

8 Supporting Change in Teachers' Ideas and Practices: The Influence of the BA Educational Studies (TESOL) on Classroom Teaching

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1 INTRODUCTION

The complaint has often been made that in-service teacher education seems to have a minimal impact on classroom teaching (Freeman, 1993). There is growing evidence, however, that the BA Educational Studies (TESOL) Programme in Oman did succeed in influencing the way that teachers taught, as well as thought about their work: both cognitive and behavioural change seemed to occur. In this article, I plan to review evidence of growth in teachers' 'practical knowledge' (Elbaz, 1981) during and after the course and consider how the programme helped BA students develop as teachers. First, though, I consider the programme's aims.

2 BACKGROUND

As described (in Chapter 3) above, the BA Programme was designed for Diploma-holding teachers of English with a minimum of four years' experience and sufficient proficiency in English. These teachers had previously attended a two-year pre-service course, which had included instruction in Arabic, and had then been assigned to teach the Our World Through English (OWTE) curriculum in General Education Elementary schools (for Grades 4-6). As part of educational reform, from 1998 onwards, many (particularly women initially) had then transferred to Basic Education and a new English For Me (EFM) curriculum, with English now introduced from Grade 1 (see Chapter 1).

The BA Programme aimed to develop teaching and English language skills so that graduates would "be skilled in analysing their pupils' needs and in planning and teaching English lessons" (University of Leeds, 2004). Developing an understanding of how theory informs teaching and learning was another goal. A further aim was that teachers would "be able to describe and use English well enough to teach it and to read about teaching and learning in English" (ibid) (see Chapter 3, above, for more details).

Clearly, the BA Programme aimed to develop students as teachers. Before considering the nature of the growth that was achieved and how, I turn to relevant literature.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

It is increasingly recognised that teachers are “active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs” (Borg, 2003:81). Their practical knowledge is highly relevant to this study, as “much of what teachers know originates in practice and is used to make sense of and deal with practical problems” (Elbaz, 1981, as cited in Borg, 2006:13). According to Elbaz (1981), teachers have practical knowledge in five key areas, relating to the self, milieu, subject matter, curriculum and instruction. They also have formal knowledge (Shulman, 1987), which I see as part of their practical knowledge, after Borg (2006), who characterizes teachers’ knowledge as personal, practical, tacit, systematic and dynamic, defined and refined on the basis of educational and professional experiences throughout their lives. I will examine how the BA Programme influenced practical knowledge growth in this article.

For teacher education to impact teachers’ cognitions and practices, it is generally thought that the use of a reflective model (Wallace, 1991) is highly beneficial. For example, after reviewing 93 studies on learning to teach, Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon (1998:159) concluded that where support was provided by “program, peers and classroom situations, and where deliberative exploration and reflection were encouraged, we saw the flowering of empowered teachers”. More broadly, encouraging reflection is a key feature of a ‘constructivist’ approach to teacher education, which involves creating a learning environment conducive to knowledge construction and centred on the context-sensitive needs of learners (Williams & Burden, 1997). After reviewing 40 constructivist teacher education programmes, Dangel & Guyton (2004) identified a number of features they shared, including opportunities for reflection, learner-centred instruction, collaborative learning, the use of problem-solving activities, authentic assessment opportunities and personal engagement. Regarding alternative models of teacher education, current thinking is that use of an ‘applied science’ model is likely to influence understanding of theory but not practice, while a ‘craft’ model may influence behaviour but not cognitions (Wallace, 1991). Since one of the aims of the BA Programme was to support educational reform, I will consider the programme closely in light of Dangel & Guyton’s (2004) criteria for constructivist teacher education.

4 METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this article, my research questions are as follows: In the context of a three-year in-service BA in Educational Studies (TESOL):

1. What changes took place in the teachers’ practical knowledge?
2. How did the programme and project help the BA students develop as teachers?

To answer these questions, I draw on data from a range of sources, with a view to strengthening the investigation through ‘triangulation’ (Stake, 1995). One of these sources is my own PhD research into teachers’ practical knowledge growth during the programme (Wyatt, 2008). This was qualitative, case study research, tracing the development of 5 teachers over three years, using extensive interviews with them, regular observations of their teaching and analysis of their assignments. While conducting the research, I was working as a Regional Tutor (RT) on the BA Project, and was therefore an insider (see Chapter 6 for more information on the RT’s role). To triangulate my findings, I have also drawn on Freeman’s (2007) independent evaluation of the project, which made use of data from various sources, including a beliefs and practices survey administered to 75 graduates, regional focus group meetings with 55 graduates, and 10 classroom observations with follow-up interviews. Moreover, I have drawn upon published research (Borg, 2008) and the testimonies of graduates collected in this volume (in Chapter 5) for further evidence of cognitive change. In addition, I have consulted documents related to the project.

