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# Life Portraits: A Comparative Case Study of Four Veteran Spanish Teachers

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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, LIFE PORTRAITS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF FOUR VETERAN SPANISH TEACHERS, by MYRNELLE GREGORY-BRYAN, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University. The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

---

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.  
Committee Chair

---

\_ Joel Meyers, Ph.D. Committee  
Member

---

Diane Belcher, Ph.D. Committee  
Member

---

Joyce Many, Ph.D. Committee  
Member

---

Date

---

Dana L. Fox, Ph.D.  
Chair, Department of Middle-Secondary Education and Instructional Technology

---

R.W. Kamphaus, Ph.D.  
Dean and Distinguished Research Professor  
College of Education

## AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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Myrnelle Gregory-Bryan

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Myrnelle Gregory-Bryan  
578, Fortune Ridge Road  
Stone Mountain, GA, 30087

The director of this dissertation is:

Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs  
Department of Middle-Secondary Education and Instructional Technology  
College of Education  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3083

## VITA

Myrnelle Gregory-Bryan

ADDRESS: 578, Fortune Ridge Road, Stone Mountain, Georgia, 30087.

### EDUCATION:

- Ph.D. 2010 Georgia State University  
Teaching and Learning
- M.Ed. 1995 University of the West Indies  
Educational Psychology/Educational Administration
- B.A. 1982 University of the West Indies  
Spanish/English Language and Literature

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

- 1996-Present Spanish Teacher  
DeKalb County School System, Decatur, Ga
- 1995-1996 Lecturer- English/ Reading in the Content Area  
University of Technology, Jamaica. Kingston, Jamaica
- 1989-1995 Spanish teacher  
St Andrew High School, Kingston, Jamaica
- Lecturer – Psychology  
St Andrew Community College
- Lecturer – Psychology  
College of Arts, Science and Technology
- 1982-1989 English Teacher  
Merl Grove High School, Kingston, Jamaica

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

2006-Present Georgia Association of Teacher Educators  
2007-Present Foreign Language Association of Georgia  
2007-Present Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

PRESENTATIONS:

Gregory-Bryan, M. & Perez, C. (2010, March). *Facilitating the development of conversational skills*. Presented at FLAG (Foreign language Association of Georgia) Savannah, Ga.

Gregory-Bryan, M. (2007, March). *Art as literacy in the Foreign Language Classroom. Session presented at the Third International Online Conference on Second and Foreign and Foreign language Teaching Research*.  
<http://www.readingmatrix.com/onlineconference/index.html>.

Gregory-Bryan, M. (2006, October). *Exposing students to the grammars of conversation through excerpts from movies*. Paper presented at the GATE (Georgia Association of Teacher Educators), Atlanta, Ga.

## ABSTRACT

### LIFE PORTRAITS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF FOUR VETERAN SPANISH TEACHERS by Myrnelle Gregory- Bryan

In foreign language education the classification native or nonnative speaker of a language often evokes thoughts related to degrees of competence in language teaching (Braine, 2004; Davies, 2003). This comparative case study focused on Spanish teachers in a United States context. It contributes toward the literature base in research related to native and nonnative speakers of languages other than English within the local context. Using the threefold theoretical framework of role identity theory (Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000), teacher efficacy (Tschennen Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and social constructivism (Schwandt, 2007), the study aimed at developing understandings about the lived experience of foreign language teachers given the native/ nonnative speaker construct. It investigated how their personal perception of their role impacted the execution of professional duties. It also explored their conceptualization of the language teacher, given their extensive observation of teachers of various languages.

Research questions included: (1) How does each participant conceptualize her role identity as Spanish teacher in a predominantly English speaking setting? (2) How viable is the native/nonnative speaker construct when teacher efficacy is considered? (3) How has the experience of supervising teachers of differing linguistic backgrounds (native/nonnative speaker )in the language they teach

influenced the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct in the USA? Data collection was done through interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations. The participants were four veteran Spanish teachers who had been in the department chair position for more than ten years. Two grew up speaking the language while the others learned the language in an academic setting.

Findings revealed that there was great similarity in the way teachers conceptualized their role as Spanish teacher; that they gave no credence to the native/ nonnative speaker construct as an indicator of language proficiency for competent language teaching or for adequate target language use in the classroom. Findings further led to the creation of a model for the novel concept Language Teacher Efficacy.



LIFE PORTRAITS: A COMPARATIVE CASE  
STUDY OF FOUR VETERAN  
SPANISH TEACHERS

by  
Myrnelle Gregory-Bryan

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the  
Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Teaching and Learning  
in  
the Department of Middle-Secondary Education and Instructional Technology  
in  
the College of Education  
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia  
2010

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## ABBREVIATIONS

FG1	First focus group
FG2	Second focus group
FG1C	Consuela's comment in first focus group
FG1H	Helen's comment in first focus group
FG1M	Maureen's comment in first focus group
FG1S	Soraya's comment in first focus group
FG2C	Consuela's comment in second focus group
FG2H	Helen's comment in second focus group
FG2M	Maureen's comment in second focus group
FG2S	Soraya's comment in second focus group
INT1P1	1 <sup>st</sup> Interview with participant 1 - Soraya
INT2P1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview with participant 1- Soraya
INT3P1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Interview with participant 1- Soraya
INT1P2	1 <sup>st</sup> Interview with participant 2 - Maureen
INT2P2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview with participant 2 - Maureen
INT3P2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Interview with participant 2 - Maureen
INT1P3	1 <sup>st</sup> Interview with participant 3 - Consuela
INT2P3	2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview with participant 3 - Consuela
INT3P3	3 <sup>rd</sup> Interview with participant 3- Consuela
INT1P4	1 <sup>st</sup> Interview with participant 4- Helen
INT2P4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview with participant 4 - Helen
INT3P4	3 <sup>rd</sup> Interview with participant 4- Helen

NNS	Nonnative speaker
NS	Native speaker
RJ.....	Researcher's Journal

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*You are the kind of person we want in our classroom – a native speaker*

(County Coordinator – World language Department)

These words, spoken to me upon my receiving a teaching position in one school system introduced a novel phenomenon to me. Prior to hearing them, I had been oblivious to the overt categorization of language teachers as native and nonnative speakers, and the attendant implication for individuals falling into each category. In my studies at the university level I had had professors who could neatly fit into each category, but my peers and I had never discussed that distinction. It seemed as irrelevant as the gait of the professors. Such distinction never had any bearing on how the teachers were rated when we were selecting classes. The way the professor structured the course, presented the information, and related to her students were the points we considered. It never occurred to us that we would have had an advantage with one over the other because we instinctively assumed that their being on the faculty was evidence that they possessed a sufficiently strong knowledge base in their discipline, and that they were all adequately qualified to teach the subject area they offered, be it the language or the literature of the target language.

The statement remained pounding in my subconscious and forced me to reflect on the seven years I had taught Spanish at the high school level prior to migrating to the United States. Teachers did their utmost to adequately prepare students for examinations, the major ones being set by external examining bodies based in other countries. Spanish was taught mainly as a foreign language, and the examination was geared towards testing the students' proficiency in manipulating the grammars of the language in written, aural and oral performance exercises,

through listening and reading comprehension, translation, and composition. The teachers' competence in facilitating the development of the required skills was crucial, but was not seen as being related to their having learnt the language by virtue of having been born into that language group, or through the course of formal education. The coordinator's statement presented at the opening was therefore unexpected, so unanticipated that I could not think of an appropriate response. I said nothing, but as I have pondered his words throughout the years, they have alerted me to the possibility that, at the very least, in my new environment there were persons in positions of responsibility in the school system, who perceived competence in language teaching as being a function of the teachers' history of contact with the language.

As I muse over the coordinator's words today, I am still unsure of how I should have responded. The words might have been an expression of confidence in my ability to make a meaningful contribution to students' language learning. They may have been an indication that he felt secure about my language proficiency based on my performance in the interview and my scores on the state examination for teachers, which he held in his hand. On the other hand, they might have been indicative of a comparatively lower level of confidence in the ability of the individual who teaches a language other than her primary language of communication – a subtle implication that there was doubt about her ability to perform equally creditably in the role of language teacher.

The coordinator visited my school on my very first day on the job. He observed my class and congratulated me on a job well done, highlighting my use of the target language as the medium of instruction and the use of visual aids as outstanding aspects that aided comprehension of the language. He gave a glowing report to my principal and described my class in detail at a conference a few months later. A year later, a staff development session using teachers who

taught their primary language of communication as facilitators was planned. I was invited to be of them. It was at this time that I informed him that Spanish was not my primary language of communication. My exposure to Spanish had always been in an academic setting, beginning in high school and continuing through the university level.

### Statement of the Problem

Different scholars (Canagaragh, 1999; Cook 2005; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004; Phillipson, 1996) have carried forward the debate about the merit of the native versus the nonnative speaker in the classroom. Their arguments have included thoughts about the use of technological resources in exposing students to authentic language; the role of adequate training in facilitating effective teaching by both native and nonnative speakers; and the marginalization of the nonnative speaker, particularly in English language teaching. Given these examples of the trend seen in the literature, I became aware that there are a variety of issues associated with the language teaching arena that are consequential to the native or nonnative speaker status of the teacher. These include questions related to linguistic competence and target culture familiarity; suitable modeling of target language use; and the subject of expertise in teaching.

### Rationale and Purpose of the Study

At the high school level in the United States 70% of students studying a foreign language study Spanish (Draper & Hicks, 2000). Eighty percent of foreign language teachers at the high school level are teachers of Spanish and, numbering 45.5 million, Spanish-speaking persons now form the largest minority group in the United States (ACTFL Student Survey, 2008). Students in this group manifest a variety of levels of proficiency in Spanish, thereby requiring of teachers a level of competence linguistically and pedagogically that allows them to meet the specific challenges that are unique to this situation (Carreira, 2003, Colombi & Roca, 2003). With

approximately 12% of the Latino group having a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2006) access to a Spanish teacher whose primary language of communication is Spanish might be relatively easy. The existence of programs that offer three-year contracts to teachers from other countries for faculty positions in the USA form another pool from which Spanish teachers who teach their primary language might be taken. Soriano (2004) reports that those offering to teach their primary language experience less difficulty in obtaining faculty positions as there is less meticulous checking of credentials than in the case of those offering to teach a language other than their primary language. In view of the foregoing, a study investigating the status of and implications for Spanish teachers who fall into each of these two categories is highly relevant in this society. This study therefore explored the lived experience of Spanish teachers who teach their primary language and those for whom a language other than Spanish is primary. The purpose was to provide an understanding of the issues that impacted their professional lives.

Inarguably, teachers who teach their primary language and those who teach languages other than their primary language learnt the language in different social contexts. Consequently, each brings a unique life history of language learning to the educational setting. This is a noteworthy factor that can affect the language teaching/learning context. Risager (2006) argues that linguistic and cultural resources that language teachers bring to the classroom context are an important part of their identity. It is evident that these would also have an effect on their role identity. Role identity refers to the internalized, personal perceptions of what a given position requires of a person (Fuller et al., 2009). These internalized, symbolic aspects have accompanying meanings and behavioral expectations that one associates with carrying out one's particular function on the job (Stryker, 1968). In language teaching,

linguistic and cultural concepts are intertwined and it is possible that one's personal history of learning the language can impact the way these concepts are presented to the learner.

My piqued awareness of the presence of the native /nonnative speaker distinction caused me to become sensitized to the phenomenon. I wondered at nativeness and nonnativeness, pondering their impact on teacher attitude, viewpoint on teaching, as well as the development of their classroom persona. Thinking of the native speaker as one who has been speaking the language from earliest childhood (Cook 2005), and the nonnative speaker as one who learnt an academically accepted form of the language (Moussu, 2000), I became interested in exploring the phenomenon from the viewpoint of selected individuals. Consequently, this study was undertaken with the purpose of investigating the lived experience of four veteran teachers of Spanish – two of whom teach their native language while the other two are nonnative speakers. This selection was not intended to perpetuate a distinction, or the idea of a dichotomy. Rather, the selection is reflective of the two principal ways individuals learn a language. This means that the participants' exposure to the language they teach would have mirrored that of the vast majority of language teachers. Having participants from both language learning backgrounds allowed the researcher to have a more in-depth view of the subject being studied, and likely one that is more reflective of the spectrum of perspectives that are likely to exist.

The study required that the veteran teachers revisit their experience from the neophyte stage to the time of the study, in order that the gamut of feelings, range of emotions, variety of concerns, and differing personal victories that might have arisen as they had engaged in their daily activities in the professional world could be brought to the fore. It also required that they precisely recall native and nonnative speaker teachers whom they had supervised, reflecting critically on those teachers' approach, their issues, contribution, philosophy and aura.



Studies have been done on differing aspects related to native and nonnative speakers such as self-perception (Rajagopalan, 2005); learners' perception of the strengths of the nonnative speaker versus the native speaker (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005); and teaching behaviors (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). These have, however, mainly addressed English language teaching, a large number being done on the nonnative speaker of English who teaches the language in sites outside the USA. I identified two studies (En-Chong, 2004; Terashima, 1996), dealing with native and nonnative speakers of languages other than English, specifically in sites in the United States, one of which was done on university teacher assistants. This study contributes to the knowledge base in this specific area of deficiency. A further purpose of this study is to have professionals in the field of language teaching critically consider the relevance of the native/nonnative speaker construct in predicting level of competence in language teaching.

### Guiding Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. How does each participant conceptualize her role identity as Spanish teacher in a predominantly English-speaking setting?
2. How viable is the native nonnative speaker construct when teacher efficacy is considered?
3. How has the experience of supervising teachers of differing linguistic backgrounds (native and nonnative speakers) in the language they teach informed the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct in the USA?

## Theoretical Framework

Different philosophies and theories have contributed to the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Primary among these are role-identity theory (Burke & Tully, 1977; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; McCall, 2003; Stryker, 1968; 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; 2001), and social constructivism (Crotty, 2003; Neuman, 2000).

Identity is defined as “the totality of one’s self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future” (Weinreich, 2003, p. 26). It might be conceptualized as a form of social representation that mediates the relationship between the individual and the social world, giving rise to a sense of self that has been constructed through active participation in social groups (Chryssochoou, 2003). This social interaction, which presupposes intercommunication in a variety of group settings, impacts one’s self-definition (identity), causing it to be linked to roles individuals occupy in these groups. The self is therefore seen as being multifaceted, emerging from people’s role in social settings (Stryker, 1968; 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000). A role is a set of expectations prescribing behavior that is deemed appropriate by others (Simon, 1992).

### *Role Identity*

Role identity can be conceptualized as “a set of meanings that are taken to characterize a self-in-role” (Burke & Reitzes, 1981, p.85); the individual’s perception of what the role requires of him/her (Fuller, Hester, Barnett, Beu, Frey, & Relyea 2009). The term encompasses self-conceptions in terms of one’s position in the social structure (Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Thoits, 1983). These self-conceptions are based on enduring, reciprocal relationships that carry obligations to others and serve as the basis for interaction with them (Thoits, 1991).

A role identity forms as an individual classifies herself in relation to social groups, interacts with others, acquires relevant knowledge, and subsequently develops an internalized version of a particular identity as it relates to a given role (Stets & Harrod, 2004). Hence the meanings and expectations that the individual internalizes and attaches to herself becomes part of her role identity.

A role identity has normative expectations in that it has a set of meanings and practices associated with it. One's role identity influences one's behavior as role-related components of self are enacted (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Thoits, 1991). Turner (1978) promotes the concept of role-person merger, in which the role identity becomes integrated with a person, leading to the formation of behavioral, psychological and social commitments to the particular role, which influences the individual to display role-appropriate attitudes and behaviors. The role identity therefore becomes a frame of reference through which the individual appraises actions, and interprets and responds to life events (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollidge, & Scabini, 2006). As the individual develops competence in performing the role, and receives confirmation of creditable performance in the role, she internalizes the self-description associated with the role (Callero, Howard & Piliavin 1987). This has implications for self-evaluations and self-esteem issues in relation to one's role identity. If one perceives oneself as satisfactorily enacting one's role, one's self-esteem is positively impacted. Conversely, negative feelings about one's self-worth result from perceptions of poor role performance (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995).

Among the plethora of structural positions individuals occupy in society are occupational roles. These are enacted within normative guidelines and expectations of various stakeholders. Professional identity, for example, implies interaction between person and context, requiring that individuals adopt and adapt related characteristics.

Teachers, in constructing their professional identity, engage in a process of interpreting and reinterpreting their experiences, to the end of understanding themselves in the teacher role (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). The use of role identity theory can allow the researcher to develop an understanding of the meanings and expectations one associates with the role, and the ways in which these are verified through social interaction as she carries out the role. Role identity theory is therefore apt in partially forming a unit of analysis for investigating features related to individuals in their professional milieu, as the researcher examines implicit and explicit references that speak to their interpretation of the language teacher role.

### *Teacher Efficacy*

Complementing role identity is the concept of teacher efficacy, a construct that has been conceptualized as “the teacher’s belief in her capability to organize and implement courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p.240). Influenced initially by Rotter’s social learning theory (Rotter, 1966) and Bandura’s Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1997), particularly his construct of self-efficacy, teacher efficacy contains the thought of the individual’s sense of agency in bringing about positive outcomes in the learning situation. The level of teacher efficacy would therefore be a function of the teacher’s perception of the degree of influence she has in bringing about student learning. The teacher who feels that factors beyond her influence are not as strong in affecting student learning as those within her control displays high teacher efficacy.

In the model devised by Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998), teacher efficacy is perceived as a convergence of one’s self-perception about one’s personal teaching competence and one’s analysis about the teaching task.

In determining the former, the teacher considers her capabilities along with her personal constraints, weighing these in light of the assumed requirements of the teaching task. Analysis of the teaching task involves assessing the resources and constraints that are features of the particular teaching context. This includes considering various factors such as student ability and motivation; the availability and quality of instructional material; and managerial issues; and appropriate teaching strategies. The underlying element driving the consideration of these factors is the anticipated outcome of the teaching episode. Thus, the teacher ponders what would constitute success in that particular teaching episode, and what means or actions would facilitate attaining it.

Mastery experiences exert a major influence on the development of efficacy beliefs in general (Bandura, 1997), hence on teacher efficacy in particular (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). If a person perceives her performance as having been successful, her efficacy beliefs are strengthened. They are particularly strengthened when success is achieved on difficult tasks, with little assistance. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) argue that there is a cyclical nature to the effect of mastery experience. They explain that proficient performance gives rise to new mastery experience which provides new information that is processed to produce new efficacy beliefs. This, in turn leads to greater effort and persistence, which ultimately leads to better performance. Improved performance ultimately leads to greater efficacy. Efficacy beliefs are lowered when one perceives that one's performance has been unsuccessful.

Teacher efficacy has been found to be related to important educational variables. Among these are teacher classroom behaviors; openness to new ideas, attitudes to teaching, and teacher satisfaction (Brouwers, Evers & Tomic, 2001; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Stecca, 2003; Coladarci, 1992; Good & Brophy, 2003; Henson, 2002; Onafowora, 2004; Ross, 1998; Ross & Bruce, 2007). It has also been found to be related to student outcomes (Ashton & Webb, 1986;

Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004; Ross, 1992). Using the correlates of teacher efficacy therefore proves valuable in forming a framework for analyzing levels of teacher efficacy.

### *Narrative Construction of Reality*

Bruner (1991) proposes a theory labeled the narrative construction of reality, in which the mind is seen as structuring its sense of reality using mediation through cultural products such as language and other symbolic systems. Narrative is one such cultural product and has been effectively used in research in education. Bruner (1996) argues that we frame our most cherished beliefs, our immediate experience, even our lives in the form of narrative. In this vein, people are conceptualized as making sense of the world by telling stories about it. Stories are therefore regarded as instruments of mind connected to meaning making, and telling them as the natural way of organizing experience and knowledge. Bakhurst (2001) complements Bruner's theory in stating that "our identities as self-conscious subjects of experience depend on our identities as narrative selves" (p.186).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that human beings lead storied lives individually and socially, and are storytelling organism. Thus, studying narratives in research constitutes a study of how humans experience the world because they relive their stories as they reflect upon their lives and tell their stories to others. As individuals relate their story in interviews which are later transcribed, along with field notes that reveal intricate details, the researcher obtains texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that can be analyzed with the view to acquiring an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

### *Social Constructivism*

Social constructivism is a paradigm based in the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work, thereby developing subjective meanings of their experiences as they engage with the world they seek to interpret (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). Reality is seen as being socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Using the social constructivist lens, the researcher relies primarily on the views of the participants, expressed in response to open-ended questioning, observations and group discussions. In accord with the central tenet of social constructivism that subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically and are formed through interaction with others, careful listening and keen observation were crucial in this research.

Expression is a meaning- making event that exhibits the particular conditions of its telling; characteristics of its teller; and the cultural, historical, and ideological horizons that support or constrain the speaker in his or her search for understanding (Freeman, 2007, p. 925)

The above captures the fundamental reason for using social constructivism as the overarching theoretical framework for this research. It allows the researcher to mull over the participants' conscious reflection on experiences; their role identity - conceived within the view of self as a multifaceted social construct; and their narrative construction of reality.

Each of the above theories presented served a distinct purpose in this study. Firstly, narrative construction of reality and social constructivism provided a framework for situating the lived experience as reported by the participants. Secondly, teacher efficacy, given its correlates, provided the lens through which the self-perceptions, reported and observed activities of the participants were viewed. Thirdly, role identity theory helped me to understand and analyze the



participants' individual journey to their present understandings of self in their professional setting, as I examined explicit and implicit references to role behaviors. These, together, allowed me to investigate the diverse details that were contained in the data.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a discussion of the native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) construct as presented in the literature. It synthesizes the information from research and other scholarly work to formulate a definition of each term. An examination of the heritage speaker who often manifests features associated with the two above is then attempted, highlighting the implications of their unique situation in teaching positions, and as students in the U.S. classroom. Complementing this, a discussion of the status of Spanish as a language in the USA ensues. The review continues by presenting scholarly views of the native and nonnative speaker in foreign language pedagogy; highlighting research on the self-perception of nonnative speaker teachers. It then takes a critical look at the perceived dichotomy in the foreign language teaching arena. The penultimate part of the review examines research related to teacher efficacy. It ends with a brief look at language teacher supervision.

#### The Native Speaker Construct

The native speaker and all the linguistic social and economical consideration that accompanies it are troublesome and open to controversy. (Braine, 1999, p. XIV)

The above succinctly captures the atmosphere of dissention that prevails among linguists, social theorists, and educators regarding the native speaker construct, particularly as it pertains to competence, expectation, and abilities in foreign language pedagogy. In the recent history of foreign language education, pedagogical experts and scholars in the field of Applied Linguistics have analyzed, debated, redefined, and even rejected and replaced the term. Medgyes (1996) gives the scenario of an English-speaking boy who has been living in the United States since early childhood. The boy lives with a Norwegian mother who communicates with him in her

mother tongue and a Mexican father who speaks to him in Spanish. Medgyes poses the pertinent question, “Which is his native language English, Spanish, or Norwegian?” (p. 22). The scenario well illustrates the complexity of formulating a clearly defined category for native speaker. It effectively supports his point that the construct is controversial from both a sociolinguistic and a purely linguistic perspective. It further underscores the inherent difficulty in devising an operational definition for the term.

Scholarly sources imply that an individual is a native speaker of the language learned first (Cook, 1999), usually in childhood (Cook, 2005). Based on multiple sources Cook (1999) compiles a list of non-developmental characteristics ascribed to the NS that complements the core meaning above. These include (a) a subconscious knowledge of rules, (b) an intuitive grasp of meanings, (c) the ability to communicate within social settings, (d) a range of language skills, (e) creativity in language use, (f) identification with a language community, (g) the ability to produce fluent discourse, (h) knowledge of differences between their own speech and that of the standard form of the language, and (i) the ability to interpret and translate into the L1 of which he or she is a native speaker. Cook expresses agreement that some of the above characteristics (1 and 2 for example) are rightly applied to a native speaker while others (8 and 9 for example) are merely incidental features. For instance, one’s ability to interpret and translate into an L1 is a function of one’s having acquired an L2.

Pragmatic and strategic competence in their language has been seen as features of the native speaker (Lee, 2005). In addition, native speakers possess internalized strategic competence that allows them to use verbal and nonverbal skills to repair breakdowns commonly experienced in conversation. These verbal and non-verbal skills allow the NS to perform effortless communication in the language. Lee further isolates six defining features of this

communicative competence namely, the ability to carry out fluent, spontaneous discourse, utilize circumlocutions and hesitations, predict what an interlocutor will say, and make clarifications through repetition of the message in other forms. Kramsch (2003) asserts that originally native speakership was viewed as a privilege of birth and NSs were deemed to have grammatical intuition not possessed by NNS.

Both Cook (2005) and Lee (2005) above make salient points regarding features of the native speaker. Intuitive grasp of meaning is a component of pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence encompasses the ability to make inferences that are guided by relevance to the situation as individuals interact in the language. It implies the use of language in a sociocultural context and therefore relates to the choice speakers make and the constraints they encounter as they use the language (Peterwagner, 2005). It is therefore reasonable to assume that individuals who have been immersed in a given language for a number of years, particularly beginning in early life, would possess a relatively high level of pragmatic competence. Along with this, strategic competence, which is knowledge of how to use one's language to communicate meaning, is presumed.

Another perspective juxtaposes the term native speaker with mother tongue, stating that these terms imply: (a) that language is inherited through genetic endowment or birth into a given language group, (b) inheriting a language means being able to speak it well, (c) being a native speaker involves comprehensive grasp of the language, and (d) people are native speakers of one mother tongue (Rampton, 1996, p.18). Rampton observes that the above implications are strongly contested by others on a number of bases. Among these is the fact that languages are acquired in social settings and, because people participate in various groups to which membership changes over time, their language also changes. Another is that being born into a

group does not guarantee mastery of its language. Language users do not possess total functional command. Rather, they possess varying degrees of proficiency in different areas of language use (Train, 2003). In spite of the logic of the foregoing, the normal expectation is that the NS has a superior level of competence in the language when compared to the NNS.

Many writers (e.g., see the works of Braine, 2004; Canagarajah, 1999; Kramsch, 2003) have alluded to and criticized the Chomskyan concept of the native speaker as an ideal speaker listener in a speech community that is completely homogeneous, and who knows the language perfectly. Braine (2004) denounces the concept with the claim that such a speaker is an abstraction with no resemblance to a living human being. Canagarajah (1999) dismisses the concept as an idealized construction. Kramsch (2003) interprets Chomsky's ideal speaker-listener as a monolingual language user whose intuition corresponds perfectly to the expectations of one homogeneous standard community, and classifies the native speaker as "an imaginary construct - a canonically literate monolingual middle- class member of a largely fictional national community" (p. 255). Adding another dimension to the native speaker construct, Kramsch (2003) suggests that native speakers are made rather than born, and argues for an awareness of the role of education and social class in conditioning the language of the native speaker. Kramsch opines that the real status as native speaker is legitimated through one's acceptance by the dominant group responsible for formulating the native and non-native speaker (NNS) distinction. This view concurs with that of Widdowson (2003) who states

The mastery of a particular grammatical system, especially perhaps those features that are redundant, makes you a member of the community which has developed that system for its own social purposes beyond the transaction of ordinary mundane matters. (p. 30)

Garza (2003) is in agreement with Kramsch (2003) that factors of social class and education condition the language of the native speaker. In commenting on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines, Garza opines that the upper scales describe a fully educated native speaker. Garza sees level 5, the highest point, which indicates superior language skills as excluding a large percentage of speakers of their mother tongue due to the lexical choices they make and the grammaticality of their speech. He draws attention to his own parents, Mexican-Americans born in Texas, who spoke both English and Spanish at home, but who would not be classified at level 5 in either because of the limitations in their education and the particular idiolects of the languages. This point reflects one made by Train (2003) who argues that not all native speech practices fall into the acceptable native standard speaker category. The idea that individuals can be native speakers of more than one language finds support in Davies (2003) who argues that a child may be a NS of more than one language as long as the acquisition process begins in the pre-puberty stage. This may be different from being a monolingual speaker of either language (Cook, 1999).

In considering the various aspects of the above discussion, the native speaker of a language may be seen as one who has been immersed in it from an early age and who has acquired a standard form of the language with which he effectively demonstrates communicative competence. This competence is seen in his ability to use the grammars of the language appropriately, to display sound pragmatic behavior in it, and to model strategic competence in it. This thought concurs with Davies (2003) who credits the native speaker with linguistic competence in her native language. In explaining this concept, he points out that the native speaker can operate as a grammatical being; can generate new sentences and understand sentences he has never heard before. The native speaker is able to put the grammar into action

and to know when this is being done. While there is a high degree of veracity in the argument above, it is not foolproof. Many linguists have observed that finding a true native speaker poses great difficulty seeing that very few people speak the language into which they were born at home, at school, at work, and hear only one variety of the language (Moussu, 2000). This observation is apropos. It brings to the fore the question of the place of different registers in the language context. Different registers occur naturally in the linguistic experience of speakers depending on the context of the discourse.

It is realistic to view education and social class as having a significant impact on one's facility in using the standard language of a community. Additionally, prolonged contact with the community that speaks the target language gives rise to familiarity with different registers of the language. Thus, those who have been part of a speech community in a prolonged way from their early years are often more flexible with the language and manifest considerable pragmatic competence. This is an advantage that one can reasonably attribute to those who are classified as native speakers of a language. They often manifest flexibility in participating in communicative exchanges with speakers of different language varieties, and those using varying registers of a given language. A register is a varied form of a language that is used for a particular purpose or in a specific social setting. A variety is a different form of a language.

The foregoing discussion has considered sources from various scholars and has shown that there is difficulty, and even controversy associated with formulating a working definition of the term native speaker for the purposes of language teaching. However, in accord with what has been stated above, this study will conceptualize the native speaker as an individual who has been immersed in a language from early childhood, and continues to use it in frequent acts of

communication in which she demonstrates a high level of language proficiency, along with appropriate pragmatic, linguistic, and strategic competence.

### The Non-native Speaker

In language teaching a non-native speaker (NNS) is one who consciously learnt an academically accepted form of a language (Moussu, 2000). This is an accepted descriptive definition, although it leaves room for debate. Liu (1999) presents the perspective of some subjects of a study that he did with reference to the classification nonnative speaker<sup>1</sup> in TESOL. One subject had been speaking English for twenty years, since age ten when she migrated to the U.S. and strongly felt that her years of Speaking English overshadowed her years of Danish from birth to ten. She suggested that native speakers and nonnative speakers should be seen as being on a continuum with a person who learnt the language as his primary language (L1) at one end, and one who learnt it as an adult at the other. This would allow an individual who learnt it as a child to be placed at a level that reflects her/his competence. She sees herself as being closer to the native speaker on such a continuum and so perceives of herself as a native speaker, thereby rejecting the order in which the language was learnt as a criterion for classification. A language continuum might be useful in reflecting the level of proficiency of a speaker in relation to others. It might also provide incentive for a speaker to improve his language skills in order that he might move along the continuum. However, it must be noted that the continuum still places the native speaker at the end. This supports the view of the native speaker as the epitome of language competence. An adjustment to the suggestion above might be to have the end of the continuum being a highly competent language user. This allows an individual to be at that point by virtue of language proficiency.



Another subject who had spoken Italian until age six also classified herself as a native English-speaking professional because she was more competent in English since it became her native language when she started school in the United States. This may lend credence to the claim that the L1 can be replaced by another later acquired language through frequent and fluent use (Lee, 2005), rendering the L1 useless because of an inability to use it creatively and generatively. Herein lies one of the controversies associated with the native /non-native speaker construct.

Davies (2003) rightly believes that with sufficient contact and practice, a second language learner may develop intuitions about the target language that he has learnt. Though challenging, a NNS can also gain the pragmatic control characteristic of native speakers. He therefore shows that non-native speakers can develop native speaker competence. This position validates the self-perception of the subjects mentioned above. Medgyes (1996) offers a modified concept of the interlanguage continuum that seems to have practical value. He shows zero competence at one end, native competence at the other, and a spot close to the native competence that some nonnative speakers have been able to reach. Medgyes perceptively observes that there are a few non-native speakers who come close to native speaker competence but soon are halted by a glass wall. He recognizes, however, that there is a small number of nonnative speakers who are able to climb over the wall. This recognition is quite profound as it has the face of reality both in terms of the percentage of NNs who reach the glass wall, and those who climb over it. It is likely that a nonnative speaker who is indistinguishable from a native speaker is a rare find, whereas finding those who are highly competent in the language is not uncommon (Llurda, 2005). Rarity, however, is not tantamount to nonexistence.

The position above is also upheld in the stance scholars in the field of applied linguistics take toward the term nonnative. It has been viewed as having a negative connotation because of the prefix non implying lack or deficiency. Rampton (1996) suggests the term expert or accomplished speakers in describing the proficiency level. The rationale for this suggestion is that expertise is: (a) learnt, not fixed, (b) relative, (c) partial, and (d) achieved through processes of certification. This suggestion is worth considering because it offers the potential for a category in which speakers could be placed without any reference to a primary or second language. It also allows for professionals from a variety of language backgrounds to be able to reach the highest level, whereas the term native speaker is exclusionary. An advantage of using a neutral term is that it helps to decrease prejudgment of the ability and competence of the individual, as is often associated with the terms native and nonnative.

This literature review acknowledges the arguments made against the use of the terms native and nonnative and views them as valid. The writer would have preferred using the terms primary language of communication and additional language of communication, which are also used in this study as synonyms for the terms. However, the terms native and nonnative speaker are used in this work because replacements have not yet been officially formulated and accepted in the field of Applied Linguistics.

The entire foregoing discussion is germane in this review because the points raised therein can cause one to question the relevance of the categories native and nonnative speaker when selecting teachers for faculty positions. A pertinent question in view of the discussion thus far is: Is the classification native or nonnative speaker teacher connected to pedagogic competence? This issue will be examined at a later point in this review.

### The Spanish Language Experience in the USA

It has been observed that whenever more than one language or language variety exist together, their status in relation to each other is often asymmetric, leading to one being viewed as superior, desirable and necessary, and the other as extraneous (Shannon, 1999). This observation offers a possible explanation for the different impact being in close contact has had on Spanish and English. Historically, Spanish has been accorded a low status in the United States though, at the birth of the nation, it was a language of power in the world. Shannon opines that the status of the language in the U.S. is a consequence of its being associated with Mexico, rather than with Spain. She sees the covert subversion of Spanish and its attendant culture in the early years as being analogous to the experience of the native Indians who were forced to abandon their language and culture to embrace that of the dominant power.

Many educational institutions still stressed the acquisition of English for Spanish Speaking students even decades after the dissolution of separate schools in the Southwest (Macgregor-Mendoza, 2000) “No Spanish” rules demanded that students refrain from speaking Spanish while on the school campus. She refers to the US commission of Civil Rights (1972) as documentation of physical and verbal disciplinary measures meted out to Mexican- American Students. Macgregor-Mendoza gives a synthesis of the experience of over 100 informants in a field research in which adult informants were asked to reflect on their experience as Spanish speakers while in school. They were required to recount events they experienced or witnessed that exemplified the language policy of the school, and to relate the effect these had had on them then, as well as their impact on them in their adult years. The findings indicate that a great majority of those interviewed did experience some form of punishment for using the Spanish language at school. The few who reported that they were allowed to speak Spanish freely

comprised those who were from small rural communities where Spanish was the primary language for the vast majority of residents, and those who were in schools where Spanish-speaking students abounded in large numbers, thereby making a “no Spanish” policy difficult to enforce. With the suppression of German and other languages after World War I, using English was a way to attain higher status. There was therefore a willingness to use English at the expense of losing Spanish (Shannon, 1999). This, along with recrimination informants associated with speaking Spanish, contributed to the lack of intergenerational transmission of formal Spanish language. Eventually, this led to later generations not knowing the language, and therefore being unable to express meaning, especially in standard Spanish. These later generations, bearing the nomenclature heritage speakers, became a noticeable feature of the linguistic landscape.

