

Reiko Mori Stuart Gale

Fukuoka Prefectural
University

AMERICAN philosopher John Dewey argued that only through reflection is life experience educative and personal development assured (1910, 1938). Schön (1983) similarly regarded reflection as necessary for promoting professional development, asserting that practitioners can grow if they reflect on their professional experiences instead of relying solely on technical knowledge (such as theories). Johnson and Golombek (2002) note that teachers' experiences and subsequent reflections in relation to theory and practice serve as a vital catalyst for development. Such reflection on experience allows teachers to reinvent themselves on a daily basis and avoid drowning in the drudgery of marking papers and getting bogged down with administrative work. As a way of exploring experiences, Johnson (2006) suggests "systematically problematizing [teachers'] own everyday practices" and asking "the broader questions of not just whether their practices work, but for whom, in what ways, and why" (pp. 248-249). This resonates with the concept of *crossing borders*, the idea that decompartmentalizing university departments and classes and working with diversified groups of people promotes creativity and experiential learning (Murphey, Okada, Iijima, & Asaoka, 2008).

In this report, we discuss a border crossing experiment at our institution. This experience gave us an opportunity to reflect on the relative merits of native and non-native speaker teachers, how they perceive themselves, and how a closer working relationship can help support student learning.

Native and non-native speaker teachers working together: Reiko's story

As the only English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in my department, I have always wondered whether the students in my speaking classes were happy with having a non-native speaking English teacher. From my experiences as a teacher and as a learner, I knew my students would love to have a native-speaker instruct them. When I aired this concern to my British colleague Stuart Gale (who teaches EFL in a different faculty at our university), he offered to exchange lessons with me. We devised

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Reflection on experience is commonly and correctly regarded as essential for teacher development. In order to reinvent themselves day after day, teachers need to reflect on professional experiences within a specific context and relate them to the broader issues of teaching and learning. In this report, two English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors from different faculties at the same university describe a class-exchange experiment and reflect upon its outcomes. The report reveals the extent to which the reflective process is subjective. The teachers—one a native speaker, the other a non-native speaker—relate the experience to their own specific teaching backgrounds, contexts, identities, and insecurities. Though these are fundamentally different, they nevertheless arrive at the same conclusion: the class-exchange experiment was a thoroughly worthwhile endeavor and opportunities for reflection should be seized upon. The report therefore supports the contention that reflection on experience is a powerful tool for teachers wishing to manage their own professional development.

経験について内省することは、教師としての成長に重要であると考えられている。毎日、自己を再生するためには、教師は教育指導や学習に関連する大きな問題に結びつけて、自分自身の経験を内省する必要がある。この報告では、同じ大学の異なる学部でEFLを教える教員2人が試行したクラス交換と、それについての内省について論じる。2人の教師（英語を母語とする教師と母語としない教師）は、この経験をそれぞれの持つ異なる背景、文脈、アイデンティティ、不安に関連づけて主観的に内省しているが、どちらも同じ結論に達している。すなわち、クラス交換は極めて価値ある試みであり、(The Language Teacherや学校内の紀要といったジャーナルに投稿することも含めて) 経験についての内省を促進する機会はいかなるものでも利用すべきであると結論づけている。プロとしての成長を願う教師にとって、経験について内省することは強力な手段である。

a plan to do so three times over a single week on the understanding that, if successful, the experiment might develop into something more substantial and permanent. Stuart taught a lesson to each of my three speaking classes, and I taught each of his three writing classes in Japanese. Prior to these lessons, we discussed our usual teaching approaches, lesson plans, and materials. We also forewarned the students in order to pique their interest and raise anticipation. Each of us brought our own teaching materials and taught as we normally would to our regular students. Neither of us was present when the other taught.

