Caribbean Curriculum
Vol. 17, 2010, 17–32.

"CONTEXT" – THE MAGIC OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Jennifer Yamin-Ali

This paper examines the issue of "context" in foreign language teaching. It focuses on nine teachers at the secondary school level in Trinidad and Tobago who were students in a one-year in-service professional development programme. The teachers are all graduates with a B.A. in either Spanish or French, or both, and have varied degrees of experience as teachers. Teachers entered the programme with limited understandings of context and its role in teaching, and with little or no experience of using it in their foreign language lessons. During their encounter with the context issue during the year-long professional development programme, they were able to make a link between the theories of effective teaching and learning and the use of context in lessons. They were also able to overcome the challenges of lack of creativity, finding suitable support material, and motivating their students. By the end of the programme, teachers were not yet using context spontaneously but found that planning lessons with appropriate contexts was time-consuming. The findings of this study are especially relevant for teacher educators who promote communicative language teaching.

Introduction

For over a century, teaching methods relevant to foreign languages have been tried and tested, resulting in compounded learning and insights that have added value to the current status of theory and practice today. Foreign language educators have benefited from understandings of how behaviouristic and cognitive schools of psychology have impacted upon approaches to the study of linguistics, and have adjusted their methods and strategies accordingly, in the interest of best practice, with a view to facilitating optimal attitudes and performance in their classrooms.

Whether foreign language teachers are those with initial training and many years of experience, or are trained novice teachers, or are practising without training for any length of time, we can safely surmise that classroom practice is crafted to varying degrees by a composite of experimentation, experiential knowledge, self-directed research, instinct, published materials (textbooks, audiovisual), and Internet sources. In

short, teachers search to find solutions to the problems in their classrooms and are eager to try something that may work.

Even if a teacher were teaching to the test, it is hardly likely that any foreign language teacher today would not have been exposed, even without knowing it, to a communicative approach to language teaching. Many modern textbooks and other learning materials do attempt to reflect this approach in their content, and in their learning and assessment strategies. However, it is not uncommon for teachers to use learning materials in ways that do not promote the intention of the authors. That is, learning materials are not teacher-proof. In addition, it is a common occurrence that foreign language teachers may purport to be using one approach or the other when, in fact, their teaching methods indicate otherwise.

Literature Review

Deep understandings of methods is a goal that may be best achieved by continuous professional development in varying forms. With regard to the communicative approach to foreign language teaching, teachers seem generally convinced by its emphasis on "the importance of self-esteem, of students cooperatively learning together, of developing individual strategies for success, and above all of focusing on the *communicative* process in language learning" (Brown, 1987, p. 12). Additionally, and according to Brown also, a great challenge for teachers is to move beyond the traditional approach that focused on form and knowledge about the language divorced from meaningful communication in the language, to genuine and spontaneous use of the language.

Teachers need to understand that because many students do not relate to what they are being taught and therefore do not understand it, education for them is merely a drill and response (Gardner, 1991). It is an established psychological notion that in order to be engaged in real learning the learner must be able to connect new knowledge with prior understandings. This is a foundational concept of the theory of constructivism that underlines the importance of context, which enables the learner to make the connection between the environment of the classroom and the real world (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Dewey's (1956) words ring true for the relevance of such connectivity to the learning process:

> From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in school comes from his inability to utilize the experience he gets outside while on the other hand he is unable to apply in daily life what he is

> learning in school. That is the isolation of the school – its isolation from life. (p. 46)

A century after Dewey's words, theorists are still grappling with the challenge of making learning relevant for students in the classroom. Thus the rise of contextual teaching and learning (CTL). Johnson (2002) describes this as "a system of instruction based on the philosophy that students learn when they see meaning in academic material, and they see meaning in schoolwork when they can connect new information with prior knowledge and their own experience" (p. vii). She further explains that the 20th century scientific worldview of the significance of relatedness among the parts of the world has demanded that educators rethink how they teach. The relationship between content and context becomes crucial in determining meaning, in that context gives meaning to content. The more students are able to make connections the more meaning they will derive from the content, thus retaining it and, at the same time, developing a new sense of appreciation for what is learnt. New attitudes to learning are formed, facilitating openness to acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

It is through the types of tasks assigned that students discover meaning in what they learn. Whilst this can be seen to be a philosophical approach to teaching and learning, it is also confirmed by neuroscience that the brain continuously tries to connect new information with existing knowledge and skills. Perhaps this may explain the transference phenomenon in foreign language acquisition, where a learner applies a construct from the native language to the new language, a technique that will not always lead to successful communication. Johnson (2002) suggests that because the brain constantly seeks meaning and retains the meaningful, teaching should engage students in a quest for meaning, enabling the students to grasp the personal significance of what they are learning.

