

A Model of Expertise: A Case Study of a Second Language Teacher Educator

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Abstract

This study investigates the characteristics of an L2 expert teacher educator. The expert participant was selected based on the criteria suggested by educational expertise studies: years of teaching experience, high reputation among multiple constituencies, and evidence of impact on student performance. The data collection included observations, interviews, and artifacts. The observations took place in a Master's course at an American university in Asia. I conducted interviews with the focal participant, his three students, and a colleague. The evidence reveals a developmental process of expertise that includes reflecting, reading, writing, and sharing through teaching and publishing. One of the synthesized products of this process, his framework for curriculum design, is described in relation to his expertise. His practice is characterized by his manner in reasoning, engaging tasks, and supporting other researchers thereby contributing to the academic community.

Introduction

One area in second language (L2) teaching that deserves more attention is the study of expertise in teacher education. Studying expertise in L2 teacher education is vital for providing opportunities and implications for instructors and student teachers to receive direct and positive influence from experts. However, this is still an under-researched area and requires further investigation (e.g., Tsui, 2011; Waters, 2005). While numerous studies often conclude with practical implications for teachers to utilize, the learning process by which teachers acquire complex skills and knowledge remains largely unexamined (e.g., Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Therefore, I set out to describe the characteristics of expertise in L2 teacher education in this case study by focusing on one teacher educator at an American university in Asia.

History of Expertise Studies

Since de Groot (1965/1978) first investigated the outstanding recall ability of chess experts for chess configurations, several characteristics common to experts have been described (Chase & Simon, 1973; Gobet & Simon, 1996). First, the memory skills of experts are highly contextual and only accessible when they are completing authentic tasks (e.g., Herzmann & Curran, 2011). Second, experts demonstrate fluid ability to recognize significant patterns with a principle-based approach (Patel & Groen, 1991; V. Patel, Groen, & Y. Patel, 1997). Educational researchers have also discovered that expert teachers have domain specific knowledge (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Bullough & Baughman, 1995). Additionally, Berliner (2004) explained that whereas non-expert teachers undergo a deliberate cognitive process, expert teachers approach classroom events in a fluid and effortless manner. Moreover, experts remember, understand, and recognize relevant events in a classroom in a principled manner (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein, & Berliner, 1988; Hogan, Rabinowitz, & Craven III, 2010; Leinhardt, 1983; Wolff, Bogert, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2014).

Different types of knowledge are important for effective teaching. For example, Shulman's (1986) taxonomy of teacher knowledge distinguishes subject content knowledge from pedagogical knowledge (how to facilitate learning). Another type of teacher knowledge is knowledge of learners, which influences teachers' decisions about what and how to teach by understanding the perspective of students. Finally, pedagogical content knowledge allows teachers to deliver the subject in a comprehensible and effective manner. It is these types of rich knowledge that allow experts' effortless and fluid performance (Berliner, 2004).

The importance of teacher knowledge has also been a focus of L2 studies (Richards, 2010). Richards, Li, and Tang (1995) examined content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of ESL teachers in Hong Kong. They found that experienced teachers exhibited more variety of teaching approaches that consider learner perspectives and a wider range of objectives than did novice teachers. Gatbonton (1999, 2008) reported that the lack of experience of novice ESL teachers kept them from actively putting their pedagogical knowledge into practice. Additionally, while novices were more concerned with student behavior and negative reactions, the experienced teacher focused instead on facilitating student learning (Farrell & Bennis, 2013). Johnston and Goettsch (2000) explained the importance of knowledge of learners by examining experienced grammar teachers in the U.S. They recognized how learners learn and what they already know.

Studies on the development of expertise, some of which distinguish experts from experienced non-experts, are also an important focus in the field. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993), teachers develop automaticity after they accumulate years of experience, and this in return frees up mental resources. Whereas experienced non-experts automatize their teaching by relying on their existing knowledge regardless of its quality, experts use this cognitive space that freed up to formalize their informal knowledge based on theoretical rationales such as through theories, research, and publishing (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993; Kreber, 2002). The process of theorizing knowledge based on practice characterizes expertise (Richards, 2010). Accordingly, Tsui (2003) suggests based on her case studies of teachers in Hong Kong that this process of theorizing practical knowledge is critical. Furthermore, practicalizing

theorized knowledge where formalized knowledge is transformed to practical knowledge in the teachers' specific contexts resulted in raising the level of competence of her expert participant.