### The Heritage Speaker

Because of the demographics of the USA, there is a strong presence of heritage language speakers (HLL), mainly of Spanish background. (Colombi & Roca, 2003). The terms native speaker, ethnic speaker, and home- background speakers have also been used to refer to them. These terms are applied to people living in the USA who have been brought up speaking a language other than English in the home (Katz, 2003), or have had in-depth exposure to another language in their home community. Heritage language speakers generally display a range of proficiency in the language (Blyth, 2003). Rodriguez-Pino (1997) perceives their proficiency as existing on a continuum. At one end are English dominant U.S. born Hispanics of a third and fourth generation. These speakers exhibit strong cultural and linguistic knowledge, but have weak speaking skills in Spanish (Colombi & Roca, 2003). Further along the continuum are first and second generation bilinguals who have varying degrees of fluency in Spanish. At the other

end of the continuum are immigrant students who are Spanish dominant but who differ in the amount of formal education they have had in the language (Carreira, 2003).

An illuminating study done in Los Angeles (Long, 2005) where forty-five percent of the population is Hispanic, focused on the text of advertisements. The researcher used a large corpus of texts that could be found on signs, posters and billboards. The texts were analyzed and contrasted with other studies about Spanish in that section of the United States. They found that the texts showed deviations from standard Spanish that were typical of the Spanish spoken in the target community. In syntax, these texts tended to follow the English pattern, resulting in, for example, non-standard use of prepositions. One example is the use of *en* where English would use *in*, but *de* is appropriately used in Spanish. Verbs were used in unconjugated forms, and the English sentence structure was used. There were numerous borrowed words (English words) that were used extensively. The orthography also showed the evidence of the English sound system influencing the spelling of some words.

The findings of this research give insight into the way societal influence can facilitate movement away from a standard form of a language. The features highlighted are typical changes that result because of languages being in close contact with each other, and are particularly indicative of the influence the Spanish language experienced in the U.S. due to its close contact with English. A few words have crossed over from Spanish into English but English has not suffered structural changes as a result. In the case of Spanish, however, the experience can lead to heritage speakers having difficulty with the use of standard forms, or eventually not knowing them and therefore being unable to express meaning, especially in situations where use of more formal language is required such as in academic writing.

Valdes (1998) suitably describes the speech of the ethnic speaker (heritage speaker) as being generally reflective of a contact variety of the language, revealing a strong English influence that deviates from the norm used in formal Spanish. While these varieties may be adequate for interacting with family and community members, they may prove unacceptable to educated speakers of standard varieties (Riegelhaupt & Carrasco, 2000). In a study investigating the attitudes of a middle class family toward the Spanish of a bilingual teacher from Yuma, Arizona, Riegelhaupt and Carrasco noted that the family perceived the Chicano Spanish spoken by the teacher as being indicative of a lack of education and of her being of low social status. Scholars have contemplated the place of heritage students in Spanish teaching and learning.

### *The Heritage Speaker in Teaching*

In discussing the expectations of foreign language departments Valdes (1998) points out that faculty members are required to carry out intellectual work in the target language, serve as models for their students and be able to teach the language itself as a subject. She posits that a commonsense view is that instructors should be able to use the registers of the language considered appropriate for teaching, to explain, simplify, offer examples, make links to other kinds of knowledge, and to correct both content and form of the written work produced by students. She aptly questions whether it is necessary that foreign language instructors be indistinguishable from native speakers in order to adequately carry out these duties. The issue of linguistic competence versus pedagogical competence is implied here and one could question whether heritage speakers with adequate training would not be prime candidates for these positions.

Kramsch (1999) comments that the ideal near- native speaker sought after by American foreign language departments for faculty positions would appear to be the heritage speaker with

a PhD. This view is held because the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills required indicate a person who has used the language extensively, and is conversant with the cultural attitudes of the specific language group while being, at the same time, fully integrated into the American society. She, however, points out that the heritage speaker is rejected by these departments because of intolerance for regional dialects, accents and non- standard varieties due to the academic bias toward written rather than spoken norms. She argues that the issue of what is bad or inferior language is tied to the views of the group in power. The aforementioned intolerance Valdes (1998) sees as being connected to the tendency of nonnative speakers in foreign language departments who, because of having an idealized, unrealistic perspective based on textbook standards, are frequently prone to judge some native speakers as using the wrong type of language. She also advances that speakers raised in countries where the language is spoken make a similar judgment, particularly when their class background differs from that of the heritage speakers. This observation implies that the heritage speaker who seeks a faculty position faces the likelihood of his language being stigmatized by both native and nonnative speakers of the target language.

The above raises a pertinent consideration related to the difference in the language that might be taught by NNS teachers versus that taught by NS teachers if textbooks are not complemented with technological resources commensurate with the twenty first century. Focus on structures and vocabulary that they have learned from textbooks but which may not always be practicable in communicative settings can be one result. This is likely connected to the nonnative speaker being less conversant with different registers of the language. However, it is important that NSs recognize the social variation of dialects, and acknowledge language varieties that exist in all cultures (Koike & Liskin-Gasparro, 2003; Kramsch, 2003; Train, 2003; Valdman, 2003).

*Heritage Language Speakers as Students*

The presence of heritage speakers in the learning situation in the USA has implications from both the perspective of the teacher and from that of the students. Having language students who have a degree of proficiency in, and personal connections to the language compels teachers to re-evaluate their pedagogical approach in an attempt at finding the most effective means of providing them with quality education (Valdes, 2005). Valdes gives a historical glimpse of the scene when she writes that in the 1970's, teachers who were accustomed to teaching Spanish as a foreign language opened their doors to students who were in some cases more fluent than they were in the language. These students were endeavoring to improve their home language by studying it at the post-secondary level. Though fluent in speaking the target language these students were generally deficient in the use of formal grammar.

Some heritage speakers as students have had problems identifying with or respecting as a Spanish teacher someone whose native language is not Spanish (Hancock, 2002). Potowski (2002) reports on the reactions of heritage speakers to corrections given by their nonnative speaker teaching assistants (TAs) at the university level. Reaction ranged from full acceptance to refusal to accept, with one individual stating that she would accept correction from a Hispanic teacher but not from one who is Non -Hispanic. The study involved twenty-five heritage speaker students in focus group interviews, and seven teaching assistants who were interviewed individually. The students viewed themselves as having the advantages of being familiar with the phonological system of Spanish and therefore did not experience the difficulties non-native Spanish students had in approximating native speech. Hence their advantage was in the area of oral proficiency, which involves oral fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. However, they felt that they were less able than their classmates in areas of grammar. The fact that students



learning Spanish as a foreign language are exposed to the formal grammatical code from the early stages of their course was seen as an advantage in producing correct grammatical Spanish. This disadvantage for the heritage speaker was reflected in the lower grades they received on grammar assignments when compared to their classmates. Resentment on the part of other students regarding such heritage speakers' native-like familiarity with oral language, and the consequent feeling that these students are studying a language they already know, has been noted (Peyton, Lewelling, & Winke, 2001).

The unique language experience of Heritage language speakers need not be a problem for either native or nonnative speakers as there can be creative ways of utilizing the skills they bring to the learning scene. Carreira (2004) suggests that at lower levels of education these students be allowed to help with the presentation of vocabulary that would be common in their experience such as those items associated with home, numbers, and proper names, along with other features of the language. This allows for differences to arise, providing an avenue for the teacher to introduce language variety, particularly when items differ. Implementing this would be commendable as it models an appreciation for language diversity. Carreira further suggests that the abilities of those learners who possess receptive skills only, could be effectively utilized in cooperative listening tasks. The suggested ways are feasible and, when implemented, should enhance language teaching in the classroom of both NS and NNS in a practical manner. It has been noted recently that some methodology textbooks have included sections geared toward training teachers for the heritage speaker in the US classroom (Edstrom, 2006).

This literature review would have been incomplete without affording the heritage speaker attention. The heritage speaker is a prominent part of the classroom environment in many states in the USA, and their unique abilities give rise to the need for certain skills and considerations on

the part of the teacher in a foreign language classroom in which their classmates have had very limited exposure to the language outside the classroom. For example, their knowledge of cultural practices, acquired through contact with their forebears can prove to be invaluable when context is crucial to full comprehension and appreciation of the material being used in the instructional setting. In this way they can complement the knowledge base of teachers. Their unique language situation also has implications relating to hiring practices, particularly regarding discrimination against selected varieties of language. Additionally, their situation also gives insight into factors that influence the development of competence in different areas of second language teaching and learning.

#### Foreign Language Pedagogy and the Native Nonnative Paradigm

Braine (2004) argues that in foreign language pedagogy a nonnative speaker is defined in terms of a native speaker and is assigned a position of inferiority. In English language teaching, for example, they face challenges related to accent and credibility, and race in the workplace (Amin1999; Chacon, 2006; Curtis, 2006; Maum, 2002; Tinker Sachs, 2006; Thomas, 1999;). There is, for example, the tendency to equate the NS with white and the nonnative speaker with non-white (Kubota & Lin, 2006). Kubota and Lin (2006) give the example a position being given to a Caucasian native English speaker at the expense of a more qualified non-Caucasian teacher. This action the program leader perceived as a means of boosting the public profile of the program. His action seemed to perpetuate the marginalization of the non-Caucasian NNS in certain language groups. Injustices experienced by non-white female faculty in TESOL have also been also reported (Lin, 2006).

Postulating that the language competence, pedagogical knowledge, and cultural orientation of the nonnative speaker are constantly being questioned Lazarton, (2003) undertook

a study posing the question, “What is the nature of the discourse produced in ESL classes taught by NNESTs?” (p. 213). The study was aimed at seeing if analysis of the discourse would reveal problems with language, teaching, or culture on the part of the non-native English speaker teacher (NNEST). Within the specific local context of her research, her findings indicated that NNESTs were able to deal with cultural topics with relative competence but showed a deficiency in facilitating the “collaborative construction of cultural knowledge” (Lazarton, 2003, p.235) when compared with native speaker teachers. Liu (2004) opines that the instructional approach of NS and NNNS teachers usually differ. This may be considered when contemplating the difference in the approach the teachers took in dealing with the cultural component.

Rajagopalan (2005) expresses the opinion that nonnative speakers are treated as second-class citizens in the language-teaching arena, especially in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). This marginalization he sees as being directly related to the view of the native speaker as the custodian of the language, “the ones authorized to serve as reliable models for all those wishing to acquire it as a second or foreign language”<sup>l</sup> (p.284). Recalling that language teaching was greatly influenced by the Generative Grammar paradigm in the 1960s through to the 1980s, Rajagopalan associates the be-all and end-all status assigned to the NS with Chomsky and his followers. This association corresponds with Canagarajah’s (1999) point that Chomsky’s linguistic concept lies at the heart of the perception of the native speaker as being superior, and as the authority and ideal informant on the language. It is also in line with McNeill (2005) who notes that the common assumption is that teachers who teach their native language have many advantages over those who are not native speakers of the language they teach.

Intuitions native speakers have about language are supposed to cause them to produce correct idiomatic utterances, and equip them with the ability to recognize acceptable and

unacceptable forms of the language (McNeill, 2005). In generating an understanding of the concept of intuition about language Lee (2004) synthesizes information from various sources and explicates the concept of intuitive knowledge as internalized knowledge of appropriate use of idiomatic expressions; correctness of language forms; natural pronunciation; cultural context; above average size vocabulary, collocations, and nonverbal cultural features.

Some linguists regard native speakers as the essential source of linguistic data (Valdes, 1998). Valdes further refers to the position taken by some American foreign language departments that only those who grew up in the culture and learnt the language in the course of primary socialization can fully understand foreign literature and its culture. This stance lends credence to Finger's (2003) view that the NS today poses as a mixture of linguistic authority and cultural expert. The point is corroborated also in Kramsch (2003) who observes that in American foreign language departments, native speakers enjoy *de facto* authority and prestige that NNS do not have.

The native-speaker-teacher ideal occupies a central role in English language teaching (Rampton, 1996). Pacek (2005) highlights findings that the NS is the preferred choice in English speaking countries. An examination of advertisements from various parts of the world such as Brazil, China, Italy, and Indonesia reveals a similar preference in other countries and in languages other than English as well (Cook, 2005). Supporting his claim, Cook points to advertisements on the worldwide web in which educational institutions boast of having mother tongue teachers, capitalizing on the assumption that students view the native speaker as being best at fulfilling their learning needs. A possible reason for the prominence afforded the native

speaker may be related to the point made in Kramsch (2003) that the focus on communicative competence since the 1970's has given the native speaker added prestige in Foreign Language pedagogy as students are expected to emulate his communicative skills.

### Communicative Competence

Some of the characteristics of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) make it difficult for a nonnative teacher who is not very proficient in the second language to teach effectively. (Brown, 2001 p. 44)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) began to make its impact on second language teaching in the 1970's. A principal tenet propelling this approach is the Chomskyan view that practising basic structures did not allow for the creativity and uniqueness of utterances. Approaches predating CLT (Situational Language Teaching, Audio-lingualism for example) were found to be ineffective in facilitating the development of communicative skills, particularly those essential to the development of oral proficiency. Basic principles of CLT are that learners learn a language through using it to communicate; that classroom activities should have authentic communication as their goal; that fluency is an important dimension of communication; that communication involves integration of different skills and that learning is a process of creative construction that involves trial and error (Richards & Rogers, 2001). This means that the goals of CLT revolve around competence in communication rather than on knowing linguistic or grammatical form, though these too are facets of competence. It is the functional use of the language that is paramount in the Approach. Consequently, transfer of meaning rather than accuracy of form is emphasized (Brown, 1987). Communicative competence is, however, composed of grammatical competence, strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Thus, it is the pragmatic use of language that is being advocated. In

this vein, it is likely advantageous if individuals who use this teaching approach are highly competent in pragmatic language use.

McNeill (2005) opines that the Communicative Approach, with its emphasis on oral interaction in the classroom poses a challenge for NNS. Conversely, the communicative competence of the native speaker leads one to expect him to have internalized rules of use, the appropriate use of language, control of strategies and pragmatics, automatic feeling for the connotation of words, feeling for what is appropriate to various domains and for the import of various speech acts (Davies, 2003). Continuing his position on the communicative competence of the native speaker, Davies advances that the NS should be able to make a distinction between what is in contemporary use and what is not; be aware of what is practical, speakable, writable and therefore communicable; and have a built-in critical awareness of usefulness. The apt observation made by Phillipson (1996) that the native speaker ideal predates tape recordings, video, and other technological resources that allow for significant exposure to a range of language users is a noteworthy point. It draws attention to a viable complement for NNS teachers who may perceive in themselves a deficiency that might inhibit full execution of CLT, particularly so as the young learners are considered technological or digital natives (Prensky, 2001).

### Technology in Teaching

The effect of the use of technological resources in language teaching has recently been an area considered in research. One study investigating how interactive television viewing enhanced pragmatic input showed that those viewing the video outperformed the control group at statistically significant levels (Witten, 2000). The study aimed at providing answers to three central questions: (a) What is the role of conscious awareness in the learning of pragmatic

features? (b) How can interactive video viewing enhance pragmatic input? and (c) Does form-focused input enhancement affect learners' global comprehension? This study used one hundred and six participants after close to half had been eliminated for various reasons, including individuals being heritage speakers of Spanish. The study was done in the United States using college students in a first- year accelerated Spanish program. Students actively listened to a soap opera over a period of ten weeks. The test group was given a take home quiz to fill out while watching. Results showed that the test group demonstrated overall awareness of pragmatic language use, an essential facet of developing communicative competence. This study aids in demonstrating how technological resources can be used in the classroom in facilitating the development of pragmatic competence. It therefore suggests that in areas in which there is easy access to technology, the effectiveness of the NNS and the NS in facilitating the development of communicative competence may be on par. The number of participants along with the purposive nature of the sampling lends credibility to the findings.

An earlier study reported on by Secules, Herron and Thomasello (1992) revealed that students who were exposed to the video-based curriculum had better listening comprehension skills. The researchers point out that in addition to knowledge of linguistic structures, understanding native accents, keeping up with native speaker speed, and recognizing a wide range of contextual meaning is important in listening comprehension. Although this was a relatively small sample (twenty-seven students), the fact that they were given writing tests and listening tests helped one to see the specific area in which the difference in performance existed. This lends validity to the findings because the difference in performance on the listening test could be reasonably attributed to the exposure to the videos. It is vital to note that no significant

difference in knowledge of linguistic structures was found. The results confirm that exposure to authentic speech through technological means can prove beneficial in the language classroom.

Secules, Herron and Thomasello (1992) also report on a quasi-experimental study done to compare the effects of teacher-managed videotaped instructional material with the effects of more traditional pedagogical methods involving a variety of classroom exercises and drills. Classes that used the videotapes scored considerably higher on tests of overall listening comprehension. Four groups of university students were used. Two groups used the video series that accompanied the textbook along with the book, while the two others used the textbook without the video. The control group engaged in transformational drills, pronunciation exercises, reading narratives, taking part in question -and- answer periods, and role-playing. The groups using the videotapes viewed the dramatic section of the video each Friday, followed by classroom discussion to ensure understanding of the basic plot. This would be followed on Monday by a timely viewing of the explanation section of the tape. Students would do exercises in an accompanying workbook, and would also be exposed to the written script. The validity of this research is positively impacted by the use of four groups that were similar to each other and in also carrying out tests of reading comprehension and writing ability. On these the students' score showed no significant difference. Being able to comprehend the language when it is spoken is an important aspect of communicative ability. Therefore, this study has implications for the use of videos in improving this aspect of developing communicative competence in the classroom. It implies that the teacher might not be the be-all and -end- all of CLT in the classroom.

The results outlined above are corroborated by the results of a study done to investigate students' perception of the use of videos in language teaching (White, Easton, & Anderson,



2000). The results revealed that the participants perceived that the video-tapes aided their acquisition of listening and speaking skills, pronunciation, and language recall through use of the visual setting and contextual features. The participants were twenty-six students enrolled in a tertiary level language course. The program of study was based around videotape, audiotape, textbook and workbook. These results were based on self-reports of twenty-nine students enrolled in the course.

The results of these studies are noteworthy when contemplating the pedagogical effectiveness of the NNS in fostering the development of communicative competence in the classroom. They attest to the validity of the stance that communicative ability can be attained if exposure to a variety of authentic communicative situations and written texts that illustrate a broad range of pragmatic situations feature in the instructional mode (Valdman, 2003). Valdman argues for the use of sociopragmatics in informing the grammar associated with communicatively oriented language teaching. He proposes that its grammar should reflect the functional use of the language and be embedded in communicative settings. This stance is congruent with that of Larsen-Freeman (2002) who posits that grammar gives flexibility in the expression of a speaker's propositional and notional meaning, and that of Celece-Murcia (2002) who states that using grammar entails making decisions about when to use one form over another. These statements imply that grammatical forms have a pragmatic aspect, and proficient language users select the form that most adequately expresses their intended meaning. Additionally, they allude to the communicative purpose of grammar usage.

With specific reference to English Language Teaching, Medgyes (1996) poses the pertinent question of whether the native speaker or the nonnative speaker is worth more, highlighting the often-debated topic of the merit of either in the foreign language classroom.

Canagarajah (1999) notes that the Chomskyan concept of the native speaker as ideal informant gives an edge in terms of grammaticality judgments. He however, questions whether the fact that one displays good pronunciation and good grammar makes one a successful teacher. This is a salient point when contemplating the merits of the debate. Phillipson (1996) makes the observation that the presumption that native speakers are likely better qualified than nonnative speakers is possibly a function of the native speakers' greater facility in demonstrating fluent, idiomatically appropriate language; in appreciating cultural connotations of the language; and in assessing the correctness of a given language form. He astutely notes, however, that these are not impervious to teacher training.

One can readily see the validity of Phillipson's point. Teacher training programs and tertiary level courses in the foreign language are designed to facilitate the development of some degree of competence in the above-mentioned areas. It might not be feasible that a teacher, having undergone appropriate training would be identical to his native speaker counterpart. However, as a lifelong learner, the teacher is expected to develop improved levels of competence with the passing of time. Phillipson (1996) posits:

In the European foreign language teaching tradition, which is highly successful in promoting some kinds of language learning, the ideal teacher has near-native speaker proficiency in the foreign language and comes from the same linguistic and cultural background. (p. 27)

Phillipson's viewpoint is that NNSs may be better qualified as second language teachers because of having gone through the process of acquiring a second language; because of having insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their students, and because of possessing detailed awareness of the differences between the target language and the L1. Consequently, they also

have the ability to appropriately identify potential areas of difficulty for the learners. Canagarajah (1999) expresses a similar thought when he argues that persons with multi-lingual competence, because of having developed deep metalinguistic knowledge and complex language awareness may make successful teachers. He further states that there is evidence to suggest that use and awareness of other languages or dialects proves advantageous to a teacher in facilitating the process of second language acquisition. Canagarajah credits his NNST who taught him English in his hometown with having played an integral role in his success as a language learner because the teacher developed in him a curiosity for language; the ability to discern rules based on observation of word usage; an awareness of the system behind language, and the skill of creatively negotiating meaning with speakers and texts.

Pasternak and Bailey (2004) compare native and nonnative English speaking teachers in terms of declarative and procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge is explained as the ability to do things, skills of knowing how. In language teaching it involves knowing how to plan lessons in the target language, how to treat oral errors and to conduct pair work. This they portray as the strength of the native speaker teacher, as they point out that native speakers of any language may be seen as having a natural advantage regarding how to use their own variety of the target language, as well as appropriate cultural behavior. Declarative knowledge in language teaching includes all that one knows and can articulate. The nonnative speaker teacher NNST may have stronger declarative knowledge about the target language given their years of formal study and instruction. This includes knowing about the target language, target culture, and about teaching, for example knowing about content and formal schemata in teaching reading and listening. Both procedural and declarative knowledge are important in language teaching.

### Research on the Nonnative Speaker

Braine (2005) highlights the result of a survey done with the objective of examining the hypothesis that NS and NNS English teachers differ in terms of their teaching practice mainly due to differing levels of language proficiencies, and that their knowledge of these differences affect NNS teachers' self-perception and teaching attitude. Results showed that more than eighty percent of NNS viewed themselves as having difficulties, particularly in the area of vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, speaking, and listening comprehension. In view of the findings, the researchers suggested that NNS be exposed to authentic language environment, and frequent proficiency-oriented in-service training. This suggestion implies confidence that the gap can be bridged through professional training measures.

Braine (2005) also reports on research aimed at determining how a group of NNS graduate students pursuing a M.A. or PhD. in TESOL perceived themselves as professionals in English language teaching. It also aimed at finding if they thought there were differences in the teaching behaviors of NSs and NNSs, what these differences were, and if they felt handicapped as NNS English teachers. Findings showed that the students perceived NS as being informal, accurate, using different techniques, methods, and approaches, being flexible, using conversational English, providing positive feedback to students, and having communication as the goals of teaching. NNS were viewed as relying on textbooks, applying differences between the first and second languages, using the first language as a medium of instruction, being aware of negative transfer and psychological aspects of learning, being sensitive to the needs of students, being more efficient, knowing the students background, and having preparation for examination as the goal of teaching. The students however, did not consider the NS teacher as being superior to the NNS. Insightfully, Thomas (1999) advances that NNSTs bring a unique

perspective to the classroom in that they have experienced the struggles of having to acquire the language, and can share personal stories. She relates how on the first day of her classes she allows students to share their experiences about language learning, and shares her own experience too. She shares her struggles and what worked for her in facing linguistic and cultural marginality. This results in students expressing appreciation for her as they view her as understanding their situation due to her having once been like them.

Presenting the pros and cons of native and non-native speaker teachers from the L2 user perspective Cook (2005) reiterates the point that NNSTs provide models of proficient L2 users in action in the classroom. Through use of the second language in the classroom, NNSTs demonstrate that it is possible for one to acquire and effectively use a second language and can further attest to the value of L2 learning in enhancing their feeling for language, their appreciation for other cultures, and in expanding their mental lives. NSTs who do not know the learners L1 model something their students can never be. NNSTs are also examples of people who have become successful second language users, thus showing learners what they can become. In addition, in comparison to their NSTs counterparts, NNSTs are seen as having more appropriate training and background, having been trained in the systems and methods of the country. Affirming the point made by Medgyes (1999) and Cook (2005), Thomas suggests that NNSTs are role models, success stories, and real images of what students can aspire to be. One disadvantage facing NNSTs that Cook presents is that they are less fluent in the target language than NSTs.

Consideration of the language needs of students is also a pertinent issue. McNeill (2005) questions whether NSTs would be likely to be less sensitive to the needs of students because of having less access to their L1 and to the way in which they process the L2. He did a study

involving Cantonese-speaking students and native and non-native English teachers. The NNSTs all spoke Cantonese. For the study, the teachers were required to make predictions about the lexical difficulty in a reading text. These predictions were later compared with the students' actual difficulties with the material. The results led to the conclusion that teachers who speak the students' L1 have an advantage in knowing where the students would experience difficulty. They are generally more accurate in identifying sources of lexical difficulty in the reading text than native English speaking teachers who are unfamiliar with the students L1. Even experienced native speaking English teachers did not do well in identifying lexical difficulty, which gives rise to the question of whether experience and training of NSETs have a major effect on their ability to focus on difficulties students would experience with the text.

#### Use of L1 in Learning Situations

If the L2 user has two languages available in the same mind, teaching should make systematic, deliberate use of the first language, partly by developing methods that incorporate both languages, partly by evaluating when the L1 can be used effectively within the L2 classroom, both as part of a true L2 user situation and to help the students' learning. (Cook 2005 p. 58)

One area of competence accorded the non-native speaker teacher is her ability to use the L1 of the students in the classroom (Medgyes 1996, Cook 2005). Chavez 2003) advances that despite not being full-fledged bilinguals, learners usually have two languages at their disposal in some contexts, and for different purposes. Chavez points to research that reveals that L1 and L2 serve different purposes in the classroom and that experienced teachers acknowledge that there are functions for which they or their students prefer the use of the L1. She therefore undertook a study to determine students' degree of preference for L1 use and for which tasks the preference

was shown. Findings revealed that students in years one and two of language study preferred the use of L1 for explanation of graded outcomes and of grammar points. Observation for the study revealed that teachers accommodate these expectations. Students also showed that they desired the use of the L1 in peer feedback activity, though this diminished as they became more advanced in the L2.

Foreign Language learning may entail the use of the L1 in the classroom because of the presence of multiple identities (Beltz, 2003). Beltz holds a positive view of multilingual use in the classroom and refers to research findings that indicate that both learners and instructors use L1 in the classroom to aid comprehension, to collaborate during group work, and to explain grammar. The age and ability of students influence the teachers' recourse to L1 use (code switching). L1 is more frequently used with lower ability students because of their level of difficulty in inferring meaning and their tendency to reach frustration level more quickly. Use of L1 therefore facilitates comprehension (Marcaro, 2005). Based on self-reports Marcaro summarizes the areas in which teachers use the L1: 1) building personal relationships with learners; 2) giving complex procedural instructions; 3) controlling pupils' behavior; 4) translating and checking students' understanding in order to speed things up because of time pressure (e.g. examinations); and 5) teaching grammar explicitly. Noticing during systemic observation that the L1 is used predominantly for message-oriented functions, Marcaro concludes that code switching is a useful strategy as it reduces the amount of time spent on input modification that is essential for successful message-oriented functions.

In presenting the value of code switching Marcaro (2005) shows that through its use the teacher models a cognitive strategy and offers the learner a metacognitive learning strategy that is especially effective in comprehension tasks. Kern's (1994) work, aimed at eliciting the

language of thought during a comprehension task, informed this stance. The study concluded that learners used the L1 as the language of thought to the end of reducing working memory constraints and to avoid losing track of the meaning of texts. The L1 was also used in clarifying the syntactic roles of lexical items, consolidating meaning in long term memory; converting the input into more familiar terms, thereby reducing anxiety; and clarifying the syntactic roles of certain lexical items (p.74). Monolingual teachers are unable to offer translation as a learning task. This kind of task Modiano (2005) feels is essential to the development of useful language skill which is needed in the world of work. Teachers who can code switch offer a wider range of learning strategies to their students. Modiano posits that teachers can use oral translation as a group think-aloud activity in which strategies students use to understand a text are elicited, shared, developed and evaluated.

In spite of the positive effects of code switching presented by Modiano, he shows awareness of the negative perception often associated with it. One such is that it is contrary to the Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, which promotes L2 learning through inference rather than through knowledge of equivalent L1/ L2 structures. Another is that it bears traces of the obsolete grammar translation method. It is also thought of as diminishing the students' exposure to the L2. In students' collaborative activities, teachers often view code switching as off task behavior while in individual work it is regarded as evidence that students are not thinking in the target language. In spite of these perceived disadvantages the value of translating as a useful language learning activity has been shown by other researchers (Ferguson, 2003; Li, 2000). Cohen (1996) investigated mental translating in the reading of college intermediate French students into L1 while reading texts. He concludes that learners have an easier time processing the thought since L1 processing facilitates semantic processing. It allows the reader to



represent difficult portions in a familiar, memory-efficient form; concepts come alive as learners' network of association is richer in L1. These thoughts synchronize with those of Kern (1994) above, whose study indicates that translation is a constant feature in the learners' repertoire of available tools.

The foregoing discussion aptly demonstrates that there are distinct areas of strength of the NNS teacher. In many regions of the world foreign languages are effectively taught by non-native speakers who empower their students to perform well academically in the language. In the past they mobilized their students to develop an understanding and appreciation of literary works in the target language, and assisted them to become conversant with appropriate usage of grammatical elements. Technological advancement allows access to instructional aids that can assist students to become highly conversant with the skills that lead to linguistic competence, metacognitive competence and pragmatic competence. It is imperative that both native speaker teachers and nonnative speaker teachers be adequately trained to utilize these maximally in their role as facilitators of language learning. It is equally essential that both be trained to use effectively the strengths they possess because of their personal linguistic identity.

#### Self-Perception of Nonnative Speaker Teachers

It is not hyperbole to say that the native/non-native dichotomy lies at the heart of Foreign language teachers' conception of who they are and what they do, affecting virtually all their pedagogical practices, from textbook selection to error correction. (Blyth, 2003 p.x)

The self- confidence of the non- native speaker, her self- perception, and how these affect performance in the classroom are essential elements to consider when discussing the issues facing nonnative speaker teachers. Thomas (1999) states that nonnative speaker teachers face the

problem of having to establish credibility as teachers of ESOL before they are taken seriously as professionals. Facing challenges to credibility has the effect of causing nervousness and making her doubtful of her own ability to succeed. Thomas identifies with a nonnative speaker from China who states that she always feels the need to show that she is just as good as native speakers because she senses that they view her as inferior. This causes her to lack confidence when communicating with them, leading to her stuttering and making grammatical errors, a situation that she feels leads to their criticizing her and wondering how she could ever teach the language.

Rajagopalan (2005) posits that many nonnative speaker teachers have come to accept the “profoundly pernicious deficit model of their own professional competence” (p.287), and he therefore attempts to assess the extent of nonnative speaker teachers’ inferiority complex. Analysis of data revealed that nonnative English speaker teachers in Brazil thought of themselves as being under-prepared, under constant psychological pressure, undervalued as professionals and as being treated as second-class citizens in the workplace. They viewed one’s having lived in an English-speaking environment as a considerable asset. Rajagopalan interprets this view as not necessarily being an acknowledgement of individuals having greater ease with using the target language but rather, a psychological refuge from nagging suspicions concerning their own professional preparedness (p. 289). He points out that during one-on-one interviews he found no verifiable correlation between the time spent in a native speaking environment and the teachers’ command of the language.

Analysis of the data also revealed that teachers who were teaching for ten years and more were more concerned about their non- native speaker status than newer teachers. The explanation offered by Rajagopalan is that newer teachers tend to be less encumbered by the native speaker

myth as there has been more emphasis on teacher education, reflective teaching, and action research in recent time. This might be interpreted as a positive move in a different direction. Informal interviews revealed that nonnative speaker teachers were uneasy in the presence of native speakers, fearing they would make mistakes. This, the nonnative speaker teachers said, negatively impacted their self-confidence, particularly when they were required to speak in public or to present papers at conferences. The researcher assesses such fears as being exaggerated, as many of them were quite fluent in English. He shows that there is the need for development of strategies of empowerment geared toward convincing nonnative speaking English teachers of the vital contribution they are able to make to teaching because of their linguistic experience that lead to carefully acquired multi-competence.

Hansen (2004) holds a positive perception of being a non-native speaker of the language one teaches. One benefit she perceives is that her status affords her the advantage of being able to approach a topic from multiple perspectives. In order to help illustrate certain points related to English she often contrasts her native Danish with the English language. She also feels she has an advantage in aspects such as understanding the experience of learners; likely areas of frustration; and the difficulty that might be involved in learning and using a language, even for a native speaker. This approach she views as being helpful in getting students inside the language and the language learning experience. Further, Hansen opines that the multiple perspectives used in teaching a topic helps provide a meeting ground for instructor and students, considering that they had in common the experience of learning an L2. She also explains that she is aware of some weaknesses in her pronunciation and has developed a number of strategies to deal with them. Interestingly, Hansen acknowledges that because of her physical appearance, she is not readily recognized as a non-native speaker of English. She notes that being perceived as a native speaker

has a positive influence on her students' views of her abilities in terms of being knowledgeable about the language and the culture. Her observation points to the erroneous profiling that the term native speaker may conjure. It might involve thoughts of ethnicity and race.

### A Critical Look at the Dichotomy

Language teaching might be conceived of as an art, a science, and a skill that requires complex pedagogical preparation and practice (Canagarajah, 1999). This profound statement points to the invaluable role of appropriate training and adequate practical experience in the development of expertise in language teaching. It also implies the inaptness of perceiving effective language teaching as being essentially bound to the teacher's linguistic identity, conceptualizing it instead as an acquired ability that can be improved through diverse means. Insightfully, Miller (2007) advances that there is a fine interplay between linguistic and pedagogic competence and neither can be compromised if learners are to learn. As Pasternak and Bailey (2004) mirror this point in acknowledging the vital role of language proficiency, professional preparation, and exposure to second language learning in the make-up of the competent language teacher, the basis for seeing teachers' linguistic identity as grounds for separation in the professional arena becomes very unsound.

Kramsch (2003) recognizes that scholars who specialize in their native language often have an advantage in the job market over their nonnative colleagues. However, various scholars have questioned the validity of ascribing greater competence in the area of language teaching on the basis of one's linguistic identity (e.g. Canagaragh, 1999; Phillipson, 1996). Soriano (2004) offers an interesting perspective, her having taught both as a native and a nonnative speaker. She feels that her professional training as an English language teacher, along with her having studied English for over fifteen years beginning at age twelve, makes her better qualified to teach

English. Whereas she finds herself being able to give clear explanations on English grammar, she is unable to do as well in explaining Spanish grammar in spite of Spanish being her primary language. Additionally, she states that her training background in teaching English helped her to succeed when she taught Spanish because she utilized the techniques and exercises from English, with modifications, to teach Spanish.

Ironically, Soriano relates that as a native speaker of Spanish she was able to procure a teaching assistantship in the Spanish department of a prominent university in Washington, in spite of not having had any previous experience teaching Spanish, or any training to teach it. In contrast, in Mexico, owing to her being classified as a nonnative English speaker, she was denied the opportunity of teaching English in some schools where the norm is to hire only native speakers of English. She makes the observation that in those schools, importance is not attached to whether the native speaker is qualified to teach English. Before being accepted for a teaching assistant position in the ESL department of another school she was subjected to rigorous testing of her language competence. This contrasted with her experience in seeking the position as teaching assistant in Spanish in Washington where her credentials were neither checked nor questioned.

