Teaching Processes and Practices for an Australian Multicultural Classroom: Two Complementary Models

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Which pedagogical processes and practices that target the recognition, value and sharing of world views in teaching and learning can be identified as strategies for learning to live together in an Australian multicultural classroom? The question is addressed by this paper, which presents two discrete but complementary pedagogical models that display the successful teaching processes and practices of teachers in Australian multicultural classrooms. These processes and practices accord with the Delors Report recommendations that education for the future should be organised around the four pillars of learning, namely, learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together.

The two complementary pedagogical models are informed by research in two primary schools in a multicultural urban area in NSW. The implications of these two models in respect to the lesson and syllabus outcomes, and the contribution of parental involvement to education are also examined.

pedagogy, Delors Report, teaching practice, multicultural, Australian, classroom

INTRODUCTION: THE QUESTION

The question, 'Which pedagogical processes and practices that target the recognition, value and sharing of world views in teaching and learning can be identified as strategies for learning to live together in an Australian multicultural classroom?' invites an analysis of its components. The first part of the question refers to pedagogical processes. These pedagogical processes are teaching processes and practices. The teaching processes are addressed in the synchronic analysis of the observed lessons. The teaching practices of two observed teachers of excellence are described, explained and appraised through a categorical analysis informed by educational pedagogy and anthropological assumption. The recognition, value and sharing of world views are represented in the acknowledgement of ways of being, ways of seeing, ways of knowing, and ways of learning which respond to the Delors Report's recommendations that education should target the four pillars of learning which are: learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together. Ways of learning to be, learning to see, learning to know and learning to live together reflect the broader anthropological context of identity, worldview, and relevance of knowledge acquisition; and the educational strategies focused on syllabus outcomes which, simultaneously, address children's learning needs and experiences.

The second part of the question specifies an Australian multicultural classroom. An examination of successful teaching processes and practices in a multicultural classroom were undertaken in two primary school classes in New South Wales. They were situated in an urban area with a population of 57,000 reflecting a broad range of multicultural backgrounds according to the 2001

census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The migrant settlement in this area has been ongoing since the 1950s but with surges following the opening of a large industrial complex in the early 1960s and the attendant service industries, and in the increases in general migration of the 1980s to the present. The relevant school populations consisted of children of mainly third phase non-English speaking background.

METHOD

The Pedagogical Processes and Practices Identified

The research focused on the teaching processes and practices in the two primary schools, SchX and SchZ, and the identified teachers of those schools, SchXTA and SchZTA. SchXTA and SchZTA were identified by senior officials of the NSW Department of Education as teachers of excellence whose teaching processes and practices addressed the recognition, value and sharing of world views in teaching and learning. The lessons of SchX were recorded as handwritten observations, which were validated by SchXTA and the principal of SchX. The lessons of SchZTA were recorded by handwritten notes, photographs, audio-tapes and videotapes from which transcripts were made. The transcripts and copies of all the written, taped and photographed material were made available to SchZTA and the principal of SchZ for validation.

The notes and transcripts were copied to QSR N4 software program for categorical analysis. Tables derived from the N4 program were imported to Excel to be converted to Excel tables and charts.

The Schools: SchX and SchZ

Teaching processes and practices of individual teachers are determined to some extent by the schools in which they teach. Schools differ in a number of ways including size, social composition of the community, programs, parental participation, staffing and student needs and abilities. Therefore in order to identify those teaching processes and practices of SchXTA and SchZTA it is important to review the structure and organisation of the schools in which they undertook their teaching duties.

Both SchX and SchZ are primary schools situated about two kilometres apart in the more recent satellite city development of an urban conglomerate. However, in the response of each to its local community they constitute two entirely different approaches to education. In 2002, SchX could be described as a proactive model of school education. SchX encouraged parents and teachers to address educational goals through specific programs such as the teacher for learning difficulties: a reading recovery program, English as a second language program, and the daily developmental play program in which parents were encouraged to participate. Lesson times and classes were determined by a central school timetable. There was regular contact between SchXTA (the ESL teacher) and the other teachers of the same children in their home classes, in this case SchXTB and SchXTC, concerning syllabus outcomes and student progress. Many staff members had been teaching at the school for a longer number of years so there was an ethos of stability and predictability in the school.

