Working at the edge:
Accounts of beginning and novice NESB teachers

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Abstract

Australia is a multicultural country and as such, the Australian workforce should be reflecting that diversity. Logically, the teaching profession is no different from any other sub-group of the working populace. Policy documents that inform the profession of teaching explicitly refer to the necessity for nurturing and developing those who are new to the profession. A key part of the development and growth of newcomers to the teaching profession involves the exchange of ideas and knowledge between colleagues. Using the sociocultural theoretical framework of communities of practice, this study seeks to understand the positioning of new members of the teaching profession with respect to their communities of practice. The particular group of newcomers to the profession investigated are those who have a non-English speaking background and who have recently undergone teacher preparation courses in the state of Queensland.

This study focuses on the accounts of interactions of a group of beginning or novice teachers who are from a non-English speaking background with other members of their particular communities of teaching practice. The abductive research strategy was used in this qualitative study. Data were generated through interviews, electronic diary recordings, face-to-face focus group and virtual focus group sessions. The participants had all completed at least two practicum experiences in schools or were in their first or second years of teaching at the time of data collection.

The data generated consisted of the accounts of the participants’ experiences in their communities of teaching practice. These data were interrogated through the application of critical discourse analysis and positioning theory. Analysis of emergent small stories used by the participants in the telling of their accounts was supported by narrative analytic tools from sociolinguists such as Ochs and Capps (2001).

The interactions of the participant teachers with established members of their communities of practice were shown to be influenced by the presence of an element of worldliness, defined as personal overseas experience through travel or migration,
in the colleague teachers. Discourses of Race and Care were used by participants in
their accounts. The study findings revealed that in some communities of practice,
participants were positioned or had taken up positions at the edge of that community.
Where a discourse of Care occurred, particularly when linked to worldliness, the
study participants took up positions as legitimate peripheral participants of that
community of practice

The findings generated a model that can be implemented in any organisation to
assist in the movement of newcomers to legitimate peripheral participants of their
communities of practice and so allow continuation on their trajectories through that
community (Lave & Wenger, 1991).
Statement of originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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Kerryn Gail McCluskey

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

This thesis examines the positioning of beginning and novice teachers who are from a non-English speaking background in their communities of practice within the schools in which they are teaching. In an age where movement between and within countries is commonplace, concern has been raised, in an English-speaking educational context, about meeting the needs of those teachers with non-English speaking backgrounds who begin to teach in schools where colleagues are predominantly from English speaking backgrounds. Globally, important research has been conducted with the view to providing information to assist in meeting the needs of non-English speaking children in the classroom (for example, Capella-Santana, 2003; Evans & Fisher, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2005). There is scant attention given to the plight of teachers of a non-English speaking background. Literature in these areas will be considered further in the literature review (Chapter 2).

The profession of teaching embodies a multicultural workforce mirroring that of the nation’s population and indeed its workforce. It is the multicultural aspect of this profession that is of interest in this thesis. Policy documents that guide the profession of teaching, for example, the National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003), the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Cross-sectoral Strategic Plan 2006-2009 for Queensland (Francis, Newham, & Harkin, 2005), and the Queensland College of Teachers Code of Practice (Board of Teacher Registration, n.d.) specify the importance of members of the profession supporting and guiding those new to teaching. Logically, it follows that all new teachers can expect collegial support.
There is a paucity of research that investigates teachers of a non-English speaking background working in an English speaking context. Particularly in Australia, and especially in Queensland from where this study is drawn, there is little evidence of research surrounding beginning or novice teachers who are of a non-English speaking background who have studied to become, and are working as, teachers in Queensland.

Using critical discourse analysis, an interrogation of the accounts of the participants of my study showed that at times the beginning or novice teacher took up a position at the edge of the community of teaching practice that consisted of colleagues in particular staffrooms.

**Research questions**

This study aimed to understand the following central issue:

*How are beginning and novice teachers of a non-English speaking background positioned within an English speaking community of teaching practice?*

The response to this question was identified through a discussion of two sub questions which evolved through the analysis of the data:

- *Who positions beginning and novice NESB teachers in English speaking communities of teaching practice? and*
- *In what ways does a community of practice position NESB beginning or novice teachers for taking up professional identities?*

As a researcher and lecturer in teacher preparation courses, my role in the research also involved participation. My role variation played an important part in the study and therefore is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

*The significance of this study*

The significance of my research arises in three main areas: the subject of my study, the methodology, and the implications from the study for future practices of inducting and retaining teachers from non-English speaking backgrounds.
Qualitative research is not unusual in the context of education, however this thesis is distinct from other research that has been conducted in the area of diversity in education. The first point of difference lies in its focus. Where the majority of the research has been focussed on meeting the needs of a multicultural student body or preparing teachers for teaching in multicultural classrooms, this thesis focuses on the interactions of multicultural teachers with their professional colleagues in order to develop the tacit knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991) required to perform their work. Secondly, the participants themselves differ from those used in other “similar” research. The educational backgrounds, including the countries in which their education was conducted, the broad range of cultural backgrounds and teaching areas further differentiate these participants from those of other research projects. Finally on this point, the participants of my research are all beginning teachers (who have had at least two practicum sessions in the course of their degrees in education) or novice teachers (who are in their first or second year of teaching) at the time of data collection who have undergone teacher preparation courses in Queensland. The third and final point of difference lies in the utilisation of electronic means of data collection, especially the organisation of chat rooms as a focus group setting.

My research has implications for education, but most specifically the teaching profession and all those stakeholders of that profession. One needs to question why policy documents clearly state the importance of caring for those who are new to the profession yet there appears to be no means of ensuring this is the case. Secondly, the findings of the thesis extend beyond the teaching profession. The model generated from the study can be implemented in any professional field, and indeed in any business particularly with the multicultural nature of the workforce in many countries.

**Overview of the thesis**

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 2 reviews literature regarding diversity in the context of education in three sections. The first of these refers to some of the literature on cultural diversity in the classroom; the second on diversity in the profession of teaching. The emphasis from the literature was on the importance of catering for and meeting the needs of all school students through the development of the teachers’ skills and cultural awareness. The third section of the literature review considers literature pertaining to the Australian context and
specifically that which examines experiences of teachers or preservice teachers who are of a non-English speaking background. The difficulties that these teachers or preservice teachers encountered in their roles in the classroom were highlighted. From the literature review the paucity of literature pertaining to the interactions of beginning or novice teachers with colleagues in the school was evident.

In Chapter 3, the argument supporting the use of communities of practice as the theoretical framework for the thesis has been presented. An overview of the sociocultural theory of learning has been provided to provide substantiation for the link between learning and the social environment in which that learning occurs (Wertsch, 1991). The concept of communities of practice as put forward by Lave and Wenger (1991) and furthered by Wenger (1997) is then introduced. To support my argument for the framework, interaction has been identified as a crucial element of communities of practice especially in the development of practice. A review of literature to support the use of communities of practice as a framework has been presented, and from this literature it has been identified that communities of practice can be formed informally or as a formal grouping of workers. Functions of a community of practice have also been identified from this body of literature. The studies in the reviewed literature involve a range of organizational sites; that is they are not restricted to schools and include national and international organisations to demonstrate the broad application of the concept of communities of practice. In all, the importance of communities of practice in providing opportunities for open discussion and development of skills involved in practice, generation of ideas, and the passing of tacit information inherent in practice in a particular context to help newcomers is emphasized.

In undertaking a qualitative approach to my research and using verbal and written texts as data, it was vital to implement a methodology that was both rigorous and produced reliable findings. Chapter 4 explains the methodological approach that I used for this thesis. Verbal and written accounts provided by the participants allowed me access to the actors’ lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and the insight into the creation of the social constructs creating their individual realities. In my study I have used the abductive strategy as it embraces the ontological assumptions of
constructivism in that those participating in the interactions socially construct their social reality (Blaikie, 1993, 2000).

Chapter 4 also provides information on the data collection methods used: electronic diaries, focus groups – both face-to-face and virtual focus groups, and interviews. Details of the participants are also provided. The approach taken to identify the extracts used for analysis is explained in this chapter. Critical discourse analysis has been supported by positioning theory in the analysis of the data. The data were generated through the participants’ accounts. The accounts represent the retelling of experiences or conversations that demonstrate the positioning of the characters in the event being described (Davies & Harré, 1990; Howie & Peters, 1996). Therefore an explanation of positioning theory is provided next. The chapter then concludes with an argument for the use of critical discourse analysis adapted from van Dijk (2001a) and Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter (2000) and an explanation of its application to the study.

Chapter 5 provides the reader with an insight into the background of the study and my roles with respect to the participants. I have used a retrospective reflective account written towards the end of the thesis writing process to reflect on how I was positioning myself as mentor and researcher both before and during the research. The retrospective reflective account is then examined using critical discourse analysis, my analytical tool for the thesis data. I believe that it is necessary to present this chapter at the beginning of the thesis to not only inform the reader of the events propelling the research but to also provide an anchor for the thesis.

The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I have provided extracts of the participants’ accounts and analysed these using the critical discourse analysis tools outlined in Chapter 4. The analysis produced sub-themes that arose from the data: skin colour, appearance, worldliness and conversational participation. Each of these sub-themes is equally evident throughout the data and therefore this chapter is organised accordingly. A fundamental part of qualitative research and especially in the application of critical discourse analysis lies in the varied findings that are possible from one set of data. The transparent nature of the analyses in this chapter allows the reader to logically follow my method for the interrogation of the data.
Chapter 7 provides a synthesis of the data as analysed in Chapter 6. I have presented this synthesis in terms of the theoretical framework for the thesis: communities of practice. I believe that this organisational structure allows the thesis to show a complete cycle by linking the end of the thesis – the analysis, to the framework argued at an earlier point in the thesis. This is diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1. The cycle linking the framework, data and analysis**

Chapter 8 provides the conclusion of the thesis. In this chapter I have discussed the implications of the emergent issues from the analysis:

a) positioning at the *edge* or as a *legitimate peripheral participant* of the community of teaching practice and

b) the impact of the *worldliness* (overseas experiences through travel or migration) of members of the community of practice on the positioning of the beginning or novice NESB teacher and the take up of that teacher’s professional identity.

Through this discussion I show how the sub-questions (outlined earlier in Chapter 1) have been addressed. The findings of the study have been linked to the literature reviewed in Chapter 3. Chapter 8 also presents the implications and recommendations for stakeholders that have arisen from the research. The findings generated a model that has application to any multicultural workplace. This model is presented in Chapter 8.
Chapter 2

Review of the Relevant Literature

Introduction

Educational researchers have provided an abundance of evidence that acknowledges the tensions within the professional environment arising from the increasingly multicultural nature of school classrooms in countries where the dominant language is English (for example, Hartley, 2003; Hernandez Sheets & Chew, 2002; Ramanathan, 2007). There is however a paucity of research that addresses the teacher of a non-English speaking background (NESB) in the beginning or novice stage of a teaching career that is based in an English speaking context. The research that has been conducted ranges from that addressing the complexities of teaching an ethnically diverse range of students (see for example, Capella-Santana, 2003; Gallavan, 2005; Gay, 2005), to considering the design of teacher education programs and their suitability for a diverse range of preservice teachers (see for example, Hartley, 2002; Hernandez Sheets & Chew, 2002), to the introduction of teacher education programs specifically designed to attract bilingual or multilingual students to develop a diversified teaching workforce (for example see the work of Kamler, Santoro and Reid (1998), Ladson-Billings (2005) and Mabokela and Madsen (2003)). While some research has been conducted using the experiences of teachers or preservice teachers of a non-English speaking background (for example in Han, 2005; Kato, 1998), the majority of the studies have focused on the necessity for the accommodation of a diverse range of students in the classroom. Research has also investigated the inclusion of courses in initial teacher training to better prepare new teachers for cultural diversity in the classrooms when they enter the teaching profession (see for example Sleeter, 2001; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004). I will argue that there is a clear gap in the literature in relation to beginning or novice teachers who are of a non-English speaking background working in a profession that is based in an English speaking context. My study contributes to this field of research.
In this chapter, the literature will be examined by firstly considering the area of cultural diversity in the classroom with a focus on teachers of the non-dominant culture. This will be followed by a review of the research in the area of diversity in the teaching profession and the Australian classroom experiences of teachers of a non-English speaking background. This is a very limited field of research. The chapter will be concluded with a discussion on the significance of this particular study to address a gap in the research.

Cultural diversity in the classroom

Cultural diversity in the classroom has traditionally been approached as a deficit model in positing that students from minority groups should assimilate into the culture of the dominant group and that assimilation would address any problems these students may be experiencing (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Santos Rego & Nieto, 2000). Bourdieu suggests that assimilation “privileges the cultural capital (which includes world views, linguistic codes, certain types of knowledge, and material objects)” (Reed-Danahay, 2005, p. 47) of the dominant group. The cultural capital brought to the class by students and teachers is a product of that individual’s family and traditional background (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

In education, cultural capital is reflected in every facet of the teaching and learning process. The importance for a teacher in understanding, respecting and being sensitive to cultures different from the dominant culture in order to teach effectively in and manage multicultural classrooms has been identified in many research studies outside Australia (see for example Capella-Santana, 2003; Gallavan, 2005; Gay, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Talbert-Johnson, & Tillman, 1999; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004; Zine, 2005) and in an Australian context (see for example Bartlett, 2001; Nemoto, 2002; Sharifian, 2005; Shnukal, 2002). The studies referred to as exemplifying the importance of teachers having an understanding of other cultures in order to effectively function in a multicultural classroom environment identify the overwhelming representation of the dominant culture in the teacher preparation courses and teaching professions under review. Conversely, the need for teachers to acknowledge and cater for the diverse range of cultures that may be present in a classroom has also been identified. While these studies are further explained in the coming pages, it is worthwhile to recognise that the effect that the cultural capital
brought to the classroom by both teachers and individual students may differ and therefore affect the student learning that occurs in that classroom (Bartlett, 2001; Nemoto, 2002; Shariffian, 2005; Shnukal, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2004; Zine, 2005). It is the recognition of this effect that has prompted teacher preparation programs at the university level to include courses in multicultural education to better prepare graduate teachers in understanding and catering for the inevitable differences in cultural capital that may exist at any given moment in a classroom (Capella-Santana, 2003; Gallavan, 2005; Gay, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Talbot-Johnson & Tillman, 1999). The effects of the differences in cultural capital as shown by the research are explicated in the remaining pages of this chapter. The research into the difficulties faced by minority students in the classroom is vast, therefore a selection representative of that research has been made to provide a platform on which to demonstrate the necessity for investigating the existence of difficulties faced by minority teachers beyond their role in the classroom.

From the perspective of the teacher’s role in the classroom, there has been a recognition of the need for both practising and preservice teachers to develop their knowledge of the cultures of their students to assist in the education of all of their students (Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Santos Rego & Nieto, 2000; Seidl, 2007; Weinstein et al., 2004; Zine, 2005). In order to improve educational equality, Zine (2005) has proposed developing an “integrative framework” (p. 12) that recognizes and incorporates a multicentred rather than Eurocentred perspective to education. An integrated framework would recognize “different centres of knowledge based on diverse ethnocultural and spiritual traditions” (Zine, p. 13) to move “educational theory and practice towards a more global, plural framework” (p. 14).

The development of a culturally responsive pedagogy that recognizes the importance of the link between a school and the community from which it draws its students and responds to the cultural norms and values of that community has also been suggested as a way of improving educational equity (Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Santos Rego & Nieto, 2000; Seidl, 2007). In the further consideration of equity in the classroom, a focus of educational research has been on the importance of the teacher, a member of the dominant cultural group, having some knowledge of the minority
cultures including language differences and effective classroom management styles to engender academic learning in the classroom.

Evans and Fisher (2000), in their research involving science students in Western Australia and Victoria and the interpersonal behaviour of their teachers stressed the importance of the teachers’ sensitivity to the students’ diverse cultural backgrounds and the ensuing impact these diverse backgrounds would have on the learning experiences used in the classroom. A statistical analysis was conducted of the data gathered from the Australian version of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction developed in 1985 in The Netherlands by Wubbels, Creton and Hooymayers. The questionnaire was completed by over 2,000 students and the analysis established that students of different cultural backgrounds have different perceptions of their interactions with teachers from the perceptions of Australian students. The findings state the need for teachers to vary the learning experiences provided in the classroom to accommodate these differences in perceptions and thus cater for all students in the classroom. In relation to the Evans and Fisher (2000) study, teachers’ knowledge of different cultures has been shown in other research, as discussed below, to assist in developing effective classroom management strategies that in turn enhances learning.

The Monroe and Obidah (2004) study in the United States considered the management of classroom behaviour and demonstrated the importance for a teacher of having knowledge of his or her students’ cultures. This research was conducted as a case study of an African American teacher using observational field visits, interviews and documents recording the teacher’s behavioral and academic expectations of her students. The teacher worked in a middle-school classroom with African American students. The research identified the advantages in knowing and understanding the culture of the students to avoid misinterpreting classroom management situations. The findings were supported by the research conducted by Weinstein et al. (2004). Weinstein et al. also documented a misinterpretation by a White American teacher of a behavioural situation concerning African American students. Weinstein et al. submitted a proposal for “culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM)” (p. 26) to circumvent such misinterpretations. In the Weinstein et al. study, descriptions of the experiences of two teachers, taken from
secondary sources, were used to demonstrate the need for CRCM. In the school of the first teacher, the majority of students were African American; in the second teacher’s school the children were Haitian. Both teachers were White. Although the teachers were from what could be interpreted as a “minority” group in their particular schools, the focus of the Weinstein et al. (2004) discussion was on the importance of teachers having cultural awareness in order to correctly interpret student behaviour and therefore be better placed to meet the needs of their students.

In Australia, Shnukal’s (2002) research in Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula schools focused on language differences confronting non-indigenous teachers and the effect of these differences on the curriculum and the outcomes of the learning experiences implemented. Shnukal found that a curriculum that did not take into account language differences disadvantaged indigenous students. The language differences were also found to hinder the development of bonds between teachers and students and teachers and the community. Further to this, Sharifian (2005) supported the need for teachers to be aware of differences in conceptualizations of words used in English between Aboriginal and “mainstream” students in order to respond appropriately in their classrooms. Two equal groups of students, one of Aboriginal students and one of Anglo-Australian students and a number of English prompt words were used in an ethnographic analysis of words and cultural associations or interpretations. Reflecting these studies, Chen (2007) conducted an ethnographical study using three children from families newly arrived in the UK, their parents and teachers. Chen found that in order to provide equality of curriculum for students from non-English cultural and linguistic backgrounds support was needed for these children in English language development to realize academic achievement. The research of de Oliveira and Athanases (2007) with teacher graduates from a Californian University supported the need for teacher preparation courses at universities to provide strategies and skills in developing the English language levels of classroom students in culturally diverse schools. De Oliveira and Athanases found that the graduates of these courses felt confident in meeting the language needs of, and advocating for equity for, their classroom students.

These studies have supported the inclusion of courses in universities for preservice teachers that better equip them for their future classroom roles in meeting
the needs of a diverse range of students beyond a focus on “curriculum content and
teaching strategies” (Weinstein et al., 2004) and through preparing them to “teach in a
way that acknowledges, encourages, and respects students from all cultural
backgrounds” (Gallimore, 2005, p. 345). Sleeter (2001) found that preservice teacher
education programs include either through community based immersion courses or
“add on” courses, opportunity for preservice teachers to develop skills to assist in
teaching in a culturally diverse classroom. Furthermore, the importance of practising
teachers developing cultural knowledge to ensure equity and fairness in educating
their students has been reiterated throughout the literature.

The above review of research has identified that the onus of addressing the
needs of minority students to ensure equality in the classroom has been placed on
teachers through the implementation of strategies that cater for a diverse range of
cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Students of minority cultures were identified in
the reviewed research as having reduced power particularly with respect to academic
achievement and interaction with teachers as compared to students of the majority
culture. The focus of this research has been on recognizing and addressing the diverse
cultures of students. Support of the minority teacher has not been addressed. A
proposed aid to assisting the culturally diverse range of students has been to consider
diversifying the teaching workforce. The next section examines the literature on the
diversification of the teaching profession.

Cultural diversity in the profession

Student populations in schools have become “ethnically, linguistically, and
culturally diverse” with a teaching population that is not matching this change
(Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 229). In the United States, while there has been
recognition of the need to diversify the teaching workforce to correct the “ethnic and
racial imbalance” (Becket, 1998, p. 196), the programs that are in place to educate
future teachers are not always found to be addressing the needs of those in the cohort
who represent the minority (e.g. Au & Blake, 2003; Bergen & Kierstead, 1998;
Capella-Santana, 2003; Gay, 2005; Montecinos, 2004). This was particularly evident
in the study by Hernandez Sheets and Chew (2002) who through the use of multiple
data sources such as focus groups, observations, questionnaires and document
collection, researched Chinese-American students in a teacher preparation course.
The program in the course that addressed diversity was found not to meet the needs of the participants as future bilingual teachers of colour teaching a diverse class. Amongst the findings of this research was that the teacher preparation course was conducted as if all students were White, and that there was no instruction provided to specifically address meeting the needs of Chinese-American school students who need to function effectively in a pluralistic society. In Australia, Hartley (2003) found this also to be so in the recruitment of Japanese language teachers to be trained to teach in Australian schools. In the two case studies, Hartley’s teachers found that the literature encouraging them to enter Australian universities and their courses did not adequately prepare them for, or match, their experiences in the schools. The brochures were encouraging and positive yet the experiences of the two preservice teachers were not. Neither the advertising literature not the university course prepared these preservice teachers for the negative responses that they faced from the school students and staff, towards learning Japanese.

In a further move to increase the number and diversity of the pool of teachers, special programs to train teachers of a specific minority group to work in schools with a specific minority population (for example Latino, Navajo and Mexican-American groups) have been devised by some universities in the United States (e.g. Becket, 1998; Waldschmidt, 2002). These programs were developed to provide teachers who would represent positive role models for all students in the schools (Au & Blake, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). However, Zine (2005) and Mabokela and Madsen (2003) found that with a lack of minority group representation in the administration of schools, barriers to promotion for teachers could be inferred by members of minority groups and also have a negative effect in depicting role models for minority students.

Mabokela and Madsen’s (2003) descriptive analysis of African-American teachers’ professional experiences found that these teachers often needed to prove their competence to European American colleagues and parents of students. The professional development of these African-American teachers was often compromised due to role boundaries placed on them by colleagues. These role boundaries included their recognized “strengths” as experts in matters African-American particularly where student issues arose and non-recognition of professional
expertise in curriculum and pedagogical matters. Therefore, while the intent of the
schools researched by Mabokela and Madsen was to increase the numbers of teachers
of colour there was no change in the composition of the administration.

Zine (2005) and Mabokela and Madsen (2003) found that the maintenance of an
administration constituted by teachers of the dominant culture indicated the existence
of a “glass ceiling” (Zine, 2005, p. 13) for teachers of colour (Mabokela & Madsen,
2003; Zine, 2005) impacting the recruitment of potential teachers from school
students of colour (Zine, 2005). The finding of a lack of influence in decision-
making, was mirrored by another United States descriptive study into the roles of
Asian- American teachers conducted by Hema Ramanathan (2007). These studies
have considered minority teachers specifically as role models for attracting minority
students into the profession of teaching and providing a more diverse workforce. The
focus of these studies was on the teachers’ participation in decision making in the
schools and as members of the administration of the school. While this research has
investigated teachers who are not representative of the dominant culture, it is limited
in number and indicates that more research needs to be conducted regarding minority
teachers.

