

A Video-Mediated Critical Friendship Reflection Framework for ESL Teacher Education

Monica Gonzalez Smith, Ph.D.

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

<monicags@hawaii.edu>

Abstract

In teacher preparation years, teacher candidates are often required to use personal video recordings of classroom instruction to reflect on teaching and learning. While it is well-documented that video supports, scaffolds, and transforms teacher reflection, the literature on ESL-focused video reflection is scant. The present study discusses how four, final semester, undergraduate teacher candidates engaged in critical friendship to reflect on personally recorded videos of instruction delivered to elementary-aged ESL students. Twelve critical friendship lesson feedback sessions were collected over a 15-week period and were analyzed through ethnographic research methods using friendship metaphors and a member checking process. The article presents a video-mediated critical friendship framework that ESL teacher educators can use to structure video-mediated dialogue with teacher candidates and concludes with a discussion surrounding the benefits of using critical friendship in ESL teacher education.

Introduction

Reflection is the cornerstone of ESL teacher education (Farrell, 2015). Effective ESL educators can use self-monitoring strategies to collect and analyze classroom data to make informed decisions about future language teaching actions and behaviors (Richards & Farrell, 2005). The standards used to structure reflective practice in ESL teacher education are generic in nature and neglect to mention the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions teachers need to be effective ESL educators. For example, the *Association for Childhood Education International* [ACEI], *Elementary Education Standard 5.1* states that teachers need to “reflect on their practice... to continually evaluate the effects of their professional decisions and actions on students” (2007). ACEI does not mention how candidates’ should evaluate the effects of ESL instructional decisions. Similarly, the *Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium* [InTASC], Standard 9.e states that a professional teacher is one who “reflects on his/her personal biases and assess resources to deepen his/her own understanding of cultural,

ethnic, gender, and learning differences” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). What are the resources that teacher candidates should use to deepen their understandings of ESL teaching and learning?

Teacher education programs have begun using video reflection tools to promote teacher candidates’ (TCs’) reflections on ESL teaching and learning. When using video reflection tools, TC can see instruction through a student’s perspective of the classroom (Estapa, Pinnow & Chval, 2016) and can watch instructional episodes repeatedly to make informed decisions about the subsequent teaching actions that are needed to improve teaching (Tripp & Rich, 2012). While video may promote candidates’ reflections on ESL teaching and learning, the empirical research on ESL-focused video reflection is in its infancy. Acknowledging that reflective dialogue is a critical component of video reflection and teacher professional development (Borko, Jacobs, Eiteljorg & Pittman, 2008; Marsh & Mitchell, 2014; Zhang, Lundeborg, Koehler, & Eberhardt, 2011); this ethnographic research explored how *critical friendship* supported undergraduate teacher candidates’ reflections on ESL teaching and learning.

Critical Friendship

Critical friendship involves two or more individuals who have complementary skills and interact with each other to form new understandings that had not been previously possessed (Farrell, 2008). A critical friend is an individual who collaborates with teachers in a way that encourages discussion and reflection in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Critical friends increase student learning and achievement through ongoing practice-centered collegial conversations about teaching and learning through a cycle of inquiry, reflection, and action. Critical friends work with a teacher to support a teacher’s professional development needs; they listen to a teacher’s interpretation of their instruction and provide thought-provoking feedback questions that “give voice to a teacher’s thinking [as if] looking into a mirror” (Farrell, 2008, p.149). While similar to peer coaching, the central aim of critical friendship is for one teacher to help another teacher improve instruction; this is done through a foundation of trust, openness, mutual respect, and the creation of a shared vision.

Review of the Literature

Video recordings of enacted classroom instruction provide teacher candidates (TCs) with a way to see, notice, and document what occurred during a specific lesson. Video presents an objective record of what took place during a lesson and provides a way for TCs to see instruction unfold through a student’s perspective of the classroom (Estapa, et al. 2016). ESL-focused reflection involves TCs in close examinations of student learning by collecting and examining classroom data to reflect on teaching practice (Beacher, Rorimer, & Smith, 2012). Currently, the literature on video tools used in ESL teacher education programs reports on video-mediated dialogue, or how university supervisors use video to evaluate TCs’ ESL instructional performances.

Video-Mediated Dialogue

Researchers contend that video reflection should include opportunities where teachers share personal video recordings of ESL instruction with others to facilitate reflective dialogue surrounding noticed ESL *critical incidents* (Farrell & Beacher, 2017; Mercado & Baecher, 2014). Critical incidents are noticed classroom events or dilemmas that allow teachers to uncover new understandings of teaching and learning practice (Tripp, 2015).