Prior to this experiment, I had been very reluctant to bring native English speakers into my classes for a number of reasons. In contrast with native-speaking teachers, non-native EFL instructors often face challenges to their credibility as English communicators as well as to their professional status from administrators (Braine, 2004) and learners alike (Liu, 2004). I myself have often been frustrated and unduly affected by this common and erroneous perception. Indeed, when placed in a classroom with a native-speaker teacher, I have felt threatened as an advanced English learner and EFL teacher since, in the eyes of students, only speakers of inner circle varieties have legitimate claims to knowing "correct" English. Under these circumstances my English ability and self-confidence is likely to decrease, leaving me feeling inferior as a professional and making linguistic mistakes I would not normally make.

Despite my reservations, the reason why I invited Stuart to teach my classes was that I wanted my students to hear a different voice, a different kind of English, and experience a different way of teaching. In short, I wanted to provide them with an on-campus multicultural experience. My commitment to the students therefore enabled me to overcome deep-rooted fears and cross the borders between our faculties and between native speaker and non-native speaker teachers.

Thoughts on the native/non-native speaker dichotomy: Stuart's perspective

As a native speaker teaching English in a monocultural EFL context, it is always with a wry smile that I hear of non-native speakers doubting the legitimacy of their English or their right to teach it. Thankfully, it is no longer a source of serious debate in linguistic circles. As Canagarajah (1999) and others have pointed out, the viability of English as the world's *lingua franca* rests upon it assimilating and de-stigmatizing those varieties spoken by people for whom it is not a first language (i.e., the vast

majority of its users). Nevertheless, and as Reiko has noted, the concept of "superior Englishes" is still with us at the grassroots level and continues to influence hiring policy at some universities in Japan and elsewhere. Strange then, that native speakers such as myself suffer from our own, equally real insecurities. For example, I am acutely aware that most Japanese students enter university with little or no experience of being taught a foreign language in that language. The extent to which they are immersed in English in my classroom (defensible in terms of sound pedagogic reasoning perhaps, but also due to my shortcomings as a Japanese speaker) is for the students potentially disorientating, threatening, and demotivating. I'm under no illusions that most of my students would welcome the occasional explanation in their first language, and though I sporadically try to provide this to the best of my ability, I'm sure it is rarely to their complete satisfaction.

A less obvious source of insecurity affecting native speaker teachers is our lack of familiarity and empathy with whatever concepts of good teaching students carry with them. This is also symptomatic of cultural imperialism and something to which native speakers, particularly those fresh off the plane and giddy with communicative ideals, are especially prone. Simply put, Japanese students, like all people, have expectations based predominantly on experience. It is therefore condescending and unreasonable for others with little or no appreciation of that experience to suddenly impose alien philosophies upon them. The native speaker may find that his or her preconceptions, so applicable back home, lack credibility and are resisted when applied to another context. Ironically, this often leads to complaints about the passivity of the class, the very quality that has traditionally defined proper student conduct in Japan.

While crossing borders does not necessarily solve these problems, it does at least serve to demonstrate that native speaker teachers have much to gain from studying other teachers in action, and particularly those from the same cultural background as the students. This is especially true for native speakers who, like me, were educated in Britain from the mid-seventies. At that time, state schools were very much in thrall to a radical interpretation of the communicative ideal. Consequently, those of us who passed through that system are now only too aware of our shortcomings in terms of explaining what was never explained to us, namely the rules of English grammar. By contrast, the non-native speaker teacher from the same cultural background as the students has not only thoroughly studied English grammar formally, but can also

anticipate typical problems caused by interference with their mutual first language. It is therefore my firm conviction that, in terms of circumventing whatever they perceive to be their own limitations, every EFL teacher has something to gain by crossing borders and introducing their students to an alternative variety of English and teaching style.

Reiko's reflections on the border crossing

The exchange was well received by my students. Some of them expressly thanked me for the opportunity to interact with a native English speaker and to be exposed to different teaching materials. Working with Stuart and his students was an educative experience for two other reasons: First, I learned that crossing borders could provide provocative experiences that promoted reflection. In addition, I realized I can develop my professional awareness anytime, anywhere if I critically reflect on those experiences.