This body of research supports the importance of encouraging diversity in the
teaching workforce yet highlights the need to incorporate into initial teacher
programs the educational perspectives and understandings of culturally diverse
preservice teachers (Au & Blake, 2003). It is simply not enough to develop a
multicultural teaching body that has been trained from the perspective of the
majority culture to teach in a multicultural classroom. The focus of this review of
the research has been to consider the effectiveness of the preparation of those who
would make up a culturally diverse teaching workforce in order to address the
increasingly diverse school student population. An alternative approach to diversify
the workforce has been to expand the current body with those teachers who have
been trained in another country.

In an Australian context, Oliver (1998) presented the position of Education
Queensland, as the employer of teachers in state schools in Queensland, and their
targeting of overseas trained NESB teachers to enable its schools to diversify the
teacher workforce. Kamler, Santoro and Reid (1998) looked at the placement of
overseas born and trained teachers in Victorian schools through a demographic survey and found the highest representations of overseas trained NESB teachers were employed in the areas of teaching languages other than English (LOTE), mathematics or science. Seah and Bishop (2001) as discussed below identified a shortage of mathematics teachers in Victoria and investigated the resultant employment of overseas trained NESB mathematics teachers and their experiences.

The need for a diversified workforce and the intrinsic benefits such diversification would bring to the profession is undeniably recognised in the literature. Zine (2005) and Mabokela and Madsen (2003) as discussed above found that minority teachers were not positioned equally with their white colleagues. Little research has been conducted on following minority teachers into the workplace and this is particularly so in an Australian context. Most studies have examined preservice teacher experiences. A consideration of Australian studies of teaching experiences, in the main using preservice teachers, follows to provide a justification for research involving Australian trained and employed NESB teachers.

**Australian experiences**

Very little research into the professional experiences of NESB teachers in Australia appears to have been conducted. That which has been done, seems to focus on classroom experiences. Seah and Bishop (2001) using a socio-anthropological approach and data from case studies based on interviews, document analyses and observations, examined the experiences of overseas trained NESB mathematics teachers particularly in relation to cultural differences in values and beliefs in teaching mathematics between their own countries and the schools in which they were employed in Victoria. Two teachers from this study were from Romania and Fiji. Seah and Bishop found that differences in beliefs and values in the teaching of mathematics between those of the participants’ own countries and those they encountered in Australia impacted on the effectiveness of their teaching in Australian schools.

In presenting the position of Education Queensland, Oliver (1998) noted the bridging course offered by the Queensland University of Technology to teachers from countries outside Australia, prior to their employment in Queensland schools. This
course, and support offered by the then Board of Teacher Registration (BTR), the registering authority for teachers in Queensland were offered as a means of providing assistance for overseas trained teachers to understand the educational system in place in Queensland. The Queensland University of Technology course and the BTR assistance were presented to support the inclusion of overseas trained teachers in the Queensland teaching workforce. Programs offered at the University of Sydney for overseas-trained teachers to upgrade their existing qualifications to meet accreditation requirements in Australia were investigated through interviews and focus groups by Cruickshank (2004) to determine the efficacy of, and the barriers to, the programs. The University of Sydney had identified through surveys that there was a population of teachers whose skills were not employed. Difficulties in accessing accurate information about university programs and registration requirements for teachers were identified as problematic for many of the overseas trained teachers. The University of Sydney utilized the community language schools as conduits for the advertisement of the program that enabled an upgrading of qualifications for registration as a teacher in New South Wales. The Sydney University program itself was found to be more successful when flexibility in delivery and content was implemented to meet the needs of the overseas trained teachers.

Kamler, Santoro and Reid (1998) conducted a demographic survey of teachers in Victoria who were overseas born and educated. It was found that the majority of these teachers were teachers of Languages Other Than English (LOTE). Of the teachers identified in the survey, approximately 44% had been teachers in their countries of origin. Kamler et al. noted that overseas teaching experiences were not always valued and accepted for employment purposes in the Victorian system. The study found that many of the teachers who were working in rural areas were teachers of LOTE, some of whom had been teachers in their own countries, but of a different subject area. These rurally placed teachers were often found to be the only teacher in that LOTE department. As a result, the availability of support networks that may be offered in larger departments in the schools did not occur. Kamler et al. interviewed eight overseas born teachers working in rural Victoria and presented the findings from one interview in the form of a poem. The findings identified themes representing difficulties met by overseas born teachers. These themes represented in the poem were of “cultural isolation, covert/overt racism, city/country binaries, an
attitude of forgiveness and a belief in childhood innocence” (p. 12). Kamler et al. recommended the initiation of support programs to prepare these teachers for their roles in rural Victorian schools.

Reid (2005) conducted a study involving six teachers who had gained teaching qualifications overseas. The teaching areas ranged across mathematics, science and social science and the countries of origin were India, Fiji and Central Africa. The teachers were employed in Sydney. In this research conducted through semi-structured interviews, over a three month period, Reid found that “authoritative discourses of qualifications, discourses of ‘otherness’ and discourses of ‘whiteness’ shape the professional experiences of visible minority and overseas-trained teachers in diverse ways … result(ing) in power being largely invested in ‘white agency’.” (p. 261). Reid recommends that to help immigrant teachers, mentoring from other teachers “who ‘have been through it’” (p. 261) and support for schools staffed with immigrant teachers are necessary.

These studies have identified the recognition of the need for a diverse teaching workforce to reflect the cultural diversity in Australian classrooms. However, they highlighted that teachers from a non-English speaking background lacked adequate support once taking positions as teachers in Australia. Very few further studies have been conducted in Australia that focus on the experiences of NESB beginning or novice teachers.

Australian studies have been conducted using preservice teachers of Asian or non-European background with a focus on the practicum experiences (e.g. Han, 2005; Han & Singh, 2007; Hartley, 2003; Kato, 1998; Santoro, 1997). Santoro (1997) conducted a case study involving two Chinese born and educated students enrolled in a teacher education program to teach LOTE and ESL in Victoria. The study focused on their experiences during a three week practicum in teaching ESL. This was their first experience in Australian schools. Santoro used critical discourse analysis as a means of identifying the positioning and identities of the preservice teachers as constructed by the supervising teachers. While the study identified a need for universities to provide more effectively for “overseas-born-and-educated student teachers” (p. 99), language and attitudes that could be interpreted as racist toward NESB teachers were also detected.
Kato (1998) and Hartley (2003) used case studies of native-speaking Japanese LOTE preservice teachers. The participant preservice teachers felt that they were underprepared for their experiences on practicum in Queensland classrooms. For example, student negativity towards learning a LOTE was unexpected. This negativity towards LOTE was also encountered in the Kamler et al. (1998) study. Kato found that classroom communication styles of Japanese preservice teachers resulted in adverse comments from the supervising teachers. Kato’s study focused on Japanese native speakers teaching in their first or second year after graduating in Queensland with the aim of informing university courses of the need to provide assistance for future Japanese preservice teachers in their classroom communication. Kato found that classroom communication differed from that of native English speakers affecting classroom management and confidence in teaching. Both Kato and Hartley found that the preservice teachers felt accepted by students in the study of LOTE but not in teaching in other areas. Extra support from the universities in preparation prior to practicum was recommended in both studies. Hartley also found that there was a lack of acceptance and assistance provided by members of the school community due to the Asian ethnicity of the preservice teachers. This reflects the concern about racist attitudes raised by Santoro (1997).

Han (2005) used a wider spread of preservice teachers, drawing a sample that included Asian, African and Pacific Island participants; hence the term in the study of “World English Speaking of non-European background” (WES) (p. 2) preservice teachers. The study found that the preservice teachers experienced difficulties due to culture and language differences as well as accent and colour. The difficulties often led to the marginalisation of the preservice teachers by both teachers in the school and school students and therefore affected the access to knowledge afforded to preservice teachers by their supervising teachers. The study investigated, through interviews, the difficulties encountered by the preservice teachers in their first year of a teacher education program and reported on the changes the WES students had made in themselves in order to develop a level of acceptance by their supervising teachers and students and move them closer to becoming “local teachers” (p21). This finding is similar to the outcomes of the Seah and Bishop (2001) mathematics teachers who altered their teaching styles to achieve what they believed allowed for optimal learning and teaching in their Australian classrooms.
Discussion

There is research on a worldwide basis that has been conducted on students from diverse backgrounds and the effectiveness of university courses to better prepare graduate teachers to cater for these students in their classrooms. While some research has been conducted overseas to explore the needs of a diverse teaching workforce little has been done in Australia. The studies of Han (2005), Hartley (2003) and Santoro (1997) focused on NESB preservice teachers on their first practicum and the study by Kato (1998) focused on NESB first or second year teachers who had completed a one year qualification in education in an Australian university. These studies also considered the role the universities’ teacher education programs play in better preparing NESB students for teaching in Australian schools. The preservice teacher participants in the conducted research were predominantly in the area of LOTE. Despite identified difficulties arising within the school context, the onus for addressing these issues for Australian prepared NESB teachers appears to have been placed on the university teacher preparation courses. Moving from the preservice educational context to the professional context, Seah and Bishop (2001) and Kamler et al. (1998) identified that extra support is necessary for overseas-prepared teachers teaching in Australian schools. In Queensland it was identified by Oliver (1998) that support for teachers who have graduated from teacher preparation courses overseas was necessary. Oliver acknowledged that such support was provided, in Queensland, in the form of courses offered at a university prior to employment, and from the teacher registration authority. There is no evidence to show the provision of assistance for NESB teachers who have graduated from Queensland universities to work in Queensland schools.

The literature strongly endorses the importance of catering for the needs of NESB or minority school students yet there has not been a commensurate level of research into the needs of the NESB teachers in dominantly English speaking schools. Through reviewing the literature, I have demonstrated that teachers as a body of professionals are expected to provide help and support for NESB classroom students. The research has also shown the acknowledgement of the value of a diversified professional workforce and in so doing has been conducted into the effectiveness of teacher preparation courses in preparing graduate NESB teachers to fulfill this
expectation and indeed, to become teachers. However, the question that remains under-researched is: are the graduate NESB teachers getting the support they need to develop as professionals?

While it is acknowledged that NESB teachers provide a valuable resource to the teaching profession (e.g. Becket, 1998; Seah and Bishop, 2001; Waldschmidt, 2002), the thread of the traditional deficit model of cultural diversity runs through the literature reviewed. Approaches to address this deficit model have been implemented in the form of courses in diversity offered in university preservice teacher education courses as discussed above. These courses have been designed to prepare future teachers more appropriately for culturally diverse classrooms. Yet these courses themselves promulgate the deficit model. The reviewed literature demonstrated that the preservice students with cultural backgrounds different from those students who make up the majority are taught and treated as the majority and did not believe that they had been adequately prepared for their future roles as teachers of multicultural classrooms. In an Australian context it was shown that the expectations of NESB preservice teachers with respect to students, schools and education differed from the realities they faced with little or no preparation for these differences in values, attitudes and beliefs provided in their teacher preparation courses. From the literature, it is apparent that there is a need for further research, in a Queensland context, into the professional lives of NESB teachers.

The Australian research that has been reviewed above has focused primarily on preservice teachers of LOTE and those who are of Asian background using, in the main, case study design. Han (2005) broadened the participant base drawing from Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands. Non-Europeans make up the participants of Australian research reviewed. Therefore there exists a gap in the range of participants used in researching NESB teachers to include those of a European background. There is also room for an alternative to the use of the case study approach to conducting research. Preservice teachers and their practicum experiences have provided the basis for most of the Australian research discussed above.

The research highlights what appears to be a very problematic context for NESB teachers to achieve professional recognition. While there is clear support and recognition for employing more teachers that represent the culturally diverse
Australian population, it is obvious that for these teachers, there is little evidence that they experience acceptance and support within the school context.

My research recognizes and addresses these gaps and consequently extends the literature through a focus on beginning and novice teachers; that is, those who are undertaking internships where they have responsibility for their classes and those who are in their first year of teaching. This will enable the time frame referred to in the generation of the data to span, for some participants, up to two years. A participant base that includes European and Asian teachers has been used in my study. Furthermore, it is time to look at the early careers of NESB teachers to investigate their workplaces, that is, their work in schools, but beyond the classroom. My research contributes to the growing body of literature in the area of education and specifically to that literature related to teachers who are of a non-English speaking background and their transitions into the workplace. My research provides valuable insights that can inform employing and registration authorities to enable provision of support for all NESB teachers and ensure the retention of a valuable part of the professional workforce.

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature on cultural diversity in the classroom and in the workforce. I have also reviewed research conducted in an Australian context that includes teachers of a non-English speaking background and argued that within a multicultural country further research involving a professional workforce of NESB teachers is required. The next chapter will explain the theoretical framework used to investigate the transitions of the participant NESB teachers into their communities of teaching practice.
Chapter 3

The Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented a review of relevant literature to provide the foundation for my research. The review identified the need for my research by explicating the dearth of research in the area of NESB teachers, specifically beginning or novice teachers. The literature review identified the importance of diversifying the teaching workforce. Further gaps in relation to the ways in which these beginning or novice teachers fit into their workplace beyond the classroom have also been found. In this chapter I argue for the use of communities of practice as a theoretical framework within which the positioning of NESB beginning and novice teachers outside the classroom might be investigated.

To substantiate the use of communities of practice as the theoretical framework within which I conducted my research, I have presented an overview of the sociocultural theory of learning which supports learning through interaction in communities of practice. I then examine literature in the field of communities of practice to respond to my research question: How are beginning and novice teachers of a non-English speaking background positioned within an English speaking community of teaching practice? Communities of practice as a theoretical framework highlights the importance of interaction in the development of practice. The studies in the reviewed literature involve a range of organizational sites; that is they are not restricted to schools and include national and international organisations. As a result, a broader application of the concept of communities of practice is reviewed. In all, the importance of communities of practice in providing opportunities for open discussion and development of skills involved in practice, generation of ideas, and the passing of tacit information inherent in practice in a particular context to help newcomers is emphasized.
In this chapter the importance of interaction in communities of practice, the methods of formation of communities of practice, and the identified functions will be considered.

**Sociocultural theory of learning**

Sociocultural theory draws on the work of Lev Vygotsky in learning and development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Renshaw, 1998; van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991) and reflects the importance of the link between learning and the social environment in which that learning occurs (Wertsch, 1991). The emphasis on social interaction with others in the learning process has been noted by Lim and Renshaw (2001):

Sociocultural theory views learning as situated within interrelated historical, cultural, institutional, and communicative processes. Individuals are seen as cultural and historical beings embedded within and constituted by a matrix of social relationships and processes. It is the changing nature of these relationships and types of participation in activities that define and redefine what is regarded as learning and development. (pp.13-14).

Therefore, in order to learn, learners need to actively participate in that social community by “engaging in and contributing to the practices of their community” (Wenger, 1998, p. 7). Engagement with the social community will allow the acquisition of cultural knowledge relevant to, and which has been developed within the historical context of, that community (Lim & Renshaw, 2001). Cultural knowledge can be referred to as the accepted ways of acting, thinking and behaving within a particular community and which can be passed on to new members as appropriate for that community (Schein, 2004).

Social interaction provides a means of equipping the learner with the “tools for thinking” (Renshaw, 1992). The tools for thinking are made available to the learner by those more experienced in the ways of that community (Rogoff, 1990) and allow the learner to appropriate, interpret and manipulate knowledge to assist in future problem-solving relevant to tasks related to that community (Renshaw, 1992).

Sociocultural theory considers development and learning as patterns of change towards active participation in communities of practice (Lim & Renshaw, 2001). The
role of sociocultural theory is therefore crucial to any investigation using communities of practice.

**Communities of Practice – An Overview**

This theoretical framework is based on the foundational work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) and further work conducted by Etienne Wenger in 1997. Lave and Wenger (1991) have named informal interactions that promote the development of practice in an organisation, communities of practice. According to this theoretical framework, interaction is understood to involve discussions and actions that allow for the transference of knowledge from one coparticipant to another in an organisation in order to develop and improve practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1997, 1998). The importance of communities of practice in any sphere of work is most especially so in the transfer of unwritten operational knowledge that assists in improving the practice of the members of that community. Interaction between workers which allows for an informal transfer of knowledge is an essential element of any effective organization (Wenger, 1997) to promote the development of practices that will achieve the organisational goals (Wenger, 1998).

Wenger (1998) has identified three distinct modes of belonging to a community of practice: engagement, imagination, and alignment. These modes of belonging “are not mutually exclusive” (Wenger, 1997, p.182). Each mode of belonging contributes to an individual member’s identity in a particular community of practice and it is the combination of the modes on which the individual’s identity is dependent (Wenger, 1997). Engagement involves the development of identity from experiences and interactions with other members while imagination and alignment are derived from a contextualization of the practices of the community in which one is involved within a broader framework (Wenger, 1998). For example, from the lived experiences gained through engagement, one can imagine oneself as a colleague of others who perform the same or similar role (Wenger, 1998). On the other hand, alignment provides an opportunity for seeing how the practices engaged in align with an employer’s or system’s expectations (Wenger, 1998).

It is through the mode of engagement that learning through continual negotiation of meaning, development of progress within the community of practice
and discovery of the tacit knowledge is made (Wenger, 1998). Wenger has recognised that when contact with a new community of practice occurs there may be a situation of non-membership that arises. This non-membership could occur through a lack of knowledge. For example, knowledge of how to engage with others in that community may not be strong. Because of unfamiliarity with the role in a specific contextual situation there would conceivably be a lack of “shared references” (Wenger, 1998, p. 153) used by members of the community of practice and possibly a non-awareness of the positioning and role of that community, as interpreted by the members of that community of practice, in the broader context of the organisation (Wenger, 1998). On becoming a member of the community of practice, these knowledges are developed. Therefore, Wenger (1998) argues that identity with respect to that community of practice is determined by participation or non-participation through engagement on all levels in that community of practice.

Positioning within a community of practice is derived from the building of an identity within that community of practice. That identity is built from experiences of interactions with members of the community of practice during the course of fulfilling commitments of a particular job role (Wenger, 1998). The individual’s interpretation of interrelationships with other members of the community of practice shapes and represents that individual’s self identity within that community (Wenger, 1998). Participation in the community of practice provides the means of learning and development of the practices that constitute that community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore the “lived experience of participation” (Wenger, 1998, p. 151) and resultant individual’s position with respect to that community of practice is contextual and unique to that community of practice.

Furthermore, Wenger (1998) argues that an individual’s identity in the community of practice is not fixed or pre-determined. Rather, identity is constructed and shaped through engagement, imagination and alignment as a member of the community of practice. He states that as individuals enter a community of practice each may have a different goal or plan for self-development within that community that can affect identity within the community of practice. He calls these plans, “trajectories” (p. 154) and has classified these trajectories into two groupings: peripheral and inbound. An individual can have, by choice or necessity, a peripheral trajectory that never results in full
participation or membership of that community of practice while still effecting
identification with that community. On the other hand, while initially being peripheral
participants, newcomers may plan on becoming full members or participants of the
community of practice. The trajectory of each member will provide individual identities
with respect to that community of practice. Thus the trajectories of newcomers may
differ from those of the old timers in the community of practice (Wenger, 1998).
Through mutual engagement with other members, newcomers access the information of
lived experiences that assists in their development along their trajectories within the
community of practice.

The positioning of the members of the community of teaching practice with
respect to informal interaction then becomes a crucial element in an individual
member’s professional identity and development as a teacher. Therefore the
positioning of the beginning/novice teachers of a non-English speaking background
in their respective communities of teaching practice will be identified through the use
of communities of practice as my theoretical framework. Positioning theory has been
used to support the analysis of the generated data and as such will be discussed in
Chapter 4.

**The crucial element: Interaction**

Underlying the community of practice is the need for informal interaction
between and among members of that community of practice. Without this interaction
there can be no community of practice. Interaction needs to extend to newcomers to
the organization to facilitate their growth and development. Through interaction, the
promotion of collaborative efforts to achieve organizational goals can be achieved. As
a beginning or novice teacher and newcomer to a community of teaching practice,
one could reasonably expect to participate and be involved in interaction in that
specific community of practice. The very existence of a community of practice relies
on the interaction between and among the members of that community of practice.
The depiction of that interaction by an individual member would represent the level
of engagement felt by that member in that particular community of practice.
Therefore it is the positioning of a member in reference to the interaction that can
indicate positioning in that particular community. Therefore, the community of
practice provides a viable framework within which to investigate the positioning of
newcomers to the profession and in particular those who are of a non-English speaking background.

Palincsar et al (1998) in arguing for the fundamental need for social interaction to sustain and develop a community of practice found that the promotion of interaction and interdependence amongst the members was able to assist those members in their practice of science teaching. Hildreth, Kimble & Wright (2000) investigated the sharing of knowledge that is built up over time and with experience and difficult to capture (soft knowledge) in commercial organisations. It was recognised that this knowledge is valuable to an organization but through changing business environments and globalisation resulting in downsizing and outsourcing of tasks, it is taken with employees on leaving and lost to that organisation. This is not unlike a school situation where teachers can be frequently transferred in and out of a particular school taking with them knowledge specific to that school. Hildreth et al. (2000) in their research into commercial organizations that in both case studies presented interaction and sharing of knowledge are essential in the interpretation and application of “hard” knowledge or “knowledge that can be easily articulated and captured” (p. 27) to the relevant context. It was also determined that face-to-face interaction developed a sense of unity, purpose and trust in other members’ input contributing to the evolution of the community of practice. In particular, the importance of informal or ad hoc interaction between members was found to benefit those members who were co-located and the resultant informal social relationships formed an important aspect of the community of practice. Zorfass and Rivero (2005) used the fact that the teachers in their study met regularly and therefore interacted with each other as the basis for their determination of teams constituting communities of practice. Through their formally organised meetings which produced interaction and collaboration, these teachers were able to generate ideas and provide collegial support in the implementation of raised ideas, their confidence in the use of technological aids ranging from low tech through mid tech to high tech tools grew, and skill levels improved, resulting in teaching practice that better met the needs of the students in their classrooms.

Participation and interaction with others in the community of practice is important in developing the sense of identity or membership of that community and
its practices (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice can provide a rich source of development of best practice and professional skills (Wenger & Snyder, 2000) through providing opportunity for the social construction of knowledge (Palincsar et al., 1998). The school environment provides the opportunity for informal interaction between teachers. This informal interaction has been identified by Palincsar et al. (1998), Zorfass and Rivero (2005) and Hildreth et al. (2000) as vital in the sustenance of a community of practice. For this reason, it is important that as part of my study I investigate the interactions that have occurred in the communities of practice encountered by the participants as reflected in their accounts.

While the literature has shown the importance of interaction in both providing the means by which the members of the community of practice can share and develop knowledge and work together to overcome problems, the structure of the community of practice whether formal or informal, may have an impact on the level of interaction that occurs in that community of practice.

**Formation: Informal v formal communities of practice**

Wenger (1998) clearly distinguishes between communities of practice and task forces or teams in that the first emerges informally while the task force or team is designed with specified members, set tasks and will begin and end on completion of those tasks. A reading of literature in which communities of practice were used as a framework in the conducted research, indicates that some researchers have adopted Wenger’s approach that a community of practice is a naturally occurring phenomenon with no formal structure or membership. Others have applied the concept of a community of practice to a specifically formed team or group – identifying in a sense, a contrived community of practice.