Soriano's experience is reflective of a commonality in hiring practices in language teaching (Braine, 1999). Defining expertise in teaching principally on the grounds of linguistic competence, however, undermines the level of professionalism expected of the language teacher; minimizes dimensions of instructional competence; and undervalues serious concerns of pedagogical practice such as learning styles, cultural traditions, social conditions, and developing sociolinguistic patterns (Canagarajah, 1999). Teachers are made not born, as insight into the language learning process, language structure, and usage have to be learnt, as does the ability to

explain language (Phillipson, 1999). Effective teaching is synonymous with sound pedagogical decisions which studies have shown to be connected to the teacher's theoretical beliefs (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwait, 2001; Swann, 2002). Beliefs refer to personal understandings and premises about the world that the individual holds to as being true. Such beliefs are often connected to cultural models which are shared mental schema or understandings of how the world works (Gallimore, 2001). The above brings to the fore the issue of cultural responsiveness in teaching contexts (Kubota, 1998) which has implications regarding language teaching within the framework of differing linguistic identities (Benke & Medgyes, 2005).

Chavez (2005) moves away from the concept of teacher as a generic entity and investigated the language use of three experienced nonnative language teachers, each of whom had spent at least one year in a German speaking country. The time in Germany is significant because it suggests added familiarity with the language. The teachers all taught second year German at the same university. The researcher observed a distinct link between the way teachers defined their role and their pattern of language use. Perceiving one's role as a guide, a facilitator, or as the ultimate source of information in teaching the language impacted the decisions made about using the language in pedagogy. Additionally, the way the teachers conceptualized and enacted communicative language teaching differed. This difference was also manifested in their language use in the classroom.

The subject of another study was the language choices made by native speaker teachers of various languages in the context of a New Zealand secondary school (Ok Kim & Elder; 2005). Teacher's language use is considered paramount in language teaching as learning goals, motivation and outcome are influenced by it. The pattern of alternation between the majority language and the target language was observed. The study found no systematic relationship

between teachers' language choices and particular pedagogic function as there was an inconsistency in language use in and across lesson segments. The quality of the target language provided by the teachers was found to be limited in terms of quantity and quality in spite of the native speaker proficiency of the teachers.

These two studies are examples that suggest that in the actual classroom setting the generic native or nonnative speaker teacher is likely a dubious entity, leading to the question of whether the perceived dichotomy is valid. In spite of having the same linguistic identity the participants in the studies differed in pedagogic decisions taken and in functions carried out in the target language. The latter is particularly noteworthy as inadequate use of TL in teaching is often equated with deficient proficiency in the language. It is instructive to contemplate the position that teachers' beliefs or theoretical orientation affect their pedagogical decisions (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001). This position may lead to a more cogent explanation for differences in pedagogical practices of language teachers, other than their linguistic identities.

Miller (2007) identifies social and cultural knowledge about students; pedagogical knowledge about how to adapt texts and build a coherent teaching sequence; understanding of the sociocultural meaning of texts; and teaching skills as primary areas that enhance effectiveness in language teaching. Inadequacy in these areas gave rise to increased anxiety in a preservice teacher in Miller's case study. Data was collected through email in which the neophyte teacher expressed feelings of inadequacy and a sense of lacking the know-how to handle the learning situation aright. Miller, however, rightly sees the participant's problems as being typical of almost all beginning teachers in the language classroom. This statement implies that there is a stark similarity, regardless of linguistic identity with regard to the pedagogical needs of the neophyte language teacher. Highlighting this implication is not meant to deny the

existence of idiosyncrasies of each teacher but to draw attention to the individual's need for guided exposure to the field of language teaching in spite of linguistic background. Rather than the linguistic identify of teachers Canagarajah (1999) suggests that more serious concerns of pedagogical practice be addressed. These include learning styles, cultural traditions, social conditions, and sociolinguistic patterns. He therefore argues that professionals who are not perfectly competent in the language they teach may prove to be successful teachers.

Liu (2004) writes that he makes up for his lack of nativeness by being aware of it. Coming from a Chinese L1, Liu teaches English in the U.S. He reports of encountering suspicion from students who anticipated being taught by a native speaker, but whose confidence he gains through the quality of his language teaching, his sharing anecdotes about learning English, and his modesty in informing his students, at times that he needs to consult a native speaker on a given word. Liu declares that success as a TESOL professional does not depend on the native or non-native status of the teacher, although he expresses awareness that these groups may use different instructional approaches. He therefore suggests these pertinent questions for consideration: (a) How can NNS English teachers take advantage of their experience of learning the language they are teaching and collaborate with native speaker teachers to make teaching more rewarding?, and (b) How can the organization incorporate the viewpoint of NNSs regarding factors such as authenticity in language, social identity in communities, and cultural diversity in language classrooms?

### Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is a construct that bears relationship to self-efficacy, which is the belief a person has about his ability to organize and perform tasks in order to attain specific goals (Bandura, 1997). Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) use two definitions of



teacher efficacy from former sources. The first is the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to influence student performance. The second is a belief or conviction that she can influence how well students learn, even in the case of difficult or unmotivated students. It is therefore the teacher's belief in her own power to bring about student learning. An item reflecting the second definition was used in measuring personal teaching efficacy. The item read "If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students." (p.4) Agreement with this statement would indicate confidence in one's own ability to overcome factors that make learning difficult for a student, reflecting confidence that their training or experience is adequate to allow them to develop strategies to overcome obstacles to student learning. Findings revealed that personal teaching efficacy affected achievement in students.

Teacher efficacy is considered a predictor of enabling teacher beliefs, functional teacher behaviors, and valued teacher outcomes (Ross & Bruce, 2007). Studies have shown that teachers with high efficacy beliefs have a positive effect on student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004; Ross, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). In the model presented in Tschannen-Moran, woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) the self- perceived competence of the teacher in the areas of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement formed the fundamental tenet of the teacher efficacy construct. Thus, organized, well-planned learning environments that are geared toward meeting the learning needs of students are characteristic of teachers with high self-efficacy (Onafowora, 2004). Effective instructional strategies and high levels of student engagement are also credited to teachers with high teacher efficacy (Good & Brophy, 2003; Ross, 1998). High teacher efficacy has been equated with openness to new ideas, and innovations, having high expectations of students, and setting challenging goals for them (Brouwers & Tomic, 2001; Henson, 2002). Ross

(1998) also adds that teachers with high teacher efficacy are more likely to provide special assistance to low achieving students, and to build students' self-perceptions of their academic skills.

The three dimensions (instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement) were examined in a study done by Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, and Quek (2008). They were examined in relation to teacher attributes and the teacher-student relationship. The teachers in the study taught adolescents who were at risk of academic failure. The researchers found that teachers with fifteen or more years of experience in teaching had a greater sense of teacher efficacy than those who had been teaching for less than five years. Thus, they concluded that experience counts toward teachers' perceived efficacy in all three dimensions of teacher efficacy. This conclusion is apt because experience is often a channel to mastery, which is a concept that is linked to development of self-efficacy.

In examining the development of efficacy beliefs Charalambous, Phillipou and Kyriakides (2008) analyzed questionnaires administered to approximately ninety preservice teachers in fieldwork in elementary schools in Cyprus. Analysis of these questionnaires revealed four patterns in the development of teacher efficacy in the participants. Interviews with selected individuals representing the four patterns led to the conclusion that the participants' efficacy beliefs were informed by experimentation with teaching, and by interaction with tutors, peers, and students. These correspond to mastery experiences and vicarious experiences which are viewed as sources of efficacy (Bandura, 1997). If one experiences success in earlier teaching episodes one entertains feelings that future episodes will be successful as well. This therefore enhances teacher efficacy. In instances in which individuals vicariously experience good

teaching through observation of credible models, teacher efficacy increases (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

Mills and Allen (2008) consider findings from research showing that teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy show greater planning and organizational skills, and are more prone to experiment with a variety of teaching methods. Additionally, they display greater enthusiasm and persistence in the face of classroom challenges. Mills and Allen posit that despite common teacher training experiences, instructional materials and recommended classroom strategies there are significant differences among individual novice teachers in their course management, instructional strategies and teaching practice. They therefore undertook a study with the purpose of exploring the events and influences that contribute to native and nonnative graduate Teaching assistants' (TAs') sense of teacher efficacy. Using qualitative methodology with a sample comprised of 12 teaching assistants (TAs) from a doctoral program in French, the researchers found that a variety of factors affected the participants' development of teacher self-efficacy. Mastery experiences, adequate training and a supportive network were identified as the principal ones. Positive feedback about their language teaching; teacher training programs; varied contact with the teacher support system; and teacher observations were cited as sources of efficacy. As content knowledge was also found to impact the teacher efficacy of language teachers, the researchers astutely suggest advanced language courses in graduate programs, and partnerships between native and nonnative speaker instructors.

#### Language Teacher Supervision

This section focuses on language teacher supervision specifically, and does not discuss general supervision of teachers. It is included in the review because one criterion for the

selection of participants was that they should be the chairperson of the World Language Department in their respective schools.

Supervision has been described as a fundamental part of the professional development of both pre-service and in-service language teachers (Chamberlin, 2000). In discussing the supervision of language teachers, Bailey (2006) highlights issues pertaining to nativeness that are worthy of consideration. One such is the matter of language proficiency of the teachers. Bailey acknowledges that there are instances when the language proficiency of nonnative speaker teachers falls below the required standard, and suggests that supervisors establish a climate of trust and open enquiry that will allow for candid discussion about language teaching. The approach used in establishing this climate might be affected by whether the supervisor's primary language is the same as that of students and supervisees, or it is the target language of the programme. If the latter, the suggestion is that it might be prudent to have an attitude of openness about learning the majority language from supervisees. If the former, eliciting ideas about pedagogy as related to teaching challenging points is advised. The rationale for the above is that it facilitates the development of an open attitude toward learning on the part of supervisees.

Duties of supervisors include visiting and evaluating teachers, having discussions with teachers about their teaching, and fostering improvement (Bailey, 2006). Bailey observes that the focus of the supervisor's responsibility has shifted from being judgmental and evaluative to being more developmental. Given the fact that language departments generally comprise teachers from differing linguistic background, it is instructive to bear in mind Tinker Sachs (2007) observation regarding native and nonnative speaker teachers. She points out that there are differing strengths and weaknesses in these groups and they both have a contribution to make. In this vein, the onus is on the supervisor to arrange for means of utilizing the strengths of each

group. Bailey suggests that a supervisor can promote team teaching, immersion experiences and the use of authentic materials in an effort to support the development of target language skills in cases of deficiency in this area.

This review has discussed controversial aspects of defining the native nonnative speaker construct, leading to a definition of the native speaker as one who learnt a language in earliest childhood and continues to use it in frequent communicative activities. The nonnative speaker is defined as one who learnt an academically accepted form of a language after a primary language had been acquired. It presents an overview of the literature regarding the place of each in foreign language pedagogy, showing the contribution each is seen as making, specific strengths and the role of professional training in ensuring competence. It has also considered the place of the heritage speaker in foreign language pedagogy - specifically in Spanish teaching.

In this review a number of studies on different aspect of the subject have been highlighted. These represent the various areas related to the native/ nonnative speaker teacher that have been researched by numerous scholars. As I examined the literature it became obvious that there is a dearth of research on the native/nonnative speaker teacher of Spanish as it relates to their experience and particular situation in the United States. Many studies have been done looking at students' perception of teachers from different linguistic backgrounds. There have also been studies investigating teachers' perception of themselves, mainly in English language teaching. Studies investigating teachers' competence in various areas of teaching have also been done. Given the significant percentage of students who take Spanish courses in the USA and the large percentage of language teachers who teach Spanish in this local context, research related to Spanish teaching is essential. Studies examining the lived experience and the role identity of

Spanish teachers in the U.S., particularly involving teachers at the high school level are noticeably absent from the literature. This research therefore sought to contribute to filling this void.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This study investigated how four experienced teachers conceptualized their role identity and how their having supervised language teachers who fall into the categories of native and nonnative speakers of the language they teach informed their understanding of the language teacher construct. To carry out the investigation I used multiple sources of information namely semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, classroom observation, and a questionnaire for demographic information. The questions that guided the research were: (1) How does each participant conceptualize her role identity as a Spanish teacher in predominantly English-speaking setting? (2) How viable is the native nonnative speaker construct when teacher efficacy is considered? and (3) How has supervising teachers from the categories native and nonnative speakers of the language they teach informed the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct in the local context.

This study was guided by the principles of social constructivism at the heart of which is the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed (Neuman, 2000). People create meaning through interaction with others, and with objects in the environment. Interpretations are constructed against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices and language (Schwandt, 2007). In using a social constructivist approach, the aim of the researcher is to depend primarily on the participant' views of what is being studied. The researcher looks for the intricacy inherent in the multiple and varied views of the participants as they construct the meaning of a situation, generally in response to broad questions posed by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). Inductively, the researcher generates meaning from the body of response that forms the collected data. In carrying out this study I proceeded according to the above.

## Research Design

This is a comparative case study in which I utilized typical case study methods while employing a social constructivist framework. Patton (2002) rightly sees the purpose of the case study as being an attempt at gathering comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. Case study methods involve systematically gathering information about participants in order that the researcher might develop an understanding how the subject functions or operates (Yin, 2004). This statement implies that through use of case study methods, in-depth understanding can be attained when data are appropriately analyzed. As a research strategy the case study is not aimed at making generalizations about populations (Yin, 1994) but instead examines a given case in great detail with the intent of probing into its characteristics, dynamics and purposes (Van Lier, 2005). A case can be an individual, a group, or a situation. In this study there were four cases, each being an individual who was a veteran teacher and department chair.

Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident (p. 13). He suggests that the case study is a desirable method when the researcher aims to cover contextual conditions that she believes might be pertinent to the phenomenon of study. As a research strategy, case study (a) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, (b) relies on multiple sources of evidence, and (c) benefits from the prior development of theoretical positions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin 2003). LeCompte and Shensul (1999) describe data collection as involving multiple sources of information rich in context (p.61). The case is bounded by time and activity (Creswell, 2003).



All the above points were applicable to this research, and influenced the selection of the case study method. Specifically, this was a comparative case study.

A comparative case study gathers the data in each case for the purpose of comparison with another. This study compared information gathered in relation to one participant with that of others. In doing the comparison participants were considered as individual teachers, and as teachers belonging to a group with a given history of learning the language. This was done to ensure accurate understanding and representation of the meanings derived from the data. This study is intrinsic in nature (Stake, 2000) as its goal was to obtain a better understanding of the case and was not necessarily intended to contribute to theory building. Rather, in line with the principle of social constructivism, my intent was to forge an interpretation of the meanings the participants had about their world (Creswell, 2003).

This comparative case study involved four veteran Spanish teachers two of whom are labeled native speakers of Spanish while the other two are classified as nonnative speakers. The labels indicate that the participants' exposure to the language had different historical bases. Those in the native speaker category had spoken Spanish as their primary language since earliest childhood while the others learnt the language in later life, in an academic setting. For the most part, language teachers learn the language they teach in one of the two ways mentioned above. This fact influenced my considering the historical background in learning the language as part of the selection criteria because the vast majority of teachers will be able to identify with the participants' language-learning history. Also, having a language- learning history that is similar to some, and different from others whom they have supervised, allowed the participants to have a broad-range perspective as they engaged in meaningful reflection. It further provided the diversity that allowed me to obtain a balanced view of the phenomenon of interest.

## Context and Participants

Researchers cannot interview every person nor can they observe all situations; therefore, participants must be selected using a carefully thought out selection strategy (Glesne, 1999). In trying to select a sample I informally spoke to a few chair persons in the county I selected, to see if they fitted the criteria. I selected two native and one nonnative speaker through this means. I then sent out a system wide email explaining the criteria and the purpose for the study. The responses received showed that there were teachers who were interested in participating, but who did not fit all the criteria. I then selected a second nonnative speaker to whom I had spoken when I was recruiting through informal oral communication. She had been reluctant because of the amount of time that my data collection procedures required of her. She later agreed to participate and was very committed to the success of the research. The participants were selected based on four main criteria:

1. At the time of the study each had been teaching Spanish at the high school level for more than fifteen years and had taught beginning, intermediate and advanced Spanish courses to high school students.
2. At the time of the study the individual was chairperson of the World Language Department in her school and had been for more than seven years.
3. Each fitted unquestionably into one of two categories as defined by the employment agency: native speaker Spanish teacher or nonnative speaker Spanish teacher.
4. In their role as head of department they had supervised both native and nonnative speaker -teachers.

Table 1. *Participants' Background Information*

	Yrs teaching	Yrs HOD	Taught other subjects	Worked in other school	Supervised NNST NST	Speaker
Soraya	27	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Native
Maureen	33	32	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nonnative
Consuela	20	16	No	No	Yes	Native
Helen	18	10	No	Yes	Yes	Nonnative

I considered the number of years these teachers had taught Spanish as being highly significant because each needed to be able to reflect on a lengthy past in the profession in order to give information sufficiently rich in context: a story unfolding over time. The two participants who were nonnative speakers of Spanish had taught Spanish for eighteen years and thirty-three years respectively. The two Spanish teachers who were native speakers had taught Spanish for twenty years, and twenty-seven years respectively. This significant length of time, when reflected on, yielded illuminating information as participants spoke about their professional history, intrapersonal reasoning, interpersonal affiliation with colleagues who are classified as either native or nonnative speakers; and their relationship with superordinates and subordinates in the World Language Department at different points in their career.

The participants had served as department chairperson for ten, sixteen, twenty and thirty-two years. They had all supervised a number of teachers who taught their native language and those who were nonnative speakers of the language they taught. These included teachers at different stages of their career: beginning and master teachers, and various stages that fall between these points. One aspect of Supervision of teachers at this level involves observing them teaching their classes and evaluating their performance. As the participants contemplated relevant details of these teachers in retrospect, they served as informants about these supervisees

as they reflected on formal and informal conversations they had with them in the professional setting. Analysis of the data received from the participants in their supervisory role yielded information that gave insights into the teaching behaviors of others over an extensive period of time.

All participants were employed in the same public school system. The schools therefore followed the same language curriculum, used the same texts, and had access to similar amenities in the program of teaching. These included organized professional development, and teaching resources such as electronic device that facilitate exposure to authentic language contexts. They all offered Spanish courses at three levels – beginning, intermediate and advanced, and the participants had taught courses at all three levels and were teaching a minimum of two levels during the period of this study. The schools bore great similarity in the socio-economic and racial make-up of the students. One school had a slightly higher percentage of students from the middle class.

The study of a foreign language is mandatory for high school students in the state in the US in which the study was conducted. Students who are in the program for a College Preparatory Diploma are required to have a minimum of two years of foreign language study. This is a requirement to enter four year colleges. Students who are on the Technology track are required to take one year of a foreign language. This is among the qualifications for entering colleges that award Associate degrees, and technical colleges. See Table 1 for the participants' background information.

#### Data Sources and Collection

##### *Questionnaire*

An open-ended questionnaire designed to collect demographic data was administered in the first week of the study (See Appendix B)

### *Interviews and Observations*

As this study was designed to enable discovery and understanding of the lived experience of the participants, interviews were a primary method of data collection. Interviews were conducted in a manner that allowed teachers to be candid yet deeply reflective. One advantage of interviewing is that it gives an opportunity to explore past events or settings hard to access that would be difficult to observe (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Details on the organization of the interviews are given below and in the appendix. Observations done in the naturalistic setting also featured as a method of data collection. Some questions in the second and third interviews were formulated based on the observations. These were for the purpose of having the participants reflect on teaching episodes, and articulate rationales for learning activities and teaching strategies. The questions were also geared toward having participants explain various facets of their classroom behavior, and to make connections between these and their own beliefs about teaching. In this way their perception of their classroom activity was made known.

### *In-depth Interviews*

Individuals' consciousness gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people. (Seidman, 2006, p. 7)

Social constructivism is used in research with the purpose of illuminating phenomena through the perceptions of the actors in the situation. It is based in a paradigm of subjectivity, emphasizing the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. The researcher has the task of "depicting the essence or basic structure of experience"<sup>l</sup> (Merriam, 1998, p. 16). In view of the foregoing, in-depth interviews are indispensable in drawing out the innermost thought of the participants on the topic of interest. These interviews allow the researcher to gain a window

into subjective human experience as well as develop insight into how individuals think about the world (Seidman, 2006). A primary function of the interviews in this study was therefore to elicit feelings, intention, and analysis of past experiences and personal behaviors – all with the aim of enlightening understanding of the lived experience of the participants.

A fundamental assumption associated with interviewing is that the perspective of the interviewee is meaningful, knowable, and can be made explicit (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). I had three semi-structured interviews with each informant. These were guided by Seidman (2006) who discusses a three-interview series for in-depth phenomenological interviewing. In his series, the first interview is aimed at establishing the context of the participants' experience. The second interview concentrates on the details of the interviewee's present lived experience while the third involves a reflection on meaning. The first round of interviews therefore focused on having participants tell about their past life up to the present. In accord with this, teachers were required to reconstruct their earlier experience in the profession. The interview was structured to have them talk about their past experiences as related to their students, students' parents, other teachers with whom they had worked over the years, and supervisors from their early years.

The second interview focused on the participants' present lived experience. Participants were therefore asked about their role as department head, their present teaching situation, and issues that were pertinent to their profession at present. For example, they were asked to describe a fulfilling day; to tell what they liked about their job; to explain what interaction with supervisees entailed; and to tell how they fostered improvement in their department. It was in this interview that we reflected on data from my first round of observations. I highlighted specific points of interest from my classroom observation and asked questions that elicited the participant's perspective.

The third round of interviews addressed the intellectual and emotional connections between the life and work of the participants. Participants were therefore required to examine how factors in their past connected with their present situation. The questions were designed to have them reflect meaningfully on how factors they had brought to light in previous interviews had interacted to impact their present situation. For example, they were asked how their past experiences impacted how they taught and how they carried out their role as department head. Reflection on my second round of observations formed part of this interview as well. (See Appendix A for interview questions). Each time I met for an interview I began by telling the participant the phase of interviewing I was in and what I hoped to achieve by the end of the interview. Although the structure of Seidman's three- interview series was followed, recursive methodologies were used in formulating succeeding interview questions beginning with completion of the first interview. The questions were open-ended to allow the researcher to build upon and explore (Seidman, 2006) the response of the participants.

Each of the abovementioned interviews was audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim. As soon as I got into my vehicle after an interview, I tape-recorded my impressions, moods I observed, off tape remarks made by the speaker, facial expressions and gestures. These were also transcribed. I then travelled to the public library, parked at a pleasant spot, and while sitting in my vehicle I listened to the interview. I made notes in my journal as I listened. This preliminary listening allowed me to get an initial holistic view of the material. In total I listened to each recording at least two times before it was transcribed. This worked as a starting point of immersion in the data as the auditory exposure allowed for additional familiarity to the sound of the interviewee's words – an essential component in understanding meaning. A research assistant who had worked with me in transcribing interviews previously transcribed the interviews, most

often in my presence. A transcription of the interview was then be sent to the interviewees for their perusal to the end of having them scan to see if there were any parts they found discomforting and might have wanted eliminated; wished to revisit; or wanted to have excluded from the study (Riessman, 1993). All participants were comfortable with the transcriptions.

Interviews with the participants were done in their classroom after school or during their planning period which lasted ninety minutes. The participants chose this venue because they found it convenient. There were interruptions on occasions as individuals entered the room to speak with the participant but these were minimal.

Seidman suggests the time frame of ninety minutes for each interview in order to allow the interview to have a chronological beginning, middle, and end (Seidman, 2006). Seidman views ninety minutes as a practical time period given the purpose of the interview: “to have participants reconstruct their experience, put it in the context of their lives and reflect on its meaning” (p.20). I had anticipated that this would be the time frame for all my interviews but the first round of interviews all took a shorter time. The participants were very articulate and the interviews flowed very well without much hesitation or hedging. The interviews lasted a longer time in the second round and by the third interview were within the suggested time frame.

As I formulated my questions for the interviews, themes from the literature influenced the formulating of questions. Themes included self-perception and beliefs of teachers; views of students and colleagues; perceived strengths and weaknesses; attitudes; and first and second language use in the instructional setting. In doing these, four types of questions suggested by Merriam (1998) were used. These are hypothetical, devil’s advocate, ideal position and interpretive. Hypothetical questions generally evoke descriptions of the interviewee’s personal experience while devil’s advocate ones are useful in eliciting opinions and feelings. Ideal



position questions elicit information as well as opinion, while interpretive ones allow the interviewer to check for understanding and obtain even more information. These interpretive questions became increasingly valuable in later interviews.

Complementing Merriam's suggestion above, Berg (2004) also advocates four types of questions: essential, extra, throw-away, and probing. Essential questions are aimed at gathering information directly connected to the study, specifically as it relates to the research question. Extra questions are in essence follow-up questions. These are aimed at establishing the reliability of the participant's response. Essentially, an extra question asks the same question another way. Throw-away questions principally serve the purpose of establishing rapport and gathering demographic data. Probing questions push for elaboration of response. The views of Berg and Merriam informed the formulation of interview questions. I often used extra questions in succeeding interviews to ensure that I understood what the participant was trying to communicate in a previous interview.

Field notes were taken during interviews, noting nonverbal expressions along with any descriptions that elucidated features that could not be caught on tape. Relevant sections from these notes were placed in the margin of transcriptions to allow for accurate recollection of mood, gestures and other features that accompanied the words of interviewees.

### *Classroom Observation*

Observations are invaluable as they take place in the natural field and produce data that are representative of a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 1998). Each teacher was observed teaching all the groups of students assigned to her in the semester in which the research was done. She was therefore observed for two half days; one first half of the day and one second half of the day. I took notes on the classroom climate the teachers

created; their use of teaching aids; interaction styles; matters affecting their choice of the language of instruction; and learning activities in which they engaged their students. I wrote detailed description of the class, along with direct quotation of some verbal communication in the classroom. All observations were done unobtrusively.

In order to discuss matters relating to my observations I formulated questions to have the participants deeply reflect on the classroom scene. In the reflection, each participant considered her classroom behaviors in connection with her perception of her role. I referred, for example, to a specific instance or activity and asked her to explain the thought process behind the activity. I asked questions that would lead to her telling me the objective of the lesson, why the specific approach was taken, how it fitted into her long term goal, and how it was connected to how she perceived her role as Spanish teacher. I shared some of the descriptions and direct quotations that I had written during my observations and asked how characteristic of her general teaching approach or the norms of her classroom they were. My intention was to have her interpret and explain her teaching behaviors and classroom atmosphere.

### *Focus Groups*

Focus groups allow for interaction between participants thereby allowing the researcher to develop a broader understanding of the subject being investigated( Kitzinger, 1994) There were two focus group sessions in which the participants and I met together to openly discuss central themes that had arisen. The first focus group meeting was held after interview two was completed with all participants. In preparation for this session I carefully reread the transcriptions of interviews one and two and selected themes that were common among the participants. The focus group questions were formulated around themes that at least three of the four participants had mentioned in the interviews (see Appendix B).

There was a very friendly atmosphere at the outset as the participants expressed pleasure at seeing one another. They knew each other because they all worked in the same school system and so met at countywide department chair meetings. The session was both audiotaped and videotaped, and was later transcribed. One participant was absent from the first focus group session. With her consent I sent her a transcription of the session and asked that she insert her comments into the document. I also revisited the focus group discussion during my third interview with her, eliciting her comments or reaction to points made in the focus group session.

The second focus group session was held after I had completed a draft of the four cases based on all interviews, observations and the first focus group discussion. The participants were very busy with various activities and we had difficulty finding a mutual time for the session. One participant suggested that I send out the prompt for the discussion by email so that each person would have thought about it and come to the session prepared for the discussion. I acquiesced. The principal prompt for the discussion centered on culture in a wide understanding of the word. I chose that because in all four cases I saw an implied or overt reference to culture. Culture was defined as the beliefs, custom, practices and social behavior of a group of people, and of attitudes that characterize a group. Within this framework we discussed school culture, the cultural background of teachers, and the implications that arose as these two interfaced. In this session we also did major member checking. I allowed each teacher to scan a copy of the draft of her case and to make comments. She was also allowed to keep the draft so she might look at it at a later date with a view to contacting me if she wanted to further comment on any aspect. One participant asked: "So what similarities are you seeing?" This led to my sharing commonalities that I had identified. The group responded by sharing their thought regarding the reason such similarities were seen. Videotaping allowed me to me to revisit the session exactly as it occurred.

#### *Member checking*

As mentioned earlier, transcriptions of interviews were sent to participants so they could check and communicate any adjustments they wished to make. I also did member checking while interviewing as I shared the understandings that I derived from previous interviews and checked if they were in line with what the interviewee's intended meaning. Having the participant check a draft of her case in the focus group was another form of member checking.

### *Researcher Journal*

I kept a journal in which I recorded informal chats off tape that were connected to the research. Heeding the advice of my advisor and committee chair, I recorded impressions that I might have formed during interviews after leaving the interviewee. This was later transcribed into my researcher journal. I also recorded hunches that I had as I listened to recordings of interviews.

### *Peer Debriefing*

I had three peer debriefers, two of whom were recent graduates of the doctoral program. I sent them raw and coded data and had feedback in various forms. I revised initial coding based on feedback. Themes that I had not seen were brought to my attention. Additional interpretation was also suggested. Each time I received suggestions for interpretation that differed from mine I carefully revisited the data in search of the feasibility of the suggested interpretation. This resulted in adjustments to some of my interpretations.

My peer debriefers and I also discussed sections of the data by telephone so that we could have an interchange of thoughts about what we were seeing in the data. I found this particularly useful as it allowed us to voice reasons for our interpretations; to have our interlocutor look at the data set as we spoke about it and thereby listen with a critical ear; and to allow for a discussion of the data that necessitated deep thought that ultimately led to mutual

understanding. This activity helped me to concretize my thoughts as I developed justification and rationale for each theme and interpretation.

#### Researcher's Role

The researcher served as the principal instrument for data collection. I was aware that I might have formed some opinions as over the years I worked with teachers who were native and nonnative speakers of the language they taught. Being aware of this, I conscientiously strove to set aside my own feelings and let the data speak. Questions were carefully worded in a manner that was free of subjectivity on my part so that no indication of any personal thought might have had was conveyed to the participant. Individuals were asked to expand on information given; illustrate what they said; and give examples of situations to which they alluded, so that ultimately it was their story that would be told rather than one influenced by the researcher.

#### Data Management and Analysis

I kept a file kept on the computer for each teacher. Transcriptions of interviews and field notes from each observation were kept in the files. I also kept a file in which I outlined patterns and themes that were arising from the data. However, beginning with the first interview I also printed transcriptions as I found it easier to interact with hard copies of data. I read these while listening to the recording and consulting my researcher's journal. I placed preliminary codes in the margin. I continued in this way for all interviews in round one. I then recoded them according to similarities in that round of interviews and for those that were not found across sets. In this way I used the constant comparative method in analyzing data, ensuring that my data analysis began with the initial data set (Lincoln & Guba, 1985),

My next step was to purchase three large twenty-four inches by eighteen inches art journals. Each had twenty-five pages. I wrote codes at the top of pages. I drew lines that divided

the page in four longitudinally and wrote the names of the four participants. I then cut out portions of the data that fitted each code and glued it under the relevant participant's name. This included cluster of words, phrases, and sentences. This helped me to clearly visualize the data in a thematic manner so I could see patterns. I then observed portions that were not cut out, to see if I could explain why they did not fit anywhere and to consider how they applied to my research. This was the first part of my first coding manual. I put the information in a word document afterwards. I proceeded in the same manner with the second set of interviews.

In my second coding manual I coded according to my research areas. I printed new copies of data sets and, referring to my first manual, searched for areas that related to my questions, adding information from the first focus group discussion. I cut and pasted these as I did in the first manual. Merriam (1998) informed the construction of categories. Key features of categories are that they should be (a) exhaustive – all data deemed important should fit into a category or subcategory, (b) mutually exclusive – a unit should fit into one category only, (c) sensitizing – naming the category should be sensitive to the data. They should be named in such a way that perusal of the categories gives an idea of the nature of the phenomenon, and (d) conceptually congruent – they should reflect the same level of abstraction. All the above informed the construction of categories in this research. One category, for example, was *instances of teacher efficacy*. Pasting excerpts in my manual gave me a graphic representation of the melding of various aspects of the research.

The next stage of coding was done on the computer. I applied my theoretical framework as I looked at central themes that applied across cases. By this time, I had become exceedingly familiar with the data that I could look at a sentence in a vacuum, knew who said it, with what tone, and where it fitted in the data. I began organizing thematic patterns into the theoretical

framework. I therefore used the correlates of efficacy and the features relevant to role identity as a guide. Across the top of the page I wrote the definition of teacher efficacy: the teacher's judgment of his/her own capacity to bring about student engagement and student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998; Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). I also wrote out the principal characteristics of teachers with high levels of efficacy: organized, well managed learning environments, high levels of student engagement, openness to new ideas, high expectation of students and a positive effect on student achievement. I then looked across data sets to see where evidence of the characteristics existed and cut and pasted them in relevant sections.

I then turned to defining role identity at the top of a new page: the internalized version of a particular identity as it relates to a given role (Stets & Harrod, 2004); a frame of reference through which the individual appraises actions, and interprets and responds to life events (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006) I proceeded to copy and paste everything related to role identity as Spanish teacher and as department chair. Within the category related to their role as department chair, I placed the participants' comments related to teachers who were native and nonnative speakers of the language they taught. At the end of that exercise I came up with categories that applied across cases as I could clearly see the central themes. A peer debriefer assisted with refinement at this level.

In creating a third coding manual I was influenced by presumptions related to narrative enquiry. One is that working with the stories people tell allows the researcher to see the tellers' interpretation of themselves. The stories provide a window into the teller's belief and experience (Bell, 2002). Whereas the storied life is not necessarily identical to the actual lived experience, it allows the researcher to see the teller's interpretation of her lived experience (Chase, 2005;

Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). I organized the excerpts in order to retell the story of each participant, fitting together the field texts into a narrative text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Interpretation of texts was interwoven with excerpts in retelling the story. Based on the order of the interviews and the stories the participants told, the data fell into the fundamental categories the novice years; after the novice years, perception of self as Spanish teacher, perception of self as chair of the World languages Department. The novice years encompassed the first three years in teaching, based on studies and journal articles (Allen & Casbergue, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralil, 2004, Johnson & Kardos, 2002). As participants related their lived experience as department chair, they revisited their experience of working with teachers from native and nonnative speaker categories. Their observations, perception and the view they formed based on this experience was also shared. Thus, the data received as they spoke o the question of the role of department chair formed the major data set for analysis of the final question: how their supervision of teachers in these categories informed their conceptualization of the language teacher construct. A final coding manual was constructed using my art manual, so that I could see the data in tangible form.

The study was conducted according to the following timeline.

Table 2. *Timeline of Events*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
1	Questionnaire given to participants.	The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect mainly demographic data and to have participants begin to channel their thoughts toward some aspects of the study.
2 -3	First Round of Interviews	The purpose of this round of interviews was to have each participant reflect on her life history in teaching in a focused way. She was required to go as far back as recalling what influenced her decision to become a Spanish teacher; to reconstruct her early years in teaching recalling, assistance needed/received; and to reflect on feelings of adequacy/inadequacy.