Finally, experts engage in a process called progressive problem solving where they focus on the complexity of the fundamental problems of their domain. Identifying and tackling critical issues that are constitutive in their domain facilitates their development of expertise because this process forces experts to expand their knowledge and raise the level of their competence (Bullough & Baughman, 1995; Tsui, 2003). Although considerable differences between experts and non-expert teachers have been reported in general education and L2 teaching, little is known about characteristics of expertise in L2 teacher education. Therefore, this case study examines three areas: developmental processes of expertise, major principles underlying expertise, and classroom practices underpinning expertise demonstrated by an L2 teacher educator.

Research Questions

The main purpose of the study is to gain an understanding related to characteristics of expertise demonstrated by Professor Henderson, an L2 teacher educator. (This and all other names in this study are pseudonyms.) The specific research questions that guided the development of this research are:

1. How did Professor Henderson develop expertise?
2. What are the characteristics of his knowledge conceptualized in principles?
3. How is his expertise reflected in his classroom practice?

Method

The Context

This case study was conducted in a graduate program at an American university in Asia where the main participant, Professor Henderson, was teaching in 2013. Faculty members and students at this university represent diverse backgrounds.

Participant

Professor Henderson is a well-known researcher and an emeritus professor of applied linguistics. His responsibilities include teaching, conducting research, and supervising doctoral students. At the time of the study, he was a visiting professor, teaching one Master's level course and a doctoral class at this university. Utilizing the criteria developed based on an extensive review of previous education expertise literature by Palmer, Stough, Burdinski, & Gonzales (2005), I justify my selection of Henderson. The criteria include a minimum of five years of experience in a specific teaching content area with a particular population of students and teacher knowledge reflected in advanced degrees relevant to their teaching. Moreover, participants should possess a solid reputation among multiple constituencies,

including colleagues and researchers. Finally, their expertise should be confirmed by some evidence of their impact on student performance.

Henderson has more than 40 years of experience in researching and teaching in several different countries. With over 180 publications, such as textbooks and resource books, empirical research articles from major journals and publishing houses in linguistics and L2 education qualified him as highly competent in the field. The topics of his publications ranged from L2 research in his specialized area to practical teaching ideas, such as curriculum and/or program development, and teacher education. Additionally, he has a strong reputation among his colleagues and other professionals as someone who delivers effective and intriguing classes. He has been selected as the plenary speaker at various international language conferences. His publications and research instruments are frequently cited by researchers and used at various institutions around the world. His impact on his students and colleagues was evident from both the award he received for best supervisor at his main university and also numerous articles and books published under his supervision or with his collaboration.

Data Collection

This is a case study, which consists of data sources from classroom observations, interviews with Henderson and his students and his colleague, and a collection of various artifacts.

Observations. The Master's class consisted of 15 students who met once a week for three hours over 15 weeks. I recorded field notes based on a total of 15 hours of classroom observations as a passive participant (Spradley, 1980). They included information related to Henderson's lectures, feedback to students, and group work along with the time spent on each activity.

Interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with Henderson and his students and colleague individually in their first language at the university. All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in full. Interviews with Henderson took place at the start and end of data collection. The purpose of the interview was to understand his experiences and the meaning he attaches to them (Seidman, 2006). Characteristics of his knowledge, previous teaching experiences in diverse contexts, and his approach to teaching and researching were investigated.

Three students in the observed Master's course were also interviewed. Adam from the U.S. and Brad from Britain both taught at Japanese universities and were close to graduation. Adam was generally quiet, but he actively participated in group discussions whereas Brad was the most vocal student in the class, often asking questions and sharing opinions. Junko, a quiet Japanese female student, had never taught English before, and had only just begun the graduate program. I asked questions regarding their educational backgrounds, and perceptions of his lectures, and tasks/assignments. Additionally, I interviewed Carl, Henderson's former PhD student and colleague, who had a working relationship with Henderson for over a decade. He has numerous publications from major journals, some of

which were published under Henderson's supervision. He discussed the impact Henderson has had on his career of teaching and research.

Artifacts. Collected artifacts included Henderson's syllabus and handouts he had created for the class. Graded assignments from one student (Adam), including Henderson's comments and sample answers were collected. Furthermore, some of Henderson's publications related to his research and approach to L2 teaching were reviewed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis utilized both deductive and inductive approaches. While the data were compared to the expertise literature, an inductive approach enabled me to focus on individual segments. Recurring themes that indicated the characteristics of Henderson's expertise were then categorized into domains such as *development of knowledge* and *sharing knowledge*. Each domain was then analyzed internally and crosschecked among the domains and later grouped into themes. This was an ongoing process, and domains and themes were continually reorganized.