Identification of informal communities of practice emerged in several studies. Pam Green (2005) in a paper addressing outcomes of a seminar on qualitative research at RMIT University described the group of assembled researchers as a community of practice who discussed and learned from each other through shared experiences in qualitative research. From this larger group, a smaller community of practice emerged informally to further develop professionally and allow its members to work together on ventures. Hildreth et al. (2000) found that communities of practice were formed.
informally based on common interests and goals within the organization with members regularly interacting with other members sharing experiences, knowledge and problem solving through discussion. Lesser & Storck (2001) differentiated between communities of practice and teams in their study in terms of structure and processes of operation. They found that informal interactions based on work or common interests resulted in communities of practice which provided informal assistance to new members of organisations.

In other research, the community of practice was contrived through the formal development of specific teams or groups. The studies of Wesley and Buysee (2001) and Au (2002) suggested that the development of a formal community of practice was necessary to improve practice. Both studies promulgate the notion that these communities of practice would include members who are all affected by the practices implemented.

Palincsar et al. (1998) have argued that there is no room in the structure of teaching in schools in the US for the informal interaction from which learning grows and is necessary in a community of practice. The basis on which this argument was founded lies in “the lack of consensus regarding the goals and means of education” (p. 6) and “the private, personal, and individualistic nature of teaching” (p. 6) in “the typical American school” (p.6). They argued that this social interaction is fundamental to the growth and sustenance of a community of practice and therefore designed and formed a community of practice consisting of teachers interested in improving their practice particularly in the area of inquiry based learning in science. The descriptions of the research showed that the teachers found that through the sharing of ideas, their classroom practices with respect to inquiry based learning were better informed. From the formal community designed and developed by the researchers, there did evolve two informal communities of practice that served to provide forums for informal discussion and interaction to further interests of particular members in specific areas of teaching.

Zorfass and Rivero (2005) identified that teams could constitute communities of practice. Each team was considered to constitute a community of practice because these teams comprised teachers within the school who met on a regular basis to consider ways of addressing specific concerns about the teaching and learning
processes they had in place in their classrooms. The process of sharing ideas, supporting each other, and reflecting on practice was found to be helpful to the teacher in this case study and informed her classroom practice.

In their research for the Society for Technical Communication (STC), Fisher and Bennion (2005) have used the provisions of the STC and a case study on a data management organization, to contrast work or project groups designed for a particular purpose with naturally occurring and informal communities of practice. The study showed that the informal communities of practice allowed for the development and growth of individuals within those communities and also allowed for sustainability of community and organizational knowledge. This growth was possible without the pressures of meeting time and financial deadlines and managerial assessment of the success of the project. Employees were found to be accepting of participation in work groups if these were felt to be considered favourably by management. Membership of informal communities of practice was found to provide an efficient way to align with the goals of the employer. Fisher and Bennion identified that for future success, organizations need to acknowledge, nurture and encourage both informal and formal communities of practice.

Communities are formed through working together to meet the common goal of providing for the educational needs of clients. Schools are organisations designed to meet the educational needs of their clients. It is the practice of teaching that allows schools to fulfil their organisational roles. Zorfass and Rivero (2005), drawing from Sparks (2002), identified schools as communities of practice where “staff members provide meaningful and sustained assistance to one another to improve teaching and student learning” (p. 51). This means then that staff should have the opportunity to work together to improve both their own teaching practices and the learning experiences of their students through the sharing of experiences and ideas. This can effectively occur in an informal manner where those with experience provide assistance and support to those who are new to the work or organisation through discussion in the work area or staff room, or via a specifically formed group or team situation. In informal communities of practice, a broad range of skills, experiences and knowledge can be shared. In order to share ideas and knowledge in the community of practice, interaction amongst staff is vital in providing the basis for the
continual learning and development of teachers in their pursuit of their shared goal of educating their students particularly, as evidenced by the literature, in imparting knowledge that is tacit but beneficial in the implementation of that practice. This social construction of knowledge along with development of professional identity and promotion of reflection on practice will be further explored in the following section as functions of communities of practice.

**Functions of communities of practice**

1. **Social construction of knowledge.**

   The position of the beginning teacher in the school can be related to that of Lave and Wenger’s (1991) “legitimate peripheral” participant in the community of practice made up of colleagues who are progressing through the “life-cycle” of teaching to become the more experienced teachers or “old-timers”. It is this process that enables the newcomers to the organisation or field of work, access to those with particular expertise in an effort to improve their own practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), socially constructing the knowledge for that role. Lave and Wenger (1991) focussed on apprenticeships in midwifery, tailoring, quartermastering, butchering and nondrinking alcoholics. The beginning of a career in teaching can be paralleled to the apprenticeship. Specific education has been undertaken including practical and academic work at a tertiary institution as in the quartermastering example of Lave and Wenger (1991). A beginning teacher then looks to colleagues for guidance, learning and honing of skills as in Lave and Wenger’s examples to assist them in the practice of teaching. Therefore the concept of the community of teaching practice is an appropriate framework for considering the positioning of new teachers, particularly the NESB beginning/novice teachers, as they embark on their new roles and develop their practice.

   Communities of practice have been identified as informal conduits through which knowledge of practice can be transmitted and developed in order to assist members in achieving shared goals (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is through the informal community of practice that many explicit and implicit conventions making up the practice of that organisation or a particular section of the organisation can be shared and developed (Wenger, 1997, 1998). Communities of practice can provide a rich
source of development of best practice and professional skills (Wenger & Snyder, 2000) through providing opportunity for the social construction of knowledge (Palincsar et al., 1998). Wenger (2004) has also argued for the members of a community of practice to “engage directly with one another” (p.4) to negotiate the solution to problems. Indeed, Westheimer and Kahne (1993), in their research into the building of communities in the classroom, argued that teachers need “the sense of connectedness, purpose, and direction that membership in a supportive community provides” (p. 325) through “interaction, mutual dependence, and identification with a group” (p. 325).

In their research, Fisher and Bennion (2005) found that communities of practice provided the space for the development and promotion of new techniques and skills to move the profession forward. They also identified the importance of networking and interaction amongst staff on an informal basis as a method of promoting and sharing best practices. This interaction was found to allow the development of solutions to common problems and improve the practices implemented. Green (2005) found in her study that informal discussions provided the opportunity for learning through shared experiences. Palincsar et al. (1998) also found that their designed community of practice made up of science teachers, encouraged interaction and interdependence amongst its members and promoted a negotiation of meaning of elements of teaching strategies to improve practice.

Hildreth et al. (2000) used two case studies to specifically investigate the operation of communities of practice particularly with respect to the process of sharing and developing soft knowledge to assist newcomers to the organisation— that is, knowledge that comes with experience or is tacit and which is difficult to identify or explain- as part of knowledge management. The focus of the research was to examine the functioning of communities of practice in a distributed environment, that is, an environment that extends over more than one site. The first case study used data from a questionnaire and interviews, the second from one week’s observation of some of the UK members of a distributed environment covering the UK, Japan and the US. Informal interaction between members, particularly those who were located physically near each other was found to assist in learning that was beneficial to the practice. This was especially so in the case of problem solving as “a result of ad hoc
encounters” (p. 35). Members of the community of practice felt that they were able to comfortably ask for assistance, guidance and participate in problem-solving once they had become familiar with each other through interaction. Lesser and Storck (2001) in their study argue that the social capital of an organization is developed and enhanced through communities of practice. Findings included the reduction of time in learning required by new employees through interaction with those considered expert in the various areas and the encouragement of new ideas to improve practice. Communities of practice were found to be valuable to organizations through the development of their social capital. Teachers comprise the social capital of a school and therefore the professional development of the teachers, particularly those new to the profession or a specific school site, can benefit from the interaction and subsequent transmission of knowledge between members of that community of teaching practice.

2. Development of professional identities.

Participation and interaction with others in the community of practice is important in developing the sense of identity or membership of that community and its practices (Wenger, 1998). This was found to be so by Green (2005) in the study reported on earlier. Green found that the community of practice that developed from the seminar on qualitative research strengthened both the methodological identities of the individuals and their identities as learners particularly through the promotion of interaction.

Communities of practice provide an environment that cultivates the professional identity of its members (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, it would not be unrealistic for beginning teachers to join the profession with expectations of becoming members of the community of practice in their particular school sites to enable them to learn and grow professionally and establish and develop their own identities as teachers. The fact that beginning teachers have undergone tertiary education and are expected to maintain currency in their knowledge of education and educational trends underscores the vital importance of the communities of practice in schools as sources of professional development (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Interaction in the community of practice provides the opportunity to reflect on practice and so aid in the professional development of the members of that community of practice.
3. **Promotion of reflection on practice.**

Green (2005) and Wesley and Buysee (2001) argue that reflective practice allows the development of individual identity and the identity of the individual in a community context. It is the encouragement of reflective practice on current and past practices to inform future practice and the opportunity to observe others reflecting on their practice that were identified as powerful in assisting in the learning of practice (Green, 2005; Wesley & Buysee, 2001). It was felt that reflection should be a shared value amongst members of the community of practice to assist in overcoming the tension between theory as promoted by learning institutions and the realities that occur in the field and so improve the practice (Wesley & Buysee).

Reflection on practice was used in the research by Zorfass and Rivero (2005). Student samples were used to discuss methods used and results obtained and to stimulate discussion on suggested strategies which included the use of some form of technology to improve outcomes. Team members provided support for each other to assist in the implementation of adopted strategies. At subsequent meetings, reflections on the outcome of these strategies were presented and discussed to inform practice that better met the needs of the students in the classrooms.

Wenger (1998) found that interaction with co-workers in an informal capacity while on breaks provided opportunities for reflection on practice. This time for reflection through discussion allowed the development of the newcomer’s identity as part of the community of practice and learning opportunities for both the new and experienced members of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The informal atmosphere of the teaching staffroom in which teachers prepare lessons, mark student work, have their breaks and interact with each other provides an ideal conduit for reflection on and growth in teaching practice.

**Summary**

Communities of practice consist of human beings who develop and learn through social interaction with each other. Through this interaction understandings of practices and identity as a member of that community evolve (Wenger, 1998). From engagement in the community of practice, a member derives imagination and alignment by contextualizing the community’s practices in a broader framework.
(Wenger, 1998). Underpinning the concept of communities of practice is a social theory of learning that has drawn from theories of identity, practice, social structure and situated experience (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). It is through learning from others in the community of practice that the history, practices and culture of that community of practice are maintained and transformed and opportunities for growth and development of new members can be provided (Wenger, 1998). As a result of the social interaction inherent in communities of practice both the individuals constituting that community and the community itself can display a dynamism and fluidity that reflects evolution and growth of and within the community (Wenger, 1998) in the implementation of its practice.

The literature reveals two main characteristics of communities of practice: one, the need for interaction to sustain a community of practice and promote the collaboration needed to achieve an organization’s goals; and two, the formation of a community of practice which could be identified as being either informal or formal.

The literature further reveals two distinct streams of thought regarding formation: informally or with a formal structure, as a salient feature of communities of practice with a possible effect on opportunities for interaction between members. Also emerging from the literature is the identification of three primary functions of communities of practice. These functions are the transmission of knowledge of practice for the continual learning and development of practitioners, the development of professional identities, and the promotion of reflection on practice.

It is argued that the staff members of the school are in fact members of a community of practice with expertise ranging across a spectrum from newcomers to those with wide experience. Interaction with staff allowing movement from a position of peripherality to one of full membership of the community of practice has been identified through the literature reviewed above as essential in the growth and development in skills, knowledge and identity of the beginning teacher. The interaction with members of the community of practice offers a forum for the promotion of reflective practice that aids in this growth. Thus it is the concept of the community of practice that has been used as the theoretical framework within which the data have been generated and presented. Interaction within the community of practice has been identified in the literature as crucial to the productive functioning of
that community. Therefore the particular focus I have taken is on the informal interaction that underlies a community of teaching practice to enable the determination of the position of the beginning/NESB teachers within their particular communities of teaching practice. I argue that interaction is a product of the positioning of the beginning/novice teacher in his or her specific community of teaching practice.

These communities of teaching practice provide the interactional sites in which the participant teachers’ accounts are produced. The following chapter will explain the research design. Positioning theory has been used to support the analysis of the generated data and will be discussed in Chapter 4. The rationale for the use of critical discourse analysis as the chosen approach to analyzing the data to investigate, through their accounts, the participant beginning teachers’ positionings in their specific communities of teaching practice is presented in Chapter 4.


Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the rationale for using communities of practice as the theoretical framework for my research in order to determine the positioning of the participant NESB beginning and novice teachers in their places of work. This chapter will explain the research strategy used in its design. Following that is an explanation of the participants involved and methods of data collection employed. The chapter concludes with a rationale for the use of critical discourse analysis, supported by positioning theory, to interrogate the accounts provided by the participants.

Research Strategy

Qualitative research stresses “the socially constructed nature of reality … answer(ing) … questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8). The reality that is portrayed is one of perspective – the perspective of the actor providing the account of the lived experience being described (Blaikie, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative approach to research suited my project in that my goal is one that could more effectively be achieved through analysis of the dialogue used by the actors recounting their experiences of their worlds “in action” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 10) than through experimentation or measurement. These accounts, or rich descriptions, provide the detail that allowed me access to the actors’ lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and the insight into the creation of the social constructs creating their individual realities.

An understanding of these accounts can best be gained through the use of an abductive research strategy (Blaikie, 1993, 2000). The abductive strategy is “associated with a range of Interpretive approaches to social enquiry” (Blaikie, 2000,
such as “hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, existential sociology and social constructivism” (Blaikie, 2000, p. 114). In my study, the abductive strategy embraces the ontological assumptions of constructivism in that those participating in the interactions socially construct their social reality (Blaikie, 1993, 2000). This is particularly relevant for my research in that the sociocultural perspective of communities of practice, which I have used as my theoretical framework for the study, is reliant on social interactions (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, Interpretivists believe that in order to make sense of and function within a social world, individuals need to give meaning to their own and others’ behaviours and actions. The accounts provided by the participants in my research will give the “‘insider’ view” (Blaikie, 2000, p. 115) of the realities of those communities of practice as constructed by them as actors in their particular social worlds.

The abductive process allows for social theories to either be generated or used for the understanding of social scientific accounts of social life that have been provided by the social actors involved. These accounts are produced through the use of meanings and concepts used by the social actors (Blaikie, 1993, 2000) who are those involved in an interaction or event that has some social consequence or intended meaning for those involved (van Dijk, 1997). This perspective aligns with the hermeneutic tradition on which the abductive strategy is based (Blaikie, 1993, 2000; Patton, 1990). The abductive research strategy requires the social actors to reflect on their actions or behaviours in order to construct their accounts in their own terms or language.

Blaikie draws heavily on the work of Giddens (Blaikie, 1993; 2000; Giddens, 1993) who based his approach on the premise that members of society adapt and change their own theories of practical social life based on their experiences. Therefore it is the knowledge of these social actors used in participating in their everyday lives and social interactions that require explanation. It is the participants’ knowledge about these actions and events that is provided in their accounts for conversion by the social scientist into social descriptions that can generate an understanding of the issue or problem (Blaikie, 1993 pp. 188 – 191; Giddens, 1993). Through the language used, “practices for producing meaning, forming subjects and regulating conduct” (MacLure, 2003, p. 175) occur in a particular situational context.
Critical discourse analysis provides a means of interrogating the everyday language of the participants’ accounts for meaning. In my research, therefore, I have used critical discourse analysis as the preferred method of analysis of the participants’ accounts. Positioning theory has been used to support critical discourse analysis to provide an understanding of the positioning of the participants in their communities of practice.

**Research question**

The research question used in this study is:

_How are beginning and novice teachers of a non-English speaking background positioned within an English speaking community of teaching practice?_

The response to this question was identified through a discussion of two sub questions:

- *Who positions beginning and novice NESB teachers in English speaking communities of teaching practice?* and
- *In what ways does a community of practice position NESB beginning or novice teachers for taking up professional identities?*_

These sub-questions arose as I was analyzing the accounts provided by the participants.

The positioning will be examined within the theoretical framework of communities of practice, as discussed in the previous chapter, and through critical discourse analysis to interrogate accounts of the beginning and novice teachers’ professional practice.

To this point I have outlined the research strategy used to address the research questions. Following is a discussion on my relationship with the main body of participants, the NESB teachers and a description of the participants.
The researcher-participant relationship

I conduct a support group for students of education in their final year of study who are from a non-English speaking background at a university in Queensland, Australia. Although the university provides sessional wages for me to conduct this group, there are no fees attached for the students, nor is there any assessment involved. It is attended purely on a voluntary basis and many students drop in as they feel the need or wish to discuss issues they have become aware of or are worried about. At the time of my research, this group operated throughout the final year of study for those completing a dual degree including the Bachelor of Education, and the first of the two years of study for graduate entry students of the Bachelor of Education. The group meetings aimed to assist and prepare students for their practicum experiences with a particular focus on aspects of schooling in Queensland that may be causing them some concern. We met once a week during the on-campus time and at weekends, as requested by the students, during the practicum periods. The practicum periods lasted for seven or eight week blocks. I also provided support via telephone on request. Over the five year period of providing this support, I have found that for each cohort there is a core group that regularly attends. Through the regular attendances, the students appear to develop a strong friendship bond which provides an alternative peer support mechanism. There is also a strong rapport and professional bond that develops each year between the students and me.

Interpretivism under the abductive research strategy requires immersion in the social world of the participants (Giddens, 1993, p. 169). It is through my role as an adviser and provider of support that my immersion in a part of the participants’ world has occurred. The rapport that has developed between the participants and me has resulted in their acceptance of me while acknowledging that I am also a native English speaking teacher who has taught in Queensland schools and also a lecturer and tutor in the program they undertook. It is this relationship, built on trust, that has allowed the honesty and frankness of the participants in their provision of data (Janesick, 2000; Madriz, 2000).
My role as researcher in working with this group of participants is one of an insider/outsider - a participant and observer (Aspland, 2003; Daly, 1992; Freebody, 2003; Miller & Glassner, 1997; Punch, 2005; Tuettemann, 2003). In my role as the facilitator of the support group I had come to know these beginning teachers quite well and they maintained contact with me on completion of their studies. I consider the researcher-participant relationship involved in this study very important and have consequently devoted the following chapter, Chapter 5, to explaining it more completely.

The participants of the study had much to teach me, and I, much to learn (Blaikie, 2000; Miller & Glassner, 1997). The balance was beneficial in that it afforded me the luxury of ensuring that I “use the nearness and involvement afforded by shared experiences to gain access and establish trust, but maintain … distance … to encourage a full account of the participant’s experience” (Daly, 1992, p. 113).

**Participants**

From the review of the literature in Chapter 2, a gap with respect to the research in the field of NESB teachers was identified. This gap consists of three main elements: investigation of experience in a context of English speaking schools, teaching areas and country of origin. I have attempted in my research to address this gap.

The number of participants in this group totaled ten over the fourteen months of data collection – two males and eight females. To further distinguish my research from the reviewed studies in the previous chapter, my participants were beginning/novice teachers whose experiences ranged across both private and state schools and schools stretching from the Gold Coast up to and including Brisbane, and one Queensland country town. No participant was working in the same school as any other participant.

All of the participants have studied in teacher education courses in Queensland universities and have completed at least two practicum sessions of approximately fifteen weeks in Queensland schools allowing for a broader range of experiences in English speaking schools prior to entering the study. For the purposes of this study, I
have used the term “beginning teachers” to refer to those pre-service teachers who are involved in their internships or have completed at least two practicum sessions. The internship program in which these teachers were involved was conducted over approximately seven consecutive weeks following a third short practicum session of three to four weeks, as part of their course qualification. According to the then Board of Teacher Registration who approved the university program, the interns are permitted to teach without supervision in the classroom for the period of the internship. A reduced workload and a mentor teacher are allocated to the intern to help in the transition into the profession (Queensland College of Teachers, n.d.).

“Novice teachers” is the term I have used as a category to represent those teachers in their first or second year of teaching. (At different times throughout the thesis, I have used “beginning/novice” as a means of identifying the particular grouping of teachers I am focusing on in the study.) Significantly, the participants in this study have a wider range of experience in English speaking schools than those of the reviewed studies. Furthermore, nine of the ten NESB participants have undertaken tertiary education in Queensland prior to entering the Bachelor of Education course. Table 1 shows the participants and their prior educational backgrounds.

The participants in the earlier Australian studies reviewed in Chapter 2 have predominantly been from Japan while my research includes participants from a variety of countries. The teaching areas identified in the Australian studies reviewed in Chapter 2 were largely LOTE or ESL while the participants in my research have a broader range of teaching areas. Table 1 shows the participants and their teaching areas. Also identified in the table is the designation of beginning or novice teacher at the points of data collection. Four of the participants began in the project as beginning teachers and continued to provide data as novice teachers. These teachers are indicated with B/N.
Table 1.

Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Beginning or Novice</th>
<th>NESB</th>
<th>Background and previous fields of study</th>
<th>Teaching Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Engineer (Taiwan), Masters IT (Qld)</td>
<td>IT 8-12, Maths 8-12, Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justine</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Business (Qld)</td>
<td>Accounting, Japanese, Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>B/N</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Chemist (India), Masters IT (Qld)</td>
<td>IT 8-12, Science 8-12, Maths 8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>B/N</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Business (Japan), MBA (Qld)</td>
<td>Japanese, IT 8-12, Business 8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Business (Qld)</td>
<td>Business 8-12, Accounting, Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>B/N</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Arts (Portugal), Masters App. Linguistics (Qld)</td>
<td>ESL, SOSE, Study of Society, Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheree</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Sri Lankan</td>
<td>Architecture (Sri Lanka), BA Indigenous Studies (Qld)-not completed</td>
<td>Science 8-12, SOSE, Maths 8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyson</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Business (Germany)</td>
<td>German (primary &amp; secondary), Business 8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>B/N</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>Science (Qld), Masters in Science (Qld)</td>
<td>Science 8-12, Indonesian Immersion classes in science and maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Business (Qld), Masters Finance (Qld)</td>
<td>Chinese, Accounting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. IT = Information Technology. MBA = Masters of Business Administration. ESL = English as a Second Language. SOSE = Studies of Society and the Environment. BA = Bachelor of Arts.

It is from students who attended my support group that my participants representing the NESB beginning/novice teachers were drawn. Sheree, who had been a graduate entry Bachelor of Education student at a different university and for whom I provided support, asked to be included in the project. Three students, David,
Michelle and Rachel were involved, as participants, in my Masters thesis which investigated, through the use of case studies, what perceived cultural differences and the extent of their impact were identified by the three NESB preservice teachers. These teachers requested a continuation of involvement by participating in this new study. To clarify further, I have used the term “students” at this point to indicate those who attended the support group during their study. I asked at a support group meeting if anyone would be interested in participating in my research and subsequently approached those six people who had shown an interest to provide them with further details. I then organized with these six further volunteers the first stage of data collection which involved one-on-one interviews.

This section has provided a description of the participants in the study and a rationale for their selection. The next section briefly outlines the ethics clearance provided for the research which is followed by explanations of the methods of data collection used.

**Ethics**

Ethics clearance for the study was sought and granted by Griffith University under protocol number CLS0904. Participants were informed both verbally and in writing of the nature of the research, the data collection methods to be used and the requirement to remove any identifying features in the data. Participants were also informed of their right to leave the project at any time. Written consent was gained from each participant for use of the data gathered through interviews, diary recordings, and focus group sessions, for research purposes.