On the other hand, in 2002 SchZ could be described as a reactive model of school education. The social composition of the neighbourhood and the proximity of a school for children with special needs whose students attended classes at SchZ, constituted a broadly diverse student body. The school was required to integrate and adapt to this diversity through programs such as extra classes, or places in classes, and programs for children with physical and intellectual needs; special ESL support lessons; a reading recovery program; a student welfare policy with a behaviour management program and a drug education program; and a program which provided the

opportunity for teenage mothers to learn childcare. Parents were encouraged to participate in general school activities such as canteen and road crossing duties as well as the home reading program. The broad range of educational requirements demanded several part-time teachers and teachers more recently appointed to address the current school needs. Consequently the complexity of staffing made a centralised organisation of lessons times unmanageable. Lesson times and length of lessons were devolved to the teachers of the individual years and subject areas.

The Classes Taught by SchXTA and SchZTA

Just as the organisation in schools influences the teaching processes and practices of teachers, so too does the type of class. Classes are formed for a variety of reasons, and every class demands some degree of flexibility by the teacher to meets its needs. However, it may be accepted that although teachers develop a range of skills, which they may modify for certain teaching requirements, they maintain a consistency in the basic structure of their lessons and the strategies that they adopt. SchXTA and SchZTA taught classes which were markedly different in purpose and composition but both teachers adapted their teaching styles to address successfully the NSW syllabus outcomes while maintaining processes and practices that addressed the Delors designated four pillars of learning.

The observed class of SchXTA was a Kindergarten or Early Stage 1 English as a Second Language (ESL) class of nine students. Of these nine students, eight students participated in the research. Of these eight students, three were in the home class of SchXTB and five were in the home class of SchXTC. The ESL lessons were held with SchXTA on four mornings per week from 9.00am until 10.30 am. These lessons were focussed on incremental language acquisition and were unequivocally structured to that end. The lessons were observed twice a week at three weekly intervals in Term 2, 2002 and with follow-up visits at three weekly intervals in Terms 3 and 4, 2002.

The observed class of SchZTA reflected the integrative constitution of SchZ. SchZTA taught a composite Years 1 and 2 at the level of the NSW syllabus outcomes levels of Year 1 and Year 2 English and Creative Arts, but mainly of the Year 1 level. The class of approximately 23 students included 3 ESL students. Two of these students took reading recovery lessons with a special teacher. SchZTA also gave in-class ESL lessons to students and took another for withdrawal ESL lessons during the observation period, including one of the children in her Year 1/2 composite class. She did not take a designated ESL class of several children. The five classes observed for the comparative analysis of teaching practices and processes were: reading and creative writing (07.08.02 and 28.08.02); craft (29.08.02); English written expression following an in-school excursion (25.09.02); and English expression – procedural text (14.11.02). The length of lessons ranged from 20 minutes for individual students to 1 ½ hours for the Years1/2.

Two Models for Teaching in an Australian Multicultural Classroom

These classes of SchX and SchZ and the teaching processes and practices demonstrated by SchXTA and SchZTA, present two education models. These may be described as an integrative model and a continuum model.

The Integrative Model

As an integrative model the two classes present separately but the underlying expectation is that children from an ESL class will return to the integrated classroom at a designated time or when they have acquired sufficient skills in the use of English to be able to participate in the lessons. SchXTA presents the ESL learning situation segment of this model. In this model children leave

their home classes for ESL lessons and return for the remaining lessons. The focus of the lessons is the outcomes described for English for the level at which the children have entered into the particular class and all effort is directed at improving the standard of English of the students. SchZTA presents an example of the integrated segment of this model. In the integrated classroom children are all encouraged to achieve their potential but since the class also may include children with other needs such as reading recovery, the teaching focuses on the immediate outcomes of the lesson, but with a recognition by the teacher that the language level of the students needs to be considered and included as a developmental skill in all areas as well as English lessons.

The integrative model provides for both teachers to address the four pillars of education. However, in this model informed by the teaching of SchXTA and SchZTA, the exercise of this aspect of the teaching and learning experience may be approached differently. In the ESL segment of this model the teacher encourages children to feel confident about their identity, world view and learning experiences through acknowledging and sharing their various cultural backgrounds and, wherever possible, including their parents in this cultural exchange. This practice develops a child's self-confidence and acceptance and tolerance of others.