To address the first research question, I have used, as a framework, an adaptation of Elbaz’s (1981) classification of types of practical knowledge. To address the second research question, I have evaluated the programme against Dangel & Guyton’s (2004) criteria for constructivist teacher education.

5 FINDINGS

5.1 What changes took place in the teachers’ practical knowledge?

5.1.1 Regarding the learners and learning

Although several teachers in my study demonstrated in their classrooms deeply engrained learner-centred practices early in the BA Programme, the input on children’s characteristics and language acquisition theories during the course was new to all. None had met Halliwell (1992) before the Pre-sessional, though this writer became influential. One reported that he had not known “too much” about the learners or the learning process beforehand, thinking that learning came from the teacher and from the books, rather than from the learners, themselves (Wyatt, 2008).

The Language Acquisition and Learning (LAL) module was very influential, providing theoretical knowledge, which the teachers made practical. Learning about Vygotsky’s (1962) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provided a theoretical basis for one teacher’s beliefs in the power of groupwork, informing his actions, while another explored Krashen’s (1982) affective filter hypothesis through research. A third gained a heightened awareness of how to support the development of learning strategies and made use of this in her advice to parents, while a fourth, influenced by learners’ statements in a questionnaire complaining of teachers embarrassing them, became more sensitive to the importance of encouraging positive attitudes through making learning enjoyable and stress-free. There were changes in her practice in this direction (Wyatt, 2008).

One of the three modules rated most useful by the 55 focus group participants Freeman (2007) met was LAL. One participant told him: “it changed my thinking about how children really learn / acquire languages” (p. 10). This module also influenced Al-Bureikhi (Chapter 5), who discusses what she learned about scaffolding and learning styles as a Cohort 4 student in 2003. In the beliefs and practices survey administered to 75 graduates by Freeman (2007:16), the item which gained strongest agreement was: ‘Different pupils may have different ways of learning’, a belief which was evident in teachers’ accommodation of different learning styles in 8 out of 10 observed lessons. Evidence from the various sources suggests widespread and considerable practical knowledge growth in the BA students regarding the learners and learning.

5.1.2 Regarding approaches to teaching

As to how they approached teaching, the five teachers in my study changed to differing extents and in different ways. The one who changed the most realized that before the course she had been too strict, too focused on teaching to exams, too teacher-centred; an ‘instructor’ with the children there to ‘receive’. Influenced, though, by new and powerful beliefs in the value of communicative tasks, she wanted to transform herself as a teacher, to be a ‘facilitator’, a ‘catalyst’ for classroom interaction. Observational evidence suggested that she did succeed in changing in this direction; her lessons became more learner-centred and she learned to incorporate activities that involved communicative purpose into her work (Wyatt, 2008).

Other teachers were also influenced by input on communicative language teaching; initially through the methodology modules Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) and Tasks in Language Learning. One teacher, for example, learned to structure his lessons as 3-part tasks centred on a ‘core’ activity (Cameron, 2001) – also including preparation and follow-up. So, from the notion of ‘task’ he gained organizational principles that helped him achieve overall goals. These included supporting ‘active’ learning; a growing belief in the importance of which developed during the course (Wyatt, 2008).

Not all teachers changed in the same direction, however. While another teacher was initially enthusiastic about communicative tasks, he then concluded it was difficult to make use of them and did not appear to do so. Though his teaching changed in some ways, for example in activating schemata in reading lessons, observed lessons did not include communicative activities and his approach to teaching remained rather traditional. This included, for instance, the practice of reading aloud around the class (Wyatt, 2008).

Freeman’s (2007) findings tend to confirm that input on communicative language teaching was popularly received but not always acted upon. Of the 75 items on the beliefs and practices questionnaire he administered, the one that gained the second highest agreement was: ‘Communicative tasks make language learning more purposeful’, though there was evidence of communicative purpose in only 5 of the 10 lessons he observed. Such discrepancies between beliefs and practices with regard to communicative language teaching have often been reported

in the literature (e.g., Nunan, 1987). What is noteworthy is that input on communicative tasks clearly made a considerable impact on some teachers' practical knowledge.

