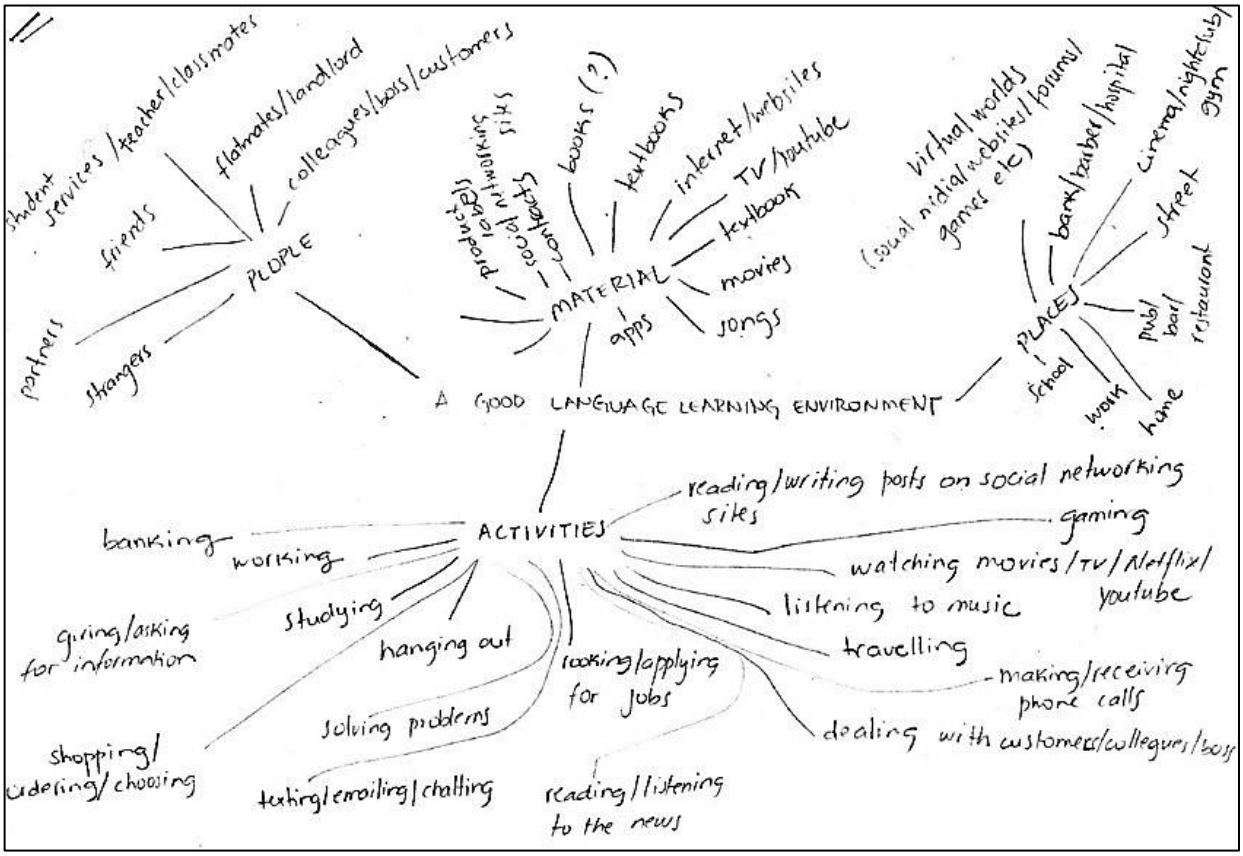


Figure 4.5. Luke's Mind Map 1



For example, both Monika and Luke have Node Level 1 *Transport* with *buying a ticket, reading timetables* and *asking for directions* as activities. The components of *Accommodation* and *Employment/Work* were also similar. The main differences between the two were that Monika appeared to pay more attention to the *Social media communications* element and students' use of technology-related activities; whereas, Luke appeared to pay more attention to face-to-face interactions by drawing symbols of a human with information about people with whom students would potentially interact in each situation such as *bus drivers* and *checkout staff.*

Figure 4.6. Roberto's Mind Map 1



The similarities between Roberto's Mind Map 1 and those produced by Monika and Luke included placing most focus on the various activities, which occupied half of the sheet. Although the arrangement of the mind map was different, his conceptions appeared to

share the same content as the conceptions of Monika and Luke. Descriptions under *People* were similar to those produced by Luke, and the various materials related to technology were similar to some of those appearing in Monika's Mind Map 1. The various locations and spaces written under *Places* also appeared to refer to the settings and contexts described by Monika and Luke as Node Level 1.

This pattern in the teachers' conceptions of a good language learning environment appeared to indicate that language learning takes place through everyday activities in the students' lives and from being naturally immersed in English through such activities and interactions with people.

4.2.3.3 In-class Focused

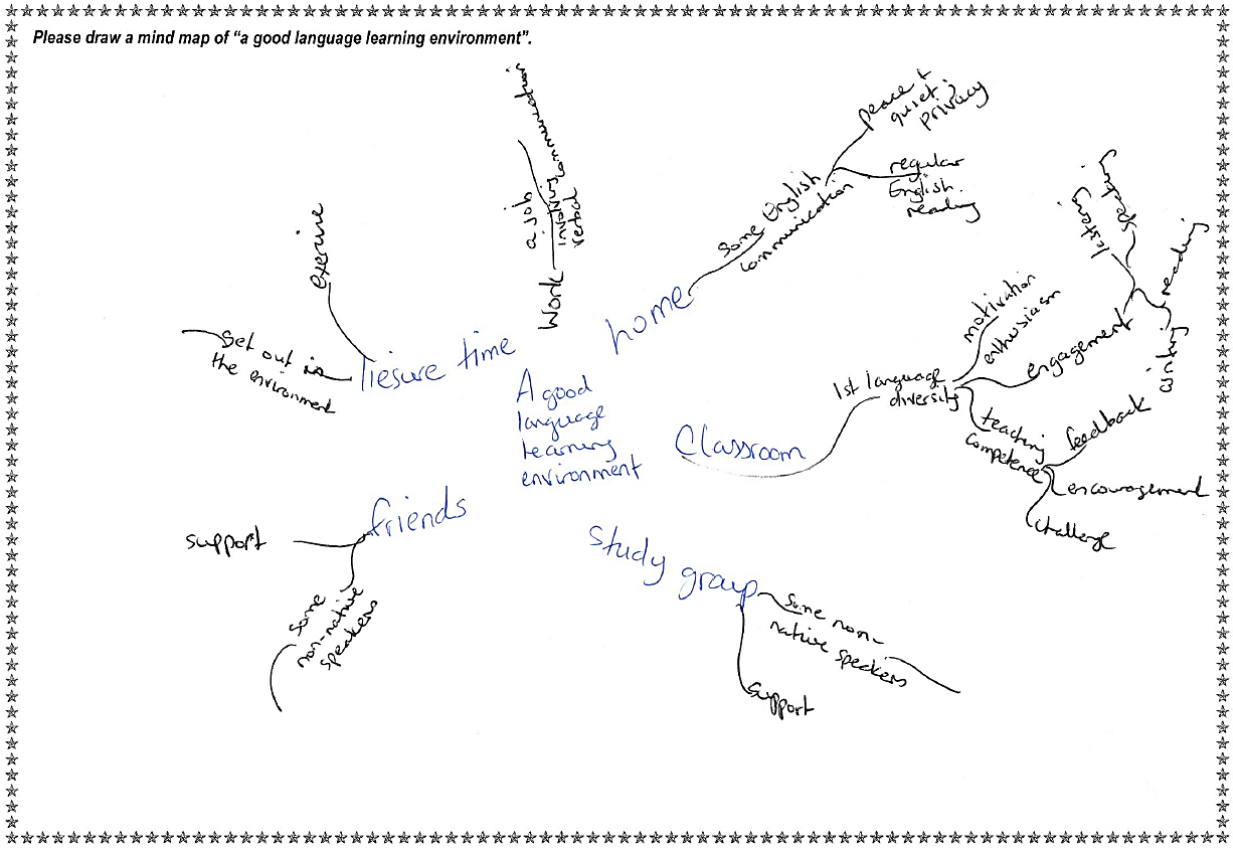
Thomas, Jesse, Kathy, and **Maureen** appeared to emphasise in-class learning contexts more than other aspects. Moreover, *Classroom* was one of the main components described as Node Level 1. Table 4.4 below is a summary of Node Levels 1 and 2 outcomes as depicted by the four teachers.

Table 4.4. In-class Focused: Node Level 1 & 2 distributions

	Thomas	Jesse	Kathy	Maureen
1. Activities				
2. People	**Friends** (support, some non-native speakers)	**Classmates** (encouraging, friendly, positive, cooperative, supportive, etc.) **Teachers** (reliable, responsible, happy, knowledge, friendly motivating, etc.)	**Teacher/facilitator** (friendly, reliable, organised, professional)	**Student** (family + friends, age, social status, hobbies/interests, gender, personal quality) **Teacher** (hobbies +interests, precious experiences)
3. Resources		Removable chairs, internet access, equipment, library – extra resources, study space	**Reliable +useful resources** (textbook, worksheets, I.T., projector, computer)	
4. Settings and contexts	**Home** (some English communication) **Classroom** (L1 diversity) **Leisure time** (set out in the environment, exercise) **Work** (involving verbal communication)	**Physical environment (Home) –** (happy/positive, sleep, healthy, quiet study space, etc.) **Classroom –** (encouragement, space, colour, safe, positive, etc.) **Community –** (community acceptance, L1 community, work social networks, library, etc.)	**Study area** (bathroom facilities, student meeting area – kitchen/cafes, classroom - desk, chairs – clean + hygienic)	**Wider community** (shopping, social media, library, social/religious groups) Work
5. Students' learning	**Study group** (support) Motivation, enthusiasm, engagement – listening, speaking, reading, writing) Regular English reading	**Study habits** (self-study – create opportunities, goals/motivation, use English etc., Natural ability, In-class – experience, engagement, interesting, attention, cooperative, etc.)	**Motivated students** (goals/aims, internal & external motivation, positive reinforcement)	
6. Teaching	Teaching competence (feedback, encouragement, challenge)	**Teachers** (teach for academic & daily life, organised, planning, nurturing)	Create opportunity to study in group situations and alone, friendly, reliable, organised, professional	
7. Life issues		**Psychological factors** (background/skills, willingness to adapt to new environment, making new friendships, manage cultural shock, etc.) **Health** (exercise, sleep, diet, etc.) **Finances** (family, scholarships, work)		

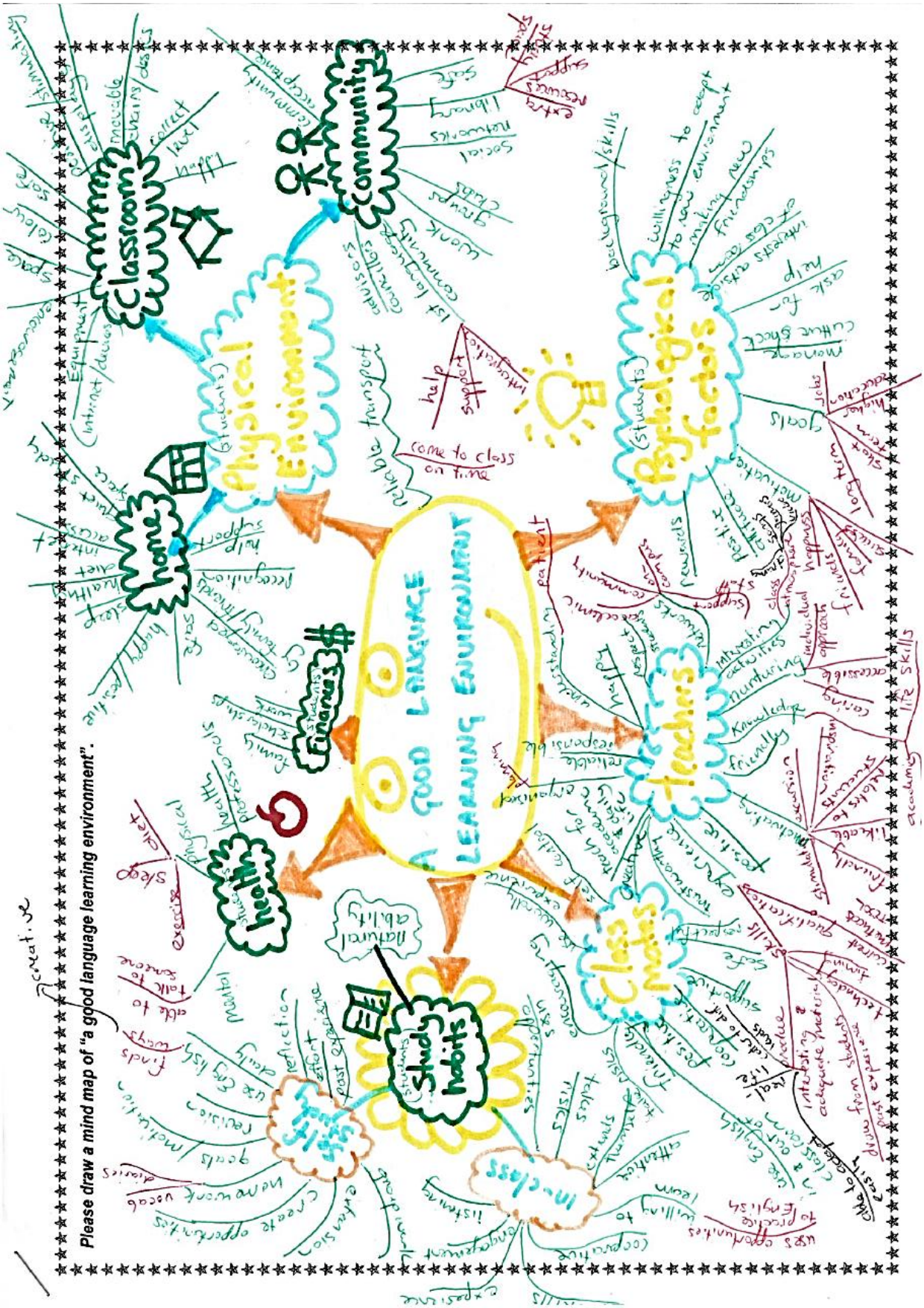
Thomas appeared to put more emphasis on *Classroom* as evidenced in the amount of information described. Although other Node Level 1 outcomes included settings and contexts, his emphasis on the students' uses of English was seen from Node Level 2 such as *L1 language diversity* linked to *Classroom, some non-native speakers* linked to both *study group* and *friends*, *some English communication* linked to *home*, and *involving verbal communication* linked to *work.*

Figure 4.7. Thomas' Mind Map 1



Jesse's Mind Map 1 below (Figure 4.8) was the most complicated and intensive one among them all. It included all seven concepts and the nodes were linked up to level 4. (Jesse's selected nodes are shown in Table 4.4.) Some of her ideas also appeared to overlap.

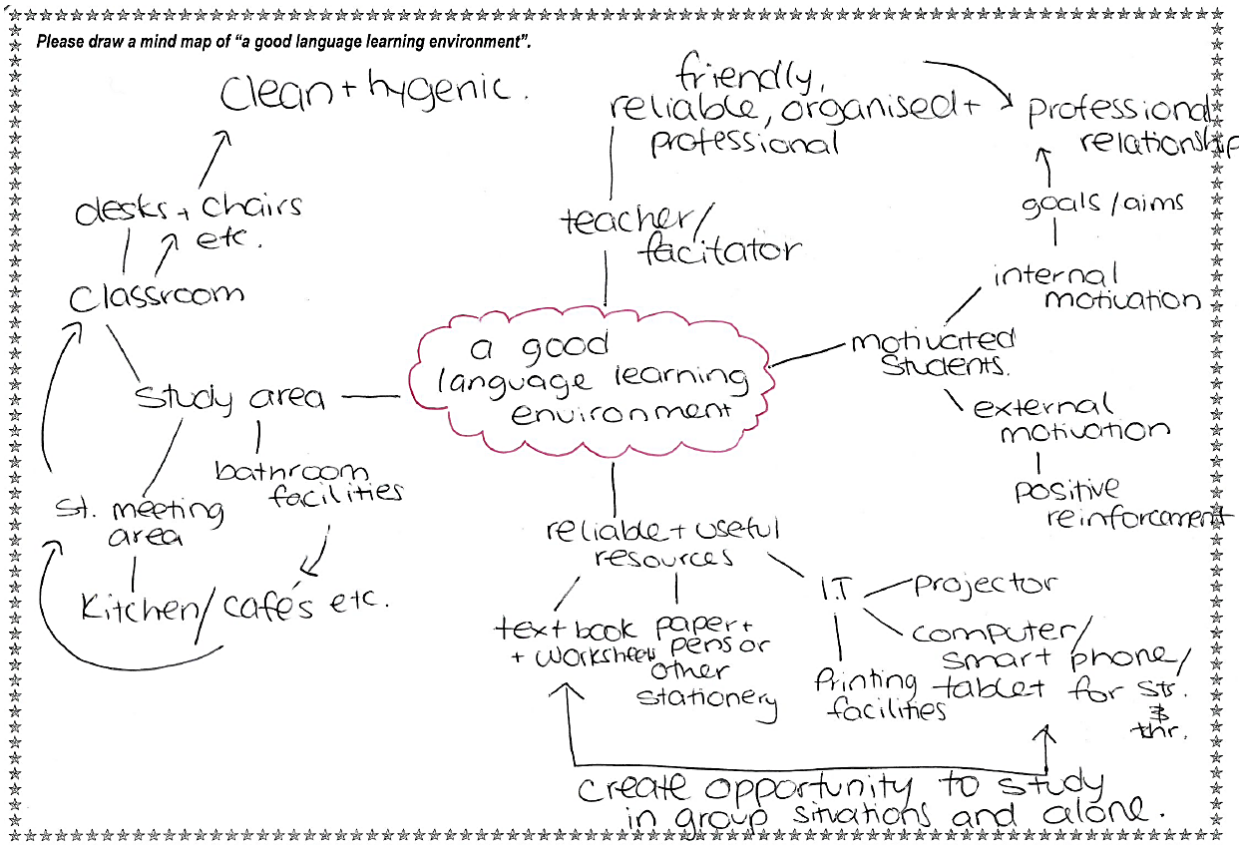
Figure 4.8. Jesse's Mind Map 1



Jesse wrote *Physical environment* and *Psychological factors* to cover elements of resources, settings, and student learning. Her emphasis appeared to be on in-class contexts as classroom-related concepts were often described. *Classroom* (Node Level 2) under *Physical environment* seemed to refer to elements of physical materials and *in-class* (Node Level 2) under *study habits* appeared to refer to students' attitudes towards learning. *Teachers* was written as one of the main components of the environment indicating both teachers' attitudes and teaching approaches: *reliable, friendly, teach for academic and daily life* and so on. Partly because of the large amount of information appearing in the space, it was difficult to comprehend her interest domain only from the mind map analysis.

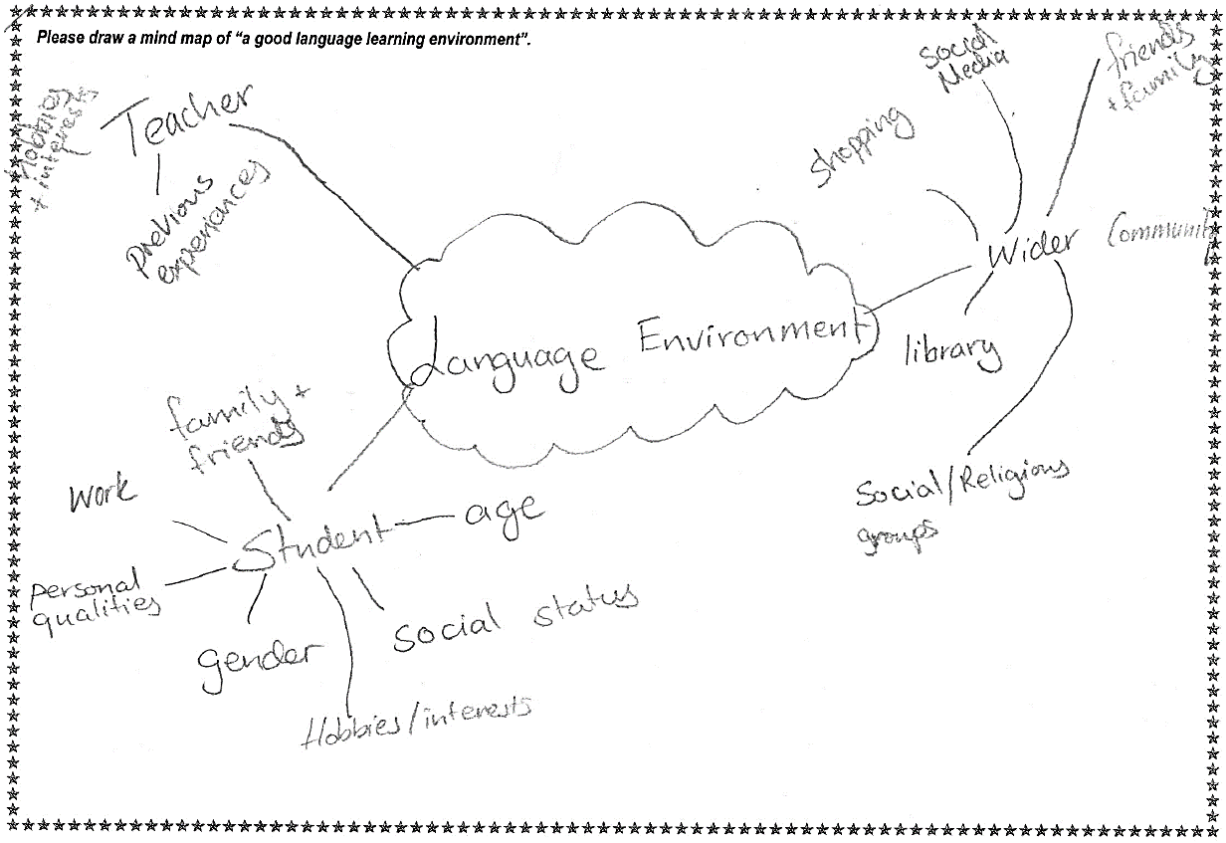
In Kathy's case (Figure 4.9), greater emphasis was placed on sufficient resources and facilities in school as a base for learning.

Figure 4.9. Kathy's Mind Map 1



Node Level 1, *Reliable +useful resources* contain information technology (IT) facilities, teaching and learning materials such as *textbook, worksheets, paper and pens*, and she associated them with *create opportunity to study in group situations and alone*, indicating why such a component in necessary. Another Node Level 1 outcome, *Study area*, also consisted of facilities at the school to support learning. Although her focus appeared to be mostly on the physical environment of the school, she also included a student learning component under Node Level 1, *motivated students – internal motivation, external motivation, goals/aims* and so on. *Teacher/facilitator* was also one of the main constructing elements and this appeared to indicate her beliefs about the teacher's role.

Figure 4.10. Maureen's Mind Map 1



Maureen's emphasis was rather difficult to capture from her Mind Map 1 (Figure 4.10). In terms of the components and their arrangement described as Node Levels 1 and 2, her conception of a good language learning environment appeared to be quite different

from the conceptions offered by the other teachers as there were more about 'facts' in each category. The decision to include her in this group was made on the basis that her emphasis was on neither out-of-class settings or activities nor student learning qualities or processes. In addition, *Stude*nt and *Teacher* written as a Node Level 1 appeared to be shared with other members in this group.

4.2.4 Summary of the Mind Map Analysis

As a visual representation of the teachers' conceptions of a good language learning environment, the mind maps rendered us:

- A holistic picture of the teachers' conceptions of a good language learning environment,
- Teachers' beliefs about the necessary components for an ideal language learning environment,
- Teachers' beliefs about ideal language learning practices for students to engage in, and
- Hints of their beliefs about the relationship between the constituting concepts in the environment through a spatial representation in mind maps.

Exploration of the three focus patterns in the first mind maps drawn by the teachers reveals the different ways of conceptualising a language learning environment, with particular emphasis on the components which make it 'good' for language learning. As such, a collective and holistic picture of the teachers' conceptions of a good language learning environment was achieved via an analysis of the mind maps, rather than via interviews only. However, the mind maps alone could not provide us with:

- The depth of the teachers' views on language learning environments, and

- An understanding of whether the teachers have queries and concerns about students' actual language learning practices beyond the classroom (as the teachers only expressed their beliefs about an ideal environment in mind maps).

There was also the potential for the researcher to make misinterpretations and inappropriate assumptions of vague concepts during the analysis. Therefore, it is essential to combine visual methods and interviews to gain the benefits from analysing both data sources to better understand the teachers' beliefs, and for clarification of the underlying meanings of the represented concepts. Interview data was therefore used for the purpose of investigating teachers' beliefs about the:

- Students' attitudes towards language learning,
- Gaps between ideal and actual language learning practices,
- Relationship between the students' out-of-class language learning environments and what they do in-class, and
- Teachers' roles in student learning beyond the classroom.

It also plays a role in verifying rather vague concepts depicted in the mind maps to avoid researcher misinterpretation.

The teachers' beliefs about the ideal language learning environment are compared to their assumptions about the students' actual language learning environments during the interview. The comparisons drew out the teachers' queries and concerns by identifying the conflicting factors and by illuminating the particular issues they found important. The following section includes the analysis of the interview data to complement the mind map analysis, also to achieve a more in-depth understanding of individual teachers' holistic views of language learning environments beyond the classroom.

4.3 Teachers' Initial Beliefs

This section provides an in-depth exploration of the teacher participants' initial beliefs about ideal language learning environments by drawing out and discussing the gaps between their 'ideal' environments and the 'actual' environments. In addition, the teachers' beliefs about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning with regard to their teaching practices were sought in order to understand their views on the connection, and to encourage them to think from a relational perspective. The four focus points of teachers' beliefs below were elicited during the first and final interviews:

1) Students' language learning practices beyond the classroom,
2) Students' attitudes towards language learning outside of the classroom,
3) The relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning, and
4) Teachers' roles in student language learning beyond the classroom.

All the interview scripts were coded and analysed thematically. Through both within-case and cross-case analysis, individual teachers' conceptions of a good language learning environment and the commonalities and variations in their initial beliefs were unpacked. The discrepancies acknowledged by the teachers when comparing the 'ideal' and 'actual' language learning environments during interview appeared to indicate the teachers' queries and concerns. It should be noted that at this stage, the teachers' beliefs about their students' actual language learning environments are assumptions emergent from their past teaching experiences or from observational perspectives, not from the information provided by the students.

The following sections illustrate the teachers' beliefs and critical views of the students' language learning practices and environments as they emerged through the discussion on the four focus points mentioned above.

4.3.1 Teacher Beliefs about Students' Language Learning Practices beyond the Classroom

This section examines the teacher participants' initial beliefs about ideal language learning practices beyond the classroom for engagement by students, as well as the discrepancies between their views and the practices of some students.

As evidenced in the Out-of-class Focused mind map pattern (4.2.3.2) in particular, the teachers' beliefs that students ideally learn English through everyday activities (including technology-mediated activities) in various settings beyond the classroom are highlighted. Luke strongly believed that the use of English (L2) in everyday activities by students can develop their language skills, as evidenced in the extract below from his interview which verified his Mind Map 1:

> I: So do you think these kinds of experiences outside of school are important for students to develop their language skills?
>
> L: Definitely. Because it's natural everyday language, yeah. So, if they can do all of these things, you know, quite fluently then they're high level students because it covers just about every aspects of English. (Luke, Interview 1)

Luke's belief that students can develop all aspects of their English language skills in naturalistic settings was evident in his comments. As evidenced in his mind map identifying people who might support interactions in English, his belief about good language learning practices through face-to-face interactions particularly was emphasised during the interview:

> […] if you're talking to people on the street, you're talking a native, idiomatic language as well, and you have to pick up your learning, listening and speaking skills because people on the street won't talk like I do when I teach. (Luke, Interview 1)

As such, Luke appeared to emphasise the importance of exercising one's listening and speaking skills through face-to-face interactions, ideally with L2 native speakers. At the same time, his concern about the students' use of first language preventing them from participating in an English-immersion environment was expressed. He commented, "it's unfortunate that once the students leave the school a lot of them tend to associate with

people from their own country", and so they mostly speak in their first language. Luke suggests to his students that "don't think in your own language. Think in English all the time".

In a similar vein, Monika mentioned her big concern about the students' choices of languages when they engage in the activities described in her Mind Map 1. Her image of a good language learning environment (particularly out-of-class situations) would be apparent only when students chose to use English. Then, everyday situations with exposure to English creates a good language learning environment. However, she suggested that "they're using their own language most of the time" as she knew some students "only mix with people from their own country, so they live in a house with people where all the flatmates speak the same language, and they work for people from their country" (Interview 1). Monika's critical views were therefore that students are not sufficiently exposed to English in their everyday lives. In addition, as the following extract shows, she expressed the negative view that technology developments sometimes create less engagement in English by students during their everyday activities. However, she did write *Social media communications* as one of the main categories.

> […] they can live with their own language. They can live here using very very little English out-of-class to practice; especially nowadays I think, with Google maps, translator, with um… you know instant communication with friends and stuff. They don't need to sometimes because they can rely on their phones. Phones will tell them everything. (Monika, Interview 1)

Monika believed that social media communications have potential benefits for language learning, however, she also expressed negative views based on her observations of students' actual use of technology.

Roberto emphasised during the interview that the most important element among the four elements drawn in the Mind Map 1 was *Activities*. This occupied a half of the space provided to describe all the activities the students may engaging in, in English. The reason for his strong belief that activities outside of the classroom were important was that he

believed 95% of learning occurs outside of the classroom, where students actually use English in various practical situations:

> R: I think it's actually what they do out there is 95% of learning process. What we do here is maybe 5 or 10% (laughter). I don't wanna be too specific, I'm not good at numbers.
>
> I: You mean more learning is happening outside of school?
>
> R: I think so. I think here we polish the process. We give them some structure, but real learning if you like happens out there in contexts when they use the language when they have to use it. […] But yes, when they work, when they deal with customers, with their colleagues, ah… student services when they have to send an email or apply for a job, I think that's when the learning process really happens. (Roberto, Interview 1)

As evident in his interview response and in his Mind Map 1, Roberto believes that "real learning" takes place when students are actually using their L2 in contexts outside of the classroom. In addition, he regards in-class learning as "polishing" students' learning in a structured way. Reading and listening to the news, for example, may not be a common practice, but students tend to engage in various face-to-face activities in English at work, particularly his evening class students, such as "dealing with customers and their colleagues, and making and receiving phone calls".

Roberto also emphasised the impact of technology-supported materials and activities on students' language learning practices beyond the classroom. He also stressed that such materials and resources should be integrated in classroom teaching practices. "Watching YouTube, Netflix and TV, reading and writing posts on social networking sites" are everyday activities the students are probably doing, as well as "engaging in conversation with their virtual friends". Under the *Places* category in his mind map, Roberto wrote *Virtual worlds* as the "most important" place, especially for younger students because they can practice English through "social media, websites, forums, and games".

Roberto also pointed out that students can be "exposed to different Englishes" by meeting and interacting with people in social situations such as "colleagues, bosses,

customers, flatmates and landlords"; listed in his mind map under Node Level 1, *People.* Roberto believed that students could practice English by communicating with people of other nationalities. Even in the school environment, students may communicate with teachers and classmates or student service staff if "they've got any issues any questions". As an "additional" element of *Materials,* Roberto listed up all the resources with the potential to facilitate student learning such as *apps*. He explained that he wrote a big question mark next to *books* because he was not sure if students nowadays read any kinds of books or e-books, suggesting that they would rather do a quick read of postings on social networking sites. *Textbook* was also written down by Roberto, although it is not his favourite teaching material. He understood however that the textbook helps them to give some structure to their learning, because "it's organised". Other possible materials related to the students' daily activities were also mentioned:

> Ah… contracts, they have to sign contracts at work. They have to sign contracts when they rent a place. So, when they apply for a course, they go to the gym, that's… Product labels, understanding labels, and social networking sites. I recon those are good materials that help them. (Roberto, Interview 1)

As such, Roberto appeared to cover all possible materials for learning in the Mind Map 1 rather than select ones that he believes to be GOOD. It was revealed later during the project that Roberto was trying to cover ALL elements he included in the Mind Map 1 because he "thought about what she (the researcher) wants me (Roberto) to do" and he was "looking for a right answer" and "trying to meet your expectations maybe than meet my own expectations" (Interview 3).

Roberto's critical views at the initial stage concerned student motivation and the goals of studying abroad, which were related to their ways of creating their environments. He said that "some of them are very comfortable, they are in their *comfort zone* using their first language, it's easier", but others "realise that they should be using the language more". Roberto thought that "it depends on the student, on what their goals are, why they're here.

Are they here in Australia to learn English or to work, so that's a question" (Interview 1). Although he knows that some students have come to Australia to work even though they are taking an English course, he said that he always asks himself, "how can I help them learn a bit?" (Interview 1).

Thomas emphasised in-class components in his mind map and explained that he tried to "write down any locations or, you know, parts of your life". He started with *Classroom* and then *Home*, and the last one was *Work*. He thought that "everyone has leisure time, and most people have friends, and study groups that something some of them might do". For Node level 2, he wrote "the most important factor in each one":

> So, in the classroom I thought language diversity is the most important factor, because if they're all from the same country speaking the same language it is a big negative, but even just three or four other languages makes massive difference. And things like engagement, motivation, enthusiasm, teaching competence, and engagement in all skills in the class, and … so that's the classroom. (Thomas, Interview 1)

As evident in the above extract, Thomas believed 'first language diversity' to be the most crucial condition of the classroom and other settings to create a good language learning environment. Thomas' focus in every category was on whether the students "need to speak English to people" or if they have "opportunities to speak English". Also, friendships and support from friends who do not share the same first language was emphasised in each category. As the extract below highlights, the support written under *Friends* refers to both practical support such as finding information and emotional support:

> […] so, do they have any non-native… when I say non-native I mean their own language, are any of their friends speakers of English or any other language apart from their native language. And do their friends give them any support, you know, emotional support or other support makes a difference, I think. (Thomas, Interview 1)

As such, his beliefs about the use of English among friends was again emphasised within the concept of "emotional support" or any other practical support as a condition of a good language learning environment. Thomas, however, was critical of his students' surrounding

environments in that they did not appear to support the creation of English-speaking networks for practicing English. He believed that this was mainly due to the nationality bias in the student population at the school:

> The biggest concern here is that such a disproportional number of students who come from the same country and speak the same language, Chinese, Mandarin, and uh… that's the biggest problem here and they usually live with people from their own country as well, not always, but generally they seem to do that, and so um, understandably I guess, but that's probably the biggest problem really in terms of learning English. (Thomas, Interview 1)

Thomas' core beliefs appeared to be confirmed in that his focus was on friendship networks for creating both in-class and out-of-class settings good language learning environments where students have further opportunities to use English. However, he emphasised that the actual school environment was dominant by Mandarin speaking students and that this was impacting negatively on student language learning beyond the classroom.

Kathy also appeared to focus on the in-class/school components in her Mind Map 1. She said that she started drawing the mind map to reflect the idea of *motivated students*. For Kathy, "it's important to think about internal motivation and external motivation". Teachers can provide "positive reinforcement" through the provision of little rewards to the students such as "giving them a chocolate, or… saying 'hey, you did a good job' or clapping them". In terms of internal motivation, she believes that it can be evoked within the students themselves, stating, "they've got their own goals and their own aims". In relation to the student component, she linked this to the *Teacher/facilitator* component to express her beliefs about the teachers' roles.

Kathy then explained the Node Level 1 *Reliable +useful resources* outcome, which appeared to be the domain of interest in her mind map. She emphasised that an IT supported classroom and a reliable textbook make teaching more effective. She valued highly technology-mediated sources for learning and often shared useful websites with her

students. She also says, for example, "Google search, tongue twister for P and V or something" for pronunciation practice so the students can self-study or receive instant feedback. Kathy then highlighted that resources can support teachers to "create an opportunity for them [the students] to study in group situations or alone, maybe over the internet or giving them work for home". She wanted to add *curriculum* with *focus and objectives* to her Mind Map 1. As such, Kathy's responses during interview appeared to verify that her main focus was on in-class learning, but with a strong emphasis on learning quality such as student motivation and the teaching approaches to support them. Physical objects and resources at the school are elements which support quality learning.

Kathy was not ignorant of the students' out-of-class learning practices however. She raised concerns about the students' lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom. Kathy stated; "from my point of view as a language teacher, the thing that is missing in the classroom is life" and "the language that we use in life is different to what's in the textbook". Hence, she is emphasising the value of enriching out-of-class learning experiences. In reality however, unless the students are in a homestay situation they tend to live or work with people who speak their first language, even though they do not want to:

> So sometimes it's hard for them, or to get the level they need, you know. I emphasise that too. Like, it's good you've got someone to talk Portuguese to because you're trying to find a job and maybe they can help find a job. (Kathy, Interview 1)

Kathy expressed her understanding of how students may struggle to balance the need for a first-language network for survival (e.g., finding a job or an apartment) and the need for spaces to use English outside of the classroom. She also voiced her concerns about the students' busy life styles; "they're already so time poor" and "doing two or three jobs and study, so what do they do when they get home? They go to sleep, you know". Hence, it is a challenge for her to find appropriate support, but "probably a bit more support with self-

study". She indicated that the social activities at the college seemed only to be suitable for "quite confident and outgoing" students, as most of the activities were outdoors. Nonetheless, she thought that it was hard to know what type of support was best for the student:

> [...] and I know some colleges that have like a study hour. I think they've been talking about having it here, but you know… what kind of the facility should you provide? I think… just too many now. It's hard to know what they want. So, probably we need to know more about them before we can provide what they need. (Kathy, Interview 1)

As evident in the extract above, Kathy emphasised the need to understand the students' learning needs to identify the appropriate support for student self-study.

The teachers believed that students having ample opportunities to practice English in everyday situations was one of the features of a good environment for language learning. The teachers appeared to also share the concern that the students' lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom was mainly due to the students' immediate environment and their interactions with their first language speakers. The students' tendency to associate with first language speakers, their unwillingness or lack of time to participate in social activities where English is spoken, or their failure to seek out opportunities to speak in English were raised as factors to hinder the students English speaking development.

4.3.2 Beliefs about Student Attitudes towards Language Learning

This section discusses the emerging issues around student attitudes towards language learning as part of a language learning environment beyond the classroom. It was highlighted by the teachers in the Learning Quality Focused mind map pattern (4.2.3.1) particularly. As seen in Table 4.2, the teachers' beliefs about the students' ideal attitudes towards engaging in various activities outside the classroom such as *motivated* and *proactive*, and the students' *self-awareness* of their language learning opportunities were highlighted as features of a good language learning environment.

Lisa's Mind Map 1 (Figure 4.2) included four learning quality components: *Interactive, supportive*, *happy*, and *appropriate*, Lisa said that she "tried to think as little as possible about" what makes a good learning environment. She also explained that she "didn't think about inside of the classroom or outside of the classroom", but that she "was thinking more about in general" (Interview 1). Lisa started with *Supportive* by reflecting on her own past learning experiences. She always tries "to get an atmosphere in the classroom where the students are supporting each other, having been in learning situations myself, when it wasn't".

In relation to support, Lisa explained that the reason she wrote *Happy* as one of the main components was because she believed it was important to help students who are stressed out by "continuous assessments" or feeling pressured from the university or their family to pass. To her, the students' mental wellbeing and facilitating in them a positive attitude towards learning (which they would bring into their classroom) were a priority. Lisa commented that *Appropriate*, including "appropriate teaching materials, and teacher has to have some skills, it's gonna be adaptable and some variety" came after *Supportive* and *Happy*. The final component of Node Level 1 was *Interactive* because Lisa anticipated a gap (e.g., cultural gap) between students' perceptions of a good language learning environment. She believed that the students perceived a good language learning environment to reflect the "more traditional approach" with "a well-trained or well-experienced teacher who is giving them what they need". Lisa tried to counteract these perceptions with greater proactive participation by the students. Due to the perception gap, Lisa indicated that being proactive such as asking questions is "an alien notion for many students". Lisa claimed that students tend to expect one correct answer from teachers and explained that this is "partly cultural" and because they have "a lack of experience" in discussing points or providing opinions to open-ended question. She also expressed how it was difficult to teach students with different perceptions of a good

language learning environment about "how to cope with" and realise the benefits of language learning in interactive ways. Lisa then emphasised the importance of teachers understanding that such a perception gap between students and teachers exists, and that teachers may need to make an effort to help the students to realise the benefits of language learning through communicative learning with a proactive attitude.

In Molly's case (Figure 4.4), in Node Level 1, *Galleries and museums*, she explained that "connecting to galleries, museums, parks, and nature walks, is the way to create a connection to the culture and with others". "Animals and plants are always a place of a wonder" where students might be able "to strike up a conversation" with people. For Molly, these locations are both resources and part of the learning process. Molly highlighted the students' exposure to out-of-class environments, so that the students would be more aware of the connection between language learning and out-of-class personal life experiences:

> Meaning and purpose through nature in the arts, online, online communities, projects, mini research tasks, presentations. So, I've got up here, meaning and purpose, which I put with connectedness and raising awareness. Motivation, getting to the students likes and dislikes, hobbies, dreams, enjoyment. I think the learning environment needs to connect with the individual. What makes a person tick, you know, um… confident, think positive! (Molly, Interview 1)

Molly emphasised connectivity, both among friends to form networks to enjoy out-of-class experiences together and with the environment. Molly's criticisms of the students' language learning practices were that many students did not really have exposure to outside the world, except in the area nearby for grocery shopping:

> Um, like I said, some of them don't do it, they freely admit it, um which is fine. But, they give reasons why. It's related to confidence, and for some it's not that they can't actually perform with some level of linguistic competence, they've got that. It's the social competence they need, you know. Um, it's mainly around that; that's the main feedback I get. The social phobia is a little bit, not that's a phobia in a clinical sense, but the anxiety is definitely there. (Molly, Interview 1)

Molly indicated *Linguistic & social competence* and *confidence* in her Mind Map 1, and she emphasised these two elements during interview. This is evidenced in the above extract

and her concerns about the anxiety felt by some students towards using English outside of the classroom. Molly assumed that the student's age or motivation level for L2 acquisition were related to the difficulties they experienced trying to learn a language, especially in an overseas setting. Although she "can only merely kind of guess what is like because [she's] never really learnt a L2", she thought that the students may need a lot of confidence and the right linguistic skills to facilitate out-of-class English language learning, as she expressed below:

> […] maybe reception for that student might not be so positive? I'm not so sure whether that's really a big issue…all the time or not. Um, I think, what else what are the issues? … Comprehension? The ability to comprehend, and to receive the answer and to probe the response more deeply. (Molly, Interview 1)

Molly highlighted her concerns about the students' negative emotions outside of the classroom due to lack of English skills to communicate with people, stating that "it might affect their confidence in such a way that puts them off". Therefore, she believes that having "a really strong set-up in class, before you send them out" is something she can do to build up their confidence and language skills, particularly for students with lower-level proficiency. Molly also places high value on excursions as a way to provide students with opportunities to interact with people outside of the classroom. Moreover, she considered it a way of showing them how language learning can take place outside of school while visiting historical or popular sites in Australia. At the end of the first interview, Molly explained the students' language learning experience abroad using the metaphor of a growing tree, as she drew in the centre of the Mind Map 1:

> […] that's the tree because it's growing, you know its growth. Um … it's a bit of a journey really, without trying sound too kind of corny, but it is! It is a journey, and um it started when they… in part, it started when they got on the plane to come here, so…you know. (Molly, Interview 1)

As such, Molly often articulated her position on how to support the students' English language learning journey in Sydney using metaphorical expressions.

Dan emphasised learning quality in his Mind Map 1 (Figure 4.3) with three main concepts; *Student feelings, Processes and principles*, and *Results.* He also drew a few question symbols to show his uncertainty about some of the elements in the students' language learning environments. He wrote and circled *self-awareness* as Node Level 2 under *processes & principles*, and emphasised its role during interview. Dan first drafted a mind map with different locations and types of aspects in each location. He thought that "instead of thinking about different locations, I was thinking about what the students are doing when they're in that location". He then "tried to picture the characteristics of it". (Interview 1)

Dan's core belief about a good language learning environment was related to students' self-awareness – "how the students feel about what they're doing". He emphasised that the important element of the environment was students' awareness of their own learning processes and a preparedness to take responsibility for it. This is because a learning environment belongs to them and "one of the good processes that goes on in a good language learning environment is to do with the student".

> In other words, the student brings… this is an aspect that language learners are often unaware of and that is… or anyone any students really, it doesn't matter if it's a language or not, whenever we're learning something, we're often unaware of what we bring to the environment. You know if I'm learning piano then I'm responsible for actually sitting down at the piano… I'm responsible for putting myself in that environment so to speak, so that's why I put here like self-awareness because I think especially with the technology thing. It's kind of… not sure how… I put it there because you can see when it's not happening, I think that's the point. You can see when the students are simply unaware of what they are doing as a learner, you know? (Dan, Interview 1)

In terms of "the technology thing" discussed by Dan, he believed that when students use the internet or social media they are often unaware that they are actually using their first language all the time for reading information, sending text messages, and so on. So, in relation to students' self-awareness of their language use, he explained why he put *can use L1 or L2 openly* in his Mind Map 1:

> […] they themselves balance L1 and L2 appropriately, in a sense, so that … just because you've got the freedom to use L1 and L2, it doesn't mean you use L1. This is where self-awareness comes in. I think a lot of our students, a lot of learners, they mistake freedom and convenience for what they should actually do, and they have to take. It's all about taking responsibility for your own learning. I've never figured it out how to help students with that to be honest. (Dan, Interview 1)

As evident in the above extract, Dan highlighted the issue of students' lack of awareness of their use of L1 and L2, and its influence on the language learning process. At the same time, he expressed his curiosity about finding ways to help the students in this regard. Regarding *integration,* Dan spoke about forming social relationships or friendships through language learning. As the extract below shows, he emphasised that it is part of the learning process to form such relationships through/with language:

> […] it's not always just about language, it's about relationships. So, I think people who use language inevitably form relationships. So, it's just something you can see. You can see 'oh they are friends', and when the relationships start to form, you can actually use… I think that's when we can see these things are actually happening. (Dan, Interview 1)

As emphasised, Dan believes that language use is an integral part of forming social relationships. He said that the good language learning environment he depicted does not exist, "even in a classroom", because the necessary components as drawn in his mind map were not evidenced in actual environment as far as he was concerned. First, outside of the classroom especially, the students would be pressured to use English correctly to be understood by their boss or customers at work for example, or they might receive negative feedback such as "Sorry, I don't understand you". The students would not get practice using English in real situations; "they just have to jump in and use it". In addition, there may not be flexibility in the way, "in a sense that like you're over here I can use L1 or L2, it's not the flexibility, you have to use English". Considering these features, Dan said, "my students I would say are mostly in bad language learning environments". For him, students who have access to an ideal language learning environment are successful learners who are already aware of their learning processes and environments. However, Dan stated that his students

usually needed support considering their English learning histories. He suggested that "as a teacher we have to remember that our students are generally not over-achievers" and were not "fantastic at English at school", "they're not usually the best language learners, and they are not necessarily the most motivated" or "not naturally inclined to learn English" otherwise "they would've been off to university in London, something like that". Therefore, Dan suggested that the students need "slow encouragement" rather than a push to remind them of "what the whole point is"; that is, the purpose and goals of learning English in Sydney and "of pushing themselves a little bit".

As such, Dan expressed his queries around supporting unsuccessful language learners to create a good language learning environment with the elements of *self-awareness, balancing L1 and L2,* and for them to start taking responsibility for their own learning.

4.3.3 Beliefs about the Relationship between In-class and Out-of-class Language Learning

This section explores the teacher participants' beliefs about the 'ideal' relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning and their critical views of the 'actual' relationship. It also explores the students' perceptions of the relationship.

The teachers appeared to share similar beliefs about the ideal relationship between the two contexts and how the relationship was not a reality. The ideal relationship for them is that students learn in class and then practice/use what they have learned outside of the classroom in various situations. The teachers expect that students will learn grammar rules and new phrases or expressions in a structured and safe environment in the classroom. The students then practice using the grammar and expressions in natural situations outside of the classroom by transferring and adapting their knowledge and skills. Classrooms are therefore places where students develop linguistic skills and confidence.

The classroom could also be a place where students can clarify the uses of English (e.g., pronunciation or word meanings) they encounter outside of the classroom:

> I think they learn in class how to do it, and outside they practice. Because you know they won't be learning the grammar too much outside, practicing it. Whereas, in class they're learning how, I think that's the thing. (Luke, interview 1)

> Well, it's a very safe environment in the classroom… because they know it doesn't matter if they make a mistake of if they misunderstood. But when they go out in the real world, they might be embarrassed, you know if people don't understand them, or if they don't know how to ask. So, it's a very different environment I think. (Monika, interview 1)

Luka and Monika's extracts above reveal their beliefs that in-class and out-of-class learning are different environments because of the presence of the teacher in class and the lack of support from a teacher in out-of-class learning situations. Such differences included the degree of pressure they felt to communicate due to their linguistic skills, their confidence level, and the idiomatic language and variable accents they would experience. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of connecting the two contexts; namely, integrating authentic learning through particular teaching approaches into what they do in class. Kathy posited that being an Australian she could combine in-class learning from the textbook with authentic English use outside of the classroom.

> For students, I think the more you can integrate it the more you can show them. I've been living in Australia my whole life and if they wanna learn about Australia, they can learn from me. Like, what's an Australian person like? Or language as well, so you can teach from the textbook, but the textbook doesn't cover everything, and you know, less formal English or even words we don't like to use, rude words things like that. I mean they need to know them. Because if they're living here, they could be in any situation, could be a positive or negative situation, and someone could be telling them horrible things and they wouldn't know. So, I'd like to try to think about that and teach them that kind of stuff too because I think it's important. Um… being a teacher is to empower students with knowledge and so, I'm empowering them with language, so I want them to know everything. So, for them I'm sure it's very different to what it is like in a classroom compared to outside of the classroom. (Kathy, interview 1)

Kathy's extract highlights the teacher's role in linking the two different learning contexts by doing activities not included in the textbook such as informal English use and learning about cultural issues (not stereotype issues). She believed it is about teaching the student

practical uses of English so that they can feel empowered and motivated to learn the language outside of school to a greater extent. The use of authentic materials such as YouTube videos and movies were mentioned by Luke and Roberto in particular.

Molly also highlighted the connection between in-class and out-of-class learning when she explained the concept of *connectedness* included in her Mind Map 1. She emphasised the importance of the connection between in-class learning and "the reality of the language" outside of the classroom:

> Okay, first of all, it's (out-of-class learning) essential. I think that um… we really need to connect our students with the reality of the language, the purpose, the meaning, um its use, you know. Our in-class activities of course can prepare us for that, but that's only a part of the way, […]. I think if we give students projects, or open-ended activities based on…you know something that they work on in class then we extend that to outside of the classroom and maybe we can link it back to an activity inside of the classroom, or link it to an activity that is beyond, for example, I don't know writing a letter to an organisation that we want to or […]. But I think purpose, meaning, fun, positivity… and connecting to the reality of the language is very important. (Molly, Interview 1)

For Molly, a project-based teaching approach is one way to extend what the students learn in class to the outside of the classroom setting in a meaningful way. It creates a link by bringing it back to the class; for example, presenting mini projects in class. Asking the students to share informally their life stories in class was also identified by the teachers as an example of how to connect the two contexts.

For Roberto, the student in class "maybe polishing what they learned and helping them to understand what's formal and what's informal when they use certain elements of the language" (Interview 1). For example, his students sometimes asked him about the language their boss used that they did not understand. He believed that the social activity program provided by the college was great as the students can go out and experience activities with other international students as opportunities to practice what they learned in class. Roberto himself also sometimes takes his students outside of the classroom to have them experience real English use such as going to a supermarket. Lisa, Molly, and

Roberto agreed that such excursions were valuable; whereas, others were not so keen on such activities, despite sometimes organise them. Jesse, Kathy, Thomas, Monika expressed doubts about the benefits of excursions because they thought the students did not appear to take advantage of them.