In the integrated classroom segment of this model, SchZTA presents a classroom where all children are treated equally, where any differences, be they of culture, appearance, ability, physical capacity or otherwise, are accepted without mention. The teacher maintains as much contact with the parents as possible in monitoring the child's development, but otherwise the focus of the lessons is on the subject matter, which reflects current skill acquisition or designated topics such as the local environment. The resources, materials, and language of the teacher reflect this subject matter. This is a culturally neutral classroom but one which has its own culture of acceptance and harmonious interaction between students, and teacher and students.

The Continuum Model

In this model SchXTA and SchZTA and the classes that they taught in the observation period represent two ends of a continuum. The highly structured ESL class is one extreme and the fully integrated class is the other extreme. This model is accessible to all teachers because all classes will fall somewhere along this continuum and therefore the teaching processes and practices of SchXTA and SchZTA may be modified and adapted to any classroom situation.

The integrated model and the continuum model together form a powerful resource for teachers either in specialist teaching areas or in general classrooms to access teaching practices and processes that have proven successful in multicultural classrooms. The degree to which teachers will access any of these teaching practices and processes will depend on the extent to which they feel confident enough to integrate all, or some, of the cultural inclusions of the backgrounds of the children or whether it is better for them and their classes that these acknowledgements by the teacher remain without comment so that no child feels different. It is one thing to be among a number of children of diverse backgrounds in a multicultural ESL class, but it is another to be the one of a very few, or indeed, the only child of a different cultural background from other children. This situation requires the sensitivity demonstrated by SchZTA in her integrated classroom.

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ANALYSIS

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In order to determine the successful teaching processes and practices of SchXTA and SchZTA two approaches were undertaken. These were:

(a) a synchronic analysis of a series of lessons by SchXTA and SchZTA; a diachronic analysis of five lessons of SchXTA and a comparative analysis of five lessons of SchZTA; and

(b) a categorical analysis of communication and teaching strategies of SchXTA and SchZTA.

The outcomes of these analyses are merged as five topics which incorporate both teaching processes and teaching practices within their scope. These five topics are:

(a) lesson organisation,

(b) lesson outcomes,

(c) teacher communication,

(d) teaching strategies, and

(e) cultural inclusion.

Synchronic Analysis

Lesson Organisation

Lesson organisation refers to both time and space. Time refers to both the organisation of the lesson in its synchronic form and also the organisation a series of lessons over an extended period of time. The synchronic analysis of the lessons of SchXTA and SchZTA indicates a basic structure used by each teacher, which remained constant over a series of lessons. This consistency in structure was a significant instrument of both teachers in establishing a predictable routine and in so doing maintaining the focus of the children. The similarities in the synchronic structure of the lessons are demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. A comparative synchronic analysis of the lessons of SchXTA and SchZTA

SchXTA	SchZTA
Entering the classroom	
Speaking and Listening	Commencement of Lesson / News
Greeting	Introduction
Date	Vocabulary
Weather	
Revision of vocabulary	Explanation/ Demonstration
News	
Writing	Activity
Explanation	writing
Writing the date	craft
Preparation for writing	
New word for creative writing	
Creative writing	
Lesson closure	Lesson closure

Both SchXTA and SchZTA organised their lessons into three main sections – the teacher and student interaction component at the commencement of the lessons; the explanation and demonstration section; and the writing or activity student focused section. Both teachers used the classroom space to enhance their lessons. For the first section of the lesson the children in both classes sat on the floor in an area about one quarter the space of the room while the teacher sat on a low chair close to them. In the demonstration and explanation section SchXTA always stood before the children so that her actions would be visible. In the case of SchZTA, depending on the lesson, the children might remain seated on the floor for this section while the teacher remained seated on the low chair, or otherwise were seated at their desks while SchZTA stood in front of the class. In the third section of the lesson the children of both classes always worked at their desks while SchXTA and SchZTA monitored their work or responded to questions.

The lessons of SchXTA were more intricately structured than those of SchZTA. SchXTA maintained a tight interconnection between the skills introduced in the first section of the lesson

such as the morning greeting the date, the weather vocabulary, and spoken expression (News), and the application of these skills in the writing section of the lesson. SchZTA taught a variety of subjects including English spoken and written expression, art and craft, and natural science so the children's News stories were not used in the activity section of the lesson as was the case with the students of SchXTA. The News provided an opportunity for children to practice their speaking skills and was a means of focussing the children's attention to the teacher and lesson.