I triangulated different data methods and sources, such as conflicting opinions from students about Henderson. Member checking was conducted after transcribing the interviews with all participants. To verify and elicit feedback, I sent the final data analysis to Henderson and those who know him, including his students and his colleague.

Positionality

During the research, I was enrolled in the doctoral program at this university and taking Henderson's class. Prior to taking his course, the level of interest I had for his research area was low. However, my interest and appreciation for the area of study grew as the semester proceeded. His manner of showing his great passion and effective tasks helped me understand key concepts and the importance of the topic. Most importantly, unlike some professors, who often identify themselves as researchers but often put less effort into teaching, Henderson demonstrated his interest in his students and was well-prepared to teach lessons.

My insider perspective affects the study both positively and negatively. There are several advantages. First of all, my selection of Henderson as an expert teacher educator participant was better informed because of this perspective (Taylor, 2011). The combination of the established criteria (Palmer, et al., 2005) and my personal experience made the selection of the main participant more credible. Additionally, the insider status helped me gain better access to the research context (Labaree, 2002; Unluer, 2012). It was not only Henderson but also the administrators and students from the observed class that showed great understanding for the purpose of my research and helped me with data collection. For example, in their busy schedule, all my participants made extra effort to make the time for an interview. Moreover, I was able to gain access to personal information, such as graded assignments, which may have been difficult if I had not built trust with some of the participants as an insider. Finally, being a student in this context allowed me to "interpret the culture of the community" (Labaree,

2002). I was able to not only understand the meanings participants attached to certain terms but also relate to them personally. Examples include understanding how relevant Henderson's lessons were to the students who work in the specific context and relating to Junko, who like myself studied at this university as a non-native speaker of English.

One of the obstacles of insider perspective is maintaining objectivity (Taylor, 2011; Unluer, 2012). In order to minimize the effect of my biases and assumptions, I attempted several approaches, such as writing memos about my feelings and reactions during data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Maxwell, 2012) and conducting data sessions with my advisor and classmates during data analysis (Unluer, 2012). This process helped me reflect on my experiences and perspectives.

Results

Development of Expertise

Henderson's expertise followed an ongoing circular process, including understanding the nature of issues by reflecting, finding solutions, reformulating his knowledge through reading and writing, in addition to sharing with others through his practice (See Figure 1).