The issues to emerge if students did not recognise the connection between in-class and out-of-class language learning were also mentioned in relation to the lack of actual use of English outside of the classroom. Out-of-class learning as an 'extension' of in-class, or the 'integration' of in-class and out-of-class learning as the ideal relationship could be achieved if students were self-aware of such a relationship and have the opportunities to practice English outside of school. Jesse, for example, believed that the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning should overlap. As revealed in the comment below, Jesse believed that the information and knowledge that the students access in class should be practiced and consolidated outside of the classroom:

> I think there's a huge overlap. I think it's not just, um oh well, in anything you learn not just learning a language. Um, whatever you decide to learn, you can't just… okay this is 4 hours and clocking on and clocking off and then you're not using it or you're not adding to it or expanding to it or practicing it. If you don't, it's… you're just not going to be very successful at whatever you're learning. So, language is probably more so than others, because if you've learned some new vocabulary or pronunciation, or you've learned a grammar point, if you don't go out and use it, you're not going to remember and you're not going to get better at it. So, they have to really overlap. (Jesse, Interview 1)

Jesse also expressed her doubts that students know how to build upon what they learned outside of classroom. She thinks that the students may not fully comprehend the teacher's intention or purpose underpinning the class activities, or that they may not match the students' learning goals, suggesting the perception gap between the teachers and students. The students do not appear to understand the link between in-class and out-of-class learning according to the teachers' expectations, or the nature of the relationship between the two contexts. Jesse stated that for some students, studying English often means translating all the words in a course book or studying IELTS online rather than using the

language. Moreover, they are satisfied with these approaches because that is how they have learned English in the past and they think it is the way to fulfil their own personal goals (e.g., getting a degree). Therefore, study time and their social life outside of school appear to be kept separated.

Teachers appear to have a shared belief that in-class and out-of-class language learning should be integrated. Some explicitly explained how they have tried to achieve such integration using authentic materials or teaching practical uses of English outside of school and so on. For some teachers, a passive approach to helping students to integrate the two domains is adopted because they believe it should be the students' responsibility to find the connections to use English outside of the classroom.

4.3.4 Beliefs about Teachers' Roles

This section illustrates the teachers' beliefs about their roles in supporting student language learning beyond the classroom. It focuses on what they are doing or could do, and the limitations and challenges.

Kathy, **Maureen**, and **Jesse** wrote *Teacher* or *teaching elements* as a main component (Node Level 1). **Lisa**, **Molly**, and **Thomas** also wrote teaching qualities in their mind maps although it was not suggested as part of the mind map instruction. This may indicate that they perceive there to be clear roles for teachers in student learning environments, or links between their teaching and student language learning practices beyond the classroom. The teachers' roles within the student language learning environment were further elicited during interviews to verify the teachers' beliefs about their own roles.

During the first interview, Jesse emphasised that her priority role was to create a safe, friendly and happy environment in class. In addition, she considered her role was to provide her students with guidance and example activities to promote language learning.

In terms of *Study habits* as an element in the students' language learning environments, Jesse indicated that she would like to show the students that they have "more possibilities" which they can combine with their existing study habits such as translating a course book. Jesse conceded that it is difficult to get the students to change the study habits that they are used to do or believe to be good. Moreover, she agreed that a "different approach is not going to work for all of them either". Nonetheless, she still liked to suggest to the students additional ways that they can support their own language learning process. She also acknowledged that this view of the teacher's role she held may have emerged from her background in working with migrants. She "helped them to be part of a community" because she witnessed "how quickly they learn language". She believed that "if [she] can help [the students] to engage in class and engage outside of class then as they move through [the language learning program] they can carry [these language learning strategies] with them whether other teachers develop them or not. It's just got to be in them" (interview 1). This not only works between teachers and students, but also between students and students, and students and the community, "whether it is the academic community or wider community" (Interview 1).

Jesse emphasised that she tried "to encourage [students] and show them the positivity that will happen" if they engage in social activities outside of the classroom. However, she also mentioned that even though she encourages the students to recognise the learning opportunities outside of the classroom, it is not easy to influence those who do not look for it:

> […] well I don't know that it's willing, but they don't see a greater scope you know, and a lot of that is being very young. They're not seeing the opportunity, um, you know, that it could lead them in another direction. So, that's something they might learn. It could take them ten years down their track when they go home and think, "Wow, why didn't I take that opportunity? I could have a different position now." or "I could be talking to this person" or you know, so it's a life skill. I just yeah, I can't influence that. (Jesse, Interview 1)

As highlighted above, Jesse's critical views include that teachers are "not the biggest influence" on student learning, especially in relation to recognising the learning elements in everyday life activities. It is something that students have to "discover [for themselves]". For her, "the big influence for them is their own desire and their own goals" (Interview 1). Teachers can guide the students by suggesting "this is what you want to achieve, and how you achieve it, so, then they kind of discover it for themselves" (Interview 1).

Maureen drew attention to the individual differences among international students; their backgrounds, age, social status, and so on when considering the teacher's role in supporting language learning. She also highlighted the importance of the interactions between students and teachers by sharing stories about their hobbies and interests:

> I talked about previous experiences, learning experiences, teaching experiences, cultural experiences, all different things like that. Hobbies and interests also, so teachers' hobbies and interests and how they can be integrated into the learning, um because I think learning is a lot about sharing. So, it's not just about looking at students' interests, but also sharing your interests with them. (Maureen, Interview 1)

For Maureen, the teacher's role is not only to provide advice to the students on possible activities to engage in with the wider community to facilitate language learning, but also to share stories of interest and about their experiences with the students.

Kathy also wrote *Teacher/facilitator* as one of the main components in her Mind Map 1. She commented that she brainstormed "what is a good teacher in a good environment" and came up with adjectives such as *reliable, organised, professional* and *friendly*. She then connected this with the student category, writing *a professional relationship* based on mutual respect. Kathy also spoke about the importance of the teacher's role to "motivate [the students] to keep learning outside of the classroom" by suggesting strategies for language learning, introducing useful websites and other resources for learning, and teaching informal English as used in Australia. In addition, based on her experience as a teacher coordinator, she talked about the teacher's role as

counsellor or listener, when the students are experiencing difficulties while studying abroad.

Monika highlighted her belief that a supporting role as a teacher was to provide advice to the students on their choices of part-time work or accommodation. She believed that this was important because how the students chose to spend their time outside of the classroom would influence their language learning and their quality of life in Sydney. Monika stated that some students face issues such as "problems with accommodation, being locked out, not getting their deposit back" or "with bosses, who are not paying enough [and that she] always tells them to keep a record of the hours of work and to make sure they get paid" (interview 1). As such, Monika emphasised the non-academic role that teachers sometimes need to play. It is more about being a consultant or a parent. Although teachers cannot spend too much personal time helping students on issues outside of the classroom, they do need at times to support the students emotionally and to provide encouragement when the students are having a hard time. The extract below provides an example of the type of support Monika provides:

> I: […] like you said, students talk to you about all sorts of problems they face, and teachers sometimes need to support them
>
> M: I can't fix anything for them, but maybe on one or two occasions I can call someone on their behalf, because Elementary students you know, can't do things so… you know talking on the phone, it's a very difficult skill, the last skill that you master. It's much easier if they talk face to face.
>
> I: Yeah.
>
> M: So, obviously I can't do too much, but I can at least support them emotionally, and tell them 'it's going to be fine'. Because, when they arrive they don't have a job, and you know they think, 'what am I doing here? Am I going to survive?' They are away from home and they miss home, and sometimes it takes a while to find a job. But I always tell them to be patient, and once you get the first job, you'll have another offer and another and you'll have to juggle and say no to some people. So, it's always the same, 'Oh teacher I need money, I work hard.' 'Oh teacher, I'm tired, too much work'. (Monika, Interview 1)

The extract from Thomas below suggests that he pays little attention to the role of enhancing students' out-of-class activities.

> I: So, what are your views on student language learning activities outside of the classroom?
>
> T: Um. Uh… well, uh… it doesn't really play a major part in my teaching practice really. Uh, you know, I sort of encourage students to use English as much as they can, but um, you know, I don't monitor it or uh really follow it up much. But, definitely people who do more English out-of-class are going to, I think almost certainly, gain better progress, yeah. (Thomas, Interview 1)

There are a few possible reasons to explain Thomas' beliefs. First, he indicated that the "students don't really wanna talk about what they did on the weekend", believing that maybe this is because "it is not my business or something". Another reason he gave was that he believed he would have to spend too much class time on this particular topic, as extract below shows:

> […] because it's sort of personal experience, everyone just listening to someone's personal experience which… You can do to some extent, but … and if you do it, you know if you start trying to do it with everyone in the class, you gonna spend an hour at least. If they're willing to talk about it, so I don't really see it as a viable activity really. (Thomas, Interview 1)

Roberto pointed out that there seems to be a gap between what students expect from him as a teacher or "what they think the language learning environment should be" (Interview 1) and what he tries to do. He suggested this gap was due to the differences in the students' cultural and educational backgrounds. As revealed in the following extract, Roberto found that it was difficult to compensate for the gap:

> R: I'm not even sure they realise that when we do a speaking activity or discussion that they're learning. Sometimes, I think that they think it's just… killing time. Or relaxing.
>
> I: Not learning.
>
> R: Yeah. As I told you, I think it also depends on their background and what they think the language learning environment should be. So, if they're more traditional then I think they would probably think that a speaking activity or discussion is just a waste of time. And they want more grammar-based lesson.
>
> I: Yeah.
>
> R: But I try to incorporate all skills.
>
> I: And try to let them be more aware of … the way they're learning?
>
> R: Oh yeah. I always explain why we're doing a certain thing and try to ask them "what kind of learner are you? Are you a visual learner or how do you learn?" I also tell them about my experience as a language learner, what helped and what didn't help. They do ask sometimes, some of them… uh, but some of them are a mystery to me. (Roberto, Interview 1)

Roberto found that his students would get confused or "get a little bit puzzled" with his teaching approach if they were not familiar with it, such as evaluating their learning progress without testing. In a similar vein, Lisa expressed the view that the students' different educational backgrounds meant that their expectations of the teacher's role are often quite different, as are their skills to engage in informal, independent learning outside of the classroom. Lisa considers that studying abroad is "a big transition for them" from an environment "where [they are] spoon fed everything" to a place where they have to take all responsibility for their learning. As such, she reported that a big challenge for her was to try to balance what the students expect from her as a teacher and her expectations of students as independent language learners:

> So, they may have more independence. But even then, still sometimes… they don't know how to take control. I mean, I've had students refuse to go out and select their own reading materials because it's a teacher's job to tell them what to read. Likewise, if they're failing to improve it's the teacher's fault. Because the teacher isn't teaching enough. This is rare, but I know we have come across the odd students who see their role as 100% sitting there receiving information, usually grammar. They want lots of lots of grammar. They think that it's the way, and lots of vocabulary. The same students will try to memorise long vocabulary lists. So, it's all about the learning strategies, which they have varies in degrees, but, um, we're aware of this. You know, we're aware and try to compensate where we can. But once again, that's a transition. It's not something we can do overnight. Sometimes they're here for a short time. (Lisa, Interview 1)

The participant teachers mainly shared the belief that their supporting role was to encourage the students to learn English outside the school by providing appropriate advice. However, the teachers also reported that they struggled to identify more efficient ways to address the gap between student and teacher perceptions of language learning beyond the classroom, and the students' expectations of the teacher's role.

4.4 Summary of Overall Findings on RQ. 1

Interviews were conducted with the teacher participants to discuss and verify their beliefs about a good language learning environment as depicted in Mind Map 1. The interviews

also provided an opportunity to access an in-depth understanding of individual teacher's beliefs by exploring their critical views on the gap between the ideal language learning environment and the actual language learning environment experienced by the students.

The similarities and differences in the teachers' initial beliefs about the necessary components for constructing a 'good' language learning environment were categorised under four themes and summarised in Table 4.5 (4.4.1). The similarities and differences in the teachers' beliefs about the 'actual' language learning environments experienced by the students are summarised in Table 4.6 (4.4.2) according to the same four categories.

4.4.1 Teachers' Beliefs about the Features of a GOOD Language Learning Environment

The following four categories (see Table 4.5) frame the common and divergent views of individual teachers regarding the features of a good language learning environment:

1) Students' language learning practices beyond the classroom,
2) Students' attitudes towards out-of-class language learning,
3) The relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning, and
4) Teachers' roles in student learning beyond the classroom.

Table 4.5. Similarities and differences in the teachers' beliefs about a GOOD language learning environment

	Shared	Variations
1. Students' language learning practices beyond the classroom	▪ Language learning takes place in everyday activities and in various settings and situations that the students engage in outside the classroom. ▪ Technology-supported learning resources and materials such as social media are used to enhance language learning.	▪ Engaging in social activities in wider community can provide more opportunities to practice English. ▪ International friends' network can create more opportunities to speak English. ▪ Excursions and social activities provided by school are beneficial.
2. Students' attitudes toward out-of-class language learning	▪ Positive attitudes (be motivated, proactive to do activities outside the classroom) are important. ▪ Students are self-aware of the use of English in their everyday lives and recognise those everyday activities as learning opportunities.	
3. Relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning	▪ In-class and out-of-class language learning should be integrated/connected. Students practice what they have learned in class in real-life situations beyond the classroom. ▪ In-class and out-of-class environments are different. (In-class = safe and positive environment with structured practices; out-of-class = challenging and possibly with negative incidents.)	▪ In class, students clarify and polish what they have learned outside of the classroom.
4. Teachers' roles in student learning	▪ Teachers can support student learning beyond the classroom by giving advice on language learning opportunities and strategies.	▪ Teachers play the roles of facilitator, counsellor, or listener to support students' overseas living and learning experiences. ▪ Teachers' skills, experiences, knowledge, and rapport with the student are important. ▪ Teachers should teach practical uses of English using authentic materials in class to connect in-class and out-of-class learning.

4.4.2 Teachers' Beliefs about Students' ACTUAL Language Learning Environments

The commonalities and divergences in the teachers' beliefs about the students' actual language learning environments are provided in Table 4.6.

The beliefs expressed by Dan, Lisa, and Molly during the interview in relation to the Learning Quality Focused group emphasised student attitudes and awareness of language learning practices and environments. They are both features in the construction of a good language learning environment and missing elements in the students' actual learning environments.

Luke and Monika also verified the conceptions depicted in their mind maps that an ideal language learning environment is one in which students learn English through everyday activities. However, their concerns about the gap between the ideal environment and the students' actual environment was revealed during the interviews as they pointed to the students' lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom. Roberto also verified during interview that the main focus of his Mind Map 1 was on *activities* outside of the classroom, which was interpreted by his spatial representation in the mind map. In response to his beliefs about the value of technology-mediated learning, he regarded his main challenge was to better integrate in-class and out-of-class learning to close the perception gap between his students' approaches to language learning and his teaching approach.

Thomas, Jesse, Kathy, and Maureen, the In-class Focused group, clarified that they also highly valued student out-of-class language learning experiences, which appeared to be rather vague in the mind maps. The interview allowed the researcher to better understand their intended meanings of the ideal 'in-class' environment where students form friendships, interact with classmates and teachers in English, and where the teachers have a role to motivate and empower students to support their language learning.

Table 4.6. Similarities and differences in teachers' beliefs about students' ACTUAL language learning environments

	Shared	Variation
1. Students' language learning practices beyond the classroom	▪ Students tend to stay with people who share the same first language (in-school, at accommodation, at work) ▪ Students lack exposure to English outside of the classroom.	▪ Students do not actively participate in activities outside of the classroom. ▪ Students are too busy working. ▪ Students are not so eager to explore Australia. ▪ Technology-supported activities may support language learning, but it depends on the students' language choices.
2. Students' attitudes toward out-of-class language learning	▪ There is a lack of self-awareness of using the first language in their everyday lives.	▪ There appeared to be a cultural gap in understanding how to practice language learning independently beyond the classroom. ▪ Some students prioritise passing exams. ▪ Some students are anxious about using English because of a lack of linguistic and social competence. ▪ Some teachers doubt if students understand what independent language learning means, especially in informal contexts outside of the classroom.
3. Relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning	▪ Students do not seem to recognise the link between in-class and out-of-class learning. ▪ The two domains do not seem to be connected because many students do not seem to actually use English outside of school.	▪ There seems to be a perception gap in relation to learning in-class and out-of-class between students and teachers.
4. Teachers' roles in student learning	▪ Teachers give advice on language learning opportunities and strategies. ▪ Teachers ask students what they did on the weekend, during the holidays, etc.	▪ There seems to be a gap between students' expectations of teachers' roles, and what the teachers intend to do. ▪ Teachers sometimes need to provide emotional support to student who encounter some difficulties in life.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a holistic picture of the teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom as well as the individual differences in beliefs among the teachers. They were presented as the findings for Research Question 1.

Overall, the teachers believed that students' out-of-class language learning practices, particularly face-to-face interactions, were valuable for developing all language skills. Therefore, the teachers believed that student engagement in rich language learning practices through daily activities, including technology-mediated activities, is an important aspect of the language learning environment. Teachers also identified the gaps in their understanding by comparing their beliefs about the 'ideal' language learning environment and their assumptions about the 'actual' environment experienced by the students. Teachers believed that students lack sufficient exposure to English and self-awareness of their language practices and were uncertain as to whether the surrounding environment supported language learning by the students.

The findings related to the commonalities and variations in the initial beliefs of the teacher participants also pointed to the individual differences in beliefs about the necessary components for student learning beyond the classroom and their perceptions of students' needs.

The next chapter explores the teachers' responses to students' feedback on their language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom to gain insights into teacher learning through inquiry.

Chapter Five

Teacher Responses and Attitudes to Student Data

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 identified ELICOS teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom with the four main themes:

1) Student language learning practices beyond the classroom,
2) Students' attitudes towards out-of-class language learning,
3) The relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning, and
4) Teachers' roles in student learning beyond the classroom.

This chapter investigates the teachers' responses to the collected student data on these themes to address Research Question 2:

RQ.2: How do teachers respond to students' feedback on their language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom?

Drawing out Interview 2 as the primary data set for examination, two aspects of the teacher responses to the inquiry are given focus:

1) An overall picture of the teachers' responses to the four themes, and
2) Individual differences in attitude towards the inquiry; openness to learn from the student data.

5.2 Research Activity Procedure

Data was collected from the students during a lesson with their respective teacher around one week after Interview 1 with the teacher participants. Approximately three weeks after the student data collection, Interview 2 (Responsive Interview) was conducted with the teachers. The use of student data during Interview 2 to facilitate a guided discussion with

the teachers is described as a Responsive Interview in this thesis as there were no specific sets of questions to ask. Rather, the discussion and subsequent probing questions by the researcher proceeded on the basis of the teachers' responses. The Responsive Interview aimed to analyse the student data collaboratively with the teachers in order to discuss what we understand from the data. Thus, the researcher's active participation (disclosure) in the discussion via her comments and interpretations of the data was taken into account as reflexivity in the research project.

5.2.1 Presenting Questionnaire Summary

The students' questionnaire responses were summarised and written-up as separate summary report for each institution (Appendixes K and L). The reports produced by the researcher were then shared with the appropriate individual teachers during Interview 2.

The summary included graphs and tables generated from the SPSS analysis. The original questionnaire was also at hand to review the questionnaire items. As the teachers were not familiar with statistical data presentations, the researcher simplified the data and explained what the tables presented and where to locate specific information. For example, the numbers 1 to 5 represent the Likert scale values used in the questionnaire. As such, the researcher suggested to the teachers that they look at either the Mode (most common value) or the Median (the middle value of the distribution) in statistical data in the tables to understand the overall tendency in the students' behaviours. The explanation of the questionnaire results illustrated in this chapter was shared with all the teacher participants with some interpretation by the researcher.

5.2.2 Presenting Student Mind Maps

Each teacher participant was given access to the mind maps drawn by their students only. At the end of the second session, the teachers were given time to closely look over the mind maps and to offer their comments about them.

The teachers also reflected on this particular activity in terms of student engagement, potential benefits to students, or for future use. The interpretation of the students' mind maps illustrated in this chapter were shared with the teachers.

5.3 Students' Language Learning Practices beyond the Classroom

Using check lists, the first section explores the overall picture of the teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices. In particular, the extent to which their beliefs were confirmed or challenged by the student data or remained unknown/not sure because the student data were not relevant (5.3.1). The teachers' responses to the student data are then illustrated, highlighting the two main outcomes related to student practices: more technology-mediated practices embedded in their daily activities or at the centre of the language learning environment (5.3.2), and the lack of or limitations around their social engagement outside of the classroom (5.3.3).

5.3.1 Comparison between Teachers' Initial Beliefs and Students' Reported Practices

The teachers' initial beliefs about ideal language learning practices by the students listed in Chapter 4 were used as a checklist to determine whether their beliefs were confirmed, challenged or remained unknown/not sure in the student data. The symbols below were used to indicate 'confirmed', 'challenged', and 'unknown/not sure' in Table 5.1 Check list 1 and Table 5.2 Check list 2:

√ = confirmed, 💔 = challenged, 🤔 = unknown/not sure

It should be noted that this chapter mainly deals with the teachers' *shared* initial beliefs to gain an overview of teacher responses to student data.

Table 5.1. **Check list 1**: Features of good language learning practices

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	Language learning takes place in everyday activities and in various settings and situations that the students engage in outside of the classroom.	√+ 💔
2	Technology-supported learning resources and materials such as social media platforms are used to enhance language learning.	√
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
3	Engaging in social activities in the wider community can provide more opportunities to practice English. (Jesse, Maureen, Lisa, Luke, Monika)	💔
4	International friendship networks can create more opportunities to speak English. (Thomas, Molly, Dan)	💔
5	Excursions and social activities provided by school are beneficial (Roberto, Lisa, Molly).	💔

Teacher beliefs about the features of ideal language learning practices were mostly confirmed in terms of the use of technology-mediated sources for language learning. Conversely, the aspect of 'various settings and situations' was not so much confirmed.

Table 5.2. **Check list 2**: Students' actual language learning practices beyond the classroom

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	Students tend to stay with people who share the same first language. (in-school, at accommodation, at work)	√
2	Students lack exposure to English outside of the classroom.	√
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
3	Students do not actively participate in activities outside of the classroom. (Monika, Luke, Lisa, Roberto, Molly)	√
4	Students are too busy working to engage in out-of-class language learning. (Monika, Luke, Dan, Roberto, Kathy)	√
5	Students are not so eager to explore Australia. (Molly, Lisa, Monika)	🤔
6	Technology-supported activities may support language learning, but it depends on the students' language choices. (Dan, Monika, Luke)	🤔

In terms of the students' actual practices, both the shared beliefs were confirmed; namely, students' tendency to associate with first language speakers, and a general lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom.

5.3.2 Technology-oriented Practices

This section illustrates teacher responses to students' technology-supported language learning practices in relation to Table 5.1, Item 2, also partly related to Item 1. A short summary of the student data is first presented (5.3.2.1), followed by the teachers' reactions towards their confirmed beliefs (5.3.2.2). The more surprising outcomes are then discussed (5.3.2.3).

5.3.2.1 Student data

Technology-mediated activities such as social networking (Facebook, WeChat, WhatsApp, etc.), watching TV series, news and YouTube are frequently practiced and embedded in students' daily lives. When investigating the frequency of student engagement in various technology-used activities, the questionnaire outcomes showed that students engage with activities in reading, listening, watching, and speaking in English using the above-mentioned tools almost every day, except playing games and taking online/offline English courses.

The teachers' initial beliefs about ideal language learning environments, which emphasised engagement in a variety of activities using English including digital activities, were confirmed. The teachers appeared to imply that face-to-face activities were preferable when practicing English via 'everyday activities'. However, they also acknowledged that digital materials were good resources to support language learning. The students' 'everyday' learning practices, in contrast, appeared to depend on digital activities more than spoken interactions with people.

5.3.2.2 Confirmed beliefs

Technology-mediated language learning was one of the shared beliefs among the teachers regarding the features of a good language learning environment. As such, their reactions to indications from the students that they frequently used digital tools and materials for language learning were typically, 'Yes, I knew that'. The teachers paid more attention to the particular tools and materials that the students included in the example section.

The teachers appeared pleased when the students included the materials that they had used in the classroom or introduced to the students to encourage them to engage in learning beyond the classroom. Roberto, who strongly believes in the importance of technology integration into language learning, and often demonstrates Apps in class (e.g., *Kahoot*) responded positively when he saw technology items in the list. Kathy was also delighted to see TED Talks in the list:

> I: And… some answered… lyrics, short stories… "I listen to English" of course music was the popular one… and TED talks…
>
> K: TED talk, wow! That's really hard for them if it's English, they like to be challenged. That's good. (Kathy, Interview 2)

Kathy assumed that it would not be so easy for students, but she appeared to be happy with the fact that the students sometimes accepted the challenge.

5.3.2.3 Surprises

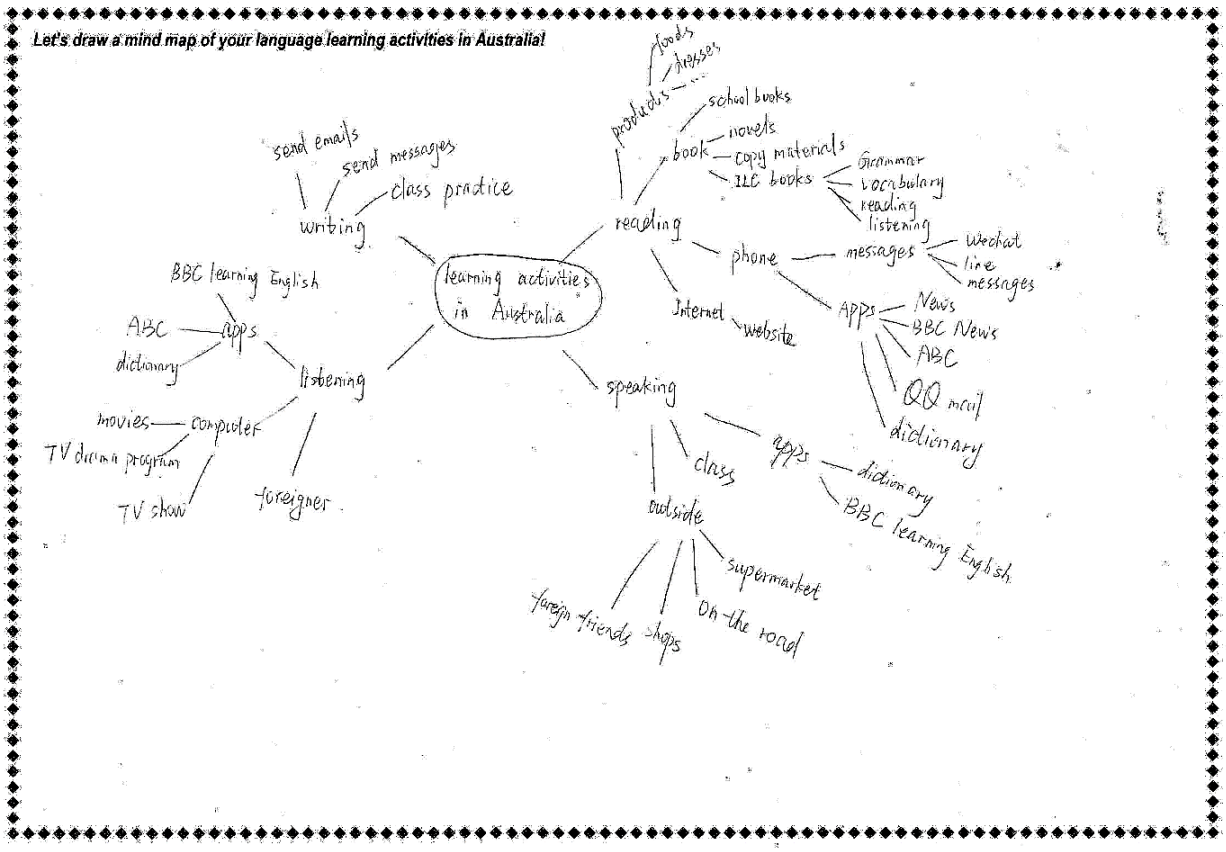
Although the teachers' beliefs about the students' frequent use of technology-mediated tools for language learning were confirmed, there were some surprises too. For instance, Luke, who is in the Out-of-class Focused group and who valued spoken activities particularly, seemed a little overwhelmed by the different types of digital materials. This was despite being familiar with some of them and knowing that the students are quite dependent on their phones.

> […] it's a lot. I'd like to sort of sit down and have a bit more time to go through it (materials list). Um… you know, I'm not a Facebook or Twitter person… I understand the value of phones and they're always on the phone… I'm aware that they do most of their reading on that, but I would probably have thought books, but it's Facebook and texting, things like that… from people, from their own country. (Luke, Interview 2)

Luke was aware of the value the students placed on their phones. However, seeing Facebook and other tech-related materials under *I read English* led him to acknowledge that the role of the students' technology-oriented life styles was more than he expected.

Thomas also appeared to identify the students' frequent use of technology by pointing to one of his students' mind maps (Figure 5.1); "This one's got Apps several times. I'm not into Apps. I don't use them much". This particular student's mind map had four skills as Node Level 1, and each node has *apps* or technology-mediated tools, and varieties of apps and related activities.

Figure 5.1. Thomas' student's mind map



Another surprise was that 'xxx News' was mentioned by many students as learning materials.

> I: […] there's a part that they could write examples. For reading in English, BBC News was the most popular one, and different types of news. Anyway, they read quite a lot of news-related things
>
> M: That is interesting! I'm surprised! I'm actually surprised. Where are the classes again? Just a random mix between General and Academic foundation.
>
> I: Yeah.
>
> M: Wow, okay. I'm actually pleasantly surprised… because sometimes news is not always such an easy thing to listen to because it's quite formal language. (Molly, Interview 2)

Molly was surprised to know that the students read or watched news bulletins as she thought it would be too difficult for them to comprehend the information, particularly for her elementary class students. Maureen was also surprised for the same reason. She was concerned about the students' ability to choose the materials best suited to their language level:

> I'm a little bit surprised, I mean I didn't expect many students read BBC News at the level that I was teaching. G3 level… reading would not be at that level that I wouldn't have thought, so maybe they're selecting materials that is not really suited to their level which I mean… which is something that I've seen before. Um, I mean even for teachers to select suitable material for the students' level to use it can be a challenge, um… so I mean I'm not surprised that they've selected materials that's not suited to their level, yeah. (Maureen, Interview 2)

For Maureen, selecting appropriate teaching materials for students is a challenge. Therefore, she appeared to be concerned about the strategies the students employ to select suitable materials for learning outside of the classroom.

5.3.3 Limited Social Interactions

This section illustrates the teachers' responses to student practices to use social interactions to support their use of English outside of the classroom. A short summary of the student data is presented first (5.3.3.1), followed by the individual teachers' responses

to having their beliefs confirmed (5.3.3.2), and then having their beliefs challenged (5.3.3.3).

5.3.3.1 Student data

The students appeared to use English in many ways on a daily basis. However, they rarely participate in social activities, events, workshops and extra courses both inside and outside of the school. The questionnaire results suggested the students are engaging in face-to-face interactions in their everyday lives (e.g., high frequency in speaking with friends and other people). However, the low frequency level of their participation in social activities as indicated in the questionnaire responses, as well as the indications in some of the students' mind maps that they have limited opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom, presented us with a contradictory view of the students' actual language learning practices.

The low frequency in which the students engaged in social activities in the wider community was understandable to the teachers given the data confirmed their shared beliefs about the students' actual language learning practices (Table 5.2, Item 1 and 2). It also confirmed the beliefs of some other teacher regarding the students' lack of time due to their busy daily work schedule (Table 5.2, Item 3 and 4).

5.3.3.2 Confirmed beliefs

Regarding the questionnaire results indicating a low number of students participating in social activities, Roberto commented that it was "fair enough" because evening class students especially "work and come to school and go home. That's the triangle, work-home-and school" (Interview 2). From his observation, morning class students and evening class students have a different routine. It was a shame for him that the data did not provide

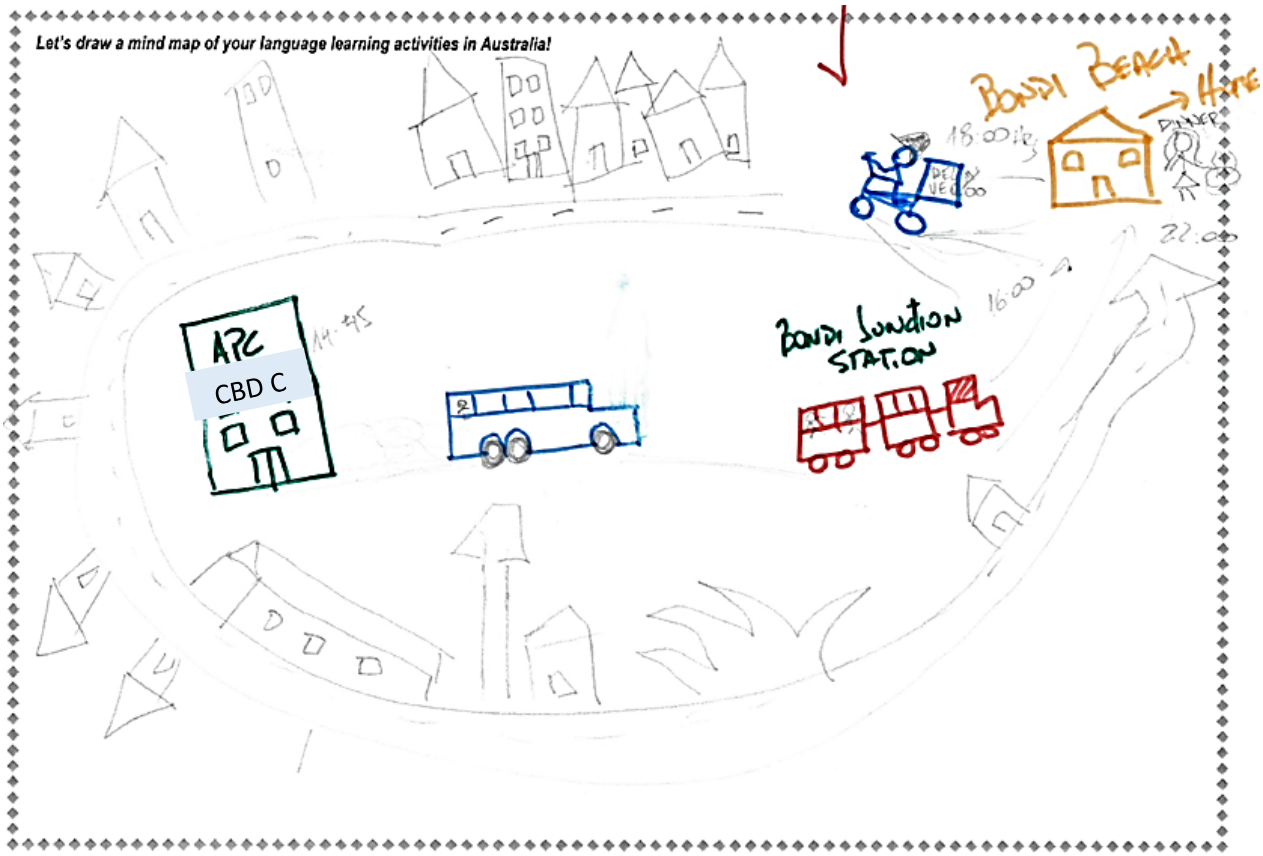
detailed information regarding whether the reasons for their lack of participation in social activities was because of time limitation due to their jobs.

The researcher pointed out that the students appeared to mostly engage in passive language learning activities such as *listening to someone speak English* rather than activities in which they have to demonstrate a certain level of commitment (e.g., social activities). This made Roberto recall his recent experience of trying to encourage the students to go on an excursion. As expressed in the extract below, he found it challenging to motivate the students to do something outside of their 'comfort zone':

> It's funny that you mentioned that because… a month ago we went to the Fox Studio with students, and… it took me a week to, not convince them but to organise the trip. And they were like "uh if you wanna do it, we'll do it" but they're not really interested. But, on the day they all came, and all enjoyed it, but it took a while for them to get motivated because coming to school is easy for them. They know they can come, just sit and relax, if they're tired they just take their time. But getting out of their comfort zone was a bit of a challenge. Interesting. (Roberto, Interview 2)

Similar to Roberto's, Monika was also concerned about the students' limited free time and money to engage in social activities. As such, she found that the mind map of one of her students (Figure 5.2) provided a "good picture" (description) of his daily routine and how his work kept him busy. She could see that his food delivery job meant that he only moves between his home, the school and his -workplace.

Figure 5.2. Monika's student's mind map



The mind map showed that Monika's student attends school during the day, goes home after class at 14:45 by bus, and arrives at Bondi Junction Station at 16:00. By 18:00 he leaves home for work, then arrives back at home around 22:00, and has dinner with his girlfriend (?). It is not clear how much he uses English in his daily life, but it seems that he has limited opportunities to interact with people given his rather fixed routine and schedule.

Based on his observations during many years of teaching, Thomas talked about the positive influence of socialising with classmates while at school and how this could make a difference to student participation in social activities. He said that although "some of them are very shy and withdrawn who probably stay in their room for a lot of the time", it sometimes depends on "the class bond".

5.3.3.3 Challenged beliefs

Although the teachers' beliefs about the students' actual language learning practices were largely confirmed, the teachers' ideal image of student language learning practices was partly challenged. Not all students have opportunities to learn English outside of the classroom, especially via spoken interactions, and the low level of engagement in social activities by some students challenged the teachers' shared beliefs (Table 5.1, Item 1)

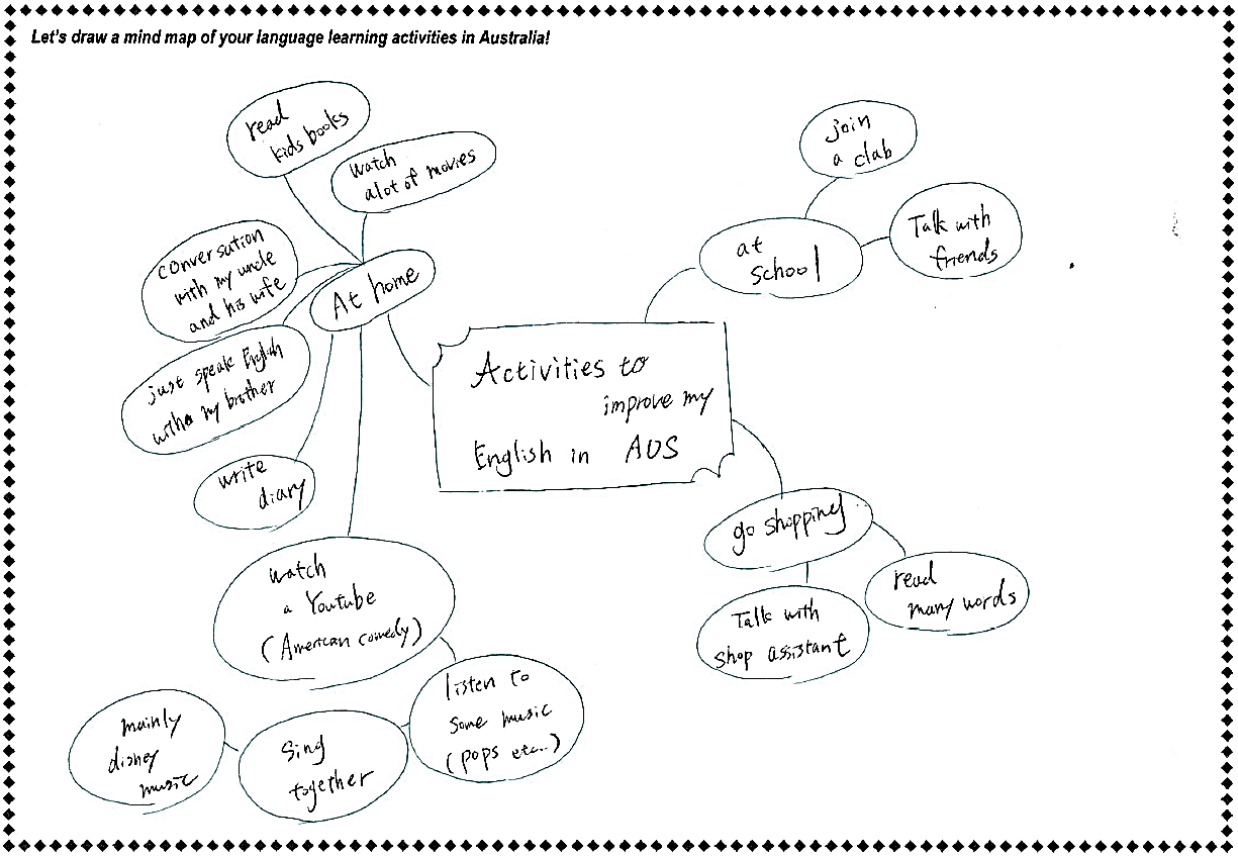
It was also surprising to the CBD College teachers in particular that student attendance levels at social activities provided by school was low. This challenged one of the teacher's notions of an ideal language learning practice.

Kathy responded that many of the activities her students described in the mind map were technology-mediated, with little human interaction:

> Uh, this is a lot of ideas of home. Mm… and listening to music, watching TV is just like one way, even podcast, so… We need robots, we should get robots, language robots (laughter). (Kathy, Interview 2)

Kathy above commented on the mind map (Figure 5.3) of one of her students which contained many activities she does at home using technology. As suggested by Kathy (rather ironically), this student had only three spaces; *at school, going shopping* and *at home*. Moreover, she remarked that the student appeared to spend most of her time at home because her activities were described as Node Levels 2 and 3. Kathy's use of the expression "language robots" when referring to the students' digital activities as one of the features suggests they have limited social face-to-face interactions as a consequence.

Figure 5.3. Kathy's student's mind map



5.4 Students' Attitudes towards Out-of-class Language Learning

In the following sections, a summary of the teachers' initial beliefs about student attitudes toward out-of-class language learning compared to the belief of the students reflected in their data is first presented (5.4.1). Then, individual teacher responses are illustrated according to the two discussions on student attitudes; namely, students' awareness of language learning practices and their surrounding environments (5.4.2), and students' beliefs about out-of-class activities for language learning (5.4.3).

5.4.1 Comparison between Teachers' Initial Beliefs and Students' Actual Attitudes

The checklists below in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 are used to determine whether the teachers' initial beliefs were confirmed, challenged, or remained unknown/not sure according to the student data.

Table 5.3. **Check list 3**: Ideal students' attitudes toward out-of-class language learning

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	Positive attitudes (be motivated, proactive towards doing activities outside the classroom) are important.	🤔
2	Students are self-aware of the use of English in their everyday lives and recognise those everyday activities as learning opportunities.	√

Table 5.4. **Check list 4**: Actual students' attitudes toward out-of-class language learning

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	There is a lack of self-awareness among students about using the first language in their everyday lives.	💔
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
2	There appeared to be a cultural gap in understanding how to practice language learning independently beyond the classroom. (Roberto, Jesse, Dan)	🤔
3	Some students prioritise passing exams. (Jesse, Lisa)	√
4	Some students are anxious about using English because of a lack of linguistic and social competence. (Molly, Dan, Jesse, Lisa)	√
5	Some teachers doubt if students understand what independent language learning means, especially in informal contexts outside of the classroom. (Jesse, Roberto, Lisa)	√

Overall, the data challenged to teachers' shared beliefs about students' attitudes because they believed the students lacked self-awareness (Table 5.4, Item 1). However, this meant that one of the beliefs shared by the teachers about 'ideal' students' attitudes was confirmed (Table 5.3, Item 2). It was unclear if the students in general have positive attitudes; that is, whether they were motivated to, and proactive about, engaging in language learning activities outside of the classroom (Table 5.3, Item 1).

5.4.2 Students' Self-awareness

This section discusses the issue of students' self-awareness of language learning opportunities in their daily lives and their uses of English. It relates to the teachers' shared beliefs about both the ideal (Table 5.3, Item 1) and the actual language learning environment (Table 5.4, Item 1). It begins with a short description of the student data

relevant to their self-awareness of their language learning practices and environments (5.4.2.1). This is followed by the individual teachers' responses to their beliefs that were confirmed (5.4.2.2) and their beliefs that were challenged (5.4.2.3).

5.4.2.1 Student data

The results of the questionnaire suggest that students are self-aware that:

- they are in an environment with rich opportunities to practice English,
- learning is taking place both in-class and out-of-class contexts, *but*
- they are surrounded by people who speak the same first language.

The results revealed that the students are highly self-aware that the current learning environment does not support productive English language learning, mainly due to the predominance of first language speakers. The students also believed that they should have more opportunities to communicate and socialise with people outside of the school to practice speaking English.

In addition, the students' general comments on negative perceptions of living and studying in Australia provided us with insights into the types of student struggles that may be hindering their language development. For instance, "expensive living costs", "difficult to understand/learn English", "missing family", and even "food" or "weather" were identified as potential hindrances.

Although there was not much supporting data representing student motivation, some of the text in the students' mind maps stated that they should 'create' an English environment, and strategies to do so may be interpreted as a proactive attitude and awareness of the need to create their language learning environment.

5.4.2.2 Confirmed beliefs

One of the teachers' beliefs about the ideal students' attitude towards language learning was confirmed. It was a big positive surprise to know that students are self-aware of their current language learning practices in their surrounding environments, that they are evaluating the amount of their daily use of English, and that they considered it important to practice English more by speaking with international friends or native speakers outside of the classroom.

Luke strongly believed that face-to-face interactions with (ideally) native speakers and using English all the time are essential features of a good language learning environment. This belief was confirmed by the student data. The students' written answers included statements that they wished they could practice English more. Luke confirmed that "at the end of the day speaking is the most important, isn't it?" (Luke, Interview 2).

For Monika, the student data was something that she "experienced and observed". Nonetheless, she indicated that it was "interesting to see how they see themselves and how they feel that they can improve". She went on to suggest that "it's good to hear that they know that they have to do more" (Interview 2) and that they wished to live with someone who does not speak the same first language and so on.

5.4.2.3 Challenged beliefs

Students' reflective views and evaluations of their language learning practices can indicate their awareness of the current situations and allow them to critically consider what they should do to develop their language skills.

Lisa identified students' awareness of their language learning opportunities around them from the students' mind maps. She stated, "the number of ideas they come up with is heartening" and "they are aware that they need to work outside of the class" because it is

something she always "pushes" them to do by telling them that "they have to be learning out-of-class". She further mentioned:

> So, they've considered what is going to help them; they've thought about 4 skills. … Some of them, not many, didn't see the value of it. (Lisa, Interview 2)

Lisa highlighted her surprise to find that the student awareness represented in the mind maps challenged her beliefs about the students' lack of awareness of language learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Lisa and the researcher found that students' awareness in this regard was not only related to their current environments, but also how they visualised learning English over time, as well as their future goals:

> They're not just thinking about what they're doing in the present. They're… they're considering what they're going to do; "Go to one place of Australia" so he's thinking to travel all over Australia. That's clearly a future. You know, a future plan. (Lisa, Interview 2)

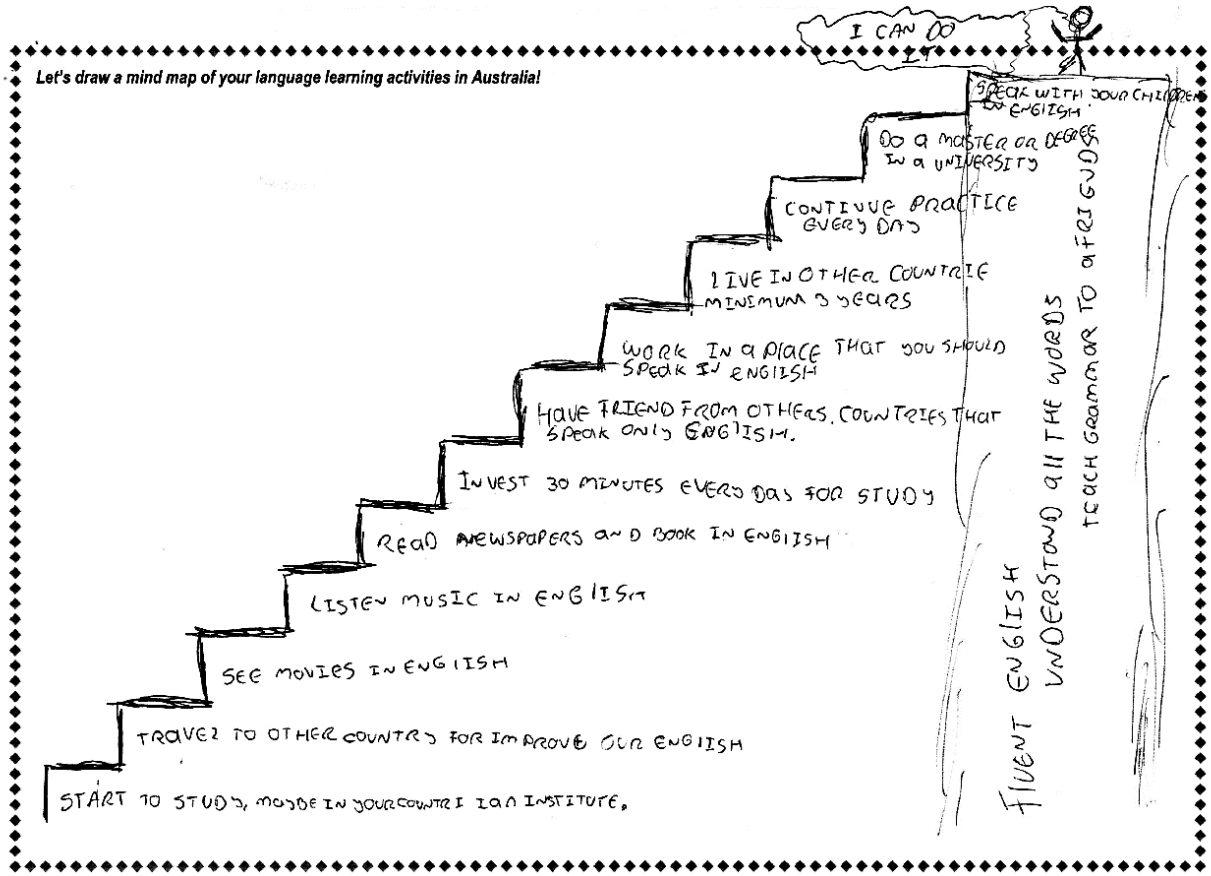
When comparing the content in the student mind maps with her own beliefs, Lisa considered that the students who included only a little information in their mind map may be less self-aware of their surrounding environments. In relation to students' awareness of the language learning, Lisa talked about the degree to which teachers and students are responsible for out-of-class language learning by comparing her own first mind map to the students' mind maps:

> I'm thinking about… what I was doing here (her Mind Map 1), then taking a lot of responsibility for it. I was taking a lot of responsibility for creating that language learning environment, but this is showing me that students are actually taking a lot of responsibility too, which is what we want; it's them taking some responsibility. I mean, if they can consider they are learning English when they're cooking in the kitchen, communicating in the dormitory with dorm friends for example, that's the first thing I looked at. That means that they're taking some responsibility. (Lisa, Interview 2)

Lisa interpreted the content of the students' mind maps to mean that some students recognise the responsibility they have for their learning beyond the classroom.

Roberto particularly liked the way one of his students represented his attitudes towards language learning beyond the classroom in his mind map (Figure 5.4). His student depicted the learning processes through representations of his past, current, and future self. This student reflected on the language learning process from the time he was in his home country (the lowest step of the stairs). He used steps to describe his actions towards achieving future goals; namely, to *do a master's degree in a university* and *speak with your children in English*, or use *fluent English, understand all the words, teach grammar to friends*. He drew a picture of himself at the top of the stairs saying, *I can do it*.

Figure 5.4. Roberto's student's mind map



R: […] I'm interested, yeah, in this one.

I: Yeah, he described as steps. He wrote it very quickly though.

R: He has very clear goals.

> I: Yes. Interesting to see in this way. Like, some students have very clear goals and they know what they're doing here, but some students are like just… house, school, work, how much money in the bank
>
> R: Yeah, the rat race. … Awesome.
>
> I: Again, these are their current situations; what they do…
>
> R: Yes.
>
> I: … plus something about future goals or something.
>
> R: Expectations. (Roberto, Interview 2)

Roberto interpreted that this student had a clear language learning goal and expectation of his future self. Although the students were not limited to using written text only to reflect what they actually do, it was not suggested in the instructions to students that they use a time scale such as the one designed by Roberto's student. I subsequently shared with Roberto that this particular student appeared to have high awareness of his surrounding environment, practices and processes of learning.