Both SchXTA and SchZTA used the demonstration and explanation section of the lesson as an opportunity for imparting the required skills for the lesson. For SchXTA this was a development from the previous lesson while for SchZTA this could be a discrete lesson with no follow-up. This was followed by the activity section of the lesson in which both SchXTA and SchZTA worked in a one-to-one interaction with the children.

Syllabus Outcomes

The lesson outcomes of both SchXTA and SchZTA were ascertained by comparing the long term goals and short term goals of each lesson to the New South Wales Board of Studies, *English K-6 Syllabus Outcomes for Early Stage 1* (BOSNSW, 1998). The lessons of SchXTA were informed by the English Syllabus outcomes of *Talking and Listening* and *Writing,* and the lessons of SchZTA were informed by the English Syllabus and the Creative Arts Syllabus (BOSNSW, 1998).

The synchronic and diachronic analyses of the lessons of SchXTA confirmed that the long term goals for Kindergarten outlined in the *Syllabus Outcomes for Early Stage 1* were accumulatively addressed in each lesson through the scaffolding of each skill upon the previously learned skill. SchXTA exhibited an intricate but logical interlacing and extending of skills within a lesson and the transformation of each new learned skill into a building block for the next skill to be learned in follow-up lessons.

SchZTA did not scaffold the lessons incrementally but, instead, addressed specific skills outlined in the *NSW Syllabus Outcomes*. Any particular lesson outcomes reflected the requirements of the syllabus for *Creative Arts*, *English*, or any other subject being taught, but the teaching of skills did not demonstrate the intrinsic coherence of that of SchXTA. This is not to say that the skills development was not incremental, but the irregular teaching requirements of SchZTA as a part-time teacher, and the broad subject area that she was required to teach, demanded an observation of the skills of the class in general and a choice of which skills would be included as an outcome for any lesson.

Categorical Analysis

Teacher Communication

The forms of teacher communication analysed, consisted of (a) verbal communication including assertions, commissives, directives, effectives, effective-expressives, and verdictives; (b) non-verbal communication, in this case being facial expression, gesture and conversational and social space; and (c) paralanguage including vocal volume and pitch and tone.

Verbal Teacher Communication: The verbal communication of both SchXTA and SchZTA was measured against the variables of the domain communication verbal (cv), at a frequency of five occasions. The collective cv observations are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Collective cv variables scores from five observations of SchXTA and SchZTA

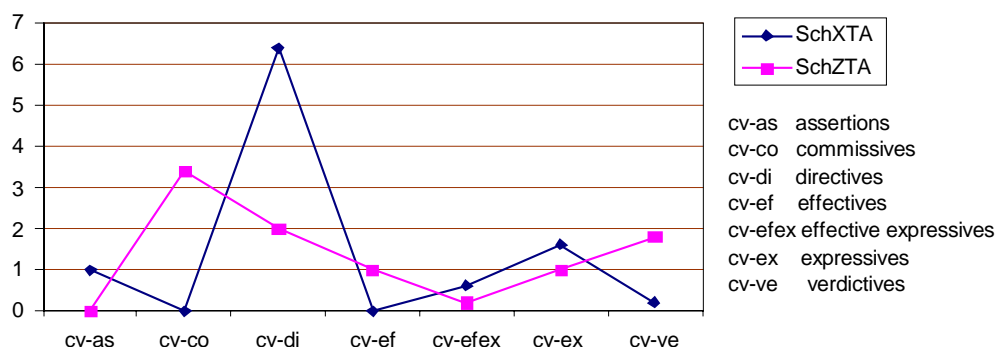|	cv-as	cv-co	cv-di	cv-ef	cv-efex	cv-ex	cv-ve
SchXTA	5	0	32	0	3	8	1

SchZTA	0	17	10	5	1	5	9

The unit scores in Table 3 were derived by dividing the category scores in Table 2 by five for the five observations of both SchXTA and SchZTA.

Table 3. cv variables unit scores of SchXTA and SchZTA

	cv-as	cv-co	cv-di	cv-ef	cv-efex	cv-ex	cv-ve
SchXTA	1	0	6.4	0	0.6	1.6	0.2
SchZTA	0	3.4	2	1	0.2	1	1.8

Figure 1 demonstrates the relative frequencies of each of the variables of cv. It indicates the points of close convergence of the variables and the points of divergence.