One area of uncertainty that Freeman (2007) noted, however, after analysing the beliefs and practices questionnaire, was in the teaching of initial literacy in English. This is an area, he points out, in which there is a need for more research, particularly in relation to dual language literacy in English and Arabic. In my own study, I presented evidence of a teacher using relevant concepts drawn from the Initial Literacy module to analyse a learner's reading strategies, and argued that this input had become part of her practical knowledge. However, with regard to another teacher, although it became clear that he seemed deeply committed to overcoming learners' problems in developing reading skills, his practical knowledge growth was quite uneven, with evidence of confusion in the way he applied ideas (Wyatt, 2008). The focus group meetings conducted by Freeman (2007) suggest that the Initial Literacy module made little impact amongst graduates, although the Stories module, also introduced early in the course and related in some ways, seemed to capture the imagination (ibid), inspiring innovative practice that sometimes made use of new technologies (e.g. Al-Shkaili, 2008).

In summary, while the programme's focus on communicative and learner-centred methodology, through TEYL, Tasks in Language Learning and Stories, seemed to inspire teachers, its input on initial literacy appeared to make less impact, with deep cultural or linguistic factors perhaps interceding. However, all 10 observed teachers interviewed in Freeman's (2007) study claimed their practices had changed as a result of the programme, while I noted considerable practical knowledge growth with regard to methodological practices in several of the teachers I followed longitudinally (Wyatt, 2008).

5.1.3 Regarding the curriculum

One key aspect of the practical knowledge growth of teachers was in their interaction with the curriculum; their analysis of course materials, adaptation of them, and assessment of lessons and learning. They were working with different curricula: OWTE and EFM. "There are some gaps in the syllabus", a teacher using EFM told me, which require "teachers to think... have knowledge, have some theories to depend on, and that happened with the BA". A teacher using OWTE, which was being phased out, argued that it was an appropriate course book for BA students for that reason: "There are no communicative tasks, so you can create them" (Wyatt, 2008).

The teachers adapted course materials to differing extents and in different ways. One had been doing so before the BA course, and indeed every lesson of his I observed throughout the three-year programme was characterized by creativity with materials, though the activities were not always logically sequenced. In this he improved. Prior to the course, he felt he had lacked clear criteria to guide him in materials design. He had also found it hard to assess lessons and learning. This changed, and, by the third year of the course, he reported being able to evaluate learning outcomes, considering issues such as learners' feelings and the materials'

cultural appropriacy. Prompted by the course, other teachers started adapting, too. In one case, this was minor, extending to adding realia. One of the more adventurous teachers told me, though:

When I plan I can see which part, which step is suitable for them, which part might be difficult and how I'm going to adapt it or create something new... When you are adapting something, you are not adapting it at once like magic and suddenly it will be perfect. It requires hard work and concentration. The process of analysing and reviewing needs a clear mind, but I have a lot of ideas now (Wyatt, 2008).

Freeman (2007) also found plenty of evidence of adaptation (in 8 of the 10 lessons he observed). Furthermore, the observed teachers told him that the BA Programme had helped them gain a deeper understanding of the approach underlying the English curriculum (OWTE or EFM), "be selective among the activities specified... and to adjust these activities and tasks [according] to the needs of their pupils" (ibid, p. 30). They thus gained transferable skills in materials design, evident in Al-Jahdhmy's (Chapter 5) account of how analytical processes introduced on the BA Programme subsequently helped her design teacher training sessions. In contexts where 'English For Everyone' (Wedell, 2008) is promoted, it is important that teacher education programmes, such as the BA (TESOL), empower teachers with such practical knowledge.

5.1.4 Regarding the self

Another area of practical knowledge growth I identified related to the self, in terms of the development of reflective skills and qualities, and awareness of how to learn. "My mind is now open", a teacher told me late in the course, because "now we have the awareness to exploit everything around us". "I know now", she continued, "how to improve myself, how to improve my skills; reading, writing, speaking". Before the course, this had been "very difficult". The same teacher also told me that she considered herself more "patient" now, better able to "notice important things" that happened in the classroom and better able to act on them. Now, she asked herself many questions when something was not working, which she had not done before. "I can think of quick solutions. I can use different strategies", she reported. "I am a more reflective modern teacher than before. I know now how to reflect on any action" (Wyatt, 2008).