**Data collection**

Four techniques were used to collect the data over a period of fourteen months: one-on-one interviews, electronic diaries and two types of focus groups. The two different types of focus groups used were face-to-face focus groups and virtual focus groups. The virtual focus group was conducted on-line as described below. After the face-to-face focus group session, participants were provided with the opportunity to provide further information or clarifications of their accounts via email or telephone – these were audio recorded as interviews. Each of the data gathering techniques is discussed in the following section.
One-on-one interviews

Interviews are one good way of “accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (Punch, 2005, p. 168) by encouraging people to talk about their lives (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). That is, they can provide the understanding of another’s version of reality through allowing insight into the meanings that person has placed on social interactions (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). Therefore I have accepted that the “realities” presented through the interviews are the versions of realities produced by the participants at that moment in the interview when accounting for an experience in a specific context. During the exchange that is conducted between the interviewer and the interviewee, there is opportunity for the interviewer to follow up on topics raised by the interviewee so as “to gather information that meaningfully frames the configuration and salience of those facts in the interviewee’s life” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001, p.57).

The method of interviewing can be found along a continuum classified according to the degree of structure involved and ranges from structured, through focused or semi-structured to unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1998, 2003; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1990). I used a semi-structured interview format. In this format, two key questions were identified as addressing the main research question prior to the interview. These open ended questions were:

1. I want you to tell me about your experiences in the school. Did you find that you encountered situations that could be identified as occurring through differences in culture?

2. How did you find you fitted into the school community?

The question “Did you find that you encountered situations that could be identified as occurring through differences in culture?” was generated from the review of studies discussed in the literature review and also from my Masters thesis where cultural differences were in fact found to cause problematic situations for NESB teachers. I do acknowledge that the interview questions in and of themselves could have anchored a participant’s version of an experience being related and therefore must be taken into consideration during the analysis.
Allowance was made for the participants to respond in their own ways to the questions (May, 2001). This was achieved by permitting the participants to apply their own interpretations to the questions and letting them respond as they thought appropriate. This format allowed me the opportunity to seek clarification of responses or comments and probe further for elaboration as required (May, 2001). This interaction between the interviewees and the researcher presented an “active interview” in which both the participant and I became “deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings” (Holstein and Gubrium (1997), p. 114). This was possible through allowing the human who was the participant to emerge by encouraging viewpoints and the use of examples or stories to explain constructed meanings of reality (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997) reflected in the accounts. One-on-one interviews were conducted with six participants. One participant was interviewed twice, once after completing her teaching qualification, and again during her first year of teaching because she requested the opportunity to do so. The seven interviews were held in places of convenience for the participants to assist in making them feel comfortable with familiar surroundings and therefore more likely to be freer in their responses (Madriz, 2000). Some were held in the university, one was held in my home, and two were held in the homes of the individual participants.

**Diary entries**

All participants had been asked to provide reflections on their experiences in the school communities in an electronic diary either as beginning or novice teachers, depending on their point of joining. Three participants did so as they had previously found diary recordings valuable as part of their personal reflective practice. These entries merged personal and professional experiences and helped the participants to make sense of different situations which arose (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). At times the entries contained requests for advice from me regarding different situations in which they had found themselves. There was no stipulated time line or required number of entries to be made. Two of these participants continued to electronically submit to me reflections on the first term of teaching after graduation as novice teachers.

The use of diary recordings enabled the participants to provide in their words, in their own time, a presentation of their reflections of their experiences (Minichiello
et al., 1990; Sarantakos, 1993). In other words, the diaries provided a way for the researcher to access incidental accounts entered by the participants. The diary recordings provided an opportunity for participants to put into words their accounts of the community of teaching practice in which they were involved. The use of the diary provided a means of expressing thoughts and actions without fear of judgement. The participants knew that I would be the only person to be reading their text with a first-hand knowledge of the identity of the author.

**Focus groups**

The technique of focus group interviewing has been defined by Morgan (1996) as a “research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (p. 130). Focus groups are used to collect data on a predetermined topic through group interaction thereby providing access to data that may not have been possible through any other method (Morgan, 1997, 2001; Walker, 1985). The assumption of focus groups is that individuals will be more open to discussion of a shared problem in the security of similar others (Higginbotham & Cox, 1979; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). Free flowing discussion between the participants of the group provides a valuable source of insights into the perceptions and explanations of the participants (Higginbotham & Cox, 1979; Morgan, 1997, 2001; Patton, 1990). Through the focus groups the participants can ask each other for, or use, explanations or anecdotes that may provide insight into the “extent of consensus and diversity among the participants” (Morgan, 1996, p. 139). The focus group also provides an ideal conduit in this study for clarifying responses or statements made in earlier interviews or diary recordings (Morgan, 1996).

Gubrium & Holstein (2001) suggest it is the moderator who facilitates the group discussion which becomes “a process of mutual interviewing, with the roles of interviewer and interviewee in effect becoming shared property in the give-and-take of the proceedings” (p. 58). I, as the researcher acted as the moderator of the focus group. It is the role of the moderator, who ensures that the sessions are running smoothly (Morgan, 1997; Punch, 2005) and provides an environment in which all participants feel their input is valued and that facilitates development of rapport between participants (Mann & Stewart, 2001). The moderator’s role in the focus group will result in the level of structure of the session. That is, if the moderator
controls the discussed topics through questioning and focus on what the moderator feels is important, this becomes a highly structured session as opposed to a session with minimal structure in which the group discusses topics of interest to them (Morgan, 1996; 2001). In my research, I used a less structured approach in the focus group sessions. A key question was asked to open the session and participants discussed what they felt was relevant to the topic being addressed by the question. As moderator, I was able to seek clarification on points raised in the discussion.

The use of focus groups allows for the collection of data that can provide a deep understanding of the realities of the participants. Interaction between the participants “accentuates empathy and commonality of experiences and fosters self-disclosure and self-validation” (Madriz, 2000, p. 842) providing insight into their versions of the world. As with the one-on-one interviews, it is acknowledged that the disclosures will reflect the realities of the speakers. That reality will be one that is presented at that specific moment in time as an experience that occurred in a specific context.

The focus group allows for open discussion between the participants with the opportunity of comments from one participant triggering memories or thoughts in another that may be brought forward in the discussion (Higginbotham & Cox, 1979) but may have been forgotten or censored in the diary, interview or previous focus group sessions. Some of the participants had become friends through the support group and all were keen to be involved in the study. For these reasons, the focus group sessions became an ideal data gathering technique that would encourage their talk and interaction. The topic for discussion, their experiences in their communities of teaching practice, was one of which all members of the group had knowledge and experience thereby providing common ground for the group members and strengthening the use of the focus group as a form of data collection (Greenbaum, 1998).

Two different “types” of focus groups were conducted. One form of the focus group was a face-to-face discussion, and the second was an on-line focus group session utilizing an instant messaging facility. The following sections explain the two focus group types and the rationale for their inclusion in the study as data collection techniques.
Virtual focus group

The Internet has provided for contact between people who are situated at all points on the globe by providing computer mediated communication. As a result, researchers have been using the internet particularly in relation to survey interviewing for quite some time through originally, computer-assisted telephone interviewing progressing to computer-assisted personal interviewing in the form of web-based surveys or e-mail surveys (Couper & Hansen, 2001; Edmunds, 1999; May, 2001; Mann & Stewart, 2001; Markham, 2004; Shuy, 2001).

One provision of the Internet is the range of interactive facilities that allow two or more people to interact as in a face-to-face conversation, by typing the conversation being conducted thereby providing real-time discussion that is text-based and online (Hewson, Yule, Laurent & Vogel, 2003). These facilities include discussion boards, blackboards or whiteboards; chat rooms and instant messaging. When trialling different options, I found discussion boards or blackboards could prove unwieldy or complicated to use if needing immediate responses to comments as they may require swapping between screens for typing messages then reading responses. The other concern that I had was that while discussion boards and blackboards along with email options allowed the participants to take their own time to respond to comments or questions, I was looking for an option that simulated a face-to-face focus group situation. Another aspect to be considered was the skill or competence of the participants of the discussion in using the chosen facility.

Chat rooms and instant messaging facilities allow the typing and reading of the conversation to occur on the same page and the involvement of any number of participants. Yates (2001) refers to this facility as providing “co-present” parties with “synchronous” (instant) interaction (p.96).

In order to use chat rooms, specific software needs to be installed from the website providing the chat room. With the increasing number of computer viruses and concern over some of the participants’ lack of familiarity with chat rooms, I decided against using these for this current study. I knew that all participants were familiar with and highly competent in the use of email. The instant messaging facility works in a similar fashion to email. I therefore decided to use the instant messaging system
provided by MSN that was freely available through Microsoft operating system packages. This provided another dimension to the release of information by the participants in an interactive format. The instant messaging facility proved to be time and cost efficient and allowed access to group discussions for those participants who found travel to a central point difficult or inconvenient. The participants could join in from the comfort of their own homes when and if they could and for the period of time that suited their lifestyles. Participants were at liberty to join when it suited it them on the designated day and leave when they needed to. That is, there was no requirement that they must be involved or involved for the entire session.

Hotmail (email) accounts are the simplest way to operate the instant messaging system through MSN. To begin, participants who did not have hotmail accounts went through the simple process of setting up these free accounts. Once established, I added all participants’ hotmail addresses to my list of contacts. Each of the participants put my hotmail account address on their contact lists. By using the contact lists, each time one of my participants signed into MSN if I was also signed in, then a pop-up message appeared in the bottom right corner of my screen to advise me of their online status and conversely, that participant would receive a pop-up message indicating that I was online.

Preset times were negotiated for conversations. When the first participant came online, I opened the dialogue screen. The screen is divided into two parts. The top section contains the visible dialogue, and the bottom part is where one types a message which will join the conversation. The instant messaging system works in a similar way to chat rooms where people involved in the conversation can type their messages, press “Enter” or “Send” and the information is put on the top part of the screen, often within the space of a second, where all members of that conversation can see it and respond. When a member of the conversation is typing a contribution to the conversation, there is an indicator bar at the bottom of the page that shows which person or people are typing at any given moment.

As participants were indicated as being online, I could invite them to join the conversation. No person other than those invited by me to join the conversation could enter or read the conversation. In this way, the conversation was run similarly to a face-to-face focus group in a room with me as moderator and able to control entry
into the chat room. I felt that this was an ideal way to maintain confidentiality of our conversations and encourage freedom in the conversations. All conversations are deleted from the site on “signing out” from the conversation. I copied and pasted conversations from the site to a Word document prior to signing out at the end of the sessions. These documents then provided the data from the virtual focus group.

A positive relationship between all those involved in a focus group situation is vital in fostering an honest and open exchange of ideas. Mann and Stewart (2001) argue that the initial moments of entering an online focus group are essential in introducing participants and providing the basis on which rapport between participants can be developed. While some of the participants knew each other, they were not all known to each other. I found one way of introducing participants was to indicate in the first session from which country each “new” person came. I used this because I had found on previous occasions that the participants were very interested in this information. The participants all were volunteers to the study, all shared non-English speaking backgrounds and all had known me for at least eighteen months. Consequently, there was a feeling of trust at the outset and willingness to accept and talk to each other.

The virtual focus group was conducted in an unstructured format (Fontana & Frey, 1998, 2003; May, 2001; Minichiello et al., 1990). After receiving the initial prompt question, the participants led the discussions and I would ask questions drawn from their “talk”. This allowed the participants to address questions they wished to address by drawing on their own interpretations of interactive events (May, 2001). The unstructured format also provided the opportunity for the participants to put forward their viewpoints on their own terms (May, 2001).

Issues

There were two main issues or limitations that arose through the use of the instant messaging: participants’ proficiency in using the facility and their access to the internet. Only two of the participants had been conversant with the use of instant messaging prior to this experience so that on occasion during each session, there were questions relating to use of the facility. At different times I was required to speak by mobile telephone or land line to participants to step them through the process and get them into the conversation. A practice session was run with some of the participants
prior to the “real” session to assist in participation. Once in the conversation, people found it quite easy to operate within the virtual focus group.

Connection problems proved to cause participation issues for different members at different times. One session had to be postponed because I had difficulty in connecting to the Internet. Access to the Internet presented problems in one instance. The participant involved was using a dial-up connection which works through the telephone line. Her participation was terminated early in the first conversation due to other members of the household requiring the use of the telephone.

As with interviewing and face-to-face focus groups, the virtual focus group provides the option of whether to respond or not to questions or comments made by others in the conversation. Overall, the relationship I had developed with each individual facilitated in breaking down any barriers so that responses would be freely made, yet I still remained respectful of any decisions by the participants not to become involved in segments of the conversations.

The conversational flow may appear disrupted when reading a transcript. This occurs as the responses to questions or comments may vary in length or time of shown responses due to participants’ typing skills. Utterances in the conversation are posted whenever the enter key or send key is hit. That means that a response may appear on the communal screen several utterances after the one to which the response is directed. However the flow can be interpreted from reading the previous few utterances.

Conversations can be saved through either copying and pasting the conversation pages into a Word document, or through a facility provided by MSN. I successfully tried the MSN facility but found the format too difficult to read and use for analysis purposes. I found two formats in which MSN could save the conversation, however with each the participant’s participation in the conversation is saved from entry into the conversation until signing out of MSN. With one format, the difficulty in using the saved conversations existed because the transcript saved times, when people were typing responses and responses pasted on the dialogue screen, making it difficult to read. See below (Figure 2) for a conversation saved under the user name “kelly”. The names used in this conversation are the allocated pseudonyms I have used in the project. Capitalisation has not been used for the names unless it was used in the
participants’ original user names. This shows that I had welcomed Kelly to the conversation with “hi Kelly”, the date and time she joined the conversation, and that “ian” and “rachel” and “kelly” were typing responses prior to the response from Ian being placed on the dialogue screen “i was invited couple of times on party at monto and i accepted that invitiation” then later “i showed interest” until finally showing Kelly’s responsive “hi everyone”.

Figure 2.

Kelly joining the conversation
The second format (Figure 3) was more user-friendly, but still recorded from that participant’s entry into the conversation until he or she left. Again, the names used are the pseudonyms used in the project. The following conversation (Figure 3) shows when Rachel joined in, but the conversation had in fact begun at 6:21pm that evening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28/06/2005</td>
<td>7:33:04 PM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rachela@hotmail.com">rachela@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Kerryn</td>
<td>hi Kerryn are you there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/06/2005</td>
<td>7:33:49 PM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rachela@hotmail.com">rachela@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Kerryn</td>
<td>I got stuck! It does not seem like usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/06/2005</td>
<td>7:34:36 PM</td>
<td>Kerryn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rachela@hotmail.com">rachela@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>you should be right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/06/2005</td>
<td>7:33:29 PM</td>
<td>Kerryn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rachela@hotmail.com">rachela@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Hi Rachel, yep we are all here. Michelle, David, Ian (Ian) and me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/06/2005</td>
<td>7:34:49 PM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rachela@hotmail.com">rachela@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>David, Kerryn, Ian</td>
<td>Hi Michelle, David and everyone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.
Rachel joining the conversation.

To rectify this, and for ease of analysis, I also saved the conversations by copying them and pasting them into a Word document. This allowed the conversation to appear in its entirety and for me to replace names with the pseudonyms for the study.

Face to face focus group

The second type of focus group held was a face to face group meeting attended by seven participants. This session was used to clarify and expand on any issues or comments that were identified through the diary recordings, interviews and virtual focus group sessions. Langer (2001) suggests that the necessity to type rather than talk can restrict the richness of responses when in an online situation. This was another reason for holding a face to face focus group meeting as a final data collection method.

The session was semi-structured (Fontana & Frey, 1998, 2003; Minichiello et al., 1990; Morgan, 1996; 2001; Punch, 2005). To facilitate this, a funnel design (Minichiello et al., 1995; Silverman, 2001) was used to generate discussion. That is,
general questions were asked about the teachers’ experiences and from there questions progressively narrowed in on general themes that arose from the responses. The focus group was begun with a scenario (If someone was to come from another planet and see you at school and say ‘what are you, who are you, how do you feel’, could you explain that?) which I hoped would lead the participants into discussions that would triangulate their comments from the diaries, interviews and virtual focus groups with the research questions always in mind. It must be acknowledged that while using a scenario, which was relatively general and open as to where it could lead, it could also position the participants’ telling of their experiences. I hoped that if reticence in providing frankness during the one-on-one interview or virtual focus group sessions existed through, for example, fear of loss of face or displaying incompetence had occurred, the discussion with visible participants would encourage openness among the participants. As the moderator or facilitator of the focus group it was part of my role to encourage participation in discussion by all members of the group (Morgan, 1997; 2001). However I remained mindful throughout of the freedom of choice each participant had regarding their participation in or refrainment from entering parts of the conversations. Miller and Glassner (1997) argue that the participants are the experts in the area of research and through the interviews and focus groups have been placed in a position that is “empowering and illuminating because one can reflect on and speak about one’s life in ways not often available” (p 105). The willingness of the participants to be involved in this study and the relationship I had with each, gave me hope that there would be full and frank discussions. In Chapter 5 I have presented a reflective account that further explicates my relationship with the participants.

The focus group meeting was held at my home, a semi-natural setting. The discussion was digitally audiotaped and subsequently transcribed.

This section has provided an explanation of the methods of data collection used in this study. The following section outlines the steps taken to ensure credibility of the data collected.
Validity

As the data presented by participants reflects their own realities in their own social worlds, there is no definitive interpretation of that social world (Blaikie, 2000; Janesick, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Richardson, 2000) and any conclusions relating to that data are therefore not generalisable. To transfer the findings to another situation would have to be considered with care and reference to the context of the new experience (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The hermeneutic tradition which is encompassed by the abductive strategy requires a researcher to reconsider constantly her position and findings to ensure that her own ideas and thoughts are not being superimposed on those of the participants (Blaikie, 2000). Therefore, in interpreting the data provided by the participants it will be important that I engage in self-reflection and self-criticism so as to be aware of prejudices and assumptions that may affect any interpretation (Daly, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Prasad, 2002).

With respect to qualitative research which by its very nature is built on descriptions and explanations, issues of validity are based in ensuring that the “explanation fits the description” (Janesick, 2000, p. 393). Therefore, I used a range of data collection methods: individual interviews, face-to-face focus groups, virtual focus groups and diary entries across a fourteen month period to substantiate the realities presented. Throughout the data collection process, I made it clear to the participants, both verbally and in written form, that the information they were providing was to be used in my research. The rapport I had developed, as discussed earlier in this chapter and again in Chapter 5, with the participants who were interviewed one-on-one allowed for valid data collection (Platt, 2002; Ryen, 2003). The two formats of focus groups allowed for the flow of information from and between the participants (Edmunds, 1999; Madriz, 2000). The focus group method of data collection “empowers the participants and validates their voices and experiences” (Madriz, 2000, p. 838). This fostering of inter-participant discussion brought about by the group situation not only reduced my influence on the discussions but also any influence I may have had over individual participants (Madriz, 2000). Furthermore the use of three groups of participants provided a range of viewpoints ensuring opportunity for contrary experiences to be divulged (Silverman, 2000) and validation of outcomes reached (Berg, 2007). The diaries
provided a further data source and a means whereby the participants were able to privately record experiences and represented current expression of experiences without the lapse of time interfering with memory (Berg, 2007). Thus, by using multiple data collection methods and multiple participant groups I believe I have validated the research process to ensure the credibility of both my data and my analysis of that data. Furthermore, the data processes are included in this thesis for the reader to follow my analyses of the data. The rigour of the analysis and the open access to the data being analysed in this thesis, ensures the reliability of the findings but raises issues that have possible implications for practice in other sites.

The design of the research including descriptions of the participants and data collection methods has been explained in the preceding sections of this chapter. The next stage of the chapter rationalises the use critical discourse analysis, used as the methodology to examine the data generated.

Methodology of Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis

The reviewed literature on communities of practice identified the use of case studies to present data. It also identified the valuable contribution a community of practice can provide for those in the workplace and to the organisation as a whole. This contribution was shown to occur particularly through informal interaction between and among members of any given community of practice. Communities of practice provide the interactional sites generating teachers’ accounts and provide an alternative to case study research. As interaction is the focus of the community of practice, so too should it be the focus of the data analysis. The data produced throughout the collection period for this study was in two formats; oral and written text representing the externalized products or accounts of experiences from which the participants’ sense of the world being investigated can be explored (Blaikie, 1993, p.177; Blaikie, 2000, p. 116). In this investigation, as it is the positioning of the beginning/novice teachers in their communities of teaching practice that is of particular interest to me the accounts reflect experiences in these communities, particularly interactions with other members of the specific communities of teaching practice. Thus there is a suggestion of the influence of power in these interactional
relationships. Since the essence of critical discourse analysis is the relationship between language and power, this method of analysis is most appropriate to address the key research question: *How are beginning and novice teachers of a non-English speaking background positioned within an English speaking community of teaching practice?* The following section outlines a rationale for the use of critical discourse analysis as the preferred method of analysis for my research. As positioning theory has been applied in the process of analysis, an overview of positioning theory is included.

“(L)anguage is the commonest form of social behaviour” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 2) and it is through language that social behaviour can be expressed. The abductive research strategy that was employed dictates that the data will reflect the participants’ representations of the world and that these representations may vary from individual to individual and situation to situation. Furthermore, Gubrium and Holstein (1997) state that the surroundings in which the participants find themselves “provide (them) with familiar and accountable ways of representing conditions and concerns” (p. 114). Thus the analytic emphasis will be on the interpretation of the constructed realities of the participants to determine their positioning within that world.

Critical discourse analysis generates an analysis of the power relationships that exist or are developed in any given interaction thus providing the basis of identification and interpretation of experiences of and by the interactants (Mumby & Clair, 1997). The use of the notion of ‘apprenticeship’ or ‘beginning’ could be construed to denote a situation of power; power having been granted to those teachers who are considered to have moved beyond the beginning stage of their careers and who are on their own trajectories into and through their community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Indeed, “legitimate peripherality is a complex notion, implicated in social structures involving relations of power” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.36) and the extent of acceptance into and participation in that community of practice are determined by other members (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

A critical analysis of the language or discourse used allows a means for identifying relationships that exist in a social situation (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 1997). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that critical discourse analysis views discourse or language as used in a specific way to suit a specific situation or social
relationship. Therefore it shapes and is shaped by, that situation or relationship (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Gee, 1999). It is this two way relationship that produces the “social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). These interactional relationships can produce situations of social power, a “specific relation between social groups” (van Dijk, 1997, p. 17, original emphasis). Critical discourse analysis provides a way of identifying inequitable distribution of power in a given social situation (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). A sympathetic theoretical approach to use in conjunction with critical discourse is positioning theory. Positioning theory allows the investigation into relationships within the community of practice by focusing on the agency and power of those doing the positioning and those being positioned respectively.

**Positioning theory**

Davies and Harré (1990) have identified positioning as a phenomenon arising from conversation, a social interaction that demonstrates the interpersonal relationships of the interactants (Davies & Harré, 1990). Through conversational interactions, the social realities of the interactants are produced (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991) and the discursive practices used to create those realities position the interactants within the interactions (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991; Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994).

Davies and Harré (1990) identify “interactive positioning” where one person will position the other through the language of the conversation, and “reflexive positioning” in which the speaker will position him or herself (p. 48). These positionings, intentional or not, are formed by the words used by the speaker (Davies & Harré, 1990). Power is one of the key features of Positioning Theory in that conversations are seen as interactions in which one person has the potential agency to position him or herself and others in that interaction (Davies & Harré, 1990; Howie & Peters, 1996). Therefore a social world is necessary (Jones, 1997) for positioning to take place.