Figure 1. Comparative cv variables unit score values of SchXTA and SchZTA

SchXTA who limited vocabulary to expressions and vocabulary that she had imparted in her incremental skill development, used directives as her most common form of communication. She avoided conversational techniques such as assertions, effective expressives and verdictives. SchZTA, who used language as a means of establishing a friendly rapport with her students and also taught several subjects other than English, resorted to the use of commissives and verdictives as these styles of communication were more persuasive than instructions. Expressives were occasionally used but assertions and effective expressives were rarely used. She included directives as instructions where guidelines were to be followed, for example in completing a proforma.

Non-Verbal Teacher Communication: Non-verbal communication consisted of facial expression, gesture and the use of conversational and social space. SchXTA would not agree to being recorded by audio-tape or video-tape. However, her teaching requirements contraindicated the need for any associated facial expression. On the other hand, SchZTA permitted frequent recordings of her lessons, which allowed for a detailed analysis of her use of facial expression, gesture and voice. In accordance with her endeavour to encourage a sense of friendly joint purpose in her class, SchZTA used facial expression economically on occasions in association with exclamations such as a positive response to a child's work. Both SchXTA and SchZTA used gesture for reinforcing explanation and demonstration, and conversational or social space depending on whether they were addressing a single child or the whole class.

Paralanguage Teacher Communication: Paralanguage was used by both SchXTA and SchZTA but differently. SchXTA repeated instructions while maintaining a pitch and volume of voice that were designed to impart information without emotional connotation and to maintain consistency in expression to avoid ambiguity of meaning. SchZTA used her voice as a significant teaching tool to maintain the interest of children in the information she was sharing. Her use of voice pitch, volume and expression was a consistent strategy to capture and maintain the interest of the children.

Teaching Strategies

An examination of the learning environment of SchXTA and SchZTA indicates that both teachers were aware of the importance of holistic learning and the benefits of scaffolding. According to Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2000, p.9) "It is widely recognized that an integrated, holistic and developmental approach is needed to learning, teaching and care with children form birth to 7". But these writers also acknowledge the important contribution of scaffolding and include Elliot's assessment of the characteristics of scaffolding (Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2000, p.25) "making instructional goals explicit, actively monitoring learner progress, providing immediate and educationally oriented feedback, and creating an environment that is task oriented but relaxed. In addition, other characteristics of scaffolding should include providing social, cultural and linguistic relevance". This assessment of scaffolding accords with Hammond and Gibson (2001, p.6), who describe scaffolding as the "ongoing interaction between teacher and student".

In the case of SchXTA, holistic learning was addressed through the structure of the lesson that used the News section to draw on children's home experiences thereby providing an opportunity for children to discuss their experiences while the teacher assisted with the development of their vocabulary and grammar through questioning, modelling, and immediate reinforcing feedback. This spoken section of the lesson provided the framework for the development of the written section of the lesson. SchZTA used the speaking and listening section of the lesson to develop concepts, ideas and vocabulary and to practise speaking and listening as a group activity that would be re-addressed through another medium in the activity section of the lesson.

Both teachers used scaffolding as a method by which skills addressed in the speaking and listening section of the lesson were instrumental in providing the knowledge to complete the written section of the lesson and, in the process, were reinforced. SchXTA also used the incremental form of scaffolding, described by Hammond and Gibson (2001), such as program goals and the selection and sequencing of tasks that are informed by graduated long term outcomes. Each section of any lesson such as the morning greeting, the etiquette for the presentation of News, the writing of the date or the description of the weather provided an opportunity for the development of social conventions, verbal expressions, grammar and vocabulary.

Since most classes are positioned on the continuum model between the highly structured ESL class and the fully integrated class, the choice of learning and scaffolding should be tempered with an understanding of the needs of individual children. The case of SchXStuC and SchZStuG are cases in particular. SchXStuC was the child who made the least progress in the class of SchXTA. By the end of the year he had not mastered the ability to link phonemes together to make words and he was therefore unable to write down his ideas with any legibility. Yet in his home class he demonstrated that he learned kinetically such as measuring height physically by standing between children who were shorter and taller than himself. His standard of creativity using a construction set was superior to that of most children in the class during developmental play. Children such as SchStuC could benefit from an environment that embraces holistic learning in its broadest sense, that is, including learning through multiple intelligences.