5.4.3 Students' Beliefs about Out-of-class Activities for Learning

This section focuses on teacher responses to students' beliefs and perceptions of out-of-class language learning. A brief summary of the student data is first presented (5.4.3.1), followed by the teachers' responses to having their beliefs confirmed (5.4.3.2), and finally, the highlighted issues (5.4.3.3).

5.4.3.1 Student data

In the students' evaluations of the usefulness of various activities for language learning, most of the listed digital activities were evaluated by the students at both institutions as reasonably 'useful'. This was excepting *playing online/offline games* and *taking online/offline English courses*. Given that these two items were also rated low in frequency by the students at both institutions, it is assumed that they did not engage in them very often because they did not perceive them as useful.

Regarding non-digital activities, both the ELC and the CBD College students appeared to perceive almost all of the listed activities as relatively useful. The students were not so sure however about the usefulness of joining social activities/events and joining courses/workshops provided at the school. Again, these two items were rated low in frequency.

I discussed with individual teachers the idea that this correlation may suggest three possible outcomes. First, the students did not recognise the usefulness of these activities because they did not participate in them very often. Second, they did not perceive these activities to be of value and therefore did not care to engage in them. Third, it may be because the students have had some negative experiences and would prefer to engage in speaking activities without expanding their language learning environment. The results regarding students' perceptions of the use of online sources or the workshops provided or recommended by the institutions were of a similar vein. They suggest that the students may not regard them as useful due to insufficient support or poor promotion around the use of such materials.

A large discrepancy between students' desired practices and their actual practices was also apparent. The students indicated that they wanted to improve their speaking/communicating skills and to have more opportunities to join social activities outside of school so that they could meet local or English-speaking people to practice English. However, the results indicate that they do not really participate in social activities. Students from both institutions indicated in their questionnaire responses a variety of reasons for not being able to engage in these desired activities:

- Time limitation,
- Surrounded by people speaking the first language,
- Lack of social opportunities (e.g., "I don't know where I can find a club to join", "I don't have friends to speak English to"), and

- Lack of confidence or language skills (e.g., "shy").

Many CBD College students explicitly expressed that they are surrounded by first language speakers and therefore cannot practice speaking English much as they would have expected. Comments such as "doing homework is enough" or "passing the course is the most important thing", which particularly from ELC students, gave us a sense that some students have an exam-oriented perception of learning English.

5.4.3.2 Confirmed beliefs

Students' perceptions of the usefulness of social activities confirmed the teachers' beliefs that this was a feature of an ideal language learning environment.

Thomas believed in the importance of a friendship network for language learning, and that "the teacher is a major element" in the creation of a student social network in class. Thomas did also believe however that "it's not just the teacher". The extract below highlighted his strong belief about the importance of friendship networks, ideally including students representing a mix of nationalities:

> I think that if the class bonds well, [...] sometimes get the shy ones actually doing, getting more interactions outside the class with friends they made in the class. If the class, you know, they kind of seem to enjoy each other's company more than average, tends to lead to something more outside the class. Like this class, for example, I've got the impression that they do meet each other. And other classes I've had the same impression. But other classes, we don't get the same feeling that they like each other so much. (Thomas, Interview 2)

Jesse also pointed out the discrepancy that the students' language learning environments did not appear to support the creation of rich social interactions in English, even though the students think that such an environment is useful for language learning. While students have more control over activities with digital devices, they use them more if they think that they are useful:

> J: Okay, so it (social activities) was the most useful, but they don't do it very often.
>
> I: Yes. So, it's not really straight forward, what they often do and what they think useful, compared to electronic devices that was more straightforward.

> J: Yeah, I can understand that one too. They just don't have the opportunity to do it even though they know that it would be the most useful thing for them because we just don't have big mix of nationalities. (Jesse, Interview 2)

Jesse showed her understanding of the students' immediate language learning environment with her reference to a lack of mixed nationalities and how it limited their opportunities for social interactions in English.

Other teachers' initial beliefs were also confirmed such as the students' exam-oriented perspective of language learning – raised by some of the ELC teachers (Table 5.4, Item 3), students' lack of linguistic confidence and social competence resulting in them feeling anxious about using English outside of the classroom (Table 5.4, Item 4), and students' understanding of independent learning (Table 5.4, Item 5). The teachers who stated these beliefs reacted in both a concerned and sympathetic way to the student data.

5.4.3.3 Highlighted issues

The low number of students participating in social activities provided at the school was a rather striking outcome for many teachers, but also understandable. Monika reasoned for instance that college social activities were usually held on weekends and, given that the majority of CBD College students were working (over 70% of the questionnaire respondents), it was not really a suitable time for them to attend. In addition, some of the activities included expenses such as transport fees, leading only those students who could cover the costs to attend. Therefore, only particular groups of students who have money and time can gain the language learning benefits from such social activities. Dan and Kathy (also from CBD College) commented similarly that all social activities designed for students should be reconsidered as they did not appear to be working well.

The ELC teachers were all surprised that their students were not using ELC Online (a platform for online learning resources and for communicating with teachers). Use of the

platform was integrated into the curriculum and the outcome was a concern because all students are actually expected to use it. Such outcomes confirmed and strengthened Jesse's beliefs that students' perceptions of language learning appeared to differ from her own perceptions, and that they are not really making use of their environments both inside and outside of school. Jesse found "the fact that they don't actually use, engage in workshops and find them worthwhile", was "deflating [her]" (Interview 2). Even though she was sort of aware of it, it was surprising for her to see that only 16 out of 60 students indicated that they use it or any other online English learning resource (such as IELTS online). However, she admitted that the survey results were reflective of current students. She evaluated that the program was suitable for students enrolled in academic courses, especially for lower level students, but also that they do not seem to "understand its significance". She also assumed that many students were not accustomed to this style of learning.

5.5 The Relationship between In-class and Out-of-class Language Learning

This section explores the teachers' responses to the data related to students' perceptions of in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences.

Following the same structure as the previous sections, the next section presents checklists to overview whether or not the teachers' initial beliefs were confirmed (5.5.1). Then, the student data related to their beliefs about in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences are presented (5.5.2), followed by the teachers' reactions to having their beliefs confirmed, with a focus on initial shared beliefs (5.5.3). The final section discusses the teachers' queries or concerns to emerge from the student data (5.5.4).

5.5.1 Comparison between Teachers' Initial Beliefs and Students' Perceptions

It should be noted that students' perceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning was a theme discussed during interviews. This was to encourage

teachers to adopt an ecological view for the inquiry, rather than just the information sought from students. Therefore, it was difficult to undertake a deep exploration of the students' beliefs and perceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning from student data, although their perceptions of each context were revealed.

Table 5.5. **Check list 5**: Teachers' initial beliefs about the *ideal* relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	In-class and out-of-class language learning should be integrated/connected. Students practice what they have learned in class in real-life situations beyond the classroom.	🤔
2	In-class and out-of-class environments are different. (In-class = safe and positive environment with structured practices; out-of-class = challenging and possibility of negative incidents.)	√
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
3	In-class, students clarify and polish what they have learned outside the classroom. (Roberto)	🤔

Table 5.6. **Check list 6**: Teachers' initial beliefs about the *actual* relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning for students

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	Students do not seem to recognise the link between in-class and out-of-class learning.	🤔
2	The two domains do not seem to be connected because many students do not seem to actually use English outside of school.	🤔
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
3	There seems to be a perception gap in relation to learning in-class and out-of-class between students and teachers. (Roberto, Jesse, Dan, Lisa)	🤔

As seen above, apart from the statements related to the teachers' shared beliefs about the ideal relationship (Table 5.5, Item 2), most of their beliefs were not clearly confirmed or challenged.

5.5.2 Student data

In-class and out-of-class language learning activities were listed according to the skills required to compare how students perceive the challenges of using similar skills in the two different contexts. For example, *Having everyday conversations with classmates and teachers* (in-class) versus *Having everyday conversations with local people* (out of class).

For the ELC students, in-class learning activities were all considered as *a little challenging, but I'm doing OK*; whereas, out-of-class learning was slightly more challenging than in-class learning, particularly in relation to three items: *Having everyday conversations with local people*, *Listening and understanding TV/online programs in English (e.g., YouTube),* and *Writing (e.g., filling out documents).* The most challenging activity appeared to be *Having everyday conversations with local people* as it scored the highest.

For the CBD College students, two items, *Building up vocabulary* and *Writing (e.g., essays)* were identified as in-class activities which were a little challenging, and the same three items identified by the ELC students were identified as out-of-class activities which were a little challenging. The most challenging activity appeared to be *Writing (e.g., filling out documents)* for CBD College students.

All teachers had a somewhat surprised reaction (e.g., "Interesting") towards the students' reflective views on how challenging both in-class and out-of-class learning experiences were. This was because they interpreted some of the students' views related to in-class learning as feedback on the difficulties of in-class learning.

5.5.3 Confirmed Beliefs

The teachers responded that the above results were reasonable because they initially stated that out-of-class experiences using English would be more challenging for students as they were naturalistic; that is, without teacher assistance or instruction. It confirmed the teachers' shared beliefs that in-class and out-of-class environments are different, and that

out-of-class experiences would be more challenging for students (Table 5.5, Item 2). However, the fact that the difference between in-class and out-of-class language learning activities for both institutions were not so significant, and that all the activities were regarded as *a little challenging* raised an important question for consideration – Do the students consider all in-class and out-of-class learning experiences not so challenging?

Kathy thought that it was valuable feedback to know the students' perceptions of the tasks. As evidenced in her extract below, she believed that teachers should ensure that the students feel the level of class activities or homework is 'quite challenging'.

> I: So, the most common answer was; "A little challenging, but I'm doing okay"
>
> K: Uh, that's good to know because "this is difficult teacher" and you'll go like "oh, maybe I shouldn't have given this, it's too hard". I like to give them intermediate stuff often, like maybe once a week, we do one or two activities that are intermediate and "oh god so hard" (laughter) but it's not hard enough. That's good.
>
> I: I don't know which number should be appropriate, you know?
>
> K: Yeah, it's kind of we don't want them to feel overwhelmed, do we?
>
> I: Yeah, but if it's too easy you know it's…
>
> K: Yeah.
>
> I: Good balance is very difficult, yeah?
>
> K: Yeah, but "quite challenging" would be good I think, maybe sometimes.
>
> I: Yeah.
>
> K: Interesting. (Kathy, interview 2)

Thomas also thought that 'quite challenging' should be a good level of difficulty for learning materials.

> T: So, ideally it should be around three, middle, but they're not? They're not in the middle?
>
> I: Many of them were 1; "I can do it easily". So things they do in class are not so challenging.
>
> T: Interesting. (Thomas, Interview 2)

For Jesse, knowing that "the things that we do in class are not that challenging, not that difficult actually worries [her] a little bit about the students" (Interview 2). She knows that her students are not doing well in her class, but they think the tasks in class are not

very challenging. She guessed that "they're not really comprehending their own problems very well", or "they're not really taking it beyond that, how is that useful?" (Interview 2). Understanding the students' perceptions was useful for her as she now understands that she needs to explain to the students "why this is useful", and what she "can do for them to understand a little bit more" (Interview 2).

For Dan, students' perceptions that they do not build up new vocabulary outside of the classroom prompted him to create a task for his students to increase their awareness of language use around them. He stated:

> Homework! That's the homework! Find out new vocabulary from English speaking… or from their friends in English speaking contexts. It doesn't have to be a native speaker; it can be like their social group. But they have to find out new vocabulary, that's their homework. That has to happen in… because that's just about forming habits. Being aware of everything has a word! (Dan, Interview 2)

Dan's focus on the importance of students' self-awareness of their language learning opportunities and of using English outside of the classroom led him to respond to the student data by creating a suitable learning activity.

5.5.4 Remaining Queries or Concerns

The integration of in-class and out-of-class language learning contexts is the ideal relationship according to the initial shared beliefs among teachers. The teachers unquestionably gained insights into the students' views of in-class and out-of-class language learning. However, whether the students recognised the connection between in-class and out-of-class learning, and how they traverse their learning experiences in and outside of the classroom, were not revealed. In addition, whether there is a perceptual gap between the teachers and students due to the latter's beliefs shaped by their learning experiences from their home country, as identified in various teachers' initial beliefs, also remained unpacked.

Given this is an issue of ongoing focus in the final interview, the development of individual teachers' beliefs about the relationships between the two contexts is discussed in the next chapter.

5.6 Teachers' Roles in Student Learning beyond the Classroom

This section reports the findings related to the teachers' roles in student learning as identified in the student data. The student questionnaire did not seek explicitly for their perceptions or beliefs about the teacher's roles. Rather, it focused on their perceptions of language learning for teacher inquiry. As such, this section aims to report on the teachers' reactions to some of the outcomes from the student data which may be interpreted as representations of teachers' roles.

Using the checklists of teachers' initial beliefs about their roles, the information gained as evidence of the teachers' roles in influencing students' beliefs about language learning is first examined (5.6.1). The teachers' reactions to having their beliefs confirmed are then discussed (5.6.2). This is followed by an exploration of the implications and new ideas on classroom teaching to emerge from the student data overall (5.6.3), before concluding with a report on the teachers' limitations (5.6.4).

5.6.1 Comparison between Teachers' Initial Beliefs and Evidence of Teacher Roles

The shared initial beliefs among teachers about their roles both as a feature of the ideal language learning environment and the students' actual learning environment were confirmed by some of the illustrations in the students' mind maps.

Table 5.7. **Check list 7**: Teachers' initial beliefs about the *ideal* teachers' roles

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	Teachers can support student learning beyond the classroom by giving advice on language learning opportunities and strategies.	√
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
2	Teachers play the roles of facilitator, counsellor, or listener to support the students' oversea living and learning experiences. (Kathy, Monika, Lisa, Jesse, Molly)	🤔
3	Teachers' skills, experience, knowledge, and rapport with the students are important. (Jesse, Lisa, Roberto)	🤔
4	Teachers should teach practical uses of English using authentic materials in class to connect in-class and out-of-class learning. (Roberto, Kathy)	🤔

Table 5.8. **Check list 8**: Teachers' beliefs about the *actual* teachers' roles

Teachers' shared beliefs		
1	Teachers give advice on language learning opportunities and strategies.	√
2	Teachers ask students what they did on the weekend, during the holidays, etc.	🤔
Other variations of teacher beliefs		
3	There seems to be a gap between student expectations of the teachers' roles and what the teachers intend to do. (Roberto)	🤔
4	Teachers sometimes need to provide emotional support to students who encounter difficulties in life. (Kathy, Monika, Molly, Lisa)	🤔

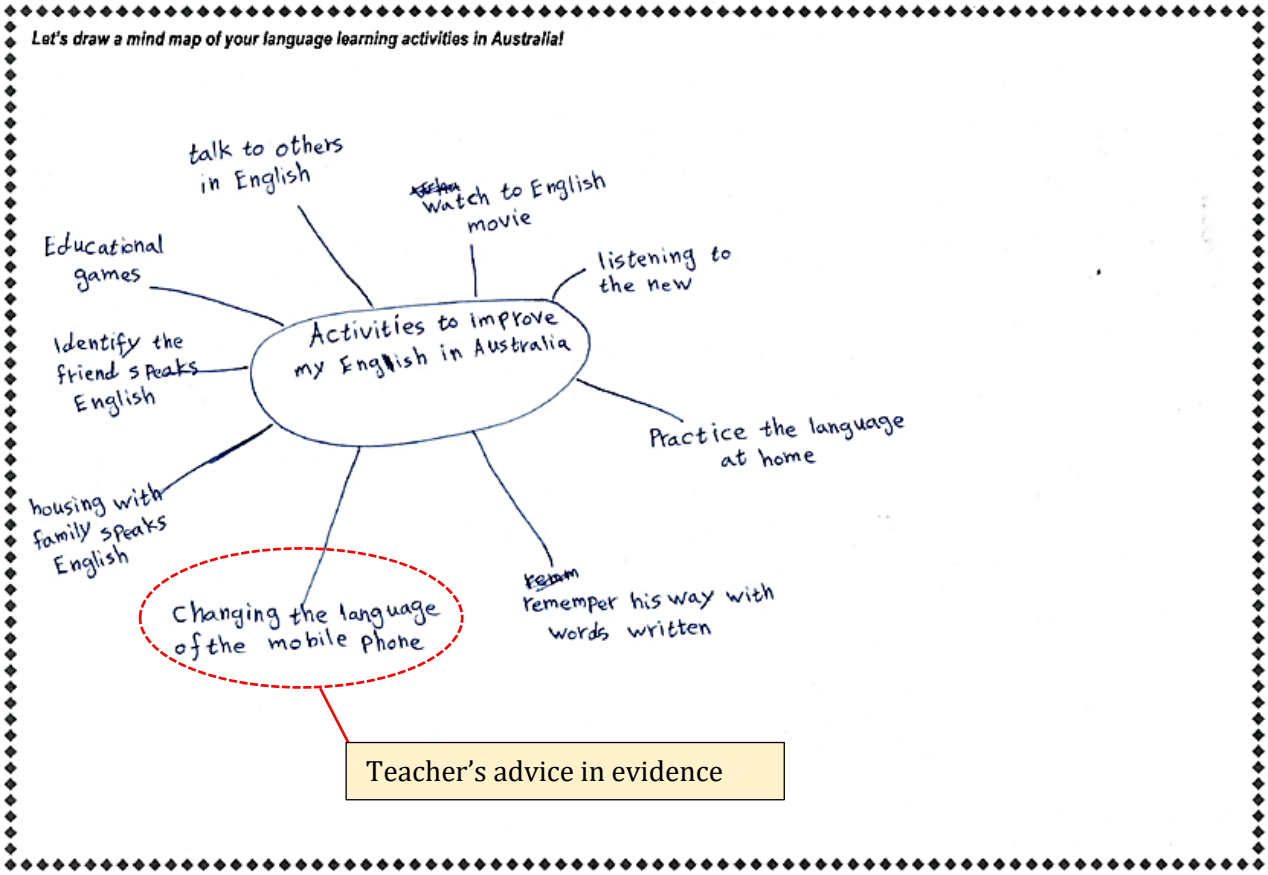
5.6.2 Confirmed Beliefs

Many teachers were delighted to see evidence of their advice to students in the students' mind maps. Words such as *in-school/classroom* or *teachers* written in students' mind maps caught the teachers' attention particularly as they regarded them as student feedback related to their teaching or could be interpreted as an indication of the students' beliefs about the teachers' roles.

As seen in Tables 5.7 and 5.8, the teachers' initial belief about their role; namely, to provide advice on language learning practices and strategies, appeared to be confirmed in some of the student mind maps.

The mind map (Figure 5.5) produced by one of Maureen's students is an example of how the advice or suggestions from teachers were described as part of their language learning activities.

Figure 5.5. Maureen's student's mind map



The student wrote *changing the language of the mobile phone* as one of her strategies to improve her English. The same text was seen in other mind maps from some students in the same class. This was a suggestion from Maureen, the class teacher, and the mind maps provide evidence that the students have actually taken the suggestion on board. When Maureen saw such evidence of the teacher's influence in the students' mind maps, she was slightly surprised, but also impressed because she was not sure whether the students actually listened to her suggestions.

I: So, I thought that it was a teacher's influence?

M: Wow, I'm impressed that they listen to me. I didn't think a lot did when they're in class (laughter).

I: It really reflects what the teacher said, I mean I can see… I don't see whose class it is, but if I read what they write, sometimes I actually know who the teacher is.

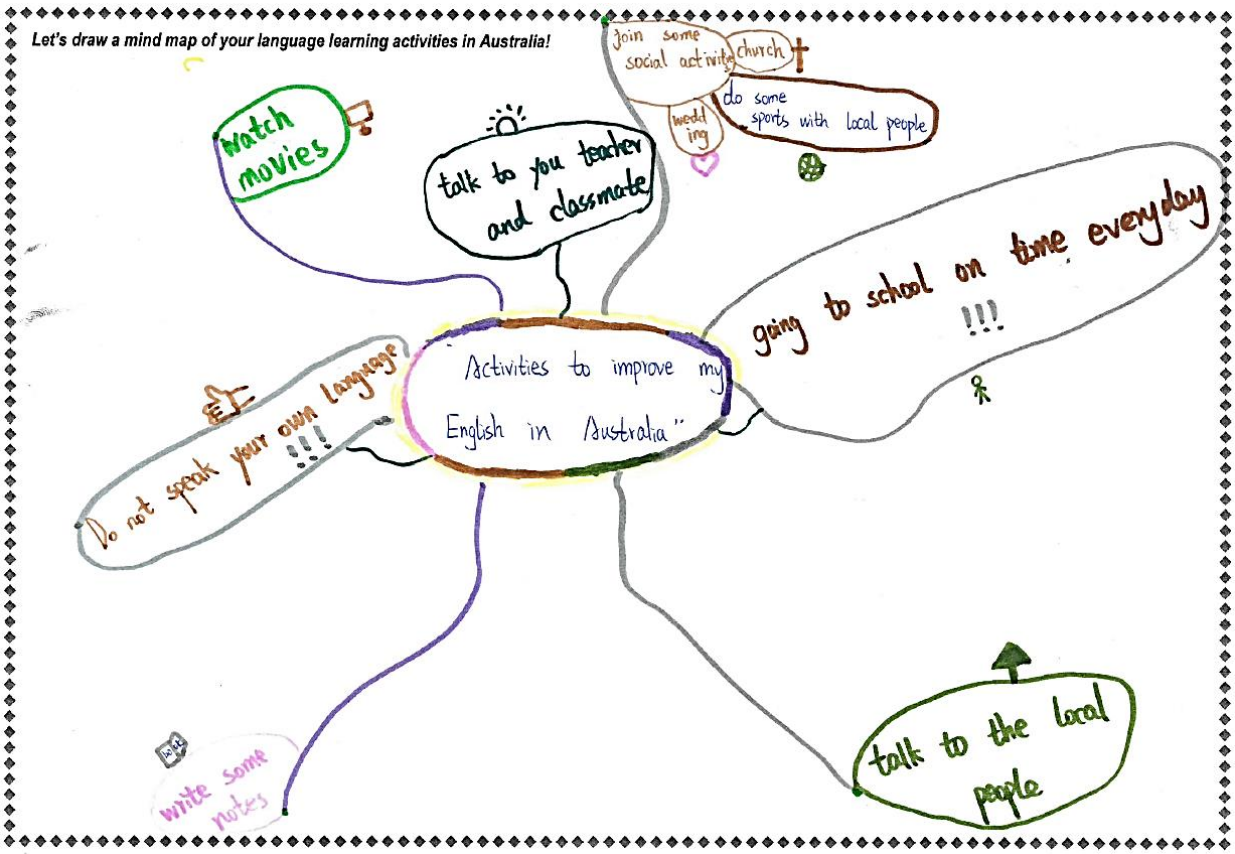
M: Oh wow.

I: So, it's really interesting.

M: It's good to see that from that perspective because I've never done the activity like that with my students to actually see if they take on board suggestions that I make, so it's very pleasing yeah. (Maureen, Interview 2)

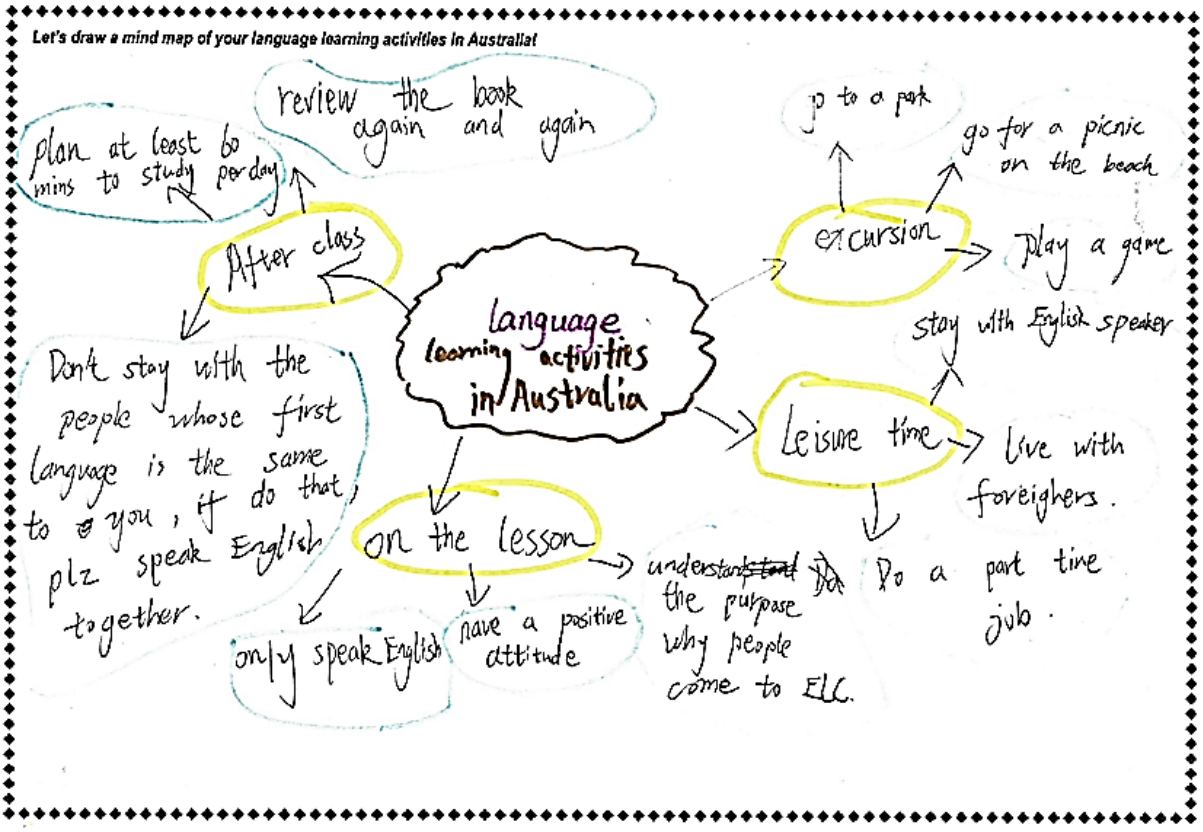
In Jesse's case, the different approach she took to the management of the two different age groups of students in her class; that is, providing different types of advice, appeared to influence the students. For example, Jesse's concerns appeared to have influenced her students as seen in their mind maps through text such as *Do not speak your language* (Figure 5.6) or *only speak [in] English* (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.6. Jesse's student's mind map (1)



It was the researcher who pointed out to Jessie that the evidence of her influence in her students' mind maps demonstrated the similarities between her beliefs about ideal language learning activities and the beliefs held by her students.

Figure 5.7. Jesse's student's mind map (2)



Excursion, *leisure time*, *on the lesson*, and *after class* comprised the four main components of the student's language learning activities. Action verbs were then used for all other descriptions in Node Level 2. It is not so certain that if this student actually does all the things she described here, or whether she wanted to achieve these outcomes in the future (e.g., *do a part time job*). Nonetheless, they reflect her strong will or belief that they are the actions she needs to construct in her language learning environment. Her statements such as *Understand the purpose why people come to ELC* and *don't stay with the people whose first language is the same to you, but if you do that, speak English together* sound like something her class teacher would say. It is therefore likely that the student

kept her teacher's suggestion in the back of her mind. Jesse agreed that "maybe it's me putting that onto them. Rather than me taking it from them. Yeah you're right, maybe I was" as she often talks to them "a lot about 'why did you come here? If you're going to speak your language, you could've stayed at home'. (You) come here to learn language" (Interview 2).

5.6.3 New Ideas of Classroom Teaching

This section focuses on the visions of the future of language instruction that the teachers shared in the interview. It also identifies the message that the teachers took from the student data and how it shaped their ideas about the future. Some teachers associated their future vision in teaching with practical classroom teaching ideas as a result of their engagement with the student data.

Luke expressed two teaching ideas. First, the use of checklist (a can-do list) in his class for students to evaluate their current language skills. The checklist is typically used in college at the end of the course, but he believed it could be used at any time during the course to prompt the students to reflect on their language skills. Second, create teaching materials for a role-play activity in which students can learn new vocabulary in familiar out-of-class situations (i.e., a pub conversation).

Molly also came up with the idea to form a social group within the ELC students, preferably led by students who share the same interest, as a way to expand their social activities outside of the classroom. In addition, she shared her plan to initiate future excursions to "build in activities where [the students] need to speak or ask questions, and maybe find out some information or some kind of little mini task around that", rather than just let them speak to somebody. She stated:

> I think my focus would be a little bit different. I think it's more at the front of my mind now, about getting these guys making the most of the opportunity, basically. (Molly, Interview 2)

The student data appeared to provide Molly with a clearer focus on how to integrate speaking practices into class activities and excursions.

5.6.4 Teachers' Limitation

When developing ideas about what more they could do as teachers, some teachers expressed their limitations.

For instance, Lisa recognised the gap between her students' awareness of learning opportunities in the environment and their actions to achieve their goals.

> I: So, last time we're talking about how they may not find good opportunities outside the classroom; they may not think that there are lots of opportunities. But, I think they're quite … they are aware that out-of-class is also the place for learning opportunities.
>
> L: Um… yes. Yes, they're aware that it's there, but it's actually, you know, getting them to engage…
>
> I: Yes.
>
> L: … and if they're lazy or shy, lack of confidence they don't want to push themselves outside then, it's um… it's harder. (Lisa, Interview 2)

Lisa appeared to start thinking of ways to navigate her students towards taking action, but she also acknowledged that this is not easy because the students also expressed constraints such as being shy, lack of confidence in language skills, and so on.

After looking at the students' mind maps, Jesse also talked about her limitations related to supporting students to engage in out-of-class learning activities. It was beneficial for her to see the students' mind maps because she gained insights into their out-of-class language learning environments, and it also gave her an opportunity to rethink how she can encourage them to engage in out-of-class activities. However, as revealed in the following extract, she acknowledged that some types of out-of-class activities such as *find a job*, *get local friends* as written on the students' mind maps were "outside of [her] scheme":

> But obviously, when I looked at this, I'm not helping them very much (laughing). Because I'm not helping them to find a job, I'm not helping them to … you know to get local friends, and I'm not… all of that kind of thing that they want to do, it's outside of my scheme of helping them. I guess all I can do is encourage them…well perhaps if you … get your English

> skills up a bit more in the classroom, you will have more confidence to go out and do these things. But really, I can't, you know. I'm limited. (Jesse, Interview 2)

Jesse expressed the view that a key aspect of her in-class teaching was to help students to develop their English skills as well as to feel more confident to use English outside of the classroom.

5.7 New Insights and Remaining Queries

This section illustrates the additional outcomes to emerge from the inquiry which were not addressed in Interview 1. It focuses on the new insights expressed by teachers related to students' language learning practices beyond the classroom (5.7.1). In addition, the ongoing queries and concerns of the teachers around the challenges of language instruction (5.7.2) are reported.

5.7.1 Teachers' Shared New Insights

Analysis of the student data combined with the discussions during Interview 2 enabled all teachers to develop a better understanding of how each student has their own way of language learning and of creating speaking practice environments. This section explores the teachers' responses to the issues around the constraints and difficulties encountered by students when creating English-rich environments.

The critical views of students regarding their first-language use suggest that achieving the right/ideal balance between using their first and second languages in their daily lives is the primary issue. The students have strong aspirations to ensure they have sufficient opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom, particularly speaking. The dilemma for them however appears to be their ability to surround themselves with first-language speakers at their place of accommodation or in their workplaces. Thus, the analysis revealed that the students struggle to construct their ideal language learning

environments. This outcome was used to guide the discussion further to explore the type of support teachers could provide the students in this regard.

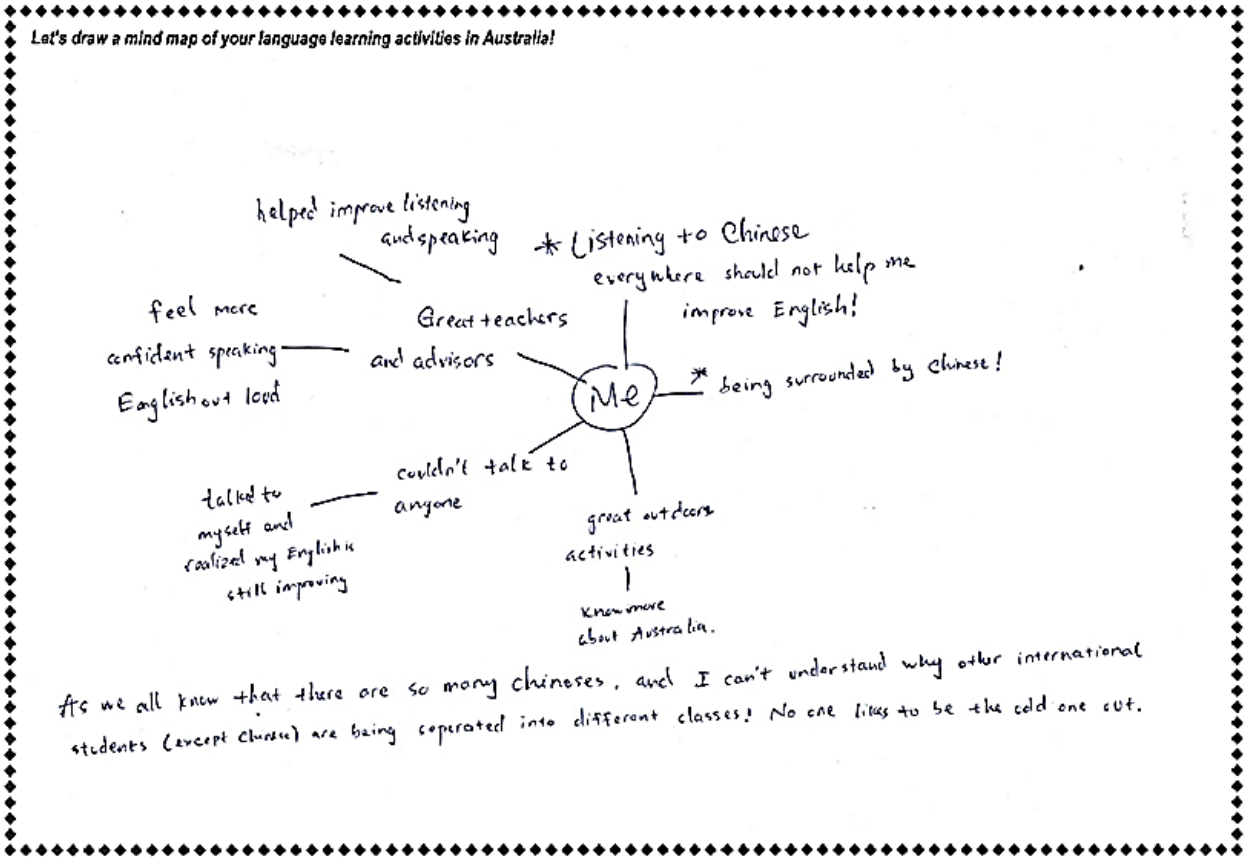
For Monika, this issue was not something new. She expressed her recognition of how easily students can form a first-language environment around them:

> M: […] but some are very happy just to live in their own little world, and um… you know with Thai friends and do everything in Thai, Thai town, Thai friends, Thai food and Thai work and everything. When they do everything they have to do in Thai they don't need to talk in English, you know. They can talk to you know Mr. Google, he's got all the answers in Thai (laugh).
>
> I: Right.
>
> M: So, you can survive easily nowadays in a foreign country I think really.
>
> I: Yeah especially like Sydney.
>
> M: Like Sydney, you know for the things they do, once they work out… the way to go to work or school and back home, they know their routine, they don't really need to fix or change anything. (Monika, Interview 2)

Monika and the researcher agreed that technology and the multilingual/multicultural environment of Sydney can make it easier for students to maintain their own language use and cultural practices. Nonetheless, although the students may live in such an environment, Monika has still witnessed some of her students, who could speak very little English when they first arrived, interact and improve their English language proficiency by socialising with classmates.

Such students' struggles to create the desired language learning environment, even in the classroom, was sometimes represented explicitly and emotionally. Lisa's student's mind map (Figure 5.8) provided an emotionally charged representation of his language learning experience at the ELC.

Figure 5.8. Lisa's student's mind map



For him, the large number of classmates from mainland China was a constraint, as he wrote with an asterisk symbol (*), *listening to Chinese everywhere should not help me improve English!* However, the student also expressed the view that he had *great teachers and advisors* who supported him, and that he felt *more confident in speaking English out loud*. He reflected that he *couldn't talk to anyone* and noted that talking to himself was the way to improve his English. The student also appeared to feel 'alone' in his class – being the only non-Chinese speaking student – as revealed from his comment, *No one likes to be the odd one out*. As such, he was quite critical in his evaluation of his past learning experiences and learning environment. Notwithstanding these challenges, the student also appeared to have a plan for future language learning activities, as indicated by the comment, *great outdoor activities – know more about Australia*. Below is the conversation the researcher had with Lisa about her student's mind map:

> I: Yeah, I found it interesting here… He is among maybe just one or two of non-Chinese…
>
> L: Yes.
>
> I: … and felt a little bit isolated, but um… here "great teachers", I guess you were one of the… supporters? I don't know… so teacher support was very important for him…
> L: Um… even if we can stop them speaking Chinese during the class, the minute they finish the class they all speak in Chinese. And there's non-stop Chinese, all the way, walking through the corridor, they're hearing Chinese all the time. (Lisa, Interview 2)

Lisa responded to the negative remark about the class demographics from her student, explaining that the ELC tries to ensure a mix of nationalities in one class to avoid having one dominant nationality. She also intimated however that Mandarin is widely spoken in the ELC.

5.7.2 Teachers' Shared Queries and Concerns

In relation to the issue of having sufficient exposure to English, the query or concern shared most among teachers was regarding the actual amount of English use by the students. Given the student data focused on activities in which English is used, the results did not provide detailed information on the amount of first-language or English use by the students when engaging in the daily activities. (Although some students did evaluate their English language use as minimal.) Although the summary of the survey results showed technology-oriented learning activities were initiated with students, all teachers were of the view that the students may be using their first language when communicating via social networking sites or simply when using Google to search for information. For example, the teachers claimed they often witness students using their first language on their phones.

Monika responded that it depends on the students' level of awareness of everyday language use and their willingness to decide to do some things differently:

> […] they tend to, it's easier for them. Also, I think they get in touch with their own people, you know finding jobs and accommodation, the first step, the first contact with them. Once they get better at English, more confident, and if they want to try something else, a lot of them say that, 'oh I don't want to live with their own people. I want to live with people from different countries'. But, I think, well, it's understandable that they feel safe and they get support from them and they can communicate. (Monika, Interview 2)

Monika reflected on the data from her students and talked about the different awareness levels of individual students and the changes they try to make in their environments. She had one student who asked her to move to another class with fewer Portuguese and Spanish speakers as she did not want to listen or use her first language in-class and break time. In contrast, it is also an ongoing concern for her as she also understands that students feel safe and supported in first-language environments.

5.8 Summary of Inquiry Outcomes

The teachers' overall responses to the student data were explored in relation to the contrasts between their initial beliefs (mainly shared ones) about the features of ideal language learning environments with the students' actual language learning practices and beliefs.

The confirmed teacher initial beliefs were:

- Students' digital activities are embedded in their daily lives,
- Students' lack of exposure to English due to low level participation in social activities outside of the classroom,
- The students' tendency to be surrounded by first-language speakers,
- Low level engagement in social activities by the students,
- Students perceive the use of English in out-of-class contexts to be more challenging than in in-class contexts, and
- Teachers can support student learning beyond the classroom by providing suggestions and advice on language learning opportunities and strategies.

The technology-oriented/dependent language learning environments depicted by the students in their mind maps, and their low-level participation in social activities and use of

online resources provided by the school confirmed the teachers' beliefs. However, the teachers were nonetheless surprised by the extent of the dependency and low level of participation indicated by the students.

The teachers' beliefs to be challenged were:

- Low-level recognition by the students of the usefulness of social activities,
- Student awareness of their language learning practices and environments - limitations around opportunities to practice English and their desire to engage in more speaking-related practices outside of the classroom.

The clear evidence that the students were aware of their limited use of English in their language learning environments and that they struggled to fulfil their goals led some teachers to further discuss the possibility of better teacher support and more practical teaching plans. Some teachers also identified limitations in their role as teacher.

The remaining queries and concerns were:

- Students' perceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning,
- Whether there is a cultural or perceptual gap between teachers and students in their understanding of language learning via social activities and independent language learning outside of the classroom,
- How students make decisions about their choice of language use in particular activities, and
- How much the students actually use English while engaging in daily activities.

To sum up, four main themes emerged from the inquiry regarding the teachers' shared understanding of students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom, as one of the findings on RQ. 2.

1) Students do value engaging in social activities in the wider community to improve their English language use to the teachers' expectations,
2) Students are self-aware of their language learning practices and environments but struggle to create an environment with sufficient opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom,
3) Ideally, in-class and out-of-class language learning should be integrated/connected, but students do not seem to recognise the link between in-class and out-of-class learning, and
4) There appeared to be a gap between teacher and student understanding of language learning independently beyond the classroom.

There were also individual teacher differences in their understandings of student learning beyond the classroom, in particular, teachers' interpretation of students' needs and new teaching plans to meet those needs.

5.9 Individual Teacher Attitudes to Student Data

So far, the current chapter has explored the overall picture of the teachers' responses to the student data, with contrasts drawn between the teachers' initial beliefs and the actual outcomes for students. Based on the responses, there appeared to be differences among teachers in relation to their attitudes towards the inquiry. In terms of openness, the following sections illustrate the two attitudes towards learning through inquiry observed in the teachers.

5.9.1 'Open to Learning' from the Information: (Roberto, Dan, Kathy, Luke, Jesse, Molly, Lisa)

- Teachers were open to gaining new insights into student learning, even though the information may not have necessarily been strikingly new or a challenge to their initial beliefs.
- Teachers were open to formulating new teaching ideas and acknowledging new challenges.

Roberto found the student data useful, "especially in the comments sections" where students explicitly expressed their wish to have more opportunities to use English outside of the classroom. He appeared to start thinking about how to make use of this student information in his teaching:

> I: But anyway, from the writing comments, they mentioned speaking a lot, so…
>
> R: That's extremely relevant feedback and… I'm still thinking about the writing, how they see the value of writing and all that.
>
> I: Yes.
>
> R: But speaking, absolutely. And they're very confident, so my lessons should be more challenging. (Roberto, Interview 2)

Both Kathy and Luke commented that they better understand students' technology-oriented activities outside of the classroom. For Kathy, knowing the data came from their students gave it a sense of relevance and freshness compared to reading research papers with data from other schools. Furthermore, the information we sought included students' out-of-class language learning practices, which the institution may not ordinarily pay attention to in the feedback. Kathy pointed out the need for teachers to collect student feedback to identify the type of support appropriate for them. She also indicated that a needs analysis can offer teachers a way to connect to the student as they would have a better understanding of their needs:

> I: Yeah, but it's always good to have some feedback from students.
>
> K: […] that's why we teach… language teaching needs analysis you know. And it's not probably just needs, it's also about connecting and knowing them. (Kathy, Interview 2)

As discussed in 5.6.3, Luke identified two actual class activities which were inspired by the inquiry. Molly also stated her intention to increase interactions with students in future teaching approaches. Dan also developed the idea that students themselves have to construct the contexts in which they meet people and talk about their English learning situations through social activities. This is in response to the students' comments on their L1 environment and lack of opportunities to practice English. Dan suggested that students take responsibility of their learning by talking about their learning and situations with friends:

> So, I think that confirms what I was thinking when I mentioned to some of the students in class that you have to talk about that with your friends. You actually have to open the topic, "let's talk about the fact that we're always speaking Spanish" you know, "let's have some sort of plan", whatever it is. I think it's the only way. (Dan, Interview 2)

In Jesse's case, some students' exam-focused attitudes towards learning were confirmed. This made her think more about those students who are not aware of, or do not care about, all the potential and exciting language learning opportunities outside of the classroom. She remarked, "those students don't see a need to do any of these other extra things because it's not, you know, what they want to do in their life" (Interview 2). Jesse then stated that she would "be a little bit more mindful" and try to explain the purpose of doing certain activities in-class and what they could achieve from out-of-class activities. For Lisa, as stated in 5.6.4, the new insights she gained about the students' struggles led her to accept a new challenge to better support the students to take an action on desired activities, while also recognise her limitations.

5.9.2 'Less Open to Learning' from the Information: (Monika, Thomas, Maureen)

- The information supported what the teachers already knew.
- Teachers did not indicate any particular practical teaching ideas.
- Teachers repeatedly stated their initial beliefs.

Monika developed visions of future class activities involving more communicative teaching approaches. However, her beliefs about the teacher's role in student out-of-class language learning appeared to remain the same; namely, to provide advice to students on how to get greater exposure to activities to increase their English language use:

> […] based on how little English they have outside of class I think it's important. Give them a lot of opportunities to speak in class, encourage them to speak. And you know, encourage them to do other things, not just going to work, stay at home, and speak to their own people with the same nationality. So, try to… I always give them… just encourage them to do other things as well and explore. They always worry about money, I always say no. Yes money is important it's true, but you can do a lot of things in Sydney without spending any money. Take a picnic and go out and explore. But some students don't like to explore. They just like… they're just happy in their own. (Monika, Interview 2)

Thomas also repeated his beliefs about the importance of establishing a class bond among the international students to increase their interactions in English beyond the classroom:

> There's more opportunity for them to actually arrange to see people outside the class, I think. As your own answers show, they see that that's really useful and I think it is. I think that's how you learn by socialising, socialising is the best way really start to use another language, I think. (Thomas, Interview 2)

Although Thomas appeared to engage with the student data and the inquiry process, he did not produce any practical teaching plans as an outcome.

Maureen also did not identify any new visions as outcomes of the inquiry. Her initial beliefs were mostly confirmed seen in her students' mind maps; in particular, the teacher's role to suggest learning strategies. As such, her roles as a teacher remained the same;

namely, “demonstrating in the classroom how easy it is (to use in English), and how accessible it is” (Interview 2).

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overall picture of the teacher participants’ responses to student feedback on their language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom. In doing so, it aimed to answer Research Question 2.

Specifically, it reported that the teachers shared four main understandings as outcomes of the inquiry. First, the teachers gained a better understanding of the students’ desire to engage in social activities for language learning, as well as the difficulties the students experienced in creating such an environment with sufficient opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom. For teachers, in-class and out-of-class language learning should be integrated/connected through the practical use of English outside of the classroom. However, the teachers indicated that students do not seem to recognise the link between in-class and out-of-class learning. Some teachers pointed to a potential gap between teachers’ and students’ understanding of independent language learning outside of the classroom.

This thesis also reported and discussed the differences in individual teacher attitudes toward the student data. In examining the development of individual teachers’ views through the inquiry, the teachers’ attitudes toward the inquiry were grouped according to their level of openness to learning from the student data. Seven teachers (Roberto, Dan, Kathy, Luke, Jesse, Molly, and Lisa) had an ‘open-to-learning’ attitude towards the data as evident in their use of the insights gained to guide future visions of teaching. In other words, teachers responded to the student data by integrating it with their initial beliefs to develop new teaching ideas to better suit the students’ learning needs.

Three teachers (Monika, Thomas, and Maureen), however, appeared to be 'less open' to utilising the student data. Although they acknowledged that it was interesting and useful, it did not appear to ignite in them a desire to change their teaching strategies. They rather maintained their beliefs through the inquiry and no future implications were stated. As such, they responded to the student data by using it to reconfirm their initial beliefs and to re-identify their concerns.

The next chapter further explores the differences in the learning processes of individual teachers toward the end of the project. Five teacher narratives have been selected as case studies to further examine the insights gained into teacher learning, including the development of their beliefs, actions in teaching, and the re-conceptualisation of their roles in student learning beyond the classroom.

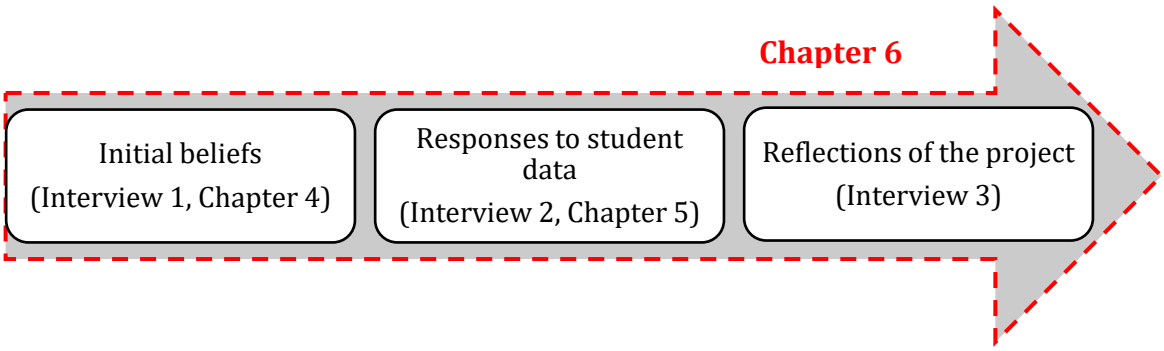
Chapter Six

Narrative Case Studies on Teacher Learning Processes

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters reported on the state of teacher cognition before the inquiry and the changes to teacher cognition observed during the inquiry. This chapter aims to build on the findings reported in Chapter 5 by demonstrating the development in teacher cognition to occur following their participation in the entire research process. Particular attention is given therefore to Interview 3 in which the teacher participants were encouraged to reflect on their learning experience throughout the project.

Figure 6.1. The location of Chapters 4, 5, and 6



Drawing on the findings reported in Chapter 4 (initial beliefs) and Chapter 5 (responses to student data), five narratives have been selected to explore the insights they provide into the change in cognition as well as the learning processes of individual teacher throughout the inquiry into student learning beyond the classroom. In turn, the discussion in this chapter aims to answer Research Questions 3:

RQ. 3: How does participation in an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments influence teachers' cognition?

a) What changes in cognition are observed?
b) How do teachers learn?

The five narratives in the following section (6.2) present both findings and a deeper stage of narrative analysis. Thus, outcomes developed from the five narrative case studies, which address RQ. 3, are followed by discussion on emerging issues: teachers' attitudes towards the inquiry and actions in teaching (6.3), and outcomes of teacher learning through the inquiry (6.4).

6.2 Individual Teacher Learning Processes - Narratives of Cognition Development

Each teacher narrative consists of:

- brief information about the teacher,
- a comparison of the two mind maps: differences in the visual representations of the teachers' reflections on the evolution of their conceptions of a good language learning environment,
- the development of beliefs about the highlighted concepts as raised from the student data,
- challenges and implications for future teaching, along with visions for further teacher learning, and
- a summary of the learning processes and outcomes from participating in the current project.

6.2.1 Roberto's Story: From a Learner's Perspective to an Inquiry-based Teacher

Roberto is a qualified and experienced language teacher of Brazilian background. He started teaching English as a foreign language in Brazil and has teaching experience in the United Kingdom (UK). After teaching English to European adult learners in South Africa, Roberto came to Australia seven years ago and has been teaching English ever since, mainly to international students. He holds two Master's degrees; one in Translation and the other in Applied Linguistics. He was working at three different institutions at the time of this study; two private institutions and one attached to another university. He had not previously participated in a research project like this or initiated his own research project.

Roberto exemplifies the type of teacher who is open to learning from student data. He appeared to demonstrate the most significant learning outcomes in his cognition development and he engaged in deep reflective practice on multiple aspects of this study including learning for professional development. As a result, his ecological views provided a strong connection between teaching and learning ecologies.