Eröz-Tuğa, (2013) examined how video-mediated feedback sessions with a university supervisor (UnS) improved 11 Turkish TCs' insights into ESL instruction. Data were collected over the course of one semester and included two video-mediated feedback sessions per TC. Findings revealed that TCs felt anxiety about sharing personal video recordings of their ESL instruction with their UnS, but began to feel more comfortable after the second video-mediated feedback session. Findings from Eröz-Tuğa's research underscore the potential benefits that video-mediated dialogue has for promoting teacher reflection and pedagogical development. Implications from Eröz-Tuğa's research suggests that TCs need time to develop comfort with a video reflection methodology before being asked to examine video for reflective practice.

Video for Evaluations on TCs' ESL Instructional Performances

Researchers have studied how ESL teacher educators use video to evaluate TCs' ESL instructional performances. Beacher, McCormack and Kung, (2014) examined how university supervisors used video to conduct field-based evaluations. Data included questionnaire responses and written vignettes from 20 university supervisor's feedback sessions. A thematic analysis involving member checking reported on the affordances and challenges university supervisors encountered using video to evaluate TCs' ESL instructional performances. Challenges discussed included the abbreviated nature of video clips and the inability for university supervisors to see the whole classroom in video recordings. Listed affordances included how video provoked TC autonomy; whereby, TCs used video to pinpoint specific ESL instructional events that they wanted to discuss with their university supervisor. Beacher et al. concluded with four recommendations that ESL teacher education programs should consider to structure ESL-focused video reflection practices:

1. The TC and university supervisors should mutually agree on the types of student activities they want to see in recorded ESL lessons.
2. The TC and university supervisors should receive common sets of lesson plans, videos, and reflective commentaries to respond to and guide what they will look for when analyzing recorded video.
3. The TC should be provided with a series of prompts to complete before engaging in video-mediated dialogue with the university supervisors.
4. The TC and university supervisors should independently review recorded ESL lessons before meeting to mark instances to discuss collaboratively.

In another study, Mercado & Baecher (2014) examined the perceptions that 247 TCs, and 27 university supervisors had about a video component of an ESL teacher evaluation tool. Survey data were collected over a 15-week period and revealed that TCs evaluated themselves more favorably than their university supervisors did. Similar to Eröz-Tuğa's research (2013), survey

data also suggested that TCs became more comfortable with viewing themselves on video after the second time using the video-mediated self-evaluation practice. Moreover, Mercado and Beacher found that TCs were able to use video to document personal professional development goals.

Preparing TCs for an ESL-Focused Video-Mediated Reflection

When engaged in video reflection, TCs should receive guidance on how to analyze recorded segments of their instruction. Researchers explain that TCs should engage in repeated viewing (Tripp & Rich 2012) and should be provided with video analysis guides that support noticing and what to ‘look for’ when viewing recorded videos of ESL instruction (Beacher et al. 2014; Prusak, Dye, Graham, & Graser, 2010). As noted by Beacher and Kung, a video review should be “scaffolded by a viewer’s guide which either directs the viewer to do or look at specific items or prompts” (2011, p.16), such as; analyzing teacher actions or behaviors, or student learning outcomes. TCs can use video guides to analyze videos of ESL instruction. Video reflection guides help TCs see patterns of classroom activity that they would not have been able to see otherwise.

Video annotation tools allow TCs to mark, highlight, code and/or comment on segments of recorded video for reflection (Rich & Hannafin, 2009). Repeated viewing is an essential component of a video annotation tool procedure (Rich and Trip, 2011). Repeated viewing allows TCs to see what may have otherwise been missed and provides a way for TCs to scrutinize and notice salient teaching or student actions and behaviors. When using a video annotation tool, it is vital that TCs first engage in repeated viewing, then code a purposely selected video segment that aligns with a teaching goal, or demonstrates a critical incident of practice (Brantley-Dias, Dias, Frisch, & Rushton, 2008). A *critical incident* of practice is any unplanned teaching event that occurs during class that appears to be typical rather than critical at first sight and is rendered critical through intentional analysis (Farrell, 2008; Farrell & Beacher, 2017; Tripp, 2012;). TCs who conduct a pattern analysis of video recorded critical incidents can examine classroom video evidence to make data-informed decisions about subsequent ESL teaching and learning actions.

An effective video-mediated reflective practice utilizes video reflection guides, frameworks, or rubrics to present and model the skills that TCs need to acquire and/or develop competencies in. For example, Baecher et al. (2013) examined the impact that video models had on teacher candidates’ readiness for and capacity to self-evaluate classroom, field-based, ESL instructional performances. In their study, two different training approaches were used to introduce two groups of teacher candidates to an ESL field-based, video reflection rubric. One group of candidates received three ESL lesson plan descriptions of teachers who were scored as ‘standard’ on the rubric; while the second group of TCs received online videos that corresponded to teachers’ ESL lesson plan descriptions. Data included TCs’ written reflections, self-evaluations, and UnSs’ evaluations. TCs in both groups felt that introductory materials such as rubrics and video guides were necessary to prepare them for the video reflection practice.