SchZStuG was in a fully integrated Kindergarten class at school SchZ. He was withdrawn from class once a week for an individual speaking and listening English lesson with the ESL teacher, SchZTA. Both his home class teacher and SchZTA had concerns with his spoken English, which they described as similar to 'gobbledygook'. However, when the videotape of his lessons were transcribed into speech it became apparent that SchZStuG was struggling to verbalise his ideas but the fluency of his speech was broken by stammering as he repeatedly attempted to correct his own grammar, and also by his incorrect pronunciation. A structured language program, that is, a

scaffolded incremental program, with modelling and repetition, could correct and strengthen his English language acquisition.

The main teaching strategies invoked by SchXTA and SchZTA within the holistic and scaffolded teaching environment were the delivery and extraction of information and the development and reinforcement of skills. The main teaching strategies used by both SchXTA and SchZTA are: classroom organisation, questioning and feedback.

Classroom Organisation: The classroom organisation of students in both case studies was socio metric; that is, the children could sit with their friends. In both case studies children were encouraged to share their work with other children or to assist each other. In the class of SchZTA, a composite class, this interaction occurred both within and across grades.

Questioning: Questioning was a significant strategy used in both case studies. The strategy of questioning of both SchXTA and SchZTA was measured against the variables of the domain questioning (qu) at a frequency of five occasions. The collective observations are depicted in Table 4. In the case of SchXTA the questioning of the eight individual students was collectively measured over the five lessons to provide the initial collective total.

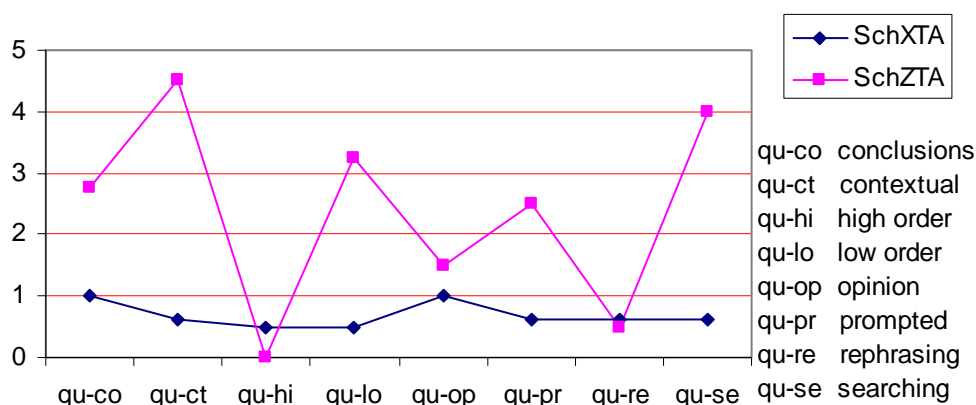**Table 4. qu variables collective scores of five class observations of SchXTA and SchZTA**

	qu-co	qu-ct	qu-hi	qu-lo	qu-op	qu-pr	qu-re	qu-se
SchXTA	8	5	4	4	8	5	5	5
SchZTA	11	18	0	13	6	10	2	16

The unit scores in Table 5 were derived by dividing the category scores of SchXTA and SchZTA by five to reflect the five observations of SchXTA and the 5 observation periods of SchZTA.

Table 5. qu unit scores of SchXTA and SchZTA

	qu-co	qu-ct	qu-hi	qu-lo	qu-op	qu-pr	qu-re	qu-se
SchXTA	1	0.625	0.5	0.5	1	0.625	0.63	0.63
SchZTA	2.75	4.5	0	3.25	1.5	2.5	0.5	4

Figure 2 demonstrates the relative frequencies of each of the variables of qu. It indicates the points of close convergence of the variables and the points of divergence.