The retelling of experiences or conversations is identified by Harré and van Langenhove (1991) as “accountive positioning” that demonstrates the positioning of
the characters in the event being described (Davies & Harré, 1990; Howie & Peters, 1996). The accounts represent the participants’ verbalized expressions of the events that have shaped their experiences in their specific communities of teaching practice. Positioning allows individuals to provide explanations for the behaviours of those involved in the social interaction, or event, and thereby make sense of that interaction (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991; Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994). Through the verbal explanations, the actors in the event are positioned or position others involved in that event. These verbal explanations, or accounts, can reveal the taking up of a position by one or more of the actors in that event (Davies & Harré, 1990). Positions then are jointly constructed and critical discourse analysis enables the display of how the positioning occurs (van Dijk, 1993).

The accounts of the participants in this study represent the participants’ realities of the social interactions in their communities of teaching practice. Through the use of critical discourse analysis the accounts will be interrogated to determine the positionings of the actors in the social world that makes up these particular communities of teaching practice.

As stated earlier, the participants’ own language will be examined to show their positioning in the community of practice. Language is used to interact with others within contextual situations (van Dijk, 1997). Discourse, or “language as a form of social practice” (Fairclough, 2001, p.16), then becomes the key to the research (Edwards & Potter, 2001) as a means of representation of the experiences of human beings (Punch, 2005). “(B)y accomplishing discourse in social situations, language users at the same time actively construct and display (cultural) roles and identities” (van Dijk, 1997, p. 3, original emphasis) and therefore their positioning in a particular context. Potter (1997) argues that “discourse analysis emphasizes the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse” (p. 146) and that as a result of being “the medium for interaction” (p. 146) discourse analysis then becomes the way of interpreting what people do through an analysis of their talk (Gee, 1999; Potter, 1997; Punch, 2005).

Through the use of individual and group collection methods of data, critical discourse analysis will allow determination of the heterogeneous or individual
representational nature of the participants’ accounts. This analytic process allows the presentation of outcomes that occur in a contextual circumstance.

Critical discourse analysts aim to elicit change through providing a critical understanding of those “who suffer most from dominance and inequality” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252) by focusing on power relationships between groups in society (van Dijk, 1993). “Power is a key feature of Positioning Theory” (Howie & Peters, 1996) and provides an understanding of relationships generated through social interactions. The analysis of accounts of social interactions and of which social relations are a product (Davies & Harré, 1990), allows for an identification of the positions of the actors depicted through those accounts. Positioning theory with critical discourse analysis provides the method for a fuller derivation and understanding of the social meanings of the accounts produced by the participants of my research from the identification of the positions of the actors depicted in the accounts. Therefore the use of positioning theory strengthens the capacity of critical discourse analysis as a methodology of researching social inequalities.

**The critical discourse analysis approach**

Since teaching is a social practice that provides opportunities for interaction to occur between teachers, it is appropriate that critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been used to determine the positioning of the participant beginning teachers within their communities of teaching practice. CDA is especially useful in using discourse to identify not only “reproduction of power” (van Dijk, 2001a, p. 97) but also the agency of less powerful individuals and groups to speak and react to their positioning by the more powerful. CDA allows the determination of how positions of power are demonstrated and received through discourse (van Dijk, 1993). Positioning theory works alongside CDA to highlight how language in social interaction is used as a vehicle for the teachers to renegotiate the way they wish to be heard in the world context. By its very nature, as mentioned above, the community of practice authenticates “social power” (van Dijk, 2001b, p. 302) but in order to determine abuse or otherwise of this power, the situational events must be used (van Dijk, 2001a). CDA is used “to identify a set of perspectives that emphasises the relations between language and power” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 205). It is through an interrogation of the language in the participants’ accounts of their experiences in
social interaction in the community of teaching practice that their self-positioning or positioning by other members can be identified.

The critical discourse analysis approach taken in analysing the data as shown in Table 2 is adapted from van Dijk (2001 a) and Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter (2000). Table 2 shows the steps that were involved in the analytic process.

**Table 2.**

*Analytic process*

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- Identify context and event models
- Identify the macrostructure
- Identify the macropropositions or sub-themes
- Identify local meanings
- Summary

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Van Dijk (2001a) has distinguished between global and local contexts where global contexts are “defined by the social, political, cultural and historical structures in which a communicative event takes place” (p.108) while the local context is “defined in terms of properties of the immediate, interactional situation” (p.108). The global context used for this study is deemed to be communities of practice in an education sense. The macrostructure becomes the structure of these communities of practice supported by policies reflecting social, political, cultural and historical impacts. This macrostructure is now explicated.

**The macrostructure**

The macrostructure in this study is defined by the range of policy documents issued by the relevant authoritative bodies. These bodies in the Queensland educational context of this study consist, in the main, of the Queensland College of Teachers, the state government, and the employing authorities. Documents formulated by these bodies include statutes, codes of ethics, manuals of procedures, and standards of professional conduct, all of which reflect national policies and support the notion of a community of practice in which colleagues assist newcomers and peers in developing skills and knowledge to improve practice. From these policy documents individual employing authorities have been encouraged to develop their
own professional standards and codes of conduct (e.g. Professional Standards for Teachers: Guidelines for professional practice, Education Queensland). The following section will show the importance placed on the policy documents examined in providing collegial support in the development of teaching practice. Therefore, as a beginning teacher, one could be expected to be aware of the directions in these documents for the provision of support from those more experienced members of the profession.

**Impact of the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century**

In 1999 the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) acknowledged the need for a framework that adopted *The National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century* (The Adelaide Declaration). Furthermore, in order to articulate quality teaching, MCEETYA through the Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce (TQELT) prepared the National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching from which state and local standards could be developed and contextualized (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003). The National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching clearly identifies career dimensions and professional elements for teachers (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003). There are four career dimensions identified. The first of these is Graduation, at which point it is acknowledged that graduates in education have completed teacher education programmes and are embarking on new careers but are “not yet recognized as … competent and capable practitioner(s) with full professional standing” (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003, p. 10).

Competence is the second of the dimensions identified in the National Framework and refers to the successful teaching experiences and continued learning undertaken by teachers. Within this dimension is reference to working collaboratively to “further enhance their professional practice” (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003, p. 10). The National Framework further recognizes in its third dimension, the support provided to other teachers as a professional quality of teachers. This dimension, Accomplishment, refers also to the teachers at this level recognizing them as “highly accomplished and highly regarded by their peers” (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003, p.10). Leadership is
the final dimension in the National Framework and refers to recognition of leadership qualities in teachers who, as well being highly accomplished teachers and advocates for their profession, are also supportive of the “professional learning needs of others”.

These dimensions clearly reflect assumptions about desirable expectations of teacher characteristics. In including these dimensions within the standards framework, there is a definitive link with Lave and Wenger (1991) through both the legitimate peripheral participant identifiable in the Graduate dimension and the old timers identifiable in the dimension of Accomplishment.

Four professional elements have been identified in the National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching. These elements refer to the teacher’s application of practice with the focus on the students. Two of these, professional knowledge and professional practice refer to the disciplinary and professional knowledge required to ensure the employment of effective and inclusive teaching and learning strategies for a “supportive learning environment” (Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003, p. 11). Professional values, the third professional element, reflects the commitment to improving professional practice and the professional interaction with all stakeholders. Acknowledgment of diversity of students is addressed in the final element, professional relationships. The emphasis is on the need to work with others to assist students from diverse backgrounds.

*Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Cross-sectoral Strategic Plan 2006-2009 For Queensland*

This strategic plan was produced in collaboration by the three major employing authorities in education in Queensland: Education Queensland, Queensland Catholic Education commission and the Association of Independent Schools (Queensland) (Francis, Newham, & Harkin, 2005). The strategic plan states explicitly that teachers need to be of a high quality in order to meet the goals identified in the Adelaide Declaration (p.3). In endeavouring to provide a framework within which teacher quality can be enhanced, the strategic plan clearly states the provision for “opportunities for teachers to lead their own learning, and that of their colleagues … ” (p. 6) through, amongst other activities, encouraging the development of “networks and communities of practice as contexts for professional dialogue, and sources for
theoretical inputs, practical advice, and mentored reflection” (p.6). These communities of practice are further referred to as a means of professional learning for teachers through which “skills and knowledge required for teaching in 21st Century” (p.9) can be developed.

Queensland College of Teachers Code of Practice

All teachers in Queensland schools must be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT). Prior to 1 January, 2006, the registering authority was the Board of Teacher Registration (BTR). In the performance of their practice, all Queensland registered teachers are expected to follow the code of practice as set down by the QCT. This code of practice is currently the Ethical Standards for Queensland Teachers adopted from the BTR. Of the four types of responsibility set down in the ethical standards that teachers must display, two relate to the students and their families; one relates to the employers and society. A fourth responsibility relates to the provision of support and assistance to new members of the teaching profession and continuing self development (BTR, n.d.).

All of these documents clearly support the notion of a community of practice in which colleagues assist newcomers and peers in developing skills and knowledge to improve practice. These documents also provide a basis on which the newcomer to the profession of teaching would imagine (Wenger, 1998) his or her role in teaching and expectations of membership of that profession. Therefore, as a beginning or novice teacher, one could be expected to receive support from those more experienced teachers in order to understand procedures and improve practices and grow through their expertise and professional learning. The policy documents provide the macrostructure for this analysis.

The macroproposition and sub-themes

The expected support for a newcomer to the teaching profession as outlined in the macrostructure above, clearly relies on interaction between newcomers and the old-timers (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in the community of practice. The importance of interaction was discussed in Chapter 3 as crucial to the community of practice to promote the collaborative achievement of organizational goals and facilitate member growth and development within that community of practice. The events that the
participants recall, reflecting opinion, knowledge and beliefs of that event (van Dijk, 2001a) provide the accounts which make up the data for the study. Repeated readings of the data revealed an underlying theme of interaction as the basis for the newcomers’ sense of acceptance into the community of practice. Interaction was the major recurring theme and is therefore the macroproposition (van Dijk, 2001a) used in the analysis. As the macroproposition, interaction was seen ultimately to impact on levels of engagement (Wenger, 1998) with colleagues and positioning of the participants with respect to their specific communities of teaching practice.

The participants contributed via diaries, interviews, a face-to-face focus group and virtual focus groups. Under the umbrella of the macroproposition, several sub-themes emerged from the data collected from the participants. To explain the identification of the sub-themes as part of the process of analysis I will proceed in the chronological order that it occurred.

The following table (Table 3) indicates the NESB participants using their pseudonyms and the form of data collection that each was involved in. The table shows that if the teacher was involved in an interview the code began with an “I”, or if involved with a diary, the letter “D” was used. The focus groups were separated by using “FF” for face-to-face focus group and “FV” for the virtual focus groups. The teachers chose the collection methods they would participate in.

Table 3.

Method of data collection used for each participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Diary</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-fact (FFNESB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>√ DD</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>√ II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ DM</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>√ IS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>√ IK</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheree</td>
<td>√ ISh</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyson</td>
<td>√ IA</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ DR</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>√ IAa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justine</td>
<td>√ IJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Included in the table is the identifier used to reference the modes of data collection and the participant contributor or contributors within that mode. In the cases of the interviews and diaries, the initial of the pseudonyms given to the participants were used in the coding. In the cases where the pseudonym began with the same letter for more than one teacher, a second letter from the name was added to discriminate between them e.g. Susan (S) and Sheree (Sh).

While the diaries and virtual focus group data were provided in an electronically transcribed format, the data from the interviews and face-to-face focus group session were audio taped and subsequently required transcription. The audio tapes were transcribed to provide some of the data of the research (Ochs, 1979). A basic transcript showing the speakers’ turns as they occurred in the interview - “a top to bottom” format (Ochs, 1979, p. 46) - was produced for further analysis. In transcribing the audio tapes, I used a “modified orthography” (Ochs, 1979, p. 61) taking the pronunciation of the word as opposed to its correct spelling (Ochs, 1979). In the transcription, I inserted punctuation marks such as commas and full stops as appropriate. Transcriptions of the audio tapes along with the diaries and virtual focus group printouts, resulted in a corpus of data that required sorting into a suitable format to enable some sense and understanding to be made of the experiences of these beginning teachers. These data have been presented in the participants’ own words, written and verbal, with no alteration for grammar or spelling.

In my research design explained earlier in this chapter I outlined the use of the abductive strategy. This strategy required me to identify ideas and concepts from the data, not impose pre-conceived ideas or concepts on the data (Blaikie, 2000) thus the readings of the data became a journey of learning about the realities of the participant teachers. The repeated readings of the data did reveal the emergence of several recurring themes across the transcripts. The transcripts were then colour coded for ease of identification of the themes which related to the participants’ accounts of their experiences in teaching (Appendix Two). The use of colour codes also allowed easy assessment to visually determine prominent themes. This first step in the content analysis revealed the general themes of:

- reasons for entering the profession which I coded in green;
• experiences with students in the classroom which was coded orange; and
• experiences with staff in the schools which I coded in pink.

Further reading showed that the most prominent theme was that of the experiences with staff in the schools, specifically interaction with colleagues. This theme was of such significance that it was evident in each of the participants’ scripts, sometimes occurring at several points throughout individual participants’ transcriptions. It was this theme that became the macroproposition for the study. As the accounts of the interactions were centred around colleagues in the staffrooms in the various schools, this confirmed the use of Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice as the framework for the research.

My next step was to re-examine more closely those sections of the accounts relating to the experiences with colleagues to determine the sub-themes that would explicate the major theme according to specific instances. It is from the local meanings that I could then begin to address my research question.

A number of identifiable sub-themes emerged from the data itself. These sub-themes reflect the participants’ accounts of experiences in the community of practice. They were echoed by more than one participant providing justification for their inclusion in the analysis (Titscher et al., 2000) as reliable instances of practice. Identified sub-themes that were reflected in the accounts of interactions of the participants in the community of practice were skin colour, appearance, worldliness (which includes travel experience and migration from another country), and conversational participation. The table below (Table 4) provides some examples of the raw data related to each of these sub-themes.
Table 4.

*Participants’ accounts reflecting sub-themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub -Theme</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skin colour</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>So I thought oh what do you mean, aren’t we all foreigners? You are not a native, you’re white!</td>
<td>ISh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Also, with an Asian appearance it makes very noticeable that you are different from the teaching community...</td>
<td>IS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldliness</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>(Colleague name) had been living in The Philippines for a year. She said that because she had been in living in the Philippines, she understand how it likes to be a foreigner …</td>
<td>DR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational participation</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>… I knew already that the way of most Australians shut down when they realise you are not a native speaker.</td>
<td>IA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table, each of the sub-themes was colour coded for ease of visual identification. The table also identifies the source of the data e.g. IA is from an interview with Alyson and DR is from one of Rachel’s diary entries.

Following the use of the diaries and the interviews, the next step in the data collection was the use of the virtual focus groups and the face-to-face focus group session. The data from these focus groups reflected the major theme of interaction with colleagues in the communities of teaching practice. The data from the focus groups provided further details on these interactions and strongly reflected the sub-themes that arose across the other sources of data. These data became the main source from which the extracts were chosen for the finer grained analysis.

Segments of the accounts containing sub-themes were analysed linguistically to determine how positioning of the beginning/novice teacher was taking place in the community of practice.
As all of the sub-themes were derived from the macroproposition, there was interconnection within and across the data and sub-themes. That is, at times it was difficult to clearly segregate the sub-themes.

Some of the sub-themes emerged in the form of small stories (Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2006) used to account for specific interactions. Segments of the accounts were used to allow each of these sub-themes to be analysed linguistically to determine the reflection of the positioning of the beginning teacher in the community of practice. This then, became the identification of local meaning.

**The local meanings**

In this study, the local meanings are represented in the participant teachers’ accounts of their interactions in the communities of teaching practice they encountered. These accounts consist of the participant teachers’ beliefs, understandings and realities and as such are personal and thick with description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). To legitimize their accounts, the participants sometimes used small stories (Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). These small stories are “tellable episodes” (Bamberg, 2004b, p. 368) that provide an opportunity for the researcher to “locate identity positionings in everyday interactive practices and their performance” (Bamberg, 2004b p. 368). Through the small stories, the teller is showing how he or she has been positioned interactively or reflexively (Davies & Harré, 1990) and how that position has been taken up in the telling. The small story involves the narration of an event that the teller believed was unusual enough to give it reportability (Labov, 2006) or tellability (Ochs & Capps, 2001) and helped to make sense of a personal experience (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005; Georgakopoulou, 2006). These small stories are tellings of a personal, past experience or event (Georgakopoulou, 2006). The small stories are not necessarily told in chronological order but are triggered by comments or previous participants’ stories.

To provide more depth to the analysis, narrative analytic tools from sociolinguists such as Och & Capps (2001) have been adapted for application to my data. Therefore, where appropriate, the Ochs and Capps (2001) dimensions of a narrative were identified in the small stories and integrated into the analysis of the account. These dimensions are listed as tellership, tellability, embeddedness, linearity
and moral stance (p. 20) (see Table 5). These small stories reflect conversational narratives (Ochs & Capps) with clarifications and speculations or evaluations (Ochs & Capps) by the teller. Each of the small stories across the accounts while not necessarily connected linearly (Ochs & Capps) is embedded (Ochs & Capps) in the overarching theme of informal social interaction in the community of practice. These small stories provided further insight into the positioning of the participants in those communities of practice including the participants’ uptake of that positioning, and therefore warrant some investigation in the analysis of the accounts.

Table 5.

**Dimensions of a Narrative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tellership</td>
<td>involvement of interlocutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tellability</td>
<td>interest, importance or significance of an event that warrants its telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embeddedness</td>
<td>relationship to a theme under discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linearity</td>
<td>relationship between events being recounted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral stance</td>
<td>event used to demonstrate moral stance of teller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Extracts depicting each sub-theme were selected as representative of the participant group’s data. These extracts were then analysed linguistically to determine the local meanings arising from the data.

The linguistic analysis focuses on the words and phrases used by the participants in their accounts of the events being discussed to further assist in the identification of local meanings. Of particular interest, were the use of collective pronouns such as “we”, “us”, “them” and “they” and proper nouns such as country names or cited nationalities. Considering the ways in which these pronouns are used will indicate the relational values inferred by the speaker (Fairclough, 2001). These words recurred across the accounts indicating a need for examination particularly in
relation to the positioning of the participants in the community of teaching practice. Direct reported speech and direct reported thought (Holt, 1996, 2000) were used at times in the accounts providing a sense of reality to the small story. By investigating the local meanings of the accounts in the context of the macropropoposition of interaction with colleagues, the positioning of the participants in terms of their communities of teaching practice can be revealed.

**Review**

After identifying the global context of communities of practice in education and the macrostructure as outlined in the reviewed policy documents, the data analysis was begun. On completion of the content analyses which were conducted through many readings of the data and colour coding of themes and sub-themes, the identification of the macroproposition of interaction and sub-themes arising through that major theme was made. Following this a critical analysis of the selected extracts was conducted. This provided the means for determining the local meanings arising from the data. Using the participants’ own language and through an analysis of the words and phrases used, and the ways in which they were used in the extracts, the positioning of the beginning/novice teacher in their respective communities of teaching practice could be determined. The reporting of the analysis to investigate the local meanings is presented in the following chapter.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have explained the design of the research undertaken using an abductive approach. An explanation of the researcher-participant relationship and the three groups of participants involved in the study has been presented. This relationship is further explicated in Chapter 5. The methods of data collection I used were outlined and justified. Following this I have provided an overview of critical discourse analysis used to interrogate the participants’ accounts of their experiences in order to address my research questions. The extracts used in the analysis and the local meanings taken from these can be found in the Chapter 6.
Chapter 5

Researcher – Participant Relationship

Introduction

Bamberg (1997) notes that storytellers take up positions through the telling of stories. Ultimately he argues that storytellers wish to be heard in a particular way. This section of the chapter outlines five small stories about the development of the support group which provided the impetus for this thesis and from which all but one of the participants have been drawn. This section also provides a space for me to reflect on how I was positioning myself as mentor and researcher. This segment is not to be seen as a diary recording but rather as a retrospective reflective account undertaken in the latter stages of the preparation of this thesis. In presenting this account, I believe that my role within the research conducted for this thesis becomes more easily identified. The account focuses on my work related to the support group for NESB education students in a teacher preparation program. My reflective account follows this introduction. I have divided the account into two parts: one that reflects on the development of the support group and one that reflects on my role within that group. My reflective account section is followed by its interrogation using critical discourse analysis.

My reflective account

A staff meeting was held at the university at the end of my first year of involvement as a lecturer in Business Education courses in the Teacher Education program. In this meeting, colleagues raised the topic of the students in the program who were of a non-English speaking background and the issue that these preservice teachers were “struggling” in their practicum courses in the program and that “something” should be done. While no definition of “struggling” or “something” was given,
there were many at that meeting who nodded in agreement with the statement. At the time I thought that "struggling" inferred that the NESB preservice teachers found the practicum very difficult and many failed the course. I had no clear idea of what made the practicum difficult and assumed it was because they must have known little about the workings of Queensland schools and students of those schools. It made sense to me that these experiences could or would be different from what the preservice teachers had been used to in their own years of schooling.

Early in the following university year I approached the Teacher Education Administrator who addressed many student issues in her role what program or plan. I asked, in relation to the comment raised at the aforementioned staff meeting, what had been put in place to help the new cohort of education students. I was told that nothing had been suggested. At that point I was finishing my Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics with a majority of peers for whom English was a second language and perhaps this made me more aware of the possible difficulties the NESB preservice teachers may have been facing - I am not too sure about this. Whatever the underlying reason may have been, I offered to provide a support group to help the NESB education students. My belief was that if nothing was to be done, then these students were falsely being led to believe that they stood an equal chance as their ESB peers in successfully completing the course. I thought this was unjust and unfair. My offer was accepted and I was advised that I would receive payment for running this group. I had not thought of payment so that was a surprise.
In the initial stage, I wanted to provide an informal forum where the NESB students could voice concerns regarding teaching in a system that was unfamiliar to them. This was the premise on which I based my idea of the support group. It must be reiterated at this stage that attendance at these support group meetings was voluntary on the part of the education students. There were no fees and no assessment attached. In these sessions I aimed to provide exercises such as micro teaching and role playing to help them when they entered a Queensland classroom/school environment as well as answer any questions they may have. The majority of the NESB students in each cohort were Asian and from a cultural background that precluded easy interaction with experienced teachers or those in the workplace who were senior to them. These were findings from my research for my Masters thesis. During my first year of conducting the support group, I undertook my Masters thesis. The Masters thesis in particular focused, through the use of three case studies of Asian preservice teachers, on identifying possible cultural factors that could affect the performance of preservice teachers during the practicum experience. For these preservice teachers, being a teacher, in and of itself, commanded respect from all members of society. This automatic respect was their expectation of their school students in their practicum classrooms so that they also believed that all school students would listen attentively and respond as asked. Therefore, the areas I chose to focus on included speaking at a level that could be audible throughout the classroom, speaking with clarity, giving clear and specific instructions and mixing with other teachers in the school environment.
I have now been holding the support group meetings for five years. In the first year, the number of students who attended the group meetings fluctuated but increased prior to the second practicum. This was as a result of having been in the classrooms for a period (approximately eight weeks) and realising that there were a number of issues, such as in mixing with teachers, addressing classroom behaviour and instruction giving, for which they required help.