Present Gaps in the Literature

The literature on ESL-focused video reflection shows that video recording, analysis and reflection provide a way for teachers to capture, view, and evaluate ESL instructional actions and behaviors in order to arrive at new ideas for improving future instruction (Beacher et al. 2013). While it is known that video reflection supports autonomous teacher reflection (Beacher et al. 2014) and professional development (Mercado & Baecher, 2014), what is currently known about video-mediated reflective dialogue is limited to reports on university supervisors (UnSs) engaging in video-mediated dialogue (post-lesson conversations) with TCs for instructional evaluation practices. This top-down approach to the dissemination of knowledge; where an “experienced other” assumes a role of authority over a TC to suggest ideas for how the TC can (and should) improve ESL instruction is not autonomous reflection.

Critical friendship is a reflective practice that benefits ESL teacher professional development and supports autonomous reflection (Farrell 2013; 2008; 2001), albeit critical friendship is rarely reported on in the ESL literature. Farrell (2013) explains that “teachers who come together to talk about their teaching can be effective as a result of participating in such groups” (p.48). To date, critical friendship has not been used to discuss video reflection methodologies for ESL teacher education. This research seeks to fill the present gap in the literature and will report on a video-mediated critical friendship (VMCF) framework that ESL teacher educators can use to structure and support TCs’ ESL-focused video reflection.

Methods

This ethnographic research focused on the role that video-mediated critical friendship played in supporting TCs’ reflection on ESL teaching and learning. In particular, I was interested in studying how critical friendship mediated the reflections that TCs had about personally recorded videos of instruction enacted with elementary-aged ESL students. In this study, I explore the following research question: How does video-mediated critical friendship (VMCF) support four final semester, undergraduate teacher candidates’ reflections on ESL teaching and learning?

Context

The study took place at a large, public research university located in the southeast part of the country. TCs entered the teacher education program their junior year of college and completed four semesters of face-to-face content area, ESL ‘infused’^[1] methods courses, and four semesters of field experiences in mainstream, K-5, public school, English-only classrooms that included ESL students. Field experiences included two full days of instruction (per week) in semesters one, two, and three; and, four full days of instruction in final semester full-time student teaching. While working in the field, TCs were formally observed by a UnS three times per semester and were required to record all formal observations for reflection. The formal observation procedure included a pre-lesson conference where TCs shared and discussed their lesson plan with their UnS; a formal observation where TCs were observed by their UnS; and, a post-lesson feedback session where candidates reflected on what took place during their lesson with their UnS. All formal observations concluded with TCs completing a written reflection on their instructional experience.

End of semester course evaluations revealed that university supervisors used different video reflection practices, or neglected to use video reflection entirely. Some university supervisors did not require TCs to share personally recorded video segments of their instruction with their university supervisor or peers for professional development while others did. This lack of consensus created confusion amongst university supervisors when considering what video reflection methodology worked best to prepare candidates for working with ESL students. This research was conceptualized in an attempt to improve the way video reflection was used in the ESL infused teacher education program.

Participants

Four TCs with a shared interest in using video reflection for ESL professional development were invited to participate in this research. The four TCs were in the final semester of the undergraduate, elementary ESL infused teacher education program. They were US-born female monolingual English speakers who had completed all required ESL coursework (stand-alone and ESL infused courses), were between the ages of 21-23 and worked in the first or second-grade classrooms that had between 3-5 ESL students in them.

Role of the Researcher

At the time of this study, I was an advanced graduate student in Elementary Education, Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in ESL teacher education. I developed trusting relationships with four female TCs who were enrolled in the Elementary Education, ESL infused teacher education program. I did not supervise or instruct the four TCs and was able to support their ESL instructional development needs using critical friendship.

Initial Training

The TCs who were invited to participate in this study completed an initial training on the video annotation tool V-Note (version 2.4.0; 2015). In the training, TCs and I co-created a video analysis framework that included the following prompts:

1. Select an ESL instructional goal.
2. Record ESL instruction.
3. Watch the entire video.
4. Select a 5-10-minute video segment that showcases the ESL instructional ‘goal in action’
5. Rewatch the video segment and write down words or phrases that pertain to your ESL instructional goal, then use listed words/phrases to create code buttons for your video analysis.
6. Rewatch the selected video segment and analyze the segment with V-Note.
 1. What patterns do you see?
 2. How does video evidence show that your ESL instructional goal was met/not met?
 3. What ideas or considerations do you have for future ESL instruction?
 4. What questions or concerns do you still have?