Figure 6.2. Roberto's Mind Map 1

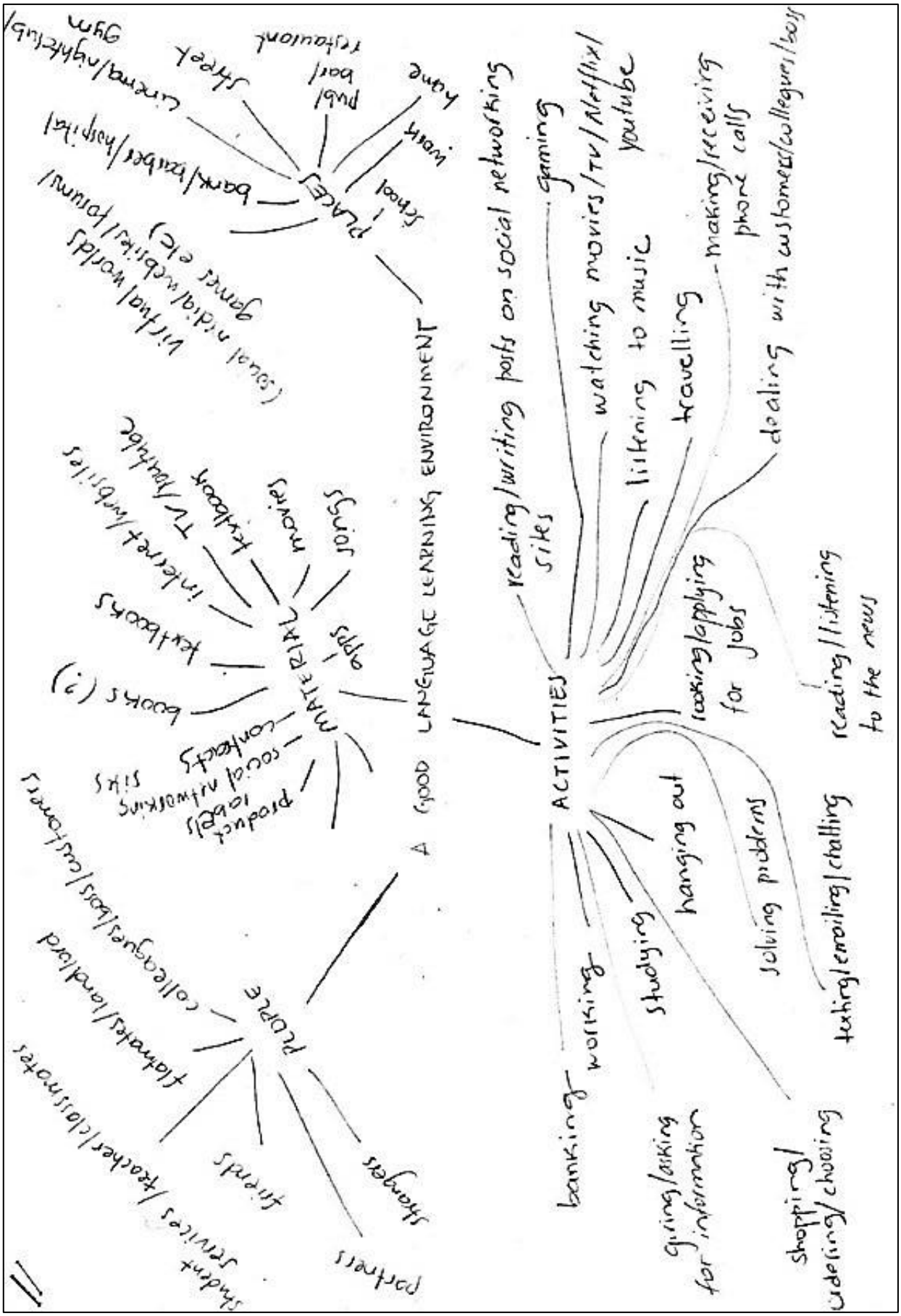
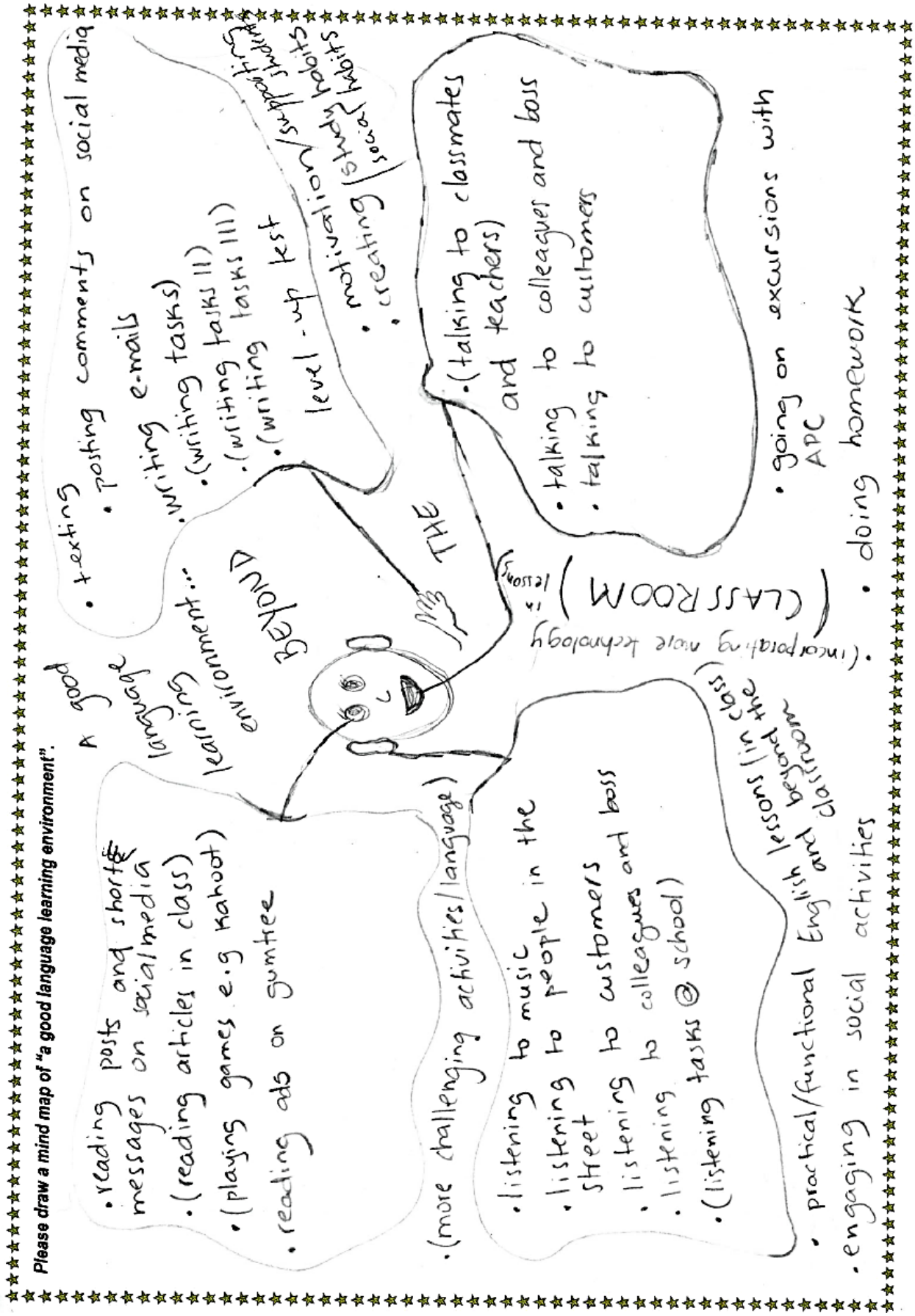


Figure 6.3. Roberto's Mind Map 2



During Interview 3, Roberto reflected on the differences in the beliefs he held at the beginning of the project to those he held at the end of the project. Using the two mind maps he created to facilitate a comparison, he realised that he had achieved a better understanding of the students as a result of the inquiry:

> R: Here, my ideas are all are all over the place. Have lots of ideas. Here, my second mind map is much more focused, and … this one (Mind Map 2) is more realistic than this one (Mind Map 1).
>
> I: Right. I feel that too, because you already have sort of 'your' challenges to make it happen. Like you said, you may not be sure how you could do but you already have some future plans as a teacher to improve yourself, your teaching
>
> R: Yes, and after learning what students really do out there, so this was what I thought they did, and I think what they really do and what they expect from me as well. (Interview 3)

Roberto explained that Mind Map 1 was drawn based on his reflections of his own experience of learning a language, "because he [I] went through the same process they're going through right now" (Interview 1). When drawing Mind Map 2 however, Roberto was influenced and inspired by the student data.

Roberto created the categories of listening, writing, and speaking in Mind Map 2. He put in-class activities in brackets to differentiate in-class and out-of-class activity ideas. He said that putting the emphasis on the writing task in Mind Map 2 was influenced by both the student data and the NEAS[3] audit feedback recently obtained by the college. Such input made him pay more attention to "the value of improving [the students'] writing skills". He reflected that "it seems that writing is a skill that is only used in class" because it is "not so useful out there". He also remarked that the students "only want to improve their writing to pass the level-up test". However, Roberto thought that writing in real-life situations included texting, sending emails, and possibly filling out forms and writing comments. He

[3] NEAS -National ELT Accreditation Scheme Limited (Australia), is a globally recognised body that provides quality assurance services to ELT and vocational providers in Australia and internationally. The NEAS QA Framework establishes and upholds high standards, supports centres in demonstrating quality in their programs and services, and provides guidance in continuous improvement processes. The NEAS tick promotes the recognition of quality in education and training. https://www.neas.org.au/about-us/

also created writing tasks in class for homework which were more relevant to out-of-class writing situations (e.g., posting comments on social media). Roberto now spends the first 15 minutes of each lesson checking the optional writing homework. So far, "just a couple of them do it, honestly, but at least they have an option there" (Interview 3).

6.2.1.1 Mind a trap! "That's the triangle, work-home-school"!

Regarding the students' "comfort zone" Roberto stated during Interview 1 that their awareness of their use of L1 may be related to their motivation and goals to study abroad. Roberto's expression, comfort zone, refers to the students' daily routines or what they normally do with familiar people. This is a broader way of describing the space where students are not doing something challenging for language learning.

During Interview 3, Roberto expressed his concerns that the students' negative emotions towards the struggles they face in everyday life environments could impact their language learning. He subsequently reflected on the student data showing a tension between student expectations of having many opportunities to practice English and the reality of having limited opportunities due to time. Roberto described how the students "fall into a trap" when they spend a lot of their time and energy on work:

> But when they arrive here, it's a different reality. It is, and it isn't? I don't know how much of the role of their comfort zone play in this. I think that if they pushed themselves, they could probably, you know, take more advantage of the world out there. But I think, maybe they are homesick and want to feel more comfortable living with people who speak their language. So, they come with this idea, but when they get here they **fall into this trap**. Living with people from their countries, and they fall into this rat race, work- school-work, school-home; no social activities. So, priority seems to change when they come here. That might be the cost of living, family pressure… we don't really know exactly what has a huge impact on their behaviour. And uh… also impact on the way they learn. (Interview 3)

Roberto highlighted his concern about the student "comfort zone", which appears to be more complex than he initially thought. Students create comfort zones because it is easier and more comfortable to use their first language, and because of other emotional and

financial factors due to living overseas away from family. Roberto shared the story about a student in his evening class who exemplified the impact of negative emotions on learning. The student missed half of the task explanation because she arrived late for the class. Then, she struggled to understand what the class task involved, causing her to feel frustrated. She then blurted out, "Oh, I hate English" due to her frustration, which really shocked Roberto. This incident made him realise that "the world out there has much more influence maybe than we think on our students, and on how they learn". The extract below illustrates the empathy Roberto has for students who are in "a trap" during the academic term:

> R: They're tired… most of the evening students I believe that they cannot afford to study during the day. You know, they struggle financially and need to work to study here. They're just here… they come to class because of the visa requirements, but at the same time they do want to learn a little bit. But it's really hard, they're tired.
>
> I: Like you said, a trap
>
> R: It's a trap. (Interview 3)

Roberto's use of the phrase "a trap" expresses clearly his deeper understanding of the students' struggles to make use of their environments for language learning.

6.2.1.2 Integration vs. perceptual gap between students and Roberto

Roberto indicated during Interview 1 that a key challenge for him as a language teacher was to integrate in-class and out-of-class contexts by introducing more learning activities which are relevant to the students' lives. He also expressed doubts about whether he was doing the right thing as he feels the gap between his students' and his own perceptions of language learning:

> I think it's very hard, it's very difficult to bring the outside inside. […] There are pre-conceptions that I have as a teacher of what should be happening in the classroom. All students come with a baggage and they expect certain things to happen in the classroom. And the moment they walk through the doors here, you know, that changes their perception. So, I find it a bit hard sometimes because a classroom is a social conventions; I'm the teacher, I have the knowledge, I know the truth, I know what's right and wrong. I don't believe in that, but a lot of my students do, depending on their background. I know

> that… for example, South American students, they usually… have classes in South American that are very traditional, I know that the same happen in China. (Interview 1)

Roberto expressed uncertainty about the extent to which his teaching approaches met student expectations of in-class learning. So, Roberto implements certain learning activities to compensate for the gap; things that are "expected of me" such as "the whole process of marking and checking their attendance".

During Interview 3, Roberto expressed how the students' low levels of active engagement in learning outside of the classroom was different to what he expected:

> When I learned a language, I did all these (activities), but they don't. I always try to engage in social activities and take advantages of… not everyone, but most of them, don't have the time or the energy of, or don't know how to do all that. So we are different. (Interview 3)

As is also evident in the extract below, Roberto's view changed when he realised the extent of the perceptual gap that was present between his and his students' views about ways of language learning, particularly outside of the classroom:

> I still do (think) that… it happens out there… but maybe students don't think it does. Maybe students think they rely on these experience here, in coming to class and learning here. I think they are passive learners out there, and maybe more active learners here, but that doesn't sound right. Maybe they're not aware that they're learning out there. It's still happening. It is learning. They are learning certain skills out there and here they learn different skills here. I think the challenge is to integrate the skills they learn there and the skills they learn here. They are both important. But, again, it depends on the purpose, on their goals. So, I wouldn't say 95% there 5% here anymore, I would change that probably. (Interview 3)

During Interview 1, Roberto said that 95% of language learning takes place in the students' daily lives outside of the classroom, and 5% takes place in-class. Roberto maintained his belief that learning mostly occurs via out-of-class experiences. He nonetheless realised that the lack of awareness by the students of the link between in-class and out-of-class learning or depending on the students' goals and purpose of studying/living abroad, they may not even realise that they are learning outside of the classroom. This led Roberto to reconsider that the students' language learning environments might not be the same as his language

learning environment. He considered that his environment was rather supportive of language learning because "I'm a language teacher and I'm interested in language, so that give me a bit of advantage. I was always interested in learning." Roberto confirmed his beliefs about the importance of integrating in-class and out-of-class contexts.

6.2.1.3 Creating study habits

Roberto's beliefs about his role in supporting out-of-class learning were mostly related to his teaching approaches. For instance, he believed that he should try "to bring more of the outside into the classroom" with authentic materials to "bring the world to the classroom" or to integrate technology-mediated tools for learning. These strategies encourage students to be more "focused [and] interested in the lesson. Especially with evening students. They are workers, they work hard all day, so… they don't have a very long attention span" (Interview 1). Hence, Roberto always tries to make his lessons "dynamic".

Roberto also valued excursions and out-of-class activities with students as another out-of-class learning support activity. For example, "often on Fridays after class [he would] go [with his students] and have a meal or go to a pub" (Interview 1). He said, "it's good because you get to see them using English in contexts, when they order something, so it's good experience" (Interview 1). He valued these types of social activities between students and teachers to build a good rapport with students.

During Interview 3, Roberto again emphasised his supporting roles with reference to various practical teaching ideas which were reflected in the students' feedback. Designing his lessons with "more challenging activities and language" and bringing "a real article from newspapers from the internet into class" to encourage students to get into the habit of reading beyond the classroom. He would also create writing tasks which related to the students' daily activities such as "posting comments on social media, writing emails" and "incorporating more technology in [his] lessons". He also believed that helping the

students "to create study habits" through in-class practice was something he would like to work on more to encourage independent learning.

In addition, Roberto aimed to motivate the students to engage in more social activities outside of the classroom by expanding the in-class activities. For example, he would talk about Australian holidays and events, and created social groups within the classroom dynamic. For inspiration, Roberto took the students on an excursion to Barangaroo. He indicated that he thought, "if we start in class to organise and prepare [social outings], then they can do it on their own. Maybe they don't need a teacher to accompany them". Roberto believed that this was "creating study habits" as well as "creating social habits" (Interview 3).

6.2.1.4 Technology integration into in-class learning activities and beyond

Roberto commented during Interview 3; "I need to find all the ways of cooperating, bringing technology into my class". Although he had already been using technology-mediated materials regularly in his lessons, he showed his intention to learn more about their use:

> I'm already using it, but I can use them even more. I think I need some training as well, because I don't have any formal training in using technology, you know. I learn as I go. So, that's my way of looking at. (Interview 3)

Roberto reflected that the student information helped him to think clearly and gave him "some good concepts, good ideas". For him, the real challenge was how to implement the ideas visualised in Mind Map 2 and "make them work" in his teaching. He stated; "I think it depends a lot on me now" and was subsequently concerned about whether he had the "time and resources to do all that" (interview 3).

As such, Roberto's ideas about future teaching practices were not entirely new, but he appeared nonetheless to be enlightened through the process of refining his focus and

aims. The extract below shows his increased awareness of the students' language learning needs, which he intends to take into account when planning a lesson:

> I'm more aware of what they want, what they need, I think. And when I do prepare my lessons, I think I'm gonna try and start taking into consideration all of these aspects…, Yeah, but it's gotta be a balance there as well. I can't focus only on social activities, because we have a program. (Interview 3)

As highlighted in the extract, Roberto planned to incorporate more social activities into the learning process to balance this student language learning need with the existing teaching curriculum.

Roberto's learning was observed in the way his view of the students' language learning environments changed. He appeared to become more mindful of the differences between his and the students' perceptions of language learning situations, as well as how to improve the students' motivation for learning. To Roberto, the 'real challenge' is to demonstrate to the students the link between in-class and out-of-class learning.

6.2.1.5 "Old habits die hard"

In terms of professional development, Roberto appreciated the learning opportunity that this project provided him and wondered if he would have continuous support after this. He indicated that the professional development sessions the teachers attend from time to time at college were "more on the spot" – "sometimes it becomes just something you have to go to" (Interview 3):

> R: I'm just thinking that now we did this, it was great. But, then, you know, old habits die hard. In six months' time, in a year's time, I wonder, are we gonna have another person coming in and (laughter) motivating us as well? Or are we gonna fall into the same routine…
>
> I: Are you afraid of going back to the old routine?
>
> R: It's always a risk. […] Yeah, old habits die hard. Change is not easy. So, maybe we need more of Mayumi to come and … make us think. (Interview 3)

The expression from Roberto that "old habits die hard" indicates his understanding that making changes in familiar teaching styles does not happen easily. For him, having ongoing support from someone to motivate him to keep learning how to be a better teacher was important. Further evidence of this sentiment emerged in Roberto's reflection on learning when he considered his attitude towards the project:

> I: Could you sum up your experience of…?
>
> R: It's been really good. When Andy or Kate approached me I thought, "Okay, yeah. I'm interested in research". I thought, "Okay, let's do this. Let's see what happens". But I also thought, it's gonna be a burden. Because it's …
>
> I: Extra time.
>
> R: Extra time, but it became something enjoyable. And I think students learned from it, because… I don't know when you came in, I don't know if you realised, they were really interested […] (Interview 3)

As is evident in the extract, Roberto was rather passive in his approach to participating in the current project when first approached by the academic manager. He was uncertain about the benefits of participation and thought that "it's gonna be a burden" because he would have had to devote extra time to the project. However, he revealed that the project experience "became something enjoyable" and transformed him as an active learner.

Roberto's suggestion below on how to make the project more effective indicates his vision of learning collaboratively with teachers into the future:

> I wish we could have maybe another session with all the teachers you interviewed. Because, I don't know what their ideas are. So, it would be interesting to compare our mind maps and our ideas. (Interview 3)

Roberto also pointed out that a collaborative approach to learning by the teachers would guide them towards better learning outcomes.

From the researcher's perspective, Roberto was constantly worried about whether he was doing okay. He would often ask; "What do you reckon? Was this what you were expecting?" "I hope this is what you were looking for." "Am I giving you the right answers?"

However, as the project progressed he became more active in his participating and found the focus of his future teaching. As a result, he did not feel that he was finding only the 'expected' answers anymore.

When focusing on the aspects of a language learning environment, Roberto initially emphasised various out-of-class activities including digital tasks for language learning. However, his higher awareness of the students' perceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning, and his active engagement in the inquiry processes, guided Roberto to develop ideas on how to support students to link their in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences. Therefore, his teaching approaches have become more inquiry-based and tailored to student needs rather than based on his own learning experiences.

Roberto treated the student data as a representation of their needs rather than just reported information. In addition, his attitude to look for ways to meet the students' needs by gaining a deeper understanding of their lives outside of the classroom guided the development of his cognition. Subsequently, he initiated actions to improve his teaching and recognised alternative ways to facilitate language learning from the process of the inquiry.

6.2.2 Jesse's Story: Towards a Teacher Researcher

Jesse has more than 20 years of teaching experience in various contexts and with students of different age groups. She has taught at ELICOS sectors, in overseas settings for a few years and had seven to eight years of teaching migrants in Australia before working at the ELC. At the ELC, she was involved in the teacher training programme for Chinese teachers of English. The present study is the first time she has been involved in a research project.

Jesse exemplifies a teacher who has an open attitude towards student data. While Roberto initially doubted the benefits of participation in the current project, but gradually became more engaged, Jesse was the most passionate about the project and the most actively engaged from the beginning. Thus, Jesse's openness to treating the project as a learning opportunity was the most explicit among all the participants.

Figure 6.4. Jesse's Mind Map 1

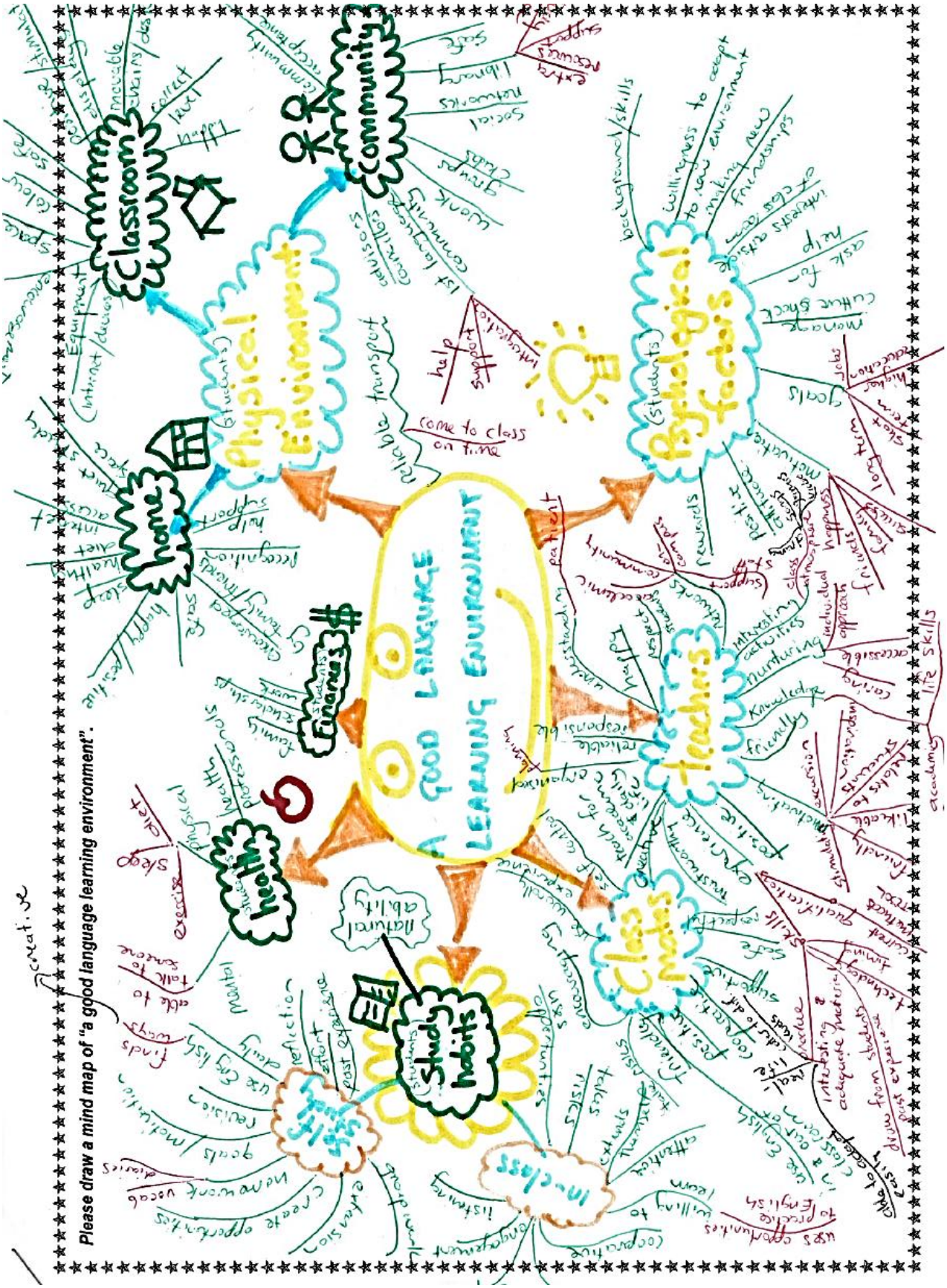
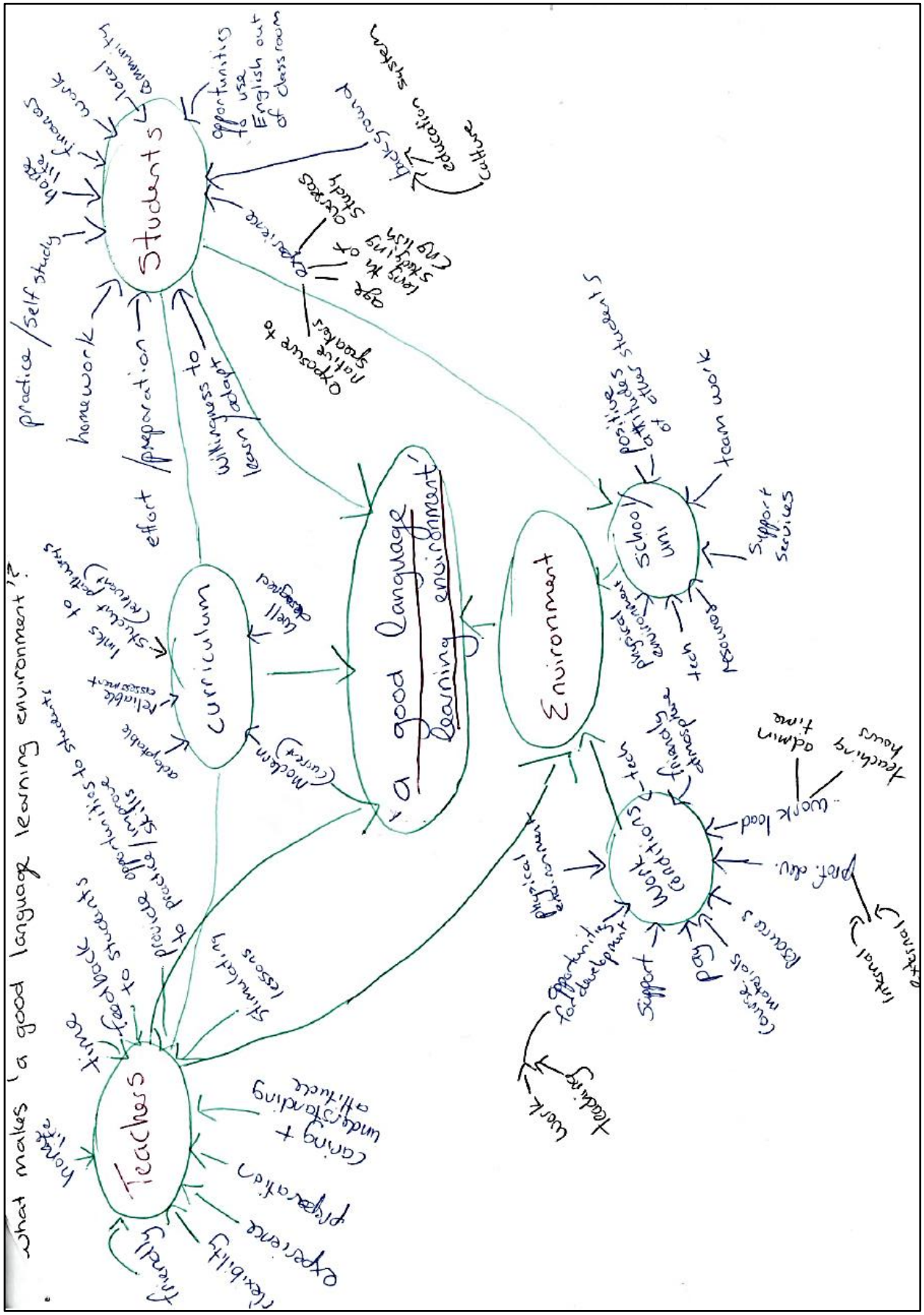


Figure 6.5. Jesse's Mind Map 2



Jesse was in the In-class Focused group because she emphasised in Mind Map 1 that both students and teachers create a "positive, happy, and comfortable environment" in-class. She also highlighted the importance of having basic life management skills (e.g., related to personal finances and health) in order to "look after themselves" while learning abroad. She later reflected that Mind Map 1 was probably more related to the students she was teaching at that time. It was a cohort of young students (around 18 years old) and this caused her to emphasise the "mothering role" as she was concern about the students being away from their families (for the first time).

Although Jesse appeared to put an emphasis on in-class activities when representing the components of a good language learning environment, she believed that in-class and out-of-class language learning should "overlap". Indeed, she understood the importance of out-of-class learning contexts based on her experiences teaching migrants and the focus given to practical uses of English in everyday life.

Jesse described how she took "a holistic approach" when drawing Mind Map 1, including the "different factors that would affect" students. For Mind Map 2. Jesse's approach was "more defined" and "clearer" based on her realisation of the limited roles that she could play. In representing the factors "affect the language learning environment" Jesse's Mind Map 2 included three elements: "the *teachers*, the *students* and just the *environment* in general". She explained that "all of those things [smaller concepts] are kind of different layers on it and they feed to the language learning environment in the middle" (Interview 3). Here she emphasised that the significant differences between her two mind maps were in relation to the necessary components of a good language learning environment and the direction of the arrows which connect the components. She drew the arrows inward to emphasise that those components "feed in" to create the environment.

Jesse also reflected that she first thought she was "connected to everything" and that she should accept "a lot more responsibility" for the students' language learning

environments. She later realised that she was as connected or responsible as she thought. Considering her limitations, Jesse stated that those who are responsible for developing the curriculum and learning resources should "take up a lot more" of the responsibilities. As evidenced in her Mind Map 2, *curriculum* was one of the main components of a good language learning environment, representing a new focus concept within her understanding of a good language learning environment.

6.2.2.1 Stabbed culture in students

Although Jesse believed that the ideal relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning should be one in which they overlap, she doubted that her students recognised the links between the two learning domains. Furthermore, she doubted that the students know how to expand on what they have learned in-class in the environment outside of the classroom.

Reflecting on the priority given by some students to passing exams (which confirmed her belief), Jesse talked about her students' notion of doing homework or self-study. She was surprised that "nearly all [of her students] said that there is no homework in Australia, but in China, there's so much homework to do, and [they believe that] home work is a good thing to improve your skill" (Interview 3). She understands that the students "came from a system where everything was fed to them", a culture of "teachers give students a handout to fill in" or "translate 100 words every night", which "stabs in their heart". She acknowledged that the students arrived at their new learning environment with these old habits. She also suggested however that some students identify the differences in teaching methods and come to the conclusion, "wow, that's what I need to do". Conversely, she accepts that others "probably won't [recognise new ways of learning] until they see there's a benefit of doing it" (Interview 3).

During Interview 3, Jesse stated that the students' "learning environment is everywhere", and that "the classroom is only a part of it", even though some students may not yet recognise this. She also repeated the limitations she experiences in trying to get her students to understand that learning opportunities are everywhere in Sydney.

Jesse came up with the idea to invite an ex-ELC student who is currently completing a Master's degree into her class to talk to the students about his/her language learning experience. In particular, the ex-student focused on the ways in which the ELC language learning programme contributed to his/her postgraduate learning. Jesse also suggested that it is important for the students to use the ELC network and support services.

As such, Jesse deepened her understanding of the students' transition to a new language learning environment and the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning. Given their learning experience in their home country, the students have deep-rooted beliefs about language learning and the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning activities. Therefore, Jesse finds it a big challenge to convince them of the nature of this relationship and the benefits it offers for the development of their language skills. In addition, Jesse pointed out that the ELC's assessment-based curriculum was more conducive to the students' goal to complete a degree rather than developing their language proficiency through learning experiences outside of the classroom.

6.2.2.2 Actions in teaching

Jesse quickly planned how she could integrate the current project activities into her classroom activities. When she administered the activities to her students, she took charge of the process rather than just provide the researcher with time to do all the necessary activities with her students. She said that integrating the project in the classroom "came naturally", and "it wasn't difficult to do it":

> Well, I liked that everything kind of flows in it in a way. Everything has a purpose as well. So, I mean, I think for me, um it's a little bit problematic if I just said to the students "oh hey

> there's a… my PhD friend is doing some research, can you help her?" I like to think that they're getting something from it, so whatever they're doing is linked to what they're learning and somehow help you to understand what you're doing or how you're learning or… It was all kind of like a connection. So, I just think that it might be better for them. (Interview 2)

The researcher noted in the reflective journal that "she planned for a blog discussion with this topic for her students to discuss and share". For the student mind map activity, "Jesse first let her students brainstorm all the activities they do outside of the classroom in groups, then let them draw a mind map individually". This demonstrates that Jesse incorporated the research activities smoothly into her lesson design.

Jesse was also eager to do the optional activities prepared for the project. She arranged to interview two students after the class activities to discuss the contents of mind maps and why they included those elements. She devoted time to both the actual project and to think about the issues around the research topic. As such, she was observed to have a proactive attitude towards engaging in the whole research project with extensive reflective practice.

In response to the inquiry outcome that students "really want to meet non-native speakers (their first language speakers)", on one Friday Jesse brought her son along on an excursion with the group. Despite her son being of a similar age to her students, Jesse was very disappointed that only one student out of almost thirty took the opportunity to talk to him to practice their English. Most students did not appear to want to converse in English. As Jesse stated, "they actually stayed in their own group speaking their first language and using their phones" (Interview 3). This contradictory behaviour by the students led Jesse to become confused about what the students indicated in their questionnaire responses compared to their actual attitude and behaviours in the language learning environment. However, as the following comment from Jesse about a health survey reveals, she thought that this contradictory behaviour was "probably reflective of everything":

> If you gave me a survey about health, I would probably say, "Oh yeah, I should go for a walk every day and I should eat all of those healthy foods". But then, if I put into practice what I actually do, I don't do any of them. I don't do exercise and I eat crappy food, but I acknowledge that this is what I should do. So, maybe it's just what it is with the students. They know what they should do even if they're not doing it. […] They are actually aware that their English is not good, but, like me, I'm aware I'm overweight, but I'm still … haven't got to the point where I feel like "I'm SO overweight I've got to do something about it", you know. So, maybe it's the same with the kids, that until they're actually in the environment in the main university where they go. (Interview 3)

The health survey example provided by Jesse in the above extract shows that she has an understanding of the struggles the students face to turn their intentions into actions. Jesse then pointed out that staff at the ELC do not do enough to assist the students to realise the importance of being proactive language learners:

> Yeah, put up a mirror. You know what I mean? Put up a mirror, look this is what you're doing, because they can't clearly see that for themselves. Like me, when I'm looking at a mirror, yeah. I'm still looking fat (laughter). (Interview 3)

Jesse continued with this line of thought, suggesting that the way in which "the mirror is put up shouldn't be too hard on [the students]". Rather, she conceded that teachers "need to be mindful of why they're [the students] doing that". Jesse stated that this project reminded her of the importance of thinking about ways to navigate the students towards taking desired actions.

6.2.2.3 Curriculum development as a new challenge

When reflecting on the project overall, Jesse remarked that "it's good to reflect on things". She continued; "I always thought that the students were just a bit lazy about doing some of the outside activities". As such, she realised that the students simply do not see the point or purpose in some actions and this prompted her to further reflect on her teaching approach:

> Maybe I need to actually lay in a little bit. Maybe I have been giving too many different ideas and different things and "you can try this or here is this website for this", and another one and another one. Maybe it was just too much, and I've got to give some specific kind of set things and outcome for it. Rather than just going, "okay, you really need to improve your English. Here is a bunch of websites, practise on your own". I need to probably set

> something as a task and then that task will be part of something. Because these younger ones, you know, they just can't grab why they need to do it. And it's not, I don't think, because they are lazy. It's just that they focus on what they need to do to pass. (Interview 3)

As highlighted in the above extract, Jesse realised that simply giving advice about the importance of using all sorts of learning resources and strategies was not working. She reconsidered that she in fact needs to set a task for the students to engage in that enables them to experience and understand how it is expanding their learning beyond the classroom. As a result, Jesse identified the importance of task design as well as methods of assessment, and the problem of focus in the current curriculum on exam outcomes. The development of Jesse's cognition resulted in her establishing an interest area for further investigation; namely, curriculum development as a way to encourage and support student learning beyond the classroom:

> I: You talked about how you'll be more mindful about things you realised through the project. Do you have anything else that you plan for future teaching after this project?
>
> J: Okay. Um… one of the things that came out of our last discussion, which I would really like to know a bit more about is why the students don't see as useful some of those things that we do have in place. I have started to think about it a lot, and I think that it is linked to what I was saying about the assessment we have. The way we assess them that they don't go on ELC online and do all the homework and look at those wonderful resources because that doesn't give any marks. So, I think that maybe we need some other forms of assessing students which encourage different type of behaviour; not just that exam, you know. We're very exam-based, but it's very hard to… I guess to… for the way we have to measure their language ability, you know we do have to…
>
> I: More performance-based?
>
> J: Yeah, we do have to have a standard. We do have to have a testing system. But, I think we could build something else into our curriculum to make it more encouraging, so they can see, we know there are other things to get out of it, but for them to measure what's the point of doing this? You know, you gonna get something out of it in terms of your marks as well.
>
> I: That's why you put "curriculum" here (Mind Map 2), which didn't have…
>
> J: Which I didn't have last time, yeah. (Interview 3)

As such, Jesse's view became more focused on her role in linking in-class and out-of-class learning by exploring the assessment system and curriculum at ELC, as represented in her

Mind Map 2. Jesse reconceptualised her role as being more mindful about the connection of in-class and out-of-class contexts when she designs tasks. She considered that the students may be too young to realise the purposes and benefits of some in-class activities and beyond. Therefore, the institute should "list some of those activities" to generally help the students to realise their benefits. The interview responses from two of her students supported the idea that students sometimes need the teacher to encourage them to engage in some activities that they have not experienced. The students can then identify alternative ways of learning English outside of the classroom.

Jesse constantly talked about limitations throughout the three interviews, such as the students' minimal interest in learning outside of the classroom even though she "present[s] those opportunities" to them. For those who are willing to learn outside of the classroom, Jesse is happy to "help them and encourage them". However, for those students who do not want to learn outside of the classroom, Jesse conceded, "I don't know what to do" (Interview 3). Nonetheless, she was going to continue to try to overcome the limitations. For instance, she was going to join another research project and collaborate with university teaching staff on a topic related to curriculum development – which she found important as a result of her participation in this project. Jesse's only concern was the time constraints she felt around trying to do all of the things that she could think of such as having more counselling time with individual students, lesson planning, and all the other preparation activities.

6.2.2.4 In-class as a sharing space

Jesse's initial and fundamental focus remained the same throughout the project as she expressed the same belief about the importance of creating a happy and safe environment in-class during Interview 3. She suggested that the classroom is where the students and teacher can "bring our experiences to what we're doing" together as they share the same

working space. She asserted that the teacher can create a good language learning environment by making it "friendly and flexible". Moreover, it was her view that the teachers have "got experience, … and you know, they understand the difficulties that students have and the need to produce stimulating lessons, provide opportunities for students to practice and use their skills, and to give feedback to students" (Interview 3). In turn, she emphasised that students also bring their cultural and educational backgrounds into the classroom which could influence the language learning environments.

Jesse's learning outcomes from her participation in the inquiry included a more refined understanding of the students' beliefs and struggles, and a re-conceptualisation of the teacher's role in showing the students the links between in-class and out-of-class learning. This gave her a clear purpose for doing certain exercises in class and a clear target for further learning.

Jesse's sense of ownership of, and strong interest in, the project guided her active engagement in the project activities and instilled in her an open attitude towards learning. In turn, she developed her beliefs about language instruction. Her learning outcomes also demonstrated the way in which a teacher can be transformed to be a teacher-researcher through inquiry into student learning by identifying areas for further learning.

6.2.3 Dan's Story: From a Class Teacher to a Tutor

Dan is an experienced, Australian teacher. He has previously taught English in Korea and Japan. He has been teaching in EFL/ESL contexts for about 17 years in Australia and has taught a wide range of English courses such as General English, Academic English, Business English, exam English courses, and so on. He seemed to be a busy person, working double shifts at times and completing a Master's degree part time. He also does one-on-one online tutoring to Japanese learners of English living in Japan.

Like Roberto and Jesse, Dan also exemplifies a teacher who is open to learning from the student data. His story demonstrates how reflective practice plays a key role in teacher learning. Specifically, Dan links his understanding of student learning beyond the classroom to the in-class learning activities to make sense of his own teaching.

Figure 6.6. Dan's Mind Map 1

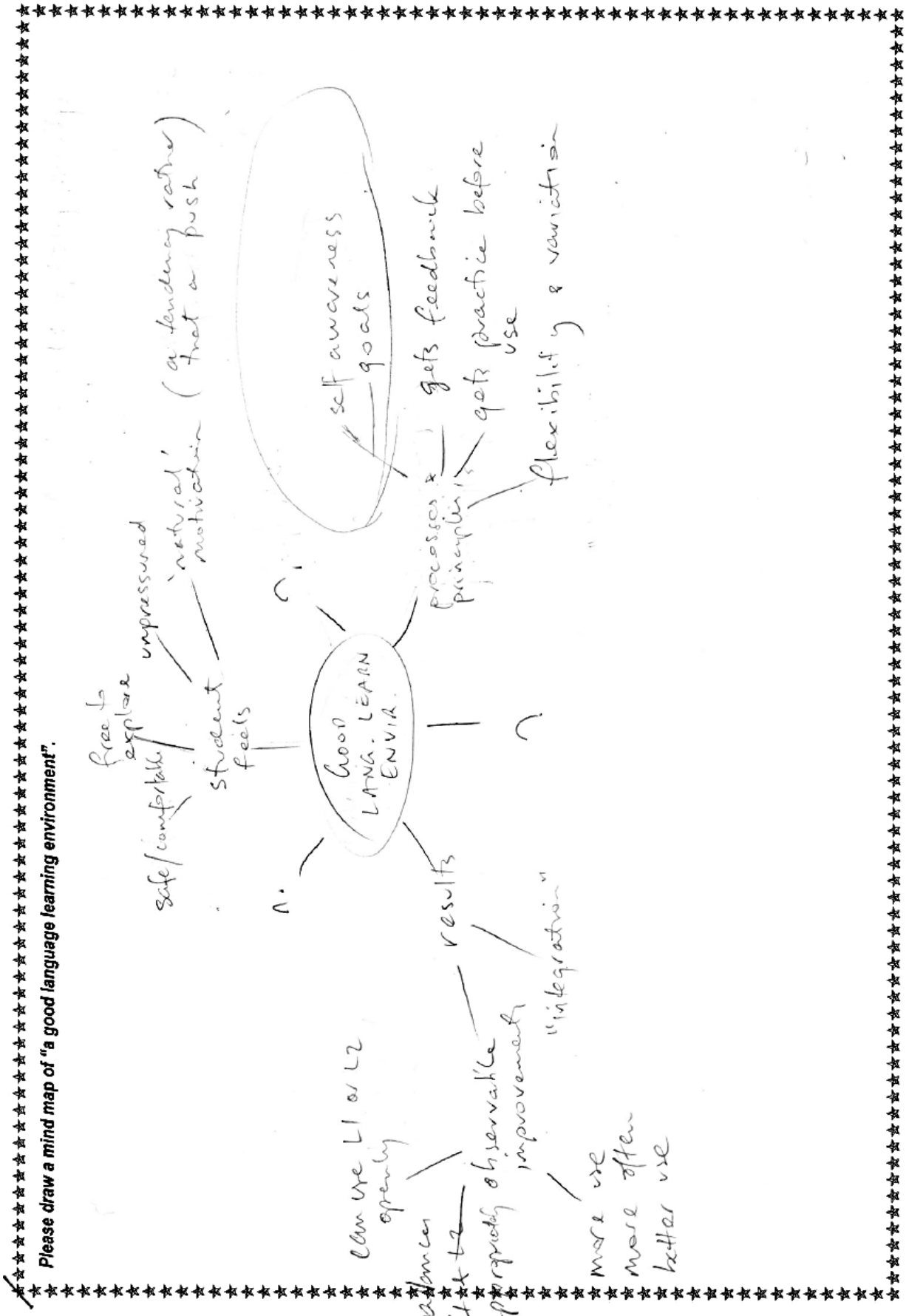
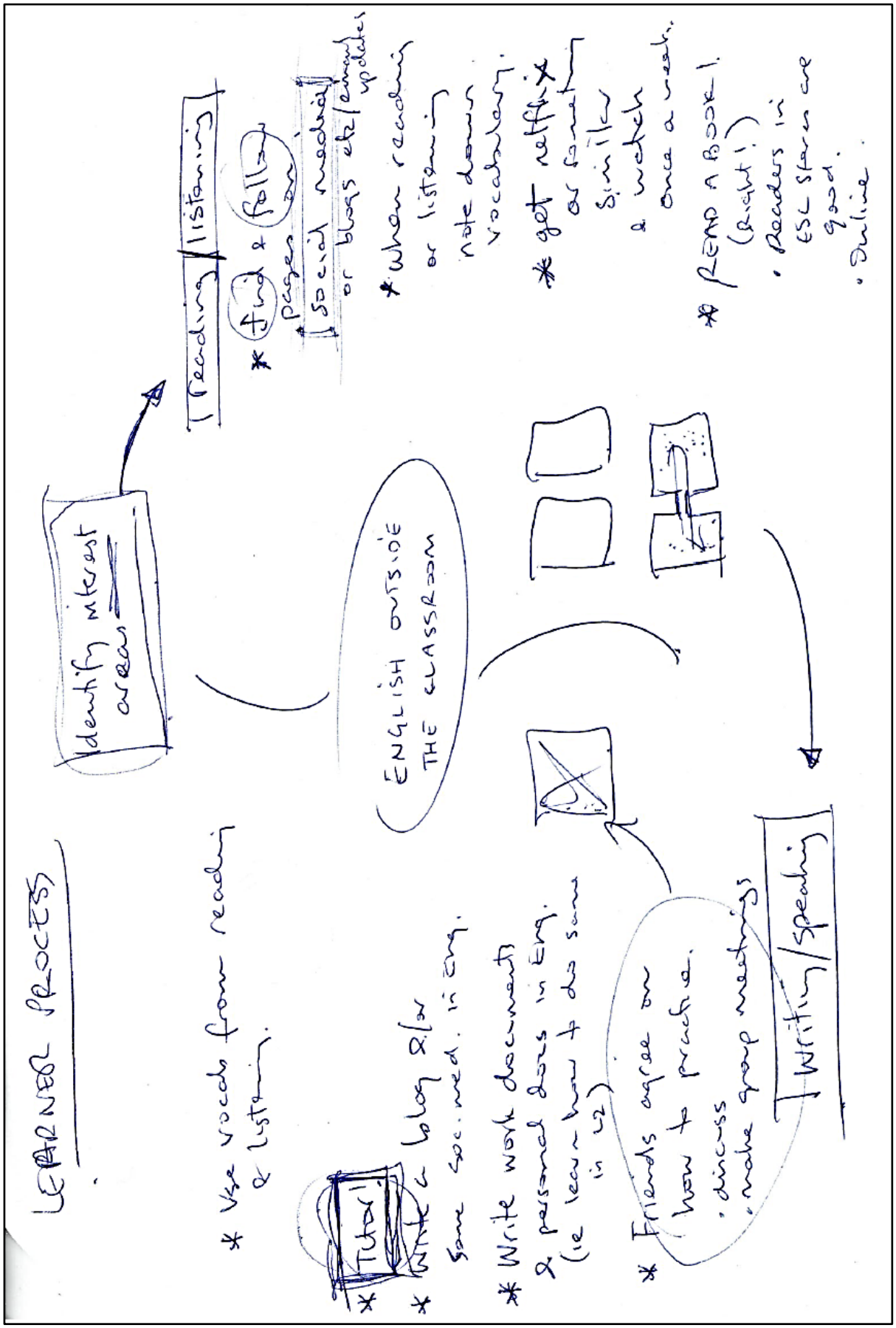


Figure 6.7. Dan's Mind Map 2



Dan was in the Learning Quality Focused group because his initial focus views on a good language learning environment emphasised the importance of students' self-awareness and the teacher's role in raising student awareness. He included a few question-mark symbols in Mind Map 1 to show that he did not know about or was still unsure about some of the elements required to construct a good language learning environment.

Dan expressed explicitly that his Mind Map 2 was different to his Mind Map 1. Mind Map 2 was drawn with the emphasis on the ways in which students take an active role in creating the environment and how teachers can guide them. He listed what the students could do to use English under the theme, *identify interest areas*. Students can start *reading and listening* to topics of interest, *find and follow pages on social media*, learn *vocabulary from reading and listening* to interesting sources, or engage in *writing/ speaking* about stories related to their areas of interest. Dan reconceptualised the teacher's role as *tutor* who monitors the *learner process* in the long term, as evidenced in his Mind Map 2. The question-mark symbols were also absent in Mind Map 2 which may indicate the development of his cognition and the resolution of certain queries that he had at the initial stage of the project.

6.2.3.1 Comfort zone VS. Self-awareness of L1/L2 use

Dan believed that students' self-awareness was the key for creating a good language learning environment. For Dan, self-awareness means that students are taking ownership of "what they are doing as a learner" (Interview 1). Dan explained that international students come to Australia with the intention to learn English, but generally end up finding first language (L1) friends with who they feel "relaxed". As such, he believed that they have "actually gone back to an L1 context" like in their home country. Dan stressed that the students have to be more self-aware of their language use, and "have to negotiate how much [they] speak English" by talking about this issue with friends. For Dan, this is "not

something that teachers can tell them to do". When commenting on the L1 contexts the students create as "a comfort zone", Dan pointed out that the students need to recognise how it affects the language learning process:

> We like our safe environment, a comfort zone, but we have to recognise that our comfort zone is not going to help us. We have to have our comfort zone, but our comfort zone has to still provide… um… still has to fulfil the purpose. The purpose is you gonna learn language. (Interview 1)

Dan emphasised that the students must be reminded that the purpose of their coming to Australia is to study English, even though they still may have a comfort zone. As a teacher, Dan reflected that this issue "tends to come up ad hoc like here and there" and that "it's never really been something that [he] thought broadly about". However, his participation in this project prompted him to think about a way that "this could be part of teaching as a whole rather than just as individual counselling":

> Maybe it should be more about actively encouraging that process of self-awareness. You know, awareness of your environment and negotiating your environment if you find yourself back in your L1 too much. How do you know when too much is too much? Right? So … maybe it's just something that needs to be talked about in a lesson. It needs to happen regularly in class. (Interview 1)

Dan highlighted the necessity of raising students' self-awareness of their language learning environment as well as what they are doing with languages and evaluate if their environment supports their learning.

The student data confirmed a lot of things that he thought about, and for him, "the real take-home message was that teachers have to encourage students to consciously approach their learning outside of the classroom" so that students do the same. He started thinking about "how to create tasks which are simple, but which encourage the students to participate in language learning outside of the classroom" (Interview 2). Dan implemented a vocabulary search homework task to increase students' language awareness outside of the classroom and to motivate them to want to learn more in this environment. His

students shared some of the vocabulary they learned in their surrounding context (e.g., at work) in class. Dan reported that it went well as the students enjoyed introducing and sharing new words with classmates.