Contextual teaching and learning also adopts the principle that the five senses have a role to play in learning. This is reminiscent of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Since our senses are interdependent, the provision of stimuli for all is important in a learning situation where, as teachers, our goal is that information is stored not just in short-term memory, but also in long-term memory. The incorporation of context in teaching facilitates the efficient functioning of the brain by acknowledging the spheres of our realities that make us human and, more importantly, forces us to recognize our students as humans with their individual contexts and needs.

Teaching in context is undeniably associated with the pedagogical approach known as authentic learning. Though foreign language learning at the adolescent level may not involve situations or tasks as complex as those used in the classic authentic learning approach, the reliance on real-world scenarios or contexts is common to both approaches. Such a reliance makes it possible to motivate learners intrinsically (Mehlinger, 1995) by sustaining their interest through meaningful tasks, engaging them in exploration and inquiry, fostering interdisciplinary learning, sharing with communities within and without the school environment the products of students' work, making learning student-driven, and promoting discourse among students and between students and other communities (Mims, 2003). In the foreign language classroom, authentic learning can be downsized to simulated contexts, perhaps requiring a "willing suspension of disbelief," where students are transported to a world that is not only plausible, but likely. According to Mims:

> educational researchers have found that students involved in authentic learning are motivated to persevere despite initial disorientation or frustration, as long as the exercise simulates what really counts – the social structure and culture that gives the discipline its meaning and relevance. (p. 4)

This approach recognizes that new information must be linked in some way to the learner's "schema," so that if there is encouragement to own the new material in a personal way, the unfamiliar will be easier to assimilate

In ascertaining the role of relevance and meaning in foreign language learning, it becomes necessary to determine how to integrate them into instructional planning. Tileston (2004) suggests that students will pay attention and learn better if the instructional plan takes into account the *anticipation of meaning.* This sets the tone for a lesson or a topic and dissipates the potential panic that a learner may initially experience at the start of a lesson. Some lesson formats refer to this as the "Set Induction." Organization of information to be presented in a lesson is another factor relevant to context in a lesson or a topic. Realistic flow of information constitutes an element of realistic context, therefore plausible organizers have to be factored into foreign language lessons for successful simulation to occur.

Some teachers believe that creating context in a lesson mainly serves the purpose of maintaining interest or motivating students. However, instructional planning requires that teachers provide avenues for storing information to be held in long-term memory. Presenting the information

in context, simulating a purpose for finding patterns, discussing information in simulated roles, and adding purpose to movement can all augment the memory capacity of learners. One example provided by Tileston (2004) is the use of reflection through journal writing. A further step is to create an imagined purpose for this journal writing. Generally, all proposals on instructional planning outline guidelines and suggestions for the guided practice phase of a lesson. Omaggio Hadley (2000) skilfully iterates useful contexts for such activities in the foreign language classroom, while Todhunter's study (2007) of instructional conversations in a high school class notes the usefulness of students' personal experiences in creating situations "where these types of conversations occur most naturally, and offer the greatest opportunities for teachers to establish instructional conversation as a regular discursive practice of the classroom" (p. 616). She concluded that topics which were based on students' experiences evoked the most student participation, and that covering the curriculum at the expense of spontaneous interaction is a hindrance to the development of communicative competence.

Johnson (2002, p. 3) also identifies types of activities conducive to contextual teaching and learning and, consequently, communicative competence: formulating projects, identifying interesting problems, making choices, accepting responsibilities, searching out information, reaching conclusions, actively choosing, ordering, organizing, touching, planning, investigating, questioning, and making decisions. She justifies such activities by explaining that they connect academic content to the context of life's situations, thereby enabling the discovery of meaning. Such planning calls for creativity and undauntedness on the part of the teacher, bearing in mind that the students would likely feed off the teacher's behaviour and attitude.