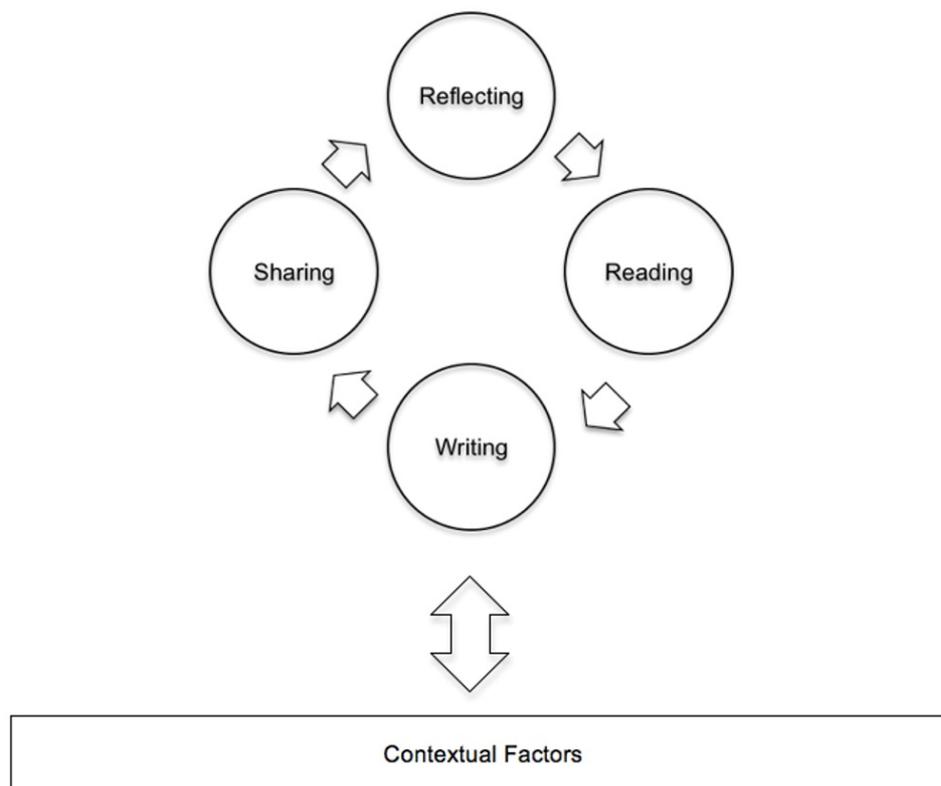


Figure 1. Developmental Process

Henderson considered reflection a primary source of learning. He described his experience of observing a class that was taught by his boss. Henderson described him as a great teacher, who was “absolutely different from anybody” because he “had a very original approach to things.” Henderson wrote down ideas that he liked in his notebook while observing this teacher. Henderson described the experience of reflecting on his own teaching as something crucial that included “always reflecting on why things worked and why they didn’t work.” The reflection he engaged in through teaching practice is a common characteristic of expert teachers (Farrell, 2013; Tsui, 2003).

Henderson also immediately attended to problems discovered through reflection. When describing benefits of group work, he said that it allowed him to observe “what the understanding is” among students. He recalled an incident in which he learned from students’ feedback after group work that “nobody understood what a (basic concept) was.” He continued: “I was glad that I’d done that activity because I realized that we’ve gotta [sic] spend more time on this.” Schön (1987) calls this phenomenon reflection-in-action, where skilled professionals demonstrate fluid performance when unexpected events occur. This process requires experts in the immediate moment to critically evaluate the cause of a problematic situation and reorganize strategies to formulate and verify the next action. Henderson’s effortless manner of elucidation demonstrated his dynamic processes of reflection-in-action.

Furthermore, Henderson engaged in problem solving that demands extensive commitment. One event that demonstrated this aspect took place in a country in Southeast Asia where he taught both teacher education and EFL for four years, facing numerous challenges including a lack of basic resources such as blackboards, photocopiers, and general teaching materials. Henderson created an original dictionary and found a publisher that donated copies for his students. He explained that having a dictionary “meant that people could do reading and look up words, otherwise how do they find the meaning?” As someone who believed in the effect of vocabulary knowledge, he chose to focus on this problem. Rather than remaining confined by limitations or ignoring the fundamental issues, Henderson overcame them by maximizing the effects of limited resources, a characteristic of expert teachers reported previously in another case study (Tsui, 2003).

Henderson’s experience of dealing with challenging contextual factors has had a significant effect on his career. Contextual factors are “shaped by the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom” (Borg, 2003, p. 94), such as curriculum goals and available resources. Therefore, it is important for teachers to learn the norms in a specific context (Richards, 2010). Though contextual factors can limit teachers’ abilities, Henderson instead utilized different strategies to find solutions. He said: “I knew I learned an enormous amount”, and that it “really started my career because there was so much to do, and so much that we managed to do.” He believed the influence of contextual factors consequently enhanced his competence.

This experience also initiated his research career. He stated: “I had to read a lot, and I did a lot of writing.” For Henderson, writing is “figuring out things. Sometimes I don’t know what I think until I have written about it, and when I have written about it, it clarifies ideas. I write

for myself.” Explaining how writing fits into the overall development of his expertise, he continued:

I had to read to do the writing and then you put the experience in there, and then writing it down makes it clearer. You’ve gotta [*sic*] figure out things because you can’t write them down unless you have some understanding of what it’s about.

His manner in problem solving through the process of theorizing and reconceptualizing practical knowledge is evident. It also demonstrates the interconnected relationship between his practice and knowledge. Henderson’s knowledge was strongly influenced by his practice of teaching and researching which also simultaneously promoted his beliefs and commitment in expanding and reformulating his knowledge.