4	Observation 1	Each teacher was observed for a half of a day. This was the first part of observing her in her natural setting. I took note of her teaching style, interaction style and classroom persona. This round of observation also allowed the researcher to collect data that formed a part of the questions for the second round of interviews.
5-7	Second Round of Interviews	This round of interviews concentrated on details of the Participants' present lived experience and the meaning they attached to it. In the interview participants spoke about what they actually did on the job. They reflected on their teaching style, goals, strategies, and their teaching. They critically considered with me data from observation and answered questions related to their supervisory role.
8-10	Observation 2	Teachers were observed for the second half of their teaching day. At the end of this round each teacher had been observed teaching all groups of students to which she was assigned in the semester of the research. Data from the observation also provided the basis for specific questions related to her teaching. Transcriptions of interviews were sent to participants.
12	First Focus Group	The purpose of this focus group session was to have the participants discuss key elements that had arisen based on interviews and observations. The participants discussed four questions that I formulated based on points that at least three of the four participants had brought out. There was shared reflection on teaching styles of supervisees.
13-16	Analysis of Focus group Data	I took time to carefully consider of the data received from focus the group discussion, and to compare it with data received through interviews. I integrated the information into an updated coding manual.
17-19	Third Round of Interviews	This was the final part of Seidman's three-part interview series. It was aimed at addressing the intellectual and emotional connection between the events and experiences participants had related in previous interviews and their role identity. It is how they understood the meaning of the experience that was sought. They looked at how the factors in the first two interviews interacted to inform their present situation and view of their professional world. They reflected on my second round of observations. In reflecting on my observations, participants were required to contemplate connections between their personal beliefs about teaching and what I had observed in the classroom. We also considered the overall implications for language teaching and for supervision of language teachers.
20- 23	Writing Working Draft	Based on my coding manuals I formulated a working draft of the four cases. The draft was sent to a peer debriefer to

		for her critique of my analyses.
24	Revisions to draft	
25	Writing Draft	Major analysis of data. Conclusions are drawn from data.
28	Second Focus Group Meeting	This was a major debriefing and member checking session. Consideration and discussion of my analyses and findings ensued. The group discussed how culture affected the learning environment. The topic was based on points they had made in interviews.
29 onward		Writing

### Trustworthiness and Rigor

Studies that rely on a single data source tend to be more vulnerable to errors (Patton, 2002). Triangulation was achieved through use of multiple interviews, observations and focus group sessions, thereby reducing room for error. The lengthy talk time of each interview allowed for reflection and collection of thoughts so that valuable information was obtained. Having the teachers scan the transcript of each interview further ensured that what they intended to communicate was there in writing. The multiplicity of interviews along with participation in the focus group sessions allowed for cross checking so that authenticity was achieved. The observation of the participants teaching all groups to which they are assigned for the semester provided access to differing classroom behaviors on which the researcher and participants could reflect. I accurately represented the data in order to ensure trustworthiness.

### *Transferability*

Transferability and dependability are essential criteria in qualitative research and therefore must be carefully planned for by the researcher. The choice of veteran teachers whose history in teaching and positions of leadership in the profession span a lengthy period allowed for receipt of accurate and meaningful information that covered a range of situations, experiences and events. These worked together to form a realistic picture of the phenomenon of interest.

Systematically immersing oneself into this information led to deep comprehension of the phenomenon. Thick, rich description with extensive and frequent quotations form part of the report based on the analysis. These quotations allow the reader to see the actual data, and further allow her the freedom of analyzing the material on a personal basis to test the extent to which the analysis seems valid and can be useful in other contexts.

### *Limitations*

The purpose of the study was to elicit and record the perceptions of the selected teachers. This study gave insight into their lived experience, the development of their role identity as language teacher and as department chair, and their perception of the native nonnative speaker construct based on years of supervising both groups. The fact that the study used only two persons from each category is a possible limitation to the generalizability of the findings. The study took place in the specific cultural context of the U.S. in which native speakers of Spanish are frequently encountered. Its relevance might be considered less in settings with different demographics. Each participant had taught in the school in which she was teaching at the time of the study for at least sixteen years, and three participants had had their entire experience as department chair in one school (see table 1). Although during their long tenure as Spanish teacher and department chair they had worked with a number of teachers of varied background, it is possible that their stories might have been different if they had supervised teachers in other settings.

Each participant was observed for two half days. This allowed the researcher to record classroom behaviors that she would later have the participant comment on. It is possible that more extensive observation might have enriched the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the four individual cases as they were constructed through information obtained in the interviews, focus group discussions, observation and the questionnaire. The cases are presented under the main headings: *The Early Years*; *In the Teacher Role*; and *In the Department Chair Role*. Under the first heading I present the participants' experiences during their formative years in teaching Spanish. This encompasses primarily the participants' first three years as a teacher of Spanish at the high school level. Under the second subheading I present the participants in the teacher role after the initial years. The third heading encompasses the participants in their supervisory role, highlighting their perception of what is entailed in leading the department successfully. After presenting the cases I do an analysis across cases to highlight similarities and dissimilarities. The chapter ends with a section entitled Native and Nonnative speakers. In that section I present these two groups through the eyes of the participants. The data were gathered as the participants spoke in their capacity of department chairs in interviews and focus group discussions. The concepts they had formed through extensive contact with supervisees in the professional milieu are presented.

As I referred to the text from the research, I used the following abbreviations:

Interview – INT. This is followed by a number 1, 2, 3, referring to the first second or third interview with the participant. The letter P followed by the number assigned to the participant will follow. Hence INT1P1/354 means interview 1 with participant 1, line 354. The numbers were assigned to the participants based on the order in which the first interview was done with them: 1- Helen, 2-Soraya 3- Consuela, and 4 - Maureen. All names are pseudonyms. Focus Group discussions were represented by FG. The number 1 or 2 that follows refers to the first or second

focus group discussion. This is followed by the first letter of the participant's name, and a line number. FN represents field notes. RJ is researcher's journal. I present the cases in the following order: Soraya, Maureen, Consuela and Helen.

### Soraya

Soraya was born in a Spanish speaking country in the Caribbean and migrated to the United States in her adult years. A seemingly caring person, Soraya was involved with benevolent societies, often mobilizing people to provide aid for needy persons, particularly in the Hispanic community in the United States, and in Spanish speaking countries. Along with her husband, she often visited prisons and had a strong ministry among the incarcerated Hispanic population. In college she had pursued a major in sociology and a minor in Education, which had included a practicum in a kindergarten class in her native country. She migrated to the USA after completing her bachelor's degree, and her first employment in the USA involved teaching core subjects to Spanish-speaking students.

At the start of her career she was teeming with enthusiasm about teaching, and envisioned making a positive contribution in her field: — I was coming just out of college, and I came with lots of ideas. I thought I was going to change the whole educational system, and I came with those ideas (INT1P2/ 16-17). She felt she was filling a vital need in working with Spanish speaking students, scaffolding their transition from one language to another. She recalled that when she was interviewing for the position, she understood that the students were mostly living on welfare, and that there was a great need to raise test scores and graduation rates among them. She felt fit for the task, armed with ideas and a lot of energy to work with those kids (INT1P2/20).

Using Spanish as the language of instruction, she taught Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies to children who had immigrated from Central and South America. The program was designed to have students receive instruction in their first language (Spanish) in the first semester. In the second semester they received instruction using both English and Spanish as the medium of instruction: That's what they do to transition the students from not knowing anything, instead of sending them to fail (INT1P2/38). Essentially, she was also their ESOL teacher. The goal was for the students to eventually have classes completely in English by the second and third year of their schooling in the United States. She remained in that position for five years.

The change to teaching Spanish came with her move from one state to another. She had no difficulty finding a position teaching Spanish, and had been at the same school for twenty-three years at the time of the research. It was therefore the only school in which she had worked as a Spanish teacher, and she had served as department head for eighteen years. In this managerial capacity she had supervised teachers from a variety of cultures who taught Latin, French, Spanish, German, and English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL).

### *Early Years*

Soraya's venture into teaching Spanish brought with it new goals, vision and feelings. She began teaching what she considered her language and therefore she had a special connection to it. She entertained a vision that went beyond students passing Spanish in order to fulfill graduation requirements. She wanted her students to view Spanish as an additional channel of communication for their thoughts.

My vision was that all the kids would be learning Spanish and become fluent in Spanish. They would have the desire to learn and love the language, and love

everything that surrounds the language. They would take the books and learn and be able to be completely fluent in less than a year and to maintain a conversation. I wanted them to come out of my class being completely like a native speaker (INT 1P2/293-297).

She viewed the teaching of Spanish to students from a different language group as an opportunity to extend an invitation to others to share in her ethnicity. —I thought I was coming from a Hispanic environment and transferring that into their hearts, and to their mind, and to their brain, that desire to live in a Hispanic environment (INT1P2/299-301). —I wanted them to love my culture in the same way that I did. I wanted them to understand (INT1P4/308-309). The love of her culture and country served as an inspiration for her. As she taught, she shared various bits of information that helped her students to understand and appreciate people from her culture.

I like...to see...what I like most about my job is not monetary. I'm a Hispanic, but when I see the students are into the culture, into the language, it's like they care about something that is part of me. They really care about it (INT2/P2/ 52 - 54).

So they were talking not just about the language but also the culture. So I started talking to them about, we use the hands when we talk, we move the nose, even the lips when we point, we open the eyes when we are surprised, we are very touchy, and we're just very emotional. We cry for everything...I mean, I was able to introduce culture also, plus the list of words; they told me a bunch of words they had heard and what does that mean (INT2P2/26-30).

As Soraya's identity as a language teacher was closely tied to her connection to the country in which she was born, sharing cultural information was woven into the lesson in a very

natural way. In each class that I observed, there were instances when Soraya made reference to her country and culture to illustrate a point or to give information. For example, in teaching greetings, in addition to the ones typically taught at that level, she informed the students of another one that is used with older relatives, and made it personal by telling the students that that was how she greeted her godmother whenever she visited her native country. She modeled the greeting and the typical response. This was new information for me too. (FNSObs2).

### *Main Challenges*

When Soraya moved from one state to another her new position brought challenges. There was a feeling of apprehension: — I didn't know what I was doing because the system in Chicago and the system in Georgia were completely different.”<sup>1</sup> Adjusting to the *modus operandi* of the educational system contributed to the feeling of trepidation. Additionally, teaching Spanish was a novel experience. She had experience in teaching core subjects to Spanish speaking students and in teaching ESOL but she had no experience in teaching Spanish. Initially, she felt a level of uncertainty as to how to proceed.

It was kind of tough in one way because it was my first experience teaching students that were not Hispanic. When I came to the school, 99.9% of the students were Anglo; they were white. When I came from Chicago, all my students were Hispanic, and over here everything was in English. And in my advanced classes I was used to using expressions that only native speakers would know, so I had to go back and look at the Spanish I and II book to realize the vocabulary that they had (INT1P2/90-94).

She judged herself as being deficient in recognizing where her new student population was in the language: the grammatical structures, vocabulary items to which they would have



been exposed. Such knowledge was needed in order that she might recognize how to adjust her language use so that she was comprehensible to the students. She also felt a level of uncertainty regarding her competence in teaching the language to this population of students. This was mainly due to her lack of familiarity with teaching Spanish as a second or foreign language. Having had no exposure to teaching Spanish, either through observation or through methodology courses, she felt unsure of how to facilitate the gradual building of foreign language competence in the students. She reflected on difficulties she faced:

In the first three years, it was being a native speaker, and having that experience teaching students who didn't know any Spanish. I was trying to teach Spanish just like I was teaching Spanish in my country. Like they understood all the tenses and the vocabulary words, and one of the biggest challenges was to use words that were from the Spanish I level because words that they didn't know came to me so quickly, and it was so simple to me, but they didn't know those words (INT1P2/189-193).

This unfamiliarity with teaching Spanish to students from other language groups presented other challenges for her as well: — The second one was going from teaching the ABC'S into teaching verbs and tenses in less than a month. It was like going from kindergarten to fifth or sixth grade. For me, the transition was hard to do.¶ (INT1P2/199-201). She perceived she lacked the know-how to move students through the language-learning process at the pace required by the curriculum guide. She experienced feelings of inadequacy as a Spanish teacher in this regard.

The cultural aspect, specifically school culture, also posed a difficulty for Soraya in the early years. Compared with that of her native country, she found some norms of her new school somewhat unusual:

The other one was understanding this culture. The kids that I was teaching were not Hispanic; they were mostly Anglo. And to teach them and to see the emphasis on sports and being a cheerleader, and extracurricular activities was very strange for me. In my country, the extracurricular activities are part of the neighborhood, not part of the school. You go to school to teach and to learn. But over here the emphasis was different (INT1P2/ 201-205).

Here Soraya compared the difference on a cultural level. She found the connection between life in the classroom and life in sports somewhat perplexing. She mentioned being confused when she was informed about tutoring the athletes she taught because the meaning conveyed to her was that they were a special group of students to whom she should be available to provide additional attention (RJ).

The materials used for teaching Spanish were also unfamiliar to Soraya: —Even the books were different (INT1P2/209). A textbook for teaching Spanish as a second language is significantly different from a Spanish textbook used in a Spanish speaking culture. Again, not having been exposed to training for teaching Spanish as a second language, the textbook used in the second language classroom was new to Soraya. The manner in which the lessons were structured, the organization of the content and the focus were all new to her.

She also had intrapersonal battles about the language of instruction. On the one hand, use of the language was natural to her so instructing through use of the target language, in compliance with the regulation of the Department of Education, was not a challenge for her

linguistic skills. On the other, the students' familiarity with the target language was limited, so that conveying concepts through the language proved demanding and a test of her skills in modifying her language to communicate effectively with her students. The problem of finding the right balance in the use of the target language weighed on her heavily: —Also, that I was supposed to use Spanish ninety five percent of the time, but when I looked at the students that looked so confused and frustrated, instead of taking twenty minutes to teach something in Spanish, I could take one minute and teach it in English! (INT1P2/209-212).

*Feeling Alone, and Alienated*

With all the uncertainties that Soraya experienced in the early years in teaching Spanish, she would have welcomed support and assistance in various ways. However, she found no support in her department chair: —Yes, she was a Spanish teacher but she didn't share. She gave me the books, and that's it. I was on my own. They assumed I knew all that because I came with five years of experience, but I came from another state, which is completely different! (INT1P2/175). Soraya emphasized that there was a distinct difference between the system she came from and the one in which she taught Spanish. She felt short-changed by her supervisor whom she perceived as not giving her the guidance she needed. For example, she felt she needed practical examples, and mentoring as she believed that those would have given her an understanding of how to approach the task, and would have reduced the feeling of being confounded.

Oh yes, if I would have sat down to observe, especially teachers that went through the same experience that I went through, like native speakers that had been teaching six seven or eight years. To sit down with them and for them to give me

advice, it would have been what I learned on my own in the first two, three years (INT1P2/234).

She further felt a sense of alienation in the department because of the language her colleagues used when communicating with one another.

I was also a little intimidated by them because every time that I talked to them in Spanish they answered me in English, so I assumed that every time they spoke to me in English I had to answer them in English even though they were Spanish teachers. They didn't communicate with me a lot in Spanish (INT1P2/153-156).

She revealed to me that she was feeling inadequate in English at that time, not having previously been in a situation where she had had to express her thoughts primarily in English. Thus, having her colleagues communicate with her in Spanish would have been helpful emotionally, and would have contributed to her feeling of belonging (RJ).

### *Solutions and Successes*

Soraya experienced a sense of relief and companionship when a new teacher came into the department. They communicated about teaching, bouncing ideas off each other. This alleviated the feeling of being alone in her undertaking. The seed of team work was sown.

The only thing that helped me was that next to me came a teacher who was African American and we became very good friends. She was a Spanish teacher, and we were giving ideas like, "Let's go teach this in this way, or that way." We tried to always teach the same thing in the same way, and I learned in that way (INT1P2/238-241).

Her colleague had learnt the target language in a context that was different from hers. This African American teacher of Spanish, had had her exposure to the language in an

academic setting, and had also been exposed to the formal courses in the methods of teaching Spanish.

### *In the Language Teacher Role*

This section shows the connection between some of Soraya's experiences in the early years and her development as a teacher. Her teaching style and perceptions of her success in the teaching role are also included.

The challenges she faced in the first years forced Soraya to devise solutions. As she reflected on those difficult years, she hinted at developing a sense of efficacy as she became aware that that she was capable of devising strategies that could lead to successful teaching and learning episodes:

But I never received any help. Sometimes, I don't know if it's good or bad, because now that I go back and think, because I didn't have any advice from anybody, I was able to teach my class, and for my students to be successful. On the contrary, if I knew somebody who was giving me everything, then I was not Mrs. *Soraya* anymore, I would have been the other person, imitating the other person. But what Mrs. *Soraya* has, my style of teaching, is my teaching style, I didn't copy it from anybody because I only observed during my practice in (native country) in kindergarten, but not in Spanish (INT1P2/264-270).

There were mastery experiences that further contributed to a sense of efficacy. There was recognition of her students' success through their performance on external examinations. The Advanced Placement examination, which is set by the College Board rates students' performance on a scale of 1-5. That her method had led to her students being successfully prepared for the examination was evident from the results:

I wanted them to talk, not just to say things like “*Me llamo*” and “*Bien gracias*. I wanted them to sound like native speakers. I’m gonna tell you something, I’m proud that at that time, I remember, nine or twelve students took the AP exam and mostly all of them made fours or fives because, even some would go and talk to another teacher” (INT1P2/368-311).

Her comments also revealed that in her teaching she aimed at having her students communicate in the language rather than having them reproduce mechanically learnt units of language. It was evident from the comments above that the students began developing a degree of confidence in using the language to the point that they would initiate conversation in the target language with other teachers.

Other mastery experiences attested to her capability in moving her students toward successful outcomes, thereby further contributing to the development of her sense of efficacy as a Spanish teacher:

By the way, when I came here, for two years in a row my students were the finalists for the Governor’s Honors. And one year my students won the Governor’s Honors in Spanish. Because they were so accustomed to listening to me speak Spanish kind of fast that when they went to their interview they said —Your teacher must be a Hispanic!, and when asked why, they said it was because they spoke really fast (INT1P2/210-214).

She recognized that her students were not only doing well in terms of mastering the content of the curriculum but also in attaining one of the personal goals she had for them, which was to have her students attain the model of competent speaking that she had set for them.

I remember one time I took them to a competition and they scored them a little bit lower in one area because they talked too fast and the judges were from the United States and they said they were talking too fast. I was like, — “Because they are talking too fast!”<sup>11</sup> The students were trying to, and I want them to talk closest to a native speaker, and the native speakers don’t speak that slow in Spanish; they go fast. So they took off a couple points, but one of them took first place in the competition, another one took second place, and as a group, they took third place. The only comment that they made about the group is that they talked too fast (INT1P2/372-379).

It appears that her students had modeled their speaking pace after their teacher. This might have differed from that of the judges who were Americans. In spite of the perspective of the adjudicators, Soraya was satisfied with the progress her students had made toward attaining the level of speaking competence she expected of them. For her, speaking at a pace that approximated what she considered the norm for native speakers was a part of developing competence in speaking the language. As the students received accolades for their outstanding performance in Spanish, she experienced success which she attributed to her hard work. Experiencing that degree of success and its attendant teacher efficacy, Soraya got the impetus to go forward.

To further enhance her teaching competence, Soraya drew on her own language learning experiences, along with what she learned from attending classes for teaching English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL). These had given her a degree of exposure to methods of teaching and learning a second language. Thinking that there were elements of language learning that

were common to various second language learning situations, she began to combine knowledge and experience of language learning in order to develop a teaching style:

In Chicago, they sent me to take a lot of classes like, Teaching English as a Second Language because at that time, my students were Hispanic and they were learning English. So I assumed it was the same thing when I came to teach Spanish to a non-Spanish speaker. I used a lot of that. Also, from my own experience: I'm not from here, and I came here not knowing one word in English to do my masters at DePaul University. So in the same way that I was learning, I taught them how to learn Spanish, with music, reading newspapers, trying to get the idea of what you are reading. So I was using my experience and trying to transfer my experience to them so that they could learn in the same way (INT1P2/280-287).

She also tried a variety of ways to aid the learning process and to create in the students an appreciation of the Hispanic culture:—Teaching songs. For example, I was doing cultural day where we had to wear t-shirts from different countries or dress like people from different countries. I took my students to Mexico several times, and some of my students, at the beginning, went to Spain (INT1P2/322-324). As an experienced teacher with a high level of efficacy at the time of the research, she revealed that she attempted to plan learning activities with different learning styles in mind. Her aim was to reach all students regardless of their preferred learning style:

I prepare lessons in different ways to have different activities. Because I have students who like everything to be oral; they want to participate immediately. They give you the response immediately oral. There are some that are very shy



They're very quiet they get intimidated by the other ones, and they'd rather to write things down. The other one is when I say —let's ....who wanted to readl....

I feel like I have two different kinds of students in the classroom: those who like oral activities who like to read a lot and the other ones who like to write a lot and translate and you have to prepare your lessons in that way that you can cover everybody because not everybody, each student learns in a different way. We don't learn in the same way so we have to prepare the lesson according that the student can read, can write, can talk can you know, kind of activities that cover different areas (INT3P2/ 27-40)

### *Perception of Success*

Soraya's goal of having her students develop competence in speaking the language remained consistent. She viewed it as the primary function of her role as Spanish teacher. That oral communication skills were paramount for her was evident in her classroom persona. I found it impressive that her beginning level students were comfortable in making attempts to speak to their teacher in the target language. Some students tried to make comments in Spanish that were not directly related to the lesson. (FNSObs2). Sometimes the utterances comprised a combination of Spanish and English words. In such instances the teacher supplied the Spanish word and the student spontaneously incorporated it into his/her communication. The level of comfort with which students took risks in the language indicated that that was the norm in Soraya's classroom: —That's what I want them to be able to do. To say something, but to say it in Spanish. Not just to write it down, but to talk to me in Spanish (INT 2P2/93-94).

Her feelings of success as a teacher were tied to her students manifesting a willingness to communicate in the target language.

Well, normally I feel like it was a good day when we do all the activities and the students can... That, uh.. I listen to them talking to me in Spanish. Especially when we do oral activities and... when I listen to them talking to me in Spanish. When I listen to them talking to me in Spanish, I feel like I have accomplished what I wanted to accomplish (INT2 P2/36-39).

True to her goal, over the years Soraya used varied strategies to help her students reduce the fear of taking risks in the language. She seemed to cater for the affective aspect by setting the stage for informal conversation in the language: —For example, I will tell them something and they will think that it is gossiping, and they get interested in what I'm talking about, because they think that it's gossip (INTP2/2/67-60). She varied her approach:

I will say something to them in English, or — “Do you know what happened to so-and-so?”<sup>1</sup> Even in the classroom, and they wanted to participate because they are into the subject but if they wanted to talk to me they had to do it in Spanish. I say, —I said it to you in English; that is my second language. So you say it in Spanish; that is your second language. The same thing that I'm doing, you're going to do it back to me (INT2P2/72-75).

### *Soraya as Department Chair*

#### *Providing Support for Supervisees*

Possibly grounded in her initial experience in teaching Spanish, Soraya attempted to assuage alienation and alleviate feelings of loneliness by being proactive in perceiving the needs of supervisees, and offering assistance. —And that's why when I became the department head I promised I was going to be different because I really struggled by myself for three years. I didn't

know what I was doing, honestly (INT1P2/159-160). As department chair, she put measures in place to prevent supervisees from having some of the negative experiences she had.

If I know that as a teacher, they're not doing something that they're supposed to be doing, or if I see that a person in the department is very strong in some areas and another person is weak in those areas, I like to pair them to work; not just to see me like, — "Come on, I'm going to teach you how to do it." But if I see a person that is doing very well, then I pair the other person with this person and try to work together in pairs for ideas, how to teach this concept, without telling the other person — "I observed what you're doing and it's very, very poor, so why don't you try working with this person who is much better than you." Instead of that, probably I would go to the person that is doing much better and I would say, — "Can you please work with this person in this area" ‖ (INT2/P2/104-111).

She believed that team work was one useful means of promoting effective teaching: —Yeah, working together sometimes can be very beneficial. Like you see, because some people, to teach one area, one thing, one topic, comes very easy and I like when the people can change classes and teach the other one (FGIS/17-20).

As supervisor, she felt it was her responsibility to ensure that teachers received assistance in improving their teaching skills. She therefore attempted to mobilize them in a manner that would promote optimal performance:

We always have a side of us that is the strong side and a side that is the weak side, so probably next month it would be the other person and it's the opposite. The other person is much better in this area than the other person, so working in teams, working in pairs, two heads are better than one. So for me, first, respect,

second, to work together in the department as a family, not just I'm the department head and you're right there (INT2P2/110-114).

Maintaining a close relationship with members of the department and developing awareness of the repertoire of competence that might exist in her department was seen as an important function related to her role. These allowed her to make decisions regarding which teachers she would want to work together at any given time. It depended on the needs of the teacher. She aimed at promoting a supportive atmosphere in the department.—If you're teaching level one, I try to pair the teachers so both, you know; I try to have a native speaker with non-native speakers so they can work together in how to teach certain things, certain topics (INT3P2/119-121). This comment reminded the researcher of Soraya's personal story related above, of being helped through the difficult period when an American teacher joined the faculty and they both began sharing ideas about teaching strategies. It is interesting that she organized pairs consisting of native and nonnative speakers. This was a tacit recognition that their various strengths could be mutually beneficial.

### *Encouraging Differentiation*

Soraya considered it important, in her role as department chair, to mobilize her teachers to bring about successful learning outcomes. Promoting differentiation in teaching strategies was one way in which she did this. She revealed that she encouraged teachers to observe each other's classes to learn how different strategies were utilized. She firmly believed that student engagement was important and that teachers could learn from one another how to bring this about through various means. In her role as head of department she encouraged teachers to explore these to the end of having student learning take place: —Your job is to teach so that they learn whatever you are trying to teach. If you cannot do it, obviously 50% is not there. That's

why we have to have a lot of different techniques when we teach (INT2P2/209-210). She felt differentiation and varied activities were integral aspects of fostering student achievement:

Everybody is different, and the students learn in different ways. I cannot tell the teachers to teach in this way. The only thing I say to the teachers is to try to use different ways of teaching the same idea, not just repetition (INT2P2/177-178).

I have seen...because a lot of teachers out of college have many fresh ideas, especially with the technology. They have so many different ideas and techniques of teaching (INT2P2/220-222).

Everybody has their own strengths. Everybody has their own technique. It's not that everybody; um...there are teachers I see that use a lot of visual aids. World Languages is like teaching kindergarten kids. You have to start with something completely new, this is something new for them. So teachers have to use so many ideas: from playing bingo, to soap operas, to a lot of games. And even to learn tenses, we read them like they're marching in the army (INT2P2/155-159).

### *Selecting Teachers*

Soraya's principal goal of having students excel in using the language conversationally influenced her selection of teachers: —You don't want to hire a person just to teach grammar and write words on the board all the time. You want the person to talk (INT2P2/304-306). Thus, she approached the interview with that in mind:

Well the first thing that I do is I talk to the person in Spanish. That's the first thing because if you're teaching Spanish, you should not be afraid to talk in Spanish. Second, if you have a degree in that..... and I will even tell the person, —Listen, I am talking to you in Spanish, but I'm going to talk to you in English

first. Why? So you know that I have an accent, and that's not what matters here.

So now I'm gonna talk to you in Spanish. I'm not looking at your accent at all

(INT 2/P2/384-288).

Her comment revealed that she thought that an individual's exposure to studying the language at the tertiary level equipped him or her with the ability to converse in the language. At the same time, Soraya showed an understanding of the possible causes of reluctance on the part of prospective teachers to converse with her: likely mainly those who were not raised in the language group feeling inadequate in her presence. She therefore took steps to minimize their discomfort: —Oh yes. I try to make them feel comfortable. As soon as they know that I'm a native speaker, they talk to me in English. I say, no, talk to me in Spanish (INT2P2/308-340). In addition, she tried to exhibit a supportive role in order to alleviate the fear that she perceived in some teachers.

I feel that because they know that I am a native speaker, that if they make a mistake, I'm going to be looking at them like they don't know what they are saying, but that's ok. I tell them, I make a lot of mistakes in English. I even tell them I'm going to talk to you in English all the time, and you're going to talk to me in Spanish. In that way, we are on the same level. If I make a mistake, you correct me. If you make a mistake, I correct you, but never in front of the students (INT2P2/313-317).

She took the initiative to assist in dispelling self-doubts some might have regarding their ability to use the language. In that way she sought to encourage colleagues from other language groups to be relaxed when communicating with her in Spanish.

She also viewed herself as an available source that teachers could tap into when language needs arose: —But what I want is that the teachers see me as a resource... than like I'm

their department head. I'm a native speaker, and I'm a resource if you want to say something different (FG1S/157-158). A greater familiarity with the language, which being a native speaker afforded her, propelled her to want to use this strength to the benefit of her colleagues.

### *Summary*

Soraya manifested a personal connection to the language and culture, and therefore felt teaching Spanish was partly a sharing of herself. She developed a sense of efficacy in teaching the language through her successful management of difficulties that she experienced in the early years of teaching Spanish. She attempted to be a supportive person to her supervisees, lending them the assistance she perceived they needed to effectively facilitate language learning in students. While she saw herself as a resource for language, she promoted the concept of teamwork among supervisees because she felt that the effectiveness of a language department was tied to individual members supporting one another. Consequently, as department chair, she endeavored to identify the strengths in each supervisee so that she might organize teams for effective teaching.

### *Maureen*

Maureen was an American female who began learning Spanish in high school. In her sophomore year she taught Spanish to second graders as part of her language learning. She continued her studies in Spanish at the university level, completing the requirements for certification in the teaching of Spanish by her second year: —By the time I went to college, I'd met my Spanish certification requirements within the first two years because I'd had enough of it in high school (INT1/P4/260-261). Her studies at the university level allowed her to be certified to teach both Spanish and English. She had been teaching for thirty-four years, and had served as department chair for thirty-three. Notably, she was appointed department chair of the English

department in her second year of teaching, and served in that capacity for nine years. When she moved to Georgia, she was employed in the position vacated by the chair of the World Language Department, and twenty- four years later was still that position.

A pleasant and warm person, Maureen seemed to be an individual whom the students, as well as members of her department, found very approachable. She appeared calm and unflustered, exhibited a high level of professionalism, and exuded confidence in her abilities in the professional setting. At the start of her career, her goal was to make learning fun and to make students see that learning Spanish was a useful endeavor. Her expressed goal at the time of the study was to have students leave school eager to use and discover the advantages of being bilingual in a multi-lingual society. She rated herself as an excellent classroom teacher based on her efforts at challenging her students while nurturing them to strive for excellence.

Teaching gave Maureen a high level of satisfaction, a feeling that she was doing what was her calling: —It's that then, and now, I so enjoy what I am doing. I know it's something that God put in my heart even before I was born (INT1P1/82-82). For the first ten years of her career she taught Spanish and English in another state at the junior high school level – seventh eighth and ninth grades. She was one of two Spanish teachers and primarily taught English. Her recollection of the chairperson in the department remained blurred: —In the first year, there was a leader of the English department, but I don't have any recall of him or her (INT1P4/351-352). Consequently, she felt that mentoring for her early leadership position was not from a source inside the school system but rather from her father: —Well, I wouldn't say that I had a mentor in the building. I'd say that I had a mentor in my father who, um, was a leader in the church, a leader in the community, a leader in the household, a leader in his overall family, his extended family of his siblings etc. So, I think that had been poured into me, and so I didn't need to look



at someone else. I could just look inside and pull that out of me (INT1P4/424). This confidence in her ability to provide effective leadership remained evident in her demeanor.

In her role as department chair of the World Language department, Maureen had supervised teachers who hailed from different parts of the world. Among these were countries in Africa, Panama, Peru, Columbia, Jamaica and the United States. Some teachers from the countries mentioned taught the language that they had spoken since birth while others taught a language that they had learnt later in life. Maureen viewed the head of department role as being similar to that of working with students in that it involved teaching, monitoring, nurturing and encouraging. She shared with me that one year a novice teacher gave her a Mothers' Day card in showing his appreciation for the assistance she had given him in his new career. She rated herself as an excellent department chair based on her self-perception of genuinely working at exemplifying successful teaching.

### *Early Years*

Maureen began her years in teaching feeling enthused and ready to infuse new ideas into the field of education. —I was coming up with new ideas ..... —that was something the students welcomed (INT1P4/397). Although in retrospect she felt that her fresh approach might have evoked negative feelings in her more experienced colleagues, she remembered those initial years as being very productive and fulfilling, affirmed by additional responsibilities that were bestowed on her.

I had some of the same students in both English and Spanish so it gave me a double opportunity to get to know them. And my recollection, for back then, is that it was a great experience. I really enjoyed it. I ended up becoming the Honor Society sponsor, the cheerleading sponsor, the English department chair, and a

whole host of other activities and responsibilities that I had. So, I can only say that it was a great experience. I enjoyed working with the students. (INT1P4/82-86).

In addition to the vote of confidence implied in the above, Maureen experienced early success in moving her students upward academically. This mastery experience provided a high level of satisfaction, and remained imprinted on her mind. It was likely a contributing factor in the high level of confidence she displayed.

I remember that, not that year but the next year, as a result of my experience and the interaction that I had with the students and parents, that I was asked to teach the lowest level of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and I thought: —Wow, what a reward.‖ Um, because of how they felt I addressed the average student and the above average student that they'd given me their lowest percentile and that was a reward for me? Or them? It was yet to be seen, and as it turned out it was the second-best year that I had. I thoroughly enjoyed those students. I loved seeing them take those leaps and bounds and I think they loved seeing someone who believed in them and believed that they could achieve higher goals than they had at that point (INT1P4/288-295).

The success that she attained through her efforts with those low achieving students confirmed her capability in moving students toward success. She expressed a strong belief that well-planned lessons gave rise to successful learning outcomes, and the lessons I observed gave evidence of sound planning. (FNMobs2). She attributed her success as a teacher to three basic facets of her persona: —That I'm organized; I'm very confident; and I seek to know what they

need to know so that I can prepare them for that! (INT1P4/336-337). At a later date Maureen stated:

I feel that, as it relates to my teaching strategies, the organization is critical. Whatever strategy I'm going to apply, I need to have everything organized to put that strategy in place. For example, if I'm doing a cooperative learning activity, then I've had to pre-think what groups are best; how many people are in the group, etc. So, organization, for whatever the strategy, has to be considered (INT2P4/53-57).

When I observed her classes, the physical setting was very organized. The smooth transition that she and her students made from one learning activity to another indicated a high level of planning and organization. (FNM/Obs1).

Maureen did not recall challenges or difficulties in the early years. She recalled those years as being fulfilling and enjoyable. —I can't recall challenges. I remember that again those first two years in particular were such great experiences that I remember saying to my dad —I love doing this so much. You know, I can't believe they pay me for it!! (INT1P4/100-102).

*Maureen the teacher*

Maureen had taught different levels of Spanish from beginning levels to Advanced Placement (AP), a collegiate level course taken by high school students. Her familiarity with the AP program impacted her teaching, as she taught lower levels with the aim of laying a foundation for the advanced course.

I had gone through the AP seminars and, very familiar, very eager because I would love to bring my students to that AP level. So that even filters down to my 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and other levels now because I know the expectation, I know the

Standard. So that at some point in time that they want to take their language further than where they are now, that at least they'll know the skill and would have had the foundation for that (INT2P4/215-218).

She saw her role as ensuring a level of mastery at all stages in order that students might be adequately prepared for later stages of language study. Hence she exacted a high standard from her students at all levels. Her attitude was one of teaching with the end in mind. That end also encompassed more than creditable performance in the academic arena:

As a matter of fact, that is my life -philosophy: let me expose you to something so that when you face it outside of my classroom, you'll be very comfortable, you'll be very confident and you can take that from me into your situation, whatever that happens to be (INT2P4/244 246).