Figure 2. Comparative qu unit score values of SchXTA and SchZTA

Both SchXTA and SchZTA used questioning as a key teaching strategy. The frequency of types of questioning used reflects the teaching requirements of the relevant classes. The diagram indicates that SchXTA used all the described types of questioning equally with a slight increase in questions that drew conclusions and high order questioning. In practice SchXTA used questioning in the News, that is, the speaking section of the lesson, to improve the children's ability to recall and converse in English but also to provide each child with a verbalised personal experience, or

story, to bring to the written recount section of the lesson. As a consequence of this purpose, the questioning would always tend be in the context of the child's experiential recount and would reflect the child's ability to recall, to respond to questions and to convert ideas into spoken form that focused on the ideas that would form the core of their written work. Therefore, the questioning used by SchXTA was responsive to the individual needs of children and since the children represented different levels of language acquisition and expression, the questioning varied accordingly.

Questioning in the case of SchZTA reflected the lesson subject matter and the type of lesson. For example, in the case of the Craft demonstration and practice lesson, SchZTA provided instructions and did not use questioning at all. In the Speaking and Listening lesson and the Creative Writing lessons, questioning was used for reasons similar to that of SchXTA, that is, to encourage children to convey their ideas in English, to provide ideas on a topic and to expand on these ideas, and as preparation for the creative writing process. Since the larger class of SchZTA precluded the opportunity to expand the contribution of each individual child, SchZTA focused on questioning that led to corporate conclusions such as the steps that would be used to make a sandwich in the Procedural Text lesson, or the prompted answers for multiple choice responses for a narrative recount (the story about the Frog who turned into a Prince). The type of questioning most commonly used by SchZTA reflects these corporate needs and consisted mainly of contextual questions, searching questions, prompted questions, opinion generating questions and questions that led to conclusions. In fact, all of these types of questions are incorporated by SchZTA as an inductive teaching strategy to produce specific conclusions.

Feedback: Feedback was a significant strategy used by both SchXTA and SchZTA. Feedback refers to the teacher's response to student effort. In the two case studies, feedback was used as a reinforcing tool applied when children were undertaking a skill or piece of work, and as a consequence, could incorporate positive or negative connotations depending on the individual teachers' usage. The strategy of feedback of both SchXTA and SchZTA measured the seven variables of the domain feedback (fb). The collective observations are depicted in Table 6.

Table 6. Collective fb scores from six observations of SchXTA and of five of SchZTA

	fb-co	fb-im	fb-ne	fb-po	fb-re	fb-sa	fb-sm
SchXTA	9	14	0	7	13	0	3
SchZTA	26	13	0	14	32	0	1

The unit scores in Table 7 were derived by dividing the category scores of SchXTA by six and SchZTA by five to reflect the six observation periods of SchXTA and the five observation periods of SchZTA.
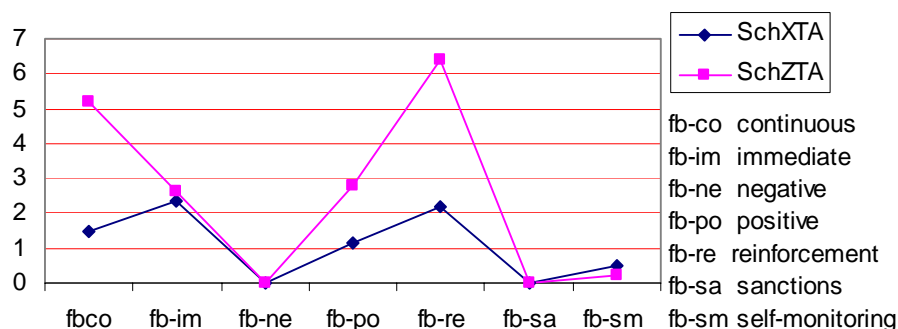
Table 7. fb unit scores of SchXTA and SchZTA

	fb-co	fb-im	fb-ne	fb-po	fb-re	fb-sa	fb-sm
SchXTA	1.5	2.33	0	1.17	2.17	0	0.5
SchZTA	5.2	2.6	0	2.8	6.4	0	0.2

Figure 3 demonstrates the relative frequencies of each of the variables of fb. It indicates the points of close convergence of the variables and the points of divergence.

The use of feedback was a major teaching strategy of both teachers. Moreover, feedback was used as a positive teaching tool to recognise and reinforce correct responses. Negative feedback or sanctions were never used by either teacher. The use of immediate feedback of both teachers converged.