Dan continued to develop the idea of raising students' self-awareness of their learning processes and negotiating their environments. By contemplating possible teaching approaches and reflecting on actual class activities he has just tried, Dan identified his active roles:

> I think the more we are involved with our students outside of the classroom, the more engaged they would be inside the classroom as a general [...] You have to bridge the personal, certain level of personal engagement, so that you can then um... use that as a basis for something you know. (Interview 3)

As expressed in the above extract, Dan suggested that teachers' personal engagement in the students' out-of-class learning experiences could actually also benefit the students' level of engagement in-class.

6.2.3.2 Students taking responsibility on learning

Regarding the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning, Dan considered that "there would be different relationships for different students" (Interview 1). He expressed his views on the students' rather problematic perceptions of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning using a scenario example of going to the gym:

> For example, for some students the classroom is like a gym. You go there and do your practice, and then you go out and you use it! Okay, that's sounds really wonderful, but that is not actually what they're doing. (Interview 1)

According to Dan, the students would probably say that they attend class "to practice [English] so that they can use it outside". However, he further claimed that, "they're not actually using the classroom as a practise-base, as a spring board to go out. They're using it as a way of not taking responsibility for their own study" (Interview 1). Dan argued that the students are "forcing themselves in the learning context (classroom) with all good

intention", but "without any intrinsic motivation, and [they]'re expecting the teacher to give it to [them]". However, for Dan, "the ideal situation is that the students are coming to you already with some idea about what they gonna be using their English for" (Interview 1). He believes that some students fail to link in-class and out-of-class language learning, even though they might think that they are adopting the right approach.

From the inquiry, Dan found that the key approach is to "link to their areas of interest" to help students to be aware of their own language learning. He posited that their perception of language learning beyond the classroom would then be different. Dan believed that students can link their interests to learning English beyond the classroom through social media, as evident in the extract below:

> So, once all the things start to connect, then I think they start to think; "Oh I'm learning something here", as opposed to "I'm just wasting time on social media." Or "I'm wasting time on watching TV." […] It's a slow transition. It's a transition where… you know, and you can waste time there's nothing wrong with that, as long as you've also got these things coming to your news feed. Then, you're naturally gonna read about them. You know you're naturally gonna be asking questions about vocabulary, because you're interested, and you want to know what that means! (Interview 3)

However, Dan also cautioned that the student must know why they are doing it. It must be their decision and not simply because the teacher told them to do so. It was his view that students' interests are the means to bridge their in-class and out-of-class learning experiences, and that it is the teacher's role to help students to see that learning language is part of their everyday life:

> Basically, if it's an interest, then the next step is about identifying ways in which to access information about that interest. In other words, getting them engaged in their own interest. In other words, helping them have a life. (Interview 3)

As such, Dan developed his teaching ideas about linking the two contexts by focusing on the students' interests so that they can perceive the link between their in-class and out-of-class lives, and start taking responsibility for their learning beyond the classroom.

6.2.3.3 Bridging in-class and students' life outside of the classroom

As previously discussed, Dan suggested that the level of teacher engagement in the students' lives outside of the classroom can, to some extent, help students to realise the link between their interests and what they do towards language learning outside of the classroom.

In relation to students' self-awareness of their learning, Dan developed his beliefs about the teacher's role as tutor to help them to recognise the meaning of in-class learning and its links to out-of-class learning:

> Students need to feel that the teacher is not just a teacher, but actually personally involved in their language development on a day to day basis, you know. Little by little. I think that's gonna make the classroom a far more engaged place. And it could actually reduce the feeling that the classroom is just a classroom. (Interview 3)

For example, if the teacher knows that a student likes to go motorbike riding on the weekend then the teacher can talk to him about his trips to new places and what happens there. For the student, his motorbike trips become part of the language learning process by talking about it English in-class. "It's how students will engage in the classroom if the teacher is engaged with them outside of the class" (Interview 3).

Dan also asserted that "traditional teacher-centred study location environments" should be adjusted to something more engaging for students. In this way, the students can relate their life outside of the classroom to the language learning process by "bringing the outside learning into the classroom" (Interview 3). For Dan, it has to be "a two-way bridge" connecting the two contexts. If teachers think about the connection between students' interests and learning English, as well as the learning processes, grammatical exercises for example can be changed in minor ways to "make [the students] see that outside the classroom is not just a non-study environment. In other words, it's changing their perception of the boundary between the classroom and the not classroom" (Interview 3). Further to the "two-way bridge", Dan stated that it cannot happen "if we're treating the

classroom like a traditional classroom. We can't expect the students to learn more outside the classroom" (Interview 3) without changing our teaching approaches.

Dan summed up that the key element to language learning outside of the classroom is student motivation. For him, motivation means that the students "have an interest, or have a purpose". Then, the teacher's job is "to help them not only identify that interest or purpose, but also provide structured ways and actual tasks" (Interview 3). Dan acknowledged that this approach is different to what the students are used to. He suggested that many students conceptualise 'studying' as something like "writing out grammar sentences" – his so called "studier" behaviour. In turn, Dan believed that teachers can "guide them about how to attack the texts that they're finding and how to activate any language that they're getting out of those texts" (Interview 3).

6.2.3.4 Dan's reflective practice

During the induction session, Dan shared his critical views on language learning environments. He suggested that the current students are surrounded particularly by positive and negative impacts of technology on language learning practices. This suggests that Dan's reflective practice could have started at the very beginning of the project.

Dan often demonstrated his sense-making processes when talking about his ideas during the interview. He would add his new ideas to the mind maps spontaneously while discussing. This may suggest that the interactions with the researcher when discussing the issues to arise during the inquiry stimulated or assisted his reflective practice and the development of his thoughts. Dan reconceptualised the teacher's support role as "a tutor" with very clear visions of how to navigate individual student learning processes. In fact, he wrote *tutor* and *learning process* on Mind Map 2 while talking about it, saying that "to encourage English outside of the classroom, it's all about the process. Yeah, that makes sense to me" (Interview 3).

The student data provided Dan with information about their activities and confirmed his beliefs. It reminded him of the students' needs and provided him with "some inspiration" for future teaching. This suggests that thinking about the issue of language learning outside of the classroom led Dan to give additional consideration to in-class teaching practices and developed his ideas about teachers' awareness of students' lives outside of the classroom. The researcher asked Dan if the discussion topic about language learning environments beyond the classroom was something new to him. As the extract below stresses, it was not a particularly new topic to him. Rather, he thought it was common sense, but worth making clearer, so that teachers would start thinking about the types of changes they could make in their daily classroom practices.

> I: So, the ideas you came up with now, is it something you were aware of before?
>
> D: Probably, but I didn't clarify. I guess there's a certain degree of common sense about what we're talking about
>
> I: Yeah, you teach English for them to be able to use it outside of the classroom.
>
> D: Exactly. But common sense is not always obvious. Yeah, I think it's good to make it clearer and obvious. This is really what we should be doing. Because once you clarify it you start thinking about how to change exercises. It becomes a very small part of … like some small grammatical exercises can be changed just in a little way. And if you do that 30 times then the students start to get the feeling that "oh… okay", you know. (Interview 3)

The dialogue above demonstrates the impact of reflective practice on Dan's awareness of common sense or everyday teaching practices and his ability to identify ways to improve his teaching practices.

6.2.3.5 Overall attitudes towards the project

Dan highlighted that both he and the researcher benefited from the learning project: he from the process of the inquiry, and the researcher from the insights she gained of his learning processes.

Dan integrated the students' survey and mind map activities into his evening class and developed it into a class discussion. Due to the small class size (only 4 students

attended), he asked the students to talk about what they do outside of the classroom while going through the questionnaire items together. The mind map activity was expanded to a group discussion on the following questions: 1) How do you improve your English when you have spare time in Australia?: and 2) How do you improve your English when you go back to your country? Dan was also observed to provide his students with advice about how to form a social group to practice English in a stress-free environment, even if they go back to their home countries.

Dan liked the way that the project was structured to include classroom activities with students:

> Really useful. I think the way you… my hat goes off to the way you structured the task. Because it wasn't just that you were getting information from us or from our students, it's that I was actually getting something from the process as well. Because I'm getting something from the process, then that's what you're getting from the process. In other words, yeah, I learn something, and you learned something, yeah. (Interview 3)

Based on the development of his idea to bridge in-class and out-of-class learning, also the teacher's role as tutor, Dan pointed out that teachers should consider the learners' long-term goals when implementing the curriculum designed by the institution for each course. He proposed that within the 12-week curriculum, a few minor assessment tasks could be implemented in between the weeks. For example, the students could be given the task to form a social group that talks in English outside of the classroom. At the end of week 12, the students write a reflection on the process of forming the group, how it worked or did not work, and why. Dan stated that this type of long-term goal setting, as well as encouraging the students to think about it, may guide them to the realisation that learning English is not only happening in the classroom. That is, it is occurring when they are socialising with friends beyond the classroom.

Students' self-awareness of their language learning beyond the classroom was the key concept emphasised by Dan throughout the project. Nonetheless, it was also a challenge for him to help the students to become more aware of how to increase their

English use in their daily lives. Dan's learning was evident in his actions taken in class. His thoughts demonstrated development in the way he identified the exact ways he would help his students to take ownership on their learning. In addition, it was evidenced in his re-conceptualisation of his role as a "tutor". However, although Dan's professional growth was evident, it is not certain whether it would be sustained into the future as he did not state clearly a future learning target.

Dan's story demonstrated that the learning outcomes were the result of his minute-by-minute reflective practice through the research process by linking student learning and teacher roles. Reflecting on "a common sense" approach that included discussion with students and taking action for improvement was the way in which Dan developed his understanding of the students' language learning contexts and how to navigate his learning.

6.2.4 Monika's Story: More Practical Class Activities and Continue Giving Advice

Monika is a teacher of Polish background with about 25 years of teaching experience. She holds a degree in Education and ESL qualifications. She used to live in England where she taught foreign languages: Russian and Polish, before switching to ESL teaching. She taught English in England for four years before coming to Australia seven years ago. Monika has taught only ESL in Australia and has been teaching at CBD College for four years. She has taught both Academic English/EAP and General English courses at this college. She has never previously engaged in any research projects.

Monika exemplifies the type of teacher who does not have an open attitude towards the use of student data. Monika's story reveals less about learning outcomes and more about the development of her beliefs. Specifically, her increased awareness of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning from an ecological perspective gained through the research process.

Figure 6.8. Monika's Mind Map 1

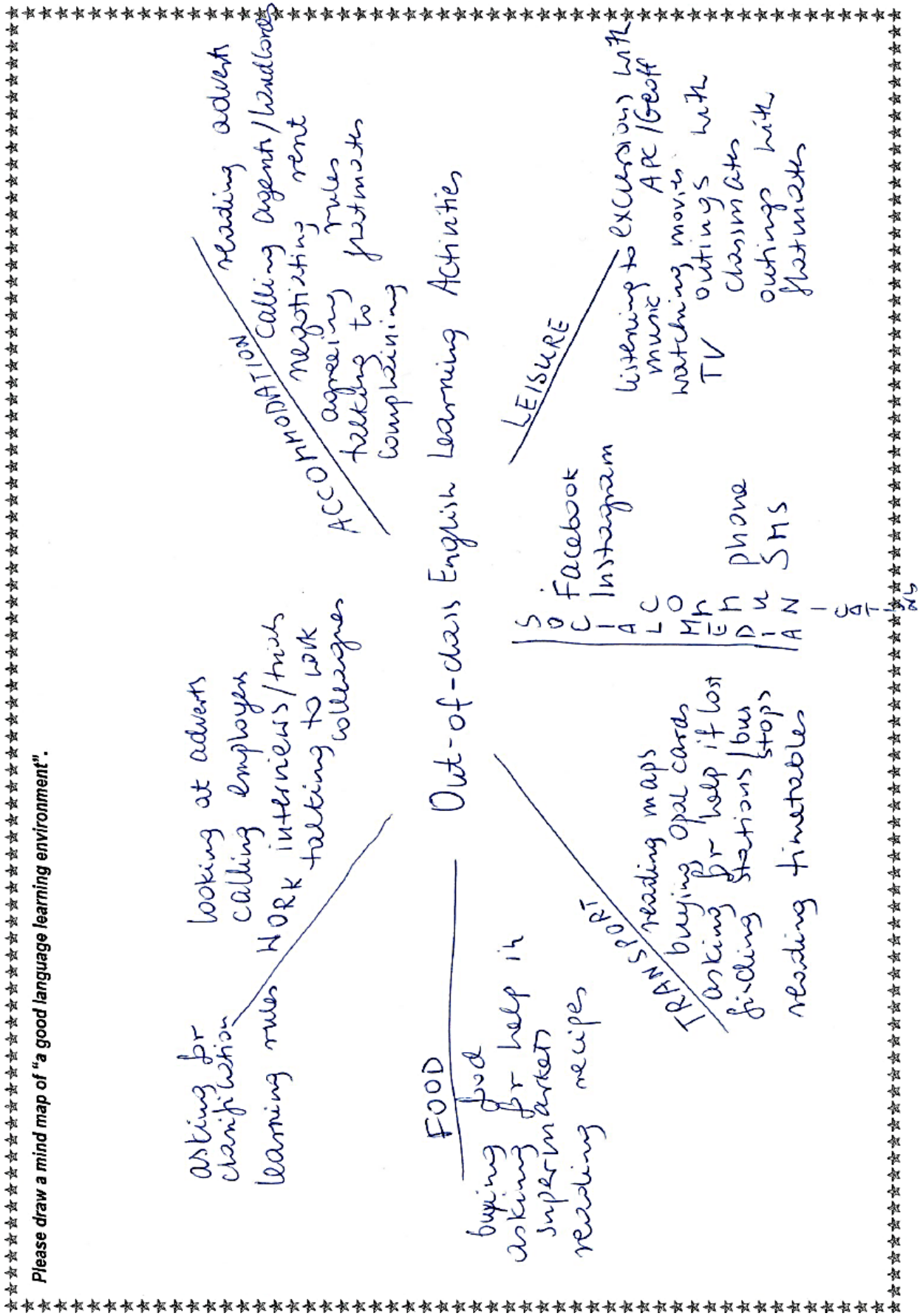
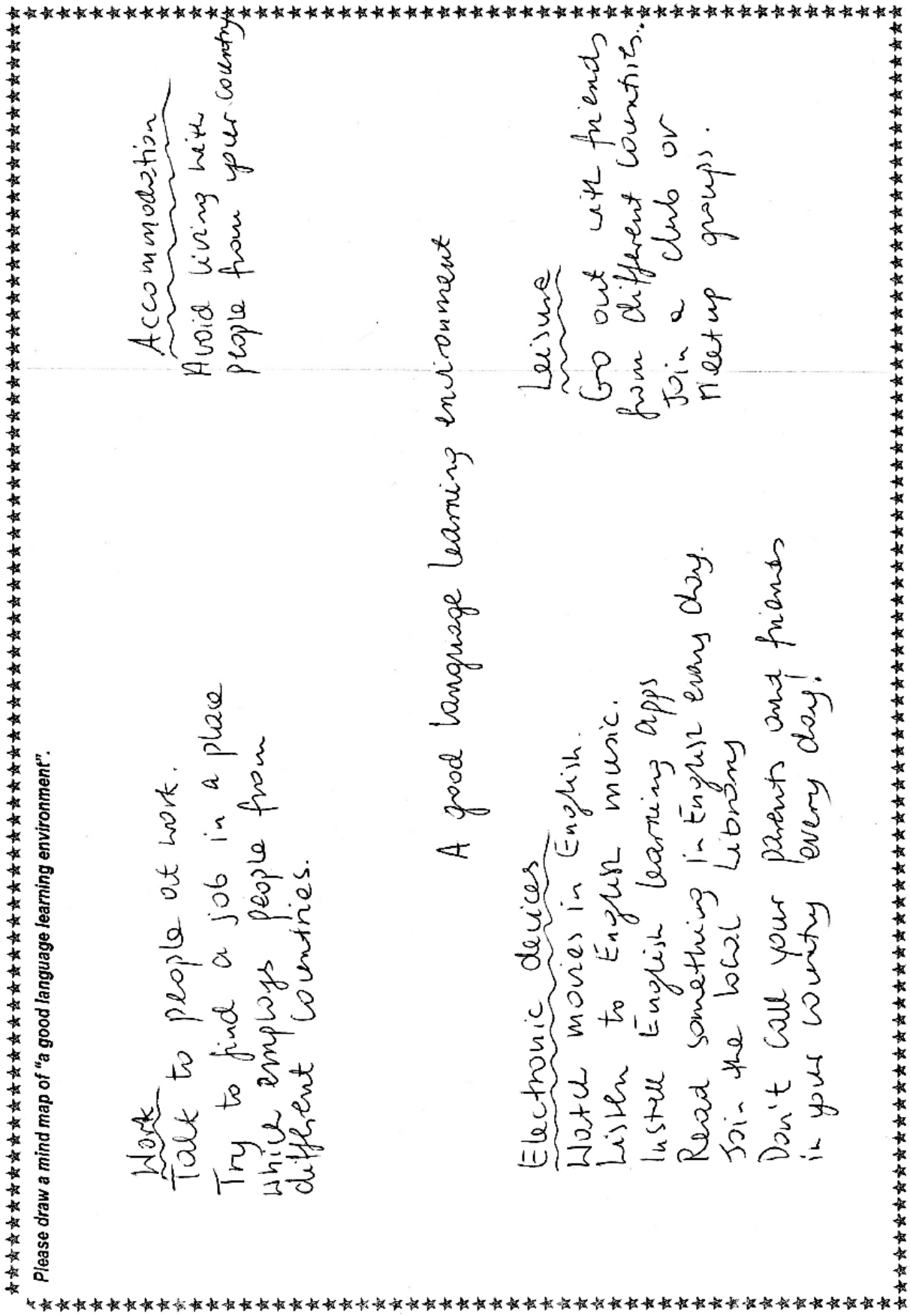


Figure 6.9. Monika's Mind Map 2



Monika was in the Out-of-class Focus group as she focused on out-of-class activities in Mind Map 1, with the central theme stating *Out-of-class English Learning Activities*. Compared to Mind Map 1, Mind Map 2 showed greater focus on student use of English outside of the classroom. However, the main components of a good language learning environment in the two mind maps remained similar. Monika also acknowledged that there was relatively little change, although she identified Interview 2 as useful and as having influenced her ideas:

> I: Yes. So, last time I showed you the summary of the questionnaire answers…
>
> M: Yes.
>
> I: Did it affect your mind map this time, do you think?
>
> M: Yeah, I think so.
>
> I: Yeah? Somehow.
>
> M: Yes, but I think the main areas are still the same aren't they? Work, accommodation, leisure.
>
> I: Yes. (Interview 3)

The central theme in Mind Map 2 by Monika was changed to *a good language learning environment* and *Social Media Communication* was transformed to *Electronic devices*. *Food* and *Transport*, as seen in Mind Map 1, were not included. As evidenced in the extract below, Monika explained that she put more emphasis in Mind Map 2 on the use of English while students engage in daily activities, which was not indicated explicitly in Mind Map 1:

> So, a good language learning environment is to talk to people at work, try to find a place which employs people from different countries. Accommodation; again avoid living with people from your own country. For leisure, I said go out with friends from different countries, join a club or meet-up groups. And for electronic devices, watch movies in English, listen to English music, install English learning apps, read something in English every day, and join a local library. This is a new idea that came to me the other day when the students were talking about it. (Interview 3)

Monika also added as a new idea in Mind map 2, *don't call your parents and friends in your country every day*. She did this after observing how it negatively impacted the English development of one of her students:

> I have one student, she sits outside for about 2 hours every single day and talks to her mother. I said to her yesterday, "do you really need to call your mother every day and talk to her for 2 hours?" She said "yes". I replied, "but you know you just surrounding yourself in Spanish? Your mother can't help you. Just text her to say I'm fine, everything is fine, I'm happy, don't worry me. Just say I'm fine and come back to class." She sat out today and talked to her mom for 2 hours, she is 25! (Interview 3)

Monika highlighted that students can easily create another L1 context through their telecommunication habits with friends and family in their country.

6.2.4.1 "A vicious circle" due to financial difficulties

From Monika's perspective, "economic circumstances" was one of the biggest factors to affect the students' language learning environments. She mentioned this factor in all three interviews. She suggested that "if [the students] have more money, they would do different things, and more activities", and tend to participate more in school events and do travelling rather than working many hours a week (Interview 1).

Monika also emphasised that the student's level of confidence plays a role in their preparedness to engage in out-of-class L2 language practices. Monika commented that some of her students "only mix with people from their own country, so they live in a house with people who speak the same language, and they work for people from their country". She continued, others "try to move away from that as they gain more confidence and language. They will try to mix and get the benefits":

> M: Oh, I mean, you know, there are a lot of factors which influence. Money is number one; they all struggle financially. They have friends, so they're sharing (accommodation) with friends and they don't want to move. They… maybe they enjoy their job even it's far away, so lots of thing which…
>
> I: Do you think they're scared to do new things?
>
> M: Yeah, possibly they're scared. I think so. They stay in a comfort zone, you know in their community. (Interview 1)

As described above, “a comfort zone” to Monika refers to a community created by the students for the purpose of finding (and sharing) accommodation and a job. It is usually created with people of the same nationality. Even if students have settled down, they tend not to get out from the community. However, Monika believed that if students are confident enough to use English, they could create a better environment for language learning.

Monika was also concerned that the students had had few language learning experiences in Australia due to their concentration on making money to survive. The student data confirmed Monika’s beliefs that they struggle to get out of a comfort zone and tend to associate with L1 speakers. She described this as “a vicious circle”:

> It’s **a vicious circle** isn’t it? They don’t speak because they don’t feel confident, and they don’t feel confident because they don’t speak. It’s not easy. I do sympathise with a lot of them, but sometimes I think they could do a little bit more, show a little bit more interest. (Interview 3)

Monika’s vision of student language learning environments and their practices was similar to Roberto’s view, although the terms they used were different. For Monika, development of linguistic confidence is the key if students are to get out of the viscous cycle. However, she also showed her understanding of how the students’ life situations were a factor, stating, “they feel safe and they get support from them (people from the same country), they can communicate”.

Monika’s personal history of being an immigrant English teacher appeared to have influenced her beliefs about her role to support students by giving advice to them on how to improve their living conditions. She remarked, “Maybe it’s because I’m also an immigrant here. I had to come and find my way here” (Interview 3). Monika gained insights into the students’ life situations and the difficulties they experience in trying to create their ideal language learning environments. Nonetheless, she hoped that they would try to be

more confident and to push themselves outside of their comfort zones to be more proactive in their use of English.

6.2.4.2 Non-academic support

The emphasis Monika placed on the supporting role of the teacher remained the same from the initial stage of the project until its conclusion. She emphasised the teacher's role in giving advice about the students' life circumstances (i.e., jobs and accommodation) which are relevant to language learning practices and skills development. She said that she "always encourage[s] them to try to work for an Australian company, better money and speak English" (Interview 1).

Monika emphasised that the advice she gave was also about "teaching them to survive". She commented during interview that she understands how difficult it can be to live overseas in a country where you do not understand the language; finding jobs, reading simple signs on the road, and how homesick the students would feel (Interview 3). Therefore, she suggested that the college should have practical lessons for students such as on safety issues by inviting police officers to be guest speakers (the College actually did once have such lessons). Again, for Monika, new teaching ideas and the role of the teachers are related to the students' language learning conditions and environments in their part-time job and accommodation contexts. Monika's beliefs that teachers can suggest to students to improve their quality of life as a way to improving their English language learning environment were strengthened.

6.2.4.3 Connecting in-class and out-of-class learning

Monika provided an example of how she draws students' attention to the use of particular points of grammar or vocabulary in their real-life situations as a strategy to connect their

in-class and out-of-class learning experiences. To understand politeness in English, she shared a story of what she talked about with her students:

> M: For instance, yesterday we had a lot of Latin students say, "What!?" It's typical when they first arrive, "What!?" I talk to them and (they) say, "What!?" I say, "guys, no "what", it sounds very rude".
>
> I: Yeah aggressive.
>
> M: Yeah, aggressive and rude in English. And I teach them because 'if you go out in the street, or you say to your employer, "what!?" (laughter), you won't last very long. Or to a customer in the restaurant; "what!?" (laughter). I hope they appreciate it and I hope they take it on board. (Interview 1)

For Monika, teaching practical uses of English in outside of the classroom contexts and drawing the students' attention to situations that they can relate to finding a reason to practise English are the ways in which she links their in-class and out-of-class language learning contexts. She believed that parstudents and knowing about their lives outside of the classroom are important for teachers so that they can provide appropriate suggestions and support to the students.

Monika reflected on the student data and her past experience of observations of students who improved their English through interactions with other classmates. In turn, she suggested that the teacher's role in creating in-class communicative activities are to help the students develop their confidence to communicate beyond the classroom:

> The teacher can do a lot, you know, to pair them up and put them with different partners and change partners for different activities and put them in groups. There's a lot one can do to encourage them; to makes them feel easier and welcomed, not isolated. (Interview 3)

Despite Monika's attempts to increase student awareness of the connection between in-class and out-of-class learning, she acknowledged the constraints to guiding and motivating some students. Highlighting the power of using digital devices for student learning, she shared her concerns about the students' addiction to using their phones and how it could distract them from learning:

> M: Mobile phones… they can do some, (but they should) think about, if they want to learn in class. We were watching a movie today. You can learn so much from watching a movie with

> subtitles and you can ask questions, no? Head down looking at a phone, 'What are you doing? What are you looking at?' I feel dizzy when I look at my phone for an hour and it gives me a headache! They are on their phones for 5 hours.
>
> I: Addicted
>
> M: It is an addiction, isn't it? You know, what do you do? It can't be good for your eyes…
>
> I: And thinking…
>
> M: Just mindless browsing isn't it? Completely mindless.
>
> I: Yeah.
>
> M: And posting… (They are) lovely kids. I love some of them, but you know friends on Facebook, it's like literally every 5 minutes surfing on Facebook. 'I'm eating here, I'm standing here' […] I just wonder why they do it, why don't they want to… Knowing that they don't have much English outside of school, you would think that they would want to learn as much as possible here, but they don't. Some do, but not everyone. (Interview 3)

Monika expressed rather emotional comments on her everyday challenge to teach those students who pay more attention to their phones than they do to learning English.

6.2.4.4 Motivating students is a challenge

Monika pointed to the students' individual differences in motivation to learn English, which relates to their construction of the surrounding environment for language learning. Monika suggested that some students "are eager to learn and ask questions"; whereas, others "are happy to just sit and kill their time, wait for the 5 hours to pass" (Interview 3). She shared the story of a student in her class with low-level motivation to learn:

> One student at the moment, only 20, but he has no interest what so ever. I'm not sure if he knows which city he is in. Honestly, no interest, nothing. He sits with his hoody on, or he disappears. The only time he wakes up is when I ask him about his music. He's into playing his guitar, he's got a big great animated one you know. I asked through his interpreter, his friend, today, "can he play?" But otherwise, just, you know, totally oblivious to the world. Doesn't understand anything, doesn't want to. (Interview 3)

Monika explained that the students' learning motivation was also related to their backgrounds. She indicated that based on her observations, some young students from (usually) Asian countries "who were just sent by their parents" do not seem to be as

motivated compared to those who have experience travelling or who have completed a bachelor's degree.

Although Monika developed some teaching ideas, she also expressed that she experienced constraints and difficulties when trying to do so. She thought of some "real lessons" that she could do in the future although she usually does not implement them:

> We could take them out, for example. I know one teacher who does that. She takes them out and does a real-life activity, you know, like going to the post office and buying things. She makes them buy things, write things, and send it home and, you know, things like that. You could go shopping, you could take them out on an excursion when they have to ask and… yeah so you can incorporate real life things rather than just in the classroom. (Interview 3)

Monika was concerned however about the costs involved in such out-of-class activities. As she suggested, some students are "reluctant to do these things because they cost money, the ferry or bus fee". In addition, "some students think that it's not proper learning if you are not sitting in the classroom doing grammar" (Interview 3).

Monika also expressed her intention to make her class more communicative by providing the students with many opportunities to speak. However, in terms of student out-of-class engagement, her perception of her role as a teacher was the same as at the end of the project as it was at the beginning. That is, she indicated her role was to give advice and to encourage the students to do more activities using English outside of the classroom. In addition, Monika expressed rather despondently that her main challenges were students who appeared to be happy to stay in their comfort zones and those with low-level motivation for language learning.

6.2.4.5 Ecological views as outcomes of the project

During Interview 3, Monika reflected that thinking about the students' learning environment in a broader and holistic way helped her to focus on what she can do to support students learning. This is expressed in the extract below:

> When thinking about what I can do and how I can improve, I think that by doing a mind map you certainly start thinking about all the different things they have to face outside of the classroom, and what can we do to help them. It's not just about teaching, but also making an environment for them to be able to use it, and outside of the classroom as well. Teach them practical things. Give them advice, give them information. Show them… some are very, you know, very good, they ask lots of questions. It's good to be able to guide them, give them tips. (Interview 3)

Monika also reflected on the benefits for her students:

> For the students, it's good because they can evaluate the effort (laughter) and see what they can do, or they should be doing, to improve their English. That is, not just coming to a class, but they can do other things. So, I think it's very useful to sit down and talk and, you know, just to focus on different things and different activities. (Interview 3)

This project led Monika to reflect on the learning opportunities beyond the classroom from an ecological perspective. Nonetheless, her emphasis on learning English in 'out-of-class' contexts, including at work place and at their accommodation, and her beliefs about her role as a teacher remained the same. There were no significant developments observed in her cognition and actual actions taken in her class as a consequence of the inquiry. Therefore, Monika's future teaching practices may not be different. In addition, she highlighted continuing queries and constraining factors such as student motivation, their lack of courage to step out from their comfort zones (creating "a vicious circle"), and their lack of awareness of their first language while using digital devices. Monika did not express an interest in undertaking further investigation or learning at the end of the project.

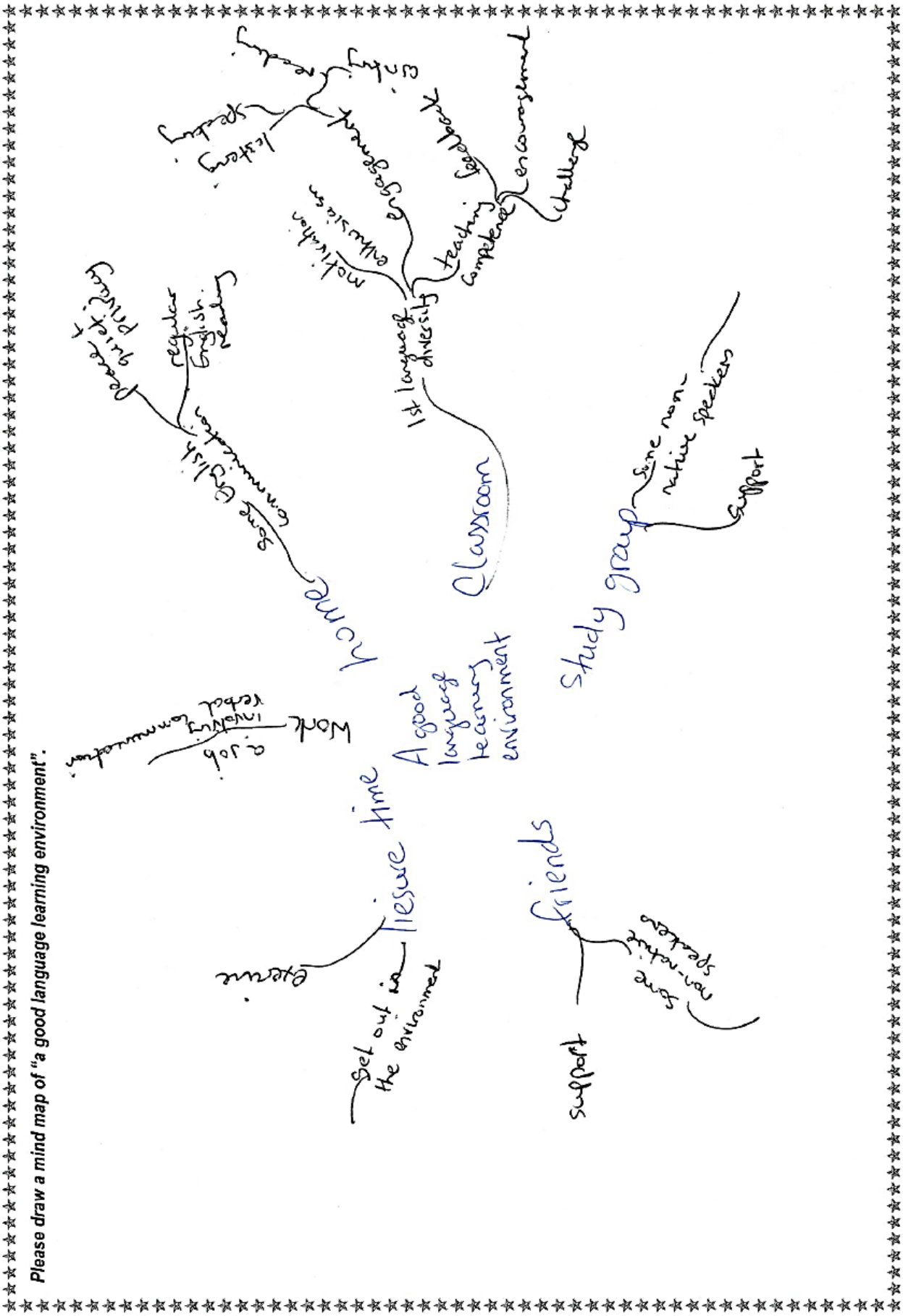
Monika's learning outcomes from the inquiry were to develop a more holistic awareness of student language learning ecologies. However, less agentic attitudes for the improvement of her teaching practices allowed her to maintain the same beliefs about her teaching roles. As such, she remained rather passive compared to Roberto, Jesse, and Dan. Monika's reflective practice also highlighted the constraints more than the implications.

6.2.5 Thomas' Story: Continuing Challenges and Queries

Thomas was a high school teacher in Australia for five years before moving to Japan to be an EFL teacher. He taught young adults and adults at a private school in Japan for about six years, and then came back to Australia to continue to teach English. He has been teaching at the ELC for about 16 years. Thomas used to teach General English, but recently, he only teaches Academic English courses. He did not have any prior experience participating in research projects.

Thomas also exemplifies a teacher who has a relatively closed attitude towards learning from student data. His story demonstrates how his negative emotions almost 'blocked' any learning by him in the research process, despite his active engagement in the research project.

Figure 6.10. Thomas' Mind Map 1



Thomas was in the In-class Focused group because he placed emphasis on in-class friendships and international friend networks in his ideal language learning environment. He suggested that this would provide students with support and opportunities to speak English beyond the classroom. Thomas believed that a "study group" was one possible way for the students to access support from each other for their language development and to solve problems. As stated by Thomas, friendships and networks were good dynamics to access useful information about living overseas in general, and to get "active, practical support, or even just … you know, if you're feeling down and you got someone to talk to, that sort of thing" (Interview 1).

Thomas drew Mind Map 1 only. He expressed the view that there was no need to draw a second mind map because his ideas about a good language learning environment remained the same.

6.2.5.1 Fed up with the school environment

Throughout the project, Thomas placed emphasis on the implications of the ELC environment for language learning. Specifically, he was concerned about the large number of students from mainland China negatively affecting the students' language learning practices beyond the classroom. For Thomas, the bond that exists among the students in the classroom and school is the key to enhancing students' language learning practices beyond the classroom.

When reflecting on the project, Thomas expressed a somewhat negative view of students' language learning practices and his teaching context. The extract below shows that his frustrations at what he describes as the "huge fundamental problem" of the student population coming predominantly from mainland China:

> You really do lose a lot of value having people in a classroom for a few hours together, for the purpose of improving their English, when all of them speak the same mother language. Sometimes it might be 1 or 2 others, and 1 or 2 is not really quite enough to make the

> differences. Only if we get 4 or 5 can it make a significant positive difference. To be honest, it's one of the things it's… you know I just totally fed up with working here. (Interview 3)

Thomas emphasised that having a homogeneous student cohort influences the learning and teaching dynamics in the classroom and made him feel "fed up with working" at the institution. In addition, Thomas perceived the current course materials to be problematic for his teaching:

> T: They're old and boring and needed upgrading. They're full of problems… so I'm just feeling pretty uninspired working here at the moment.
>
> I: So, it effects your working environment as well?
>
> T: Yeah definitely, yeah. I mean I used to enjoy working here quite a lot, um but I'm just going through really… negative phase in the moment. (Interview 3)

The two issues highlighted by Thomas reveal his negative emotions about the situations he cannot control. He strengthened his belief about the importance of having an in-class or school environment that has a mix of student nationalities to encourage rich out-of-class language learning practices via social interactions. The more Thomas realises the gap between his beliefs and the reality of the classroom learning environment, the more he seemed to highlight the difficulties he experienced working as a teacher, rather than his concerns about the students.

6.2.5.2 "There's not that much that you can do."

Thomas believed in the benefits of out-of-class language learning practices based on his observations of students who had developed their English skills through volunteer work with local people, for example. However, he did not appear to explicitly encourage and support the students to engage in these types of out-of-class activities. He conceded during interview that he "very rarely said something like who did you speak English to last night or on the weekend?" (Interview 1). He also acknowledged that he should do more in this

regard such as allocating time each day to talk to the students about their activities outside of the classroom to enhance their awareness of out-of-class language learning.

Through the process of inquiry, Thomas firmed in his beliefs about the importance of friendships and bonds among classmates because the students appeared to want to engage in interactions in English outside of the classroom. Thomas pointed out again that if students have good friendships or a network with other students in the class they have more opportunities to socialise together when outside of the classroom. During Interview 3, however, Thomas identified the same issue at the ELC; namely, of that the student population is comprised predominantly by speakers of the same first language.

> I think there is some more that could be done to get students a bit more engaged outside the classroom. But, um… I mean, there's not that much you can do if they're (ELC) not gonna do anything so there's not that much that you can do really. (Interview 3)

Although Thomas considered taking some time to talk to his students about their out-of-class language learning experiences, his beliefs about his role as a teacher did not appear to change. Thomas believed that teachers can assist students to create a strong class bond. However, as the extract above highlighted, he believed that the teacher's role in supporting student language learning practices beyond the classroom is minimal. For him, as long as the in-school environment remained the same, which is dominant by mainland Chinese students, students' language learning practices beyond the classroom would be limited.

In relation to using class time to encourage students to share their out-of-class language learning practices, Thomas talked about a Book Club Café. He felt encouraged to integrate this approach into the curriculum for every course at the ELC. He explained how it "often goes quite well" because it provides students with the "freedom to speak in English" in a relaxed environment on any topic that arises from their readings:

> The students tend to bring their own drinks and eats. […] That can go quite well because I found… one class particularly I have at the moment, I have 5 non-Chinese students which is a really good number. So, I can make 4 groups with non-Chinese person in an every group, and they all speak English for an hour, an hour and a quarter. Very little Chinese and they all

> talked about something, I mean mostly they talk about things they read, but they went off topic and talked about all kind of things but that was fine as long as it's in English. So, it's really, it's an excellent activity when it goes like that. (Interview 1)

Thomas' positive feedback on the Book Club Café activity was based on the fact that he could create student groups of mixed nationalities. This was stressed as fundamental to the successful enhancement of the students' uses of English. I asked Thomas if he could design a similar type of informal speaking activity around the topic of out-of-class activities. He did not think that it would work like Book Club Café however, stating that "if you say talk about your life outside of the class or talk about how you use English outside the class, it is kind of a narrow focus. I don't think it will take off. I don't think students will get interested in that". Alternatively, he asserted that the Book Club Café works because "they can read anything and so they find they can talk about anything, a big range of topics pop up and that stimulates its own inputs" (Interview 1).

6.2.5.3 Outcomes of the inquiry

During Interview 1, Thomas did not demonstrate a strong interest as a teacher in being actively involved in the students' out-of-class learning language. He did however show a great interest in learning about students' actual practices and their beliefs from the student data.

Thomas was surprised by the students' low-level participation in ELC online activities and engagement with the curriculum learning materials. The student data confirmed his initial belief about the importance of student friendships and network building to language learning. As a result, he indicated that he was more interested in seeing data from the students in HIS class (majoring Human Sciences-related subjects at university) as this class usually has a great mixture of student nationalities. He continued that it would be "interesting to see how many friendships happen among the people in those classes" (Interview 3).

As an additional activity, Thomas suggested a class discussion instead of optional individual interviews with selected students as there was spare time at the end of the course. He posited that we could hear more ideas from the students and they could also listen to each other's stories. Some students shared their stories of when they first arrived in Sydney. Details of the whole-class discussion were noted in the researcher's reflective journal:

> A whole class with 17 students made a circle including Thomas and I. […] One of the students started to share his experience of miscommunication at the gym because he couldn't understand what the staff said for the registration process. Another student shared a story about his accommodation. He lived with his uncle and cousins. They spoke English to him but not much interactions as everyone was usually in their own room. Another student also shared his accommodation story. He used to live with an Arabic family where he first felt comfortable talking in his first language. But he moved to a flat where his flatmates were native English speakers and he talked how it was a good challenge for him to develop his listening and speaking skills. Some other students also shared their stories about the difficulties they had communicating with people at shops or on the street. They felt stressed a bit as they didn't understand what they said. Vocabulary of Australian English and what they thought right (e.g., ketchup vs tomato sauce at Subway, British accent and Australian accent, also came up in their stories. (After the discussion session)

Thomas and the researcher reflected on the class discussion idea during Interview 3. The researcher asked Thomas if it was useful for him to hear the students' stories. He first replied, "I'm really not sure… yeah, I'm not sure". It appeared that it was not particularly useful for him, although he seemed to enjoy listening to his students' stories. Thomas also said having that time to share at the end of the course was good, and we could have done better to conduct a smaller group discussion.

Even though Thomas gained additional information about his students' lives outside of school and heard interesting stories of their language learning experiences, it did not appear to affect his learning or teaching practices.

6.2.5.4 Highlighting problems

Thomas' feedback on the whole project was generally not positive as is evident in the following extract:

> I mean, it's a…uh… a problem I've long been aware of. I don't think I learned anything particularly new. (Interview 3)

Interview 3 was more about identifying the constraints or problems Thomas had observed at the ELC rather than accessing his future visions or talking to him about his learning during this project. For Thomas, "the biggest problem" is that "almost all [students] are from the same country and they all speak the same one or two languages" (Interview 3).

Another of Thomas' concerns was that the level of difficulty of the course materials did not match the range of student language competencies apparent in a class. Thomas talked about "highly developed and complex" course materials for Academic English courses. He also suggested that the assessment system and grading instruments/criteria for the Academic courses were problematic in that "the assessment tends to control them a lot, so it tends to limit the flexibility of teachers to do what they want to do or to provide things that students enjoy more" (Interview 3). Thomas did concede however that these problematic aspects are hard to change.

Thomas thought of a few ideas to enhance student out-of-class interactions such as "taking them to places where they might encounter people in the community". However, as the extract below shows, he would not likely be implementing such interactions due to the tight teaching schedule for Academic courses:

> I mean, that's to take our students to places, that's a pretty radical move. It could work well, but it's a radical idea for them I think. I mean, doing something like that you could, there's no way I would organise one of these academic courses. There's academic course as I said really tightly organised around assessment. You know, from day 1 onwards. I mean, they try to build in some degree of flexibility, but not that much. (Interview 3)

The tight teaching schedule is also related to the limitations around linking student out-of-class language learning experiences to the course contents. According to Thomas,

this is because the materials for the Academic English course are not so directly related to "doing things outside the class". He continued, it is more about "reading things and writing essays, understanding lectures. It's not about sort of thing you can apply everyday life out there in a community really" (Interview 3). However, Thomas thought that he could "give [the students] challenging but achievable tasks and then get them do it and evaluate how well [they] did it". He concluded "it has to be some tasks in the real world" (Interview 3).

Thomas also expressed that not all students would be happy if he took them on an excursion or organised a BBQ or picnic. He commented, "that's what I want to do but some objected saying, I don't wanna go there. I've been there once" (Interview 3). As such, Thomas generated some new ideas, but at the same time, he also mentioned the limitations and constraints around implementing them. He repeated that the core problem is that "so many classes are completely dominated by one language group" (Interview 3) and he expressed that this problem discourages him from working at this institution. His continuous frustration appeared to have made him "fed up with" working in this current situation and he seemed to be almost 'burned out'.

6.2.5.5 Active engagement but no learning

Thomas openly said at the end of Interview 3 that the project was not really useful to him as he did not learn anything new to inspire his future teaching. This did not mean however that he was not interested in the student data, their stories, or participating in the project. Thomas showed interest in drawing the mind map as he liked to visually represent his ideas. It was noted in the researcher's reflective journal as follows:

> Thomas found the mind map drawing activity interesting. Then he wanted to try it with his current students, although he could do it with new students in the next block. (After Interview 1)

Thomas also showed active engagement and commitment to this project, not only in the planned research activities, but also by initiating an optional whole-class discussion. He

was always supportive and reachable, although he was especially busy towards the end of the course.

Thomas conceptualised possible learning activities to implement after looking at the student data. However, their input also led him to re-think and reflect on his current teaching environment and the salient issues in this context. As a result, Thomas highlighted the problems that had been on his mind for a long time, commenting that "it's been pretty painful and obvious to me for quite a long time that the students are not doing that much social integration into the outside world here" (Interview 3).

Thomas strengthened his beliefs with the same focus on the importance of international student friendships within non-L1 environments to expand their out-of-class social activities. Thomas ended the project by highlighting the constraints around the teacher's role in supporting student language learning environments including the course materials and other problems with the curriculum. Thomas did not appear to reconceptualise the teacher's role in supporting students' out-of-class language learning activities throughout the project. He did not show any future vision to change his teaching approach or to initiate further learning.

Thomas' story demonstrates the adverse impact on learning that can occur from the build-up of negative emotions and frustrations. Thomas most likely joined the current project with an intention to learn. However, his active engagement in the project and interests in student data, which navigated his reflective practice, were not enough to achieve learning as his negative emotions restrained him from perceiving teaching affordances in his context.

6.3 Attitudes towards the Inquiry and Actions in Teaching

6.3.1 The 'Open-to-Learning' Attitude Group

As the narratives of Roberto, Jesse, and Dan illustrated, the teachers who were open to learning from the student data first developed ideas about ways to support student learning, and then actioned these ideas in their teaching. Roberto implemented writing tasks as optional homework, Jesse brought her bilingual son along on a class excursion to provide an opportunity for her students to interact with him in English, and Dan created a vocabulary task as homework to increase student awareness of the language use around them. Other teachers in the same group; namely, Kathy, Luke, Molly, and Lisa also implemented one or two new class activities inspired by their understanding of the student data. Kathy, for instance, implemented a postcard writing activity whereby the students wrote to families or friends with the aim to connect their personal lives to English language learning processes. Kathy and her students took the postcard messages to the post office to send to their home country. In turn, this provided the students with an opportunity for real-life English language usage (e.g., writing messages and addresses in English, using English buying a stamp).

6.3.2 The 'Less-Open-to-Learning' Attitude Group

Monika, Thomas, and Maureen were identified as being less open to learning from the student data as their counterparts discussed above. This attitude towards the use of student data meant that the teachers did not initiate any new teaching actions in the classroom during the project. They did however share ideas about possible classroom exercises.

As such, the level of openness towards the inquiry appeared to have navigated the teachers' development of ideas for teaching practices. In addition, it influenced whether the teachers took action to introduce new teaching practices. On the one hand, by

implementing new activities in class, the teachers further developed their beliefs by reflecting on the impact of the new practice. On the other hand, those teachers who were less open to learning from the student data were less likely lead to renew their teaching practices and so develop their cognition.

6.4 Outcomes of Teacher Learning through the Inquiry

6.4.1 Development of Teacher Cognition

The development of teacher cognition appeared to correlate strongly to the teachers' attitudes and actions. Seven teachers deemed to have an open attitude towards the inquiry appeared to develop their cognition with more focused visions. This served to enrich their classroom practices and prompted them to reconceptualise their roles through their teaching action.

The development of cognition also empowered the teacher to pursue further professional development. At the end of the project, Roberto and Jesse clearly indicated their interests in further developing their skills as a teacher. Roberto was eager to learn more about effective ways to integrate technology into his lesson design. He indicated his belief that this would enhance the students' communicative practices and get them into the habit of independent learning outside of the classroom. Jesse identified curriculum development as the area that she would like to pursue as a new research project. In Dan's case, his future learning was not as clearly conceptualised compared to Roberto and Jesse. However, his vision to incorporate long-term language learning support into the curriculum design may be considered as the implications of his future learning. Kathy, Luke, Molly, and Lisa also did not specify their future learning goals. Nonetheless, they all reported a new understanding of their role as teacher in supporting student learning beyond the classroom.

In contrast, significant development in cognition were not observed in the teachers who entered into the project with a less-open-to-learning attitude towards the inquiry; that is, Monika, Thomas, and Maureen. Repeatedly mentioned by these teachers were the constraints and limitations confronting teachers in their effort to support students to create a better language learning environment.

Throughout the project, Monika emphasised her role in giving advice to students on how to find a job and accommodation where they can practice English and encouraging students to engage in more activities outside of the classroom. She also cited motivating students who seem to lack interest in, and awareness of, learning opportunities beyond the classroom as a continuing challenge. For Thomas, despite his interest in students' language learning practices outside of the classroom, the project reaffirmed his belief about the problem with the ELC learning environment. That is, that the dominance of one nationality among the student cohort negatively impacts the students' opportunities to expand their social networks for L2 use, and to interact in English with international friends outside of the classroom.

Maureen was similar to Monika. The ecological perspectives embedded in the inquiry offered Maureen "a deeper awareness" of out-of-class learning. They also made her "a little bit more committed to encouraging students and making them aware of the combination of the two (in-class and out-of-class learning)" (Interview 3). However, Maureen did not generate new teaching ideas. The teaching roles she mentioned in Interview 3 were the same as those she mentioned in Interview 1: to increase student awareness of language use outside of the classroom by "demonstrating" or "sampling a little bit of an activity that can be replicated outside of the classroom" in class.

6.4.2 Teachers' Situated Beliefs and Lenses

As Wheeldon and Ahlberg (2012, p. 7) stated, "our concepts are like lenses, or perhaps nets, through which we see the world around us while we gather new information". In this study, the teachers' conceptions of a good language learning environment and their initial beliefs acted as a lens through which to view the student data. The teachers' attitudes towards learning appeared to be closely related to their beliefs. In turn, their beliefs have been constructed by their learning and teaching history, personal lived experiences, and the climate of their situating contexts.

Narrative analysis helped to confirm that teachers' beliefs were shaped by individual past experiences and were situated in the particular contexts in which they reside. Teachers' beliefs, conceptions, and assumptions therefore acted as a filter or lens through which they looked at the new information. The lens can be considered as a negotiated, multi-dimensional identity or tool which guides the teacher towards the identification of a focus of learning. Conversely, they could play-out as a constraint if the teacher has long-held negative emotions.

The lens applied by each teacher helped to build their conceptions of language learning and teaching from their lived personal experiences. The teachers used their lenses to interpret the student data as well as the experience of participating in this project. Some engaged in personal reflection and explicitly expressed that their backgrounds influenced their way of thinking and teaching approaches. Some may not have been consciously aware of the influence of their past or current experiences on their beliefs, as well as on the environments that they are constructing.

Monika, polish background, a migrant to Australia, acknowledged that her experience of migrating to Australia might have influenced what she chose to care about the most; namely, the students' quality of life, working conditions, and financial issues. They are closely related to their construction of language learning environments, and a

better language learning environment leads to better living conditions. Roberto is also a migrant, however, unlike Monika, his main lens was 'being a learner of English overseas' at the initial stage. His interests in using technology to enhance student learning also appeared to be the lens through which he accelerated his professional growth for integrating technology in his class.

Lisa and Maureen's previous research experience appeared to have influenced how they engaged with the student data. Specifically, they tended to relate it to their interests and concluded that they needed to pursue further research. Jesse's long-time teaching experience to migrants showed the value they placed on of out-of-class learning through life experiences. Jesse had strong beliefs about the importance of life management skills as a foundation of language learning for young students living overseas. She reminded herself that her current students might not think about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning environments in the same way as migrant students.