Like for any other subject, the aim of the foreign language lesson is that students arrive at the stage of automaticity—where students perform a task with a satisfactory level of proficiency and competence. So that the assessment phase of a lesson should also require that students perform a task in the relevant context. Implemenatation of a lesson plan is a major area of teacher professional development that requires investigation and examination. As occurs within the context of this research, there are occasions when a chasm exists between the theoretical component of professional development and the practical output of teachers in training. It is significant to note that Bärenfänger and Tschirner (2008), in their examination of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching,

Assessment (CEFR), indicate that in its intention to situate and coordinate the efforts of language professionals who reflect on their current practice, the CEFR is actually engaging in quality management. While most educational authorities plan for teacher supervision through their school management policies, it is safe to assume that quality management on the ground, as far as teaching practice goes, is far from adequate. As such, this study, situated in Trinidad and Tobago, examines one key concept in the practice of teaching by presenting and analysing the experiences and expressions of secondary school in-service student teachers of foreign languages (French and Spanish) with regard to the issue of context in foreign language teaching.

Immediate Research Context

The study examines the declared understandings and practice of nine in-service foreign language teachers at the secondary school level (ages 11-19) in Trinidad and Tobago, with teaching experience ranging from 5 to 23 years. The professional development in which they were engaged is a one-year, part-time post-graduate diploma programme in education (Dip.Ed.), with specialization in Foreign Language education. None of the teachers had engaged in prior professional development. The content focuses on theory and practice, and includes clinical supervision of the teachers' practice in their classrooms, including peer observation and critique by colleagues on the Dip.Ed. programme. While the diploma is not a systemic requirement for teaching in their context, it is a requirement for promotion to middle management positions such as Department Head or Dean, or senior administrative positions such as Vice-Principal or Principal. It is generally acknowledged that many of the teachers enrol in the programme in order to qualify for such positions as opposed to a genuine desire for professional development. Despite their initial intentions, though, a recent poll indicated that the student teachers do enjoy the programme and feel that they benefit from it.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain teachers' declared understanding of the role of context and how to implement it in their lessons, as well as to determine whether their understandings are reflected in their practice. The outcomes would indicate potential areas of focus for improving the professional development of foreign language teachers not only on the Dip. Ed. Programme, but on a national scale.

Methodology

The research is a case study comprising a purposive sample of nine teachers. The quantitative approach is used mainly to provide a clear picture of frequency of occurences of the phenomenon under investigation, whereas the qualitative approach provides the intuitive and humanized details, providing a more complete composite. Maxwell (1996) indicates that each research paradigm has the potential to address different questions and purposes. It is the qualitative analysis of the data that brings the teachers' experiences to life and leads to a better understanding of their perspectives and understandings, as expressed by them. The quantitative analysis provides a closer understanding of the extent of the phenomena.

Research Questions

1. What are student teachers' understandings of "context" in foreign language teaching?
2. What changes did student teachers make or experience with regard to the use of "context" in their planning and teaching during their professional development phase?
3. What changes did student teachers observe in their students once they incorporated "context" in their teaching?
4. What challenges did student teachers face in their attempt to incorporate "context" in their lessons?

Data Collection and Analysis

In the eighth month of the 10-month programme, the nine student teachers were asked to respond in writing to headings relevant to the four stated research questions. These reponses were analysed by isolating the main points and, where relevant, clustering them under categories. For each teacher, four lessons were observed for the purpose of their teaching practice and clinical supervision, which were a major component of the Dip.Ed. programme. Written plans for these lessons were analysed under categories that were most relevant to the use of context, and the supervisor's clinical notes taken during teaching practice were also analysed to determine pertinent elements that were or were not reflected in the written lesson plan. An analysis of the lesson plans and observations is presented in Table 1.

Examples of teachers' use of context are also extracted from their plans and practice (Table 2) as an indication of how they perceive context in foreign language teaching and learning, and in order to arrive

at an analysis of what the teachers determine to be context that is useful and appropriate.