Although problem solving is a characteristic of expertise (Smith & Strahan, 2004; Tsui, 2003), mere problem solving is insufficient by itself to reach a level of expertise. Experts are engaged in constant progressive problem solving by pushing their boundaries of competence to focus on fundamental complexities of their profession (Bullough & Baughman, 1995). Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) claim that this process not only promotes development in the management of existing complexities but also “expand(s) knowledge in ways that bring more complexities to light” (p. 96). The ways in which Henderson contributes to the field by providing new resources and research findings supported his prolonged investment in progressive problem solving. Related to this point, Henderson said: “Research is creating new knowledge. That’s always interesting. It can be useful, and it’s the basis of teaching and writing. Just repeating what other people say isn’t much.” Henderson found this process of creating knowledge intriguing. Accordingly, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) explained that experts find a sense of pleasure in solving problems that represent a good balance between their ability and the level of challenge.

Henderson’s endeavor to create and share new knowledge for further development of the academic community is evident. Over four decades, he has conducted and published numerous studies about L2 acquisition. He has also written tests and publications introducing various L2 pedagogical approaches. The most recent publication is available free online and covers different techniques and activities to enhance learning and promoting professional development.

Finally, experts develop teaching principles based on theorizing and reformulating knowledge (Richards, 2010). In his developmental process, Henderson articulated the fundamentals of his knowledge and beliefs about principles:

The experience of how to deal with difficulties in teaching and learning by having to face them and you solve the problem, you learn a lot and see what lies in general behind the solutions. Teachers need to have principles that they can fall back on. Principles are very important because you can do things in many different ways, and the many different ways might also still use the same principles. Teachers have to be able to understand why they are doing things and what they are trying to put into practice.

Henderson's principles did not simply guide his personal and professional practice. He shared his complex and well-grounded knowledge with other teachers by consolidating what he has learned into a clear, usable framework.

Henderson's Framework for Curriculum Design

Henderson's framework, which he has been promoting for over two decades, is a synthesized product of his knowledge. His systematic and flexible framework underpins his principles of teaching and learning.

Systematic. The framework is systematic, straightforward, and easy to implement. Henderson created four main areas of focus based on theoretical principles of L2 teaching and learning that can be used as a guideline for any teacher to plan a course/class. The proportion dedicated to each area is easily and quickly divided into 25% of class time for each of the main areas.

Junko recognized the usefulness of this framework, remarking that it “allows me to understand (concepts) in a systematic manner. I can put into practical use.” Henderson's clear and justified system allows professionals to quickly plan a well-balanced course and understand its purpose and the research implications. His manner of justifying this framework based on systematically theorized knowledge corresponds with Tsui's (2003) study about an expert participant, who continually theorized her informal knowledge.

Flexible. The framework also demonstrates Henderson's flexible and creative manner in integrating different aspects of his rich and well-organized knowledge. He recognizes the advantages of different types of methods and supports blending various methods by complementing the limitations of each methodology. His creativity in integrating different theories demonstrates the ability of experts to break “new ground in their efforts to address problems at increasingly complex levels” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 123). Rather than taking one side of a method, which may not be applicable in a certain context, Henderson suggested creative ways of applying different types of teaching in a balanced way.

Teachers can use this framework in ever-changing teaching situations and across various contexts regardless of objectives of the course or institutional constraints. Working within the framework usually requires minimum materials, and teachers can implement activities with any level of students depending on their own teaching environment. Henderson explained in his publications the importance of a well-balanced course, which makes the effect on students' learning more robust. This framework was created to meet this fundamental goal of teaching and to help teachers maximize their students' learning in any teaching situation. (Further details of his specific framework will not be discussed in order to preserve his anonymity.)

Classroom Practice

I discuss Henderson's teaching practice using data mainly from classroom observations. First, Henderson's systematically organized lectures maximize students' learning. Additionally, his

manner of justification not only assisted students' understanding but also served as a model. His original tasks guided students to efficiently internalize knowledge through scaffolded and engaging activities. Finally, Henderson assisted the developmental process of novice researchers.

Systematically organized lectures. Henderson's teaching involved explaining a target concept and its role within his framework. Moreover, he described various related aspects of the topic by providing practical implications and logical explanations. There was one specific lesson sequence that especially demonstrated his overall approach to teaching. When introducing the concept of extensive reading (ER), Henderson began the lecture by asking students to calculate the proportion of language learning that should be devoted to ER. This required students to apply his framework, which had been previously discussed in class. As shown in this example, Henderson frequently encouraged students to recycle vital knowledge related to the target topic.

Henderson explained the benefits of the topic by introducing significant published studies and their pedagogical implications. Continuing with the example above, he explained effective ways to implement ER based on previous research. Then he expanded the topic to important strategies for running a successful ER class, including the necessity of informing L2 learners the value of ER. Accordingly, he explained the difference between blind and informed tasks by referring to a famous coach, who successfully trained athletes through informed tasks by telling them the goals of each training exercise. Henderson not only lectured about this concept but also modeled it by constantly informing and reminding his students the significance of topics and tasks.