Regarding Thomas, he expressed negative emotional accounts of teaching at the same institution for a long time. This resulted in continuous struggles, tensions, and frustrations due to the conflict between his ideal teaching situation and the current reality. His negative lens could have led him to refrain from taking action for further learning. However, the complexity of the relationship between teacher identity and teacher learning was evident in his motivation to join the project and his commitment in all the activities. Thomas actually showed genuine enthusiasm towards learning (Kubanyiova, 2012). As Tsui (2007) argued, professional development pathways during a teacher's career are non-linear and situated. It depends on the teacher's personal interaction with their situated contexts and "the ways in which they see the possibilities that can be opened up for their professional learning" (p. 1064).

6.4.3 Teacher Learning Cycles

In reference to Figure 2.1, Timperley's (2008, 2011) model of 'Teacher inquiry and knowledge-building cycles to promote valued student outcomes' in Chapter 2, this section discusses the stage in the learning cycle the teachers attained as a consequence of participating in this research project. The relationship between teacher agency and the development of teacher cognition as key elements involved in teacher learning are also discussed.

Figure 6.11. Achievement of teacher inquiry

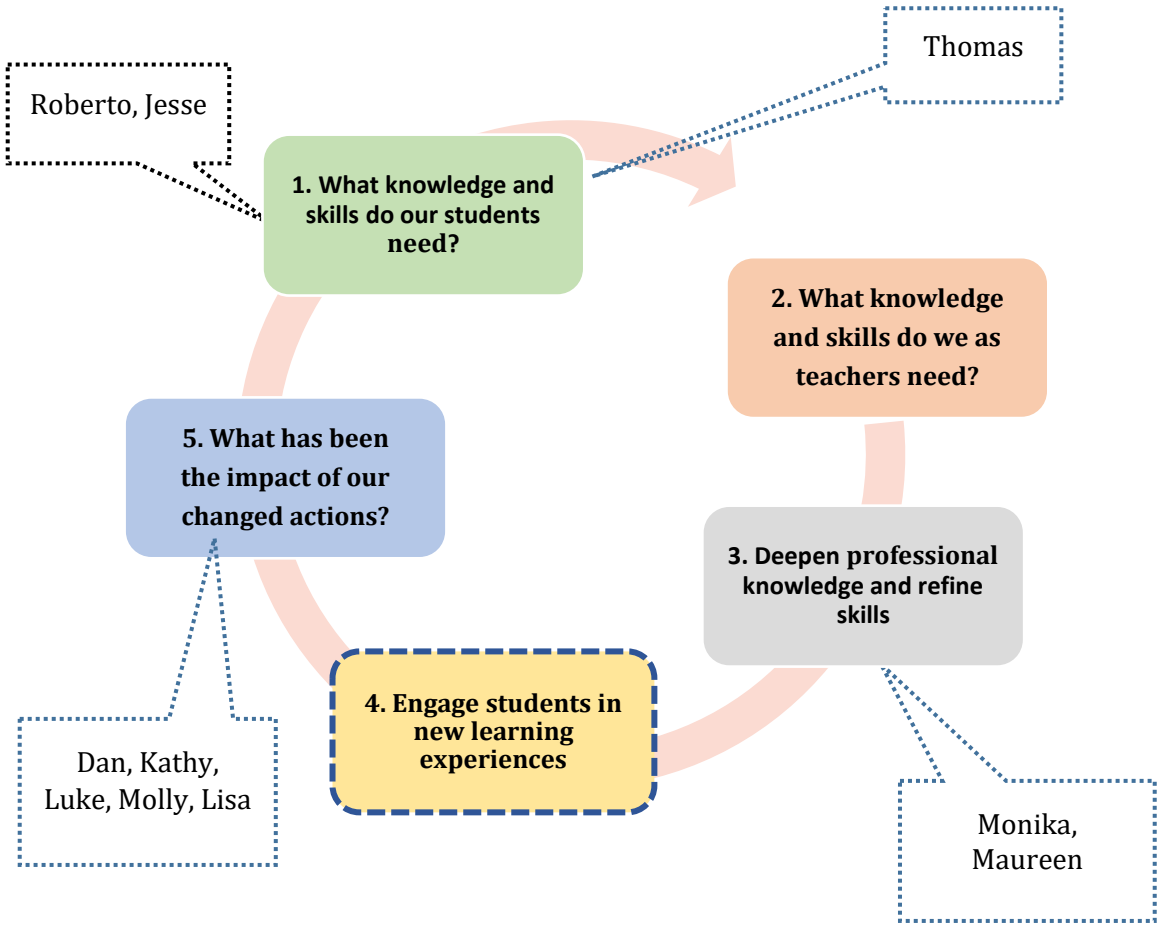


Figure 6.11 above illustrates the stage in the learning cycle the teacher achieved through the inquiry. Roberto and Jesse are considered to have reached a new cycle of teacher learning with implications from their learning. Another group, Dan, Kathy, Luke, Molly, and

Lisa are considered to have reached Stage 5 because they could evaluate their teaching actions in their classes. Monika, Thomas, and Maureen are considered to be at the early stage within the cycle – at around Stage 3 – as they did not attempt to implement any new teaching practices in their classes.

6.4.3.1 Potential of Iterative Learning Cycles

Roberto and Jesse are considered to be most likely to generate spirals of learning cycles because of their clear intention out at the end of the project to engage in future learning for professional development. The evaluation of their participating in the research project and reflecting on their self-reflection and thought development seemed to empower their learning and make it more sustainable.

Roberto expressed a strong intention to continue learning about effective ways to integrate technology into his teaching, with an emphasis on communicative practice as well as fostering self-study habits among students. Jesse expressed a future plan to join a research project to pursue the investigation related to curriculum development. Both these expressions imply a new cycle of learning for the teachers. It can also be regarded as sustainable teacher learning for continuing professional development.

6.4.3.2 Attained a Full Learning Cycle

The five teachers (Dan, Kathy, Luke, Molly, Lisa) at Stage 5 are considered to have successfully engaged in a learning cycle as there emerged new teaching ideas and materials as a result of reflective practice and learning through the project. As such, through teacher inquiry research, the teachers not only actioned their ideas in their classroom teaching, they also evaluated their actions. In other words, reflective practice was operating to support their learning in parallel to the learning cycle.

6.4.3.3 In the Middle of the Learning Cycle

Monika, and Maureen are considered to have achieved learning until Stage 3 as they did not demonstrate noticeable change in cognition or in their actions. Therefore, the two teachers appeared to be on a learning curve by constructing the learning cycle and by developing reflective practice.

Apart from the limitation of the project design, it may be considered that they were either taking a slow approach or resistant to changing their beliefs and practice (Kubanyiova, 2012). However, as Timperley (2008) argued, without teacher belief changes there would not be any change in classroom practices, and the cycle of teacher learning would not be attained. Stage 4, therefore, is the key stage to boost teacher learning.

For Monika, the project was "very good because it made [her] think". In particular, the mind map drawing allowed her to represent "all the different components of learning English" (Interview 3). However, Monika expressed rather defensive comments about her professional development by pointing to teacher interests or time limitations. She tried to generalise the tendency of teacher behaviour towards learning via inquiry research projects:

> I: Do you think that teachers can discuss more about this topic or do you think teachers can learn from each other more through talking about this issue?
>
> M: Teachers, in a staffroom?
>
> I: Yes, kind of part of professional development…
>
> M: Oh yeah.
>
> I: Do you think it's a good topic to discuss?
>
> M: Oh yeah… I think so, but you know it depends really on the teachers. You can't expect every teacher to get involved. Some teachers are not interested, and some are more interested. Our job is to teach really, so I think it's more on … it depends on the individual teacher what they can be…. You know. We can't impose them to get involved… much beyond teaching. (Monika, Interview 3)

For Thomas, his learning stayed at the Stage 1. He did not go beyond reflecting on the current students' language learning environments. Indeed, he affirmed that "it's a problem I've long-been aware of. I don't think I learned anything particularly new" (Interview 3).

Maureen's case is quite different from those of Thomas and Monika. Although she expressed a strong intention to pursuing a research degree, it was not the outcome of this particular project. During Interview 3, Maureen reflected on the project and said; "to be honest, I was thinking about this prior to (the current project), because I had done some work with it (the topic related to independent learning)". Her comments suggested that she felt she knew it all before the inquiry, and that she was saying to the researcher that she had learned something to be polite.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided the findings relevant to Research Question 3 (RQ 3). As such, the focus was on the following two aspects of teacher learning as a result of their participation in the inquiry into student language learning practices and environments:

a) What changes in cognition are observed?

b) How do teachers learn?

The narrative inquiry to examine the development of teacher cognition over time from the initial stage (Chapter 4), through the attitudes and responses to the student data (Chapter 5), and finally to their reflection on the whole research process as learning (in this chapter) provided insights into individual teacher cognition changes as part of the learning processes as well as outcomes of the inquiry.

Regarding RQ. 3 (a), changes in teacher cognition were observed in their increased awareness of student learning beyond the classroom. Specifically, the teachers were more aware that:

1) Students do a lot of out-of-class activities for language learning,

2) Students experienced difficulties trying to shape an ideal language learning environment, and
3) Students' life environments beyond the classroom (e.g., lack of time) impacted their language learning.

As a result of the inquiry, all teachers became more self-aware of their daily teaching practices, their students' learning ecologies, and the teaching environment from a wider perspective. Then, the teachers developed their conceptualisations of the teacher's role in student learning via in-class teaching.

Regarding RQ. 3 (b), four teacher learning processes were observed to occur throughout their participation in the teacher inquiry:

1) Self-reflecting on their beliefs and teaching practices and then giving expression to the outcomes in a mind map drawing.
2) Reframing their beliefs as they gained a better understanding of students' practices and perceptions of language learning beyond the classroom.
3) Clarifying problems and reconceptualising teacher roles to find solutions.
4) Formulating new beliefs into teaching actions for implementation as solutions.

The benefits of teacher inquiry into student learning to guide teacher learning were evident in all teacher participants. It was particularly evident in the way it increased reflective practice: self-reflection, reflection on practice, and reflection on the contexts in which they are situated. The two mind maps drawn by the teachers to represent their thoughts visually also increased their reflective practice. As a result, they could examine their own learning processes by comparing the contents of the two mind maps. In addition, the teachers' ecological perspectives provided them with a holistic view of language learning and teaching. Moreover, it increased their awareness of the relationship between in-class teaching and student language learning environments beyond the classroom.

However, the actual improvement in teaching practices as outcomes of teacher learning appeared to depend on the degree of agency demonstrated by the teacher. This included the teacher's openness to learning from student data, their capacity and willingness to implement new teaching actions, and their ability to identify how they can develop as professionals. The narrative case studies suggested that individual differences in the degree of teacher agency can influence the development of teacher cognition, and the level of learning achieved by the teacher. The findings also suggested that there appeared to be two paths of teacher learning for professional development:

1) Teachers strengthened their core beliefs by receiving student information which confirmed their beliefs. In this situation, no particular changes occurred in teaching practices.
2) Teachers integrated the student information into their beliefs, and then reformulated their teaching practices and reconceptualised their teaching roles.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings to emerge from the data analysis in relation to previous research studies and the broader literature. A brief summary of the key findings according to RQs is also reviewed below.

RQ. 1: What are ELICOS teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom? (Chapter 4)

- Teachers believed that students' out-of-class language learning practices were valuable for developing all language skills, particularly listening and speaking.
- Therefore, students' engagement in rich language learning practices through daily activities including technology-mediated activities is important.
- However, teachers believed that students lack sufficient exposure to English and self-awareness of their language practices and were uncertain as to whether surrounding environments supported language learning by the students.

Teachers could identify the gaps in their understanding by comparing their beliefs about the 'ideal' language learning environment and their assumptions about the 'actual' environment experienced by their students.

RQ. 2: How do teachers respond to students' feedback on their language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom? (Chapter 5)

- Some teachers responded to the student data by integrating it with their initial beliefs to develop new teaching ideas to better suit the students' learning needs.

- However, other teachers responded to the student data by using it to reconfirm their initial beliefs and to re-identify their concerns.

Two types of attitudes towards responding to the student data were identified in the teachers: those 'open' to learning from the data and those 'less open' to learning from the data.

RQ. 3: How does participation in an inquiry into students' language learning practices and environments influence teachers' cognition? (Chapter 6)

a) What changes in cognition are observed?

b) How do teachers learn?

Four changes in teachers' cognition were observed:

1) Teachers realised that students do a lot of out-of-class activities for language learning,
2) Teachers became more aware of the difficulties students experienced trying to shape an ideal language learning environment,
3) Teachers became more aware of their students' 'life environments' beyond the classroom (e.g., lack of time),
4) Teachers developed their conceptualisations of their role in student learning beyond the classroom via in-class teaching.

The following processes of teacher learning from their participation in the research project were observed:

1) All the teachers reflected on their beliefs and teaching practices and expressed the outcomes in a mind map drawing.

2) The inquiry led teachers to reframe their beliefs as they gained a better understanding of students' practices and perceptions of language learning beyond the classroom.
3) Some teachers clarified problems and reconceptualised teacher roles to find solutions.
4) These teachers then formulated their new beliefs into teaching actions for implementation as solutions.

As a result of the above processes, the teachers became more self-aware of their daily teaching practices and their students' learning ecologies. However, the outcomes of the learning differed among teachers depending on the depth of their reflective practice, openness to learning through the inquiry process, and the degree of teacher agency to act upon their new insights in their teaching context. There appeared to be two paths to teacher learning process could follow to facilitate professional development:

1) Teachers strengthened their core beliefs by receiving student information which confirmed their beliefs. In this situation, no particular changes occurred in teaching practices.
2) Teachers integrated the student information into their beliefs, and then reformulated their teaching practices and reconceptualised their teaching roles.

The following sections revisit the key findings in this study in relation to the stated research questions, and to discuss their contributions or challenges to the ideas and issues discussed in the relevant literature.

7.2 Teachers' Beliefs about Language Learning Beyond the Classroom (RQ. 1)

This section discusses how the teachers' initial beliefs about students' language learning practices connected to what we know from previous research.

The main finding to emerge from the visual representations of teacher cognition in Mind Map 1 was that teacher conceptions of 'a good language learning environment' canvassed three different areas of focus: Learning Quality Focused (emphasising student learning processes and attitudes), Out-of-class Focused (emphasising the settings and activities outside of the classroom), and In-class Focused (emphasising the importance of in-class elements). By complementing the Mind Map 1 analysis results with the interview data at the initial stage, an in-depth understanding of individual teacher beliefs about language learning environments beyond the classroom was achieved.

The findings related to teachers' initial beliefs created a conceptual framework that included four aspects of teachers' beliefs about language learning beyond the classroom: (1) students' language learning practices beyond the classroom, (2) students' attitudes towards out-of-class language learning, (3) the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning, and (4) the teacher's role to support student learning beyond the classroom. Given these aspects of teachers' beliefs were largely unknown, and have also been suggested as new research agenda (Reinders & Benson, 2017), the findings of the current study contribute to an overall understanding of teachers' beliefs about language learning beyond the classroom.

7.2.1 Students' Language Learning Practices beyond the Classroom

The teacher participants in this study believed that students should practice English through everyday activities in various settings and situations outside of the classroom, including digital activities such as social networking. Some teachers stressed the importance of students engaging in social activities with international friends or the wider community to increase opportunities for face-to-face interactions. However, teachers also believed that, in reality, the students lacked exposure to English as they tended to socialise with L1 speakers, and most likely used their L1 on their digital devices.

Toffoli and Sockett (2015) reported that teachers are aware of the students' increasing use of Online Informal Learning of English (OILE), but were uncertain about how to adapt their teaching practices. The beliefs expressed by the teachers in the present study supported the assertion that teachers are aware of the students' technology-mediated practices, as well as the rich opportunities available to students to practice English in diverse ways in their daily lives as international students. The finding of a gap between teachers' beliefs about ideal language learning practices and the reality of the students' actual practices provides a more in-depth understanding of teachers' beliefs about the students' language learning contexts.

7.2.2 Students' Attitudes towards Out-of-class Language Learning

The teacher participants believed that students' awareness of the learning opportunities available to them from using English more actively in their everyday lives is the key to creating a good language learning environment. However, the teachers also believed that most students were not very aware of their language learning affordances offered by the environment due to their frequent use of their L1 in their daily lives.

The importance of students' self-awareness of the environmental affordances for language learning and of designing affordances within their environments in the context of multilingualism and language teaching were discussed by Aronin and Singleton (2012). The current study revealed the ELICOS teachers' beliefs about its importance. Furthermore, variations in teachers' beliefs about aspects of the students' attitudes potentially leading to low level engagement in out-of-class language learning also provided new insights into teachers' beliefs specific to the international educational language learning context. The teachers believed that:

- There is a potential gap between students and teachers in their respective understandings how to practice language learning independently outside of the classroom,
- Some students prioritise passing exams, and
- Students are anxious about using English outside of the classroom because they think they lack linguistic and social competence.

7.2.3 The Relationship between In-class and Out-of-class Language Learning

Beliefs about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning shared among the teacher were emphasised in the potential gaps between student and teacher perceptions of the relationship and the challenges teachers experienced when trying to compensate for the gaps. There appeared to be two gaps: one in relation to the teachers' beliefs about the ideal relationship between the two domains and the reality of the relationship; and one in relation to the different perceptions between the students and the teachers. Regarding the former, the 'ideal' relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning contexts is that they are integrated/connected whereby students practice what they have learned in class in real-life situations beyond the classroom. The reality however is that the two domains do not appear to be connected because many students do not use English outside of school to any potentially beneficial extent. Regarding the latter, the perception gap between students and teachers emerges because students do not appear to recognise the link between in-class and out-of-class learning. As a result, the teachers were concerned that their efforts to bridge the two contexts did not appear to be working.

As there is a paucity of studies exploring teachers' beliefs about the relationship between the in-class and out-of-class language learning contexts, the present study largely contributes to our academic understanding of how teachers conceptualise the two different

learning contexts for students and the importance of the connection between in-class and out-of-class language learning. In addition, the criticism expressed by the teachers that students lack awareness of the links between the two contexts was again articulated when reflecting on their beliefs and contexts. The teachers' increased awareness of the need to connect to the two learning contexts enabled the teachers to think more expansively about their role in bridging the two contexts.

7.2.4 Teacher Roles in Student Learning beyond the Classroom

The participant teachers in this study believed that they could support student learning beyond the classroom by providing advice on language learning opportunities and strategies. However, some teachers also believed that a gap exists between student expectations on the type of support they require from teachers, and what the teachers intend to do.

Lai (2017) and Xu (2015) asserted the importance of teachers having access to student voices to "confront them with the divergences in student expectancies and their own views" (Lai, 2017, p. 134). This is integral to raising teachers' awareness of the prominent role they play in enhancing student self-regulated language learning behaviours beyond the classroom. Indeed, the type of support from teachers largely influences the quality of out-of-class language learning engaged in by the students and their creation of a beneficial language learning environment. The present study found that teachers were aware of their role in promoting student self-regulated language learning. However, the teachers seemed less aware of the students' actual outside-of-the-classroom language learning practices and environments, and somewhat uncertain about the effectiveness of their advice to students on how to improve their language learning outside of the classroom.

Toffoli and Sockett (2015), and Nakata (2011) found that teachers perceived they had a rather limited role in student learning outside of the classroom, and lacked confidence in their pedagogical skills to bridge in-class and out-of-class language learning. The authors claimed that the teachers' perceptions of a limited role can manifest as almost having no interest in students' out-of-class language learning activities. In turn, the authors argued that teachers should demonstrate strategies to utilise technology for learning through in-class activities or incorporate student choices of appropriate materials for learning outside of the classroom into their lesson design. The teachers in the present study shared their strategies for bridging the in-class and out-of-class language learning contexts for the students. For instance, Molly and Lisa often took the students on excursions so that they could interact with local people. Roberto used learning apps for class activities, and Kathy, Luke, Monika, Dan, and Maureen often share stories with students about their weekend activities and so on. The teacher participants appeared to play an active role in linking the two contexts through their teaching strategies.

Some teachers in the present study also expressed the belief that it was challenging at times to connect student out-of-class language learning practices and the in-class learning activities. The challenges they experienced were not due to a lack of skills or ideas on how to integrate in-class and out-of-class learning experiences, but the possible perceptual gap between teachers and students on the nature of the relationship between the two learning contexts. This goes beyond the Toffoli and Sockett (2015), and Nakata (2011) suggestions on the role of the teacher.

7.3 Teacher Reponses and Attitudes towards the Inquiry into Student Learning (RQ. 2)

The mind map 1 activity prompted the teacher participants to reflect on their beliefs, and Interview 1 was used to talk through the mind maps with the teachers to clarify their beliefs before providing them with access to the student data. The teachers' responses to

the data showed how they interpreted the new information, their level of interest in using the data, and the depth of their reflections on teaching practices.

The teacher responses are further discussed below, focusing on three aspects particularly: students' language learning practices and environments, student awareness of their learning, and the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning (7.3.1). The teacher's role in supporting out-of-the-classroom language learning by students was another aspect in the teacher beliefs framework identified previously and is discussed in relation to teacher attitudes (7.3.2).

7.3.1 Responses to Student Learning

No studies to date have investigated teacher responses to student feedback within the teacher inquiry process. As such, the findings reported in this study on this topic largely contributes to the field of teacher learning research and how teachers learn through inquiry.

7.3.1.1 Students' language learning practices and environments

The teachers responded to the following students' language learning practices and environments beyond the classroom as identified in the literature:

1) Students balance or complement in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences by finding particular functions in each context (Lai, 2015).
2) Students form personalised environments with their choices of tools and platforms for technology-mediated activities in their environments (Sockett, 2014; Williams, Karousou & Mackness, 2011).
3) Students mainly use familiar digital platforms for social networking purposes because they are accustomed to using these platforms in their home countries (Chang & Gomes, 2017).

Analysis of the teachers' responses to the students' questionnaire answers revealed that they have a good understanding of the students' actual language learning practices and perceptions of language learning. In particular, the teachers showed interest in the students' aspirations and expectation to engage in more spoken interactions outside of the classroom. The teachers also responded with deep concern about the students' actual low level of exposure to English speaking interactions outside of the classroom.

The teachers' responses to the students' mind maps revealed that they now better understood how individual students form unique, personal language learning environments. Indeed, whereas the teachers once underestimated the central role of social networking sites in the students' lives, they now appeared to have a good understanding of the powerful role of such sites.

7.3.1.2 Students' self-awareness of their learning

The teacher participants in this study originally believed that students lacked awareness of the affordances for language learning provided in the broader environment. This belief was challenged by the student data. The data presented an overall picture of students' awareness of the opportunities for language learning in the environment, how they evaluated their current language learning practices, and their beliefs about desirable language learning activities and environments. Identifying this gap contributes to an understanding of the extent to which teachers may lack understanding of the level of self-awareness demonstrated by students of the language learning affordances offered in the environment.

The participating teachers in this study reframed their initial beliefs about students' awareness and attitudes towards the environmental language learning affordances discussed in the literature. Understanding the social dimension of learner autonomy, the impact of one's interactions in one's social world, and learner attitudes towards language

learning outside of the classroom are crucial. Nonetheless, the capacity of students to reap the benefits of the language learning environment (i.e., to design new affordances or to take action to exploit existing affordances) appeared to be challenging for them.

Teachers at both research site institutions expressed their concerns about the tendencies of students to create a comfort zone in which they mainly engage with L1 speakers. The teacher participants also gained a better understanding of how the students struggle to fulfil their goals to engage in more spoken interactions in English outside of the classroom; that is, constructing a niche to make better use of the language learning opportunities. Some teachers, Dan for example, combined the student information with his initial beliefs to design new pedagogical interventions as solutions. Other teachers such as Monika and Thomas strengthened their initial beliefs by re-identifying their concerns.

7.3.1.3 The relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning

Teachers in this study responded to the following aspects of students' perceptions of language learning beyond the classroom identified in the literature below.

1) It is "the learners' perceptions and interpretations of their environments that will affect their learning" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 192)
2) Social interactions via community participation are behaviours of a niche construction (Steffensen, 2013).

After engaging with the student data, some teachers reframed their initial beliefs about the possible perception gaps between teachers and students: in particular, perceptions of independent/informal/out-of-class learning. Steffensen (2013) asserted that social interactions were valuable opportunities for language learning as well as a niche construction. However, the teachers in this study responded that the students seemed only to *perceive* the affordances of face-to-face social interactions rather than *act* upon the affordances.

This perceptual gap also reflects the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning. The teachers in this study strengthened their beliefs that the two domains should be integrated/connected, but also recognised more clearly that students do not seem to view the link between the two language learning contexts as teachers do. As Williams and Burden (1997) pointed out, students' perceptions of the relationship between the two contexts in Sydney affects their learning in the environment. Roberto and Jesse particularly discussed the transition stage of international students who hold particular beliefs about language learning processes shaped by previous learning experiences in their home country. When placed in a new environment, the students need to understand the different relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning or reconfigure their language learning ecologies. It is particularly challenging for teachers to support students in this endeavour and to close the perceptual gap by linking the in-class learning activities to out-of-class language learning objectives.

The perception gaps related to the relationship between in-class and out-of-class learning demonstrated by the teacher participants is a new area of research interest. This is particularly important in study abroad and international educational contexts because a better understanding of the perception gap between teachers and students regarding these two language learning contexts will improve their capacity for the mutual construction of a better language learning environment beyond the classroom.

7.3.2 Teacher with an Open Attitude to Learning from New Information

The teacher attitude towards learning from the new information; namely, those who were 'open-to-learning' and those who were 'less-open-to-learning' emerged as relevant to the teacher's preparedness to change. An open-to-learning attitude was associated with the teacher identifying new teaching practices based on their developed understanding of

student learning. Conversely, teachers who were less-open-to-learning from the student information did not articulate new teaching ideas.

Richards (2015b) pointed out that a teacher's core beliefs and personal philosophy are sometimes resilient to change. The author subsequently argued that positive professional development changes are facilitated by two types of prompts: "adaptation of theory" (p. 123) by making connections between new concepts and then reflecting on practice outcomes; and "theorizing from practice" (p. 123) to gain a better understanding of student learning and language teaching through teacher self-reflection.

The present study adds an additional prompt for positive changes in teacher professional development; namely, teacher openness to learning from the student data. This prompt is associated with the teacher's willingness to conceptualise and implement new teaching ideas, which are prerequisite elements to developing their beliefs about the different roles they have as a teacher.

The open to learning attitude demonstrated by Roberto, Jesse, and Dan guided them towards planning new teaching actions based on the student information presented to them. This was despite the teachers already being aware of some of the ideas articulated by the students and not always having their core beliefs challenged. Conversely, teachers who were 'less open' to learning from the student data, for example Monika, Thomas, and Maureen were not particularly inspired to conceptualise and implement new teaching actions in the classroom.

7.4 The Development of Teacher Cognition and Teacher Learning Processes (RQ. 3)

This section discusses the key findings related to teacher changes in cognition, developments in teaching beliefs, and the changes/development process as it unfolded during the inquiry in relation to the findings and issues reported in the broader literature.

7.4.1 Teacher Conceptual Change (RQ. 3-a)

The present study supports Kubanyiova's (2012) discussion of the complexity of teacher change. According to the author, the complexities involve teacher agency, prior beliefs and heuristics, and emotional dissonances. The nature of these change aspects resulted in some teachers experiencing less development in their thoughts and classroom practices.

Unlike the Kubanyiova's study, the teacher participants in this study engaged in teacher inquiry research activities rather than a formal course. Therefore, the focus of teacher learning was partly drawn from the teachers' existing beliefs and queries. However, the inquiry into student learning did not always result in a change in beliefs for each teacher. The current study contributed insights into individual teacher cognition development in relation to teacher attitudes and action in teaching as part of the learning process.

The present study suggested that an ecological perspective of student language learning environments enhanced the teacher reflection on teaching practices and provided a better understanding of their situated contexts. As Kubanyiova (2012) states, understanding the learning environment through reflection and adapting an ecological perspective are integral to teacher learning and for navigating them towards a more expansive vision of teaching. The teachers enhanced their awareness of students' language learning practices and environments outside of the classroom and its relationship to in-class learning activities. Teacher conceptual change in this study was therefore associated with the teachers' reconceptualisation of their role in each student's language learning ecology rather than their conceptions of a language learning environment.

7.4.2 Processes of Teacher Learning and Contributing Elements (RQ. 3-b)

The combination of teacher mind maps and teacher inquiry into student learning provided the teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their teaching experiences and to reframe

their beliefs in a new light. As identified in Chapter 6, the degree of teacher agency, which could be affected by teacher emotions, was influential in generating a cycle of teacher learning through inquiry. This section further discusses the teacher learning process and its contributing elements; namely, teacher agency and emotions, the teacher's reflective practice, and the stage of the teacher's career.

7.4.3 Teacher Agency and Emotions

The present study contributes insights into the different degrees of agency demonstrated by the teachers, which is closely related to teacher learning. Teacher agency is, as Toom et al. (2015) defined:

> [a] willingness and capacity to act according to professional values, beliefs, goals and knowledge in the different contexts and situations that teachers face in their work both in classrooms and outside of them. (p. 616)

The emphasis was on the teacher's capacity to take actions in teaching in light of the affordances and constraints apparent in their contexts.

The degree of teacher agency was characterised by the extent to which each teacher formulated new teaching actions based on the outcomes of their inquiry. Teachers who demonstrated an open-to-learning attitude towards the student data could identify possible solutions to teaching issues, and then formulated methods to implement their solutions as future teaching actions. Teachers who demonstrated a less-open-to-learning attitude did not formulate new teaching actions to implement in their classrooms. The present study thus confirms the importance of teachers having an open attitude or 'willingness' towards developing new knowledge and transferring the new knowledge into teaching practices.

White (2018a) argues that a complex and dynamic interplay of agency and emotion exists within a teacher's lived experience. The author further posits that both positive and negative emotions can influence teacher agency and teaching practices. White asserted

these claims based on the main findings from her study which analysed teachers' emotional narrative accounts of classroom events. The present study also showed that teachers who experience negative emotions when teaching appear to have their teacher agency constrained and thus their potential to initiate a change in teaching actions. The negative emotions reported by Thomas and Monika emerged from their feelings of frustration towards the aspects of their teaching that they could not control. For them, the low levels of student engagement in social activities and motivation to learn English appeared to have influenced the degree of their teacher agency. As such, the present study concludes that negative emotions can constrain teacher agency in terms of 'willingness' to learn from new information, and to change teaching practices.

7.4.4 Reflective Practice

Reflective practice was a fundamental exercise throughout the project. The study empirically supports the effectiveness of reflective practice for the development of teacher cognition with evidence of increased teacher awareness of new teaching approaches and their implementation.

Evidence of teacher *reflection-in-action* was seen from the beginning of their research participation. Their critical views on students' language learning practices and environments suggested that the teachers became more aware of past teaching queries and issues they experienced within their teaching contexts. The teacher narrative activity (i.e., talking to the researcher about their reflective thoughts) was a sense-making process to increase *reflection-on-action* by having the teachers reflect on their everyday teaching, emotions, constraints, and future visions, as well as reconfiguring their identity in the context in which they are situated (Barkhuizen, 2015; Liu & Xu, 2011).

The mind maps were a useful tool to increase such reflective practice. In addition, the inquiry into student learning enabled the teachers to connect their beliefs as depicted

in the mind maps to student learning. This also expanded their reflective practice to reframe their beliefs, articulate their concerns, and then formulate ideas for future teaching actions. As such, the current research contributed a possible methodology to promote teacher reflection on practice. The mind map drawing also offered a pathway for the teachers to directly reflect on their beliefs, which, according to Richards (2015b) is the starting point of reflective practice. Farrell (2017) suggested that teachers should be encouraged to think on "what they consider important about what they do" (p. 29). In turn, the research project for reflective practice should be conducted "with teachers, by teachers, and for teachers so that they can become enlightened about their practice" (Farrell, 2017, p. 29). The current study facilitated the teachers' active engagement in reflective practice through the teacher inquiry approach focusing in their ecological perspectives. In other words, the present study demonstrated a methodological process for teachers to engage in extensive reflection on both their teaching practices and their teaching contexts. In addition, reflective practice at the initial stage of teacher learning provided the teachers with the opportunity to explicitly map out their existing beliefs as a personal conceptual framework for further learning. Outcomes of the reflective practice by the teachers such as the implementation of new teaching methods and the identification of future learning goals for professional development appeared to correlate with the degree of teacher agency for learning.

This study highlighted the role of teacher agency to engage in *reflection-for-action.* Reflection-for-action emphasises teacher preparation for future teaching actions through the knowledge gained from teaching experiences. As Akbari et al. (2010) described, a reflective teacher is "one who critically examines his/her practices, comes up with some ideas [on improving teaching performance] to enhance students' learning, and puts those ideas into practice" (p. 212). However, reflection-for-action was demonstrated only by teachers with a higher degree of teacher agency. This suggests that the stage of reflection-

for-action seems particularly vital if teachers are to become reflective practitioners. Hence, reflection-for-action is not achieved naturally, but is the development of teacher agency.

Wedell (2013) suggested that teacher reflection is one of the invisible containing layers of context. This is because it is through reflection on action in combination with a better understanding of the teaching context that teachers develop their confidence to make teaching decisions and grow as professionals. This study supported Wedell's (2013) perspective that paying greater attention to the temporal dimension features of the educational environment is important to the development of one's teaching practices relevant to the context.

7.4.5 Learning Cycles and Teacher Career Paths

This section discusses the teachers' achievements during the learning cycles in relation to teacher learning and professional development. Notably, this study identified the degree of teacher agency as a key factor to impact their learning. In addition, the value and meaning assigned to what was learnt by the teacher, with them being experienced or otherwise, might have affected the teacher's attitude towards adopting new concepts and information. Tsui (2007) identified five phases of teacher professional development:

1. Discovery/exploration;
2. Stabilisation;
3. Experimentation and diversification;
4. Self-doubt/reassessment; and
5. Disengagement (pp. 1053-1054).

The phases are non-linear and situated in the teachers' personal interactions within their contexts. A current phase in the professional development of the teacher is identified by "the ways in which they see the possibilities that can be opened up for their professional learning" (Tsui, 2007, p. 1064).

Seven teachers (Roberto, Jesse, Dan, Kathy, Luke, Molly, and Lisa) may be considered to be in an 'experimentation and diversification' phase in relation to implementing new teaching ideas. The objective of this phase is to enhance their effectiveness as teachers as a result of their heightened awareness of the issues emerging from the inquiry. The teachers also reconceptualised their roles and teaching approaches to support students to link in-class and out-of-class learning experiences. This was accomplished by reframing the teachers' understanding of their role in bridging in-class and out-of-class language learning.

Conversely, two teachers, Thomas and Monika, may be considered to be in a 'reassessment' (borderline 'disengagement') phase as evidenced in their "decline in professional investment and enthusiasm" (Tsui, 2007, p. 1054). Thomas' disappointment about having little impact on the students' social engagement outside of the classroom was clearly evident. In Maureen's case, she may be in a 'discovery' phase in relation to understanding the multi-faceted nature of classroom teaching. This is because she had only three years of experience in teaching English as a second language. For example, she indicated that the challenging part of teaching international students for her was communicating with them as they were from a different cultural background.

7.5 Teacher Inquiry Research

The two methodological approaches used in the present study contributed the following positive effects on teacher learning:

1) Teachers' reflective practice and active engagement in the project were enhanced through the teacher inquiry process into student learning, and
2) The teachers' ecological perspectives supported a new way to understand student learning and reflection on the connection between learning and teaching.

The following section discusses the effectiveness of the teacher inquiry research design as employed in the study to facilitate an innovative approach to language teacher research aligned with to an ecological framework.

7.5.1 Teacher Inquiry into Student Learning

The present study empirically confirmed the effectiveness of teacher inquiry as a method of teacher research. It provided the teacher participants with the following benefits as discussed in the literature:

1) Active engagement in a research project to explore student language learning practices and teacher professional development (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).
2) A better understanding of student learning and language learning contexts involving their students (Beck & Kosnik, 2014).
3) 'A research perspective' into their classroom (Paran, 2017).

As such, this study strongly supports teacher inquiry as a way for teachers to learn via an exploration of student learning and reflection on in-class experiences. Not unexpectedly, there were differences in the learning outcomes for individual teachers as a result of their participation in the inquiry. In turn Timperley's (2008, 2011) model entitled 'Teacher inquiry and knowledge-building cycles to promote valued student outcomes' was useful for navigating the teachers' learning process throughout the inquiry, and also for measuring their level of achievement. If elements such as collaborative learning among teachers or a project design based on teacher initiatives are endorsed, further learning with a higher degree of teacher agency could have been achieved. However, as Vieira (2007) discussed, an inquiry initiated by the researcher was helpful for guiding teachers to explore insights into student learning without the uncertainty of dealing with student data. The groundwork is then laid for the next inquiry into a particular query identified by the teacher.

In addition, this study demonstrates that research studies for a higher degree, not necessarily an in-service training programme, may provide teachers with experience in participating in a research project and how to construct a teacher inquiry project, collaboratively.

7.5.2 Ecological Views for the Inquiry

The ecological view highlights the interrelationship between all constituting components of language learning and teaching in a particular context. As such, it was promoted as a framework of inquiry into student learning beyond the classroom in this study. Presenting the ecological view to the teachers through a mind map activity and focusing the interviews on the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning contexts provided the teachers with the following two benefits as previously discussed in literature:

1) Increased teacher awareness of the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning (Lai, 2015b; Lai et al., 2015) with particular attention on bridging in-class and out-of-class learning experiences (Eskildsen & Theodórsdóttir, 2017; Grau & Legutke, 2015; Reinders & Benson, 2017; Sockett, 2014).
2) A better understanding of the relationship between the student learning experiences and their environment (Ellis & Goodyear, 2010).

As such, the importance and benefits of the teachers' ecological views are discussed in the literature, although strategies on how to acquire them are not been suggested. The present study contributes a method for promoting an ecological perspective through its integration into the research project.

In terms of the benefits of the ecological view to the inquiry, this study demonstrated that the new perspective increased teachers' awareness of the students' lives beyond the classroom and the interconnections between all the constituting elements of student language learning environments, including their teaching practices. The

ecological view then guided teachers to reconceptualise their roles in student learning, particularly in relation to pedagogical interventions to help students to link in-class and out-of-class language learning.

Kubanyiova (2014) suggested that teachers should be inspired to envisage their possible selves and the environments they could create to enhance student language learning success. Through deep reflection on practices, teachers can become energised towards a deeper level of engagement in the practical implications of their in-class teaching activities. The present study can also inspire teachers to use their ecological visions to reflect on their beliefs about how to create a good language learning environment. Moreover, specific focus can be given to the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning and teaching. In addition, an exploration of student learning by teachers based on an analysis of student data (i.e., survey and mind maps) supported a deeper level of reflection.

Ruohotie-Lyhty (2016) explored the extent to which teachers understand their teaching environments, exercise their agency, and how their construction of the environment affects their beliefs from ecological perspectives. The author argued that "[i]t is not the environment directly, but the individual teacher's construction of the environment that significantly affects the teacher's beliefs" (p. 170). In her study, teachers who perceived the working environment to encourage trying new things developed their ability to utilise the teaching affordances in the environment. Conversely, teachers who perceived the environment as restrictive were inclined to pursue traditional teaching practices. Based on the findings of the current study, it may be argued that changes in teacher perceptions of the environment can impact the extent to which they change their actions to reconstruct the environment, rather than the environment affecting the teachers' beliefs. However, as argued earlier, the negative emotions experienced by teachers can influence the degree of their agency to change the teaching environment.

Regarding teacher roles, Choi and Nunan (2018) suggested that teachers should encourage and support learners to take control of their learning beyond the classroom and become "active participants in their own language learning and activation" (p. 60). The present study highlighted that recognition of this responsibility by the teacher was a consequence of his or her ecological perspective; through understanding the struggles experienced by the students to make use of their environments and to take control over their language learning practices. Furthermore, some teachers developed their understanding of the teacher's role in student language learning beyond the classroom and implemented new ideas with the clear purpose to link in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences.

The significant contribution of the present study to the use of mind maps as a strategy to promote the development of an ecological perspective by teachers is discussed in section 7.6.

7.5.3 Teacher Learning and Ecologies of Practices

The present study contributes to a theoretical understanding of the concept of ecologies of practice. The positive effects of the ecological view on teacher learning through inquiry into students' language learning practices provided a clear illustration of language teachers' ecological practices.

Kemmis et al. (2014) advocated that teacher inquiry into student practices supports teacher learning to improve teaching practices. Teacher learning is regarded as one of the five components in the ecological configuration: 1) student learning, 2) teaching, 3) professional learning, 4) leading, and 5) researching. This study highlighted the link between student learning, professional learning, and teaching practices. Promoting the ecological views of teachers increased their awareness of their teaching practices, and how they reconceptualised their roles within the student language learning ecologies. As such,

the ecological framework contributed to the identification of the teachers' ecological practices within the broader concept of ecologies of language learning and teaching.

Some teacher participants in this study reconceptualised their teaching role based on their new awareness of the students' diverse out-of-class language learning practices using various materials, and the growth in affordances for learners through the inquiry. This study confirmed that promoting teacher inquiry into students' language learning practices influenced the change in their teaching practices. Although not given focus in this study, such changes in teaching practices could potentially affect student learning. As such, the ecology of language learning and teaching mechanism was clearly observed.

This study provided an ecological vision to teachers without using academic terminology. This is in contrast to the promotion of the ecological notion via formal instruction (e.g., a lecture, workshop) by foregrounding academic knowledge as part of a teacher education initiative. Hence, this study offers an alternative use of teacher inquiry for teacher education that is a less academic and more practical approach to the promotion of ecological views among practitioners.

7.6 Visual Method

The benefits of employing visual materials as an innovative and alternative research tool to glean rich qualitative data are discussed in this section. The present study's use of mind maps contributes to:

- a novel method for eliciting information during interview, and
- the exploration of issues under investigation from ecological perspectives.

7.6.1 Visual Materials for Interview Elicitation

The present study confirmed the effectiveness of using mind map drawings as a visual research tool for the collection of rich data.

The benefits of using visual tools for data collection have been highlighted in the literature as a way to:

1) access participants' different representations of their daily experiences (Bagnoli, 2009),
2) increase the validity of the analysis when examining teacher cognition (Glegg, 2018; Liebenberg, 2009; Wheeldon, 2010), and
3) stimulate the thoughts and ideas of interviewees as alternative ways that go beyond traditional interviewing methods and in how the interviewees brainstorm and express their thoughts (Copeland & Agosto, 2012; Crilly et al., 2006; Hathaway & Atkinson, 2003; Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009).
4) "conceive of an unobtrusive or perhaps less intrusive measure" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012, p. 13).

The mind maps drawn by the teachers assisted them to not only engage in a deep level of self-reflection, but also to stimulate and guide the explanation of their beliefs to the researcher during the interviews. As Mavers (2003) has pointed out, the visual representations in a teacher's mind map including choice of text and how the concepts are arranged appeared to be "both a means of making meaning for themselves and of making themselves maximally understood by others" (p. 19). Mind Map 1 not only assisted this researcher to generate and examine visual representations of teacher cognition of a good language learning environment at the initial stage, it also offered the teachers a new way to see the language learning and teaching landscape in a holistic way by explicitly reflecting on their beliefs. Some of the Mind Map 2 drawings by the teachers did not demonstrate a typical structure or style with Nodes and Links. Rather, they depicted their thoughts in more creative ways with diagrams or a picture/illustration.

The present study also highlighted the value of using mind maps drawing prior to participant interviews as a powerful vehicle for self-reflection. Having the teacher

participants draw two mind maps was also beneficial because it prompted them to reflect on their initial reflections and thus examine their thoughts at different stages of the research process. In turn, this provided the teachers with a platform from which to make sense of the changes in their beliefs.

Liebenberg (2009) suggested that the use of participant-generated materials as data sources can increase the participant's sense of control over the research process and facilitate self-reflection to enhance the relevance of the data. Rose (2016) also pointed out that such self-reflection promoted teacher awareness of their everyday teaching and taken-for-granted assumptions, and helped them to "articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain implicit" (p. 316). The present study confirmed the effectiveness of including this type of participatory method (i.e., mind maps drawn by the participants) in the course of teacher inquiry to support deep level self-reflection while actively engaging in the research project.

7.6.2 Spatial Representation of Thoughts

Mind maps served as a useful tool for spatially representing ideas and concepts using Nodes and Links (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, (2012). Therefore, combining this research tool with an ecological framework that emphasise the interrelations of elements within the language learning environments proved advantageous for promoting ecological views to the teacher participants.

Equally, the mind maps drawn by the students proved very useful as data sources because they provided this study with rich information that was not limited around the theme *Activities to improve my English in Australia*. Some student mind maps conveyed their underlying thoughts and beliefs about language learning. In some cases, the visual or message-like expressions by the students explicitly represented their feelings and emotions; reflections on, and evaluations of their experiences; self-rules; or what had they

determined for future learning activities. The students' mind maps, therefore, demonstrated the complex dynamics of their language learning experiences as an international student under the given theme. As such, the mind maps provided the teachers with vivid and vibrant images of the students' language learning practices and how they shape their personal learning environments. Mind maps may therefore have further potential applications in qualitative research in the field of Applied Linguistics.

Analysis of the mind maps in this study was performed by assigning a level of importance of the concepts identified by the participants (starting from Node Level 1 as core concepts and then expanding to Node Level 2 and more for secondary concepts). This represents a novel analysis method as no other examples of this approach are apparent in the current literature. It was thus my attempt to identify a more effective way to manage the mind maps as visual data. As such, this thesis arguably contributes a systematic way of analysing mind maps for use in other similar studies.

7.7 Overall Reflections of the Discussion

7.7.1 Individual Differences and Patterns of Teacher Learning Pathways

The research findings reported in this thesis highlighted that the teacher participants differed in many ways regarding the aspects for inclusion in their ideal language learning environment. Such differences are understandable given that the teachers are human beings with their individual views and preferences. The teachers conceptualised new teaching practices in different ways even though they all believed in the importance of bridging the gaps between in-class and out-of-class language learning. There did however appear to be a correlation between the teachers' openness to learning from the student data and their learning pathway for professional development. In addition, the learning process by the teachers was broadly related to the degree of agency demonstrated by the teachers. As such, the likelihood that the teachers would achieve a positive learning

outcome could, in general, be measured according to two aspects (openness to learning attitude and degree of teacher agency), in addition to their decision to participate in this type of teacher education programme.

Given the key factors to influence teacher learning identified above, consideration should in turn be given to the following questions: How can teacher agency be fostered?; How can teachers be encouraged to be open to new concepts and to assimilate new information?; and How can a teacher's willingness and capacity to take action in their situated context be supported? For researchers, a teacher's willingness to learn is demonstrated in their voluntary participation in the research project. However, it is much more difficult to observe the teacher's willingness to learn from their participation in formal teacher education programmes. The present study showed that a teacher inquiry into student learning is one positive way to facilitate teacher learning. The results of the study also proved however that there is no 'one size fits all' approach. As such, a number of further queries into language teacher learning and professional development have emerged as a result of this study.

7.7.2 Differences Between the Teachers in the School

Two different types of institutions were selected as the research settings for this study; namely, a university-based English Language Centre, and a private language learning institution located in downtown Sydney. This selection decision was based on the expectation that the language teachers in different institutional contexts would have different views about students' language learning environments. However, the findings to emerge from the data analysis did not show significant differences between the institutions in terms of the teachers' beliefs about the value of students' out-of-class language learning experiences, the development of teacher cognition, and the learning processes observed. Teachers at both institutions identified similar gaps between in-class and out-of-class

learning by their students, although the reasons for the gaps were different. Students' perceptions of independent language learning outside of the classroom was an issue highlighted by the participating teachers from both institutions and subsequently targeted as issue for further consideration.

The only observable context-specific difference between the two teacher cohorts regarded their beliefs about the purpose of their second language instruction to students. In general, the ELC is primarily focused on helping the students to gain entry into the university course of their choice. The ELC teachers therefore appeared to be most concerned about the gap between the characteristics of in-class and out-of-class learning. For these teachers, the goal to help students develop the required language skills for entry into university (i.e., to pass the university entrance exam) is different to the goal to developing the students' language skills via informal learning outside of the classroom. Both outcomes are equally important to the ELC teachers but may not be to the ELC students.

The CBD College teachers observe the main difficulties experienced by their students as finding the balance between working to live (most students enrolled at the college are working) and language learning through everyday living activities. The teachers believe the students are more likely to prioritise working above developing their language skills.

7.7.3 Generalisability of the Findings

This section discusses the extent to which the findings of this study are generalisable to other language learning contexts. The qualitative approach adopted for this research investigation focused the teachers' beliefs about the necessary components of a fruitful language learning environments. Such components include the importance of face-to-face interactions outside of the classroom and student tendencies to create comfort zones with

L1 speakers. In turn, they may be general beliefs among ELICOS teachers or teachers working in similar study abroad/international educational contexts in other countries where students are exposed to the target L2 in their daily lives.

The sample in the present study also represented the diversity of English language teacher backgrounds in the ELICOS sector and may reflect aspects of multilingual/multicultural environments in which they work. For example, Roberto and Monika were migrants to Australia and thus English was not their L1, and Maureen was a second-generation Lebanese migrant. In other words, not all teachers who teach English in Australia are so called 'native' English speakers, notwithstanding that some international students would have come with the expectation of being taught by Australian native speaker of English.

Some aspects of the findings reported in this study are generalisable to language teachers. In terms of the teacher learning processes via reflective practice and an inquiry into student learning, the findings to emerge in this study may be generalised to possibly all teachers across the world, not only those working in the ELICOS sectors or international educational contexts. The effectiveness of teacher reflection on everyday teaching practices and of updating their knowledge of student learning beyond the classroom through inquiry should also be generalisable to language teachers in other contexts. In addition, the findings pointing to the importance of fostering teacher agency and of their openness to learning can apply to teachers in other contexts.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the significance of the key findings reported in this thesis in relation to the findings reported and issues discussed in the broader research literature.

The use of ecologies of language learning in this study as an overarching theoretical framework contributed to our understanding of:

- Individual teacher's awareness and beliefs about language learning and teaching beyond the classroom. Individual teacher's core beliefs functioned as a lens for new information.
- Teachers' attitudes towards learning is a crucial element for the development of beliefs and change in teaching practices.
- How teachers learn and develop their cognition through inquiry and reflective practice to reconceptualise their teaching roles.
- Teacher learning processes in relation to the degree of teacher agency, and negative emotions as constraints to teacher learning.
- Theoretical frameworks related to the role of teacher ecological practices; that is, learning through an inquiry into student learning to improve in-class teaching practices within the ecologies of language learning and teaching.

The present study largely supported the view that teacher inquiry is an effective method of research for increasing both teacher participation and reflective practice for learning. As a methodological consideration, the use of visual materials (mind maps in particular) to elicit the participants' thoughts and ideas during the interviews, and to promote their ecological perspectives, largely contributed an innovative method of teacher research in the field. Having identified the effectiveness of these visual methods, the potential for using this type of methodological design for similar research studies were suggested. Overall, the present study contributes a degree of generalisability to an understanding of ELICOS teacher cognition of language learning environments beyond the classroom. Understanding of the key factors in the process of teacher learning for professional development could apply to other contexts other than ELICOS or the international educational context.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This chapter presents the contributions of the present study based on the key findings discussed in the previous chapter. The limitations of the study are also addressed, followed by suggestions and implications for future research.

The primary aim of the current study was to investigate the development of teacher cognition during their engagement in a teacher inquiry into student learning beyond the classroom in international educational contexts. Particular emphasis was placed on promoting teacher ecological perspectives for learning throughout the inquiry. The secondary aim of this study was to explore for practical ways to use the ecological framework in the design of an empirical study. To achieve these two outcomes, the study was designed to integrate three aspects; namely, teacher cognition, teacher inquiry, and the ecological framework.

The present study was conducted at two ELICOS institutions in Sydney. Applying qualitative research paradigms, three data sources: mind maps as visual materials, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journal entries by the researcher were triangulated to increase the trustworthiness and validity of the data. Student data (i.e., questionnaire responses and mind map drawings) were also incorporated into the research study to facilitate the teacher inquiry process and to encourage teachers to be actively engaged in the project. Multiple narrative case studies also enabled this study to explore the learning processes of individual teachers throughout the research process.