Findings

Student Teachers' Account of Their Developing Understanding of the Issue of Using Context in FL Teaching

Student teachers' explanation of their understanding of context before they enrolled in the Dip.Ed. programme

Six out of nine student teachers indicated that they had no understanding of the concept of context in Foreign Language teaching before they enrolled in the Dip.Ed. programme, while one indicated that this approach was never used by her teachers when she was a Foreign Language student. One of the students had theoretical understanding but could not put it into practice. She did not know how to create context.

Student teachers' explanation of their understanding of context after 8 months on the Dip.Ed. programme

After eight months of theory and practice, student teachers' most common understanding of the notion of teaching langage in context was that a context can enable students to connect with new knowledge. This notion included the "*need to provide a reason for their learning*" and "*that the reason must be very relevant to the needs of the students*."

Other learnings were that the use of context adds to students' enjoyment of lessons, using context makes teaching student-centred, "*allows students to display their talents and use their imagination*," and "*helps to develop students' social and communication skills*." Among their learnings were also the ideas that context must be maintained throughout the lesson and that the planned activities must revolve around the original context introduced in the lesson. It was also felt that context enables one to "*set the tone for the lesson and thus captivate students*."

Student teachers' reports of changes that they made/experienced re using context in their planning and teaching after exposure to the issue of context while on the Dip.Ed. programme

Specific teacher behaviours and stances were reported once student teachers began to grapple with incorporating context in their lessons. Among the changes shared was that no lesson plan is now written

without context. Some teachers now find out students' interests, while others highlighted that they now have to search for relevant support material, and try to employ different forms of media to emphasize context.

In addition to this, one indicated that she now introduces the context at the beginning of each activity. Types of activities have now improved and "*the textbook is no longer the Bible*," and there is more incorporation of all the linguistic skills since relevant contexts facilitate this. One teacher makes a point of giving the students a reason for learning particular topics so that they understand the broad context of the lesson.

Teachers' reports of changes that they observed in their students once they incorporated context in their teaching

Seven teachers reported that students' interest had increased or that there was a genuine desire to learn. Interestingly, for one teacher, male students were more motivated to participate and were less disruptive. It was also reported that students enjoyed lessons more, lessons were more successful, and students grasped concepts faster. Classes were also more "*vibrant*." One novel outcome was that students were creating or suggesting their own contexts. One teacher commented that she had noticed no behavioural changes in her students.

Teachers' accounts of challenges they face in using context in their lessons

Though enthused by the strategy of teaching in context, teachers did face some challenges in their planning and implementation. For most, it was difficult to formulate contexts. For some, it was time-consuming to find support material. Linking the context to the lesson was another challenge mentioned. While multimedia was cited as a good support for teaching in context, its use was "*daunting*" for one teacher. One student reported that students were "*unwilling to accept the spoken foreign language*" by the teacher (because of the newness of the target language exposure), and for one it was "*difficult to communicate context to the class*."

One challenge recognized was that more attention has to be paid to types and sequence of activities. Another was that of maintaining a running thread (of context) throughout the lesson. An interesting concern of one teacher was the lack of context in other subjects, which her foreign language students would now find difficulty accepting.

Observed Use of Context in Lesson Plans and in the Classroom

The nine student teachers were observed 4 times over a period of 6 months. Table 1 indicates the potential avenues for incorporating context in lessons and the extent to which the nine teachers presented evidence of the elements outlined.

Table 1. Evidence of Context in Lesson Plans and Delivery of Lessons by Nine Teachers

Context Element	**Lesson No.**			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Set Induction present on plan	8	9	9	9
Set Induction suitable	6	9	8	9
Set Induction context maintained	7	9	7	9
No. of contextualized activities	6/40 (15%)	19/38 (50%)	21/33 (64%)	20/35 (57%)
Evaluation contextualized	3	7	5	6
Context written on lesson plan	0	5	7	8
Context introduced spontaneously	1	1	0	0
Realistic context	1	7	8	8
Forced context	2	1	1	0
Closure contextualized	2	5	6	5
Homework contextualized	2	4	4	8