Additionally, Henderson made students' learning meaningful by having the topic relate to their own teaching contexts. When discussing effective ways to promote ER, Henderson described a problem that teachers often face in their context, such as how sustained silent reading is often perceived negatively by stakeholders. Henderson discussed institutional change, which emphasizes the importance of getting people actively involved or rationally convincing them of the importance of implementing new ideas. Furthermore, he introduced examples of successful ER programs. Henderson's ability to understand and predict common obstacles that many educators encounter in their contexts reflects his rich learner knowledge.

Finally, Henderson constantly provided justifications for his assertions based on theories and research. When explaining ER, he justified its use by stating, "it sets a good condition for repetition", which is considered crucial for L2 learning. Theorized reasoning was also provided to answer student questions, make suggestions, and share his opinions. Reasoning is crucial to establishing principles and further develops competence (Tsui, 2003). Henderson not only engaged in this process but also facilitated the same process among his students.

Maximizing students' learning. Henderson's teaching tasks facilitated cooperative learning where students often worked in groups to build their arguments. The tasks offered both theoretical and pedagogical relevance, including evaluating and making suggestions to improve teaching materials and activities based on theories. Additionally, they encouraged the recycling of knowledge through reviewing readings and notes from previous lessons.

Finally, the tasks facilitated successful cooperative learning where students develop new insights by rationalizing their answers and applying and using what they know in a new situation (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Henderson described the importance of this process: “To truly come to grips with some things, you have to talk about it and make sure you understand what their classmates understand. Also when you have feedback from them, then that lets you know what your understanding is.”

Henderson’s tasks encouraged students to verbalize, organize, and reexamine their ideas through justification, negotiation with peers, and utilization of previously studied materials and were perceived positively by students. Junko discussed how talking to her classmates allowed her to “learn how they internalize what they learn in this class. If I don’t understand something, I ask them questions and they help me.” Brad explained that tasks helped him to assess his own understanding because “you notice gaps in your knowledge.” Cooperative learning is not an activity where students simply work in groups, but includes well-structured procedures and tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Henderson’s manner in setting up these necessary steps facilitated successful cooperative learning. He ensured that students understood the nature of tasks by giving several examples. Then he provided necessary monitoring to maintain quality of discussion and assistance during tasks. After completing tasks, students shared answers with Henderson, who provided feedback by evaluating them, asking further questions, and expanding the topic.

His role as an evaluator was dynamic as it shifted from being a resource to being a facilitator. He checked students’ understanding of a concept by evaluating the nature of student responses and justifications followed by providing more details or informing students about misunderstandings based on theorized reasoning. Brad explained: “He’ll tell us where we’re wrong or right because we could be right for the wrong reasons.” Henderson forced students to justify their argument through their reasoning. Freeman and Richards (1993) argued, “explanations or justifications for teaching can be arrived at through reason or rational thought” (p. 201). The manner Henderson promoted learning by pushing students to logically reason their own teaching practices, thus facilitating their development as teachers (Richards, 2010).

Henderson was also a facilitator who piqued students’ interest and promoted engagement. He discussed the importance of engaging students to maximize their learning that “You need to engage students (and) grab them and get them engaged with what they are doing. Challenge them. There are general principles of learning such as the importance of repetition and meeting things in new ways.” Henderson believes engaging students is essential to learning so he utilized different approaches, including creating opportunities for recycling and presenting relevant topics to students.

Henderson’s tasks were organized to scaffold students’ learning. For example, homework assignments demanded that students utilize basic knowledge about a topic and eventually moved to dealing with more complex issues of teaching and researching. In the first assignment, students used special software to explain the type of learning that L2 learners should focus on. They also described and justified their approach to teaching certain skills. The following assignment involved critiquing a sample activity and making suggestions on

improvement utilizing the reading for justification. The assignment also required students to briefly study another language. After recording their L2 learning experience in detail and sharing them with peers, students created research questions about the type of learning they engaged in. As Singh and Richards (2006) argued, it is necessary for teacher educators to understand that students need to shape their understanding of theory based on their actual experience with a language. This assignment provided students with an opportunity to experience language learning from the perspective of both a researcher and a learner.