Her aim was to equip students with language skills that were of practical value so that they could be utilized in other situations. These situations would include communicative acts with persons from the target language group with whom students might come in contact. Some lessons I observed her teaching lent credence to her professed philosophy because she provided opportunities for students to use the language in simulated real-life scenes, and encouraged target language use in communication related to the daily routine (FNM/obs1). However, she aimed to teach more than language skill as her role as teacher comprised a wider perspective: —I enjoy working with students and seeing the light come on indicating that they get it. Some concept in life, it may not be Spanish, but just some concept in life they finally make the connection and they understand it (INT2P4/21).

### *Effective Teaching*

Maureen conscientiously considered the characteristics of her students as she planned learning activities for them. She arranged for the social needs to be met even while the students were learning. She showed an awareness of the need for multiple learning activities in a teaching episode.

A successful lesson will have a number of activities where the students are engaged continuously. There's always some downtime for them since they are little chatty birds. They can get that chattiness out so fifteen minutes of time or twenty minutes out of the block of time are given to them to do an assignment where it's ok if they're chatting, because I'm keeping them on a time schedule so they get it done within the time frame, and they get that talking out of their system or further down into their system (INT2P4/61-66).

In one ninety-minute episode I observed that there were i) a student taking the lead in reviewing vocabulary with the other students through use of a power point created by the teacher ii) small-group presentation of a rap they had created and organized in the previous class iii) a teacher-led drill on irregular verbs in the past tense iv) a paired activity in which students told each other in the target language what they did the night before, using the tense reviewed in the drill and the vocabulary reviewed at the start of the class. This variety characterized all her classes that I observed, and the effort to ensure that the adolescent need for socializing was satisfied through use of tasks that required cooperative activity was always evident.

In varying the learning activities and the teaching approach Maureen sought to address the multiplicity of learning needs that often existed in her classes. To this end, she found cooperative learning activities useful when dealing with a class of students in which the students

displayed differing levels of mastery. Structuring the learning activity around interaction with peers seemed to her a positive way to enhance student learning.

I have students who..... every year I inherit students from various scenarios where some of them have come to me with an A average, B average, or C average that will have far less than A, B or C knowledge and as a result, the greatest strength that my students can gain is from interaction with peers. Partnering with someone who has more knowledge than they do seems to be very effective, and they welcome that (INT2P4/72-76).

Her self- efficacy in the area of devising strategies to meet learning needs seemed quite high, possibly due to the positive outcomes she reported that she had had in attaining learning outcomes:

I use various strategies for my students, in teaching. There are a number that are needed on a daily basis. So as far as the learner outcomes, and what my purposes are for them, using those strategies is, of course, to help them to excel. The end result is that all the students who come across my path will have grown as a result of the strategies that I've used (INT3P4/36-39).

She reported continued success in her teaching as the end product indicated that the goals she had set were being attained. This likely contributed to the high level of teacher efficacy that she seemed to display.

And my goals are always to make sure that they are well prepared when they go to college that they can take an entrance exam and that entrance exam will put them above their peers who have done the same amount. And when my students come back and share with me, they find that that is the case (INT3P4/220-223).

### *Adapting for Changes*

A number of factors had, throughout the years, moved Maureen to see the need to modify her teaching to meet the needs of her students as changes occurred. Although she had been in the same school for more than two decades, she had seen major changes that influenced her teaching approach. A fundamental one was the change in what characterized the learning readiness of her students:

I would say that the greatest impact on how I teach today has been the students and the changes that they have...that I have seen in them. That is to say, students that are less prepared for education than previously; having had students that were more prepared to be educated. That has had the greatest impact on me because actually, I have had so much more that I have to do to prepare them to be educated than I used to have (INT3P4/77-81).

Because her goal was to facilitate the attainment of excellence, Maureen saw the need to alter the starting point of lessons in order to build skills that enhanced learning, given the deficiency she had identified in her students.

You're teaching more to students these days than ever before as far as life skills. Skills that they aren't getting in other places; they impede their ability to be the best student. If you don't give them those underpinnings, then they're not going to be able to be their best (INT2P4/21-25).

As she analyzed the changes and assessed the needs of her students Maureen recognized the benefit of using technology in presenting information. This was an outstanding aspect of her flexibility in methods, particularly so because at the start of her career the availability of

technology in the classroom was very limited. She learnt how to use and incorporate technology in her teaching in order to promote student engagement in her lessons.

That's where my students are. It's a technical age. The day of the pen and paper and that book .... you have to bring it alive. If you don't bring it alive, your students are going to be dead. So you make the choice: bring the book alive or kill the students. That makes it your choice to bring the book alive; or whatever the theme or concept is, bring it alive (INT2P4/431-434).

Her use of technology was practical and impressive. In a single lesson she used the tape recorder, did a power point presentation, and recorded using a camcorder (FNMObs1). She therefore moved from one activity to another using technological means that were common in the experience of the students at this point in the twenty-first century. This typified the way she taught. Pictures from the book were brought to life on a power point. That was one means of "bringing the book alive" for her students. She felt that, in keeping with her students' exposure to technology from their toddler years, it was incumbent on her to use technology to get and hold their attention. —If you're not pulling their attention to it, their attention is going to go to something else. Technology affords you the opportunity to do that|| (INT2P4/439-440). She saw using technology in her classes as a means of mirroring the way the students had been learning since infancy, and the way their environment presented itself to them:

Today's youth is not yesterday's youth by any stretch of the imagination. Those that are willing to sit down, and study, and stick to it and work hard to get it. That's not today's youth. Why not? Because when they go to the television, they see that's not what others do. Today's society is a microwave society. They want it like this (snaps fingers). If you can't get it to them like this (snaps fingers) you



lose their interest. If you can't give to them where it's large and in color and it interacts, they're not interested. So, you have to change your methods to go along with that (FG1P4/550-555).

The following is a fitting summary for her perspective on the need for adjusting teaching methods:

Well, technological devices are a necessity today. You could get by in the past without using them because you had students who could create their own visual images. Today, you must create visual images because these students are so visually oriented. They are so manipulative, in terms of having things they wanna put their hands on. So visually ... they've got to see something. As a result, my classroom activities and ways of teaching have gone to match that. I would be so outdated and would not get very far with my students at all if I did not have the technological support that I require in my classroom (INT3P4/51-57).

Her ultimate goal in differentiating instruction was to enable effective language learning through discovery.

I think that today's language is a hands-on kind of thing. You really have to give students experiences and opportunities where they discover the language through their usage, and that was not the case in terms of how I learned the language (INT3P/ 80-83).

#### *Maureen as Department Chair*

Maureen seemed to view her employment in the position of department chair as the principal's act of entrusting her with the responsibility to bring about needed changes in the management of language learning. She figured that the unspoken request was that she should

endeavor to promote an attitude to language teaching that deviated from a mundane, mechanical manner of delivery:

I think he was looking for stability in the department, and to actually connect with the students. Um, the previous...my predecessor who had been the department chair was a native of...of a Latin American country. I can't honestly recall which one, and the students, I'm told, were just given worksheets and things like that. So they really weren't expected to use the language. They weren't expected to, um, get engaged in any form or fashion; just go through the routine of this is my schedule, this is my grade and, and that's what it is. And I think the principal wanted more than that for the students ((INT1P4/480-488)).

She accepted the responsibility and resolved to run a department in which teachers were conscious of their role in promoting student engagement in leaning tasks. Her mention of her predecessor's approach was significant, considering that although he (her predecessor) was from a Spanish speaking country, he seemingly did not promote the concept of teaching Spanish and the other languages as a tool for meaningful communication.

### *Standard Setting*

Maureen's goal of preparing students for creditable performance at higher levels drove her role as standard setter. The importance of teachers doing their utmost to prepare students for success beyond the classroom was a recurring theme with her (RJ), and indicated that this matter was close to her heart. It therefore appeared to motivate her to maintain a high standard in her teaching, allowing her to model the behavior she desired to see in her supervisees. Her efforts at ensuring effective teaching took varied forms:

I'm always trying to set a standard that others will follow and...but what I've seen is that many will do a little something but not nearly enough to give the students the outcome that they're going to need to be successful once they leave high school (INT3P4/219- 221).

*Sharing and Modeling*

As she used varied instructional techniques in her classes, Maureen tacitly provided opportunities for supervisees to see the potential these had for enhancing instruction. It was clear that she considered facilitating supervisees' growth in the area of modifying teaching techniques as an integral part of her role of department chair. She fostered this growth through various means:

I share with them the successes of my students. They come in when I'm filming sometimes, or they see the presentations that the students have made, and they...change is something that is difficult for many people, so they take a little bit at a time, and it takes a long time for change to make an effective turnover (INT2P4/165 -168).

Typically I will share what works well for me, or they'll observe and see something and that they take ownership of a lot of times. So it typically happens that I've either given them something that I think will work well for them, or they've come in when I'm doing something and they say, — “Oh I think I'd like to do that too. Your students seem to be very engaged. I'd like for my students to be equally engaged.” So they take that back to their class with them (INT2P4/107-111).

So I give them strategies that I've applied, and I think that if they're working for me they can work for you too if you put forth the effort. In time, I think I've mentioned this to you (I know I did it the first interview we had) that I look at annual evaluations. I look back and see what worked and what didn't. Then I try to improve upon that. I encourage them to do the same (INT3P4/ 416-419).

Improvement was the watchword. Support was evident. In her role of department chair Maureen took an active part in fostering improvement. Sharing ideas about teaching was one way she did this. Another was by making practical use of evaluations. She promoted the thought that through use of official evaluations others made, one could look at one's teaching through the eyes of another, thereby seeing possible areas for improvement. Improvement, however, was seen as a lifelong venture as was evident in her comment:

It doesn't matter if it is a first -year teacher and you're a twenty- year veteran. That means you can still learn something from them. As a matter of fact, I have a new teacher here that, she's fresh out of the university with her masters in the language. She's been here for a month now, and I've gleaned so much from her. And I hope that I've given her some insights as well. So, observation is critical (INT3P4/385-139).

Over the years, her focus on having students fully engaged led, not only to changes in her personal teaching style, but also in her encouragement to supervisees to be adaptable to changes that might impact the way students learn at any given time. Expectations were explicit:

Well, it means that we get together and discuss all classrooms in terms of how they should appear: What is a standard Spanish classroom. Observations: What it is that I will be looking for; or other observers that come into their classroom. We

discuss the things that impede their ability to teach and how they can improve upon them. So we deal with the professional aspects as well. We meet at least once a month (INT2P4/35-39).

A realistic approach toward ensuring that the members of the department were clear about expectations and standards was evident. Discussing practical issues relating to teaching and the teaching context was clearly viewed as being an integral part of effectively managing the department. Along with that, there were formal and informal meetings which served as forums for discussing other job related matters: —Typically yes, once per month we are charged by the building to have a meeting and we do so, but actually we tend to have lunch together and discuss casually other aspects of our job as well (INT2P4/L43-44 ).

#### *Mentoring New Teachers*

Being aware that new teachers will likely experience difficulties, possibly because of having unrealistic expectations about the students and the learning environment, Maureen, as department chair, was proactive in trying to buffer possible shocks. This, she felt, was an integral part of initiating the neophyte into the norms of teaching:

Well, because I know the reality before they walk in the door: that they're far removed from what they are going to encounter, with regard to what a student is today. They're at least four years removed from it. So it's always different from what they anticipated (INT3/424-426).

Another thing that I do is I let them actually sit there and observe and that's when they find out, — “Oh wow, students are *this* now. You need to do *that* now” etc, etc. So, you know, just giving them a heads up on it by sharing with them and then allowing them to observe for themselves (INT3P4/428-430).

Through vicarious experiences Maureen gently introduced neophytes to the realities of the classroom. Along with this, she provided daily support through lending a listening ear and offering advice:

We meet frequently. I say that —**well** because that's what I'm doing now. I have a new teacher on board now, and she and I are talking every day and we're talking about her successes or the lack thereof; how we can make improvements in those areas. For example, she was dealing with.....she had an observation from the county two days ago and I read the observation and one of the things that ..... I gave her some managerial tips (INT3P4/436 -440).

She emphasized the importance of providing that level of support to the neophyte because absence of it had been known to lead to disastrous consequences. She was convinced that it was within her power to prevent negative experiences for the beginning teacher through providing adequate support in areas in which it was needed. She illustrated the point:

Like the sub in my classroom for another teacher said, he was formerly at another school, and he had subbed for a Spanish teacher who had, after two weeks, just left. I've never had a story like that. I don't think I'll ever have a story like that because I wanna be a resource for whatever that's going on regardless. Not just language, it's coping with logistics. Coping with students. It's whatever. I want to be a resource for that. (INT3P4/503-506).

Because she was aware that there might be numerous challenges for the neophyte, Maureen felt that adequately performing her role as department chair included being a resource into which neophytes could tap when they needed support in various areas associated with language teaching. This type of support, she felt, positively impacted teacher retention.

So that's what we do: We stay very close and we talk about things so that they aren't out there on an island by themselves, you know. I'm walking with them and encouraging. The rest of the department is the same way. If they have something that, you know, could be useful, then they jump in and help out as well (INT3P4/452-455).

She consciously aimed at alleviating the feeling of alienation that new teachers have been known to experience and, through the spirit of cooperation that she had fostered in her department, she helped to cushion the neophytes' challenges. — Just a sense of belonging, a sense of understanding, empathy, you know, I understand what you're going through and I'm going to do whatever I can do help you. Just human qualities, basically (INT3P4/534-537).

She felt very strongly that there was great benefit to be derived from the members of the department collaborating in designing learning tasks and teaching strategies.

Well, there are a number of benefits that the department can obtain as a result of working together. One, you don't have to come up with the ideas yourself. You can have someone else to bounce the ideas off of. You can have someone that you can go in and see what they are doing and model behind them. So you're really expanding your horizons of what options you have in your classroom (FG1M/11)

### *Selecting Teachers*

Maureen's emphasis on effectively preparing the students for success at higher levels of learning was a factor that featured in her selection of teachers. She also considered how the individual would contribute to the cohesiveness of the department, maintaining a united effort at facilitating student success. Flexibility and a willingness to learn from others in order to increase effectiveness in teaching were valued:

And one of the things I'm looking for is a genuine desire to help students; and the willingness to work, and do whatever it takes to work with me and the department to make that a success. I've had individuals come, and think just because they speak Spanish, they deserve the job. But they're not really willing to do what it takes to bring the students to the point. They'd rather talk about what the students are lacking. That kind of person has no use in this department because the gentlemen who are in the department can tell you that I give them some things to help them grow, and I expect to see those changes then we move right along. But if you just come here and think you're going to do your own thing and be behind the doors by yourself, it just doesn't work that way (INT2P4/265-274).

At the time of interview two (INT2) Maureen's supervisees were all men. One had later been replaced by a female. Maureen felt very strongly that effective teaching involved a process of constant growth. She would be prone to select a teacher who shared that view to be a member of her department; one who was competent in the using the language and in teaching the language:

So it's not just somebody who *knows* the language, but one who can *communicate it*. Um, you may have had an experience in college where you had this professor and the professor was just teaching, teaching, teaching and was renown, and respected by his colleagues, but NOBODY was getting it (INT3/279-282).

Specific skills were needed to effectively facilitate language learning in students. Many times they are native speakers, so it's just like English speakers think they know English. Not really, but they think they do. Spanish speakers think that because they speak Spanish, they are qualified to teach students, but they know



nothing about how to educate a child and how to use the language to build their language skills (INT3P4/289-293).

The comment above referred to persons who had not been exposed to training in language teaching. It emphasized her stand that more than having a high level of proficiency in the language was needed. That stand was reiterated in a later comment:

On the reverse of it, then you've got someone who is not a native speaker, who doesn't know the language, and so the students are doing other kinds of things instead of the intended objective of learning the language, etcetera. So that too, is a disaster. So it really has to be the individual who knows both: what is necessary to engage the students, as well as the content that needs to be delivered to the students (INT3P4/288 -292).

She mentioned that for those who learnt the language in an academic setting, it was essential that the language had been learnt to the point of having a great deal of comfort in one's ability to speak the language, use the language, know the language, and therefore impart it to others (INT3P4/ 268-269).

### *Classroom Management*

Classroom management was a concept that Maureen seriously considered when selecting teachers. —I ask them what is their plan. I'll give them a scenario and ask them to share with me how they would handle that scenario (FG1M-/54/255). —Content is relevant if you're managing the classroom, but it's irrelevant if you have a poorly managed classroom: nobody's getting anything because it's so disruptive (INT2P4/282-286).

A well-managed classroom, for me, is where all the students are engaged. They're focused on whatever the instructional activity happens to be: whether it's a

cooperative learning one; whether it's a lecture; whether it's a project; whatever it happens to be. If the students are all engaged in what they're supposed to do, then that's a well-managed classroom (FG1M/317-321).

She juxtaposed classroom management with student engagement as she considered the former jnjkessential if students were to stay on task.

The bottom line is if they don't manage their classroom, then there is very little instruction so those students aren't getting anything. And then those of us who do manage our classroom are inheriting them and that student is disabled, not so much because of the student's inability, but because the teacher did not give them what they needed. So that's why it's very critical for me (FG1M4/268-271).

### *Summary*

Maureen was a veteran teacher and department chair who prided herself in maintaining high standards in her teaching and supervisory activities. She found both aspects of her job satisfying as she had seen rewards for her efforts. These rewards included having students attain success in language learning at higher levels of education, and seeing teachers become empowered as effective language teachers through her mentoring and guidance. She exhibited a strong consciousness of the characteristics of the typical adolescent learner today so she utilized strategies that promoted engagement for the learner, and required that her supervisees do the same. She exhibited high levels of teacher efficacy, appearing very confident in her ability to successfully teach learners who might exhibit differing learning needs. She also felt efficacious in mobilizing her supervisees for collaboratively achieving the goal of successful language teaching.

### Consuela

A native of a Spanish-speaking country in South America, Consuela immigrated to the USA after graduating from high school. She did her tertiary studies at a university in the United States and was in her twentieth year of teaching Spanish at the high school level. As part of her program of study, she had done a practicum which lasted six months. The supervising teacher was an American who began learning Spanish in high school, and was also a participant in this study. After her practicum she was employed at another school as teacher of Spanish, and had already completed nineteen years teaching Spanish there at the time of the first interview. She was named the teacher of the year for the recently ended school year. She was very personable, caring, and considerate, manifesting an interest in the well-being of colleagues and students.

Consuela felt she was carrying out a mission from God as she performed her duties as a teacher. She was dedicated to her faith, loved her job and worked hard at it, and found satisfaction in student success —It makes me feel like I have done something; that I have contributed to the world in my own way by teaching Spanish to students (INT3P3/17). She seemed contented in her school environment, related well to her students, and manifested an interest in the well-being of colleagues and students.

Consuela had been chair of the World Language for thirteen years. Over those years she had supervised teachers from a variety of cultures including Russian, Japanese, Polish, German, African, Jamaican and Haitian. She thought of having worked with these as an experience of growth for her: — For me, it has been a very cultural progress because I have been able to change, and adapt myself, to their needs and accept the way they are. By doing that, I have been able to work with them (INT2P3/128-130). These teachers had taught a number of languages

such as Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and the more commonly taught languages like Spanish French, German and Latin.

### *Early Years*

Fresh out of college, Consuela was employed to teach Spanish at the school at which she had taught for her entire career up to the time of this research. At the time of employment, she had recently done her practicum and was feeling equipped to teach. As the target language was her primary language of communication, she was confident about her knowledge of the content.

They were looking for a teacher that had experience. And I didn't have the experience, but I had the skills. And I did my practical at (Name) High and I was hired after my practical. And um, they asked me basic questions like, "Why do you like to teach? Why do you want to teach Spanish? Why do you want to be a teacher and why did you choose (Name) High School." Basic questions. They saw my curriculum (vita), they talked to the principal who saw me doing my practical at (Name) High School, and they also called the supervising teacher, who gave references about my teaching practices ( INT1P3/11-17).

The supervising teacher to whom she referred above was one of the teachers in this study. She felt confident that she had learned strategies from her. —I did my student teaching with her and that's how I learned to manage the classroom, because she's an excellent teacher with classroom management. I know exactly what I have to do (FG1C/ 427-429). Although she had felt confident about the skills she had acquired during her practicum, and seemed to use them to guide her actions even twenty years later, the initial years proved quite challenging. She recognized that she was deficient in the area of managing student behavior.

I felt prepared because I was very knowledgeable and the knowledge, that gave me confidence, and I have always been a person with confidence. It's a part of my personality. So, I felt I was well-prepared to teach, but not well-prepared to deal with behavior problems. So, my problem with (Name of school) was partly behavioral problems, with the students because I was not well-prepared to deal with discipline problems, but I was well-prepared to teach the subject (INT1P3/21-25).

This unfamiliarity with the type of disciplinary problems she encountered caused major discomfort for Consuela. It came as a culture shock to have students who were disrespectful and who had attitudes towards adults with which she was unfamiliar. This situation therefore posed a major difficulty for her. —My first year teaching at (*Name of school*) was very difficult. Number one, because I was a new teacher and then because I didn't know the rules and I needed to learn different things and different strategies to handle the students with behavioral problems (INT1P3/30-31). Whereas she had observed effective strategies being used in managing behavior during her practicum, she felt inadequate in utilizing these when she was actually in the role of teacher. Her practicum had been done in a classroom with a set of students who had already been trained in the discipline the teacher required. When she was teacher in charge of her own set of students, the situation implied a different set of dynamics.

The behavioral problems possibly stood out in Consuela's mind as this contrasted markedly with that which she had known in the system in which she had been schooled.

It was a shock, because the students in my high school in South America were well-behaved, and they showed a lot of respect for the teachers and adults in general. Over here, the children were very disrespectful and used a lot of

profanity, and they have problems with drugs and alcohol and sex and bad nutrition, not having parents at home, so the problems were emotional as well as physical problems (INT1P3/36-40).

Some colleagues who had been in college with her had similar issues: —They probably had the behavior problems, which was a shock. Some moved from one school to another school, from one county to another. They were looking for a different place hoping that they would find a better place with a better behavior situation (INT1P3/222). —Out of thirteen teachers, only two remain in the teaching profession: me, and another teacher who teaches German. The other ones changed professions. Some went into real estate. Others went into nursing. And some moved out and I don't know what happened to them but they quit being a teacher (INT1P3/207-213). Her comment emphasized the idea that the shock connected with the difference in expectation regarding behavior was one reality that could have great impact on teachers whose expectation about school culture differed significantly from the reality. This might have implications for mentoring to meet the needs of teachers who fall into this category.

### *Managing the Problem*

Determined to remain in the profession Consuela attempted to deal with the behavioural problems. One approach was to develop an understanding of her students' social background; to become familiar with situations that impacted their life, and issues they faced outside of school.

I learned to love the students, and I learned the problems and became familiar with the problems and grew a feeling of compassion and motherhood. So now that I have been here for 19 years, and next year will be my 20<sup>th</sup>, I have grown a feeling of love and compassion, and decided to serve because I feel that it's a mission that I'm doing here. I'm not working with students that have everything. I

am working with disadvantaged students, in every way of life. They are disadvantaged because they have emotional problems, mental problems, physical problems, economic problems...you name it. They have a lot of problems, so I'm working with disadvantaged students (INT2P3/201-208)

She began to view working with that particular set of students as a mission in life. The number of times she reiterated this during our interview seemed to suggest that this was indeed a firm belief that she held:

Like I said, I grew love for the students. Every time I was thinking about moving from (*Name of school*) to another school, (because I did have offers from my county supervisors to go to other schools and leave (*Name of school*)). Every time I was thinking about leaving the students who really needed me the most, I had a sad feeling, I wanted to cry. That's when I knew that I had a mission here. My purpose was to help these kids with disadvantages and problems (INT1P3/78-82).

She developed a feeling of personal commitment to assist those students as they manifested specific needs. This early commitment to those students had likely been a principal motivator for her having remained at that school for nineteen years. —Not everybody wants to put up with behavior problems. I felt needed. It was a personal feeling. I felt needed, and I told myself, “They need me here more than they need me somewhere else.” It was personal (INT1P3/145-146). As she began her twentieth year, she shared with me that she intended to remain at that school until she retired. She reiterated that she considered being there as fulfilling a mission (RJ).

I had a positive influence on my students and on myself because I pulled myself up to continue. I knew that it wasn't easy teaching, but it was more than that. I

needed to serve them. They needed to be served by somebody. Most of the teachers were coming and going. They didn't last more than three years because of the behavior problems. But I felt like when the Lord wanted me to leave this place, I would have the feeling in my heart. That feeling has not been in my heart (INT1P3/114 -120).

*From no help to help*

As she reflected on her journey, particularly the path of her initial years, she figured that she had braced herself then to deal with the situation, had made some adaptations, and was therefore able to cater to the needs of the students. However, she felt deprived initially of the kind of assistance that she needed from her department chair. What she needed was described as —Mostly mentoring and advice. What to do, or where to go, or how to find things (INT1P3/67). Because she was new to the system, and the culture, Consuela felt in need of guidance in practical areas: —The impatient person (the first department chair) never showed me what a course syllabus should look like. When I was sick and I needed to leave emergency lesson plans, she didn't give me any ideas for what type of emergency lesson plans I should leave. Things like that (INT1P3/153-156).

A change of department head helped in this regard. Consuela felt more comfortable working with the new department chair who had a different personality and who had a different approach to supervising teachers: —The second department head was patient. Sometimes, of course, she needed to be strict and make sure we do our part. But on the other side, if I asked her for something, she knew what it was and how to guide me, to tell me where to go and how to find it (INT1 P3/159-160). She therefore received help in the areas in which she needed it, and felt that the new chair understood her needs as a new teacher:



The first head of the department was young and impatient. She was a French teacher, (*Name*).... and she was very impatient. She didn't have any patience with me or with anybody in the department. So I was happy that the second year I had a different head of the department who was a nicer person with a lot of experience. An older person, and she was able to help me, and understand that I was a new teacher (INT1P3/60 -64).

Consuela was determined to remain in the position. There were different avenues through which she received assistance. For example, she was aware of getting help through: —Professional development, being around my colleagues, sharing different activities, being humble enough to take their activities and use them in my classroom (INT1P3/93). She was open to learning how to become more competent in doing what the job entailed: —Yes. I watched what they were doing, and I used those strategies and adopted them into my teaching styles, in my own way. I created more activities to help the students, plus we had a lot of county meetings where we were trained by supervisors. That helped me gain experience (INT1P3/87-89).

### *Experiencing success*

The above led to her to begin developing confidence in her ability to teach her students effectively. It gave her assurance that she could develop competence in essential areas that contributed to a successful professional experience. Thus began her movement toward developing teacher efficacy:

I saw myself as a person that can deliver, and I perceived the students were doing well. They competed in foreign languages contest, and I saw their progress. They were winning this contest, which helped me feel like they could do it. And I said to myself, we can do it together (INT1P3/109-111).

*Consuela the Teacher*

Consuela felt that she taught her students in a timely manner, patiently helping them to learn. She tried a variety of means to motivate them to learn and to develop confidence in their ability to succeed:

If you expect them to know everything so fast, you will only make them upset and hate the language. But if you have patience and you give them more practice by playing more games, having more activities that have to do with the subject, reviewing more before the exams, or using more teaching strategies, like more handouts, papers, worksheets, practice sheets with pictures or colors, and projects, they are able to like and enjoy and want to learn. But if I didn't have the patience, they would probably be upset and close their minds and say no, I don't want to learn because it's too hard. When I made it simple and provided the practice and the steps through different activities, they were able to learn (INT1P3/330).

She used her personal experience in second language learning to inform her teaching: —Since I knew that it took me a lot of practice to pronounce the words the way they were supposed to be pronounced, I gave my students the same practice because I knew all they needed was practice<sup>ll</sup> (INT1P3/320). She was confident that students could learn the language if she performed competently in her role as teacher, providing adequate practice in various ways. Sometimes practice was through songs: —ABCs, days of the week, the months of the year. Some songs I created. Parts of the body songs. Seasons of the year, the numbers (INT1P3/250). This was done particularly with beginning level students, but she pointed out that there would be less opportunities for singing as one moved to a higher levels.

I knew that it takes practice, so I gave the students the practice that they needed. Actually, by me learning different languages, it helped me understand the students and become patient with the students. I knew they could not learn things as fast as I could teach them. I could not expect them to know it by heart without giving them the practice that they needed so that they could accomplish their goals (INT1P3/310).

She anticipated that the practice would lead to a level of mastery of the target content that would show a job well done. If her students, on evaluation, showed a level of mastery that she considered satisfactory she experienced a feeling of fulfillment because her goal had been met: —Um...I love my job. I like when the students make 100s. When they make 100s, I feel like wow, it was worth my time, my effort, my sacrifice, all these activities and games and the hassle of disciplining students so that they learn (INT2P3/ 23-25). Thus, her feeling of success was tied to the degree of success she perceived her students experienced:

A fulfilling day? The day when my students have a quiz or test and they have...they have good answers. They are able to communicate. They are able to perform well, you know, with the vocabulary they have learned. Because we use vocabulary and then we apply them in different ways like we create phrases, sentences, paragraphs, we write essays, and then we speak. We do it the same way with the verbal performance. We ask oral questions, and they answer orally (INTT2P3/ 91-95).

#### *Varied Learning Activities*

She varied instruction. When I observed her classes I noticed that she used games to a great extent. These provided opportunities for students to move from one place to another as they

practised structures or vocabulary. They also introduced friendly rivalry which helped the students to keep focused: —When they play a game, they learn more than if they listened to you all day talking! (FGIC/I557). She felt that through games she could ensure a high level of student engagement, ultimately leading to improved learning.

They're very engaged in learning, because they compete. We divide them in groups. When you see like four groups and each group is going to compete. So I send four students to the board, and they write a sentence or a phrase with a vocabulary word that they have learned and I tell them you can write a phrase, but it has to be a good phrase that makes sense. And that's what we do. We compete. And creative phrases of their own, and competing against each other because everybody wants to gain their credit points. And uh, they learn. They are very competitive. They like to win (INT3P3/29 -35).

When they are engaged, they remember. It's a life learning activity. When they are playing games and they are creating their own phrases, their own creation, their own creativity, and they win on top of that, they feel very talented, and they are talented. And they feel very important because they won with their own creativity (INT3P3/58-61).

She viewed travelling to countries that spoke the target language as a means of enhancing language learning and appreciation for the target culture.

It was very important that they knew different cultures, and were exposed to different cultures so that they can understand different people from different groups and different countries and appreciate what they have here. Plus, they also practised the Spanish language! (INT1/1P3/96).

I used to take my students overseas. We went to Spain, Mexico, Venezuela. We went to France, Italy, England, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, and Russia. It was a very exciting experience. But nowadays we're not going anywhere except to the internet, or showing them a movie of the country and customs that they have, how to travel, their requirements, um...because the economy is not good, and also the responsibilities. There is a high demand now for everything...and...it's better to just do it in a safe way (FG1Con/303-308).

As the school at which Consuela taught had an extensive foreign language program, the principal languages spoken in the countries listed above were taught at the school. Travel therefore was a practical component to what the students learnt in the classroom. On another level they were also given a degree of exposure through in-school cultural activities, one of which is preparing dishes indigenous to the target countries from recipes.

### *Using Technology*

She displayed a positive attitude toward technology, considering it important in enhancing teaching even though the school building was not equipped to allow extensive use of technology in the teaching program

I love the PowerPoint presentation, but my thing is that if every classroom had a lot of computers for the students to work with technology, it would be wonderful because when you only have one computer room that one hundred teachers want to use the computer room, it becomes very frustrating. When you want to use it for next week, but next week it's full. So, technology is a wonderful activity and strategy to use but we do need more computers. More, um...like, as you can see, the only computer I have here is my computer. And the only TV that I have to

use with the computer is the one over there (points). And that is good to watch a movie, but to do everybody's PowerPoint presentation, it's very small (INT2P2/299-306).

*Consuela the Department Chair*

Consuela valued having members of the department share strategies and teaching techniques. The norm was for all members of the department to meet together on a regular basis in order to share ideas.

Every Monday, we have a meeting where we all get together, and it's called a subject team meeting. And every Monday we talk about lesson plans and what things we can do to improve the lesson. And every time we get together with the French teachers, the Spanish teacher, the Japanese teacher, and the ESL teacher to see what works best for them and how we can improve a lesson by sharing, and we do it by sharing ideas. Every Monday. *Every Monday* we have that meeting (INT2P3/75-90).

I think it's the best thing that can happen to a group because we all share ideas and we all share activities. For example, with Spanish II or I, we have three teachers teaching Spanish. So, she comes with one activity, I come with one activity, and the other teacher comes with one. We all make copies of the activities, and we use them (INT2P3/94-97).

The act of meeting together on Mondays eliminated the problem of having teachers at different places in the curriculum map that served as a guide for the foreign language program. It allowed for development of a repertoire from which they could select learning activities. It also provided a ready forum for brainstorming ideas.

Since we see each other every Monday so we know exactly what we're going to teach. And we say we're going to teach this way from here to here, and we're going to share these activities. — “What are you going to use for that?”— “Oh, I'm going to use this.” So I give her a copy and they make copies. And then I ask, — “What are you going to use for this group of vocabulary words?” So they give me copies of theirs. And we all share ideas and activities that we create. We make copies and we share, so when we're teaching, they're using my activities and I'm using their activities (INT12P3/102-108).

We share our papers, like, do you see how she came with something to share to me, then I share with her. (A teacher had come to her during our interview). I give them ideas, like, — “Oh, this went really well with me. Use it.” And she uses it. And then we see each other on the halls and say — “Oh! That really worked!” Like the other day, I told them I use win, lose, or draw. The students draw a picture of the vocabulary I give them, and their group has to guess without the help of the book. They just have to remember. And they guess what the picture is. And it was a good activity. Because they enjoy earning extra credit points and they learn the words without any problems (INT2P3/84-91).

### *Change*

The focus in language teaching had recently been changed to put more emphasis on oral expression: —Remember in the old times, we used to teach differently. We did a lot of writing and reading and very little speaking. Nowadays, it's the opposite. We do more speaking than writing and reading (INT2P3/151-153). The coordinator at the county level had recently

expressed strong views about the use of the textbook. Consuela understood her suggestion as meaning that the book ought not to be used in class. She had immediately implemented the change.

My greatest challenges have been...um...teaching without a text book, but it's now one of my biggest accomplishments because I have succeeded by creating my own activities; my own practice sheets; my own strategies; my own games; finding my own pictures. I have succeeded by doing that, and that's my biggest strength. I can teach without a textbook (INT 2P3/309-312).

The accomplishment of the task of developing materials was something Consuela looked at as a great achievement. The work ethic of sharing ideas and materials had paid off for her and her supervisees. They constantly added to their repertoire of activities:

We get along in my World Languages Department. The teachers, everybody is willing to work, and they are very positive people. They want to learn, and they want to change. Even though like I said, in the past, we had some people that did not want to change, they wanted to use the old way. But now, they are learning from us. They see that it can be done. They see the results from the ones that are willing to change because as technology changes and the students change, the needs now are different than the needs in the past. In the past, they wanted to do a lot of...workbook and textbook activities. Now, they love to create their own. They (*students*) like to be in charge. They want to create their own projects and share with everybody. And when they are in charge; it makes a difference. But it's a lot of work for us, because we have to be our own editors and authors and you know, the things that other people have done throughout the years we have to



do it now because we have to create everything. But since we are saving the material, we feel good because we can use it next year.