8.1 Contributions

This section identifies the contributions of the current study to the fields of teacher cognition and language learning and teaching beyond the classroom. The theoretical

framework of ecologies of language learning and teaching adopted in the study contributed greatly to these research fields by providing structure to the research investigation. In particular, this study demonstrated the framework's effectiveness for empirical studies in language teacher research and as a method for promoting teacher learning for professional development.

8.1.1 Teacher Cognition Research

The investigation in this study of the development of teacher cognition and the learning processes demonstrated by teachers when engaged in an inquiry into student learning contributed to our academic understanding of the role of teacher cognition in the ecological configuration of language learning and teaching. Without developments in teacher cognition, the in-class practices of teachers would not evolve, and the student learning outcomes would be less likely to improve. There is an emerging need to reconceptualise the teacher's role in students' learning environments given the growing affordances for language learning outside of the classroom. Fostering teacher agency is the key to generating cycles of teacher learning to better understand how the environment external to the classroom and innovative teaching practice can meet the language learning needs of students. Designing this study as a teacher inquiry research project enabled the ecological configuration of the constructing elements to come into view; namely, teachers' beliefs, students' language learning practices, teacher learning and teaching practices, in-class and out-of-class contexts, teacher agency, and time (development and processes). In turn, the present study contributed new and valuable insights into the relationship between teacher cognition, the ecological practices of teachers, and student learning ecologies. These elements are interdependent, with teacher cognition playing a vital role in their configuration.

8.1.2 Language Learning and Teaching Beyond the Classroom

Language learning and teaching beyond the classroom was identified in this thesis as an under-researched field. This study contributed to the closing of this research gap by exploring how teachers conceptualise an ideal language learning environment as well as their beliefs about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning.

Ecological perspectives were utilised in the exploration of the teachers' conceptualisations of a language learning environment beyond the classroom. Teachers used these perspectives to achieve a holistic view of language learning and thus to better understand their role in student language learning ecologies. Furthermore, the ecological perspectives focused their attention on aspects of student language learning which they had 'taken-for-granted' or not given their full consideration to; that is, the students' out-of-class language learning practices and environments.

In addition, the present study positioned teachers as influential towards, and active agents in, the creation of student learning ecologies. As such, it demonstrated the value of promoting the ecological views of teachers for an inquiry into student learning. The promotion of new conceptualisations of language learning and teaching from ecological perspectives supported the teacher participants to broaden their views of teaching and to refine their understanding of the relationship between students' out-of-class language learning. In turn, the teachers enhanced their awareness of the teaching practices available to them to promote students' language learning outside of the classroom. The teachers' reconceptualisation of their role would help to make their teaching practices more meaningful to the students and support them to integrate and traverse in-class and out-of-class language learning experiences.

Widening the research scope to students' language learning beyond the classroom using ecological views achieve two important outcomes. First, it allowed the researcher to explore the role of teacher cognition and teaching practices in relation to student language

learning ecologies. Second, it allowed an emphasis to be placed on the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning and teaching.

The ecological perspectives provided teachers with a new lens through which to explore language learning and teaching in their own contexts. The new lens broadened their perspectives and heightened their awareness of the out-of-class language learning experiences of students. Previously, the teachers afforded this language learning domain indirect attention or, in Dan's words, adopted 'a common sense' approach which tends to be inexplicit in daily teaching. Now, the teachers were more aware of the importance of implementing practices in the classroom that are more closely related to the students' out-of-class language learning environments. In turn, the teachers developed their beliefs about the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning, developed new teaching approaches in response to their new beliefs, and reconceptualised their roles in student learning.

As such, the ecological framework contributed to a robust empirical investigation of teacher cognition of language learning environments beyond the classroom, a better conceptual understanding of teachers' ecological practices, and innovative ways to facilitate teacher learning.

8.2 Limitations

The present study achieved the primary aims to deliver insights into teacher cognition development and to explain its role in teacher learning through inquiry. However, the findings related to teacher cognition of language learning environments beyond the classroom, and the teacher learning process more generally are specific to the participants in this study and the study context.

The following limitations of the study are expressed as the questions to emerge during the research process which were not able to be answered:

1) What is the impact of the teachers' change in cognition on their teaching practices?

The study did not include the provision to observe and report on the teachers' changes in teaching practice. Although it was the intention to avoid putting the teacher participants under pressure, focusing more on the dynamics of in-class teaching improvement with continuous collaborative support from the researcher could have further contributed to the development of the participants' teaching practices. Furthermore, given that teacher change can be a long-term process within scope of a professional career, the study was not long enough to capture the possible changes over time.

2) How do international students perceive and construct their language learning environments in a multilingual city like Sydney?

Student data was treated as an information source to facilitate the teacher inquiry, rather than as a primary focus of the research investigation. Therefore, a deep understanding of the multilingual environment's impact on the international students' everyday lives, the complexity of the learning environments including the use of digital devices, and the students' solutions for reconfiguring their language learning practices and environments were not fully achieved.

The limitation relevant to the research design relates to the teachers' initiation in the inquiry process. The research topic of focus, the choice of which sources to collect from students, and the methods of inquiry could ideally be teacher-initiated to generate sustainable learning cycles (Burns, 2013). Moreover, teacher-initiated processes may also promote more meaningful reflective practice with a sense of personal choice and ownership (Bailey & Springer, 2013). However, for the teacher participants who were relatively new to this type of research engagement, the researcher's navigation of them through the inquiry process, with the focus on maintaining a structured research design, helped to introduce them to the teacher inquiry process.

In addition, because the study adopted a qualitative approach, the outcomes have limited generalisability to a wider population. The study has achieved a goal of exploring individual teacher's life experiences, behaviours, and phenomena in the target contexts with descriptive representation of outcomes (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009), however, the research outcomes may have been influenced by the researcher's possible biases in her interpretations as well as perceptions on the meaning of the data. In terms of the analysis process, the study was limited to one person's (i.e., the researcher) interpretation of the data. There was no secondary analysis employed during the process. Future studies could employ a mixed methods approach to provide "a stronger understanding of the problem or question" (Creswell, 2014, p. 215) to minimise such limitations.

8.3 Suggestions and Implications

Suggestions and implications arising from the overall findings are illustrated in this section. The implications regarding the potential use of the theoretical framework in future research and the methodological implications for teacher learning and teacher cognition studies are discussed. This is followed by suggestions for future research.

8.3.1 Theoretical Framework: Ecological Views

This study confirmed the potential for ecologies of language learning and teaching to be applied as a theoretical framework in the fields of teacher cognition and language learning and teaching beyond the classroom, or the integration of the two. The current study did not explore the actual improvement in teaching practices or the changes in students' language learning practices and beliefs as a consequence of the development of teacher cognition and teacher learning. In other words, the impact of ecologies of practice on student language learning ecologies remains unreported. The ecological framework could therefore be employed in an investigation of the interrelationships between teacher beliefs and

student beliefs, teaching practices and student ecologies, and the mutual development of the two by incorporating it with teacher learning.

Furthermore, ecological perspectives should be promoted among language teachers as one method of teacher learning. In particular, it can help to heighten teacher awareness of students' out-of-class language learning and extend their understanding of their teaching role beyond the classroom.

8.3.2 Methodological and Research Implications

The findings of the present study suggest several methodological implications for future research studies with a similar design. Use of participatory research method and visual materials as research tools are discussed in this section.

8.3.2.1 Teacher learning through participatory research method

Teacher inquiry research at any educational institution as part of a teacher professional development initiative would promote reflective practice and learning by teachers via active engagement in the inquiry and possible collaborations with academia.

According to Smith et al. (2014), teacher-friendly research that is innovative and supportive rather than strictly 'academic' will more likely fulfil the teachers' desire for further learning in a research context. As such, stronger relationships between researchers and teachers could be established so that research can encourage and support teachers to improve their teaching practices through research engagement. It is also suggested that the experience of engaging in the present research demonstrated to the teachers some possible ways to pursue further learning and motivated them to conduct action research.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the study, there is a great potential for use of mind maps as a participatory method for teacher inquiry, perhaps with small groups of teachers.

Sharing ideas and perspectives drawn out on mind maps with other teachers could encourage more teacher learning within the group dynamics.

8.3.2.2 Visual method for teacher cognition research

This study affirmed the great value of using visual methods for research on teacher cognition, the reflective practice of teachers, or teacher education in the field of Applied Linguistics. Regarding the teachers' reflective practice, the mind map drawings used to encourage the teachers to reflect on their beliefs and practices increased the depth of their reflections compared to simple narratives or journal entries to express their thoughts and experiences. In addition, this approach appeared to enhance the teachers' sense of engagement and ownership in the research project investigation. Therefore, an implication for future research on the reflective practice of teachers may find the use of visual materials produced by the participants as an effective way to explore the reflective process as well as the impact of their reflective practice.

8.3.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The key findings reported in the present study indicate potential focus areas for future research in the field. First, as previously mentioned, the present study did not collect data and report on the effects of these changes on students' language learning practices. In other words, a clear link between teacher learning and student learning was not revealed. Thus, future research could further explore how new teaching practices implemented by teachers as a result of changes in their cognition of language learning beyond the classroom impacts the creation of language learning environments beyond the classroom by students. The teachers' reconceptualisation of their roles resulted in some teachers designing new teaching approaches and classroom activities. A comparative study of students' mind maps

drawn at the pre-and post-implementation stages of a teacher learning project is a research option to gain insights into the link.

Second, because the present study did not fully examine the impact of the complex and dynamic multilingual environment on student language learning, a deep exploration of international students' affordances and niche construction skills is required. For example, ongoing tension between the students' desired language learning practices and their natural exposure to the target language outside of the classroom, and their struggles to fulfil their linguistic goals and expectations, means that student agency and emotions related to their solutions for reconfiguring language learning ecologies could be further explored. A context specific, institutional level investigation such as action research could support teachers to identify more focused support for the international students.

Third, the gap between teachers' and students' perceptions of language learning beyond the classroom was identified in this study. Future research should therefore focus on how teachers formulate and review their understanding of the expected role of the teacher in student language learning. Further research is required, perhaps via student interviews, to better explain students' perceptions of out-of-class language learning, their expectations of in-class learning, and their views on the teacher's role in both learning contexts. The findings from such research could provide teachers with valuable insights into how their beliefs about their role compare to the students' beliefs, and what they can do to better meet the students' expectations.

Fourth, future research could further explore the role of teacher emotions, identity constructions and negotiation as elements of teacher learning for professional development. Specifically, the research should examine how teacher identity (as shaped by past teaching and learning experiences) including conceptions and beliefs, emotions, and the teaching contexts function as interdependent elements to influence the teaching environment. In terms of the ELICOS or similar contexts, future research is needed on the

opportunities and constraints English language teachers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds experience when teaching international students in study abroad contexts. The findings from such research could help inform how multilingual/multicultural classrooms can best be designed to optimise the language learning outcomes of students.

8.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented the overall outcomes of the study and significance of the key findings for language teaching and learning theory and practice. Ecologies of language learning and teaching was applied as a framework in the study to generate answers to the research questions. The study demonstrated that the ecological framework provides benefits to the research process through the integration of two disciplines; teacher cognition and language learning and teaching beyond the classroom. Incorporation of the visual methods also supported the framework to obtain rich and wide-scoping data on teacher cognition. Taking such contributions into account, the present study has shed light on a new research project design to both engage participants and enhance researcher-practitioner communication.

Suggestions for the future research therefore focus on further exploration of the mechanisms and dynamics of ecologies of language learning and teaching. Such mechanisms and dynamics include teacher identity in relation to student learning (with the possibility that teachers initiate the examination of their teaching), the interplay between teachers' and students' expectations and beliefs about language learning, and both the teachers' and students' relationship to the environment. Teacher awareness of the language learning environment and what they are doing in the environment is the first step towards generating practice changes. One of the most important aspects of the study for me was scaffolding for teachers how they can achieve genuine professional development through reflection on practice. Through reflection, teacher learning can contribute to

student learning and sustainable teacher learning outcomes. Researchers can contribute their expertise in research skills to the inquiry so that teachers gain the professional developmental benefits from engaging in inquiry or action research.

As Roberto expressed, “old habits die hard”. Teaching habits emergent from deeply-rooted views and beliefs about language learning and teaching could be resistant to change. A key catalyst of teacher learning, especially to improve what is said and done inside the classroom, is the agentic attitude of the teacher towards learning. As a researcher, we can support teacher learning by providing teachers with a vision of how to engage in reflection on their everyday teaching practices through an inquiry into student learning. This will assist teachers to renew their teaching practices and to reconceptualise their roles in student learning and empower their capacity to resist constraints.

To me, the entire Ph.D. degree process – engaging in the research project, talking to and sharing stories with the teachers, analysing the student data together with the teachers, and writing up the results in this thesis – involved extensive reflective practice. This precious experience has definitely contributed to my continuing professional development and enabled me to take a step forward to the next chapter of my teaching career. I am looking forward to giving expression to the positive personal changes I have experienced.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Mind Map Drawing Instruction Guide

<u>Mind-map drawing instruction guide: To students</u>

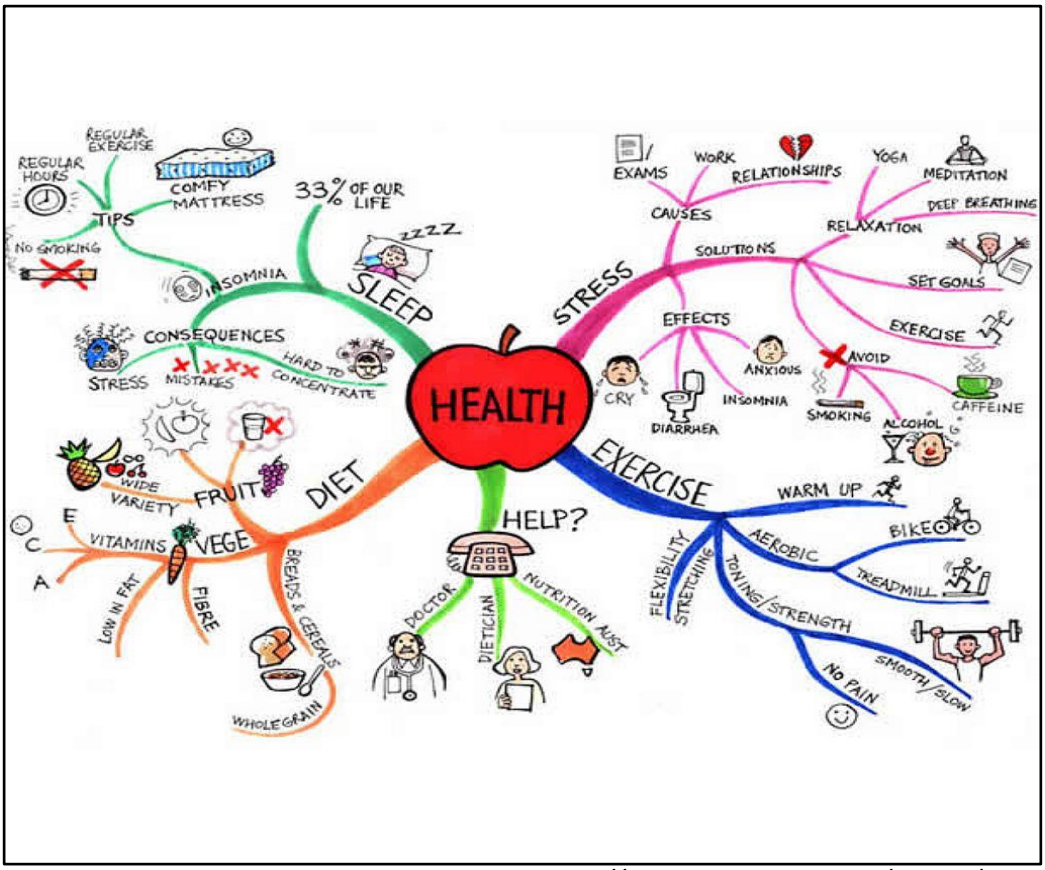
Instructions:

1. Draw & write your central idea *<u>"Activities to improve my English in Australia"</u>* in the middle of a paper.

2. Draw your second and third level ideas which connect to the main idea by connecting branches.

3. Continue branching out and linking ideas with supporting details.

Example



http://www.tonybuzan.com/gallery/mind-maps/

Mind-map drawing instruction guide: To teachers

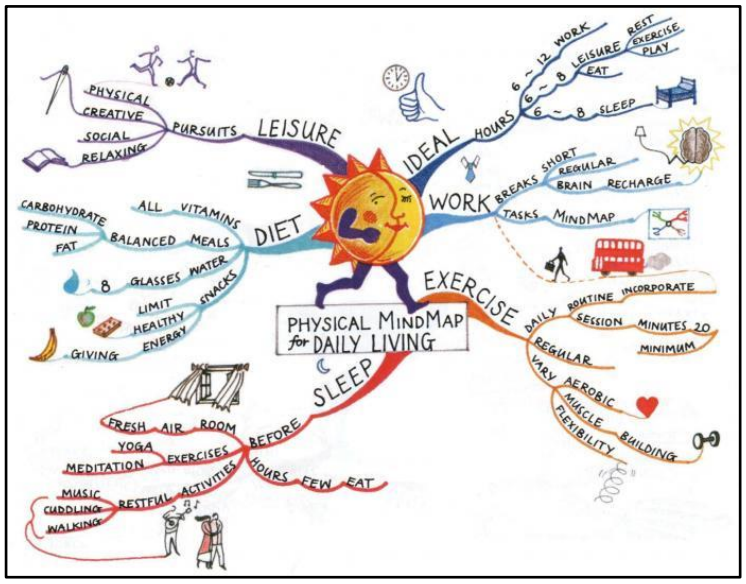
Instructions:

1. Draw & write your central idea *"A good language learning environment"* in the middle of a paper.

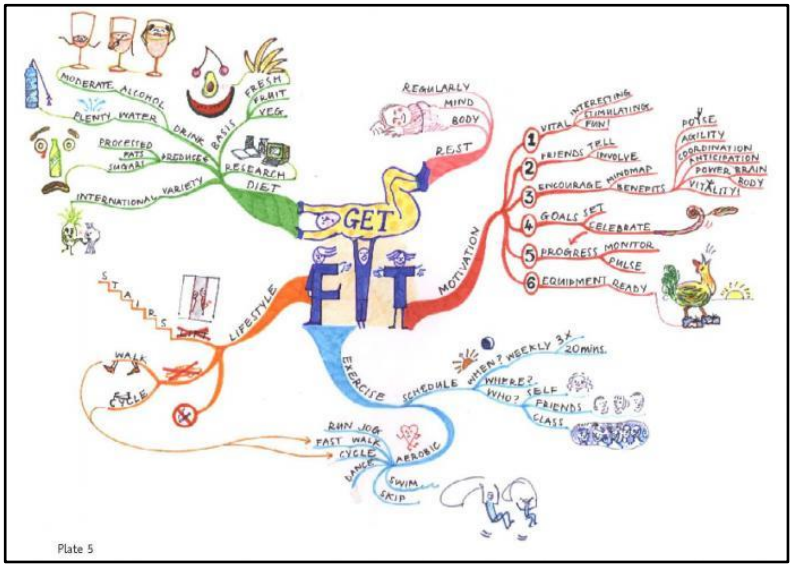
2. Draw your second and third level ideas which connect to the main idea by connecting branches.

3. Continue branching out and linking ideas with supporting details.

Examples



http://www.mindwerx.com/files/imagecache/node-view/Physical%20Mind%20Map%20for%20Daily%20Living.jpg



http://www.mindwerx.com/mex/mind-map/hand-drawn/817/mind-map-summary-how-get-fit

7 Steps to Making a Mind Map

1. **Start in the CENTRE of a blank page turned sideways.**

Why? Because starting in the centre gives your Brain freedom to spread out in all directions and to express itself more freely and naturally.

2. **Use an IMAGE or PICTURE for your central idea.**

Why? Because an image *is* worth a thousand words and helps you use your Imagination. A central image is more interesting, keeps you focussed, helps you concentrate, and gives your Brain more of a buzz!

3. **Use COLOURS throughout.**

Why? Because colours are as exciting to your Brain as are images. Colour adds extra vibrancy and life to your Mind Map, adds tremendous energy to your Creative Thinking, and is fun!

4. **CONNECT your MAIN BRANCHES to the central image and connect your second- and third-level branches to the first and second levels, etc.**

Why? Because your Brain works by *association.* It likes to link two (or three, or four) things together. If you connect the branches, you will understand and remember a lot more easily.

5. **Make your branches CURVED rather than straight-lined.**

Why? Because having nothing but straight lines is *boring* to your Brain.

6. **Use ONE KEY WORD PER LINE.**

Why? Because single key words give your Mind Map more power and flexibility.

7. **Use IMAGES throughout.**

Why? Because each image, like the central image, is also worth a thousand words. So if you have only 10 images in your Mind Map, it's already the equal of 10,000 words of notes!

Buzan (2011)

Appendix B: Mind Map Sheet for Teachers

Please draw a mind map of "a good language learning environment".

Appendix C: Teacher Interview Guide

- ***Interview 1: Background and their beliefs about out-of-class language learning***

1. What is your previous and current teaching background?

2. What are your views on students' language learning activities outside the classroom/school?

3. What concerns do you have about students' out-of-class language learning?

4. Did/do you encourage your students to do out-of-class language activities? If yes, what are they?

5. Do you feel that you influence students' out-of-class language learning?

6. In general, how might teachers help enhance students' out-of-class language learning activities (If we want to enhance students' out-of-class language learning activities, what roles could teachers play)?

7. What do you perceive the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning? (Could you explain what you drew here as your conception of "a good language learning environment"?)

- ***Interview 2: Students' responses to a questionnaire & mind-maps of their current language learning environment***

1. What do you think about the students' answers to the survey? (Do they match what you expected?)

2. What do you think about the students' mind-maps?

3. Did you find any information that is useful for your teaching?

3. Based on survey results, what are students' struggles in the transition process do you think?

4. Based on survey results, how might teachers help students for a smoother transition to the new learning environment in Australia?

- ***Interview 3: Follow-up questions and the second mind-map drawing***

1. Do you perceive the relationship between in-class and out-of-class language learning differently now?

2. Do you think the students' survey has influenced your thoughts about teaching or teaching approaches?

3. Do you think you should change your teaching approaches in the future?

4. Could you draw a mind-map again and explain the difference between your first mind-map and the second one?

5. What roles could teachers play to support international students for a better transition to language learning in Australia?

Appendix D: Student Questionnaire

Date: ____ /____ / 2017

In-class & Out-of-class English Learning Activities

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions about the learning activities you do both inside and outside of the classroom to improve your English, and how useful you think they are. This survey is conducted by Mayumi Kashiwa, a research student at Macquarie University to better understand learners' language learning environments. All answers will remain anonymous and will not affect your course evaluation. Please try to answer all the questions honestly. Thank you very much for your time.

Part 1: Technology-related activities outside of the classroom in Australia

This part is about the types of activities you do outside of the classroom with *electronic devices (such as computers, iPads, smartphones etc.)*. Please answer the questions below by simply circling marks from 1 to 5 to show how often you do the activities to improve your English. Also, please write example activities when it is asked.

1= I don't do it. 2= I do it rarely (less than once a month). 3= I do it quite often (1-3 times a month).

4= I do it very often (once a week or more). 5= I do it almost every day.

On the right, please mark (✓) one of faces to show how useful you find these activities for learning English. *If you don't do the activity, please show how useful you think it would be.*

☹ **= Not so useful.** 😐 **= Not sure.** 😀 **= Very useful.**

For example:

		How often	☹	😐	😀
Ex.	I use the internet in English. Please write examples _____*online dictionary*_____	1 2 3 4 (5)	✓		

		How often	☹	😐	😀
1	I read in English using electronic devices. Please write examples (e.g., BBC news...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
2	I listen to English using electronic devices. Please write examples (e.g., music, news ...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
3	I watch TV series or movies in English. Please write examples (e.g., The Big Bang Theory...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
4	I exchange emails in English with friends or teachers.	1 2 3 4 5			
5	I read and write messages in English using electronic devices. Please write examples (e.g., Facebook...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
6	I speak with my friends in English using electronic devices. Please write examples (e.g., Line, Skype...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
7	I play online/offline games in English. Please write examples (e.g., LOL...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
8	I take online/offline English courses. Please write examples (e.g., IELTS Online...) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
9	If you do any other activities with electronic devices in English, please write examples:_____	1 2 3 4 5			

1

Part 2: Activities without electronic devices outside of the classroom in Australia

This part is about the activities you do without any electronic devices. Like Part 1, please circle how often you do the activities and mark (✓) the usefulness.

		How often	☹	😐	😄
10	I read in English. Please write examples (e.g., books, posters…) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
11	I listen to someone speak in English. Please write examples (e.g., conversation on a train…) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
12	I go to the movies.	1 2 3 4 5			
13	I write in English. Please write examples (e.g., diaries, notes…) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
14	I keep a vocabulary notebook.	1 2 3 4 5			
15	I go out with friends from other countries and speak with them in English.	1 2 3 4 5			
16	I talk with teachers before or after class.	1 2 3 4 5			
17	I speak with other people in English outside of school. Please write examples (e.g., flatmates, at work…) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
18	I join social activities or events. Please write examples (e.g., football club…) _____	1 2 3 4 5			
19	I join courses/workshops provided at school. Please write examples (e.g., conversation class…) _____	1 2 3 4 5			

20. Is there anything you think you should/could do to improve your English, but you don't/can't?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes,

(i) Please write what this is.

(ii) Please explain why you don't/can't do this.

Part 3: Homework

In this part, I would like to ask about your opinion about homework at your school in Australia. Please show how useful you think these different kinds of homework are by circling a number.

		Not useful at all ⟷			Very useful
21	Speaking exercises. (e.g., conversation practice)	1	2	3	4
22	Listening exercises. (e.g., listening to news)	1	2	3	4
23	Reading articles/stories.	1	2	3	4
24	Writing a short essay/report/story/diary.	1	2	3	4
25	Projects (e.g., working in groups)	1	2	3	4

26. Please choose your opinion about the amount of homework you have.

☐ I want to have *less* homework.

☐ I have *about the right amount* of homework.

☐ I want to have *more* homework.

27. Did you have any particular homework you found useful for your learning since you arrived in Australia?

☐ Yes. ☐ Not really.

If yes, please explain.

Part 4: In-class learning VS Out-of-class learning

How challenging?

Please show how challenging you find these activities in Australia to improve your English.

😄 = not challenging (I do it easily).

😕 = A little challenging, but I'm doing OK.

😟 = Quite challenging (I can do only a little).

😱 = Too challenging.

	Using English in-class	😄	😕	😟	😱
28	Having everyday conversation with my classmates or teachers.				
29	Speaking in class (e.g., giving your opinions, making a presentation).				
30	Doing listening exercises.				
31	Building up vocabulary.				
32	Reading (e.g., articles/stories/essays).				
33	Writing (e.g., essays).				

	Using English outside of school	😄	😕	😟	😱
34	Having everyday conversation with local people.				
35	Using English to do things (e.g., at shops or offices)				
36	Listening and understanding TV/online programs in English (e.g., YouTube).				
37	Building up vocabulary.				
38	Reading (e.g., webpages, news).				
39	Writing (e.g., filling out documents).				

Where do you improve your English?

Please tick (✓) one of the choices below.

👻 = Neither in-class nor out-of-class 📝 = In-class mainly

🌴 = Out-of-class mainly 📝 + 🌴 = Both in-class and out-of-class

		👻	📝	🌴	📝 + 🌴
40	Improving speaking skills.				
41	Improving listening skills.				
42	Improving reading skills.				
43	Improving writing skills.				
44	Building up vocabulary.				

Please give your opinion about studying in Australia by completing the sentences below.

45. I like to study in Australia because...

---

46. I don't like to study in Australia very much because...

---

47. I wish I could do (more) to improve my English by...

Part 5: General Questions

48. What is your first language? _____

49. Please circle your gender. Male / Female

50. Please circle your age group.

18-25 / 26-30 / 31-35 / 36-40 / 41-45 / > 45

51. What programme are you studying?

☐ General English ☐ Academic English (EAP) ☐ IELTS Preparation

☐ Other: _____

52. For how many years have you been studying English? (about)_____ years.

53. How much has your English improved since you arrived in Australia?

☐ Not at all yet. ☐ A little. ☐ A lot.

54. How long have you been in Australia? _____

55. Have you ever lived or studied abroad before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, where? _____ For how long? _____

56. What is your accommodation type?

☐ Homestay ☐ Living with my family/relatives ☐ Sharing a flat/house

☐ Student accommodation ☐ Living in my own apartment/house

☐ Other: _____

57. Do you have a part time job? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what do you do? _____

☺ *This is the end of survey. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.* 💙

Appendix E: Student Mind Map Drawing Instructions (PPT) in Class

Mind Map

"Activities to Improve my English in Australia"

Let's think about all the activities you do here.

How do the things connect to the development of your English skills?

Instructions

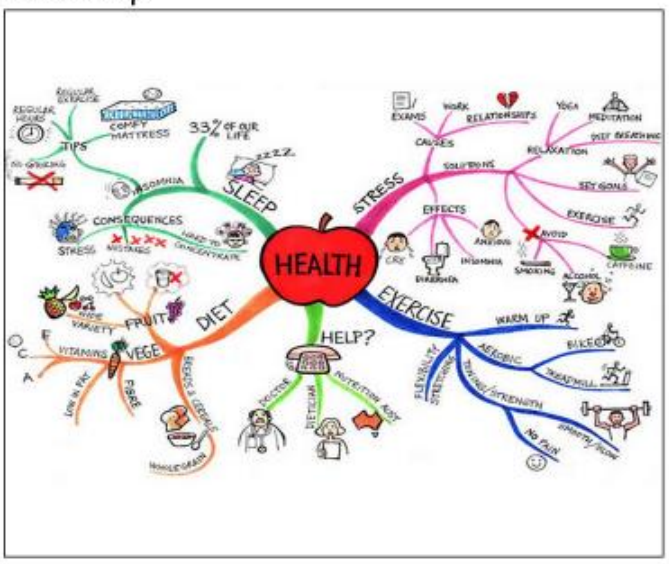
1. Draw & write your central idea **"Activities to improve my English in Australia"** in the middle of a paper.

2. Draw your second and third level ideas which connect to the main idea by connecting branches.

Example: people, resources/materials, places, things you can do to improve your English skills

3. Continue branching out and linking ideas with supporting details.

Example Mind Map



Appendix F: Mind Map Sheet for Students

Let's draw a mind map of your language learning activities in Australia!

Appendix G: Ethics Approval

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)
Research Office
CSC East Research HUB, Level 3

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY-AUSTRALIA

23 August 2016

Professor Phil Benson
Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
Macquarie University NSW 2109

Reference: 5201600591(D)

Dear Professor Benson,

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: Ecologies of Language Learning and Teaching: Teacher Cognition of Language Learning Environment

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 15th August 2016. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Chief Investigator: Professor Phil Benson
Co-Investigator: Dr Philip Chappell
Co-Investigator: Ms Mayumi Kashiwa

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 15th August 2017
Progress Report 2 Due: 15th August 2018
Progress Report 3 Due: 15th August 2019
Progress Report 4 Due: 15th August 2020
Final Report Due: 15th August 2021

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/application_resources

Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia

T: +61 2 9850 7987
www.research.mq.edu.au

ABN 90 952 801 237 | CRICOS Provider 00002J

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)
Research Office
CSC East Research HUB, Level 3

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely,

pp

Dr Anthony Miller
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee
Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix H: Teacher Recruitment Advertisement

Language Learning Environments beyond the Classroom

I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University. I am recruiting participants who can join my project for about 15 weeks. The purpose of the study is to discover how language learners engage in out-of-class activities to develop their language proficiency. Also how learners feel about their transition to the Australian language learning environment, and how teachers could help support them will be explored.

Please join us if you…

- are teaching English to international students.
- are interested in how your students develop their English skills through learning beyond the classroom.

❖ What's involved:

- **Interviews (3 times)**
- **Mind-map drawing**
- **Students' questionnaire and mind-map drawing as class work**

$50
Gift Voucher
When you complete the project

- If you have any questions, or want to know more details, please feel free to contact us via email below.
- If you are interested in joining, please contact Mayumi Kashiwa (student researcher) directly via email.

Contact:
Mayumi Kashiwa
E-mail: mayumi.kashiwa@students.mq.edu.au
Supervisor: Prof. Philip Benson
E-mail: philip.benson@mq.edu.au

Appendix I: Teacher Consent Form

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
Faculty of Human Sciences

Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 8756
E-mail: Philip.benson@mq.edu.au

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY-AUSTRALIA

(Attachment #2 – Teacher Consent Form)

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Philip Benson, Professor of Applied Linguistics

Participant Information and Consent Form: Teachers

Name of Project: Language Learning Environments beyond the Classroom

The purpose of the study is to discover how language learners engage with various activities both in-class and out-of-class to develop their language proficiency, and how teachers can support learners for a smoother transition to the Australian language learning environment.

The study is being conducted by Mayumi Kashiwa in order to meet the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Prof. Philip Benson of the Department of Linguistics. Contact details are below.

Mayumi Kashiwa - Tel: +61 (0)431 436-750, Email: mayumi.kashiwa@students.mq.edu.au
Professor Philip Benson - Tel: +61 (0)2 9850 8756, E-mail: philip.benson@mq.edu.au

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in;

1) Three hour-long interviews
2) Mind-map drawing (twice) on "a good language learning environment"
3) Administering a student questionnaire and mind-map drawing in your class time (approximately 30 minutes)

The interviews will focus on what you think about learners' engagement in out-of-class activities in relation to your teaching. The interview conversation will be audio-recorded. You will also be asked to draw a mind-map on above topic at the initial stage of the project as well as at the end.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the chief investigator and student researcher will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request via email (mayumi.kashiwa@students.mq.edu.au).

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.Your participation in the study will not affect your employment at your institution.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date:_____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S COPY)

Appendix J: Student Consent Form

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
Faculty of Human Sciences
Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 8756
E-mail: Philip.benson@mq.edu.au

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

(Attachment #3- Student Consent Form)

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Philip Benson, Professor of Applied Linguistics

Participant Information and Consent Form: Students

Name of Project: Language Learning Environments beyond the Classroom

You are invited to join a research project called *Language Learning Environments beyond the Classroom*. This research project aims to find out how language learners develop their English skills through various activities both inside and outside of the classroom, and how teachers can support learners to have a better language learning environment.

The researchers are Mayumi Kashiwa (0431 436-750, mayumi.kashiwa@students.mq.edu.au), in order to meet the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy, and her supervisor Prof. Philip Benson of the Department of Linguistics (02 9850 8756, philip.benson@mq.edu.au)

If you decide to join the project, your class teacher will keep the work that you produce for *Language Learning Environments beyond the Classroom* for use as research data. This work will include;

1) a questionnaire on your language learning activities both in-class and out-of-class in Australia.
2) a mind-map on your current language learning environment.

Joining the project will not influence your course grades. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. Your name will not be used in any articles or presentations. Only the researchers will see the data, which will be stored safely. The result of the research project will be sent to you if you send an email to mayumi.kashiwa@students.mq.edu.au.

We may find your mind-map interesting and would like to know more about your language learning in Australia. Do you agree if we ask you to talk about your mind-map? This meeting will be with your class teacher and the researcher for about 30 minutes. The talk will be audio-recorded.

☐ Yes, I can talk about my language learning activities with you.

☐ No, I don't want to be interviewed.

You are not required to join the study. If you do join, you may leave at any time, without giving a reason.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to join this research project, knowing that I can leave at any time without giving a reason. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Investigator's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S COPY)

Appendix K: CBD College Questionnaire Summary Report

Total number of students responded: 72 (6 classes)
Daytime class: Intermediate: 16, Upper-Intermediate: 16, Elementary: 19, Pre-Intermediate: 8
Evening class: Intermediate: 10, Advanced: 3

Part 1: Technology-related activities OOC

- Frequency (/5)
  - *Mode: most common value*
  - *Median: the middle value of the distribution*

Statistics

		q1a	q2a	q3a	q4a	q5a	q6a	q7a	q8a
N	Valid	70	71	71	70	71	71	65	68
	Missing	2	1	1	2	1	1	7	4
Mean		3.71	3.97	3.56	2.83	3.99	3.38	1.80	2.07
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	1.00	2.00
Mode		4	5	5	2	5	3[a]	1	1

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

- Usefulness (/3)

Statistics

		q1b	q2b	q3b	q4b	q5b	q6b	q7b	q8b
N	Valid	71	72	71	68	72	72	63	68
	Missing	1	0	1	4	0	0	9	4
Mean		2.49	2.63	2.61	2.35	2.63	2.50	1.73	2.25
Median		3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3

- Example activities using electronic devises OOC

q1c: I read in English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	News	9	12.5	17.0	17.0
	Facebook	4	5.6	7.5	24.5
	Online Books	3	4.2	5.7	30.2
	Phone	3	4.2	5.7	35.8
	BBC news	2	2.8	3.8	39.6
	Google	2	2.8	3.8	43.4
	Gumtree	2	2.8	3.8	47.2
	New York Times	1	1.4	1.9	49.1
	TV shows	1	1.4	1.9	50.9
	7 news	1	1.4	1.9	52.8

	App dictionary	1	1.4	1.9	54.7
	BBC news, Japan Times	1	1.4	1.9	56.6
	CNN news	1	1.4	1.9	58.5
	CNN, YouTube	1	1.4	1.9	60.4
	Computer, phone	1	1.4	1.9	62.3
	ESPN News	1	1.4	1.9	64.2
	Facebook and Instagram	1	1.4	1.9	66.0
	Films and TV	1	1.4	1.9	67.9
	Google translation	1	1.4	1.9	69.8
	Google, news	1	1.4	1.9	71.7
	Gumtree, movies	1	1.4	1.9	73.6
	Internet	1	1.4	1.9	75.5
	iPad book	1	1.4	1.9	77.4
	Lyrics	1	1.4	1.9	79.2
	Magazine	1	1.4	1.9	81.1
	Mails, lessons, adv.	1	1.4	1.9	83.0
	Movie	1	1.4	1.9	84.9
	Music	1	1.4	1.9	86.8
	News and Facebook	1	1.4	1.9	88.7
	News and books	1	1.4	1.9	90.6
	Searching online	1	1.4	1.9	92.5
	Short story	1	1.4	1.9	94.3
	TV and apps on mobile	1	1.4	1.9	96.2
	TV, iPod	1	1.4	1.9	98.1
	Webpages	1	1.4	1.9	100.0
	Total	53	73.6	100.0	
Missing	999	19	26.4		
Total		72	100.0		

q2c: I listen to English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Music	25	34.7	45.5	45.5
	Music and IELTS exercises	3	4.2	5.5	50.9
	Spotify	3	4.2	5.5	56.4
	YouTube	2	2.8	3.6	60.0
	Movies	2	2.8	3.6	63.6
	Music and movies	2	2.8	3.6	67.3
	Phone	2	2.8	3.6	70.9
	Music and News	1	1.4	1.8	72.7
	News	1	1.4	1.8	74.5
	TED Talk	1	1.4	1.8	76.4
	Radio	1	1.4	1.8	78.2
	Films and TV	1	1.4	1.8	80.0

	Games	1	1.4	1.8	81.8
	Movie or Game	1	1.4	1.8	83.6
	Music and films	1	1.4	1.8	85.5
	Music and TV	1	1.4	1.8	87.3
	Music, News, Movie	1	1.4	1.8	89.1
	News and Facebook	1	1.4	1.8	90.9
	News and music	1	1.4	1.8	92.7
	Phone calls	1	1.4	1.8	94.5
	Short story	1	1.4	1.8	96.4
	TED talk and music	1	1.4	1.8	98.2
	YouTube, movies	1	1.4	1.8	100.0
	Total	55	76.4	100.0	
Missing	999	17	23.6		
Total		72	100.0		

q3c: I watch TV series or movies in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	American TV series	16	22.2	34.0	34.0
	Movies	13	18.1	27.7	61.7
	Netflix	4	5.6	8.5	70.2
	Australian TV series	3	4.2	6.4	76.6
	Movies and TV	2	2.8	4.3	80.9
	TV series	2	2.8	4.3	85.1
	Ellen	1	1.4	2.1	87.2
	Game of Thrones	1	1.4	2.1	89.4
	News, Disney movies	1	1.4	2.1	91.5
	News, TV series	1	1.4	2.1	93.6
	Phone	1	1.4	2.1	95.7
	TV	1	1.4	2.1	97.9
	TV show	1	1.4	2.1	100.0
	Total	47	65.3	100.0	
Missing	999	25	34.7		
Total		72	100.0		

q5c: I read and write messages in English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	15	20.8	28.3	28.3
	Facebook and Instagram	6	8.3	11.3	39.6
	Facebook and WhatsApp	3	4.2	5.7	45.3
	Line	3	4.2	5.7	50.9
	Facebook and Messenger	3	4.2	5.7	56.6
	Facebook and Twitter	2	2.8	3.8	60.4

	WhatsApp	2	2.8	3.8	64.2
	Facebook and Line	2	2.8	3.8	67.9
	Text messages	2	2.8	3.8	71.7
	WhatsApp and Instagram	2	2.8	3.8	75.5
	Email and Facebook	1	1.4	1.9	77.4
	Instagram	1	1.4	1.9	79.2
	Air-tasker	1	1.4	1.9	81.1
	Facebook and twitter	1	1.4	1.9	83.0
	Facebook, email, news	1	1.4	1.9	84.9
	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	1	1.4	1.9	86.8
	iMessage	1	1.4	1.9	88.7
	Instagram and twitter	1	1.4	1.9	90.6
	Internet	1	1.4	1.9	92.5
	Line and Facebook	1	1.4	1.9	94.3
	Phone	1	1.4	1.9	96.2
	Skype	1	1.4	1.9	98.1
	Telegram	1	1.4	1.9	100.0
	Total	53	73.6	100.0	
Missing	999	19	26.4		
Total		72	100.0		

q6c: I speak with my friends in English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Line	11	15.3	23.9	23.9
	WhatsApp	7	9.7	15.2	39.1
	Skype	5	6.9	10.9	50.0
	Facebook and WhatsApp	3	4.2	6.5	56.5
	Line and Facebook	2	2.8	4.3	60.9
	Line, WhatsApp, Messenger	2	2.8	4.3	65.2
	Messenger	2	2.8	4.3	69.6
	Line and Messenger	1	1.4	2.2	71.7
	Kakao Talk	1	1.4	2.2	73.9
	WeChat	1	1.4	2.2	76.1
	FaceTime	1	1.4	2.2	78.3
	Facebook video call	1	1.4	2.2	80.4
	Facebook, Line, Skype	1	1.4	2.2	82.6
	Line and WhatsApp	1	1.4	2.2	84.8
	Line, Kakao talk	1	1.4	2.2	87.0
	Line, Kakao Talk, Facebook	1	1.4	2.2	89.1
	Messenger, FaceTime	1	1.4	2.2	91.3

	Messenger, Skype	1	1.4	2.2	93.5
	Skype and Facebook	1	1.4	2.2	95.7
	Telephone	1	1.4	2.2	97.8
	WhatsApp, messenger, Instagram	1	1.4	2.2	100.0
	Total	46	63.9	100.0	
Missing	999	26	36.1		
Total		72	100.0		

q7c: I play online/offline games in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	LOL	3	4.2	18.8	18.8
	Kahoot	2	2.8	12.5	31.3
	Computer	1	1.4	6.3	37.5
	Duolingo	1	1.4	6.3	43.8
	Farm Frenzy	1	1.4	6.3	50.0
	FIFA 17	1	1.4	6.3	56.3
	FIFA, Call of Duty	1	1.4	6.3	62.5
	Garden escapes	1	1.4	6.3	68.8
	HON	1	1.4	6.3	75.0
	Maple story	1	1.4	6.3	81.3
	Prison tales	1	1.4	6.3	87.5
	Tibia	1	1.4	6.3	93.8
	War frame, DOTA 2	1	1.4	6.3	100.0
	Total	16	22.2	100.0	
Missing	999	56	77.8		
Total		72	100.0		

q8c: I take online/offline English courses. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	IELTS	5	6.9	25.0	25.0
	Duolingo	3	4.2	15.0	40.0
	DMM	2	2.8	10.0	50.0
	English course	2	2.8	10.0	60.0
	YouTube	2	2.8	10.0	70.0
	APC course	1	1.4	5.0	75.0
	English offline course	1	1.4	5.0	80.0
	Learn English	1	1.4	5.0	85.0
	Lessons in YouTube	1	1.4	5.0	90.0
	TOEIC online	1	1.4	5.0	95.0
	Voice Tube	1	1.4	5.0	100.0

	Total	20	27.8	100.0	
Missing	999	52	72.2		
Total		72	100.0		

q9c: ... any other activities with electronic devices?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Duolingo	2	2.8	11.1	11.1
	Apps	1	1.4	5.6	16.7
	Banking, organizing trips	1	1.4	5.6	22.2
	Booking flights, banking, shop	1	1.4	5.6	27.8
	Computer class	1	1.4	5.6	33.3
	conversationexchange.com	1	1.4	5.6	38.9
	Dictionary	1	1.4	5.6	44.4
	Find a job, Bank account	1	1.4	5.6	50.0
	job	1	1.4	5.6	55.6
	Kahoot in class	1	1.4	5.6	61.1
	Listen to pop songs	1	1.4	5.6	66.7
	Lynda.com	1	1.4	5.6	72.2
	Read devotional and bible in	1	1.4	5.6	77.8
	Reading some quotes on Facebook	1	1.4	5.6	83.3
	Searching events or news	1	1.4	5.6	88.9
	Work	1	1.4	5.6	94.4
	YouTube (Cherry E Bright)	1	1.4	5.6	100.0
	Total	18	25.0	100.0	
Missing	999	54	75.0		
Total		72	100.0		

Part 2: Activities without electronic devices OOC

❖ Frequency (/5)

		q10a	q11a	q12a	q13a	q14a	q15a	q16a	q17a	q18a	q19a
N	Valid	69	71	68	70	66	71	68	71	68	66
	Missing	3	1	4	2	6	1	4	1	4	6
Mean		3.29	3.94	2.24	3.33	2.94	3.35	2.69	4.04	2.09	2.21
Median		3.00	4.00	2.00	3.50	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		4	5	1	4	1	3[a]	1	5	1	1

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

❖ Usefulness (/3)

		q10b	q11b	q12b	q13b	q14b	q15b	q16b	q17b	q18b	q19b
N	Valid	70	71	68	69	65	71	69	71	65	64
	Missing	2	1	4	3	7	1	3	1	7	8
Mean		2.69	2.59	2.26	2.51	2.43	2.54	2.46	2.66	2.12	2.31
Median		3.00	3.00	2.50	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.50
Mode		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3

❖ Example activities

q10c: I read in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Books	17	23.6	33.3	33.3
	Newspapers	9	12.5	17.6	51.0
	Posters	5	6.9	9.8	60.8
	Textbooks	3	4.2	5.9	66.7
	Books and newspapers	2	2.8	3.9	70.6
	Books and magazines	2	2.8	3.9	74.5
	Letters	1	1.4	2.0	76.5
	Magazine	1	1.4	2.0	78.4
	Books, music lyrics	1	1.4	2.0	80.4
	Comments	1	1.4	2.0	82.4
	Facebook	1	1.4	2.0	84.3
	LOL patch notes	1	1.4	2.0	86.3
	Manuals, Handbooks	1	1.4	2.0	88.2
	Menus	1	1.4	2.0	90.2
	Newspapers and books	1	1.4	2.0	92.2
	Only school	1	1.4	2.0	94.1
	Positive quotes in FB	1	1.4	2.0	96.1

	Posters, instruction	1	1.4	2.0	98.0
	Studying books	1	1.4	2.0	100.0
	Total	51	70.8	100.0	
Missing	999	21	29.2		
Total		72	100.0		

q11c: I listen to someone speak in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	On a bus/train	7	9.7	14.6	14.6
	Friends	7	9.7	14.6	29.2
	At work	4	5.6	8.3	37.5
	Conversation	3	4.2	6.3	43.8
	Everywhere	3	4.2	6.3	50.0
	At school/in class	2	2.8	4.2	54.2
	At restaurants	2	2.8	4.2	58.3
	At home	2	2.8	4.2	62.5
	At shops	1	1.4	2.1	64.6
	At beach	1	1.4	2.1	66.7
	At work , cafe with friends	1	1.4	2.1	68.8
	At work (restaurant)	1	1.4	2.1	70.8
	At work and friends	1	1.4	2.1	72.9
	Australian people	1	1.4	2.1	75.0
	Flatmates	1	1.4	2.1	77.1
	Flatmates and at work	1	1.4	2.1	79.2
	Go to the movies	1	1.4	2.1	81.3
	In class, cafe	1	1.4	2.1	83.3
	On a bus and street	1	1.4	2.1	85.4
	On a bus, train, at restaurants	1	1.4	2.1	87.5
	On a train and street	1	1.4	2.1	89.6
	On the street, in class	1	1.4	2.1	91.7
	Teacher	1	1.4	2.1	93.8
	With customer	1	1.4	2.1	95.8
	With my uncle	1	1.4	2.1	97.9
	YouTube	1	1.4	2.1	100.0
	Total	48	66.7	100.0	
Missing	999	24	33.3		
Total		72	100.0		

q13c: I write in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Taking notes	13	18.1	28.3	28.3
	Diaries	8	11.1	17.4	45.7
	Messages	3	4.2	6.5	52.2
	Notes and homework	2	2.8	4.3	56.5
	Homework	1	1.4	2.2	58.7
	At school	1	1.4	2.2	60.9
	Books	1	1.4	2.2	63.0
	Diaries and taking notes	1	1.4	2.2	65.2
	FB message	1	1.4	2.2	67.4
	Grammar(school activity)	1	1.4	2.2	69.6
	In class	1	1.4	2.2	71.7
	Letter	1	1.4	2.2	73.9
	message	1	1.4	2.2	76.1
	Messages, notes, letters	1	1.4	2.2	78.3
	Notes and shopping list	1	1.4	2.2	80.4
	Notes for work	1	1.4	2.2	82.6
	Notes on chats	1	1.4	2.2	84.8
	Online chat	1	1.4	2.2	87.0
	Only text message	1	1.4	2.2	89.1
	Taking notes, appointment	1	1.4	2.2	91.3
	To friends	1	1.4	2.2	93.5
	Vocabulary	1	1.4	2.2	95.7
	Write songs, apply for a job	1	1.4	2.2	97.8
	Writing test	1	1.4	2.2	100.0
	Total	46	63.9	100.0	
Missing	999	26	36.1		
Total		72	100.0		

q17c: I speak with other people in English outside of school. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	At work	12	16.7	22.2	22.2
	Flatmates and at work	9	12.5	16.7	38.9
	Flatmates	7	9.7	13.0	51.9
	At work and shops	3	4.2	5.6	57.4
	At shops/supermarkets	2	2.8	3.7	61.1

	At restaurants	2	2.8	3.7	64.8
	Church	1	1.4	1.9	66.7
	Flatmates and classmates	1	1.4	1.9	68.5
	At home	1	1.4	1.9	70.4
	Strangers	1	1.4	1.9	72.2
	Classmates	1	1.4	1.9	74.1
	At cafes	1	1.4	1.9	75.9
	At school	1	1.4	1.9	77.8
	At work and friends	1	1.4	1.9	79.6
	At work and Internet cafe	1	1.4	1.9	81.5
	At work, bar and restaurants	1	1.4	1.9	83.3
	Classmates and my boyfriend	1	1.4	1.9	85.2
	Flatmates and friends	1	1.4	1.9	87.0
	Friends and co-workers	1	1.4	1.9	88.9
	On internet	1	1.4	1.9	90.7
	Pubs	1	1.4	1.9	92.6
	Roommate, family	1	1.4	1.9	94.4
	Roommates	1	1.4	1.9	96.3
	Social activities	1	1.4	1.9	98.1
	Street, shopping	1	1.4	1.9	100.0
	Total	54	75.0	100.0	
Missing	999	18	25.0		
Total		72	100.0		

q18c: I join social activities or events. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Basketball club	2	2.8	9.1	9.1
	Football club	2	2.8	9.1	18.2
	Pub	2	2.8	9.1	27.3
	Soccer	2	2.8	9.1	36.4
	APC activities	1	1.4	4.5	40.9
	APC party	1	1.4	4.5	45.5
	Concerts	1	1.4	4.5	50.0
	Concerts, parties, BBQ	1	1.4	4.5	54.5
	Dance	1	1.4	4.5	59.1
	Events in the beach	1	1.4	4.5	63.6
	Night clubs	1	1.4	4.5	68.2
	Parties, pubs	1	1.4	4.5	72.7
	PlayStation	1	1.4	4.5	77.3
	Poker	1	1.4	4.5	81.8
	Snap Chat	1	1.4	4.5	86.4
	Sport club	1	1.4	4.5	90.9

	Surfing	1	1.4	4.5	95.5
	Tennis	1	1.4	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	30.6	100.0	
Missing	999	50	69.4		
Total		72	100.0		

q19c: I join courses/workshops provided at school. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conversation class	5	6.9	29.4	29.4
	Optional classes	4	5.6	23.5	52.9
	Workshops	1	1.4	5.9	58.8
	Government course	1	1.4	5.9	64.7
	Grammar and writing	1	1.4	5.9	70.6
	Grammar class	1	1.4	5.9	76.5
	IELTS practice test	1	1.4	5.9	82.4
	Pronunciation	1	1.4	5.9	88.2
	Speaking practice	1	1.4	5.9	94.1
	Writing and conversation class	1	1.4	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	23.6	100.0	
Missing	999	55	76.4		
Total		72	100.0		

Q20a: Is there anything you should/could do to improve your English, but you don't/can't?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	18	25.0	27.7	27.7
	Yes	47	65.3	72.3	100.0
	Total	65	90.3	100.0	
Missing	999	7	9.7		
Total		72	100.0		

Q20a: If yes, what is it?