Video-Mediated Critical Friendship (VMCF)

TCs were asked to record three separate episodes of the instruction they provided to ESL students over a 15 week period. To structure the study, I created a Video-Mediated Critical Friendship VMCF cycle (Figure 1). The VMCF cycle included socially constructed reflection (depicted with a solid line in Figure 1) and, psychological, self-reflection (depicted with a dashed line in Figure 1). In this study, the four TCs completed three iterations of the VMCF cycle.

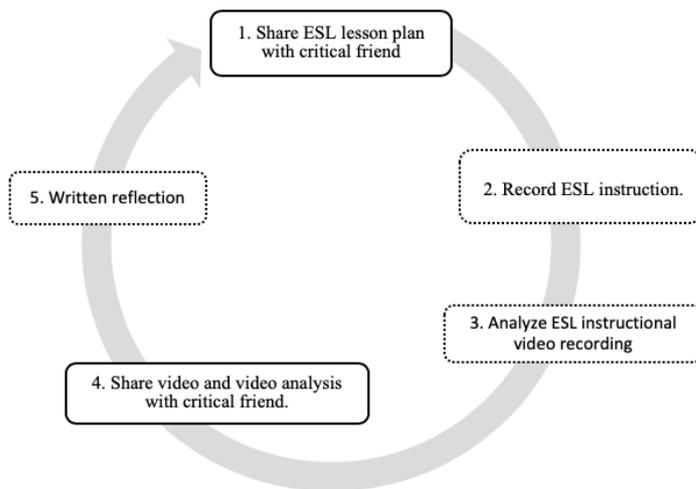


Figure 1. VMCF reflection cycle.

1. **Share ESL lesson plan with critical friend.** TCs met with me (critical friend) independently after school in their field-experience classroom to review their ESL lesson plan. As TCs spoke, I took notes in my researcher’s journal during the discussion and provided TCs with feedback using open-ended questions (e.g., how will you support language in this lesson?). To culminate our discussion, TCs decided on the ESL instructional goal that they wanted to use as a lens for their video analysis (e.g., “I want to focus on how the ESL students use the rubric I give to them to support peer discussion”).
2. **Record instruction provided to ESL students.** TCs used personal cell phones to record the instruction they provided to the ESL students in their classroom. To do so, TCs used spider-leg adjustable tripods to place their cell phones in optimal recording locations throughout the classroom.
3. **Analyze ESL video recording.** After recording their ESL instruction, TCs analyzed their video with V-Note then saved their V-note timeline results (figure 2) to facilitate post-lesson VMCF.

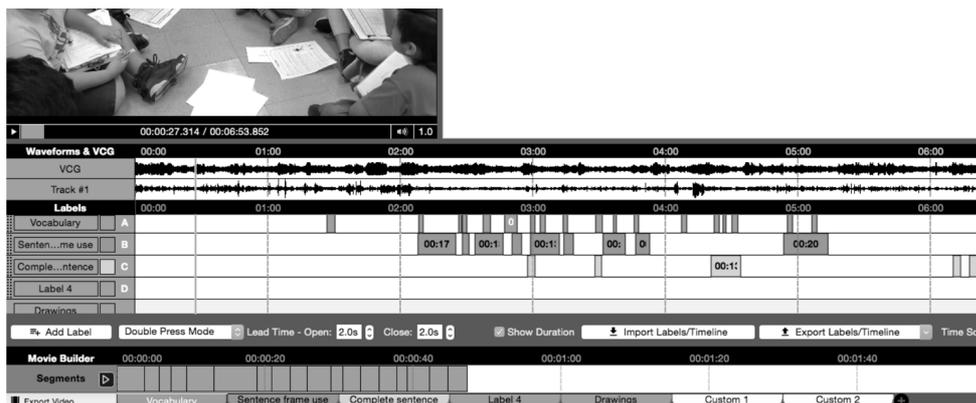


Figure 2. V-Note timeline.

4. Share video and video analysis with critical friend. TCs facilitated a lesson feedback session with me (critical friend) where they played their video and shared their V-Note timeline results. As I watched their videos, I took notes in my researcher's journal on salient ESL instructional events that I believed were important and/or pertained to the TC's ESL instructional goal (that was previously discussed in step 1 of the VMCF cycle). Once the video finished playing, the TC shared their V-Note timeline with me to conduct a pattern analysis on what was observed and noticed in their video recording. As the TC spoke, I cross-referenced my researcher's journal notes to see if any ESL instructional event were missed and warranted further reflection.
5. Written reflection. TCs completed a written reflection on the VMCF process. To guide reflective writing, I asked each TC to discuss how their ESL lesson went, how they analyzed their video, what patterns were noticed, and what these patterns mean for future ESL instruction.