### *Selecting Teachers*

Knowledge of content was considered important: —Well, it's necessary that they know the subject in order to teach. Because if they don't know the subject, I mean, they're going to teach wrong (INT3P3/ 186-188). However, she considered other aspects as being critical when considering persons for positions:

I would like to see their attitude. The positive attitude of teaching. If the person is willing to work with different students, because we have to do different shades of instruction in order to reach everybody. Because in order for us to reach the whole world we have to reach each student first. And if the teacher is willing to work with all the students, and everybody is on a different level...we have some students who are fast learners. We have some students that are slow learners. We have some students that came from Special Ed classroom. So we have to adapt our instruction to everyone's needs, not just work with smart learners or fast learners but also work with the slow learners and the Special Education kids (INT3P3/190-197).

### *Summary*

Consuela, a very dedicated Spanish teacher, viewed teaching her students as her mission in life, and tried to foster a spirit of cooperation among supervisees. As a principal way of keeping her students engaged, she used games in teaching. These games she created as needed, designing them in line with target structures or vocabulary. She remained flexible, open to new ideas and changes, and had seen positive outcomes because of her efforts. She displayed a strong

sense of efficacy, the development of which was tied to her dealing successfully with the problems she had had with managing the behavior of students in her initial years. It was also tied to her successfully developing strategies to efficiently teach her students in the face of a variety of challenging situations in the school environment.

### Helen

Helen was an eighteen -year veteran high school Spanish teacher. She was born and raised in the United States in an English-speaking American household. Her exposure to learning Spanish began in high school. As she was very keen at learning the language, she took all courses then available to her. When she progressed beyond the courses formally offered in her school, she was allowed to continue her language development through independent study, guided by the teacher. She was exposed to literature in Spanish which she read avidly. Her practice in speaking the language was mainly done through conversing with her teacher.

In keeping with her plans to become a Spanish teacher, Helen went on to study Spanish at the university level, where she took all the preparatory courses required by the state, including the methods classes they offered. As she intended to be an elementary school Spanish teacher, her coursework and lesson planning were geared toward teaching students at that level. On graduating from university, Helen enthusiastically taught fifth grade Spanish: —Being the perfectionist that I am, if I taught colors or whatever I had to wear the clown suit. I had the pages with the clown feet in different colors, that kind of thing (INT1P1/7-8). She decided, after teaching for a semester, that the elementary level was likely not her calling: —My goal when I first started teaching was to be an elementary school teacher. I taught fifth grade for a semester and realized that was not my gift (INT3P1/284). Subsequently, she moved on to teaching high school students. This proved to be satisfying for her and she remained teaching at that level. She

had been teaching at one school for fifteen years, and had been serving as department head for ten.

Very confident in her language skills, Helen enjoyed helping students develop theirs, and found great satisfaction in seeing them respond positively: —When you have kids through the years who have taken on the language and used it to their advantage because of something you said or did, it's amazing (INT3P1/320-321). Helen led a very busy life being very active in her community outside of school. She was active in teaching at her church, was responsible for organizing activities for the youth in the church, and exhibited a passion for aiding the success of young people.

### *Early Years*

The move from teaching elementary to high school necessitated adjustments in thinking and teaching style. She was not sure of how to approach teaching older students as, in her preparatory courses, she was exposed to planning lessons and designing activities for younger children. —My first job was at (Name) High School and I think I was hired the first teacher - workday, pre-planning. So I started right away; teaching, getting started with no clue, and I had never student taught. It was real interesting to just jump in with my feet wet right away like that (INT1P1/12-14).

After the summer vacation, teachers return to work one week before their students. This is a week of preparatory activities. Helen received her appointment to a position in the high school on the first day of that week. In the comment above she alluded to feeling of anxiety because of having received the appointment so close to the students' return to school. Had she been appointed earlier, she likely would have had the opportunity to prepare mentally and otherwise for teaching at that level.

She was aware that the goal and focus of the language program at the high school level differed from the one formulated for elementary schools. Consequently, she realized that possibly an approach with which she was unfamiliar was required;

Well, see, elementary teaching and high school teaching are totally different. They are two totally different monsters. Elementary school, to me, doesn't have the same end result, or the end expectation as high school. It's the FLES program and you're giving them something and you're moving on. And you want them to learn and like the language, and you want it to be fun. High school, although you still want all those same things, the end result is that you really do want them to learn the mechanics of the language. And that, in itself, required a different method of teaching (INT1P1/50-55).

She therefore began teaching high school, feeling somewhat unprepared for the task. Initially she felt she was missing the mark of meeting the students where they were:

Now that was interesting, because here again, I never student-taught. So of course my plans, because I was thinking I was going to teach elementary school, all of the classes and coursework I took, and all of my lesson planning was geared toward elementary school. Then, when I decided I didn't want to do that anymore, I didn't have anything to help me to get ready for high school. So I taught like they already knew Spanish. It took me a while, and the great thing about that was I had a group of students that asked questions, so they taught me how to teach to where they were instead of just talking and going forward, not realizing they didn't have a clue (INT1P1/40-44).

In the above, Helen implied that she contemplated the students' voice in informing modifications to her teaching style. That attitude was in keeping with the perspective that she had on teaching: —But I don't think there's anything in a textbook that is going to prepare you for teaching (INT1P1/25). This was tacit acknowledgement that actual teaching situations offered a learning ground for teachers that helped them move toward developing competence in teaching. —Yeah, you know how to teach, but it's so much more than that. You know the material, let me say it that way, and you know how to prepare the material, but it's just so much deeper than that. It's an art (INT1P1/33-35).

She showed a keen awareness that one's teaching did not take place in isolation. Rather, there were variables in the teaching and learning situation that had significant impact on goals, objectives and methods. This knowledge informed how she practiced her craft.

Now the activities to help kids learn, I don't think those are any different, especially if you are teaching on a beginning level. The style, the activities, the performance that you're expecting changes as you move up the level of the coursework. The expectation is that, no, this is not going to be as fun as first year when you're doing AP, or fourth or fifth year (INT1P158-61).

### *Support*

Helen did not feel alone in her venture. She was a part of a positive environment: —I think that everybody got along great because you just had that environment where everybody thought the same. Expectations were the same. We knew what we were there to do, and so we did it! (INT1P1/145-147). She described the department back then as operating like a family:

I feel like when you have a department that operates as a family, where you're concerned about each others' well being, not just in the classroom, but in general, and you spend time together, that makes for a very happy medium all around. There's nothing that you can't discuss with each other, and have each other's support if someone needs it, etc. But I think we operated as a real true family, and some of us are still together to this day (INT1P1/131-135).

This support was deemed very valuable, giving the neophyte the feeling of having an ally. Practical guidance was provided in this atmosphere of trust. Helen therefore lauded that support and spoke of its practicality:

You have to feel like there is somebody you can go to, where you won't feel like, — “Oh, I'm so stupid,” but instead can ask any question like, — “What am I supposed to do with this?” or — “What do they mean by this piece of paper?” And so you feel comfortable not knowing what to do by being able to ask somebody that you know is willing to help you. Or you just don't feel like — “I have to figure this out by myself because they are frowning at me,” or feeling unwelcomed. I can't say I felt that (INT1P1/165-170).

### *Success*

This supportive environment helped Helen experience success early in her career. She was able to guide her students to high achievement:

I think in the beginning I had the most fun because the students were different. The school at which I worked was different, and the longer you stay, you tend to see those shifts in the dynamics of the community of the school, the school itself, and the kids in it. So challenges, um, I don't know. I'm thinking, and when I look back, I don't see it as a challenge. Those were the years when I got the most done because the kids learned the most. They were challenging in that they challenged each other to be the best, and so we could do so much more (INT1P1/73-77).

Success also came in the form of students using the language in a functional manner in keeping with her goal for them. She was creative in providing opportunities for students to use the language in productive activities:

Some of my fondest memories are just having the smaller advanced level classes in the third and fourth years where we could sit in circles and just have these great conversations. When we had a group that would interpret for an international elementary school during their parent-teacher conference night; when the kids really, really loved learning language. And some of those kids today are actually either using it in their profession or have actually chosen to teach the language. So those same kids are the ones I have the fondest memories of (INT1P1/86-91).

She reflected on her success then, giving credit to the togetherness of the department as well as the high expectations of the community;

I don't think it had anything to do with me. I think it was more all of those things I mentioned earlier, working in concert. It was the self-motivation of the kids; it

was the high academic standard of the community and the school. I think all of those things working together helped all of us to be the best that we could be. I don't think that it was anything that I did. I think that I had to be a great teacher to fit into that mould and be able to survive it, but I don't think it was anything that I personally did that I could say was a strength on my account except that I really, really care, in the present tense, because it carries all the way back from then \_til now, about what I do, how I do it, and that I'm doing the very best job for these kids. So if there's a strength that I have, it's that I care that much about what I do, \_til I think that I have to give them my very best, and sometimes, the difficult part about that, is that my standard is very high, so if I'm going to do it and you're going to go with me, then you've got to rise up (INT1P1/203-214).

### *Helen the Teacher*

Helen had taught all levels of Spanish, from beginning to advanced, and therefore felt that she had a wide-ranging perspective of the curriculum that would assist in preparing students for successful language learning. She taught with the end in view – the end being advanced placement courses in some cases. As she maintained her set standard of excellence she firmly believed she ought to reach each child, channeling him to successful language learning. This meant being aware of the learning needs of her students, and attempting to address those competently:

I think language is, when you teach from every level, you see where something is missing. If a child has a poor first year, his one and one; if he never learns that that is two in his first year, he's dead in the water all the way to the top. And I think that's a shame. I think there are changes that we have to make, so when you



get that kid in your class, you can't just stick to — “Well, I've got to do it like this, this way,” rigidly. You can't be that way. You've got to teach to every level in the same classroom, for every class, and that's difficult to do but it has to be done in order to have each kid have some measure of success (INT1P1/262-268).

Successful language learning she saw as equipping the learner with the skills that would enable functional language use: —That means that it's not just memorizing passages and being able to say — “Hi, how are you?” “My name is...,” but to be able to express themselves in a second language (INT1P1/23-24). Measures had to be put in place to achieve this: —I think the most effective, and the most important, is to use the language in the classroom. And performing for the children so they are able to perform for you, and to know that they understand and can use the language meaningfully (INT1P1/16-18). Using the language meaningfully implied using it to accomplish tasks that were part of regular day-to-day activities; using it to convey their own thoughts.

### *Differentiation*

Helen used a variety of means to enable students to move toward developing competence in the target language. Her aim, in using these, was to accommodate the differing learning styles that would inevitably be in her classroom:

It's all over the place. Again, you wanna have as much opportunity as possible so that you reach each kid's learning style. So there's always oral work; there's always written work; there's always performing; there's always “express your ideas that you have in your head.” Note-taking is not just copying the words from the book but using your own to let me know that you understand what you are doing. And it's amazing because in language, what other people do individually in

terms of content, we do all of that and then some. There's art, there's math, there's history, there's everything and you put all that together and there's as much opportunity as you can stand to give yourself (INT2P1/300-307).

For her, effective teaching also involved ensuring that learners were exposed to the grammar of the language, often in a formal manner. In the language teaching arena there have been differing views on the subject:

And I think, having been an AP teacher, while we say that you just teach concepts in context and if they get it then they get it, I know that does not work because, at the end of the day, when you get to the highest level of understanding, you still have to know what it means and how to use it appropriately. So at some point, to me it doesn't make sense to ignore it then get to the highest level and say, "Oh, you must know this, really, really know this," and they've never been taught. So even in teaching in context, I still think there needs to be that level of formal learning. You've got to have both. And I know it can be done because I do it every day (INT2P1/289-295).

Along with the above, she also considered the teacher's use of the target language in the classroom as a means of immersing students in the language. It was a way of familiarizing students with the target language in order to facilitate their becoming effective users of it. She had observed in her students an unexpected level of discomfort with the amount of Spanish used in her classes. This discomfort she attributed to their teachers prior to her not having exposed them to the language by using it as a major means of communication in the classroom. Her having taught AP Spanish underscored the importance of student exposure to language use in the classroom:

I think that the teachers ought to use the language in the classroom. That is just vitally important. And it's one of those things that, again, teaching from the bottom all the way to the top. When kids get to your class and they are afraid because they know that you have a total language class. They're afraid because they can't hear or understand it. That's a problem. That's a major problem. So you've got to use all the tools that are available to you to help them (INT2P1/322-326)

### *Teaching Advanced Placement Spanish*

With regards to the language, Helen felt fit for the task of teaching Advanced Placement Spanish. Initially, there was a degree of uncertainty about the pedagogy because she wished to ensure that the students were adequately prepared:

Not the language at all, but just the pedagogy, or again, to make sure that they are going to be successful. So once you see the test, you can do backwards learning. Because now I know what it looks like. Before then, that was my only anticipation, "What does this look like?", so I know what to do with it (INT1P1/352-355).

### *Change*

Helen recognized the need to modify her teaching style in keeping with changes that occurred. Among these were changes that were made in the school system that altered the amount of time the teacher had with each group of students. The change from having students in fifty-minute class periods for an entire school year, to having them in ninety-minute teaching-blocks for a semester, necessitated conscious change in her teaching style if students were to be prepared at the level her personal standards dictated.

The school system also began experimenting with new ways of facilitating learning, so that student-approach and student-expectation also changed;

In the beginning and in the old days, we did a lot of book learning, but then you realize, now my classes have always been about performance along with the book learning, but then I think that with the trend, when you go to a semester system, when you go to a block system, when you have all of these different types of small learning communities, all of that stuff going on in the school, it does affect how the children learn (INT1P1/249-253).

There was also the need to diversify according to the specific needs of students. This required awareness of the characteristic, needs, and make-up of each class, so she could devise teaching and learning activities accordingly.

The kids are different, and their needs are different, and each child, even each class, has its own personality, so even though you might be teaching the same level, the class is different. So even things that work for one class will not work for another. So the same applies to the kids. In my opinion, in every class there has to be a lot of opportunity in terms of diversification so everybody can fall somewhere and do well in some area. So diversification is extremely important (INT2P1/142142).

Throughout her career she had witnessed changes in students with regard to characteristics and needs that affected their achievement. This sent a signal to her that she had to make adjustments in her approach in order to best serve her students.

It has been modified. The overall vision has not changed. The modification has come because the children have changed, so therefore, "Bad wind never blows." If

you don't change, you don't grow. So I've had to change in ways that are beneficial to the students, and this is just a trend in the educational system in and of itself (INT1P1/244-247).

Her aim was to do what was necessary to promote student achievement through keeping students engaged in learning tasks. In her classes, I observed that her activities were many and varied. In a teaching block, for example, she would have a short lecture, a game to practice targeted grammars, group discussion of a cultural aspect, individual practice, and large group practice in which students would take turns at the board (FNHobs1). She mentioned a change in her teaching approach:

Well apart from the old days, I do a lot more hands-on activities; things that we didn't do as much before. I've always been the type of teacher where the oral component is very important because, of course, I teach from the bottom to the top. So even at level one, having that oral component is important to me and then, at the same, making sure that it is correct on that bottom level. You know instead of just saying, "Well let's sing a song." Well, let's sing it correctly. Let's make sure the pronunciation is correct. Let's make sure that we're using good structure but at the same time we're having fun. So we do...we play a lot of games; we use the white board. The kids have competition but at the same time we're learning (INT3P1/16-23).

She used games to cater to lower the affective filter, with the ultimate goal of facilitating language learning. Thus, the purpose of including games in the learning situation was primarily to attain an educational goal:

Games are evaluating tools. So again, it's not all pencil and paper. You can play a game and know if your students really know what you want them to know, and that will tell you whether or not you need to go back and reteach, revisit, reevaluate and what you need to do even before you put that piece of paper down on the desk. And then it gives them the opportunity to have fun and feel successful. And if they don't enjoy...if all you're doing is sitting, reading, writing and you're never talking or having fun, they're not going to learn. And I don't like to be bored (INT2P1/3153-20).

Varying teaching techniques also included the use of technology in teaching. She had adjusted her teaching in accord with technological advancement:

Technology is awesome and if there was a weak area that I have, that would be it. But at the same time, presentations are done with technology, both by the teacher and the student, using technology to bring their learning to life. Now, I frown upon any type of translation exercise that requires it. You think they're gonna cheat using the technology to translate because then they can't learn. But the presentation, the language lab, any type of tool that's going to help the student learn better because they are technically savvy, so you better be able to compete or to keep up with them, and to make presentations and activities that are rewarding for them (INT3P1//328).

She tried to include the use of technology in a practical way. For example, she had two computers to which she referred as the student center in her classroom. She arranged for students to use these to complement their learning of the target language. (FNHObs1).

Well, umm, one good thing that has happened here is, I have the student center. I have two computers that's my student center. And so, for those kids that are not able to work at home, they can always use the student center. Then umm, I try to design lessons where we get to use the computer lab: Not just the computer but of course this particular classroom has a language lab here so I use that for every element (INT3P1/327—331).

The classroom had a language lab equipped with modern electronic device. She indicated that she used it to enhance learning.

Differentiation in instruction was geared toward boosting student achievement. Helen experienced a measure of satisfaction in her students' achievement. She glowed when she spoke on this topic:

When I see that light bulb, or I know a kid has turned the corner in their level of understanding, comprehension; is meeting me in the right place, then that is the most rewarding feeling because it makes them happy to know that they are there (INT2P1/12-14).

Another interesting area of diversification was taking trips to countries in which the target language was spoken to allow for exposure to the culture and to dialects of the country. To be a balanced language learner she felt that a student needed to be aware of the existence of dialects, along with their exposure to formal language:

Every year I take a group of kids to Europe. Summers or anytime during the year, if I can find a moment, then I'm going. I'm a beach, sun, sand person, so I try to get that in. In the Caribbean, Central America, that kind of thing. So I think that it's real important. Now that I think about it, when you say about a weakness, it's

like it's impossible to know. But at the same time, you feel it's something that you want to know; that there are dialects in every language. So therefore, if there is a weakness, or that unknown area, it's that, ok when you get a kid that's from someplace that you have not been, or you don't know the dialect of Colombia, (and I don't). Although I have friends that are Colombianos, I don't know the dialect of Colombia so that I can understand or know that when you use a colloquialism. It's like, "What are you saying."I See, book learning gives you formal language, but practical learning is going to give you those things that you can't get out of a book, so you have to have both (INT1P1/380 -390).

To measure her success in teaching Helen looked at the level of mastery on the students' part:

Again, that end result in knowing that the evaluation, whether it is in written or oral performance form...if the kids, the students have excelled, then you know the lesson has been successful. And there are times when you are disappointed because you don't know that you have failed until you actually see the results and then you know that whatever, um...concept that you were trying to get across, it didn't work (IN2P1/T26-30).

### *Helen as Department Chair*

Helen strongly believed that it was important for members of the department to work together and to have an amiable relationship with one another. She felt that the onus was on the department chair to initiate that relationship, thereby making it easier for all to work for the common good of the students:



Well first and foremost for me, always, is it's a family-type situation because you have to be concerned about a person's well-being in order for them to do well and for you to get the results that you want. Then you have to have a personal relationship with them. Then the expectation is that, regardless of whether or not we agree on what is required of us, the point is to get it done for the sake of children. And when we can work together to make that happen, then it makes the job easy. However, on the other hand, when you're working with people that are working as individuals doing their own thing, then It's a frustrating experience. It is very frustrating (INT2P1/34-41).

It was important for the department chair to present a caring attitude to supervisees. Possibly this attitude was born from the supportive atmosphere that characterized the department in which she spent her years as a neophyte teacher:

If you're concerned about the people with whom you work, not as the person in charge, but as another member of a family, then you can get what you need from them at the time when you need it, when you have deadlines. And they are being met because they care about you because they know you care about them. That's a successful department (INT2P1/134-137).

Her concept of a successful department showed what she attempted to create through her supervisory activities. Taking a genuine interest in the affairs of the supervisee was paramount.

Oh my goodness! When people know what they're doing, and they're confident in what they're doing, and you can have a department meeting where they are sharing. And even when you spend time away from the school building together as a family, just hanging out and laughing and talking and the end of the week,

um, sharing, you know, what happened during the week and laughing and talking about your days, to me that is successful. When everybody is on the same page and even though people may not agree, and that includes the department chair as well, with whatever mandate has to be followed, but you do it because you know it is the professional thing to do. When you're working with professionals that keep personal issues out of it; when you're working with professionals that aren't concerned with the hhyh"I" but the "we." That's what makes a successful department. That's what makes the job easy (INT2P1/121-130).

In Helen's view, a major part of the responsibility of a department chair was ensuring that supervisees develop an awareness of the need to be together in the teaching program. Doing so served to alleviate problems that could be caused for the student if teachers operated on an individual basis, rather than as a group of teachers following the same curriculum guide.

Because you feel that, ok, as the chair then it's my duty to make sure that everyone in the department is on the same page. And especially when you've got, when you have single teachers like German or Latin, then of course you have some room for leeway. But when you have multiple teachers teaching the same subject, and everybody is on a different page that is a major source of concern because that directly affects the student (INT2P1/ 64-68).

She felt that there could be a detrimental effect on student learning if teachers of the same subjects were at different points in the curriculum:

I would say, not following curriculum is the major issue. And when you speak in terms of vertical learning, and backwards instruction, then the bottom (meaning level one), has to teach with the end, which is AP, in mind. And so, what you find

is from level to level, there are major discrepancies in what is being taught, so the students are ill- prepared as they move from level to level. And even laterally, if there is a schedule change, then from teacher to teacher, what you're finding is, you've got high school teachers that teach on an elementary school level. The kids are singing songs and coloring instead of doing high school curriculum (INT2P1/71-78).

Helen sought to foster improvement by showing teachers areas that needed attention. She tried to have them look at themselves with a view to taking action.

Well, you know, you can only try to encourage. You can use data to try and show that, you know, there are some areas here that need some improvement. But, at the same time, at the end of the day, after you've done and said all you can do, it's up to the individual. It's just like instruction. After you've given everything that you have, if the person decides that they aren't going to change in order to get different results, there's nothing you can do about it (INT2P1/44-53).

Fostering improvement in other areas, classroom management, for example, was also considered a primary part of her responsibility. She wanted to ensure that teachers understood the concept of classroom management. She had devised a means of helping:

The same way you do with the curriculum. You show them themselves. And you try to give them corners to help them to become successful. But ultimately, in the end, here again they have to accept that if they want different results, they have to do something different. And you know, some will say, it's not in my personality to behave this way or that way, but that's irrelevant if you're falling through the

cracks in terms of management. And again, I think the concept that is misunderstood is that “you have to be me” (INT3P1/108-113).

To bring about this improvement supervisees were expected to acknowledge areas of need and to take action by work on these areas:

Again, even when you show people themselves, they have to be willing to say, —You know what, ok, I see what you’re saying. But sometimes pride will get in the way and cause us to dig in our heels, and even when you’re, you know, having management issues, which is another major concern, not just curriculum, but management issues. And then you’ve got adults that teach children that don’t even like kids. I’m telling the truth! (INT3P1/83-95).

She felt she had the qualities that make a good department chair.

I think I have that: my personality, that is, I like order. The fact that I relate well with people. And I think that to be a good chairperson you really have to just like people, period. And you have to have people skills to get them to do what needs to be done and to encourage and...You have to just like...with the kids there’s a lot of things that you need to be. (INT3P1/102-105).

### *Summary*

Helen prided herself in setting and maintaining high standards in her teaching. She conceptualized excellent teaching as providing instruction that would eventually enable the student to perform creditably at higher levels of language study. As a result, she taught all levels of language classes with that end in view, constantly evaluating the progress of her students to indicate the measure of success she had in teaching them the language. She valued a family -type atmosphere in her department and, as department head, sought to encourage her supervisees to

work in unison to deliver high -quality instruction to the students. She also sought to foster improvement in her supervisees through encouraging self-reflection as they contemplate the results of their teaching and management activities.

### Similarities and Dissimilarities

I begin this section with a chart showing a summary of the principal aspects of the cross-case analysis. I use the participant' initials along with symbols. A check (✓) indicates that the item describes the participant's experience or behavior while an x indicates that it does not. A question mark (?) indicates that a clearly defined situation was not ascertained based on the data. One dash is used where the item did not apply to the participant based on what was indicated in the preceding item. After the chart I discuss the items that appear on it. Table 3. *Similarities and Dissimilarities between Participants*

	S	M	C	H
<b>Early Years</b>				
I felt alone and alienated from other teachers.	✓	×	?	×
I was unsure of how to teach.	✓	×	×	✓
My use of the target language with students was appropriate.	×	✓	✓	×
I did not fully understand the school culture.	✓	×	✓	×
I needed assistance from my department chair.	✓	—	✓	✓
I received the assistance I needed from my chair.	✓	—	×	×
I had problems with classroom management.	×	×	✓	×
I was familiar with the books used.	×	✓	×	✓
I was confident about my knowledge of the content.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I had early experiences of success.	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Later years</b>				
I diversify my teaching strategies.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I cater for the affective needs of students.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I encourage travel to target countries.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I focus on the development of communicative competence.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I emphasize overt grammar teaching	×	✓	×	✓
My classes have a strong oral component.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I include target culture knowledge on a regular basis.	✓	?	✓	✓
<b>Head of department</b>				
I encourage a family atmosphere in my department.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I model the teaching behaviors I want supervisees to develop.	×	✓	?	×
I provide ongoing feedback to supervisees.	✓	✓	✓	✓
I encourage teamwork.	✓	✓	✓	✓

### *Formative Years*

Each participant encountered the formative years of teaching differently. Soraya and Consuela taught in a culture that differed from the one in which they had received their secondary schooling. Consequently, dissimilarities in classroom expectations, school culture, student approach and comportment, along with their personal needs in the environment impacted the neophyte years. Consuela, for example, coming from a system in which a formal course syllabus was not given to students, was unfamiliar with the concept and was therefore at a loss as to how to prepare one. Her anxiety was increased because of not being sure of how to manage behavior that contrasted so markedly with what she had known and had expected. Such differences negatively impacted the way she experienced the neophyte years.

Soraya saw her first three years teaching Spanish as being very challenging. Apart from feeling unsure of how to interpret novel attitudes such as the emphasis placed on extracurricular activities in the school system (see Soraya Main Challenges), she felt in need of an induction into the way things were done: —I felt like my first second and third years here I was on my own and doing things on my own. And that’s why when I became the department head I promised I was going to be different because I really struggled by myself for three years (INT1P2/158-160). She needed someone to initiate her into the norms of teaching Spanish to non-Spanish speakers but she found herself in a bind as her American department head assumed that she needed no assistance seeing that she was fully conversant with the language: —Every time that I went to her to ask a question, she assumed that I knew and was not really answering what I was asking. I suppose that she thought that I knew what I was doing (INT1P2/250-251). Her unanswered questions were not about the language, but about how to approach the various elements of

teaching: —I was asking how to teach this. What kind of tests? At the beginning, when I think about my first few years, my tests were hard!! (INT1P2/257-258). It is likely that her department head never listened well enough to understand the nature of the questions she had, or to sense the cry for help behind the words.

Helen and Maureen were quite familiar with the culture of the country and of the school system and so were comfortable working in that environment. In Maureen's case, she was completely at ease, confident and proficient, and was unable to identify any challenges in her formative years. Initially, Helen needed to adjust her teaching and language use to accommodate the students' level of understanding of the language. This was similar to Soraya's experience, and likely arose due to the teachers' unfamiliarity with modifying language use to accommodate the students' level of language proficiency at the start of their career. Both Helen and Soraya said that initially they taught like the students already knew Spanish, using the language as though they were speaking to individuals with higher language proficiency. This similarity seemed particularly interesting because these participants had learnt the language in different contexts.

Although Helen had gone through the language-learning experience in high school, her own mastery of the language, as well as the number of years in which she had been away from high school Spanish, contributed to her experiencing a difficulty similar to that of Soraya who had grown up speaking the language. When I brought it to Helen's attention that Soraya, a native speaker, had had that problem she responded: —So I don't know that that is actually a concept that only happens to native speakers, because I do it as a non-native. And I think that you just get enthusiastic, or so excited about what you're doing that you don't realize that you never taught the "one and one" first. She attributed the occurrence to the teacher's enthusiasm about teaching

the subject. Using the language in this way, however, would not be likely to occur in the case of a teacher whose proficiency was not at a relatively high level.

### *Teaching*

All teachers were very confident in their knowledge of content, which was principally the Spanish language. Maureen and Helen developed their confidence through having experienced success as students of Spanish in secondary and tertiary studies. Both had begun teaching Advanced Placement Spanish early in their career. Comments Helen made regarding her teaching Advanced Placement were indicative of her confidence: —That’s a totally different level of teaching, and so you have to have something beyond. My background prepared me. Knowing the language, I was ok with that (INT1P1/333-336). While initially she felt anxiety about teaching in a manner that would adequately prepare the students for the examination set by the College Board, she was never uncertain about her language skills. Maureen commented, —I feel that I know my content well enough to surpass anything that the students would want of me, or anyone else for that matter, as far as teaching them on a daily basis (INT2P4/356-357) For Consuela and Soraya, Spanish was their primary language as they had been reared in Spanish Speaking countries. With reference to the language Consuela said: —That was something that made me confident. I knew what I was teaching, and that was a good feeling‖ (INT1P3/98-99). Soraya echoed that thought.

All participants were very conscious of the affective needs of the students when they were in their classroom and so devised strategies that would cater to these while encouraging learning. Hence, games, using technology, group activities, along with a variety of other strategies characterized their teaching. They were aware of the changes that had impacted the learning situation over the years, and recognized that it was the course of wisdom to modify their teaching



in view of these. In addition, they all valued travel to target countries as an excellent way to enhance student appreciation of target language and culture: —Because that opens up the world for them. Right now, the world is just in their book and maybe not even in their mind, only in their book (INT1P4/461-462).

Before, at the beginning, I remember traveling with them to different countries was a beautiful experience. I told them “You wanna eat, you have to speak. You want advice, you have to ask. I’m not a walking translator.” They learned so much in one week. I felt like they learned more than they did the entire year (FG1S/460-463).

It was very important that they knew different cultures and were exposed to different cultures so that they can understand different people from different groups and different countries and appreciate what they have here. Plus, they also practised the Spanish language (INT2P3/199-202).

Yeah, but you know, again, that in anything it’s going to be the practical, so it’s not just book learning. You’ve got to travel; you’ve got to know the culture realistically. You can point out a thing in a book, but until you stand in that place, you don’t know what that’s like (INT1P1/365-367).

Ultimately, they all had the goal of having students develop a level of proficiency in the language to the extent that their productive and receptive language skills would allow them to use the language in meaningful communicative acts.

#### *Head of Department Role*

Information received from the participants concerning their role as department head was important in this study because it allowed the researcher to develop an understanding of what

they viewed as important in language teaching. There were a number of commonalities among the participants in the way they perceived their role as chair of the World Language department. They all extolled the virtue of having a family atmosphere in which all members offered support one to another, thereby fostering the growth of all: —So for me, first, respect, second, to work together in the department as a family‖ (INT2P2/116-117).

But now that we are not only friends but we feel like we're sisters, and that feeling of being sisters is just a great feeling. That's the reason we help each other so much because we don't feel that we are only friends. We are sisters (FG1Consuela/148-150).

Definitely family comes to mind. We still eat together every day. We're sharing everything. We kind of wait on one another. We bring foods. We talk about what's going on in our lives. We talk about what's going on in our classrooms. And so we've developed a rapport. It is an international community that we have, and we've developed a bond that we have. So the students, as they go from one language to another.....as a matter of fact, we often have them doing that: spending one or two years in one language then moving to another. They feel very comfortable doing that because we all are of a like kind as far as our love for knowledge, or love for learning, and our love for the international concept altogether. It works out very well for us (FG1Maureen/169-178).

I feel like when you have a department that operates as a family, where you're concerned about each other's well- being, not just in the classroom, but in general, and you spend time together, that it makes for a very happy medium all around.

There's nothing that you can't discuss with each other, and have each other's support if someone needs it (INT1P1/131-134).

They all attempted, as department head, to foster that family relationship and to maintain it through daily support and monitoring of supervisees. The ultimate goal of this was to provide encouragement for one another in the language teacher role, and to seek to engender the emotional support that was often needed to enhance teachers' willingness to remain in the profession. Within this framework they encouraged sharing ideas about teaching, sharing materials, and mentoring neophytes. That atmosphere was fostered because it allowed for mutual support that could lead to more effective teaching and likely better teacher retention. The manner in which they enacted the role, however, seemed to a great extent, to be influenced by their experiences in their formative years of teaching.

Maureen, who became department chair in her second year of teaching was exceedingly confident in her abilities and attempted to model the behaviors she wanted in her supervisees. While she acknowledged that each supervisee had much to offer to other members in terms of ideas for improved teaching, and she advocated this sharing, she took the lead in presenting ideas and new strategies through in communicative encounters with supervisees or through having them observe her as well as one another in action.

Well, one, we sit around and talk together and share ideas and then when there is an opportunity to have one another sit in on one another's classes (that doesn't happen often), but certainly when a new person comes on board. As a matter of fact, that was the requirement: that I continued to have a sub a couple of days just so that my new teacher could not only observe my classroom; my other

Colleagues' classroom; the other languages that are taught. It's just essential  
(INT3P4/ 134 -139).

She thought that the interest that she had in her supervisees' well-being, and the care she took to ensure their success, was not unnoticed. Hence, she felt that her supervisees would describe her thus: —Ok, they would say someone that genuinely cares about them; someone who is always there to help them in any way|| (INT3P4/557-558).

Soraya, who at the beginning felt alienated from her colleagues in the department and felt alone in the teaching task, tried to ensure that her supervisees did not experience that feeling. She endeavored to familiarize herself with the needs of supervisees, offering support in needed areas. A primary strategy that she used was pairing teachers so that each could benefit from the others' strength. She also had simulated teaching situations in her department meetings: —Also, having departmental meetings to discuss issues. Something that I like is that the members of the department are like students and one person is a teacher to teach me how do you teach this. (FG1Soraya/57-59).

Soraya: I feel like the department head should be more like a resource for the new  
teachers than the supervisor.

Myrnelle: Okay. A resource in what way?

Soraya: If they need material to teach something to feel comfortable to come and  
talk to me and say I'm trying to teach this. The students are not getting.  
How do I do it? You know like a resource that they can come and ask,  
“How could I prepare my tests?” “But my students are not doing well on  
this area, how should I do this? (FG1S/156-161).

Consuela stressed having the department recognize the need to be helpful to one another. She too had simulations at department meetings and encouraged the sharing of materials;

And we say we're going to teach this way from here to here, and we're going to share these activities. —"What are you going to use for that?" — "Oh, I'm going to use this". So I give her a copy and they make copies. And then I ask, — "What are you going to use for this group of vocabulary words?" So they give me copies of theirs. And we all share ideas and activities that we create. We make copies and we share, so when we're teaching, they're using my activities and I'm using their activities (INT2P3/102-107).

There was a great degree of interdependence that she promoted so that each person could feel equally free to ask for ideas, and to share his/hers.

Helen, having received the support of department members in her formative years in teaching, promoted improvement within the family atmosphere. She took the initiative to pinpoint areas in which individuals might improve, and trusted the person to take action in this regard. In this way she hoped to foster improvement in her department: —And to me it was really rewarding to help you know to teach children. My thing's still ... always gonna go back to the child; to making sure that every kid gets what they need —(INT3P1/108-110).

#### Research Question Considered

Each person, as he/she carries out a job function within a culturally defined role, develops a concept of the meanings and expectations of the role he/she performs. This conceptualization becomes an integral part of the individual's role identity. —Teacher<sup>l</sup>, for example, is a culturally defined role, and is a social identity linking one to a particular group of persons (Burke, 2004). The role identity is associated with a person's enactment of his/her perception of what the role

requires of him/her (Fuller et al., 2009) and is negotiated in social interaction (Cohen, 2008). The above gives the sense in which I consider the role identity of the participants as I attempt to answer the research question: How does each participant conceptualize her role identity as Spanish teacher in a predominantly English speaking setting?