I developed a more structured approach in the second year of this support group based on the experiences I had gained the year before. This was the pattern each year. At the first meeting of each year, I would ask that if there were particular items that the members would like me to address as a session topic, to let me know and it would be included. This allowed flexibility to cater for individuals in the group. For example, such topics included the division of a calendar year into a school year and explanations of the assessment terminologies used in different phases of schooling. While I have, I believe, arrived at a structure that is addressing many of the concerns raised by the supervising teachers I have informally spoken to when visiting preservice teachers in the schools and past group members, there is still the flexibility to add topics as required.

These support group sessions were valued by the students as a place in which they could “safely” voice any concerns over understanding assessment or concepts encountered in the education courses or issues related to their practicum that they felt uncomfortable voicing in front of their peers in tutorials. The students have demonstrated how much they have valued these support group sessions through informal verbal and written
feedback thanking me. What became evident is that when these issues or concerns have been raised in our group meetings, they have not been remarkably different from those of other students in the course, but it was the forum that was different.

One of the most successful aspects of the support group was the option for weekend sessions during the practicum. These were well received by the preservice teachers and the frequency of the meetings has been negotiated with them. Some years were more demanding than others. For example, one year some of us were meeting every weekend for each practicum and in others, we would meet for two, three or four weekend days per practicum (a practicum lasted for seven or eight weeks). In the fourth year we had an NESB student teacher from another university joining in the weekend sessions. This student had remained on the email list after she withdrew from the program to enrol at another university. In recent years, sessions have included ESB preservice teachers from my university along with some from three other universities. This occurred as I provided the option of joining the session to students in classes I taught at another university. Two people, who were studying externally through an interstate university had heard of the session and also came along. I had had contact with one of these people during visits to a school where she was working in the office while studying to become a teacher.

At all times, I made myself available by mobile phone and email 24/7 to all of my education students. This was taken up frequently by the members of the NESB group during the practicum when they needed someone to talk to - sometimes it was over coffee in a coffee shop or over
the phone at night. Often the contacts were to allay concerns arising from a misinterpretation of comments (written or verbal) received from the supervising teachers. Sometimes it was to clarify instructions received from the supervising teachers. I found quite often that the expectations of the NESB student teachers differed from those of some of the ESB students. The NESB students often felt that any constructive comments were indicating major flaws in their teaching and they would become quite distressed over them and wanting ways of being perfect.

Over the years I have found that the students who attended the support group meetings preferred to be in my tutorials in preparation for the practicum and preferred to speak to me if there was a "problem" during the practicum rather than their assigned facilitator. I think this was because they felt that they could talk to me after working together in our support groups without concern for unintended consequences. Often I have found that students who did not regularly attend the support group meetings would ring me in preference to their nominated facilitator if they had wanted to talk about a concern arising from the practicum. I found, particularly in the first two years of the support group's existence, that if the university was contacted by a school regarding an NESB preservice teacher, I was often asked by the university to visit the school to see what could be done to help that preservice teacher. Now, there is a particular lecturer who has embraced my work with the support group and if she has a concern with an NESB education student, she will contact me re this student. This has worked well for a couple of students as I have been able to let the lecturer know what I have done with
that student and also provide some strategies for use with that student.

Anecdotal evidence shows that the “problems” encountered by the supervising teachers with the NESB education students on practicum have reduced since the introduction of the support group. This is probably due to the growth or development of the structure of the group sessions. The university has recognised this and provided me with two hours work allocation per teaching week to work with these students. This is double the time I had before and has been much more beneficial, I think. While attendance at the support group remains voluntary, the core group numbers, that is, those who are repeat attendees, have increased over the years as well and I don’t know why that is. I have noticed that the core group members develop a strong sense of comradeship, in fact they build and maintain their own community of practice, and support each other through the Teacher Education program. This has been particularly evident from the second year of the support group. Since then, one of the strategies I have implemented is to encourage this self-help, and the use of me as a resource if they want to check on the course of action they are taking or if they are not sure what to do. Initially I was surprised when I noticed this self-help occurring but saw the advantages in encouraging it. In working through their problems with other group members, the students became more self-reliant and confident. I guess this was what I really wanted, but I was surprised when it happened - and it has happened with each cohort.
Background to my role:

In the initial stages of the support group development I saw my role as one of providing support for a group of students who needed it but did not appear to be getting that support. I wanted the group to know that there was someone who did care about them (in the university environment one can often feel like a number, not an individual) and who took their concerns about their practicum seriously. I think I was, and still am, seen as lecturer and teacher. I am very protective of those who attend the support group and do check up on their practicum performances. It is this protective "instinct" that I think led me to commit myself to the meetings during the practicum. It was the second group (beginning in 2004) with whom I had the greatest number of weekend meetings, following up with weekend meetings during their internships in term 1 2005. I know I wanted to help these students, but wonder if, in fact, it led to some of them becoming dependent upon me. I learned from this that while I could provide support, it was important that the preservice teachers could cope with their roles as teachers and therefore I needed to "force" them into making their own decisions and accepting the consequences. As a result, I cut back the weekend practicum meetings to three or four over a seven or eight week practicum. I did (and continue to do so) find that the advice or help sought changes from before and during practicum one (stage one) to that sought before and during practicum two (stage two). Stage one advice is more about ideas for lesson plans and classroom management as well as interpersonal interactions with staff and an understanding of classrooms in Queensland. Advice during stage two is based on addressing issues
that arise/arose during the practicum and focused on job searching and interview techniques. This is not dissimilar to advice sought by other education students and in fact some from English speaking backgrounds do come to the NESB weekend sessions during practicum.

I think I have tried to cut the apron strings more quickly in the years following the second cohort. I now see my role, from the first few meetings of the year, as a facilitator in developing a sense of cohesion amongst the members of the group so that they can turn to each other rather than to me for help - in essence developing the group’s resources to build and maintain a community of practice. At the same time, I recognise the importance of the lecturer/teacher/mentor role in providing information and advice to help in addressing persistent concerns.

Informally, I have constantly been an active “action” researcher, learning from the current group to inform the following year’s group sessions. I did find that data from research for my Masters thesis provided me with some insight to help with the following groups in that I had “insider” information that helped in advice and examples I could use. It also provided concrete evidence for the group members that I understood that practicum scenarios could be interpreted in different ways for different students.

The members of the group that I had in 2004, which was the most time intensive group I have had, were followed through as interns or beginning teachers in 2005, and became the core participants of my PhD research. I have also used other members of the group from 2004 and some from the 2003 group in this thesis.
The close work I did with the members of these support group cohorts generated the rapport that I believe led to the access to data that has been used in the PhD. I am not convinced that the same sense of trust from the participants would have been afforded another researcher.

**An interrogation**

This retrospective reflection consists of two segments that together provide insight into the development of the support group for NESB students in a teacher preparation program and my changing roles in and with that group. On an investigation of the local meanings (van Dijk, 2001a) in this reflection, it is evident that in the first segment pertaining to the development of the support group, there are five small stories (Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). Each of these will now be considered in turn.

**The small stories**

The first small story relates why the support group began: to provide the “something” to address the “issue that these [NESB] preservice teachers were “struggling” in their practicum courses in the program”. Indirect reported thought was used to provide a definition for the word “struggling” as “the NESB preservice teachers found the practicum sessions very difficult and many failed the course.” “Struggling” and “something” are instances of direct reported speech used in the meeting to provide justification for the beginning thoughts of what could be done to help this group of students. The word “struggling” in and of itself depicts helplessness or at least a need for help. The very fact that it was used, and resulted in “many at that meeting who nodded in agreement” provides an indication of the recognition of difficulties being experienced by the NESB preservice teachers during their practicum. Nowhere is there a clarification of exactly what difficulties were being experienced by this group of preservice teachers. The apparent consensus, evidenced through the nods of agreement, of the existence of difficulties during the practicum indicates an assumed and shared knowledge that has not been explicated. A reported thought to clarify my own
assumption of knowledge has been used: “they must have known little of Queensland schools and students”. A moral stance has been taken regarding this reported thought in that the thought was declared as having “made sense to me”. The moral stance statement and the reported thought together have provided a justification for the difficulties faced by the preservice NESB teachers and therefore account for the apparent “struggling” during their practicum experiences.

How the support group actually began is revealed in the second small story. Indirect reported speech seen through the use of a personal pronoun and past tense verbs: “I asked”, “I was told” and “I offered” is used in this small story to provide the story from my viewpoint. There is a discourse of negotiation in this small story evident through the use of “ask”, “told”, “offered”, “accepted”. The close of negotiations appears in the acceptance of the offer and advice of payment for services. This closure also signals the launch of the support group. The issue of equity has been used as a reason for following up on the earlier staff meeting to find out what course of action had been planned and provided the moral stance in this small story as seen in the indirect reported thought “I thought this was unjust and unfair.”

The third small story is longer than the other stories and includes four “mini” stories, or story within a small story, each of which is embedded in the theme of the small story: the membership and structure of the support group. The first mini story involves the framework of the sessions of the support group: “an informal forum” with “voluntary” attendance and “no fees and no assessment attached.” This indicates that attendance is left to the individuals unlike the regular lecture/tutorial format where attendance is expected. This is followed by a mini story on the development of the content of the sessions: “micro teaching and role playing”, “speaking with clarity, giving clear and specific instructions and mixing with other teachers”, “addressing classroom behaviour”, “school year and explanations of the assessment terminologies”. Throughout this mini story is the theme of flexibility or adaptation of the content to address
“concerns” of the NESB students. The word “concern/s” has been used five times in this mini story which infers the focus of the support group. An additional mini story has been included to relate the off-campus meetings, for example at “weekend sessions”. It is in the telling of this mini story that there is an indication of a switching between the roles of “lecturer” to and “member” of, the support group. This occurs in the language used where the pronouns change to “us” and “we” (“some of us”, “we would meet” and “we had an NESB student teacher from another university”). There is a switch again to a lecturer role in the telling of the final mini story on accessibility during the practicum with another switch in “they felt that they could talk to me after working together in our support groups” when relating preference of contact during the practicum.

A fourth small story on the recognition of the support group is next in the reflective retrospective account. The recognition occurred through visiting schools to provide help for NESB preservice teachers on practicum and from another lecturer. Recognition has also been forthcoming from the university shown in the doubling of allocated hours of contact while on campus.

The final small story relates the metamorphosis of the NESB students who have participated in the support group from needing much help and guidance to helping each other as members of their own community of practice. This was an unexpected outcome of the original idea behind the support group demonstrated through an indirect reported feeling: “Initially I was surprised when I noticed this self-help occurring”.

These small stories depict why and how the support group began and what was covered in the meetings. The final two small stories relate to the recognition of the group and the metamorphosis of the group members. Following is an analysis of the account of my role in and with the support group.

In the first instance, the role is recounted as one of teacher/lecturer indicated by the referral to the “university environment”. This is further endorsed in the reference to a provider of advice based on issues arising from the practicum which is a compulsory component of the university program in teacher education.
and the provision of information to assist in education employment interviews. Use of “facilitator” has been made and this also supports the concept of an organised grouping or meeting. This role can be paralleled to that of an “old timer” in Lavé and Wenger’s (1991) community of practice particularly in the specifically identified advice giving that has been recorded: “Stage one advice is more about ideas for lesson plans and classroom management as well as interpersonal interactions with staff and an understanding of classrooms in Queensland”. This advice could be interpreted as advice from previous experience given from the old timer to the newcomers in the profession. The use of “facilitator” is relevant in that it is implying a sense of control being turned over to the members of the group with respect to the direction they could take, for example, in working with each other to solve problems.

There is a move to the role of researcher through identifying involvement in “active research” in the taking of information gained from each cohort of support group members to inform and advise future cohorts. The researcher role becomes more clearly identified in the use of members of the early groups as participants in the Masters thesis and following through to this thesis. This role is intermingled with the lecturer role – yet again providing the situation of role-switching identified earlier – where the information gained through completion of the first thesis helped in the quality and form of support provided for subsequent group members.

To this point, I have provided an interpretation through an analysis at the local level of the two segments that constitute the retrospective reflection on the support group and my role in relation to that support group for preservice teachers of a non-English speaking background. The next section of the chapter looks at this reflection in its entirety to identify the macroproposition or major theme that is carried through the reflection and to contextualise the reflection in the macrostructure of the thesis with respect to the range of policy documents issued by the relevant authoritative bodies as defined in Chapter 4.
The macroproposition and the macrostructure

Throughout these two sections of the retrospective reflection runs the major theme or macroproposition of caring. A definition of care or caring that could be considered “one of the most precise definitions of care in the literature” (Held, 2005, p. 31) is that of Bubeck (1995) who states that

Caring for is the meeting of the needs of one person by another person, where face-to-face interaction between carer and cared-for is a crucial element of the overall activity and where the need is of such a nature that it cannot possibly be met by the person in need herself (p. 129).

It is clear that the personal relationship and the practices that occur within that relationship form the basis of care theory (Groenhout, 1998). Bubeck’s (1995) definition certainly mirrors the instigating factors that precipitated the establishment of the support group: the “struggling” of the NESB preservice teachers during their practicum components of the program and the need for “something” to be done. The establishment of the support group provided the face-to-face interaction that Bubeck has identified as necessary to “caring”.

A discourse of caring has been used throughout the reflective accounts. This is evidenced in the use of “care” words beginning with the use of the term “support group” as opposed to “class” as could normally be expected in a university setting. “Support” provides a connotation of help needed or given as distinct from the delivery of a lecture or tutorial. “Group” also provides a distinction from the expected university class and gives a sense of intimacy. This interpretation of “support group” is underscored by the reference to “in the university environment one can often feel like a number, not an individual” in the account of changing roles.

Further caring words have been used repeatedly throughout the reflections. The words “help” or “helped” have been used 12 times and “support” three times (without the addendum of “group”) in the accounts.

In considering Bubeck’s (1995) definition of caring and the obvious discourse of care it could be interpreted that the NESB preservice teachers have been seen as helpless or without power to begin on the same level as their ESB peers particularly
in the practicum situation. In fact, this would appear to be the premise on which the support group has been based. The lecturer’s role has been one of power – that is, the person who has the answers. This is apparent in the revelation of the success of, or the perceived need for, the weekend meetings during the practicum.

In the account depicting the reflection on my role, several “mothering” references appear. This could be interpreted as a discourse of motherhood yet is still heavily linked to the major theme of caring. Noddings, (1984), Held (1993) and Groenhout (1998) suggest that it is through mothering, as the practice of caring for children, on which is based an “account of what Care is … ” (Groenhout, 1998, p.171). In the retrospective reflections, references appear as two distinct stages. The first is as the protective, early stages “mother” in ensuring the support group members felt that there was “someone who did care about them”. This is also reflected in the use of “I am very protective”, “check up”, and “protective “instinct””. All of these phrases denote particularly, the early stages of motherhood. The next phase appears in recognising that the students were becoming “dependent upon me”, so that “I needed to “force” them into accepting their own decisions” and “cut the apron strings”. This grouping of phrases indicates an acceptance that the “children” are growing up and should not be as dependent on the mother as in the earlier stages. This final stage can be linked to the fifth small story in the first part of the reflection which refers to the metamorphosis of the members of the group into their own community of practice where they were able to help each other, without me.

Caring, the macroproposition or major theme of the reflection is not unusual in the profession of teaching. In fact, as identified in Chapter 4, the policy documents used as the macrostructure of the thesis “clearly support the notion of a community of practice in which colleagues assist newcomers and peers in developing skills and knowledge to improve practice” (p.53). In the retrospective reflection a community of practice was identified as having been formed amongst the members of the support group, and in fact was an outcome that the support group was aiming at achieving. The support group, in and of itself, could also be argued to be a community of practice with my role seen as that of the old timer. In Chapter 4 the importance of communities of practice is noted in the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Cross-
sectoral Strategic Plan 2006-2009 For Queensland. In this document, communities of practice are further referred to as a means of learning for teachers through which “skills and knowledge required for teaching in 21st Century” (p.9) can be developed. (Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Cross-sectoral Strategic Plan 2006-2009 For Queensland).

Reference to support occurs in the section related to the policies of the Queensland College of Teachers (Chapter 4) where the fourth responsibility of teachers in the ethical standards has been noted as relating to the provision of support and assistance to new members of the teaching profession and continuing self development (BTR, n.d.).

As a teacher now in the role of a lecturer, and latterly as a researcher, I see no distinction between teachers and those learning to become teachers in respect of my obligation to help in professional development as outlined in the policy documents. There is a strong indication that it is a part of the role of a teacher to teach or help or support those who are new to the profession and through the development of the support group at the university level, this is what I have tried to do.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have provided an insight into the support group and its development, and my role with respect to that support group. On a local level, the first part of the reflection was divided into five small stories depicting the reasons for the establishment of the support group and how it eventuated, the membership and structure of the group and its recognition by others, culminating in the development of the members of the support group into their own community of practice. This section included, then was specifically followed by, a recognition of the role switching or role changing that I underwent. This was more complex than I had imagined involving in the first segment switching between “lecturer” and “member” and in the second segment switching between “lecturer” and “researcher”.

Throughout the retrospective reflection is a theme of caring encompassing both a discourse of caring and a discourse of mothering - albeit one that changes to represent and shape new contexts. I have shown that within an educational context and as guided by the policy documents that form the macrostructure of my thesis as
outlined in Chapter 4, this support or caring is not, or should not be, taken as incidental to my professional background as a teacher but is in fact seen by me to be an essential component of my teacher identity.

Chapter 6 presents the extracts from the generated data used in the analysis and the local meanings taken from these. The analyses are then synthesised in Chapter 7 to arrive at implications from the study in Chapter 8.
Chapter 6

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the analytic approach, using critical discourse analysis was explained. This chapter will present a fine grained analysis of extracts from the data in order to address the research question: *How are beginning and novice teachers of a non-English speaking background positioned within an English speaking community of teaching practice?* The extracts were chosen as representative of the sub-themes that emerged from the data. These sub-themes were skin colour, appearance, worldliness (or overseas experience from travel or migration), and conversational participation.

The abductive research strategy demands that the actual language used by the participants be subjected to the analytic process. No alterations for spelling or grammar have been made in the transcriptions of the data. The language of the participants’ accounts is taken as representing and shaping their realities. The realities represented are shaped by their interactions with other members of the community of teaching practice. These interactions are the focal point of the participants’ accounts. An interrogation of these accounts using critical discourse analysis, positioning theory and relevant linguistic tools, as indicated in Chapter 4, demonstrates the positioning of these teachers with respect to that community. Using the framework of the community of teaching practice, these participants could be considered to be legitimate peripheral participants of their communities of teaching practice as outlined in Chapter 3. However, acceptance into that community is determined by its current members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, the actions and words used by the members of the community of practice referred to in the participants’ accounts and as related by the participants, indicate the acceptance, or other positioning, of the newcomers (van Dijk, 2003).
The presentation of the data analysis has been divided into two chapters: 6 and 7. This chapter, Chapter 6, details extracts and analyses relating to the data from the participants – the beginning/novice teachers of a non-English speaking background. Chapter 7 will synthesise the analyses.

**The analyses**

Data from the NESB beginning and novice teachers were collected through interviews, diary recordings and two varieties of focus group sessions – face-to-face and virtual focus groups. As discussed in the Chapter 4, colour coding of the data revealed a variety of sub-themes (skin colour, appearance, worldliness, and conversational participation) that emerged within the major theme of interaction to provide an insight into the positioning of these beginning/novice teachers in their communities of teaching practice. These sub-themes were apparent in the focus group sessions reinforcing the findings of analyses of interviews and diary recordings and hence provided the main basis of the detailed analyses. Interconnection across the data and between the identified sub-themes in the data was evident. This made it difficult to differentiate between the sub-themes so that in each of the sub-theme sections there will often be overlap with other sub-themes. This is not to be taken as an indication of poor segregation of data but instead indicative of the multiperspectival concerns of the focus group sessions and the shared realities that made the experiences tellable.

This chapter has been divided into sub-themes within the macroproposition or major theme of “interaction” as discussed in Chapter 4. The following sections provide the analyses of the extracts by sub-theme. The sub-themes are not presented in any specific order as no one sub-theme was more predominant than the other. Shading of the data, to help the reader, has been used where small stories have been identified and used in the analysis.

**Sub-theme: Skin colour**

The first extract (Table 6) was chosen to begin the presentation of the analysis of the data because it contains the sub-themes of skin colour and worldliness that had been identified on the earlier readings of the data. In this extract, the sub-themes were presented in the form of small stories that represented and elaborated accounts of the
lived experiences (Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2006) of the participants in this particular extract. The implementation of small stories to establish the local meanings has been presented in Chapter 4. Sheree is the main contributor to the discussion at this point. Each of the stories in this extract is linked to Sheree’s account of her interaction with the teachers in the communities of practice she encountered particularly with respect towards non-Australians entering the profession. By applying the Ochs & Capps (2001) dimensions of a narrative as outlined in Chapter 4 to Sheree’s account, it is evident that Sheree has offered an explanation and evaluation of the reactions and attitudes of the members of a particular community of teaching practice and at one point took a moral stance. Each story provides a pivotal transition linked to the original topic transition (Holt & Drew, 2005) – teachers in the community of practice (utt. 1).

This extract was taken from the face-to-face focus group session at a point approximately twenty minutes into the session and flowed from a conversation in which the participants had been discussing their interactions with the students in the schools. From this discussion, Sheree transitioned into the topic of the teachers who were the established members of her community of teaching practice and proceeded to produce an account of her interactions with them.

Table 6.