Other teachers also reported they reflected in ways they had not done before. One said he "identified the importance of reflection" during the course. Another reported that he felt more autonomous, more responsible for learning outcomes, which in turn meant he needed to work harder to reach the standards he set himself (Wyatt, 2008). Reflective qualities identified as important by Dewey (1933) were evident in these teachers' work: wholeheartedness, open-mindedness and a deepening sense of responsibility. Helped by the action research they did for a variety of modules (including LAL, Teaching Speaking and Listening, and the Dissertation) and post-lesson discussions with their RTs, the teachers also developed reflective skills, such as noticing, problem-solving and evaluating outcomes against objectives (Malderez & Bodóczy, 1999). Al-Bureikhi (Chapter 5)

argues that the most important thing she learned from the BA was to be a reflective teacher, and self-awareness in terms of the development of reflective skills and qualities is also evident in the writing of others in the same chapter (cf. contributions of Al-Shibli and Al-Tobi in Chapter 5), indicating practical knowledge growth.

5.1.5 Regarding the English language

According to Chacón (2005), the most important element of a language teacher's subject matter knowledge is proficiency in the language itself. In my study, drawing on evidence from taped interviews over more than two years, I reported that the speech of all five teachers developed in terms of fluency and grammatical complexity. These developments were manifest in them taking longer but more coherent turns towards the end of the research period when describing lessons, with fewer pauses discernible. Fluency was also supported, particularly in the case of one teacher, by better use of linkers to sequence ideas. There was evidence of increasing complexity in the way that another learned to use modals to express her ideas more cautiously, and in the way that a third learned to hedge, using expressions such as "it depends". As regards accuracy, while one teacher felt she developed considerably and I noticed progress in this area, I was nevertheless conscious that inaccuracies in her speech remained (Wyatt, 2008).

There were also signs of language development in their more specialized use of academic vocabulary. Thus, in the last year of the course, one could talk about activating schemata, while another could mention the cultural context of the learners. A third reported surprising her supervisor by introducing the terms 'deductive' and 'inductive' into the discussion of a grammar lesson (Wyatt, 2008).

Anecdotal reports suggest the patterns of development described above were quite common amongst the BA students in Oman. Their fluency tended to develop, as did the lexical and grammatical complexity of their speech, while their accuracy often seemed to develop to a lesser extent.

A finding of Freeman's (2007) research was that the BA Programme increased teachers' comfort and confidence with English, quoting one observed teacher as telling him: "It is not only my teaching, it is my English. I can explain what I do to you" (ibid, p. 40). This confidence was the main outcome, he felt, of the language learning modules. Greater practical knowledge regarding their use of the language, for example as reported by Al-Bureikhi (Chapter 5), appeared to enhance teachers' confidence in approaching their work.

5.1.6 Within the broader context of their work

Several teachers I studied managed to overcome challenges, related to class size or layout, imposed by the contexts they worked in as they tried to enact their practical knowledge in areas such as the learners and learning, approaches to teaching and the curriculum. Several teachers also took on more responsibility in their schools, in sharing innovative ideas with colleagues or involving other teachers in their own research projects and gaining the cooperation of school managers (Wyatt, 2008). Further evidence that the BA Programme empowered teachers to develop practical knowledge in areas such as guiding colleagues that

would transform the contexts they worked in is provided by the testimonies of Al-Shibli, Al-Tobi and Darwish in Chapter 5.

5.1.7 Summary

It is evident that the BA Programme supported practical knowledge growth regarding the learners and learning, approaches to teaching, the curriculum, the self, the English language and within the broader context of the graduates' work. Qualitative and quantitative data drawn from a range of sources support this assertion, although a limitation of the research is that data were gathered from BA students and graduates invited to participate. They may, therefore, represent a subset of those who succeeded or appeared to be doing so (Freeman, 2007). Furthermore, although deviant case analysis was an element of my own research methodology, I investigated only a very small number of students (Wyatt, 2008). In conclusion, I would add that, while inevitably the impact of the programme varied, with different teachers influenced in different ways, some clearly experienced considerable practical knowledge growth that transformed their lives as teachers. In this, the programme appears to have been highly successful, the overall conclusion of the studies reported above.

I now consider how the BA Programme was able to exert influence and address my second research question.