The border crossing experiment was also a wonderful opportunity to get to know my colleague personally and professionally, something not always possible in the compartmentalized academic world. I could glimpse into his personality and philosophy on learning and teaching. Above all, I came to know him not as an idealized native speaker, but as a professional placed in a specific local context, a person trying his best to enhance student learning in ways he felt comfortable with. As we planned and carried out the lesson exchange, a high degree of professional camaraderie developed between us. This will undoubtedly be useful as we carry out future duties in our respective faculties and university committees.

Non-native educators face and overcome misperceptions of their work in different ways. Some emphasize culture and effective language use, employing anti-racist materials so as to demystify the native speaker (Amin, 2004). In my case, however, I needed to directly hear from a native speaker teacher in order to sensitize myself to the unique tensions they themselves are under and consider their experiences and insecurities in relation to my own. Negotiating the lesson exchange and writing this report together has provided me with a valuable opportunity for enquiring into an issue that has long troubled me.

Finally, the border crossing experience helped me realize that I can continue to develop as an EFL professional as long as I continue reflecting on my experiences and relating them to theory and practice. Ever since I became an EFL teacher, I have gone to graduate school, attended conferences, talked shop with colleagues, and discussed language-re-

lated issues with students in an attempt to develop professionally. Theories I was exposed to during graduate school and conferences have kept me in touch with the TESOL world and have saved me from feeling crushed by everyday drudgery. Similarly, regular teaching practice has helped anchor me to the classroom reality I have faced each day. This lesson exchange experiment and subsequent reflection has reminded me that opportunities for professional growth are all around me. I don't even need to leave campus. All I need to do is to act and be open to opportunities.

Crossing borders as catalyst for reflection: Stuart's experience

The term *crossing borders* is appropriate because it evokes images of uncharted territories and unfamiliar faces—things that might in some circumstances be encountered with trepidation. Furthermore, and for the teacher entering a new class, there is also the realization that we are never more likely to fail in some endeavor as we are the first time we undertake it. Far from being debilitating, this fear of failure often sharpens us and contributes to a successful and mutually satisfying outcome.

From the students' perspective, an unfamiliar teacher is, as with anything new, exciting and potentially motivating. Though it does not automatically lead to increased learning, a different teaching style militates against routine and forces students into a process of reassessment and negotiation. There is a honeymoon period at the beginning of any course when the teacher and students are mutually eager to please as they negotiate their roles relative to each other. This period may last for half an hour or (in equally rare cases) the entire course, but it is almost always at its most pronounced in the first 30 seconds or so after the teacher has entered the room and begun to address the class. It is recognizable in the alert postures of the students and their heightened receptiveness. While it may be beyond most of us to sustain this atmosphere for more than a single class, crossing borders with another teacher does at least give us the means to recreate it at any given time.

It is therefore no surprise that the students I met in Reiko's class were thoroughly responsive and apparently motivated by having a new teacher with them. Similarly, the need for us all to prove ourselves was conducive to a higher-than-usual degree of student participation (by comparison with my own classes). I was also impressed by the homework I received from my usual students the following week. This homework had been set by Reiko and was different to the type of writing assignment

usually given them. The results were generally very pleasing and, in some cases, genuinely outstanding. Some of the students had taken it upon themselves to produce their best work of the semester, a fact that has subsequently motivated me to evaluate and modify my classes. This, I believe, bears further testimony to the positive effects of crossing borders, both in terms of facilitating the development of students and, just as importantly, teachers themselves.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to present an example of reflection on experience as an educative process. The experience itself (i.e., exchanging classes with a colleague) proved constructive in terms of enhancing student-teacher motivation and teacher-teacher collaboration. Most importantly, it provided an opportunity for reflection and professional development comparable to other similar endeavors such as peer coaching and narrative inquiry (Johnson, 2006), as well as the process of reflection-through-writing for publications such as *The Language Teacher* and in-house journals. Refining the reflective process makes it more likely that better understood instructional processes will be translated into more effective classroom practice.

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"Wow, that was such a great lesson, I really want others to try it!"

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