Table 1 -- Critical Friendship Moves Codebook

Move	Definition	Data example
Catching Up	Introductory questions that allow the TC to establish the context of their lesson and analytical lenses they want the critical friend to use to analyze the instructional video recording.	“What was your ESL instructional goal?” “Why did you record this?” “What did you analyze?”
Holding Hands	The repeated viewing, simultaneous viewing and active listening used to focus a TC's attention on a pattern that is presented in their video analysis.	“What pattern(s) do you see?” “What do you notice?” “What does this (pattern) mean/suggest?”
Stirring the Pot	Rewinding of video using probing questions to pinpoint an instructional event or teaching action that has been missed and warrants further reflection. Often includes think-aloud	“Let's watch that part of your video again.” “What is happening here?”

to suggest an instructional action in a friendly, non-forceful way.

Shoulder to Lean on	Emotional support and explanations of learned theory used to comfort a teacher candidate who is experiencing feelings of dissonance.	“Mistakes happen.” “So, the monitor hypothesis then?”
The Pep Talk	Encouraging a candidate who has met an ESL professional development goal to continue ESL professional development	“Have you ever tried/considered...?” “Now that you’ve accomplished this goal, what’s next?”

Data Collection

Data were collected over a 15-week period and included 12 video recordings of VMCF lesson feedback sessions, 12 TC written reflections, and a researcher’s journal. Video recordings of VMCF lesson feedback sessions were stored electronically and were transcribed. Participants’ written reflections were submitted electronically and were stored in online folders. Throughout the course of the study, a researcher’s journal was kept to document my notes, ideas, questions that surfaced, and plans I had for the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using ethnographic research methods (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). TCs’ written reflections and VMCF post-lesson feedback sessions were read thoroughly then chunked into conceptual categories that represented ‘ESL Teaching’ or ‘ESL Student Learning.’ Descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2016) were used to sub-code the ESL Teaching and ESL Student Learning categories according to the topics TCs’ reflected on. I used process coding (Saldaña, 2016) using gerunds (-ing words) to identify how critical friendship moved candidates’ reflections on ESL teaching and learning forward. To do so, I specifically looked for instances where candidates shared how understandings about ESL teaching or ESL student learning were affirmed, challenged, or changed. Next, I examined how each process code compared or contrasted and aggregated similar codes into categorical families that represented overarching themes: critical friendship moves. To verify my coding, I played video recordings of TCs’ lesson feedback sessions to ‘see’ critical friendship as it took place. I compared video data against text data (lesson feedback session transcripts and written reflections) to refine my coding. As I reviewed VMCF transcripts and video data, I placed each coded critical friendship move in sequential order as it occurred on video. The initial five critical friendship moves were: introducing, focusing, repeated viewing, assuring, and encouraging. I then asked TCs to engage in a member checking process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) where I asked each TC to create a ‘friendship’ metaphor that described one of the five critical friendship moves I had identified. Member checking resulted in a codebook (Table 1) where each critical friendship move was described with friendship metaphors that were created by the four TCs who participate in this research. I listed each friendship metaphor, definition of the metaphor, and examples from the

data corpus to create a codebook (Table 1), then used this codebook to recode the data to arrive at study findings.

Findings

Catching Up

The ‘Catching Up’ critical friendship move includes introductory prompts the critical friend uses to understand the TC’s classroom context, expectations they had about the lesson, focus of the video recording and analysis, and the ESL instructional goal (lens) used to analyze the video recording:

Critical friend: What was the ESL instructional goal you chose for this lesson?

TC: My goal was for ESL students to act out vocabulary words for comprehension.

Critical friend: Why did you select this goal?

TC: I feel that if I allow ESL students to act out new vocabulary, then they will know what the new word means because they are doing it.

Critical friend: I see, so did you pick this goal with a particular ESL student in mind?

TC: I initially picked it for the whole class, but then, I noticed the goal was more so for one ESL student in my class; his vocabulary really needs support [points at screen].

Critical friend: I see.

Candidate: Yeah, So I decided to place the camera on the side of the classroom where he [ESL student] was sitting so I could focus on him.

The Catching Up critical friendship move frames the dialogue that is about to take place. This critical friendship move provides the critical friend with a contextual understanding of the lesson, the perception the TC has about the lesson and lets the TC restate/state their ESL instructional goal. Stating the ESL instructional goal is integral to the success of the collaborative discussion because this may have changed since the last time the critical friend and TC spoke. The Catching Up critical friendship move includes questions that promote the TC to share the background information that is needed to simultaneously watch recorded video through the same lens. For example, in the above excerpt, the critical friend was made aware that the TC wanted ESL students to ‘act out’ new vocabulary words and that a male ESL student was the focus of the video analysis.