5.2 How did the BA Programme and BA Project help the students develop as teachers?

To address this question, I will consider the programme in light of Dangel & Guyton's (2004) criteria for constructivist teacher education, as reported (in 4 above), first considering opportunities for reflection, which I consider the most essential element.

5.2.1 By providing opportunities for reflection

Opportunities for reflection were built into the design of the programme (see Chapter 3 for a description of this) and were evident in its implementation. Indeed, the encouragement of reflection and deep learning informed the three main teacher education strategies used. Firstly, input sessions frequently took BA students' beliefs and experiences as a starting point and included discussion activities. Secondly, practical assignments often involved teachers in designing tasks and activities and evaluating their use. Thirdly, post-lesson discussions focused on helping these teachers link practice to theory. I will provide evidence of each of these strategies, below.

For evidence of the first of these strategies, I turn to Session 1 of the Initial Literacy module. In the first activity, the teachers were asked to discuss (in pairs or groups): 'Where did you first learn to read?' (School of Education, 2003a). Prompted by this question, one teacher in my study recalled distant memories of learning to read, supported by an old man holding a stick, as the boys sat in a circle under a tree in the mountains; a re-lived experience that made him think about who he was as a

teacher and how he taught (Wyatt, 2008). The process of starting with students' beliefs in teacher education has been described by Malderez & Wedell (2007), who recommend it, as 'getting out' before 'putting in'.

For evidence of the second of these strategies, I turn to the very first assignment that the Cohort 4 students, who I worked with, were given. Their task was as follows: 'Describe and analyse your planning and teaching of either:- a) a language presentation activity or b) a language practice activity, with reference to current approaches to English language teaching for young learners'. As this was the first assignment, the students were given further explicit guidance in how their assignment should be structured. They should include an introduction, a description of the activity (including background information), an analysis of it (considering context, communicative purpose and other important features), and an evaluation of the activity (after they had adapted it, if necessary, and taught it). They should finish with a conclusion (School of Education, 2003b). This first assignment, therefore, was practical, taking students straight into a reflective cycle of planning, teaching and evaluating. Reflective thought was crucial at every stage, in their choice of activity, adaptation of it, and observations of their own teaching. Central to the evaluation they produced for the assignment were subsequent reflections on their planning and teaching.

The whole process of producing such an assignment involved teachers in reviewing their Winter/Summer school lecture/seminar notes, recapping Day Release sessions that built on these, analysing course materials for relevant concepts, consulting colleagues and their RT for advice, practically trying out new ideas in their classrooms, analysing and weighing up data, and then structuring, drafting, redrafting and editing their written work (while also drawing on more advice). Concepts which were sometimes 'fuzzy' after Winter/Summer school input became sharper and more focused through the assignment production process in Day Release (Wyatt & Arnold, 2003). I believe this may explain why the Day Release programme was identified as the 'most valuable' feature of the BA by 34% of 53 focus group participants Freeman (2007) interviewed, ranking first amongst eight features. It may also explain why 'tutorials / consulting with your Regional Tutor' also ranked highly (third on the same list). Much of the BA students' deep learning seemed to occur through them engaging reflectively with the assignments.

The third main teacher education strategy that encouraged reflection was mentoring through school visits. While these were not a part of the BA Programme itself, they were regarded by RTs as an important part of their role as tutors within the BA Project (see, for example, Atkins, 2002), although only one of the 53 focus group participants selected 'school visits' as the most important feature of the BA experience (Freeman, 2007). Strategies used during school visits included pre- as well as post-observation discussions (Wyatt & Arnold, 2005), and there was encouragement to relate practice to theory. Theoretical terms could be introduced into the discussion, as in the following extract, after I had asked a teacher about her eliciting from word cards in a lesson:

I (Interviewer): You held up 'short', I think, [yes] and the child said 'small'. How did you respond to that?

- T (Teacher): I said 'yes' because I know that she means that the size of this clown is small, but she don't know that there is another adjective for it. When I said 'yes, yes' I encourage her to think more and produce another word, which was short, and that girl in the end she produced it...
- I. Yes, and as you say, she understood the meaning generally, she'd also recognized the shape of the word, more or less, it's got the same number of letters and the same first letter, so there was a grapho-phonemic fit there as well.
- T. Yes, they are beginning with 's', 'short' and 'small' (Wyatt, 2008).