Extract one taken from the face-to-face focus group meeting

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. <strong>SHEREE:</strong> And they, but the teachers were not welcoming kind of thing. They thought oh, outsider coming to this area as well kind of. It is their protected area, I mean, this profession is only for Australians kind of attitude I thought they had.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>SUSAN:</strong> Oh, really?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>SHEREE:</strong> Yeah, they think uh, kind of thing. Once my prac teacher, first prac, about third week like she ask “you from which country are you from?” Um, the first lesson when I did, “oh, um your English is not, your English is pretty good.” “Yes, you know I lived in England for a little” “Oh, that make a difference.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>SUSAN:</strong> uhhm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>SHEREE:</strong> That is first comment about language and she couldn’t find anything wrong writing and all and then by about two or second or third week she asked, “which country are you from?” I said “Sri Lanka” “Oh, foreigners, foreigners” she screamed that word. I felt so, she doesn’t have to say that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. **SUSAN**: yeah
7. **SHEREE**: Yeah, foreigners, foreigners. It was such a big thing.
8. **SUSAN**: Really?
9. **SHEREE**: Oh, foreigners have come to our world. Like this. It is exactly you’re on another planet kind of thing.
10. **SUSAN**: It’s very strange she said foreigners because uh,
11. **SHEREE**: Because they themselves are foreigners aren’t they? So I just thought oh.
12. **K**: Yes!
13. **SUSAN**: Very uneducated, you know, person.
14. **SHEREE**: Yeah, so yeah. But she is a good person, but sometimes whatever underneath comes out.
15. **SUSAN**: Mm
16. **SHEREE**: This is abo thing what this is about. Because of the colour I think.
17. **SUSAN**: Yeah
18. **SHEREE**: If it is I was something like you (points to Alyson), blending with them, they don’t feel that much of a difference but with my colour and all
19. **SUSAN**: Yeah
20. **SHEREE**: I would sometimes think you know I wish I was white at least to camouflage myself for blend with these people.
21. **K**: Oh.
22. **SHEREE**: Yeah, there are instances I felt like that. … that lady has come to this country about 50 years ago from Bulgaria so she understood, she incorporated me with everything, she was very kind and she understood a lot of things.
23. **RACHEL**: Yeah, I had that experience when I was in my last prac at (school name) and my teacher she had been to Philippines and that is why teacher understands me
24. **SHEREE**: Mm
25. **RACHEL**: Yeah.
26. **SHEREE**: That is the difference. If you get something like that, some person like that, you are lucky.
27. **K**: So someone who has been away.
28. **RACHEL**: Yeah, been away
29. **K**: been on hol,
30. **RACHEL**: Yeah, like Asia
31. **K**: to another country
32. **SHEREE**: Like a migrant or come from a migrant family or something like that. (FFNESB)
In Extract one, Sheree is the main speaker providing 14 of the 32 turns, clearly dominating this segment of the conversation. Sheree introduces the topic of teachers by relating her sense of not being welcome in the community of practice (“And they, but the teachers were not welcoming kind of thing” (utt.1)) in the form of an abstract of a story (Labov, 2006). This abstract identifies with the macroproposition or theme of the study – interaction in the community of practice. To make sense of this lack of welcome Sheree provides her account of the thought processes of the members of the community of practice. In this utterance, Sheree is reporting thoughts “They thought oh, outsider coming to this area as well kind of” (utt. 1) that are not her own but those attributed by her to others. This is in contrast to a direct reporting of her own thoughts (Holt, 1996) and yet it is stated as if reporting a previous locution. Sheree’s declarative statement in utterance 3, “Yeah, they think uh, kind of thing” in response to Susan’s backchannelling cue “Oh, really?” (utt.2) reinforces Sheree’s conviction that this thought is correct. Furthermore, Sheree translates this thought into the teaching profession available only for Australians and that she is not welcome. That is, because she thought she was seen as a non-Australian, or “outsider” (utt.1) by the other teachers. Sheree has used small stories (Bamberg, 2004a) that would justify the attribution of this thought by identifying language (utt.3), country of origin (utt. 5), and skin colour (utt. 17) as reasons for non-inclusion. Sheree did note that the worldliness (or overseas experience through travel or migration) of members of the community of practice (utt. 23) engendered a sense of inclusion. This was supported by Rachel in utterance 24 with her own small story that serves to uphold Sheree’s previous story (utt.23). Both participants stated that it was this worldliness which might stem from migration (utt 33) or travel (utts. 29 and 31) that contributed to new members’ opportunities for acceptance by old timers into the community of practice. The small stories in utterances 23 and 24 are linear in that they are embedded in the theme of worldliness that has been triggered by the story that is based on the sub-theme of skin colour. The linearity begins in utterance 23 following the conclusion, at the beginning of the utterance to the story on skin colour “Yeah, there are instances I felt like that”. This reiteration of Sheree’s feelings first expressed in utterance 21
was made in response to my surprise token in utterance 22: “Oh” reflecting the unexpectedness of Sheree’s personal revelation in utterance 21 (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). This was followed up by Sheree in utterance 23 with the story about the “lady from Bulgaria” which introduced the shift into the sub-theme of worldliness. This story was followed by Rachel’s story in utterance 24 about the teacher who had visited the Philippines. These two stories are embedded in the sub-theme of worldliness and linear in that are related to each other through providing examples of the same sub-theme. The relationship between the sub-themes is one that has been dictated by the participants yet is clearly related to the topic of discussion introduced in utterance one: the teachers in the community of practice.

Sheree’s use of the phrase “protected area” (utt.1) has metaphorical significance. A protected area could signify that only certain people have access to that area and therefore is a very strong phrase to describe the teaching profession. By using the possessive pronoun “their” before and “Australians” after this phrase, Sheree has linked that special zone to those who are seen as Australians. As her skin colour precludes her from this version of Australian-ness, the attributed thought in utterance one discussed above further precludes her from entry into that protected area.

This sense of protection of the profession for Australians is reinforced in the story that Sheree recounts in utterance three and continues in utterance 5. This story relates to the teacher asking Sheree which country she is from (utt. 3). The fact that the teacher’s direct reported question (“you from which country are you from?” Utt.3)) did not arise until the second or third week could indicate that there was little acceptance of Sheree into that community of teaching practice up to that point because one could expect a question like that in the first week of contact as people introduce themselves to each other. This question introduces a discourse of race that helps to explain Sheree’s account of teaching as a protected profession. The response from the other teacher to Sheree’s country of origin (Sri Lanka) further underscores her viewpoint - “’Oh, foreigners, foreigners’ she screamed that word” (utt.5). The use of the word “foreigner” clearly assigns Sheree to a group not welcome in that protected area to which the other teacher has access. “Foreigner” has been used here in a negative way amplified by the use of the
forceful verb “screamed” as opposed to “said” or even “yelled”. The use of the word “screamed” indicates very strong emotions directed against something or someone. The word “foreigner” has impacted on Sheree to the extent that she has repeated it in utterances seven, nine and eleven. Her emotive response to the screamed reaction would appear to be one of hurt or belittlement as demonstrated in her moral stance in utterance five: “I felt so, she doesn’t have to say that”.

The reference to “another planet” in utterance nine stems from the opening scenario I presented in the beginning of the focus group session: “The question that I wanted to throw out to you was if someone was to come from another planet, and see you at school and say “what are you? “Who are you?” how do you feel you could explain that?” (FFNESB). Sheree appears to have used this scenario to reflect the teacher in her story as living on the Earth and Sheree as arriving from another planet. This could be interpreted as demonstrating the strength of her feeling of non-inclusion. Sheree has used attributed reported speech in “Oh, foreigners have come to our world” (utt. 9) to conclude her story. This statement could be seen as attributed, not specifically to one person, but to the members of the teaching profession. It could be taken that the use of the word “world” refers to the professional teaching “world”. Sheree had earlier (utt.1) identified the teaching profession as being only for Australians and therefore this utterance (utt. 9) is being attributed to those members of the teaching profession and Sheree has been identified as foreign to that “world”.

Related to the question of country of origin in the small story was a direct reported statement of judgement regarding the level of Sheree’s English as being “pretty good” (utt. 3). This statement places the other teacher in a position of being an expert on the English language particularly as Sheree is forced to explain why her standard of English is at that level (“Yes, you know I lived in England for a little” (utt. 3)). Sheree’s time in England appears to be acceptable to the teacher as the reason for Sheree’s “pretty good” level of English (“Oh, that make a difference” (utt. 3)) further positioning the teacher as an expert on the English language.
Sheree’s account as a justification for her non-inclusion helps to construct her position with respect to the community of practice (Potter & Wetherell, 2001). It is during the discussion from which this extract was taken that the sub-theme of skin colour is introduced by Sheree as an identifier that she found to contribute to her position on the edge of that particular community of practice (utt 17-23). While Sheree has used a declarative statement "(T)his is abo thing what this is about" she has softened that with an explanation, “Because of the colour I think” (utt. 17), including the hedge “I think”. The use of “I think” indicates a propositional explanation in her account for the lack of acceptance into the community of practice she experienced. She has tried to rationalize this situation by referring to her study of Native Title issues in a previously undertaken university course and suggesting that her skin colour, because it is dark, promotes a similar reaction from people as that she has learned of in the historical treatment of Aborigines in Australia; that is, a non-recognition of equality. In doing so, she has repositioned the incident into a broader discursive framework of race. This is further supported by the moral stance conveyed through the comment that the other teacher is “... a good person, but sometimes whatever underneath comes out” (utt.15) indicating that the fault lies not with the teacher herself, but is inherent in Australians as a result of historical events. In effect, Sheree is legitimizing acknowledgement of difference in skin colour as an obstruction to movement into the community of practice (van Dijk, 2001) based on the country’s past history.

Sheree’s statement “If it is I was something like you (points to Alyson), blending with them, they don’t feel that much of a difference but with my colour and all”(utt. 19) takes the issue of colour further by stating that teachers of a non-English speaking background who are white, will have less problems in mixing with colleagues than those who are not. Sheree has followed this with a verbalizing of a mental process that she has undergone while trying to become accepted into the community of practice through “I would sometimes think you know I wish I was white at least to camouflage myself for blend with these people” (utt.21). This is expressed as a personal direct reported thought (Holt, 1996) and
mental reaction to an individual situation as seen in the use of the personal pronouns “I” and “myself” and the use of present tense in her verb “wish”. It is clear that Sheree’s skin colour is something she has identified as affecting the other members of the community of practice in their acceptance of her into that community. In essence, Sheree is reporting a feeling that she has attributed to others. By using “they” she is attributing a feeling of difference through skin colour to her colleagues. Conversely, it is a change of skin colour for herself that she is “wishing” for so that she can, on first appearance, be accepted. Furthermore, Sheree has personalized actions such as blending and camouflaging herself indicating that she has recognised skin colour as a factor affecting her interaction with members and acceptance into the community of practice. Sheree has used “them”, “they”, “these people” (utts. 19, 21) to set herself apart from those not of “my colour” (utt. 21) and in so doing has emphasized the space or distance she found between herself and the other teachers and thus positioning herself on the edge of, or outside that community of teaching practice.

Susan has cemented the validity of Sheree’s comments through the use of the acknowledgement token “Yeah” (Schegloff, 1982; Wong, 2000) twice (utts. 18, 20) in this section of the extract denoting agreement with the sentiments being expressed. This could be interpreted as a reflection of her own experiences being verbalized through the account presented by Sheree.

**Summary**

While each of the sub-themes of skin colour and worldliness was introduced into this extract in the form of a small story that was embedded or linked to the topic of teachers introduced by Sheree in the first utterance there is not necessarily linearity between them. These stories were significant enough in the experiences of the tellers to warrant recounting; that is, they had tellability and were used to clarify the lack of being welcome that the teller experienced.

Direct reported speech (utts. 3 and 5), reported thought, reported feelings (utts. 1, 5 and 11) and attributed thoughts, speech and feelings (utts 1, 3, 9, 19, 24) have been used by the speakers as evidence to support the credibility of the stories being recounted. Acknowledgement tokens have been used by the recipients of the stories
to show agreement with the speaker (utts. 6, 18, and 20) and backchannelling cues used to show attention (utts. 2 and 22) given to the speaker as encouragement to continue telling the story in that way.

Through the telling of small stories, the speakers have described the extent of the engagement they experienced in their communities of teaching practice. They are representing their versions of reality through their accounts. In raising the sub-theme of skin colour in one small story, Sheree has been unable to imagine herself as a colleague of the other teachers in that particular community of practice. The words used in the related interaction indicate a positioning of Sheree by the other teacher on the edge of that community of teaching practice. In raising her desire to have a different skin colour, Sheree also has positioned herself on the edge of the community of practice. Sheree has therefore taken up the position she represents as given to her by the other teacher.

Through the small stories told by both Sheree and Rachel in the sub-theme of worldliness, their positioning was one of acceptance as members of those particular communities of teaching practice. These communities of practice had members who had travelled to or from other countries.

As indicated by Wenger (1998), quite clearly the positioning of the beginning/novice teachers with respect to their individual communities of teaching practice will be determined by the current members of that community. In the telling of the stories, the support for the storyteller by other members of the focus group shows that the sub-themes identified in these related experiences are not necessarily unique.

**Sub-theme: Appearance**

Two extracts were chosen for this section as they raised and reiterated the sub-theme of appearance which refers to physical characteristics, separate from skin colour, that the participants have accounted for as impacting their interaction with members of the community of teaching practice and therefore contributing to their positioning with respect to that community.
The first extract in this section, Extract two, was taken from the face-to-face focus group session with the participants which supported and elaborated on appearance as a factor that was raised in some of the interviews and diary entries from these participants. Extract two also introduces a minor sub-theme, accent. The second extract of this section, Extract three was taken from a phone call with Susan held after this focus group meeting. I had asked the participants to call or email me if they thought of anything they would like to add to the discussion. This interview was coded in Chapter 4 as IS (see Table 3). Each of these extracts will be interrogated in turn, again with a focus on the participants’ language in use.

**Extract two**

Before the focus group meeting began, the participants spent approximately forty-five minutes chatting together, making and renewing acquaintances. This development of a sense of comfort with each other was identified by Madriz (2000) as essential in the fostering of openness amongst the participants.

Extract two (Table 7) was taken from the beginning of the same face-to-face focus group meeting from which Extract one came. As explained under the previous sub-theme discussion, I used a very broad question phrased as a scenario to begin the discussion:

> The question that I wanted to throw out to you was if someone was to come from another planet, and see you at school and say “what are you? Who are you?” how do you feel you could explain that? (FFNESB).

I did not want to focus the discussion on a particular topic apart from the participants’ experiences in their communities of teaching practice. By using a broad based scenario, I felt that they could answer as they felt comfortable and take the discussion to wherever it would lead. This then allowed me to probe with more specific questions if needed based on the outcomes of the ensuing discussions between the participants.
Table 7.

Extract two taken from the face-to-face focus group

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>K</strong>: The question that I wanted to throw out to you was if someone was to come from another planet, and see you at school and say “what are you? Who are you?” how do you feel you could explain that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>RACHEL</strong>: somebody coming from another planet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>K</strong>: Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>KELLY</strong>: Are you trying to say if there is a differentiation between what we are and the rest of the others er staff?</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>K</strong>: It could be that. It could be that you feel that there’s a difference or it could be that you feel that there’s no difference and I just want to know why that is you know, if there is a difference or there isn’t a difference. What makes you feel like that? That’s all I’m looking for.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>SUSAN</strong>: mmmmmm. I guess I just feel like you know, my self. And of course I have you know, my appearance will be different to the majority of teachers because you know, Anglo-Saxon. But in my school if there are few different ethnic background teachers then of course it would make me feel ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>SHEREE</strong>: more comfortable, mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>SUSAN</strong>: more comfortable, and then I, we have um, you know, two two te, um two male teachers then one is from one is from I think is from Pakis ... Pakistan. And then I think he probably born here but because that is his you know his ancestors coming from, yeah and the other one is coming from ... that is science teacher and the other one is maths teacher and he has been teaching for 30 odd years and then I think he is like Greek descent yeah whatever so if you have that mixture of different like you know ethnic background yeah you know that would make me feel a bit comfortable.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>MICHELLE</strong>: Yeah. That’s what I find too. You know in school, in university there are many people from different country</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>SUSAN</strong>: mnmhm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><strong>MICHELLE</strong>: and lots Asian and male or females but once I was in prac it was a bit different. Most people Australian and female and (voice breaking and begins to cry) yeah at the top it was male. I could see been like preacher, I don’t know how to say</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td><strong>SHEREE</strong>: Principal.</td>
</tr>
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<td>13.</td>
<td><strong>MICHELLE</strong>: It’s religion. Yeah, but I just felt yeah a bit</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td><strong>SHEREE</strong>: Out of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td><strong>MICHELLE</strong>: Yeah. Because probably it was private school so I thought maybe public school it’s more mixture, students as well.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
16. **ALYSON**: No it’s not.
17. **MICHELLE**: No?

18. **ALYSON**: I work in a primary school and I think I am the only one with an accent in that.
19. **SHEREE**: That’s right.
20. **MICHELLE**: yeah

21. **ALYSON**: There is a Ger, a guy from Germany, he is quite nice but he came here as a little boy or so he speaks really Australian

22. **SUSAN**: Ahh
23. **ALYSON**: but he speaks German to me sometimes. And he is the only one, but the others are really all full Australian and for me it’s a bit … they try and like the deputy and this guy they really and some teachers really try and include you. (FFNESB)

The first part of Extract two (utts. 1-5) forms a clarifying segment where the participants tried to understand the point of the discussion. In utterances one, three and five, my position as focus group moderator has been established through providing the opening statement and the clarifications for Rachel and Kelly’s questions. In utterance 5, I tried to not lead them in any given direction but instead give the participants a starting point for their accounts so that their contributions would in fact steer the direction of the talk. I did this through the use of the modal “could” (utt. 5) and refraining from providing a definite response in the affirmative or negative to Kelly’s question in utterance 4. However, because I used the word “feel” (utts. 1, 5) this was interpreted literally as referring to feelings of the participants in the community of practice which subsequently became the topic around which the ensuing discussion flowed. It is essential to recognize that under CDA, no use of language is neutral or transparent (MacLure, 2003), and it always constructs a version of reality.

In utterance 4, Kelly has positioned the participants as a group through the use of the inclusive pronoun “we” as distinct from existing members of the community of practice who are identified as “the rest of the others”. In utterance 6 this cue was picked up by Susan who, through the use of a small story explained the cultural composition of her community of practice. In this small story, Susan has introduced the sub-theme of appearance and its effect on her feelings in that community of practice. Susan’s account of her appearance reflects the tellability of
the story of her physical features and shows how it is embedded in the topic of feelings through identifying a point of difference. A number of small stories were produced around this sub-theme of appearance and the topic of feelings and all were linked to Susan’s initial story. Stories were introduced by Michelle (utt. 9) who accounted for her positioning with respect to the community of teaching practice by comparing university and school populations, and Alyson (utt.18) who accounted for her experiences in a state primary school while introducing a minor sub-theme of speech as a differentiating element that affected interaction in the community of teaching practice.

In utterance 6, Susan has identified herself as an individual “like myself” in the first instance, but then expanded on that individuality in the next sentence. It is at this point that Susan introduces the sub-theme of appearance through the use of “my appearance” and notes that because she is Asian, she is different from “the majority of teachers because you know, Anglo-Saxon”. Immediately, Susan has identified her looks as distinguishing her from the other teachers, yet at this point she has not noted this as a negative point but as a statement of fact, particularly with the use of “And of course” to introduce her appearance. It is in the next sentence that she begins with “But” that the listeners of the story are alerted to a crisis point (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop, 2001) that is revealed as her lack of comfort (utt.8) introduced as a sub-topic of feelings. Susan explains that she would feel “more comfortable” (utt. 8) if some of the members of the community of teaching practice were also non-Anglo-Saxon. It could be inferred that this would mean then that she would not feel as if she stood out in looking different from the majority of her colleagues. Ending this story with “comfortable” reiterates the importance of ethnicity to Susan’s take-up position with respect to the community of teaching practice.

The phrase “more comfortable” was introduced into the story by Sheree (utt.7) and adopted by Susan (utt. 8). Through her involvement in the tellership of, or co-participation (Heritage, 1998) in, the story and the use of “mm” (utt.7) as a form of agreement, Sheree has positioned herself with Susan and reinforced the tellability of the story. Sheree has repeated this in the telling of Michelle’s story (utts. 12 and 14). The use of “mm” (utt. 7), “mmhm” (utt.10), “that’s right” (utt. 19) and “yeah” (utt.20)
denotes a prior knowledge or recognition of the divulged information so it is not a new consideration for the responder (Heritage, 1984) but a statement of fact.

Susan has used the lexicon “yeah” three times in the telling of this story as a turn-repair (Wong, 2000) identifiable as such in the fact that she continues in the telling of the story (Wong). In the first instance, “yeah” (utt. 8) is used to repair the statement that the teacher is from Pakistan. Susan repairs this statement by stating that his ancestors are from Pakistan. The second usage of “yeah” (utt. 8) reflects the use of the word “descent” (utt. 8) to more correctly account for the teacher’s Greek origin. The third time “yeah” (utt. 8) is used identifies that she has found the terminology she was looking for when using the filler “like you know” (utt. 8). In identifying Pakistan and Greece in this utterance as non-Anglo-Saxon countries, Susan has also selected countries from which the people, in her view, obviously differ in physical appearance from those of Anglo-Saxon descent.

This story accounts for the feeling of discomfort that Susan experienced in the community of practice. The use of the quantifier “a bit”, indicates that at the time of the account, Susan was not comfortable in that community of practice but by having more non-Anglo-Saxon teachers in that community, she would feel some degree of comfort or belonging (Wenger, 1998). In the telling of this small story, Susan has positioned herself, as a non-Anglo-Saxon and therefore powerless and on the edge of the community of practice whose members are predominantly Anglo-Saxon.

Susan’s feelings of discomfort were acknowledged by Michelle with the token “yeah” (utt. 9) as expected (Heritage, 1984) and understandable. In this utterance, Michelle uses the acknowledgement token to provide a small story of her own that presents further evidence to support Susan’s comments. Michelle’s story embeds the sub-theme physical appearance, topic feelings and sub-topic of discomfort. The declarative statement “That’s what I find too” (utt. 9) is used as a continuer as she takes on the role of teller. Utterance 11 introduces a discourse of gender and religion (Gee, 1999) so that the comparison becomes one of ethnicity, gender, and religion. Her story shows an accounted difference from a situation of what, for her, was a comfortable gender mix to one in which a religious male occupies a dominant role as principal in a mainly female staff. The members of Michelle’s community of practice were mainly female and Australian (utt. 11). As
Michelle is female, the inference lies in the membership of the community of practice being “most(ly) ... Australian” (utt.11) which led her to feel “out of place” (utt. 14). This reported feeling of discomfort provided by Sheree in co-participating (Heritage, 1998) or joining the tellership of the story (utt.14) reflects a shared feeling particularly as Michelle acknowledged the contribution with “yeah” (utt. 15). The intensity of the discomfort felt by Michelle, put into words through her reported feeling of being “out of place”, is evident by the display of emotion (crying) that was sparked through the telling of her small story (utt.11).

Through telling stories based on the sub-theme of appearance and an accounting for feelings of discomfort and resultant powerlessness, Michelle and Susan have positioned themselves at the edges of their communities of practice. Michelle has taken a moral stance on her positioning as being an outcome of membership of a community of practice in a private school environment (“Because probably it was private school so I thought maybe public school it’s more mixture, students as well”(utt. 15)). She has inferred through the use of reported thought (“so I thought”) that the school has specifically selected a predominantly Anglo-Saxon staff whereas a state school would have a broader ethnic mix of staff and students and may be more welcoming of a non-Anglo-Saxon. Alyson refutes this line of thinking with the dispreferred turn (Pomerantz, 1984): “No it’s not” (utt. 16) and proceeds to introduce a minor sub-theme (accent) through the telling of her small story (utt. 18). Michelle’s response (“No?” (utt.17)) is taken up as an invitation to Alyson to begin to tell her story that challenges Michelle’s stance and self-positioning in her community of teaching practice. In the telling of her story, Alyson does identify that some members of the community of practice, but more particularly the one who is German, do “try and include you” (utt. 23) and she qualifies even this version of inclusion with “but” and “and” (utt. 23). The power of acceptance into the community of practice lies with the old-timers (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Two of the members of the community of practice have specifically been identified (“German guy” and “deputy principal”) and a non-specific identification of others (“some teachers”) as trying to include Alyson in the community of practice. Alyson is experiencing discomfort in this community of practice as reflected in “and for me it’s a bit ... they try” (utt.23) and attributed this to her being not a “full
Australian” and therefore different from all but one member (who she believes could pass as an Australian (utt.21)) of the community of practice.

The impact of physical features on the inclusion of these teachers in their communities of teaching practice has been exemplified through the specific identification of non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds (Pakistan, Greece, and Asia) and the feelings of discomfort this difference generates for these particular participants. Extract three (Table 8) is another story from Susan that is linked to the sub-theme of appearance and the topic of feelings while introducing yet another topic, that impinges on acceptance into the community of teaching practice: that of the relevance of teaching areas. This story provides a rationalization or moral stance (Ochs & Capps, 2001) for her positioning at the edges of her community of teaching practice. This extract exemplifies the elements of imagination and alignment that Wenger (1998) attributes to belonging to a community of practice through expectations of interaction, support and learning from established members of the community of practice.

Table 8.