A synthesis across cases showed each teacher conceptualizing herself in the language teacher role as one in which she managed the language-learning situation through use of variety in teaching. They aimed at accommodating all learning styles and multiple intelligences as they facilitated the development of the four skills: reading writing, listening and speaking, and prepared students for functional language use in practical contexts. All participants had the overarching role identity of facilitator of learning of the Spanish language and culture through use of engaging learning activities. They all saw being flexible in accommodating changes that impact the learning environment as an important facet of their role. A snapshot of each teacher in her language teacher role is as follows:

*Soraya*

Soraya conceptualized her role as informant on culture and facilitator of the development of speaking skills. While she attended to all the skills outlined in the curriculum guide, she saw exposing students to the Hispanic culture as a major role in her teaching, and consequently designed teaching episodes in accord with this. As a primary facilitator of the development of speaking skills, she created an atmosphere in which students would feel comfortable in attempting oral communicative acts on topics of interest to them.

Not just to have the students sitting there looking at me writing sentences and all that, but when I see them, like, um, saying something in Spanish I feel like I accomplished. I don't have to ask them what did you learn today because they

already, you know, in the way that they talk back to me, it's understood that they grasp the concepts (INT2P2/39-42).

*Maureen*

Maureen saw her role as one in which she facilitated the development of skills that would enable students to perform creditably at higher levels of learning, particularly at the collegiate level. She emphasized grammar at all levels while working on the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening as mandated in the curriculum guide. She wanted her students to have an advantage when they went on to higher levels of learning.

*Consuela*

Consuela envisioned her role as one in which she helped students to develop confidence in their ability to successfully learn Spanish so they could use it effectively in other settings. In line with this she catered to the affective through use of games as a principal teaching tool to foster engagement as she tried to facilitate the development of the four skills.

And I knew that the children could do it. I knew they could strive to do the best they knew how. By having a positive attitude and thinking that if I do my part and they do their part, then we both can do it together. And that kept me safe (INT1P3/61-74).

*Helen*

Helen articulated her role as facilitating excellence in all four skills related to language learning. She overtly taught grammar and emphasized correctness in writing, with the aim of having students develop the ability to perform creditably in all skills of the language at higher levels.

For example, spelling, orthography. If you are going to write a word that has an accent and you do not write the accent, it's wrong. There is no partial credit.

There is no —ok, well we will give you something because you spelled it rightl. No, in AP that word is wrong, so therefore there is no need for us to pretend like you're kind of right. No, it's wrong. So, from the bottom I teach for what the expectation is at the top (INT1P1/284-289).

All four teachers reported success in the short term in having students speak productively in the target language, and in having them perform creditably on internal evaluations, and in state competitions. Success in the long term was also reported. These included positive reports about students' performance in tertiary institutions, and students using the language in their career:

Soraya

I feel like I have been very successful. I have like four Spanish teacher now that they were my students and I have actually another student... another person working with the Department of Education in Washington, and I have several students who are translators and every time that I see one of my former students they try to talk to me in Spanish. They still remember a lot of things so when I feel like they have been using the Spanish that they learn in the class in the classroom, I can say that is pretty successful because success is when you, when the other ones can use what you taught in the class to them and that's exactly what happened when I see my students. When they talk to me and I see that they're using their Spanish I can say that I'm successful because they're able to use it and that's my goal that they can use, that they can use the Spanish that they have been learning in the classroom (INT3P2/157-166).



## Maureen

Well, I would say that I have been somewhat successful. I would say that. But as I compare myself to my peers, I think I've been greatly successful. And the rationale for that is not just in my mind but actually in the product. I think that I have three or four of my former students who are currently Spanish teachers. I have two or three of my former student teachers who are currently serving in a leadership role that is synonymous to mine; they are department chairs. So I think there's a significant number out there whom I have impacted. And as I look at my peers, I don't know any of them who have the same kinds of numbers (INT3P4/128-134).

## Consuela

My students who graduated came back. They came back from college showing me their degree. Some are translators, some are doctors, engineers, computers, computer programmers, some are teachers who teach Spanish. One was a teacher for DeKalb County. DeKalb County she was uh (name of person). Then I have a student who is working at the capitol as a bilingual secretary, executive secretary at the capitol. I have received letters also from colleges asking me to send them more students like certain students. And those are the biggest impact that you know you have. It makes me feel like I have done something; that I have contributed to the world in my own way by teaching Spanish to students (INT3P3/22-29).

Helen

Oh, it's awesome. When you have kids through the years who have taken on the language and used it to their advantage because of something you said or did, it's amazing. And when you've got kids that write back to you and say, or even before they leave, "Ok, I'm going to take Spanish as my minor." Or a child that's out as an engineer ends up as a Spanish teacher even though he has an engineering degree. I mean, just kids all over the world taking something, a seed that was just planted, and watered it to something fruitful. It's amazing! It's the best feeling in the world. It makes you feel good about what you do (INT2P1/220-226).

### *Summary*

Each participant regarded facilitating the development of target language skills as a major component of her role as language teacher although each displayed a degree of uniqueness in her approach to fulfilling this facet of the role. Strong emphasis on grammatical correctness through overt grammar teaching; natural exposure through authentic, casual chats, games to improve familiarity with the target language were all features seen in the participants' teaching. The principal goal the participants highlighted was that of having their students develop strong oral proficiency.

### *Native and Nonnative Speaker Teachers*

As highlighted in chapter three, the selection of participants who had served as department chair for many years was highly purposeful. Primarily, the experience of supervising teachers over an extensive period had afforded the participants a long-range and varied view of teachers performing in the language role. They had had a direct view of the teaching practices of

many different supervisees teaching a variety of languages. Some of these were native speakers of the language they taught while others were nonnative speakers. The participants had had a

direct view of their teaching practices as they carried out formal and informal evaluations of their supervisees.

The school system in which the participants worked mandates formal evaluation of each supervisee annually. Leading up to that evaluation it is customary for the chair to do informal visits to the teachers' classroom. These visits not only allow the supervisee to become accustomed to having an observer in the room but also facilitate the supervisor's becoming familiar with the supervisee's teaching and interaction style, areas of proficiency, and general classroom persona. This, along with interaction with supervisees in other capacities within the professional setting, allowed the participants to be credible informants on various aspects related to language teachers and language teaching.

In this section I present data related to the above in order to focus on how the data speaks to the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct, based on their experiences with supervisees. The issues are directly addressed in tandem with the concept of the native and nonnative speaker in teaching. In this vein, I present the participants' impression in relation to the primary focus of the selection process, teachers' classroom language use; the impact of culture; the value of adequate support; and the role of experience. The data here also relate clearly to the question "How has the experience of supervising teachers of differing linguistic backgrounds in the language they teach (native/ nonnative speaker teachers) informed the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct in the USA?"<sup>1</sup>

#### *Primary Focus of the Selection Process*

The linguistic element, along with knowledge of cultural norms, forms the content in second language teaching. In general, the majority of individuals who apply for a teaching position are either native or nonnative speakers of the language. The relevance of the

native/nonnative speakership of the individual in the teacher selection process was a point that arose in interviews. There was indication that the knowledge of content, and competence in pedagogy were considered as being of equal importance. In the following excerpts the participants were telling what would make them choose an applicant for a position:

Helen: It has no bearing on whether the person is native or not native. The requirements are that you are going to close the door and manage the class, first. Secondly, that you are going to teach them, authentic language. And hopefully they'll have a good time. But there are only two requirements that I have: firstly, again, that you are able to manage in this environment; that you are able to manage and that you do have the capability to actually teach because, see, to know a thing is not the same thing as teaching a thing. That's not the same. So it wouldn't matter to me if you were a native. You could be a native speaker but if you don't know how to teach, then that doesn't appeal to me. It doesn't appeal to me if you are a native speaker and you don't know how to manage. And the same goes for non-native. (INT 3P1/313-321).

Helen's reference to teaching authentic language was noteworthy because it revealed an important element of her view of language teaching. *Authentic language* is considered language that follows the norms and conventions of the speech of the target language (Stiefvater, 2003), and therefore allows for purposeful communication. After years of observing teachers, Helen did not link the capacity to teach authentic language with the speakership of the teacher. She seemed to manifest an informed attitude toward the teachers' speakership:

I don't think it matters at all. If they know the language, that's really important because just as an English teacher is teaching formal language, that's really what

you want. You want to be sure that they do know that; but at the same time that they have knowledge of the idioms and other things that make up the language, that makes it cultural, so you have to be aware of both. But I don't think that it matters how they learned it. I think an excellent teacher has the sense to know that you have to diversify, going back to the diversification of presentation, so that you're reaching every kid. It's not just sit and copy out of a book or write words. It's so much more than that (INT 3P1/271-277).

The other participants also showed that the capability or the potential to teach effectively featured highly in their selection process:

Consuela: Her desire to teach. Her desire to learn. Her desire to adapt herself to the different learning styles of the students (INT3P3/227-228).

Maureen : But what makes it an easy decision is who can relate and deliver to the students what needs to be delivered to the students, and that's the whole package (INT3P4/382-384).

Soraya: If one person is a native speaker and the other one is not, I would not choose immediately the native speaker just because the native speaker knows Spanish. No, no, no. That's why I said when I interview them, I say, \_ "What are your ideas? How would you teach this? Tell me some experiences you've had. What is the best activity that you do with the Spanish? If you had to teach the students the concept of travel, how would you introduce it without using a lot of English words?" (INT2P2/202-205)

The participants did not equate language proficiency with competence in teaching the language. Neither did they seem to be placing one above the other in importance. Rather, they indicated that while the former was essential, it was important that the teacher knew how to facilitate language learning. Knowledge of how a language is learnt was therefore considered essential: —So it really has to be the individual who knows both: what is necessary to engage the students, as well as the content that needs to be delivered to the students‖ (INT3P4/290-292).

Adequate proficiency in the target language combined with competence in foreign language pedagogy was extolled as the quintessence of a capable language teacher.

### *Language Use*

A more communicative approach to language teaching, with the focus on conveying meaning through the language (Brown, 2001; McNeill, 2005) has evoked a consciousness regarding the teacher's target language use in the classroom. Insufficient use of the target language in the instructional setting was a subject that the participants all addressed.

Helen: As a chair sometimes.... what I observe is that sometimes they (native speakers) use more English in the classroom than the American teacher; and so the kids are missing that benefit of having the authentic language right there in front of them (INT3P1 56-57).

Helen's comment implied that she saw the native speaker as a ready source of authentic language that could be utilized for the benefit of the students. She was, however, concerned that this source was not fully tapped into because the teachers did not use the target language extensively in the classroom. Maureen's observation of beginning native speakers offered a possible explanation for this occurrence. She observed a specific deficiency in the neophyte teacher who was a native speaker:

Maureen: .....an inability to effectively communicate the language to the students, to the point where the students always wanted a translation. If the teacher is very comfortable with speaking the language, as one would be, being a native speaker, then they're ready to just go; but the students would discourage them, so they would end up doing more translating than actually teaching the language. That's what I've heard from all of my peers too (INT2P4/305-314).

Here Maureen noted that insufficient use of the target language could be attributed neither to low proficiency nor to a lack of self-confidence in using the language. Instead, teachers might have responded to negative reactions of students to their use of the target language as the language of instruction and of classroom communication, and given in to the use of the primary language of the students. Implied in her comment is that foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, 2001, Krashen, 1987,1988) on the part of the student might cause a teacher to develop a tendency toward using the primary language of the students in classroom in an attempt at lowering the anxiety level. It is noteworthy that Maureen stated that her peers had made similar observations.

Insufficient use of the target language as observed by the two individuals above brings to mind Soraya's account of her personal journey in language use in teaching. Initially, lack of experience caused her, like Helen, to be unable to gauge her language use in the classroom to fit the level suited to the language proficiency of the students (see Similarities and Dissimilarities) so that she spoke using language that was beyond their level of comprehension. As she became aware of the difficulty her language use created for her students, she reasoned that it would be more expedient for her to use more English when teaching. She spoke of the internal struggle that she felt as she wavered between the need to expose students to the language through its use



in the classroom, and her wanting to teach a concept in the shorter time span that using English allowed.

Similar to that of Helen and Maureen, Soraya's observation of the language use of her supervisees reflected a deficiency.

Soraya: Native speakers use English more than nonnative speakers. I have observed that. And nonnative speakers try to use the Spanish language as much as they can. The native speakers, we try to explain everything in English. So we have to explain more in the target language. (INT3P2/146-149).

Possibly influenced by her personal thought processes when she was in the initial stage, as well as based on her observation of teachers, Soraya advanced a likely reason for the use of English:

Soraya: So sometimes they, in order to understand, .....for the students to understand..... they start to explain in English; and this is something that we don't want either. We want them to teach and explain in Spanish but at the level of the class, not at a very high level. (NT3P2/151-153).

The comment above implied that teachers resorted to the use of the language of the majority in order to facilitate comprehension of the content. Although she understood the thought process behind the use of English, its use was not being sanctioned as the desirable means of addressing the difficulties students might experience when the target language is used as the language of instruction. It is worth noting that a teachers' use of the language of the majority (English in this case) as the means of instruction would also be dependent on her proficiency in that language, and her confidence in using it in a public setting, despite a likely difference in accent. If a teacher is not proficient in the majority language the problem of using it too much in the classroom would be less likely to exist.

Consuela also observed that there was inadequate target language use on the part of teachers. Her observation, however, had a different slant from that of the other participants. In her experience, she observed that native speakers tended to utilize the target language more in the classroom than their nonnative speaking counterparts.

I know native speakers are always using the language. They're always using the language because it comes natural for them. And I noticed non-native speakers, they're always using English! And they think that by using English, they are going to do them a favor, but you end up not doing them a favor, because they become handicapped in the language (INT3P3/522-525).

The school in which Consuela served as department head had, over the years, offered a greater variety of languages than that of other schools because at one point her school was the center for foreign language teaching known as the Foreign Language Magnet Program. Chinese, Japanese and Russian were three of the languages that were taught there. These were not languages that were common to the curriculum of other schools, and were taught by native speakers of the language (RJ). Students who showed strong aptitude for and high interest in language learning could be enrolled in the magnet program. This program had been terminated for a number of years before the study began, although some of the less commonly taught languages continued to be taught there. As I contemplated how Consuela's experience differed from that of the other participants, I wondered to what extent the difference in the interest and attitude toward learning the language on the part of the students might have impacted the teachers' choice of classroom language. I also felt that it might have been helpful to know the teachers' level of proficiency in English, which was the primary language of the students.

### *Perception of Strength*

There were some features that the participants associated with one group but not necessarily with the other:

Helen: Now, this is just my experience, from observing. I think a native isn't...(now this is just my observation, umm, and my experience)...is not as sure of how to teach it to the child so they understand both sides. Whereas a non-native, I hope anyway, can teach both sides of the language so that the child.... because a lot of times it's very difficult for kids to understand what they can't understand in their first language. So sometimes it is necessary to teach both sides and for this population, in this school, I find that it helps. I won't say it makes it easier, but it helps. (INT3P1/282-283).

Moving from the general observation, Helen personalized the advantage that she perceived herself as having, and shared how she used the advantage to ease students into understanding a language concept:

Helen: The advantage of being a non-native is that I know both sides very well, so I can teach both sides. And when it's clear that my kids are not getting it, then I can go back and give them that English example and help them to move closer to where I want them to be; whereas a native speaker may not know the English component side of that so they can't. And I have observed that, where you don't know how to make it plain for them, and then the kids will start to shut down and they won't want to learn from you. So, I think that the advantage of the non-native, it works (INT3P1/438-443).

The perception of the teacher who is a nonnative speaker being more adept at dealing with grammatical aspects was echoed in Maureen's comment during one focus group discussion:

Maureen: I think the reciprocal of that is also, *Soraya*, when you're trying to explain a grammar concept, you may not, as the native speaker, have as good of a grasp on it to give to an English speaker. So therefore, English speakers sometimes have a better grasp on how English has been learned for these students, therefore to transition into how to learn Spanish with the grammar as well, or whatever the target language happens to be (FG1M/1 97-201).

These individuals felt that there was a distinct display of greater competence on the part of the nonnative in dealing with the teaching of grammar. Their observation of others, as well as the perception of their own strength seemed to have informed this view. The participants who expressed this view were nonnative speakers.

A specific feature that was associated with those who were native speakers was the possession of an extensive vocabulary, and therefore the capability of exposing students to a variety of linguistic concepts.

Soraya: Sometimes it's harder when it's a native speaker, but also, it's good when you have native speakers, because the native speakers, first, can teach them other concepts and words that are not just the ones from the book. (INT2P2/356)

This statement implied that native speakers were less tied to the book than their nonnative speaker colleagues because of having a greater repertoire from which to select expressions due to more extensive exposure to the language. They could therefore teach a greater variety of ways to express an idea. Greater facility with the language was tacitly recognized in Helen's comment:

Helen: But I do believe that, probably in terms of native speakers, it may affect the way they do things, because of course, you're going to know your native

tongue better than you know anything else. It doesn't mean that you don't know, but you (native speakers) know it just better (INT2P1/201-203).

### *Role of Experience*

Experience in teaching the language was regarded as a major component in the make-up of an excellent language teacher. The consensus was that as individuals gained experience through continuing in the profession, regardless of their native/nonnative speaker status, their performance as language teachers became on par. The participants were asked to compare an experienced teacher who was a nonnative speaker of the language s/he taught with one who was a native speaker.

Maureen: Well I see some good things from both. The word "experienced" has a great deal to do with it. And, if you've experienced students, then you know the needs of students. One who has learnt the language should not have advantage over one who has had the language in their own upbringing experience because that has been compensated for by their courses that one has taken in order to learn the language. So, I think that they both should be successful and not have difficulty because again, the keyword is "experienced" Maureen (INT3P4/297-303).

Helen: I think they both become more comfortable. I think they end up in the same place. Here again, through experience, or by experience, I've observed that everybody, it doesn't even matter native or non-native, everybody goes through those first three years where you're just like, "Oh my goodness, I'm overwhelmed. I didn't know this was like this. What do you do with all of this?" But when you get to that place, and it

may be different for everybody, but when you get to that place of comfort, you can tell. You calm down. You just come to a place where you're comfortable with just teaching the children And you can see it, because when a teacher stands up in front of a class, or just giving information around and about the room, you can tell when they're in there, in a safe place within themselves, and the confidence is there to actually teach the lesson (INT3P1/364-373).

Consuela: I do know a lot of non-native teachers who are very successful. The teacher who was the teacher of the year for the state of Georgia, I forgot her name, but it was Clarissa something. She's a non-native, but she has been very successful (INT3P3/294 -296).

Consuela: But the non-natives are very successful, and there are also natives who are very successful. I think it's, uh...they both are doing well, but it's up to the person. I don't like to stereotype people that because they are natives, or because they are non-natives, they are very successful. I feel like it doesn't matter if you are a native or a non-native. I think it's up to the person. It's up to your attitude. If you are willing to succeed, you are going to succeed. You just have to work hard (INT3P3/307-312).

As the participants reflected on the stories of language teachers at neophyte and veteran points in their career, they substantiated the thought that there was equivalence in the place teachers reached regardless of speakership, though their starting points might have been characterized by differing uncertainties.

Soraya: The native speaker - first the non-experienced is like, “How would I teach this? The students they don’t understand Spanish or French. They don’t understand what I’m saying. I said a word and they just look at me and they don’t know what I’m saying.” And, an experienced native speakers they start like, “This class I’m gonna teach in this way and the other class I’m gonna teach in this way. I know exactly what the questions that the students are gonna ask, and I’m gonna be answering those questions previous to what they ask me. So I’m gonna be answering the questions. I’m gonna use this thing, these kinds of questions to make the students think about what I’m saying” (INT3P2/22-26).

Non-native speakers normally with no experience, they complain like “These kids, they don’t have any base the in English. They don’t understand the grammar in English. They don’t understand what a subject pronoun is. They don’t understand what an adjective is. They don’t understand what a direct or indirect object is in English. How in the world they gonna learn that in Spanish? How in the world I’m gonna explain something that they don’t even have an idea, because the answer of the student is like, “We don’t have that in English. We don’t have that in English.”” And a non-native speaker with experience is like native speaker: They already know what the students gonna ask. They know what kind of activities they can use. They have several activities to teach certain material so they know that if one activity doesn’t work I’m gonna use this.-Soraya(INT3P2/ 220-242 ).

Helen: The (inexperienced) non-native speaker- It's not the language, it's the environment. They're overwhelmed by the environment, because I think that their perception is, I'm just going to go in, and I'm going to teach the language. And not knowing that, no, the children are going to hang from the ceiling first, and you've gotta get a handle on all of that. You've gotta turn in all this paperwork, so the teaching part is the easiest thing. They may be overwhelmed by their building requirements. You've gotta have lesson plans for every lesson and this that and the other. And then the lesson plan that they were taught to use and the lesson plan that the building uses is not the same thing. So I don't think it's the actual language component, I think it's the administrative stuff and the environment that gets them (INTP13/299-306).

Helen: Now the native speaker that's a first year teacher, not only are they inundated with the administrative stuff, you've got these cultural issues. And then you really have it when people don't understand and they're not friendly enough, or they're not in that place that you're used to. And It's very lonely for that person to be in an environment where you don't know anybody. Not to mention you don't understand what's a lesson plan; what's this; what's that; what do you mean this or that? (INT3P1/310-315).

One might be led to understand from the above that there are differing factors at play in the language teachers' world at the start of their career that can impact both how capable the teacher feels s/he is in bringing about student success. However, after having been exposed to



the building blocks of efficacy beliefs through provision made in the environment, they tend to arrive at the same point of confidence in their capabilities:

Maureen: Well, as experienced teachers, they have learned from their mistakes and now they have compensated for their areas of weakness. And now they are able to deliver the same performances, which is essentially what I said. Experience makes the difference (INT 3P4/327-329).

Based on the analysis above, when teacher efficacy is considered, the native/ nonnative speaker construct is not viable. Indications are that teachers from the two categories enter the profession with a variety of skills and areas of competence. Teachers in both categories have need of exposure to professional development that speaks to their specific areas of deficiency. The potential for personal improvement through the abovementioned exposure is a principal factor in fostering the ability to perform creditably in the language teacher role and ultimately, there exists a great similarity in the level of competence with which the teachers perform in the role.

### *The Impact of Culture*

Culture in this study is seen as the beliefs, custom, practices and social behavior of a group of people, and of attitudes that characterize a group. It involves ways of doing things that have become norms in a particular setting. Thus, there might exist a school or department culture because the stakeholders have a given set of expectations and ways of doing. An insight into how differences in culture impact the teaching situation was gained from what Consuela shared about four teachers. It was clear that the World Language Department in the school at which Consuela worked had a particular style of language teaching that they had found more effective,

and hence preferred to use with that population of students. She spoke to the difficulties that teachers from others cultural orientations experienced:

We had a French teacher from France, and she was teaching like college. She was too serious and she was not able to adapt herself to the students. It was hard for her to teach (*Name*) High School students. I don't know about any other school, but she was not successful here at (*Name*) because she was too strict. She wanted to teach as if she was in college, and the students at (*Name*) High School, they like different activities that keep them awake. They like movement. They like to do sharing, participation, games, learning by doing TPR (Total Physical Response) activities or communicating or singing. They also like dancing. They're used to a different style because we got them used to a different style. They did not like to work with that teacher and she was not able to cope with the students. So, at the end of her year, she was removed from (*Name*) (FG2C/ 123-130).

Soraya: Was it the language?

Consuela: No, it was not the language, it was the culture. She was teaching the way French students were taught in France. But this was fifteen years ago (FG2C/134-135).

In Consuela's opinion, there was a way students were taught in a class in France, dictated by the French culture. Cultural impact on learning style is a researched phenomenon (e.g. Guierrez and Ragoff, 2003). The approach of the teacher from France was somewhat inconsistent with the one to which the student had been exposed and therefore were expecting. Hence the resultant lack of success.

Then, we had a teacher from Haiti who was teaching French, and she was really good. She had different activities, and she stayed with us \_til she retired. She was very successful, but she was from Haiti. She was not from France (FG2C/136-138).

The approach this teacher took bore a degree of similarity to that of the cultural teaching style of the department, an occurrence that likely contributed to her successful tenure there.

And then we had a teacher from another country, from Africa, I forget the name of his country, but he was not successful. He wanted to teach the way we teach in college: Very strict, very serious. He was very organized but too serious about his teaching and in World Languages, you've got to have some movement. The students are used to sing, dance, play, act, make conversations, dialogues, run, compete, and he wasn't...that was not his personality. So, he did not last but one year (FG2C/ 138-145).

This teacher also taught his native tongue, so proficiency in the language was not a problem. His teaching style seemed not to have been consistent with that of the expectations of the foreign language department of the school.

And then we had Mrs. X, who also had a hard time teaching because she wanted to teach the college way. But with our support, she learned different activities and she's trying to handle the students even though she's struggling, because she still has the European culture, where you wanted to work and teach the college way. And on the other side, we tell her, "This is not college. These are students who are learning foreign languages for the first time." French I, French II, French III, is like teaching kindergarten, first year, and second year. You cannot keep them quiet when you teach them the ABCs or the vocabulary. You need to maybe

do some drawing and try to learn different intelligences because the students have multiple intelligences. They all have different ways to learn, different styles. And if you only use college ways, you lose some. They aren't going to be able to learn. They're going to close their eyes and their minds to learning. But she's working with us (FG2C/151-161).

What Consuela termed — “the college way” was an approach that utilized learning experiences that involved less physical movement. The individuals mentioned above who experienced difficulties seemed to have been accustomed to a classroom culture that differed significantly from the one that was preferred in the language department in that school. The difficulties they experienced led to their leaving the position within a short time span. In the case of Mrs. X who was in her third year at the school, Consuela recognized the struggle she had had in trying to adapt to the culture of the department. However, she acknowledged that —she's working with us', suggesting that Mrs. X was allowing herself to become more adept at catering to the learning/teaching style of the department and becoming conversant with the skills needed to manage the learning environment in that particular setting.

The teachers referred to above were from outside of the USA, and while all World Language Departments did not have a culture that was identical to that of Consuela's, there seemed to have been an awareness of difficulties experienced by teachers from other cultures: —And I haven't said this, but I know that when I first came into the county, it was perceived then that native speakers weren't good at managing a classroom (INT2P4/ 326-328). However, Consuela also spoke of American teachers from an ethnic background that differed from the vast majority of the students at her school who also were not comfortable with teaching at that school and so transferred to schools in areas that were more reflective of another ethnicity. It is likely that the

learning/ teaching culture and style to which they were accustomed also differed from the one for which Consuela's department catered. Thus, whereas the cultural difference might be more obvious with native speakers, it might not be unique to them.

An understanding of how culture might impact a teacher's ability to function in a given school setting can be had through analysis of a comment Helen made in reference to the school in which she worked:

Helen: While a teacher could very well know language and know how to teach it etcetera, this is a hard environment to work in. So if you're not used to this kind of toughness, with the kids and the administration etcetera; if you're not used to that, it can be quite difficult to try and make that adjustment and try and teach at the same time. So that's one area, just in the adjustment to the environment...that's a...that will really cause the teaching part to suffer  
(INT3P1/303-306)

Here Helen attributes some of the difficulties teachers experience to the mismatch between the teacher and the demands that the particular school setting places on him/her. This mismatch may be more disconcerting in some cases than in others, depending on the degree to which the disparity exists. The disparity might be greater if the teacher is from a different cultural setting that embraces markedly different teaching and learning conventions from those which the given school embraces. Being aware of the foregoing has implications for the kind of support those in leadership positions offer to teachers new to their department, particularly when their cultural background is considered.

### *Assisting Teacher Growth*

The participants conveyed the concept that regardless of the initial problems, with proper support the teachers can be successful in their endeavor. Assistance was needed in various avenues.

So, there's order. Everybody's speaking French. They went. They made their presentations. They're just really, really enthusiastic... Just everything in that classroom is authentic. It's an authentic French classroom. That's the transition I've seen in this particular teacher. And...even, you know how you look at somebody's face and you can tell kinda what they're feeling, if they're really enjoying it or if they're just overwhelmed or whatever their emotion is that's showing on their face? Well, she's moved from this *overwhelmedness*, if you will, to this place of peace. And something I said earlier about...um...being secure, not being insecure to speak the language; and that's not her issue, but just being ok with where you are. So you can see that coming out. And she's blossomed and therefore her children blossomed. (INT3P1/313-321).

Consuela: In my experience, the first-year teachers, at the beginning, they are struggling with discipline. They have BIG discipline problems. And they get a little bit disappointed, but as they receive our support...because we support them. We watch the children and tell them, "If you have a problem with someone, send them to my classroom, just send them some work to go with them." And we watch those kids, one or two, so she's able to teach. Then as she gets used to the students, and she learns how to manage the classroom, then she's happy (INT3P3/405-409).

#### *Varied Support*

Helen: And then in this department, as chair, the syllabi I make for everybody, the tests I make for everybody. Whatever, I do for everyone. I do my own,

and I do for everybody so you don't have to sweat that. Let's not sweat the small stuff. And it's important, to me, for it all to be the same across the board. Now if there's something that you don't like that we need to tweak, that's fine as well. But I try to do as much administrative work as possible for everybody so that you just teach the children. Please just teach the children. That's it for me INT3P1//339-344).

Helen's comment above called to mind Consuela's sharing regarding the assistance she needed from her chair in the early years. She was confounded about making a syllabus and writing emergency plans. There are features of the school environment that are routine in one society but may be perplexing for a teacher from another geographical, ethical or cultural background. When a supervisor understands the implications of the above, she is empowered to provide appropriate supervision of language teachers, thereby enabling development of teacher efficacy.

### *The Language Teacher*

Deep consideration of the data reveals that the participants felt that the effective language teacher is a function of a combination of characteristics and qualities rather than of the native/nonnative speakership of the person. Among these are a willingness to learn; a commitment to educating the student through use of creative learning/teaching experiences in order to promote student engagement, and an open-mindedness that allows one to be a lifelong learner of both the target language and all that affects its teaching:

Consuela: That they are committed. They are very committed people. For them,

it's very important that the students learn Consuela (INT2P1/121-122).

Maureen: That teacher is going to be one that is open- minded and they are going to be first and foremost honest with themselves. They are not going to

lie to themselves and say that “yes, my students all love it when I’m lecturing.” They’re going to be honest and say, “In today’s society students are so very visually attuned that if I’m not doing something that catches their eyes and their ears, they’re not going to be engaged. So, I would say that, actually to be honest with you, two years ago I had a teacher like that. She was just out of college and she accepted a position here. She was from the country of Columbia, and I really thought that she was going to be my replacement. She was just wonderful. But I have not had that since then, and I had never, honestly, had it to that extent before. I had some facets of it, but never one who was just eager, saying, “Oh yes, my students are very engaged in this, so let me do this.” She would even take pictures of them and include them in her Power Points that she would use, so they would come in eagerly to watch the PowerPoint and see if they were going to be featured for the day. She was very good. That’s what I would like the others to do.

Myrnelle: What do you think caused her to be like that?

Maureen: I guess because she saw how much it excited the students to be a part of her class that she was looking for ways to pull them in (INT3P4/401-412).

Regardless of whether importance is placed on native/ nonnative speakership, the reality of having teachers who learnt the language in one of two principal ways does evoke thought about how to maximize the strengths these different individuals might bring to a department. Soraya, perceiving that her personal strength was facility with the language said she wanted to be



seen as a resource that was available to assist colleagues in expressing one idea in multiple ways.

Maureen had a positive reaction to that idea:

Maureen: I think that's a great idea. As a matter of fact, I would say that non-native speakers sometimes are a little bit intimidated by native speakers, so if that shield could be brought down, then the sharing could begin because both of them have something that one another can use. Then I think that will enhance the department overall (INT3P4/471-47474).

Helen thought Soraya's concept had some merit but had a different reaction toward it.

Helen: I think it goes back to the question you asked me earlier about...the older language teachers: We know everything. Why would I need to seek you out as a resource when I'm my own resource? I'm not a native speaker, but if I put in the effort to travel the world and to make that as close as possible to native, then why do I need to ask you everything? Why do you know everything? Maybe I know something you don't know.

Have you traveled the world, or are you just native to your little part? You see what I mean? So, I don't discount it but I don't see you as the end-all

(INT3P1/444-449)

Helen's reaction at the outset might appear somewhat negative. However, on closer analysis it is demonstrating that, with commitment to being a lifelong learner of the target language, a nonnative speaker can be similarly confident about her language abilities as a native speaker. It also implies that she rejects the notion of the native speaker as the ultimate source of the language. Her questioning the familiarity of the native speaker with the language in other parts of the world in which the target language is spoken underscores her understanding of

language as a dynamic entity that allows flexibility in its usage. Additionally, rather than discounting the role of the strength a native speaker might have, she was proposing balance in the way it was viewed.

### *Summary*

In this section an analysis of the data has shown that the participants place a very high value on the target language being used in the classroom. However, extensive contact with supervisees has led them to conclude that high language proficiency is not necessarily an indicator of a high level of target language use in the classroom. Nor is it an indicator of the effectiveness of one's teaching. Consequently, when selecting teachers, the participants were not guided by how the individual learnt the language. Rather, an individual's commitment to continued improvement in areas that impact success in teaching were considered paramount.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

This study was undertaken with the purpose of discovering how four highly experienced Spanish teachers conceptualized their role as teacher of Spanish in a predominantly English speaking setting, and how having supervised language teachers in the categories of native and nonnative speakers of the language they taught had informed their understanding of the language teacher construct in the USA. Based on the perspectives of the participants, the study also considered the viability of the native/ nonnative teacher construct in light of teacher efficacy. There were a number of considerations that led me to do an investigation that sought to consider the abovementioned areas. Firstly, it is a commonly held notion that in foreign language education the native/ nonnative speaker construct encompasses an ideology that favors the native speaker (Cook, 1999; Kramsch, 1999; Mahboob, 2010; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford, 2004; Medgyes, 1996). Secondly, the aforementioned stance has been questioned from various standpoints and modified positions have been suggested (Edstrom, 2005; Finger, 2003; Kerr, 2003, Kramsch, 2003; Moussu, 2002; McNeill, 2005; Mullock, 2010; LLurda, 2005, Medgyes, 1996; 2000; Tatar & Yildiz, 2010). Thirdly, gaining an understanding of the first and second points above as they relate to the specific context within the USA would shed light on how they relate to local language teaching.

Informants for this study were four Spanish teachers who had been teaching Spanish for more than fifteen years and had served as department head for at least ten years. The nonnative speakers were Americans who shared the same language and ethnicity as the majority of their students. The native speakers were from Spanish-speaking countries but had been living in the USA for more than twenty years and so were very proficient in the English language. In their

years as department chair, they had supervised teachers who were in the main categories of native and nonnative speakers of the language they taught. Because they had been in the supervisory role for at least ten years, they could serve as credible informants regarding the features their supervisees displayed in the professional realm. Through individual interviews, focus group discussions and observation I entered the storied lives of the teachers as they relived their experience and voiced their beliefs and perceptions, and as they constructed and shared the meaning of their experience (Bakhurst, 2001; Bruner, 1996). Transcriptions of interviews and discussions, along with my field notes provided the text that I later analyzed as I tried to get an understanding of the lived experience of these teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Van Manen , 1997). The

questions guiding the research were:

1. How does each participant conceptualize her role identity as Spanish teacher in a predominantly English speaking setting?
2. How viable is the native/nonnative speaker construct when teacher efficacy is considered?
3. How has supervising teachers who are native and nonnative speakers of the language they teach informed the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct in the USA?