One feature of the BA Programme was that, like a teacher education course reported on by Freeman (1993), it introduced a professional discourse that facilitated discussion of teaching. The same teacher quoted in the paragraph above told me that she could see how the BA course had helped develop her understanding of concepts, and helped her think deeply about teaching and language learning. "Before", she continued, she had not known "how to think like that" or talk about work or problems in teaching. There had been "lots of difficulties before the BA" (Wyatt, 2008).

For post-lesson discussions to stimulate reflection, quality time is required in schools, as Malderez & Bodóczy (1999) remind us. This was possible during school visits as a result of the way the BA Project was organised within the regions. Teachers were usually observed once per semester, and I believe these school visits contributed to the growth of their practical knowledge, helping them develop as teachers.

5.2.2 By incorporating other features of constructivist teacher education

From the above discussion, it is evident that the BA Programme met other criteria for constructivist teacher education (Dangel & Guyton, 2004). Practical assignments provided problem-solving activities and authentic assessment opportunities (although one of the most frequent complaints about the programme from students and tutors, e.g.; Wyatt & Arnold, 2005, was that there was too much assessment). It was also the case that not all of it was authentic: some of the exams were rather theoretical. Nevertheless, many of the assignments were constructivist, involving problem-solving and promoting personal engagement, as BA students analysed theory in light of their own contexts and teaching materials.

Other features of constructivist teacher education were evident in the design and implementation of the programme. For example, much of the instruction was learner-centred, encouraging collaborative learning and making use of learner-sensitive content. An independent evaluation of the project found that lecturers, teaching fellows and RTs demonstrated "a high level of knowledge, excellent teaching skills and a great deal of professionalism in their delivery of the modules, [which generally succeeded] in creating a high level of involvement on the part of the students" (Richards & Rixon, 2002:4). Furthermore, they found that "illustrative examples and activities, both in lectures and module materials [drew] on local materials, such as OWTE and EFM" (ibid, p. 5).

As an RT, I frequently used loop input activities to re-visit concepts, an approach which was appreciated. One teacher told me that although it was tiring to combine a teaching schedule with Day Release, one day per week was very useful to stimulate thought about teaching and “the EFM syllabus, strategies, all of the methodologies, all the theories” (Wyatt, 2008). Other RTs also adopted innovative practices to support learning (and there was always a great concern to do this rather than support assessment). RTs were well-qualified, holding teaching as well as academic qualifications, and had substantial experience of teaching English to young learners, teacher training as well as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (O’Sullivan, 2000).

Of other features of constructivist teacher education, action research was encouraged through the dissertation in the later cohorts. Al-Shibli and Al-Sneidi (Chapter 5) have written eloquently about how this aspect of the programme helped them. Field placements were also relevant: the teachers taught in their own schools throughout the course. Collaborative learning was also a strong element of the programme, supported by organization in cohort groups, the last feature of constructivist teacher education referred to by Dangel & Guyton (2004). Anecdotal reports suggest that many students formed study groups with friends from the same geographical area, and that deep learning resulted from such interactions.

5.2.3 Summary

Clearly, the BA Programme helped support teachers’ development in a number of ways that can be identified as constructivist in nature, though not all elements of the programme that I have identified as constructivist were consistently so. The Initial Literacy module, for example, which started with a focus on students’ beliefs (5.2.1, above), then became, in later sessions, in the view of RTs, rather too theoretical (Atkins, 2006), and appeared to students in retrospect rather less useful than others (Freeman, 2007).

Nevertheless, based on an evaluation of the programme in light of Dangel & Guyton’s (2004) criteria, it seems clear that the programme was constructivist, which, in language teacher education, is rare. Of the 40 studies Dangel & Guyton (ibid) reviewed, just one came from this particular field.

6 CONCLUSION

On the basis of the evidence presented above, the BA Programme and the wider BA Project made a considerable impact on teachers’ practical knowledge, leading to growth, as I have reported elsewhere (Wyatt, 2008), in self-efficacy and, more globally, self-confidence in their work as teachers. Freeman (2007:42) reported that “the professional confidence and sense of positive professional autonomy [observed were] impressive accomplishments of the BA Project as a whole”. He concluded that he was unaware “of any other national context currently in which the confluence of professional training and capacity-building with educational policy and curricular reform have played out as positively” (ibid, p. 52). I believe that the constructivist nature of the programme was instrumental to this success, helping BA students develop as teachers. I also believe that, in broad design, the programme could be

used as a blueprint for teacher education projects in other countries aimed at supporting teachers of a similar language and educational level in taking on a more active role.

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