Valid	Because I live with people speak in Spanish and I should do to improve for my degree.	1
	Conversation	1
	Conversation with other person.	1
	Don't speak Spanish. Move in to a house without Spanish speakers.	1
	Go to pub and make new friends.	1
	Having friends with more people that don't speak Spanish, making project with my classrooms	1

	I could improve my English speaking with my girlfriend or watching films in English.	1
	I could practice more by speaking.	1
	I don't have enough English skills.	1
	I live with Brazilians. They don't help me English.	1
	I never go to the movies in Sydney and I don't do homework if it's a lot.	1
	I should improve speaking English.	1
	I should only speak in English with the students coming from my country.	1
	I should read English books and talk with friends another countries more.	1
	I should write and speak more.	1
	I should write every day and talk with Australian people.	1
	I think indispensable.	1
	I try to find more foreign friends.	1
	I want to learn speak better.	1
	I want to practice speaking more at home.	1
	I want to speak and write better than this.	1
	I want to speak because I want to make friends. But I can't speak at the moment. I saw movies every	1
	In my work I don't talk English because my boss and I talk the same language.	1
	Join course or social activities/events.	1
	Join social activities or events.	1
	Joining social activities and talking with people outside of school.	1
	Just practice speaking.	1
	Live with different country people.	1
	meet with little groups for conversation	1
	Often when I don't understand anything the examples is complicated.	1
	On the street or some public place, we should do anything to improve English.	1
	Read books.	1
	sometimes watch movies	1
	Speak in English all day and every day.	1
	Speaking more.	1
	Speaking, listening, reading and writing	1
	Speaking, writing, listening	1
	Speaking.	1
	Studying more and not having as many Latin friends.	1
	Talk with more people on the streets.	1
	To have more conversation to other to practice my English.	1
	Try to learn more vocabulary every day.	1
	Vocabulary	1
	Work in an environment of only native English speakers.	1
	Write a diary, watch the movie, join the club	1
	Total	45
Missing	999	27
Total		72

Q20c: Explain why you don't/can't do it.

Valid	Not enough time.	1
	Because at the moment I live with friends that we from the same country.	1
	Because have work but I trying to speak English only.	1
	Because I am shy to talk with strangers.	1
	Because I can't speak and write.	1
	Because I don't have a chance or if someone gives me a recommendation I'll join.	1
	Because I have to work every day.	1
	Because I live with Colombians.	1
	Because I think I don't speak English well.	1
	Because I'm doing it right now. English lesson, living and any way, I just arrived.	1
	Because no one can help me to check my diary. I like watch movie but I afraid the speed too fast. I don't know where can I find a club I'm interested in.	1
	Because the group of friends that I make is all Spanish speakers. Because I don't have to do that.	1
	Because we have a lot of people from our countries here and our culture. It's easy and don't do the things people/try for example study English.	1
	Easy to speak in my own language.	1
	I can understand grammar but can't speak well.	1
	I can't improve English skills.	1
	I can't understand what other people said.	1
	I don't have any chance to join that group, also I don't have enough time to do that things.	1
	I don't have enough time to do it.	1
	I don't have enough time.	1
	I don't have friends from Australia.	1
	I don't have time to go there because I work a lot.	1
	I live with my girlfriend, but we never speak in English between us because to understand us is very slow.	1
	I live with people who speak Spanish and I don't practice English.	1
	I meet many Spanish speakers. I live with Spanish speaker, but I feel comfortable there. We get on well.	1
	I need it.	1
	I would like the teacher Italian/English.	1
	I'm foreign person, so it's very hard to making friends.	1
	I'm not a book person. I just don't like books.	1
	I'm searching but I'm not finding.	1
	I'm shy to talk in English.	1
	Make OZ friend can get your help.	1
	We don't have enough time and kind people in Australia.	1
	Total	33
Missing	999	39
Total		72

Part 3: Homework

❖ Usefulness (/4)

		q21	q22	q23	q24	q25
N	Valid	63	63	64	66	63
	Missing	9	9	8	6	9
Mean		3.29	3.35	3.36	3.23	2.90
Median		3.00	4.00	3.50	3.00	3.00
Mode		4	4	4	4	3

q26: Amount of homework

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Want less homework	7	9.7	10.3	10.3
	Right amount	42	58.3	61.8	72.1
	Want more homework	19	26.4	27.9	100.0
	Total	68	94.4	100.0	
Missing	999	4	5.6		
Total		72	100.0		

Q27a: Any particular useful homework?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not really	49	68.1	73.1	73.1
	Yes	18	25.0	26.9	100.0
	Total	67	93.1	100.0	
Missing	999	5	6.9		
Total		72	100.0		

Q27b: If yes, what homework?

Valid	Writing essays.	1
	I think getting vocabulary more is important.	1
	In homework, there are a lot of sentence. So I can check my grammar and vocabulary.	1
	It helped me read and write.	1
	Listen to people who speak English very well.	1
	See movies in English.	1
	Speaking	1
	Speaking with friends in APC college.	1
	Do some writing exercise and grammar.	1
	Watch drama, movie. Write a diary or email.	1
	Write stories about the movies you like.	1
	Writing and grammar	1

	Writing exercise e.g., diary- at least once or twice a week. If I try to write diary, it will be very helpful for me but it was very difficult	1
	Writing some reports about refugees in Australia.	1
	Total	14
Missing	999	58
Total		72

Part 4: In-class learning VS. Out-of-class learning

- Challenge-ness (/4)

In-class activities

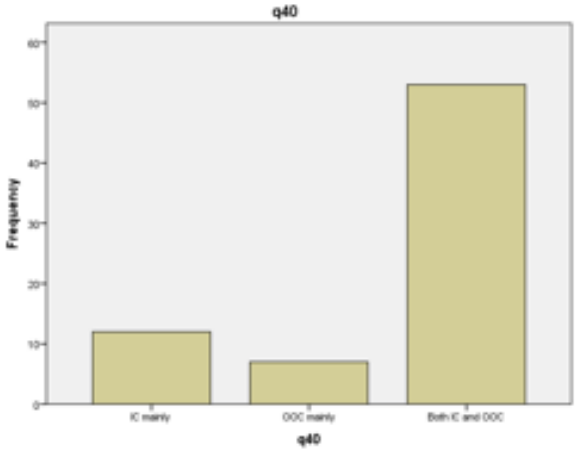
		q28	q29	q30	q31	q32	q33
N	Valid	72	72	72	72	72	72
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.61	1.82	1.83	2.01	1.79	2.28
Median		1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		1	2	2	2	2	2

Out-of-class activities

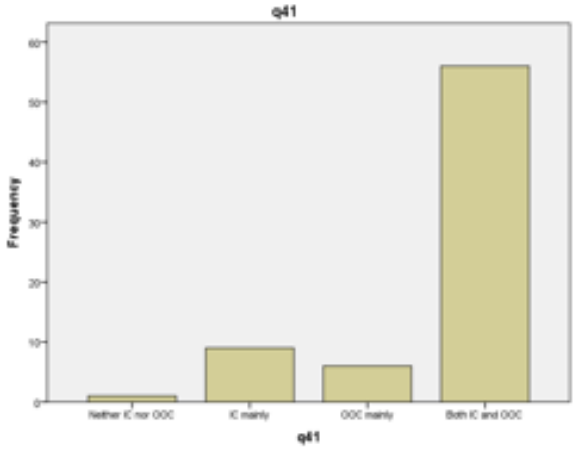
		q34	q35	q36	q37	q38	q39
N	Valid	72	72	72	72	72	72
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.21	1.82	2.26	2.18	1.90	2.35
Median		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		2	2	2	2	2	2

Where do you improve your English?

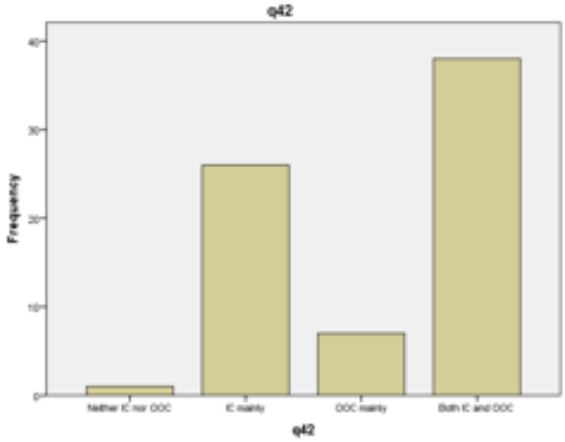
Q40: Improving speaking skills.



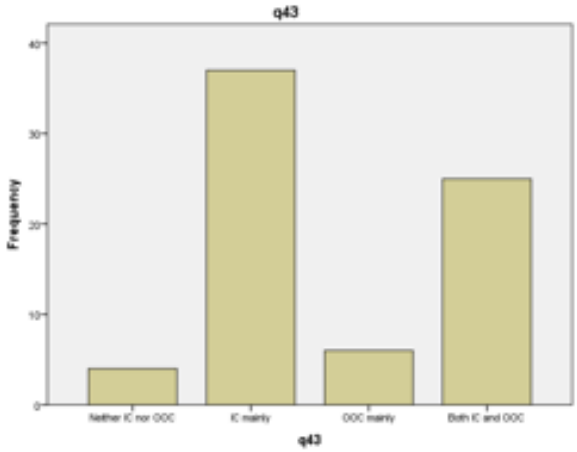
Q41: Improving listening skills.



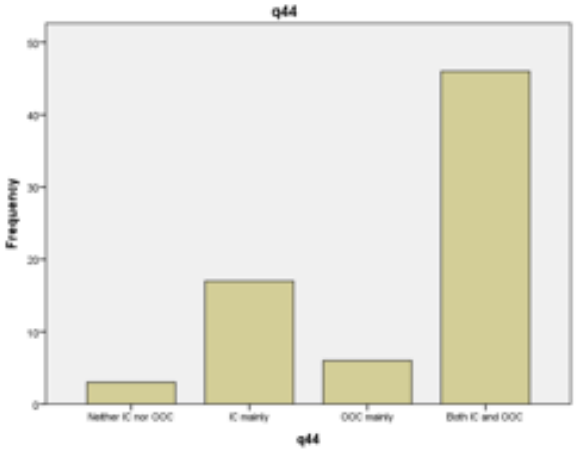
Q42: Improving reading skills.



Q43: Improving writing skills.



Q44: Building up vocabulary.



Q45: I like to study in Australia because...

Valid	I can improve my English more/faster.	1
	A lot of opportunities I can learn English more naturally.	1
	an international environment, safe and nice!	1
	an organised country and its insurance and has places very beautiful	1
	Australia is an international country. I can learn many cultures.	1
	Australian people are so gentle.	1
	Because has language environment.	1
	I can understand it easy.	1
	Education is very good.	1
	English every time.	1
	English speaking country and good for learning.	1
	has a lot of students like me.	1
	have many culture in Aus, can practice English.	1
	How international Sydney is. I want to be a worldwide man.	1
	I can communicate people from diverse countries (multicultural society).	1
	I can conversation with local people.	1
	I can get lots of new vocabulary from local native speakers.	1
	I can improve my English level.	1
	I can improve my English with other nationality.	1
	I can learn English and I can work.	1
	I can learn faster.	1
	I can meet other culture and meet beautiful places.	1
	I can meet people from all different parts of the world.	1
	I can practice English all the time and meet many people who are also studying.	1
	I can practice English every day and I can work for life.	1
	I can practice more English and to speak more people in English.	1
	I can practice on the streets.	1
	I can speak all [unclear] with the people.	1
	I can speak English everywhere.	1
	I can talk to local people.	1
	I can use English language.	1
	I have met many people, is an amazing country and the people is friendly.	1
	I have met many people and I love Sydney.	1
	I have more practice in Australia.	1
	I have other country friends I can't forget every people.	1
	I have the opportunity to practice.	1
	I have to study because I have to learn.	1
	I just like its weather and lifestyle.	1
	I like Australia.	1
	I like English and Australia is freedom.	1
	I like people and weather.	1
	I think it's better to study in their own country to get with a good foundation and continue to stud	1

	I want to be Australian citizen.	1
	I want to practice to English language.	1
	I want to speak same as native speaker.	1
	I'd like to improve in my English skill, and Australian accept other country culture.	1
	I like the country.	1
	in Australia I need to talk more in English.	1
	is very interesting and funny.	1
	it's a good opportunity to improve my English.	1
	It's a nice country, the culture is nice and I'm interested.	1
	It's an English speaking country so you get to study at school and in everyday activities.	1
	It's not too far from my country and school fees aren't too expensive.	1
	Many people speak English.	1
	many teachers	1
	Nice weather.	1
	People use to English, so I can improve studying English.	1
	People are friendly and happy to help.	1
	The Australian people are very kind with foreigners.	1
	there are a lot of people who came from other countries.	1
	there are many cultures and besides English we can learn about other countries.	1
	there are many people from another country.	1
	there is a few Japanese and climate is good.	1
	there is a great variety of cultures and people from many countries.	1
	Very good teacher	1
	Total	65
Missing	999	7
Total		72

Q46: I don't like to study in Australia very much because...

Valid	being far from my family	1
	Different English than USA is very difficult for me to understand.	1
	Difficult to learn English in English.	1
	expensive	1
	Expensive	2
	Expensive.	1
	Have a lot poisonous insects.	1
	I am very far from my family.	2
	I don't like everything is costs.	1
	I don't like food and I am far from Colombia.	1
	I don't like to study.	1

	I hate now...	1
	I like to study in Australia.	2
	I make friends that speak my native language. Sometimes I feel that I could learn more spending the	1
	I miss my parents.	1
	I need to work and it makes me very tired.	1
	I'm not sure because I just came here a few days ago.	1
	II need study alone, except the school teacher or my co-workers, no one can help me.	1
	In Australia, everything is too expensive.	1
	It's very expensive for living.	1
	It's very expensive.	1
	Many country, they have different pronunciation.	1
	Rent a house is too expensive.	1
	Sometimes people ignore me who can speak English very well.	1
	The country is very expensive.	1
	the distance of my family.	1
	the English course and the rent is very expensive.	1
	The words and pronunciation are different to other countries.	1
	Too slow cite (?)	1
	very expensive	3
	very expensive.	2
	very hard to survive.	1
	Total	38
Missing	999	34
Total		72

Q47: I wish I could do (more) to improve my English by...

Valid	speaking more.	5
	A tutor (maybe home tutor).	1
	Australian environment.	1
	by teacher, my friends from different countries.	1
	English courses and business class.	1
	English tests.	1
	Everyday conversation.	1
	friends and talking with people.	1
	having casual conversations in English.	1
	I could improve from outside class more and talk with another countries.	1
	I could speaking well.	1
	I want to continue travelling and maybe sty in this country.	1
	I want to students counsellor in here.	1
	I want to write every day.	1
	I wish improve my listening, speaking, reading and writing.	1

	is very important for my join in Colombia.	1
	learning more Australian country culture.	1
	Listening more English.	1
	Listening.	1
	meeting more locals or native speakers.	1
	meeting local people.	1
	movie, event	1
	myself studying more.	1
	Next life.	1
	practise speaking.	1
	Read a book and do more exercise after class.	1
	reading books, but I hate.	1
	relationship between other people.	1
	speak English in my job because we speak Spanish.	1
	speaking and listening.	1
	speaking more English than Portuguese outside the school.	1
	speaking more with local people.	1
	speaking with local people.	1
	speaking with my friends and local people.	1
	speaking with native English speakers.	1
	speaking, talking, listening, reading.	1
	spending more time learning.	1
	studying more.	1
	studying, having a talk.	1
	talking more people here in Australia.	1
	talking more with local people and strangers around.	1
	The study abroad.	1
	travel across country.	1
	wish I could speak and write English very well.	1
	writing and speaking, vocabulary	1
	writing, grammar.	1
	writing.	1
	Total	51
Missing	999	21
Total		72

Part 5: General Questions

q48: First language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Spanish	24	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Thai	12	16.7	16.7	50.0
	Korean	8	11.1	11.1	61.1
	Japanese	8	11.1	11.1	72.2
	Portuguese	6	8.3	8.3	80.6
	Chinese	4	5.6	5.6	86.1
	Mongolian	2	2.8	2.8	88.9
	Cantonese	1	1.4	1.4	90.3
	Vietnamese	1	1.4	1.4	91.7
	Tagalog	1	1.4	1.4	93.1
	Greek	1	1.4	1.4	94.4
	Italian	1	1.4	1.4	95.8
	Slovak	1	1.4	1.4	97.2
	Taiwanese	1	1.4	1.4	98.6
	Turkish	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

q49: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	39	54.2	54.2	54.2
	Male	33	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

q50: Age groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	28	38.9	38.9	38.9
	26-30	22	30.6	30.6	69.4
	31-35	14	19.4	19.4	88.9
	36-40	5	6.9	6.9	95.8
	over 45	2	2.8	2.8	98.6
	41-45	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

q52: Years of learning experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5 years	43	59.7	62.3	62.3
	6-10 years	12	16.7	17.4	79.7
	Less than 1 year	11	15.3	15.9	95.7
	More than 11 years	3	4.2	4.3	100.0
	Total	69	95.8	100.0	
Missing	999	3	4.2		
Total		72	100.0		

q53: Improvement of English so far.

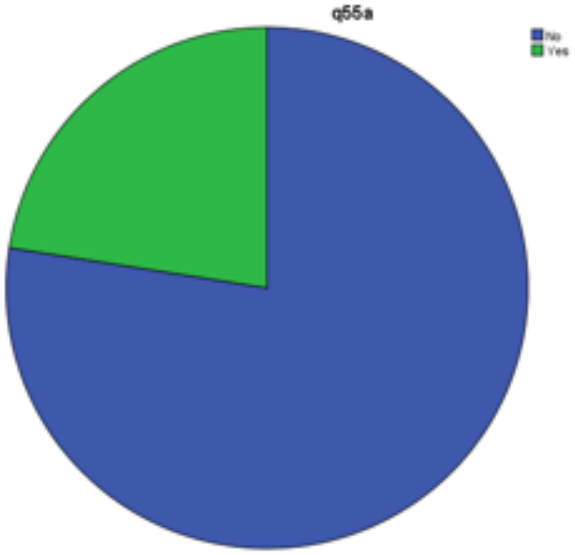
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A lot	38	52.8	52.8	52.8
	A little	29	40.3	40.3	93.1
	Not at all yet	5	6.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

q54: How long have you been in Australia?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3-6 months	31	43.1	44.3	44.3
	Less than 3 months	9	12.5	12.9	57.1
	7-12 months	9	12.5	12.9	70.0
	Less than a month	9	12.5	12.9	82.9
	More than a year	5	6.9	7.1	90.0
	2-3 years	4	5.6	5.7	95.7
	4-5 years	2	2.8	2.9	98.6
	6-8 years	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	70	97.2	100.0	
Missing	999	2	2.8		
Total		72	100.0		

q55a: Have you lived or studied abroad before?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	55	76.4	77.5	77.5
	Yes	16	22.2	22.5	100.0
	Total	71	98.6	100.0	
Missing	999	1	1.4		
Total		72	100.0		



Spain	2 years
The Philippines	3 months
Russia	6 years
Japan	10 years
Spain	6 months
Singapore	1 month
NY	1 month
Canada	7 months
Sydney	3 years
USA	4 months
NZ	1 month
Cairns, AUS	1 week

q56: Accommodation status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sharing a flat/house	46	63.9	63.9	63.9
	Living with my family/relatives	9	12.5	12.5	76.4
	Homestay	7	9.7	9.7	86.1
	Student accommodation	5	6.9	6.9	93.1
	Living in my own apartment/house	5	6.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

q57a: Do you have a part-time job?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	49	68.1	68.1	68.1
	No	23	31.9	31.9	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

q57b: Types of jobs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Waiter/waitress	8	11.1	16.3	16.3
	Cleaner	7	9.7	14.3	30.6
	Kitchen hand	4	5.6	8.2	38.8
	Delivery	4	5.6	8.2	46.9
	Chef	4	5.6	8.2	55.1
	Labour	2	2.8	4.1	59.2
	a company from my country for internet.	1	1.4	2.0	61.2
	Beautician	1	1.4	2.0	63.3
	Carer	1	1.4	2.0	65.3
	Cleaner	1	1.4	2.0	67.3
	cleaner and painting	1	1.4	2.0	69.4
	Construction labour	1	1.4	2.0	71.4
	Customer service officer	1	1.4	2.0	73.5
	Graphic designer	1	1.4	2.0	75.5
	Hair assistant	1	1.4	2.0	77.6
	House keeping	1	1.4	2.0	79.6
	Housekeeper	1	1.4	2.0	81.6
	Kitchen hand and delivery	1	1.4	2.0	83.7
	Restaurant, teaching Mandarin	1	1.4	2.0	85.7
	Room attendant	1	1.4	2.0	87.8
	Serving Ice cream	1	1.4	2.0	89.8
	Teach Japanese, Child care, waiter, event planning	1	1.4	2.0	91.8
	Uber, Delivery, Traffic control	1	1.4	2.0	93.9
	Waiter, kitchen hand, mechanic, painter	1	1.4	2.0	95.9
	Waitress and Barista in cafe	1	1.4	2.0	98.0
	Waitress and cleaner	1	1.4	2.0	100.0
	Total	49	68.1	100.0	
Missing	999	23	31.9		
Total		72	100.0		

Appendix L: ELC Questionnaire Summary Report

Number of respondents: #78 (Male: 37/Female: 37)
Number of classes: #7 (General English x2, Academic English x 3, MUIC Foundation x2)

Part 1: Technology-related activities OOC

- Frequency (/5)

		q1a	q2a	q3a	q4a	q5a	q6a	q7a	q8a
N	Valid	73	72	69	72	71	72	69	72
	Missing	31	32	35	32	33	32	35	32
Mean		3.29	3.92	3.51	2.79	3.620	3.36	2.70	2.44
Median		3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.000	4.00	3.00	2.00
Mode		3	5	5	2	5	5	1	1

- Usefulness (/3)

		q1b	q2b	q3b	q4b	q5b	q6b	q7b	q8b
N	Valid	74	75	74	74	74	73	67	70
	Missing	30	29	30	30	30	31	37	4
Mean		2.32	2.55	2.47	2.16	2.31	2.32	1.94	2.25
Median		2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		2	3	3	2	2	2[a]	1	2

- Example activities using electronic devises OOC

q1c: I read in English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	BBC news	18	17.3	22.5
	ABC News	5	4.8	6.3
	News in levels	3	2.9	3.8
	Online Books	2	1.9	2.5
	New York Time	2	1.9	2.5
	YouTube	2	1.9	2.5
	News	2	1.9	2.5
	TV shows	2	1.9	2.5
	The Time	2	1.9	2.5
	The Economics	2	1.9	2.5
	Breaking News	1	1.0	1.3
	Facebook	1	1.0	1.3
	CNN News	1	1.0	1.3
	Novels	1	1.0	1.3

	Bloomberg	1	1.0	1.3
	VOA	1	1.0	1.3
	iPhone	1	1.0	1.3
	Talk shows	1	1.0	1.3
	ER-Central	1	1.0	1.3
Missing	999	24	23.1	
Total		73	100.0	

q2c: I listen to English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Music	26	25.0	31.0	67.9
	News	4	3.8	4.8	72.6
	Radio	4	3.8	4.8	77.4
	TED Talk	3	2.9	3.6	81.0
	Music and BBC English	2	1.9	2.4	83.3
	Music and radio	2	1.9	2.4	85.7
	VOA	2	1.9	2.4	88.1
	English books	1	1.0	1.2	89.3
	Music and IELTS exercises	1	1.0	1.2	90.5
	Kindle	1	1.0	1.2	91.7
	BBC 6 mins English	1	1.0	1.2	92.9
	Music and News	1	1.0	1.2	94.0
	YouTube	1	1.0	1.2	95.2
	FM Radio	1	1.0	1.2	96.4
	Music and TED Talk	1	1.0	1.2	97.6
	News in level	1	1.0	1.2	98.8
	Music and Animation	1	1.0	1.2	100.0
Missing	999	20	19.2		
Total		73	100.0		

q3c: I watch TV series or movies in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	American TV series	26	25.0	31.7	69.5
	Movies	15	14.4	18.3	87.8
	Australian TV series	4	3.8	4.9	92.7
	UK TV series	2	1.9	2.4	95.1
	YouTube	1	1.0	1.2	96.3
	TED	1	1.0	1.2	97.6
	X Factor	1	1.0	1.2	98.8
	ABC Kids	1	1.0	1.2	100.0
Missing	999	22	21.2		
Total		73	100.0		

q5c: I read and write messages in English using electronic devices. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Facebook	16	15.4	18.8	55.3
	WeChat	10	9.6	11.8	67.1
	Instagram	5	4.8	5.9	72.9
	Facebook and Instagram	4	3.8	4.7	77.6
	SMS	2	1.9	2.4	80.0
	Facebook and WhatsApp	2	1.9	2.4	82.4
	Facebook and Twitter	2	1.9	2.4	84.7
	Twitter and Instagram	2	1.9	2.4	87.1
	WhatsApp	2	1.9	2.4	89.4
	Line and WeChat	1	1.0	1.2	90.6
	Kakaotalk	1	1.0	1.2	91.8
	Email and Facebook	1	1.0	1.2	92.9
	YouTube	1	1.0	1.2	94.1
	Timder	1	1.0	1.2	95.3
	Twitter	1	1.0	1.2	96.5
	Instagram and Messenger	1	1.0	1.2	97.6
	Homework	1	1.0	1.2	98.8
	Line	1	1.0	1.2	100.0
Missing	999	19	18.3		
Total		73	100.0		

q6c: I speak with my friends in English using electronic devices.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	WeChat	19	18.3	24.1	63.3
	Line	6	5.8	7.6	70.9
	Facebook	4	3.8	5.1	75.9
	WeChat and WhatsApp	3	2.9	3.8	79.7
	Skype	3	2.9	3.8	83.5
	WhatsApp	3	2.9	3.8	87.3
	Line and Messenger	2	1.9	2.5	89.9
	Phone call	1	1.0	1.3	91.1
	Liber	1	1.0	1.3	92.4
	Tango	1	1.0	1.3	93.7
	Snapchat	1	1.0	1.3	94.9
	FaceTime	1	1.0	1.3	96.2
	Skype and WeChat	1	1.0	1.3	97.5
	WeChat Facebook and Messenger	1	1.0	1.3	98.7
	Line and WeChat	1	1.0	1.3	100.0
Missing	999	25	24.0		
Total		73	100.0		

q7c: I play online/offline games in English.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	LOL	18	17.3	30.0	81.7
	Call of Duty	2	1.9	3.3	85.0
	Dota	2	1.9	3.3	88.3
	Words	2	1.9	3.3	91.7
	Recore	1	1.0	1.7	93.3
	GTA 5	1	1.0	1.7	95.0
	Kahoot!	1	1.0	1.7	96.7
	Cross Fire	1	1.0	1.7	98.3
	Lyrics Training	1	1.0	1.7	100.0
Missing	999	44	42.3		
Total		73	100.0		

q8c: I take online/offline English courses.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	ELC online	15	14.4	22.4	68.7
	IELTS	11	10.6	16.4	85.1
	TOFEL	2	1.9	3.0	88.1
	Khan Academy	2	1.9	3.0	91.0
	Writing	1	1.0	1.5	92.5
	Listening Drill	1	1.0	1.5	94.0
	51 Talk	1	1.0	1.5	95.5
	Youdao courses	1	1.0	1.5	97.0
	Quiz	1	1.0	1.5	98.5
	TED	1	1.0	1.5	100.0
Missing	999	37	35.6		
Total		73	100.0		

q9c: ... any other activities with electronic devices?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Shopping	2	1.9	4.3	71.7
	Translation	2	1.9	4.3	76.1
	English games	1	1.0	2.2	78.3
	Lyrics training	1	1.0	2.2	80.4
	Set the language in English for all devices	1	1.0	2.2	82.6
	Write notes in laptop	1	1.0	2.2	84.8
	Write a blog	1	1.0	2.2	87.0
	Write a composition	1	1.0	2.2	89.1
	Calm down for thinking.	1	1.0	2.2	91.3

	Writing essays	1	1.0	2.2	93.5
	Reading magazines	1	1.0	2.2	95.7
	Everything I do	1	1.0	2.2	97.8
	Online textbook	1	1.0	2.2	100.0
Missing	999	58	55.8		
Total		73	100.0		

Part 2: Activities without electronic devices OOC

❖ Frequency (/5)

		q10a	q11a	q12a	q13a	q14a	q15a	q16a	q17a	q18a	q19a
N	Valid	72	73	71	73	69	72	72	71	69	68
	Missing	6	5	7	5	9	6	6	7	9	10
Mean		3.21	3.95	2.69	3.73	3.07	3.33	4.46	3.55	2.06	2.25
Median		3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		3	5	1	5	3	4	3	4	1	1

❖ Usefulness (/3)

		q10b	q11b	q12b	q13b	q14b	q15b	q16b	q17b	q18b	q19b
N	Valid	76	77	74	76	74	76	78	78	73	70
	Missing	28	27	30	28	30	28	26	26	31	34
Mean		2.53	2.53	2.26	2.57	2.28	2.61	2.59	2.42	2.04	2.19
Median		3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.00	2.00
Mode		3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3

❖ Example activities

q10c: I read in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Books	29	27.9	34.9	72.3
	Newspapers	7	6.7	8.4	80.7
	Posters	5	4.8	6.0	86.7
	Online news	2	1.9	2.4	89.2
	Textbooks	1	1.0	1.2	90.4
	Emails	1	1.0	1.2	91.6
	Letters	1	1.0	1.2	92.8
	Homework	1	1.0	1.2	94.0
	Books and newspapers	1	1.0	1.2	95.2
	Books and magazines	1	1.0	1.2	96.4
	English video games	1	1.0	1.2	97.6
	On the phone	1	1.0	1.2	98.8

	Magazine	1	1.0	1.2	100.0
Missing	999	21	20.2		
Total		73	100.0		

q11c: I listen to some one speak in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	On a bus/train	11	14.1	19.0	19.0
	At shops	10	12.8	17.2	36.2
	Conversation	5	6.4	8.6	44.8
	At school/in class	4	5.1	6.9	51.7
	Friends	4	5.1	6.9	58.6
	Homestay, class, transport	3	3.8	5.2	63.8
	In homestay	3	3.8	5.2	69.0
	TED Talk	3	3.8	5.2	74.1
	Outside/on the street	3	3.8	5.2	79.3
	At restaurants	2	2.6	3.4	82.8
	News	2	2.6	3.4	86.2
	Everywhere	1	1.3	1.7	87.9
	BBC News	1	1.3	1.7	89.7
	Market and Hub	1	1.3	1.7	91.4
	Seminars	1	1.3	1.7	93.1
	Speech	1	1.3	1.7	94.8
	At work and restaurants	1	1.3	1.7	96.6
	Conversation at the gym	1	1.3	1.7	98.3
	Conversation at Uber	1	1.3	1.7	100.0
	Total	58	74.4	100.0	
Missing	999	20	25.6		
Total		78	100.0		

q13c: I write in English. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Taking notes	13	12.5	16.7	56.4
	Homework	12	11.5	15.4	71.8
	Diaries	7	6.7	9.0	80.8
	Essays	6	5.8	7.7	88.5
	Journals	5	4.8	6.4	94.9
	Email	2	1.9	2.6	97.4
	Text	1	1.0	1.3	98.7
	Only in class	1	1.0	1.3	100.0
Missing	999	26	25.0		
Total		73	100.0		

q17c: I speak with other people in English outside of school. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	At work	9	8.7	12.0	53.3
	At shops/supermarkets	6	5.8	8.0	61.3
	Flatmates	4	3.8	5.3	66.7
	Homestay	4	3.8	5.3	72.0
	Friends	3	2.9	4.0	76.0
	At home	3	2.9	4.0	80.0
	Strangers	3	2.9	4.0	84.0
	Party	2	1.9	2.7	86.7
	Homestay and at work	1	1.0	1.3	88.0
	Church	1	1.0	1.3	89.3
	Flatmates and classmates	1	1.0	1.3	90.7
	Receptionists	1	1.0	1.3	92.0
	Landlord	1	1.0	1.3	93.3
	At home and at work	1	1.0	1.3	94.7
	Anyone	1	1.0	1.3	96.0
	Neighbours	1	1.0	1.3	97.3
	Classmates	1	1.0	1.3	98.7
	At a bank	1	1.0	1.3	100.0
Missing	999	29	27.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q18c: I join social activities or events. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Gym	6	5.8	11.3	69.8
	Party	3	2.9	5.7	75.5
	Basketball club	2	1.9	3.8	79.2
	Football club	2	1.9	3.8	83.0
	Church	2	1.9	3.8	86.8
	Events	1	1.0	1.9	88.7
	Reading club	1	1.0	1.9	90.6
	Club	1	1.0	1.9	92.5
	Game club	1	1.0	1.9	94.3
	Volunteering	1	1.0	1.9	96.2
	Australia and China Study Club	1	1.0	1.9	98.1
	Party, Fencing studio	1	1.0	1.9	100.0
Missing	999	51	49.0		
Total		73	100.0		

q19c: I join courses/workshops provided at school. (Examples)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Workshops	11	10.6	18.6	71.2
	Conversation class	4	3.8	6.8	78.0
	Conversation with teachers	4	3.8	6.8	84.7
	Conversation group	3	2.9	5.1	89.8
	Essay, paragraph writing	1	1.0	1.7	91.5
	ILC	1	1.0	1.7	93.2
	Advice	1	1.0	1.7	94.9
	Writing	1	1.0	1.7	96.6
	Book Club Cafe	1	1.0	1.7	98.3
	IELTS Class	1	1.0	1.7	100.0
Missing	999	45	43.3		
Total		104	100.0		

q20a: Is there anything you should/could do to improve your English, but you don't/can't?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	31	29.8	46.3	46.3
	Yes	36	34.6	53.7	100.0
Missing	999	6	5.8		

q20b: If yes, what is this?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
	Speaking more with local people.	4	3.8	6.0	52.2
	Watching TV/movies in English.	4	3.8	6.0	58.2
	Learning more vocabulary.	4	3.8	6.0	64.2
	Going out more; traveling, join activities.	3	2.9	4.5	68.7
	Making international friends.	2	1.9	3.0	71.6
	Writing practices.	2	1.9	3.0	74.6
	Not to speak in my first language.	2	1.9	3.0	77.6
	Because I can study more in English.	1	1.0	1.5	79.1
	Become a volunteer.	1	1.0	1.5	80.6
	Do a part time job.	1	1.0	1.5	82.1
	Find a local boyfriend HHHHHH!	1	1.0	1.5	83.6
	Go out and work with the local people.	1	1.0	1.5	85.1
	Go traveling with another countries students and we can improve communication skills.	1	1.0	1.5	86.6
	Grammar book, vocabulary book, reading books like novels.	1	1.0	1.5	88.1
	I wanna communicate with classmates in English a lot.	1	1.0	1.5	89.6
	Listening BBC news.	1	1.0	1.5	91.0
	My friends do not matter my grammar mistakes.	1	1.0	1.5	92.5

	Only if I was put in a class with people from different nationalities.	1	1.0	1.5	94.0
	Speaking more and writing more.	1	1.0	1.5	95.5
	speaking, hearing, writing	1	1.0	1.5	97.0
	Taking part-time job.	1	1.0	1.5	98.5
	Teach other language by using English.	1	1.0	1.5	100.0
Missing	999	37	35.6		
Total		73	100.0		

Speak/talk/communicate: 10, Socialising/activities: 11, TV/Movies/News: 5, Specific skills (writing, vocabulary etc.): 10

q20c: Explain why you don't/can't do this.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
	Lazy	5	4.8	8.8	63.2
	Not enough time.	3	2.9	5.3	68.4
	Not enough opportunities.	2	1.9	3.5	71.9
	Shy	2	1.9	3.5	75.4
	Lack of confidence.	1	1.0	1.8	77.2
	Because I can help people and practice my speaking and learn more custom of study at the same time.	1	1.0	1.8	78.9
	Because I often watch Chinese TV show so I don't do this.	1	1.0	1.8	80.7
	Cause the different culture.	1	1.0	1.8	82.5
	I can't because I didn't know there are so many Chinese here.	1	1.0	1.8	84.2
	I don't have a TV.	1	1.0	1.8	86.0
	I try to make friends, and I believe I can do that.	1	1.0	1.8	87.7
	I've in the ELC and I think pass the ELC class is the most important thing.	1	1.0	1.8	89.5
	It is enough for me to complete my homework.	1	1.0	1.8	91.2
	Most of my classmates are Chinese and they speak Chinese together.	1	1.0	1.8	93.0
	not experience	1	1.0	1.8	94.7
	Printed books are too heavy to hold. I don't have enough time to read a whole book because I have to do homework.	1	1.0	1.8	96.5
	Useful.	1	1.0	1.8	98.2
	Without good habits.	1	1.0	1.8	100.0
Missing	999	47	45.2		
Total		73	100.0		

Part 3: Homework

❖ **Usefulness (/4)**

		q21	q22	q23	q24	q25
N	Valid	77	77	77	77	77
	Missing	1	1	1	1	1
Mean		3.14	3.06	3.22	3.35	3.09
Median		3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Mode		3	3	4	4	3

q26: Amount of homework

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Less homework	12	11.5	17.4	17.4
	Right amount of homework	50	48.1	72.5	89.9
	More homework	7	6.7	10.1	100.0
Missing	999	4	3.8		
Total		73	100.0		

q27a: Any particular useful homework?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not really	41	39.4	58.6	
	Yes	29	27.9	41.4	100.0
Missing	999	3	2.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q27b: If yes, what homework?

	Writing diaries/journals.	8
	Writing essays.	2
	Reading books/articles.	2
	Because buy something must use English.	1
	Doing with friends.	1
	I need more homework.	1
	It can improve my English level.	1
	Listening and speed reading. Writing essays as well.	1
	Lyricstraining.com	1

	Presentation really help with teamwork and use digital devices wisely. Especially help with critical thinking and speak in front of public.	1
	Remember	1
	Speak with native English speakers.	1
	There are no encouragement in study so I guess you understand.	1
	Watching TED talks.	1
	When I join any particular homework and can improve my English level.	1
	Writing exercises and have a discussion with classmates every day.	1
Missing	999	48
Total		73

Part 4: In-class learning VS Out-of-class learning

- *In-class Challenge-ness (/4)*

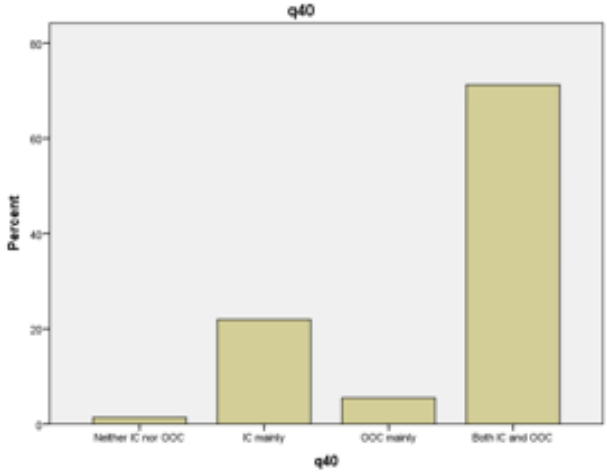
		q28	q29	q30	q31	q32	q33
N	Valid	78	78	78	78	78	78
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.53	1.71	1.77	1.88	1.65	1.79
Median		1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		1	1	1	2	2	2

- *Out-of-class Challenge-ness (/4)*

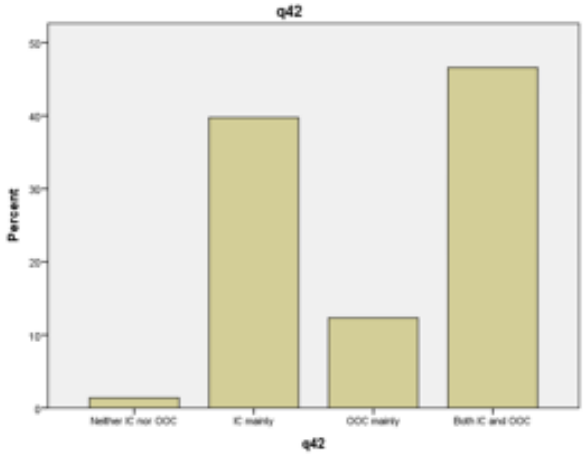
		q34	q35	q36	q37	q38	q39
N	Valid	78	78	78	78	78	78
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.14	1.72	2.10	1.94	1.88	2.03
Median		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		3	1	2	2	2	2

- ***Where do you improve your English?***

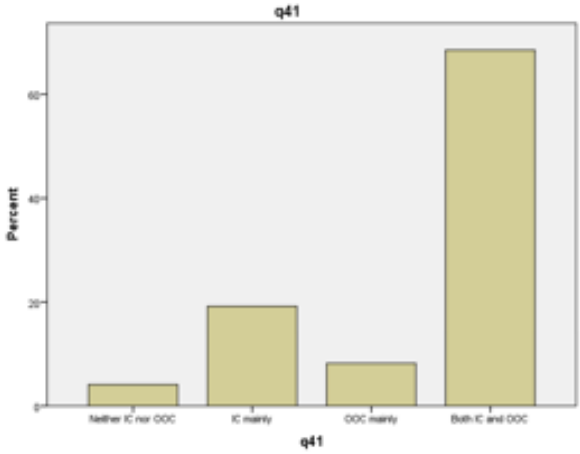
Q40: Improving speaking skills



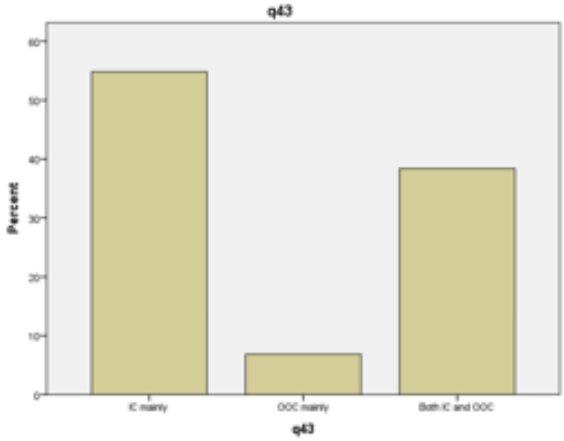
Q42: Improving reading skills.



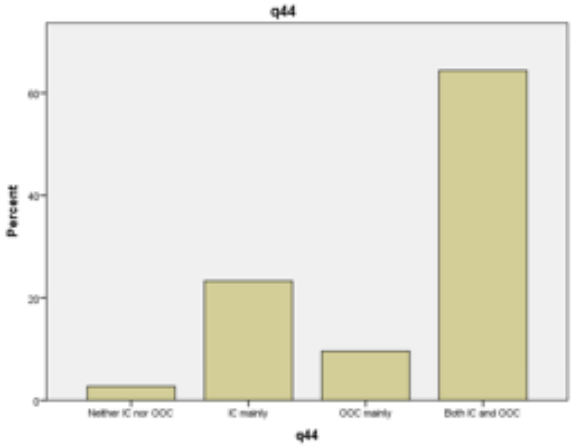
Q41: Improving listening skills.



Q43: Improving writing skills.



Q44: Building up vocabulary.



Q45: I like to study in Australia because...

	the environment is good for learning English.	13
	people are friendly/nice.	13
	it is an English speaking country.	2
	quality of university/education is high.	6
	weather/fresh air/ food are good.	3
	I can improve my English more/faster.	4
	I like the lifestyle/culture.	4
	there are more chances to communicate in English.	5
	international/multi-culture/meeting people from various countries.	7
	good education and environments.	1
	good environment, higher quality education.	1
	I can experience various things.	1
	I could learn knowledge.	1
	I don't know just like.	1
	I have to.	1
	I need studying.	1
	it's quite challenge.	1
	my friend lives in Australia.	1
	study English make me happy.	1
Missing	999	6
Total		73

Q46: I don't like to study in Australia very much because...

		Frequency
	living costs are expensive.	6
	weather is not good.	5
	there are too many Asian/Chinese students.	3
	too difficult to communicate in English.	5
	too difficult to study (exams are hard).	2
	I miss my family.	5
	I don't like food here.	1
	(nothing- I like it very much.)	5
	it is so boring.	1
	It is sometimes easy to study English in ELC.	1
	it's disappointing sometimes.	1
	not so many chances to use English.	1
	Not true.	1
	there are many foreigners.	1
	traffic is not good.	2
Missing	999	33
Total		73

Q47: I wish I could do (more) to improve my English by...

		Frequency
	talking/communicating more with local people.	15
	speaking more.	6
	living in Australia (longer).	3
	reading	2
	writing	4
	watching TV/movies in English.	2
	finding a part-time job.	2
	talking with my friends/classmates.	4
	work harder daily.	2
	listening and speaking more.	1
	more homework.	1
	class.	1
	completing this course.	1
	daily communication.	1
	joining a band.	1
	listening.	1
	making friends.	1
	meeting various people.	1
	more news, more conversation.	1
	my power.	1
	on line too.	1
	read more and write often.	1
	reading, writing and listening.	1
	review notes.	1
	seeing the movie, reading the novels.	1
	speaking, listening, writing, reading.	1
	study on class and outside the school.	1
	talking with people from different culture background.	1
	to be more confident.	1
	watch English movies, communicate with people in English.	1
Missing	999	12
Total		73

Speak/talk/communicate more: 31
Socialise (make friends, part-time job, join a club): 5
Read: 5
Write: 7
Watch TV/movies: 5
More homework: 1

Part 5: General questions

q48: First language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Chinese	50	48.1	50.5	81.8
	Cantonese	1	1.0	1.0	82.8
	Korean	4	3.8	4.0	86.9
	Japanese	4	3.8	4.0	90.9
	Vietnamese	1	1.0	1.0	91.9
	Tibet Languages	1	1.0	1.0	92.9
	Arabic	3	2.9	3.0	96.0
	Spanish	3	2.9	3.0	99.0
	Mongolia	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Missing	999	5	4.8		
Total		73	100.0		

q49: Male/Female

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	35	33.7	49.3	49.3
	Female	36	34.6	50.7	100.0
Missing	999	2	1.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q50: Age range

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-25	60	57.7	87.0	87.0
	26-30	6	5.8	8.7	95.7
	31-35	1	1.0	1.4	97.1
	36-40	1	1.0	1.4	98.6
	41-45	1	1.0	1.4	100.0
Missing	999	4	3.8		
Total		73	100.0		

q51: Courses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	General English	30	28.8	42.3	42.3
	Academic English	41	39.4	57.7	100.0
Missing	999	2	1.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q52: Yeas of studying English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1-5 years	21	20.2	30.0	30.0
	6-10 years	36	34.6	51.4	81.4
	More than 11 years	12	11.5	17.1	98.6
	Less than 1 year	1	1.0	1.4	100.0
Missing	999	3	2.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q53: Improvement of English so far.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all yet	1	1.0	1.4	1.4
	A little	29	27.9	42.0	43.5
	A lot	39	37.5	56.5	100.0
	Total	73	100.0	100.0	

q54: Length of stay in Australia so far

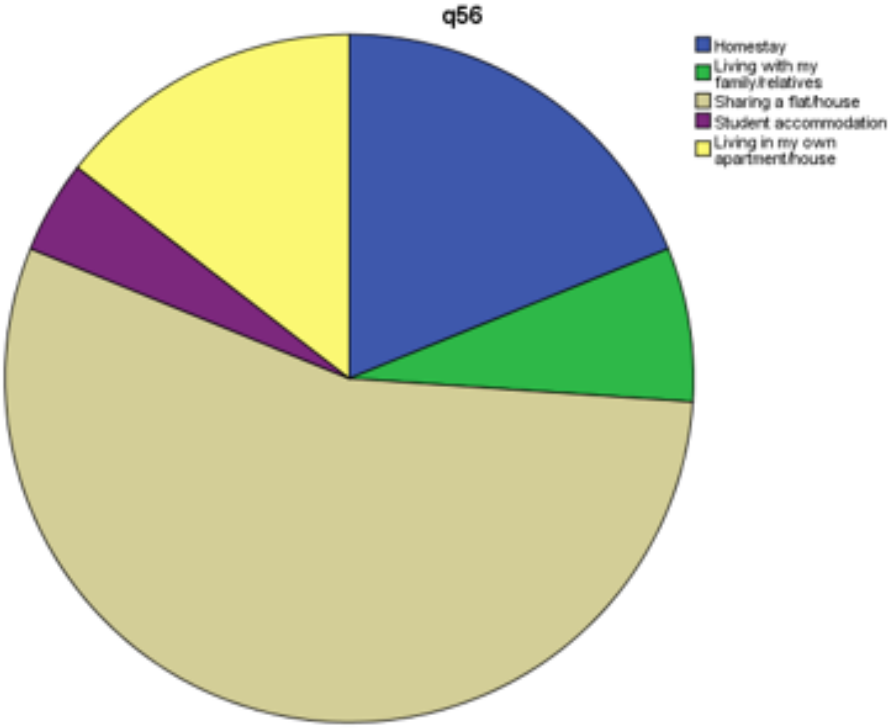
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Less than 3 months	25	24.0	35.2	
	3-6 months	27	26.0	38.0	73.2
	7-12 months	9	8.7	12.7	85.9
	More than a year	10	9.6	14.1	100.0
Missing	999	2	1.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q55a: Previous lived or studied abroad experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	54	51.9	78.3	78.3
	Yes	15	14.4	21.7	100.0
Missing	999	4	3.8		
Total		73	100.0		

q56: Accommodation status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Homestay	13	12.5	18.8	18.8
	Living with my family/relatives	5	4.8	7.2	26.1
	Sharing a flat/house	38	36.5	55.1	81.2
	Student accommodation	3	2.9	4.3	85.5
	Living in my own apartment/house	10	9.6	14.5	100.0
Missing	999	4	3.8		
Total		73	100.0		



q57a: Doing a part-time job?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	58	55.8	82.9	82.9
	Yes	12	11.5	17.1	100.0
Missing	999	3	2.9		
Total		73	100.0		

q57b: Types of part-time jobs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Waiter/waitress	2	1.9	4.7	76.7
	Kitchen hand	3	2.9	7.0	83.7
	Cleaner	1	1.0	2.3	86.0
	Gardener	1	1.0	2.3	88.4
	Delivery	1	1.0	2.3	90.7
	Cleaner	1	1.0	2.3	93.0
	Delivery	1	1.0	2.3	95.3
	Not yet, starting next week.	1	1.0	2.3	97.7
	Teaching children about making a robot.	1	1.0	2.3	100.0
Missing	999	61	58.7		
Total		73	100.0		