As presented in detail in chapter four and summarized here, the findings of the study revealed the following:

1. The participants perceived effectiveness in language teaching not as a correlate of a teacher's native or nonnative speakership of the target language but as a function of a combination of

characteristics including commitment to constant improvement in language and pedagogy, along with a desire to reach students of all learning styles.

2. Although teachers enter the language teaching profession with differing strengths which might impact language learning in diverse ways, their belief in their capabilities to bring about student language learning ultimately attain similar levels, which allow for equally creditable performance in the professional realm.
3. The participants' role identity encompassed being facilitators of the development of target language skills and target culture appreciation through fostering student engagement in learning activities, aimed at advancing communicative competence.
4. A variety of factors, including familiarity with the school culture, had a significant impact on how the teachers experienced the initial years.
5. High levels of proficiency in the target language did not guarantee adequate levels of language use in the classroom.
6. Teacher support through providing vicarious experiences and forums for sharing successes in teaching enhance one's development as a language teacher.
7. The participants believed that travel to target language countries was a practical component of the language learning process, and of fostering appreciation of the target culture.

### Discussion of Findings

As the participants and I interacted in interviews, and as they interacted one with another in focus group discussions, the social construction of meaning (Neuman, 2000) was evident. Participants clarified their intended meaning as they responded to questions or comments from one another. Member checking sessions produced shared understandings (Schwandt, 2007) between researcher and participants. In succeeding interviews, I revisited information, seeking

extension of ideas and elaboration of points made in previous ones. The participants' examination of drafts of their cases also ensured unified understandings of the lived experience of the participants. My having sent a text of the transcribed interview to each participant after the interview afforded her the opportunity to review what she had said so as to ensure that her words had conveyed her thoughts accurately.

Included in the lived experience of the participants was that part of their professional lives in which they served as department head, supervising language teachers. According to Bailey, (2006) and Vasquez and Reppen, (2007), the supervisory role has shifted its emphasis from being primarily evaluative to being developmental, through promoting teachers' reflective practice. The participants related experiences, and shared perceptions they had formed based on ten, sixteen, nineteen and thirty-two years of performing professional duties in the role of department head. The reflection on this lengthy facet of their professional experiences provided an informed perspective on supervisees, which, in this study allowed the researcher to view the native and nonnative speaker teachers whom they had supervised through the eyes of the participants.

### *Developing Competence*

Competence as a language teacher was seen as developing over time, and with conscious effort at improving language skills and pedagogical skills. Through the sharing of ideas, talents and expertise that occurs across the native or nonnative speaker teacher categories, teachers found themselves improving in essential areas that impact language teaching. I found it significant that the veterans spoke of the value of the fresh ideas that neophytes brought to the teaching arena, and how much they had learnt from them, particularly in using technology in enhancing language learning. It was an indication of an openness to new ideas, new approaches

that could increase efficacy in teaching. This attitude I also linked with all participants' indication that their being in the teaching profession was a calling designated by God. Thus, they would always strive to perform at the highest level of competence. It was also outstanding that the teachers working together eased their transition into new methods of teaching as these often became necessary due to changes in student needs, available resources, or in requirements of leaders in the school environment.

As I listened to the participants, I became aware of the dynamic nature of the language teaching of which they were a part. Soraya and Helen who initially had not adapted their language use to fit the proficiency level of their students learnt from students how to modify their classroom language use. Maureen spoke of her interaction with heritage students in which she became more flexible with the language through her contact with them. Consuela too spoke of her improvement in understanding errors because of teaching heritage speakers. They all highlighted how teaching the Advanced Placement courses modified their concept of how to approach teaching the content of the curriculum at lower levels. All this generated the thought of one becoming more adept at language teaching through the hands-on experience of actually teaching the language while attending to cues for improvement.

The above reference to the value of teaching higher level courses is paramount. At the high school level in the context in which the study was done these include, for example, Spanish IV, V, and Advanced Placement (AP). Teaching higher level courses has often been seen as preferably the forte of teachers from target language backgrounds (Byrnes, Crane & Sprang, 2002; Fraga-Canadas, 2010; LLurda, 2005). This occurrence can be seen as an impediment to the advancement of the skills of the teachers who are not from target language backgrounds to the extent that it prevents them from experiencing, on a first hand basis, the rigour associated with

teaching at these levels, and the improved efficiency that results from rising to the challenge. By extension, based on the participants' report, not teaching higher level courses impacts the teaching approach taken at lower levels because the teacher's vision lacks the benefit of having a full range perspective of the goals of the program. It also impedes the teacher's development of teacher efficacy in teaching higher level courses.

In addition to the shared expertise mentioned earlier, the participants spoke to the issue of lifelong learning being integral to the development of competence in the language teaching arena. Helen spoke of traveling to target language countries and making the effort to become near native. Her words recall the statement that the native speaker myth is needed as a model, goal or inspiration though it is useless as a measure (Davies, 2003). Reading books and watching films in the target language have been documented as ways nonnative speaker teachers demonstrate that they are conscious of the need for continuous improvement in their language proficiency (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Smith, 2000). The need for language improvement, however, was not seen as being limited to the nonnative speaker. It is also important that the native speaker develop competence in dialectal varieties, particularly in the USA, given the number of heritage speakers who impact the learning scene.

The participants credited vicarious teaching experiences and organized professional development activities with fostering improvement in teaching strategies in their growth and that of their supervisees. They concluded that ultimately, the experienced teacher, regardless of speakership, approached the teaching task with similar levels of confidence and competence in teaching. This finding concurred with that of previous studies (En-Chong, 2004; Terashima, 1996). It is presumed that the experience referred to here, included participation in the aforementioned opportunities for improvement.



### *The Language Teacher*

As they reflected on the assistance they had needed and/or received in their formative years in teaching, the veterans in the study valued highly efforts at helping neophytes to progress toward becoming effective language teachers. Unlike the results of studies that showed nonnative speakers who teach English as perceiving themselves as having difficulties with the language (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Tinker Sachs, 2007), the participants in the study did not speak of a deficiency in the language arena on the part of the nonnative speakers. They did, however, speak to the lack of confidence in using the target language, particularly when communicating with native speaker colleagues. This lack of confidence has been documented in the literature (Amour, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003; Rajagopalan, 2005; Thomas, 1999; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnson, 2005). The participants, however, felt that the exposure to the target language through university courses teachers had taken had provided adequate input to enable skillful participation in conversation. While their position is not in harmony with Schulz (2000; 2002) who argues that teacher education programs do not equip teachers to function at the level of mastery that would enable confident participation in conversation, one tends to give credence to the participants' view as their prolonged contact with such colleagues would allow them to have observed extensively the language proficiency and use of supervisees, and to evaluate such with a fair degree of accuracy.

Awareness of the reluctance on the part of some nonnative speakers to use the target language when conversing with native speakers caused the participants to use various strategies to minimize the level of anxiety. It was impressive that Soraya assured nonnative speakers that she was not concerned with their accent. Further, she used creative means to help to lessen the reluctance to use the language when communicating with her. Her suggestion to one nonnative

speaker who showed reluctance to communicate with her in the target language was that the individual should speak to her in Spanish while she (Soraya) speaks to her in English. In that way, as they both used their second language, their interlocutor who was more familiar with it could offer assistance in a non-threatening way. This was an interdependent manner of scaffolding communication between native and nonnative speakers of a language, which seems to have practical value. It likely can be used to lower the level of intimidation and reluctance to converse in the target language, which some nonnative speaker teachers have experienced. Soraya's suggestion might have been born of her early experience of feeling alienated when her colleagues communicated with her in English at a time when she was not yet confident about her level of proficiency in the language.

This lack of confidence, in Maureen's view, could be attributed to some teachers who are nonnative speakers feeling that their language skills were not as sharp as those of their colleagues who were native speakers. While not denying that a difference might exist in the area of language use, she felt that such difference did not make one less competent in teaching. Consequently, these teachers needed to operate on the principle that there are different areas of strength, and that one is not deficient because one's area of strength differs from that of another. Helen felt that native speakers' possible greater language proficiency was inconsequential in discussing teaching, as its existence was not an indication of inadequate levels of proficiency on the part of the nonnative speaker. All participants concurred that, within reason, effective teaching was not a function of levels proficiency in the target language. They did recognize, however, that it was essential for language teachers to be adequately proficient to meet the demands of the teaching/learning situation. There are contexts in which inadequate levels of

language proficiency been recognized as a major deficiency in teachers (Butler, 2004; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Khami-Stein & Mahboob, 2005; Umar-Ud-Din; Khan & Mahmood, 2010).

It is important to note that it should not be assumed that nonnative speakers all experience a level of reluctance in speaking with native speaker colleagues. In this study the two nonnative speakers reported confidence in their ability with the language from the very outset of their career. They felt that the language skills they possessed were adequate for whatever task might be required of them and they reported feeling confident in their language use because of their years of study of the language in preparation for teaching. While acknowledging that their colleagues who were native speakers likely had a greater familiarity with the language, they did not view this as a cause for timidity in communicating with them. However, it is essential that language departments be aware of possible inhibitions and be proactive in dealing with them. Supervisors could take the initiative in encouraging supervisees to see their more proficient colleagues as resources for improvement rather than threats. This is the stance that Soraya had taken.

### *Facilitator Role*

Contemporary language teaching, particularly given the tendency toward the use of a communicative approach, which focuses on language as a social tool that is used to make meaning (Savignon, 2005), has redefined the role of the language teacher. Rather than presenting the teacher as the ideal language model and the commander of the classroom as in traditional language teaching models, with the emphasis on the communicative process the teacher is seen as facilitator for the development of fluent language use in the student (Brown, 2001; Lantolf & Johnson, 2007; Leung, 2005). The participants all conceptualized their role in line with the above. There was, however, diversity in the way they defined and enacted it.

Soraya placed emphasis on oral communication and sought to aid students to use the language in expressing actual ideas that they generated. Consequently, she engaged students in casual chat on a daily basis on current events and a variety of topics of interest to them. She aimed to help students appreciate the language as a medium of expression for their thoughts; as a way of engaging in meaningful conversation with people of her culture. Her role as facilitator for language development became one with her identity as a Hispanic person who wished to have others appreciate her language and culture. She referred to Spanish as “my language” many times during the research, showing her personal connection to it. Her facility with the language allowed her the flexibility to have ready vocabulary for any topic that might arise in the open forum she created. This necessitated that she be an available source to which the students could look for aid in finding linguistic elements to express their thoughts during a conversation. This teaching technique was consonant with her self-perception as a resource for language, and was used with her students at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels in the foreign language program. The attitude and approach she adopted was in line with her stated recognition of her area of strength as being spontaneity and competence in the language. Her perception of her strength concurs with findings of research on native speakers who teach English (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). A teacher who was not highly proficient in the language might have been less inclined to use this approach.

The other participants facilitated the development of communicative skills with degrees of similarity and difference to the above. Keeping classroom communication as regards the social roles of teacher and student primarily in the target language was standard among them. They viewed this use of language as a means of aiding the development of a measure of familiarity with the language that would eventually lead to automaticity. Complementing this,

Consuela primarily had students communicate with one another mainly in cooperative activities. She wanted to have students develop the ability to have dialogues, create questions and to be able to answer them. She found this useful in helping them to listen to their peers speaking the language and in giving them practice in responding appropriately, using the vocabulary in focus. I found it interesting that although she possessed the same facility with the language as did Soraya, having also spoken the language from infancy, she facilitated the development of speaking skills through assisting students to create meaning within the framework of prescribed target vocabulary rather than in free discussions. This required less risk-taking in the language on the part of the students, and gave a more controlled scope to the content that could be covered in a speaking episode. Teachers possessing varying levels of language proficiency might utilize this method with relative ease.

Maureen and Helen focused on target language classroom communication in a wider perspective. They aimed to have students use the language even when they initiated conversation with the teacher. They spoke of “total language” in the classroom<sup>ll</sup> and “immersion in the language” as their means of facilitating the communicative process. They both had very strong feelings about the target language being the primary language in the classroom “except for rare cases or some cases where it’s not necessary or when you have to break down to explain things.”<sup>l</sup> One aspect included in the things<sup>ll</sup> that needed to be explained was grammatical concepts. These participants felt that deviation from the target language to explain grammar points was important to ensure proper understanding of the concept. This was an indication of the importance they placed on grammatical knowledge which they felt occupied a fundamental place in communicative competence. They perceived themselves and other nonnative speakers as having an advantage in the ability to explain grammatical points, given their familiarity with the

grammar of the students' first language. Knowledge of grammar has been identified in previous studies done in English language teaching as a principal area of confidence for nonnative speakers (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Llurda & Huguet, 2003). The aforementioned studies credit the nonnative speaker with knowledge of the grammar of the target language through conscious study of it. It is noteworthy that the perspective of the participants in this study differed somewhat in that they attributed the perceived competence in explaining grammatical points to the teachers' familiarity with the grammar of the first language. Helen referred to using examples from the primary language to facilitate the learning of difficult points in the target language.

### *Cultural Considerations*

The native/nonnative speakership of an individual is useful neither as an indicator of levels of mastery of a language nor of efficacy in language teaching. As a social construct, however, it can signal to supervisees to be alert to challenges that might arise due to cultural differences, especially at the initial stages of teaching in a new context. In this study, the native speakers were from a foreign land and culture. Because of having left the culture with which they were familiar for one that was new both inside and outside the classroom, there was the need for them to be formally initiated into the cultural norms, particularly as it impacted the learning environment. This involved being socialized into the school customs and practices, as well as into the mores of the wider society. Support of this nature would be instrumental in allowing for easier adjustment to the pattern of conduct that engenders success in the professional realm, given the new environment. The participants recognized this need as being common among their colleagues from target language and culture groups. However, support to all teachers was considered essential, though its nature differed depending on the extent of one's pre-service exposure to varying elements that impact the learning environment. There therefore

existed the need for emotional support, language support, support in management of language learning, and support in dealing with the requirements of the daily routine. In their role as supervisors, the participants consciously endeavored to identify the kind of support needed and to organize that supervisees receive it.

### *Teacher Efficacy*

Teacher efficacy is conceptualized as the teacher's judgment of his/her own capacity to bring about student engagement and student learning (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). It is linked to enabling teacher beliefs, functional teacher behaviors, and valued teacher outcomes (Ross & Bruce, 2007). Fundamental tenets of the construct are perceived competence of the teacher in the areas of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. Principal characteristics of teachers with high levels of teacher efficacy include: (a) organized, well-planned learning environments that are geared toward meeting the learning needs of students; (b) effective instructional strategies and high levels of student engagement; (c) openness to new ideas and innovations; (d) having high expectations of students and setting challenging goals for them; and (e) having a positive effect on student achievement (Brouwers & Tomic 2001; Good & Brophy, 2003; Henson, 2002; Onafowora, 2004). As I contemplated the viability of the native nonnative speaker construct in relation to teacher efficacy, I examined the data with the above characteristics and tenets guiding my interpretation of the data.

At the time of the research the participants were all confident about their ability to bring about the success of their students. This was not unusual because the teachers were veterans and efficacy often increases with experience (Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, & Quek, 2008). However, considering the road to that point is of central importance when considering the viability of the native/nonnative speaker construct in light of teacher efficacy. Whereas Maureen manifested

high levels of teacher efficacy from the very outset of her career, Soraya, Consuela and Helen began their Spanish teaching career with uncertainty as to how to manage language learning, and faced specific challenges. Soraya began to experience a change when a colleague who was at a similar phase of the teaching cycle combined efforts with her to devise learning experiences in which they could engage students for effective language learning. Her colleague who was a nonnative speaker had similar needs so they brainstormed ideas, pulling on each other's strength. This teamwork propelled Soraya's movement into developing her teaching style in which she used a variety of instructional techniques in order to reach students with different learning styles. Contributing to her development of efficacy as a teacher were the mastery experiences she had through her students' creditable performance in competitions and examinations. Mastery experiences are performance attainments; one's recognition of one's personal success at attaining a goal.

Consuela's move toward developing teacher efficacy was propelled through participation in professional development sessions along with observation of more experienced teachers. By means of these observations she was afforded vicarious experiences which are presented in the literature as one means of moving individuals toward developing efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Hoy, 2004). Similar to Soraya, the mastery experiences she had through having students perform at high levels in various assessment activities that required effective use of target language skills, aided her development of efficacy beliefs.

In Helen's case, the adjustment she needed to make in her teaching approach came through assistance from others in the department working closely with her. Along with this, teaching advanced classes and being able to move the students toward commendable levels of target language usage provided mastery experiences that enhanced her progress in developing



efficacy beliefs. She reminisced on evidence of successful teaching based on scores students received on AP examinations. Similar to Soraya and Consuela it was in the management of language learning which involves instructional strategies and classroom supervision, that she saw herself improving, overcoming challenges and in the process, developing teacher efficacy.

All participants spoke of the change in the demographics in their school community and an accompanying change in their teaching to accommodate new learning needs that arose. Although they enacted it differently, all participants ensured student engagement through diversification of instruction and varied classroom activities, and aimed to accommodate all learning styles that were present in their classroom. In addition, they showed themselves open to new ideas in order to enhance teaching. The characteristics listed earlier that identify teachers with high levels of teacher efficacy were evident in all participants.

#### *Teacher Efficacy in Supervisees*

As department chair, the participants had been in their supervisees' classroom doing formal and informal observations and evaluations, and over the years had observed patterns of teaching behavior. The majority observed greater target language use in the classroom on the part of teachers who were nonnative speakers. They observed that willingness to learn effective teaching strategies and approaches outweighed any advantages that might have been attributed in various contexts to the native or nonnative speaker status of the teacher. They observed equitable efficacy in teachers who fell into the native or nonnative speaker category. Over the years they had seen both native and nonnative teachers being effective in bringing about successful language teaching and exhibiting similar levels of confidence in their own ability to do so.

### Research Questions Answered

1. How does each participant conceptualize her role identity as Spanish teacher in a predominantly English- speaking setting?

The answer to this question is evident in the third item on the list of findings presented at the beginning of the chapter. Great similarity in the way the participants conceptualized their role identity was apparent. They all interpreted the language teacher role as one in which they facilitated the development of communication skills in the target language, thereby preparing the students for meaningful language use within and outside of formal learning contexts. They saw themselves as managers of the learning contexts through fostering student engagement in purposeful language activities that encompassed the four skills of listening, speaking reading and writing in the target language.

2. How viable is the native/nonnative speaker construct when teacher efficacy is considered?

The native/nonnative teacher construct is not deemed viable in the face of teacher efficacy. Speakership is not an indicator of one's effectiveness as a language teacher, nor is it indicative of the likelihood of one's judging oneself as being capable of bringing about language learning in students. Teacher efficacy, however, was an indicator of the degree of success one might have in language teaching as it impacted the effort one puts into bringing about successful language learning on the part of students.

3. How has supervising teachers who are native and nonnative speakers of the language they teach informed the participants' understanding of the language teacher construct in the USA?

Based on their many years of supervising language teachers the participants believed that the effective language teacher is a function of a combination of characteristics and qualities rather than of the native or nonnative speakership of the individual. Among these are a willingness to learn; a commitment to educating the student through use of creative learning episodes; and an open-mindedness that allows one to be a lifelong learner of both the target language and all that affects its teaching.

### Implications of the Study

The findings related to teachers' target language use in the instructional setting as well as in communication with colleagues give rise to implications for addressing these. Teaching a foreign language often involves transmitting concepts and facts through the very language that is the target of the instruction. This is extolled as the preferred mode, and differs from that which is employed in teaching other subjects which are taught through the learners' primary language (Brown, 2009). Addressing the reported inadequate target language use in the classroom might be done through conscious attempts to sensitize teachers to its value in enhancing learning, and by helping them to develop facility in its use in this area. Vicarious experiences demonstrating the use of gestures and general body language to aid student understanding when the target language is being spoken might be considered. Also, practice sessions in modifying the selection of linguistic elements to suit the proficiency of the students would likely be helpful. This is based on one participant's suggestion that deviation from using the target language possibly occurs because some teachers who are highly proficient in the language are uncertain about how to adjust their language to facilitate understanding in students in a foreign language classroom. The problem of teachers being reluctant to use the target language in communication with colleagues who were native speakers might be addressed through a variety of means. Having immersion

opportunity moments in which a short portion of the lunch period each day is designated “target language period” requiring that only the target language be used during casual conversation could be a start.

In addition to language use, points related to use of technology, and cultural adaptation for effective teaching were raised. As alluded to previously, there are strong implications for collaborative efforts among teachers. Collaboration allows teachers to gain access to individual strengths that exist within the language department due to the variety inherent in the differing degrees of contact individuals might have had with the target language and culture. Based on indications from the participants, the support language teachers receive from colleagues plays a pivotal role in fostering success for an individual in the language-teacher role. It might therefore be expedient in this context to assess the kind of support that might be needed by the teacher.

In accord with the foregoing there are implications for language teacher professional development. Considering the benefits of collegial relationship that participants in the study advocated, professional development that caters to the specific support mentioned above is vital. The social process of teacher learning (Johnson, 2009) becomes a focal point within which one might situate professional development for language teachers. Concerns related to the major points above: language use, use of technology, and cultural adaptation for effective teaching might be addressed through these. Utilizing the shared expertise that exists within the group of professionals, each area can be appropriately addressed by means of sessions held at regular intervals. These could be held on a small scale at local sites, namely the language department in individual schools, and in larger settings involving clusters of departments from a number of schools.

The study also has implications for encouraging individual effort at self-improvement in terms of language proficiency, as well as in familiarizing oneself with community practices. Individual efforts at developing and maintaining appropriate levels of language proficiency during one's tenure in the profession is tantamount to ensuring that one's skills remain at a level commensurate with the requirements of competent professionals. Along with this, ensuring that one develops an understanding of the norms of the community of learners with which one works, and keeps abreast of adjustments that might be required to ensure optimal learning is essential.

#### Language teacher Efficacy

Considering language learning and teaching as a lifelong, developmental process, the study also has implications for originating the concept of Language Teacher Efficacy. Language Teacher Efficacy differs from teacher efficacy in that it is specific to the teaching of a language other than the learner's primary language. It involves the teacher's belief that through her efforts she can move the student toward positive outcomes in language learning. Thus, even in the face of challenges to learning, the teacher is confident that s/he possesses the skills and capability needed to positively influence the student's success in attaining prescribed levels of competence in a target language, primarily through fostering student engagement in meaningful, insightfully planned learning experiences.

Based on the findings of the study, I propose an evolving model of Language Teacher Efficacy. The components of the model reflect, in summary form, the principal areas that impact Language Teacher Efficacy as gleaned through analysis of the data collected in the study. The level of competence in the individual areas combines to produce the level of Language teacher Efficacy. One who is high in Language Teacher Efficacy would be highly competent in all areas. However, differing levels of Language Teacher Efficacy would exist, based on the variety of

levels of competence that the teacher exhibits in individual elements making up the major areas. For example, an individual may be highly competent in target language proficiency, which falls into the content knowledge component, but not be adequately competent in an element of intercultural competence such as classroom management. The individual's awareness of her strength and her weakness affects how capable she feels in bringing about successful language learning.

Scholars (e.g. Ellis, 1997; Richards, 2010; Wallace, 1991); have examined the concept of language teaching from varying perspectives and have advanced theories of language learning that offer models of teaching and learning competence. Although there are similarities between some aspects of their theories and some of those implied in the model of Language teacher Efficacy, the concept in its entirety as seen in the model differs from the above. Below is a model of Language teacher Efficacy. It shows the various interconnected components that impact its development.

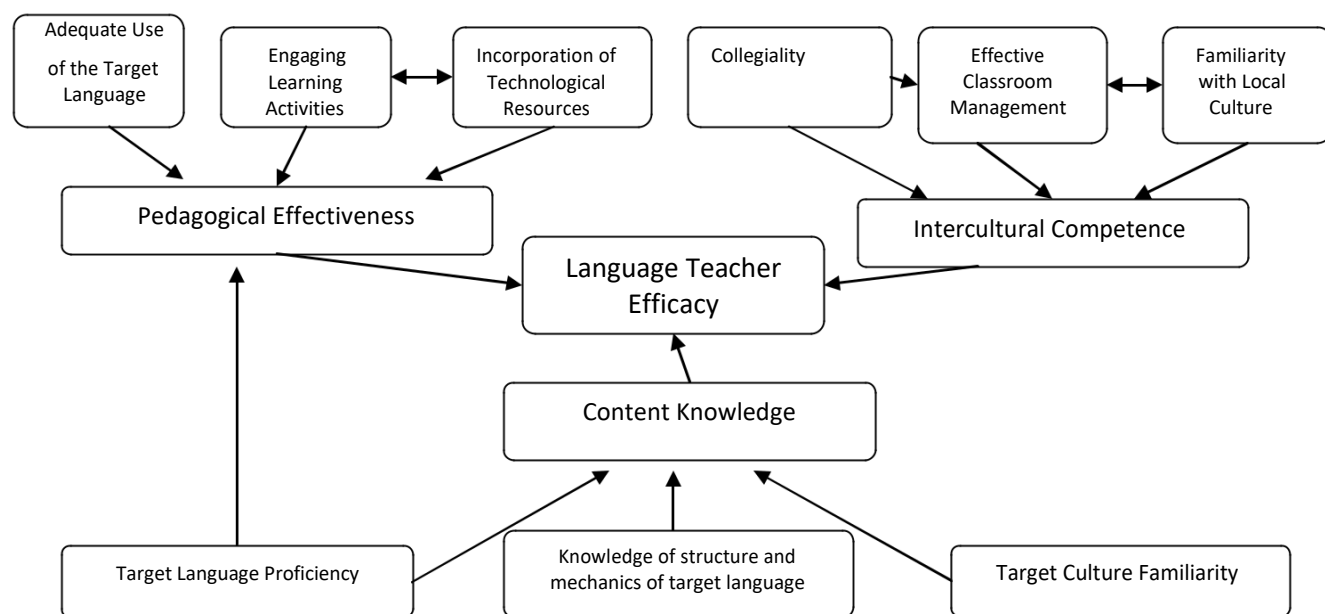


Figure 1. The Components of Language Teacher Efficacy

Pedagogical effectiveness encompasses the use of organized activities that are engaging to students and promote language learning. Problem-solving activities using the target language are examples of these. Along with this, keeping the classroom as a target language zone is vital. The teacher models language use through instructing primarily in the target language, and by giving her commands and directions mainly in it. To expose students to differing accents, dialects and language choice the teacher utilizes media images and other sources available through use of technology. The teacher also incorporates the use of technology at the output stage through encouraging and arranging for student use of available technological devices in a variety of activities that involve the students' production of language.

Content knowledge involves language proficiency in the sense of knowing the language sufficiently to allow for communicative use of the language in real-life settings. Tied to this is an understanding of linguistic elements from different dialects of the target language in order to enable communication with speakers of those varieties, and to comprehend their implication when they are seen in literary works. Knowledge of the structure and mechanics of the language includes being able to explain why a linguistic item is grammatically correct, and to give guidelines to language learners regarding appropriate vocabulary choices and use of the grammars of the language. An understanding of fundamental tenets of the target culture is also an essential part of content knowledge.

The intercultural competence component of the Language Teacher Efficacy model embraces the concept of manifesting expertise in acting appropriately within the confines of a given culture. In the classroom setting it involves understanding the communication style of students, the rudiments of propriety, and the approaches to learning to which students have been exposed. Such understanding feature highly in one's developing appropriate management

strategies for a given group of students. Closely connected to this is an understanding of the culture of the wider society in which one teaches. Familiarity with the norms of the society that impact the students' views and knowledge of the world moves the teacher toward adopting teaching styles and strategies that are commensurate with these. Collegiality refers to the interrelationship among teachers. It involves being able to engage in dialogue with colleagues on matters related to teaching. Exchanging mutual encouragement, sharing ideas for improvement in teaching, and discussing challenges are aspects of collegiality.

#### Future Research

A difference in student behavior and in classroom culture, including expected language teaching approach were outlined as areas that caused difficulties for teachers from target language countries. A longitudinal study looking at how teachers from target cultures negotiate the development of intercultural competence as conceptualized on the Language Teacher Efficacy model is recommended. It would allow researchers to document specific actions individuals take to understand the local culture as it impacts students and teaching. It would also allow the researcher to trace the connection between understanding local cultural components and appropriate management of language learning contexts.

From the participants' report, in their role as supervisors they sought to assist their supervisees' development in areas of Language Teacher Efficacy as conceived in the model above. A study comparing their perceived impact on this development with the supervisees' perception of the same would be insightful. In addition, investigating how the supervisors' perception of what they do match their actual supervisory practices would yield valuable information.



The participants in this study were veteran Spanish teachers who were high in teacher efficacy. I observed them in their classrooms for the purpose of having them reflect thoughtfully on specific classroom behaviors or other aspects of their classroom persona that I thought would contribute to an understanding of their perception of their role identity. I did not observe them for the purpose of investigating whether their conceptualizations matched their actions. A study aimed at investigating the above in comparison to less experienced teachers would be worthwhile.

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## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

**Interview 1**

Tell me about your first interview for a teaching position in Spanish?

What, in your view, was the interviewer looking for?

Tell me about the interviewing processes you went through. How was your language competence viewed?

To what extent do you think pedagogical competence featured in the decision to employ you?

Describe your first year of teaching.

What major challenges do you associate with your early years in the teaching profession?

What pleasant memories can you recall from your first five years in teaching Spanish?

How did you view your department chair in her role as HOD? What kind of support did you get in your initial years in teaching?

How do you think the level of support affected you then?

What kind of support had you anticipated?

What do you think were your strong points in the early years?

What do you think was your not-so-strong points?

What was your vision at the start of your Spanish teaching career?

Think back on yourself as a young, beginning teacher: How are the veterans affecting your development as a teacher?

Share with me the factors that motivated you to remain in the profession in those early years.

What do you think would have had the opposite effect back then? That is – What would have discouraged you from continuing in the profession?

Let's talk about some of your peers from college who entered the language teaching field. (Or others in the same early phase of teaching). Can you recall some of the experiences they had in the early years that were similar to or different from yours?

Tell me about your early experience in teaching higher level courses.

Was there any aspect that intimidated you back then?

Have you ever felt any inadequacy as a teacher back then?

How did others teachers affect your feeling of adequacy/inadequacy?

What do you think influenced these feelings of adequacy/ inadequacy?

## **Interview 2**

What is a typical day like for you?

What do you consider a fulfilling day?

What do you like most about your job?

What does interaction professionally with members of your department entail?

What are your most effective strategies in teaching Spanish?

How would you describe a successful lesson?

How do you foster improvement in teaching in your department?

What are some of the specific strengths that you see in your supervisees?

Describe common problems that your supervisees have?

What is your attitude toward heritage speakers in the classroom?

What attitude do you perceive heritage speaker students as having toward language teachers?

How important is diversifying teaching strategies?

Please give me a portrait of teachers who diversify teaching strategies as a rule of thumb.

How do you encourage language teachers to diversify teaching strategies?

How valuable is the use of *authentic samples* (speech, writing) in language learning?

How do you in your role as HOD encourage the use of authentic samples?

As HOD what do you look for when you are interviewing someone for a position?

In what ways do you think your being of a given linguistic background affects the way students view you as a teacher?

In what ways would you say the linguistic background of language teachers affect how their colleagues view them?

What would you say are your personal strengths as a Spanish teacher?

What responses have you gotten from students regarding your teaching Spanish given your linguistic background?

If you were to overhear two students discussing how you learnt Spanish, how would you perceive the conversation?

How would you compare your approach to teaching AP Spanish initially and in later years?

*Reflection on classroom observation.*

At this point I asked questions that were directly related to observation of that teacher in the classroom. For example:

I noticed you that started the class with a recorded drill. What was your rationale for this?

There were a variety of learning activities in each of your classes. Explain what influenced your decision to teach in this manner.

You had a section of your lesson that was led by a student. How do you go about organizing for this kind of activity?

### **Interview 3**

As you reflect on your experiences what do you think has had the greatest impact on how you teach today?

To what extent do you see those veterans back in your early years reflected in you, in what you do?

How does your teaching today reflect changes that might have occurred in your professional outlook at this point in your career?

Compare your use of technological devices in teaching Spanish today with your former years in teaching.

In what ways do you think your teaching, and the teaching of others who learnt the language in a similar way will evolve in the next few years?

How would you say the factors that we have spoken about have interacted to form the present “you” in your role as Spanish teacher and supervisor?

How has the vision that you had at the start of your career modified over the years.

How would you compare your teaching approach to that of others with a similar history of learning the language they teach?

How would you compare your teaching with that of teachers from a different linguistic background in the language they teach?

How successful would you say you have been in fulfilling your goals as a Spanish teacher?

Tell me about any area of deficiency you may have perceived on a personal level during your career?

What advice would you give to new language teacher who learned the language the way you did?

Describe any negative situations you have had that are related to your teaching Spanish.

Looking back, what would you say were the underlying factors that gave rise to the experience? What similarities / differences do you think teachers whose history of learning the language differ from yours experience?

Tell me about the teaching styles you have seen over the years? Are they related in any way to speakership?

Give me a portrait of the teacher who typically uses these styles.

To what extent does speakership affect your choice of teacher for courses?

Compare a beginning NS to a beginning NNS. What styles/ approaches are you seeing? Compare an experienced/ veteran NNS/NS

Think back on informal discussions. What story is the beginning NNS telling?

What story is the beginning NS telling about his profession?

What story is the experienced NS telling?

What story is the experienced NNS telling?

What is your interpretation of the story?

Why do you think you recall that particular story?

What is different about you from those veterans back then?

How do your colleagues of a different linguistic background view you?

How do you view colleagues of a different linguistic background?

*Reflection on classroom observation.*

Can you recall any comments about your race or country of origin by colleagues/parents/students/ casual observers?

How do/did you respond to these comments generally?

Individuals have said that they felt the need to be exceptional to prove their credibility as a language teacher in specific settings. What, in your opinion, could give rise to this feeling?

How do your colleagues of a different linguistic background view you? How do you view colleagues of a different linguistic background?

What would make you choose a person of a given linguistic background for a teaching position?

*Reflection on classroom observation.*

## APPENDIX B

### Focus Group1 Questions

#### Question 1

We want to discuss a few issues that at least three of you brought up in your interview. That is the purpose of this group. One of the things we want to mention is the whole issue of working together. When we think of the benefits of working together in groups, what are the benefits that teachers can derive from having the department working in concert

#### Question 2

You all spoke of mentoring your supervisees in some way. What is your role in the professional life of teachers whom you supervise?

#### Question 3

Most of you spoke about classroom management. You said that is one thing that you look for in a teacher. Of course one expects the language to be there, but you all said that you look for the ability to manage a classroom. I wanted to ask you, what does that involve? When you say “manage the classroom”l what are you thinking of?

### **Focus group 2 Questions**

How does a person’s cultural background impact the language teaching arena?

Can you give specific examples of individuals from other cultures teaching languages in the USA?

This has to do with diversity of culture. In speaking with you all, I got the feeling of, and someone mentioned “an international people.” What I want to ask you is, as chair how do you identify and cater for the needs of supervisees from various cultures?



What is your role in the professional life of a teacher from another culture?

APPENDIX C  
QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1

1. How long have you been teaching Spanish
2. Have you taught any subject other than Spanish? If yes give details.
3. Have you taught in any school other than the one in which you are employed at present?  
If yes, give details.
4. How did you learn Spanish?
5. What factors influenced your decision to become a Spanish teacher?
6. What goals in language teaching did you have at the start of your career?
7. How would you rate yourself as a classroom teacher? Give reasons for this rating.
8. How long have you been chair of the world language department?
9. In your role as department chair, have you supervised teachers who taught their native language and those who taught languages other than their native tongue? Give examples.
10. What does the HOD role entail?
11. What goals do you have for your department?
12. How would you describe a good Spanish teacher?
13. How would you rate yourself as department head? Give reasons.

*Additional comments*