Table 2. Examples of Set Inductions and Contexts for Activities

Topic	Set Induction	Contexts for Activities
Shopping	Teacher empties shopping bag and expresses her feelings about shopping	Students choose one real item of clothing and seek classmates' opinions
Professions	Career Day is announced	"Guests" from Venezuela will speak about potential jobs to give students the opportunity to plan their future career
Shopping	Students view poster announcing an upcoming school event	Your school has just advertised a party and you have to go shopping for clothes
Leisure Activities	Teacher pretends to be bored and tries out a number of activities	Your form teacher wants to take the class on an outing. He needs to find out your preferences
Healthy Eating	Teacher indicates that it is lunch time and she needs to buy something for lunch but the cafeteria is closed. Students must help her decide on what options are available	Students are presented with a range of food pictures and are asked to separate meals onto two plates—one they will eat and the other they won't. They explain their choices
Describing People	Teacher explains that she is meeting people at the airport but doesn't know what they look like	Students are at the airport looking at all the passengers to see if they fit their penpal's description
Making Decisions About Spending Money	Students view a DVD of the parade of Carnival bands (as a lead-up to spending money for the event)	It is the Carnival season and you are preparing to go to another school for the grand Calypso competition.
Complaining About Purchases	Teacher enters class with a shopping bag full of clothing items. She explains that they are all birthday presents given to her but each one has a problem	Returning the item to the store in the given context

Topic	Set Induction	Contexts for Activities
The Media	Cameraman/reporter in a simulation of a well-known news talk show "Morning Edition"	"Morning Edition" is hosting a special French edition and is interviewing students about the youths' opinion of the print media
A Kidnapping – Making a Report	Enactment of a kidnap scene on video	Giving your statement as a witness to the police
Making Comparisons to Describe People	Teacher displays a compliment in Spanish that an old man paid her while she was in Chile. Students engage in conversation about the compliment	Impressing the opposite sex (girls) with compliments

Discussion and Conclusions

It is undeniable that there was growth in these nine student-teachers'understanding and use of context in foreign language teaching and learning. The increase of appropriate contexts incorporated in lesson plans and actually implemented in the classroom is evidence that all nine teachers, by the end of the Dip.Ed. programme, had a specific tool to enhance their students' learning in the classroom. Having reported a change in students' motivation, enjoyment, and learning, teachers also discovered a new classroom management tool—making lessons student-centred—the underlying feature of contextual teaching and learning (Johnson, 2002). The teachers' ability to note changes was also an indication of their own reflective analysis as professionals trying to find meaning and practical outcomes from the symbiosis of theory and practice.

What is significant about the teachers' initial lack of knowledge or understanding of the role of context in language learning and teaching is that it may mean that there is more than one generation of teachers in the nation's schools who lack this knowledge and understanding, which translates into foreign language lessons that are sterile and irrelevant to many students, diminishing their intrinsic motivation to learn (Mehlinger, 1995). It also signals that even though a variety of learning materials have been developed within recent times, teachers are not using them in the intended ways, or do not have access to them. It may also mean that contexts used in the classroom still need to be more

individualized to suit specific social schema, and that learning materials, while they attempt to integrate content and context, are not always all-encompassing socioculturally.

The historical backdrop for this research context is one that has up to this time emphasized academic achievement as a means of upward social mobility. Thus, teaching to the test is zealously practised by a great number of teachers. Ironically, though, both the national and regional curricula and final examinations are strongly influenced by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines on proficiency. Spanish is the foreign language studied by the majority of students as opposed to French, and the percentage of students attaining a passing grade in Spanish is relatively low. Lamentably, teachers have not recognized the pedagogical implications of the difference in assessment approaches between their generation and the current generation. Teaching to the test has certainly not equipped foreign language teachers to understand the notion of context.

Another issue warranting great concern is the apparent lack of sharing among department members within the same school. Of the nine teachers under study in this research, at least five had a colleague who had experienced the Foreign Language component of the Dip.Ed. programme. Yet there seemed to be little or no effort at the school departmental level to raise the professional level of foreign language teachers through mentoring or simple discussion. What is also surprising is that it is a requirement that teachers submit schemes of work and lesson plans to Heads of Departments. It may well be that content coverage takes precedence over teaching method and delivery. Overall, the particular context of this research suggests an urgent need for quality control in the planning and implementation of teaching and learning (Bärenfänger & Tschirner, 2008).