The final assignment facilitated the recycling and integration of knowledge taught in the course while meeting individual interests of students. There were options for designing a syllabus or a research proposal about the area. Adam, who expected to learn “practical ideas” in the course, and Junko, who needed to create a syllabus for work, selected the first option. In contrast, Brad chose the research option as he had already been working on a project for a year with the assistance of Henderson.

The tasks maximized students’ learning by engaging their interest and guiding them to reach their learning objectives using a scaffolded process. Furthermore, they were designed to meet students’ personal and professional interests by including both practical and research options. Henderson thus not only acts as a classroom teacher, but as a researcher who invites and assists future researchers to contribute to the field by reformulating or adding to existing knowledge.

Guiding novice researchers. Henderson discussed gaps in the field, suggested research ideas, and provided researchers with effective support. His rich knowledge of previous research allowed him to frequently point out remaining gaps. When the class was discussing various methods to enhance students’ learning, Junko suggested giving students a choice of what to study. Henderson responded, “Nobody has looked at it.”, which was often accompanied by positive remarks and suggestion of research ideas.

Henderson also gave constructive feedback on potential research ideas by offering ample practical assistance and recognizing the magnitude of possible future research to further develop the knowledge in the field. Carl, Henderson’s former PhD student and colleague, recalled his experience discussing research topics with Henderson by stating that Henderson’s ideas were “possibly career-changing topics and interesting.” Furthermore, Carl explained that Henderson has “co-authored a number of books, and I think these were books he could have done by himself. You see his generosity.” This evidence reflects Henderson’s practice in assisting novice researchers, who can eventually expand the boundaries of knowledge in SLA.

Discussion

In this study I investigated a teacher educator, Professor Henderson, by focusing on development of his expertise, the products of his knowledge, and practice as an educator and a researcher. His rich knowledge is established through the development of expertise, including content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. Henderson’s learner knowledge makes the content more relevant and meaningful to target

students in a specific context. Henderson's knowledge is organic as it continues to promote his development in a cycle of reflecting, theorizing knowledge, internalizing knowledge and articulating his beliefs, and sharing his expertise. These characteristics of experts have also been found in previous expertise studies where experts demonstrated their continuous effort to theorize and practicalize knowledge (Farrell, 2013; Tsui, 2003). Richards (2010) explained, "A further stage in theorizing from practice is when (expert) teachers formulate principles" (p. 116), which is a process that Henderson engaged in by conceptualizing his principles into his framework. This framework reflects an element of Henderson's expertise, including his ability to creatively blend different theories essential to L2 learning in any teaching context.

The convergence between his knowledge and classroom practice also reflects his expertise. His structured lectures were delivered effectively by incorporating repetitions and justifications, which Henderson believes is crucial to maximizing learning. This is one of the important characteristics of competent teachers because their beliefs are likely to be informed by extensive teaching experiences (Basturkmen, 2012; Farrell & Bennis, 2013). Henderson's knowledge is also supported by his research experience, an aspect that distinguishes him from other non-expert teachers.

While previous studies on L2 teaching expertise have mainly focused on teaching practice (e.g., Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Gatbonton, 1999, 2008), the analysis of Henderson indicates that expertise goes beyond teaching. Henderson's manner in reformulating his content and pedagogical knowledge by progressive problem solving also goes beyond personal professional growth and lies in his contribution in expanding the knowledge of the academic community. Henderson's knowledge is further synthesized and articulated through his publications about L2 learning and teaching in addition to his framework. His influence affects not only his students but also L2 teachers and researchers around the world.

Conclusion

The findings of this study offer pedagogical and theoretical implications for teacher development. First, teachers at any stage of professional development need to engage in constant reflection and theorizing of knowledge about the subject and teaching. Novice teachers can tremendously benefit from working with experienced teachers and teacher educators, who can help facilitate their development by modeling and encouraging expert behaviors. Furthermore, observing classes, discussing different aspects of the job, and justifying their practices enable novices to realize gaps in their knowledge. This process can also benefit experienced teachers tremendously. They can also discover new appreciation for teaching and continue their lifelong learning by studying excellent teaching in their field.

Teacher knowledge and its development are too complex to be explored fully in a single case study, and therefore further research is necessary. Investigating characteristics of expert language teacher educators even in minor studies such as this one can help improve the quality of teacher education and further our ability to understand and characterize the elusive phenomenon of expertise.

About the Author

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