Holding Hands

Holding hands includes the repeated viewing and/or use of patterns analysis prompts used in an attempt to focus the TC’s attention on instructional events that were analyzed and noticed but were not discussed with the critical friend and warrant further reflection. The Holding Hands critical friendship move involves simultaneous video viewing and active listening to support the TCs’ reflections on recorded instruction as they discussed observed instructional events to share the significance that noticed ESL instructional actions or behaviors had for future instructional decision-making:

TC: [Looks at V-Note timeline]... I noticed that I have a lot more, ‘teacher’ codes and ‘other student’ codes when compared to ‘ESL student’ codes.

Critical Friend: I see, so what do you think this means?

TC: Hum... I guess that the native English speakers and I spoke for the majority of the lesson. So maybe I need to get the ESL student to participate more.

Critical Friend: I see, so what are you thinking to do as a solution?

TC: I’m not really sure how to do this.

Critical friend: What about your ‘question,’ codes? What was the pattern you saw?

TC: Let’s see. I have one, two... Yeah, so I only asked two questions in this lesson.

Critical Friend: What could this mean?

TC: That I need to think about more questions. I need to offer more student discussion time in my lessons.

Critical Friend: So next time focusing on how collaborative discussion promotes ESL participation in a lesson?

Teacher candidate: Yeah, I want to use more group talk so ESL students can participate more.

In the above excerpt, Holding Hands allowed TCs to arrive at a solution to a perceived instructional dilemma on their own. It is important to note that although the critical friend may know a solution to remedy a perceived instructional dilemma, the critical friend should not offer the suggestion to the TC. Instead, the critical friend should use simultaneous viewing, pinpointing, and prompting questions to guide the TC to arrive at a solution on his/her/their own. Personal decision-making gives the TC ownership over the actions that are decided on as a next step, whereby the solutions to a perceived instructional dilemma is derived from personal choice and a supported understanding of ESL instruction that is achieved through critical friendship dialogue.

Stirring the Pot

At times, the TC is unable to notice the significance of critical ESL instructional events that are recorded on video. When this occurs, the critical friend must ‘stir the pot’ by stopping, rewinding, and replaying segments of video to isolate instructional events that need further exploration and discussion:

TC: He [ESL student] doesn’t pay much attention in class.

Critical Friend: You said that you gave him [ESL student] sentence frames to support his speaking? Let’s watch that part in your video.

TC: [Rewinds and replays video]. I verbally gave his [ESL student] sentence frames.

Critical Friend: I see. Was this effective? I wonder if he would have performed better with a tangible sentence frame?

TC: Yeah, the visual sentence frames will be better because he can hold it and look at it again and again to remind himself about what he should say.

In the above excerpt, the critical friend noticed the TC missed a critical event in her video analysis: the sentence frame had been provided verbally. In an attempt to create a dialogic tension that would spawn feelings dissonance, the critical friend asked the TC to replay her video. Feelings of dissonance surfaced when the TC noticed that the sentence frame she provided the ESL student was verbal. The critical friend used ‘think-aloud:’ “I wonder if he would have performed better with a tangible sentence frame” to mitigate feelings of dissonance. Think-aloud provided a ‘friendly’ way for the critical friend to suggest a possible teaching solution without being too forceful. The TC mimicked the critical friend’s idea, restating the suggested idea as if it was her own: “the visual sentence frames will be better because he can hold it and look at it again and again to remind himself about what he should say;” this mimicry resulted in the TC considering ideas for subsequent instructional change.

Shoulder to Lean On

When instructional dilemmas presented themselves and TCs were unable to resolve them on their own, the critical friend provided a Shoulder to Lean On. A Shoulder to Learn On included instances where the critical friend provided the TC with emotional support and instructional reassurance:

TC: The one-on-one writing conference was a complete waste of time!

Critical friend: Let’s explore what you did together. Mistakes happen, we learn from them and they make us better teachers. Let’s watch the part [of your video] that upset you together.

TC: Ok, I did a one-on-one writing conference with one ESL student in this video recording.
[after video playback]

Critical Friend: I wonder, what was done to specifically support her [ESL student’s] language needs?

TC: Well, I wanted to do all of the conferences in the same way. So, I called students to my desk and asked them to talk about what they wrote. I asked the ESL students to tell me what they felt when writing and they couldn’t answer the question.

Critical Friend: I see, why do you think they [ESL students] couldn’t answer?

TC: Maybe I need to use a script next time to guide our conversation?

Critical Friend: Why do you say that?