It is heartening, though, that although all of the teachers initially expressed serious misgivings about their lack of creativity and imagination generally, eventually, from the data shown in their lesson plans and teaching practice, they were actually able to create suitable contexts as they sought to better understand their students' reality, making their lessons more student-centred (Todhunter, 2007), thus maximizing student learning. Interestingly, though, teachers were reluctant to stray from their planned contexts. This may have been due to the pressure of being observed or to the novelty of embedding the content into contexts, which took effort and time to create and to source support material for.

Implications

The above findings did have implications for the approach to the context issue in the current professional development design. An immediate outcome was that having reflected on the experiences and performance of these nine students, three approaches were adopted for the group of students who participated in the programme the following year. One was the course instructor's relentless emphasis on using context in lessons by providing a variety of examples with every observation or lesson plan submitted, and insistence on its infusion in every lesson. The other was a minor but practical and useful change to the structure of the written lesson plan. The earlier standard format required 2 columns for planning and denoting the activity phase of the lesson:

Objective	Activity

The new amended version now requires 3 columns:

Objective	Context	Activity

Student teachers are now compelled to see context as an essential component of their planning.

Though a seemingly minor detail, the third approach was to use the word *scenario* to better enable the teachers to capture the concept of context. It seemed to clarify to a large extent teachers' confusion or lack of clarity.

Having seen the growth of the nine teachers, especially with regard to teaching language in context, the gap in knowledge of other practising teachers becomes even more pronounced. It is therefore of great concern that in the context of this research initial professional development is not a requirement to teach in public schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Thus, the teaching of foreign languages (in this case Spanish and French) in this country assumes the hues of many varied and perhaps misguided understandings. The teachers who engage in professional development through the Dip.Ed. programme need to be positioned to have a positive professional influence on others in their department who have not had the opportunity for enhancing their craft. Realistically, it is a great challenge for teachers to harness their resources for departmental sharing without some logistical and moral support from the school's

administration. I am advocating that departments conduct their own mini workshops in prearranged slots on the school's timetable, and that a professional record be kept of such undertakings. These would be useful for inclusion in teachers' portfolios.

On a wider scale, the Foreign Language Unit of the Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education can utilize the human resource in schools to conduct zonal or regional workshops on topics such as "teaching language in context," which would redound to the long-term benefit of students. Such workshops can also provide avenues for the development of materials, which can be disseminated via the mechanisms of the Ministry.

Since examination results play such a dominant role in this society, and since teachers do tend to teach to the test, it may be sensible to package assessment familiarization workshops together with the teaching approaches that would have influenced the type of assessment. In other words, syllabus construction and reconstruction should be guided by teacher education programmes that focus on the guiding philosophy of the syllabus and the attendant teaching approaches.

It must be noted, though, that teachers themselves are also responsible for their own development. A culture of self-driven continuous professional development and even personalized learning needs to be nurtured and sustained through informal channels such as professional magazine and journal subscriptions, professional chat rooms, and podcasts. Perhaps a focus on extrinsic motivation of teachers may be one step in the right direction. Competitions for "most creative contexts for topics at middle school level" is one example of motivating foreign language teachers to do their research and to use their creativity, while at the same time alerting them to pertinent areas in their professional practice.

With the current thrust of professional standards for teaching professionals, teaching in context cannot be seen to be just one minor element of professional practice in the field of foreign language education. Indeed, it is at the core of all quality teaching and, moreso, the magic of foreign language teaching.

References

Bärenfänger, O., & Tschirner, E. (2008). Language educational policy and language learning quality management: The Common European Framework of Reference. *Foreign Language Annals, 4*(1), 81–101.

Brown, H. D. (1987). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational Researcher, 18*(1), 32–42.

Dewey. J. (1956). *The school and society and the child and the curriculum*. Chicago, IL: Phoenix Books.

Gardner, H. (1991). *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Johnson, E. B. (2002). *Contextual teaching and learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA. Corwin Press.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mehlinger, H. D. (1995). *School reform in the information age.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Mims, C. (2003). Authentic learning: A practical introduction & guide for implementation. *Meridian,* 6(1). Retrieved from http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2003/authentic_learning/2.html

Omaggio Hadley, A. (2000). *Teaching language in context* (3rd ed.) .Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Tileston, D. W. (2004). *What every teacher should know about instructional planning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Todhunter, S. (2007). Instructional conversations in a high school Spanish class. *Foreign Language Annals*, *40*(4), 604–621.