Immediate feedback refers to an acknowledgement by the teacher to the work of any individual student and the feedback is directed to that student. Continuous feedback refers to ongoing general

responses to correct work of individuals or the class. It is designed for all students in the class. SchXTA who spoke only when providing specific information, instructions, questions and feedback presented a low level of feedback but it was used as a tool for immediate correction or acknowledgement of a child's work or as a reinforcement of correct responses. SchZTA who used a conversational style of interaction with her students to maintain their interest used continuous feedback by drawing attention to children who were achieving the correct results but she also used it specifically in lessons such as speaking and listening to recognise the efforts of individual children. The most frequently used form of feedback by SchZTA was continuous and reinforcing feedback and was a feature of all lessons whether in class or individually in ESL lessons. Moreover, SchZTA used positive feedback as encouragement for individual children. Self-monitoring was encouraged but was not a significant tactic mainly due to the early level of education.

Figure 3. Comparative fb unit score values of SchXTA and SchZTA

Cultural Inclusion

The study validated the importance of the recognition of the cultural backgrounds of the students. Not all parents were active in the school education of their children so the onus fell upon the teachers to communicate with parents. Both teachers contacted parents by approaching them in the school grounds when they brought their children to school or by notes or messages sent through the children or their older siblings.

Although both teachers were conscious of the cultural backgrounds of their NESB children and addressed their special needs in the lessons, the circumstances of the two different types of classrooms indicated that this should be dealt with differently in practice. In the case of the ESL classroom of SchXTA, the classroom environment could provide an uninterrupted transition between the home culture and the Anglo school environment. Through a commitment by SchXTA to a positive recognition and sharing of the different cultural backgrounds of the children, their confidence in mixing with other children and taking risks with learning English was strengthened. This confidence spilled over into their home classes where all the children demonstrated improvement in self-confidence and performance over the year, and two children gained the highest marks in their home class, one for English, the other for maths.

In the case of SchZTA the integrated nature of the class advocated a more subtle recognition and approach to NESB children that did not differentiate them from the other children in the classroom. In cases such as this where the NESB child is in a small minority, curriculum programs that address multicultural topics in a positive way are more appropriate. This was the case in SchZ which included cultural studies in the overall curriculum and which included extra individual ESL lessons for students in the form of lesson assistance within the classroom, or speaking and reading in a withdrawal situation. Since other programs were operating in the school for children with special needs of varying types, these children did not appear to be singled out for extra attention because of their cultural differences.

The resources in SchZ did not address the multicultural composition of the school. SchX included posters and displays of children's work on cultural themes and SchXTA included some examples of cultural knowledge relevant to her students such as the Cyrillic alphabet, the word 'welcome' in several languages, and a poster of foods from different countries.

In terms of values, both teachers managed their classes with commitment to the NSW Department of Education recommendation of equity for all students.

Parental Involvement

The research indicated that there were three levels of parental involvement in the schools observed, and this would hold true generally as indicated by Siraj-Blachford and Clarke (2000, p.108). The three levels may be described as: peripheral, participation and partnership.

Peripheral Level: The peripheral level of parental involvement includes parents who contribute to school fund raising and who assist their children with homework and other activities to be completed at home and with minimal school attendance by the parents except for exceptional meetings and so on. The participation level includes parents who become involved in school and class activities that assist their children but do not participate in general educational philosophy or curriculum development. The partnership level includes parents who are proactive in their contribution to school and class activities that assist their children and who are vitally interested in the promotion of educational philosophy or methodology.

The performance of the eight children of the Kindergarten class of SchXTA in meeting the recommended outcomes of the K-6 English Syllabus (BOSNSW, 1998), demonstrated that where parents and teacher were jointly involved in a child's education, the better the chance that child had of fulfilling his or her potential in accordance with the four pillars of learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The research indicates that for a child to grow according to the four pillars of learning, namely, learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together, it is essential that the child's unique sense of who he or she is, the social position of that child and the ramifications of religious, ideological and other cultural factors, the knowledge needed for that child in his or her socio-economic environment, and the ability to integrate with people of diverse backgrounds, need to be addressed. Although teachers may address these four pillars of learning, as demonstrated in the analysis of successful teaching processes and practices, in addition to requirements of the school structure, management and curriculum, the first point of education and socialisation is the home. Since the cultural experiences of children entering school are diverse, then the involvement of parents in their child's education, especially at this early stage, can establish this connection in a child's education and assist the teacher with the child's ongoing needs.

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