TC: Then they can check their writing with the script and use it to talk to me about their writing when I call on them.

Critical friend: So like Krashen’s monitor hypothesis then? A rubric that guides them in self-assessing their writing before they meet with you?

TC: Yeah a rubric. Wow! I get what that theory means now. I’m excited now, it’s all going to work out!

When seeing that her instruction did not go according to plans, the TC expressed feelings of hopelessness: “The one-on-one writing conference was a complete waste of time!” Unable to arrive at a solution, the critical friend provided the TC with emotional support using a motto “Mistakes happen. We learn from them and they make us better teachers.” After providing

emotional support, the critical friend provided assurance; letting the TC know that they were in this together: “Let’s watch the part of your video that upset you together.” Critical friendship led the TC to notice that individualized language supports were not offered in the one-on-one writing conferences that she provided to ESL students. Noticing this instructional problem, the TC began to consider using a ‘script’ that would allow ESL students to check over their writing before meeting with her. Once a solution had been discussed, the critical friend offered justification, citing Krashen’s (1982) monitor hypothesis. The connection between theory and practice led the TC to a better understanding of the language support she had decided to use and allowed her to regain instructional confidence: I’m excited now, it’s all going to work out!”

Pep Talk

The Pep Talk critical friendship move took place when TCs accomplished a professional development goal and began to feel complacent or ‘in a rut’ with their instructional routine.

TC: I’m seeing that the visuals work well. I want to continue using them.

Critical Friend: What other language supports can you incorporate?

TC: Definitely using the visuals for math and science instruction too.

Critical Friend: What about peer editing using rubrics?

TC: I don’t think they [ESL students] can do that. They’re only in first grade.

Critical Friend: How do you know unless you try?

TC: Yeah, I guess this is the time for me to practice new things. I mean, I wasn’t comfortable with using visuals with ESL students before and now I am.

In the above excerpt, the critical friend used a ‘Pep Talk’ to move the TC out of her comfort zone. The TC was becoming complacent with her instruction and was overly relying on visuals as her preferred way of providing language support to ESL students. In an effort to motivate further inquiry and pedagogical development, the critical friend explicitly told the TC to try peer editing and rubrics. Although the candidate resisted the idea at first, she later changed her mind stating “this is the time for me to practice.” The Pep Talk critical friendship move motivated the TC to try new language scaffolds and continue to develop her ESL instruction.

Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that VMCF supported TCs’ reflections on ESL teaching and learning. The VMCF process used in this research moved TC reflections on ESL instruction forward. TCs recorded their instruction to ESL students, used a video analysis framework to decide on an ESL instructional goal, and engaged in conversation with a critical friend to reflect on what occurred and needed to occur next to improve future ESL teaching. While research contends that critical friendship supports teacher reflection (Farrell, 2013), the literature has yet to explore how critical friendship can be used to support TCs’ video-mediated ESL pedagogical developments. This research found that critical friendship should be used in ESL teacher education and that video-mediated conversations between TCs and critical friends should be structured according to the following five following moves: Catching Up, Holding Hands, Stirring the Pot, Shoulder to Learn On, and Pep Talk.

The Catching Up critical friendship move created a supportive environment where TCs shared their ESL instructional goal, how their ESL instruction was recorded, and the intended focus of their video analysis. Each time the TC and critical friend met to discuss plans for teaching and the lesson enactment, a concurrent sketch was created. The concurrent sketch guided simultaneous viewing where the TC and critical friend collaboratively decided on the attention placed on recorded instructional segments of video. Curry (2008) explains that critical friendship is founded on a foregoing sketch where the critical friendship relationship is pre-established and trust is built before coming together. Findings from this study show that the dynamic, ever-changing reality of the classroom environment requires that ongoing trust and relationship building are critical to the success of critical friendship. Introductory prompts are needed no matter how long-term or strong a critical friendship may be. TCs develop as teachers over time, their pedagogical needs change, the needs of the ESL students learners in their classroom change, therefore concurrent introductory dialogue is needed to begin all critical friendship dialogue so both teacher and critical friend can “catch up” with the current instructional content and needs of the classroom learning environment so they are both “on the same page” each time they meet..

Holding Hands provided a way for the TC and critical friend to “separate teaching into its parts and to discern how its parts work together” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.148). Through collaborative, critical friendship dialogue, the significance of video analysis patterns was brought to light. It is important to note that Holding Hands differs from the Stirring the Pot critical friendship move. Holding Hands guides the TC to ‘notice’ a pattern in their video analysis; the TC notices the pattern and can discuss it, whereas when Stirring the Pot, the critical friend must use repeated viewing (often having to rewind the video multiple times) to pinpoint a significant ESL instructional event that was missed. As noted by Beacher and Kung (2011) replay and review are essential to developing a TC’s reflective skills. During the Stirring the Pot critical friendship move, a physician-patient relationship (Kiewkor, Wongwanich & Piromsombat, 2014) is present. The critical friend pinpoints an instructional problem that the TC neglected to see, then uses stopping and rewinding of video to review a missed instructional problem. When seeing the instructional problem unfold on video, the TC experiences feelings of tension and dissonance, leading the TC to consider solutions to rectify the issue at hand. Reflective practitioners are better teachers in that they are capable and willing to change practice as needed because of their capacity to evaluate, analyze and communicate with other teachers. Stirring the Pot is used to promote teacher reflection (if and only if) a critical event is presented on video and TC has missed it. Here, it becomes equally important to note that those who engage in video-mediated dialogue with TCs may need a level of expertise in ESL instruction or critical ESL classroom events may be missed altogether.

The Shoulder to Lean On critical friendship move was used when candidates were unable to reconcile an experienced instructional dilemma. When this occurred, the critical friend offered emotional, encouragement, using a motto (e.g., Mistakes happen) to shepherd the candidate to reach a level of instructional confidence. To do so, the critical friend explored a perceived instructional dilemma *with* the TC. Beacher and Kung (2014) found that TCs who watched video recordings of their recorded ESL instruction were autonomous in their reflections on teaching and learning because they were able to pinpoint ESL instructional events that they wanted to discuss with their university supervisor. Findings from this study disagree with Beacher and Kung’s (2014) description of ‘autonomous reflection.’ The TCs in this research were able to use video evidence to pinpoint ESL instructional events using a video annotation

tool, but were often unable to discuss the significance of noticed instructional events alone. It can therefore be argued that autonomous reflection includes pinpointing and meaning-making that results from dialogue. If a TC is unable to discuss the significance of a noticed instructional event, they are not engaged in autonomous reflection.

The Pep Talk critical friendship move motivated TCs who were complacent in their ESL teaching routines to try new ESL strategies. In another study, Beacher, Rorimer, and Smith (2012) found that in-service teachers who shared and discussed recordings of their ESL instruction in video-viewing groups were able to collaborate to develop inquiries surrounding ideas for future ESL instructional improvements. Findings from this research converge with Beacher et al.'s (2012), findings; VMCF promoted TCs' ideas for subsequent instructional improvements. However, findings from this research can be used to argue that it is trust, openness, mutual respect, and shared vision that support teacher learning and not solely the number of teachers who are collaborating together to discuss video-recorded instruction.

While this research found that structured VMCF supported TC reflection, findings from this study do not come without several imitations. First and foremost, the VMCF framework presented in this study is intended to serve as a model and should not be generalized as a end all be all conversation guide for all ESL teacher education programs. More research is needed to determine if the VMCF framework presented in this research works in other ESL contexts such as EFL or to prepare secondary ESL TCs. Moreover, the four TCs included in this research attended an ESL infused teacher education program where video reflection was currently being used thus making it easy to include an ESL-focused video reflection practice to the current video reflection model. More research is needed to describe how other ESL-video reflection models take place in undergraduate teacher education contexts. Lastly, it is important to note that I (the critical friend in this study) was a graduate student in ESL teacher education and had a level of expertise in ESL theory and practice that other critical friends may not be able to provide TCs with. More research is needed to examine if video-mediated critical friendship offers the same benefits when TCs engage in the same practice with a peer who is at their same educational and experiential level.

Conclusion

ESL teacher education programs depend on reflective teaching tools that work to successfully prepare TCs with the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to teach and work effectively with ESL students. Video-recordings of instruction offer several benefits to teacher reflection, but video analysis and critical friendship sharpen a video reflection methodology. As ESL teacher educators, it is essential to provide TCs with video reflection tasks that ask them to record enacted ESL instruction, analyze recorded video, and discuss important ESL instructional events with trusted others. By recording, analyzing, and discussing ESL instruction, with a trusted individual TCs can develop the skills they need to maintain lifelong reflective teaching practices that center on ESL instructional improvement.

About the Author

Monica Gonzalez Smith, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Multilingual Learning, Elementary Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Institute for Teacher Education. Born Cuban-American, and raised in a bilingual family, she worked for Miami Dade County Public Schools as a general education and ESL teacher for eight years prior to pursuing an advanced graduate degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in ESL teacher education. Dr. Smith is a qualitative researcher. Her work centers on ESL teacher education, specifically: teacher reflection, video reflection, sheltered instruction, intercultural competence, and content and language integrated learning.

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Notes

[1] ESL infusion means that university faculty are responsible for integrating topics related to ESL teaching and learning into their respective course syllabi (Wheeler & Govoni, 2014).

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