Extract three taken from an interview with Susan

| You know, Kerryn, I joined teaching and thought that when I was in a school I would make new friends but the people are in their own groups and don’t talk to me. I feel excluded. The new Japanese teacher started, she is an Aussie, and they are going around saying come join us, can we help you with anything. Things like that. For me they did nothing. I had to work everything out. Still people don’t ask if I need help. Maybe it’s because they see I am different. Also people don’t value Chinese as a subject. They probably see oh she teaches Chinese so I am not important. They don’t know that I teach accounting and junior business (IS) |
Extract three in itself is a small story related by Susan that expands further on the sub-theme of appearance and supports her accounted lack of comfort in the community of practice. In Extract three, Susan is contrasting what she imagined (Wenger, 1998) belonging to a community of teaching practice would be like with her accounted reality of being in that particular community. Through the use of reported thought (Holt, 1996) (“... (I) thought that when I was in a school I would make new friends”) Susan has expressed an expectation that members of the community of practice would be friendly, welcoming and willing to offer assistance to her as a novice teacher and new to this community of practice. This imagined welcome was validated when she saw the reception of a teacher of Japanese who joined the staff after she did. It is the accounted difference in the two accounts of welcoming and subsequent acceptance of new teachers into the community of practice that has made this story tellable. Susan has used direct reported speech (Holt, 1996) and a contrast pair to account for the welcoming of the new person into the community and to authenticate the events (Holt, 1996, 2000): “they are going around saying come join us, can we help you with anything. Things like that. For me they did nothing.” Susan attributes the new teacher’s immediate acceptance into the community of practice to the fact that the new member is an Australian, and, more importantly, looks like (Susan’s version of) an Australian. This difference in appearance is her suggested reason (through the use of “maybe”) for her accounted positioning on the fringe of the community. She has openly used the word “different” and linked this to her appearance in “Maybe it’s because they see I am different”. Her self-positioning at the periphery is openly referred to. This is evident in “...but the people are in their own groups and don’t talk to me”. The use of the conjunction “but” signals, (Extract two, utt. 6), that the point of the story is about to be divulged through the accounted difference between imagined and experienced events. The existing members of the community of practice are referred to here as “the people”, a generic term to encompass the members, and indicating no sense of her own membership of the community. Susan has used “their own groups” to indicate cliques in the
community. Susan’s self-positioning with respect to the community of teaching practice is further indicated in the fact that she accounts for no interaction with other members (“…(they) don’t talk to me”) leading to her reported feeling of exclusion. The trajectory of the story of the new teacher supports the non-acceptance into the community due to her different appearance but takes the reported feelings of discomfort, used in Extract two, to the higher level of exclusion. Use of the word “exclusion” is very powerful as it denotes a very strong emotional and physical experience. Her entire experience has been effectively expressed in that one sentence “I feel excluded.” As a new member of the community of practice, Susan expected or imagined support and assistance from those established members or old-timers (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in order to develop in her role as a teacher. In her account, Susan has indicated that while this support was not there for her when she first joined the staff (“For me they did nothing. I had to work everything out”), it is still not evident after more than one year (“Still people don’t ask if I need help”) and further impacts negatively her sense of belonging to that community of practice.

Another explanation for Susan’s accounted non-acceptance into the community has been provided through the introduction of the attributed impressions of others towards her work. Susan attributes thoughts and impressions of her teaching areas to others to account for her positioning in that community. Here she has attributed the impression of the teaching of “Chinese as a subject” being not as highly regarded as the teaching of “accounting and junior business” to her colleagues. Susan has clearly stated this in “Also people don’t value Chinese as a subject”. While this is a statement of judgement attributed to others it is her support for her argument that because she is seen as a teacher of Chinese she therefore is not accepted into the community of practice. Susan has intimated that if her colleagues knew that she taught what she attributes that they consider more important subjects (junior business and accounting) then she would be welcomed. Through her story, her account reflects that it is not so much a point of fact that Languages Other Than English are not highly regarded by her colleagues as seen in the acceptance of the new teacher of
Japanese, but that Chinese is not considered an important subject. By stating the nationality of the new teacher of Japanese and the fact that people can see that Susan is “different” she is also drawing a parallel with the earlier extract in which the physical appearance of the newcomer may affect acceptance into that community of practice.

**Summary**

These beginning/novice teachers have reasoned that their non-inclusion, identified in these extracts through the topic of feelings and sub-topic of discomfort, is linked to their physical features that mark them as different from the majority of members of their communities of teaching practice. These extracts have involved stories used by the tellers to present their versions of reality. The tellers of the stories have used direct reported speech, attributed thoughts and attributed feelings to explain the points they have raised. It is their imagined acceptance as legitimate peripheral participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991) of the community of practice creating the alignment (Wenger, 1998) with the teaching profession that has been challenged. Through their accounts the participants are self-positioned at the periphery, as powerless to participate more fully in their communities of teaching practice due to their physical appearance.

**Sub-theme: conversational participation**

Engagement involves the development of identity that comes about through experiences and interactions with other members of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The opportunity to learn from other members through the negotiation of meaning allowing established and new ideas to merge or complement each other is provided through engagement (Wenger, 2004) particularly with respect to that knowledge which is tacit and which will develop practice. Interaction through conversation between members of a community of practice therefore is essential for learning (Wenger, 1998) and social skills then become an important element in these interactions. Extracts four and five provide accounts of interactions in informal situations between the beginning/novice teachers and other members of their communities of teaching practice. These extracts explore the self, or reflexive positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) of the beginning/novice teachers in their communities of practice.
Extract four (Table 9) has been selected as an account of interactions between the beginning/novice NESB teachers and members of their communities of teaching practice. The challenge with this extract lies in the fact that it is from the virtual focus group conducted through an online chat room (FVNESB). Therefore, the responses of the participants are not necessarily free flowing as they would be in a “normal” conversation. Secondly, as the respondents continue in their virtual conversation, the typing speed of the speaker or the length of the response will dictate the position of that response in the transcript. The typing mistakes, spelling, grammatical errors and messaging language have not been amended (e.g. ye = yes, u = you, ur = you are or your/you’re). When saving chat room data, the identifying addresses (email addresses) of the participants in the room are recorded. I have replaced these with the pseudonyms used in the study. Each time the “speaker” presses “Enter” on the keyboard or screen to place the words into the conversation, the entry is recorded as: “the selected user name says”, for example, Kerryn says. If no identifying user name has been selected, the email address is recorded followed by “says” such as in Rachela@hotmail says.

The extract begins immediately following the entry of Rachel into the chat room. Prior to entering the chat room, the conversation had consisted of general chatting about the mechanics involved in using chat room “talk” and introducing Michelle, David and Ian to each other. On Rachel’s joining the chat room, everyone greeted her arrival and then she asked if she should “say” something.
Table 9.

Extract four taken from a virtual focus group meeting

1. Kerryn says:
Perhaps, how did you feel when you were dealing with the teachers?
2. Rachela@hotmail says:
I tried to be patient. I asked them what they think about what I said or what I did that could cause misunderstanding.
3. Michelle says:
i preferred to be with LOTE teachers as they from overseas, I could share feeling with them.
4. Michelle says:
I mean I wanted to be good for all the teachers but just was easier for me, perherps.
5. Kerryn says:
what do you mean, good for all the teachers?
6. Rachela@hotmail says:
Not all my prac teachers could understand my problems. Only one who had been living in philipines, she could understand.
7. Michelle says:
I think i wanted to be like Aus when I am with them. so that they dont feel uneasy with me.
8. Kerryn says:
what made you think they were uneasy with you?
9. Kerryn says:
Ian, did you have any of these sort of feelings?
10. Michelle says: when they stopped to talk to me. it was usual.
11. Michelle says: language barrier and behaviour/expectations are different I guess.
12. Kerryn says:
stopped talking to you? where, in conversation or working relationship?
13. Rachela@hotmail says:
In my experience, maybe they stoped talking to me in the same way that they talked with other australian teachers.
14. Michelle says:
particularly when tea time with teachers.
15. Michelle says:
yes, Rachel, that's right.
16. Rachela@hotmail says:
It felf that they stoped talking with me because they thought I would not understand what they would said.
17. Michelle says:
i found that i don't share many interests such as TV prog, shopping, going out etc.
18. Rachela@hotmail says:
I donot like hearing gossips
19. Ian says:
No
When I replied to Rachel, I began with “perhaps” (utt.1). This is a non-definitive response providing the option for “speaking” at this point for Rachel to make. I did not want to make her feel pressured to join in the conversation. The pronoun “you” has also been used in utterance 1 and this could have been interpreted by Rachel as a question directed specifically at her.

In response to my question regarding dealings or interactions with teachers in the community of practice, Rachel has responded with a statement that indicated that she recognised that misunderstandings could arise during communications in which she was involved (utt. 2). Through the use of indirect reported speech (Holt, 1996),
Rachel has positioned herself as the one responsible for any misunderstanding. In this utterance, Rachel has asked the members of the community of practice to report their thoughts (“...what they think about what I said or what I did” (Holt)) as a means of seeking clarification or approval for her communication. Rachel is accounting for her own acceptance of the position of responsibility for through the use of the pronoun “I” which she has used four times in one utterance – three of these times were in the one sentence (utt. 2). The words used by Rachel in utterance 2, interactively position the established members of the community of practice as those who must approve of her actions (“what I did”) and interactions (“what I said”). In doing this, she has actually provided the members of the community of practice with the power to accept or reject her interactional turns and reinforce her allocation of responsibility for misunderstanding and thus affect her sense of belonging and identity in that community.

I had used the word “feel” in the question to which Rachel was responding, and she takes up this positioning in her opening statement with her account of her reported feelings – patience. This statement is used as a signal that she was not totally comfortable in her interactions with the members of the community of practice and because she has attributed misunderstandings to herself she is the one in the interaction who must remain patient. Rachel has reiterated this in utterance six through accepting responsibility for misunderstandings as “...my problems”. Utterances two and six show Rachel taking up the position as the cause of any communicative misunderstandings. This same positioning is adopted by Michelle in utterances four and seven. In these utterances Michelle has used reported thought (Holt, 1996) (“I think i wanted...” (utt.7)) to explain the different levels of comfort she felt with the teachers in her community of practice. With the LOTE teachers she felt more comfortable (utts. 3 and 4) and accepted. Michelle has attributed feelings (“...so that they don’t feel uneasy with me”) to the Australian teachers in her community of practice. She has attributed a feeling of unease in informal interactions to the established members of the community of practice. Evidence used to support this attributed feeling was in the cessation of informal conversation (utts. 10, 14) with her. Michelle and Rachel have supported
each other in these attributed feelings or attitudinal changes particularly in utterances 13 and 15.

Utterances 13, 14 and 15 mark a turning point in the discussion. At this point, the speakers, Michelle and Rachel attribute feelings of unease or attitudinal approach to the actions of other members of the community of practice. This was emphatically agreed to, and ended in utterance 15 through the use of acknowledgements (Gardner, 2001) “yes” and “that’s right” by Michelle.

A distinction between herself and the other members of her community of practice appears when Rachel used “other australian teachers” (utt. 13). In this utterance, Rachel identifies that the “way” in which her colleagues interact with her differs from the way in which they interact with each other and could be inferring that this led to an uncomfortable situation for Rachel. This follows Michelle’s identification of the unease her colleagues felt with her (utt. 10). Rachel has used a similar verbal phrase (“they stoped talking with me” (utt.13)) as Michelle used (“they stopped to talk to me” (utt.11)) which shows support for Michelle’s experience.

Utterance 16 introduces a subtle change in the discussion topic from identifying a situation that resulted in discomfort for these teachers to providing excuses or reasons for that situation (utterances 16, 17 and 18). This topic change could be in response to the verbal shrug produced in utterance 11 by Michelle’s suggestions as to why it was “usual” for people to stop talking to her: language and behavioural or expectational differences are suggested as reasons for the other members of the community of practice to stop interacting with her (utt.11). Rachel uses attributed reported thought of language issues “they thought I would not understand” (utt. 16)) as the reason for the breakdown in conversational interaction by the established members of the community of practice supporting Michelle’s comment in utterance 11. In utterance 18 she provides an excuse for her non-participation (“I donot like hearing gossips”). This is expanded further in utterance 32 where Rachel admits to “not understand(ing) what they say” and the difficulty she found in engaging with her colleagues. This provides some credence to the attributed thoughts she stated earlier as reasons for not
being involved in the conversational interactions in her community of practice (utt.16). Michelle has also provided excuses for her non-interaction in utterance 17 citing a lack of joint interests. Utterances 16-18 reflexively position Rachel and Michel outside informal conversational interactions that are a part of membership in a community of practice through their acceptance of language difficulties and lack of shared interests as justification for non-inclusion in these interactions.

Ian joined the topic of discussion (utt. 19) in response to my question to him (utt. 9) regarding his experiences. It is not clear in utterance 20 if he is expanding on utterance 19 or commenting on the experiences of Michelle and Rachel. In either case because he has not shared the same experiences in conversational interactions as the two women, he has triggered a question from Rachel regarding his “secret” (utt. 21) to interacting with members of the community of practice. This is of importance to Rachel as seen in her request (utt. 23) for further details of the secret. Rachel’s question has changed the topic of discussion to methods of joining in interaction.

Ian’s sequence of responses (utts. 24, 25, 27, 29 & 30) is used to explain his method (showing interest) of interacting with members of the community of practice. He has used the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) “always” (utt. 24) and “most of the time” (utt. 29) when explaining his frequency of participation in conversations. The use of “always” acts as a “Maximum Case proportional measure” (Pomerantz, 1986, p. 223) indicating that he participates in conversations on a regular basis as opposed to an irregular basis. The downgrading of “always” to “most” which is a lesser proportion than “always”, occurred when I asked him if he actually participated (utt.26) in the conversations and his defence to the challenge was to downgrade the proportion (Pomerantz, 1986). In utterance 30, Ian has pre-empted my question (utt. 31). This declarative statement (utt. 30) places the onus of participation in conversations between members of the community of practice on the individual members if they do not want to be left out of the interaction. He has done this through the use of you as a pronoun to indicate any member of the community of practice (“if u dont u will be left out” (utt. 30)). The newsworthiness of Ian’s contribution to the discussion is in utterance 34 where “Ah” is used as a newsmarker (Gardner, 2001). It is here that Ian has indicated through his account that the power for involvement in interaction lies in the newcomer to the community of practice displaying interest and actively participating in conversation. Both Ian and
Michelle felt welcomed to participate (utts. 34, 35 & 36) but from Ian’s account the onus was on them to participate and effect transition into the community of practice. Therefore, when taken with utterance 36, the possible interpretation is that non-participation in the conversation resulted in the other members of the community of practice not talking to the newcomer and that has been taken up as a positioning by that newcomer at the edge of that community.

Michelle and Rachel have identified differences in interactions between the established members of the community of practice and themselves particularly when comparing these interactions with those they observed between Australian teachers (utts. 7, 14, 15, & 16). That Michelle and Rachel both felt more comfortable interacting with members who had traveled to or came from different countries (utts. 3, 4 & 6) reflects sentiments in accounts in Extract two where understanding or empathy with the NESB beginning/novice teachers has been attributed to these established members of the community of practice. This is particularly evident in utterances three, four and seven in Extract four. Utterance 11 provides a suggested reason for the lack of interaction between Michelle and the Australian members of the community of practice. Through the use of “I guess”, Michelle is attributing a justification (“language barrier and behaviour/expectations”) for her experienced actions to these members. The use of “I guess”, similarly to “I dunno” (Potter, 2004), could be seen as protecting Michelle’s stake in her own personableness by suggesting that the reasons she was not included in the interaction were not personal.

Wenger (1998) has identified the importance of knowing from which member of the community of practice one should seek help and the equally important way of approaching members of the community in order for members to learn and improve practice. It is evident from this extract that it is the “secret” way of interacting that poses issues for these beginning/novice teachers and Michelle and Rachel have accounted for difficulty as being based in language or cultural behaviour (utts.11 & 32). On the other hand, Justine, in Extract five (Table 10), found the informal interactions to be greatly beneficial in developing practice.
Table 10.

Extract five taken from an interview with Justine

1. **KERRYN SAYS:** And what about with the staff? Did you have a lot of interaction with the staff? With the teachers?
2. **J:** Yeah, we having a lunchtime or morning tea sometimes we will sit down and then we will talk about some of, we will talk about how we are teaching things yeah, talking about some students behaviour or something where they have some other strategies I can use, or … yeah, so we were sharing ideas.
3. **KERRYN SAYS:** That’s good.
4. **J:** So sometimes we talk about the normal daily conversation like how’s the husband, yeah …
5. **KERRYN SAYS:** So did you think, did you feel that they treated you as an equal?
6. **J:** Yes. (IJ)

In her small story (Bamberg, 2004) Justine used the inclusive pronoun “we” denoting active involvement in the interactions. “Yeah” has been used twice in utterance two (Extract five) as a self-initiated repair (Wong, 2000) indicated by a correction of the prior statement (“things” to “students behaviour” and “or … ” to we were sharing ideas”). The first use of “Yeah” in utterance two is as an affirmative response to the interrogative used in utterance one. From here she uses a small story of her interaction with the members of the community of practice as evidence to substantiate her response. The final use of “yeah” (utt. 4) could be interpreted as assertion that her prior statement was correct or as a self-initiated repair for which she could not find the correction, possibly “small talk”.

The transference of tacit information occurs informally in a community of practice through the sharing of experiences (Wenger, 1998). Justine has set the scene for her small story that depicts the sharing of teaching and behaviour management strategies along with small talk by locating the interactions in informal settings at “lunchtime or morning tea” (utt. 2). This provides good evidence that Justine benefited from the experiences of the more established members of her community of teaching practice. She indicates learning from these members valuable strategies to help her with her development as a teacher. It is the experiences of these teachers in classrooms over the years and indeed with specific students that makes up some of the tacit information of the teaching profession.
During these interactions ideas were shared (utt.2). The use of “sharing” (utt.2) indicates an interaction in which more than one person is actively participating in the sharing. Furthermore, the inclusive pronoun “we” has been used six times in this extract emphasizing Justine’s feeling of inclusion in the informal interactions being held. Utterance four makes reference to “talk about the normal daily conversation like how’s the husband”. These casual conversational topics of which she felt a part strengthened her feeling of inclusion, by not only being there during the conversations but through the use of “we” to denote her inclusion. This differs from Rachel and Michelle’s experiences above where they found people stopped talking to them or talking to them in the same way as they would to other members of the community of practice. This sense of inclusion is supported finally in her positive assertion that she was considered an equal (utt.6) in that community of teaching practice.

Summary

Ian, Michelle and Justine all felt welcomed into the interactions with members of their communities of practice yet only Ian and Justine, in the data corpus, accounted for positive interactions. Ian drove taxi cabs (interview data) during his Queensland university studies and Justine attended three years of high school in Queensland (interview data). These life experiences may have contributed to their understanding of development of rapport and knowledge of approach to Australian members of their communities of teaching practice facilitating a level of ease in social interactions not experienced by Michelle and Rachel who sought comfort in interacting only with those members who had overseas travel experiences. Nonetheless, the importance of social interactions in providing a conduit for the transference of tacit knowledge between members of the community of practice remains vital in developing practice and member identity within that community of practice. The willingness and ease of participating in interactions can be seen to provide the beginning/novice teachers with the power to contribute to the community of practice and engage in the learning and development of practice. The taking up of positions by the beginning/novice teachers, through discomfort or unease, outside the interactions, places the power of involvement or engagement in the community of teaching practice, with other members.
Sub-theme: Worldliness

As discussed earlier in this chapter, overlap across the extracts chosen to best illustrate the sub-themes is evident. Two extracts from the diaries of Michelle and Rachel have been chosen to demonstrate the sub-theme of Worldliness. That is, the impact of having had travel experience to other countries or having migrated from one country to another. The analysis of these extracts will draw upon the previously presented extracts where Worldliness has also appeared. The benefit of this approach lies in the fact that this was clearly a topic that was important to the participants and therefore substantiates its tellability and selection as a sub-theme in its own right.

Extract six (Table 11) has been taken from Michelle’s diary of her accounted experiences in her community of teaching practice as a beginning teacher.

Table 11.
Extract six taken from the Michelle’s electronic diary

The French and Taiwanese (Chinese) teachers were really kind to talk to me ... I think it was because we share similar experience to be a teacher as ESL. When they saw me, they always cared me. I assumed that they might have had similar difficulty or uncertainty as I had so that they were open to listen to my stories as an intern. Additionally, it is often easier to talk to them as they speak English not very fast, not much slang. But I am sure that the important point is that I could feel at home with them.

With my supervising teacher, who is Japanese, I was being like in Japan. In Japanese culture that values hierarchical order, I should not argue with my supervising teacher nor say something against his opinion, as he is much higher than my position. I was there to learn from him, and preferably help him. Therefore, I tried to listen to him, and tried to figure out what he wanted me to do according to his words given to me. I avoid asking many questions as I thought it wastes his time. As I live in Australia for more than 3 years and appreciate Australian/ western culture, I felt the relationship was not natural at all but, anyway, I behaved in ways that I believe considered as polite in Japan. I guess my supervising teacher also felt that way. I mean, he may be different if he was with intern who is not from Japan. (DM)
In this extract, Michelle discusses her experiences involving members of her community of teaching practice who have come, as she has, from other countries. These teachers have been identified, not by name, but as natives of their countries of origin, “The French and Taiwanese (Chinese) teachers ... Japanese”. In using “French, Taiwanese and Japanese” as identifiers, Michelle has effectively distinguished these teachers from other members of the community of practice. This is an important distinction for Michelle for the purpose of her stories. Two separate stories are being told in this extract, one involving the French and Taiwanese teachers, and one involving the Japanese teacher.

In the first small story that Michelle relates, the relationship with the two identified colleagues was for her, important enough to make it tellable. It could be inferred from this that this relationship was one that was different enough from those that she had with other members of that community of practice or indeed with members of other communities of practice to make it stand out in her experiences. The use of the phrase “were really kind to talk to me” indicates surprise and appreciation of this gesture of inclusion in the community. In particular it is the use of the adjective “really” that reinforces this conclusion of appreciation and the use of “to me” supports the surprise at being included in any interaction. Michelle explains her rationalization and justification of the engagement with these members of the community of practice in

“I think it was because we share similar experience to be a teacher as ESL.” Through this justification, Michelle has suggested that it is because the three teachers have English as a second language that she has been accepted by the French and Taiwanese teachers rather than the fact that they are all teachers. It is the qualifier “as ESL” that provides this distinction. She supports this further with her cultural assumption “that they might have had similar difficulty or uncertainty as I had”. It is significant that Michelle felt she had to justify her acceptance by these teachers into that community of teaching practice because it further implies that this was not a situation that was familiar to her.

In Extract two the topic of comfort or discomfort in the community of practice was raised. This topic appears in Michelle’s first story also in the form of her reported feeling of being “at home with them.” The word “home” itself could be
interpreted to raise connotations of comfort. This sense of comfort Michelle experienced here was stressed as being very important to her in her use of “I am sure that the important point is…” Michelle has also introduced the attributed emotion of caring in “When they saw me, they always cared me” which helped in establishing her feeling of comfort in their presence. Adding to this sense of comfort is the ease of interaction with the French and Taiwanese teachers experienced by Michelle because “it is often easier to talk to them as they speak English not very fast, not much slang.” This statement also assists in providing the comfort Michelle reportedly experienced in that particular community of practice. In this small story, the importance of comfort in that community of teaching practice has been demonstrated through the care shown by, and ease of communication with, the teachers from other countries. This comfort has been attributed to the worldliness of these teachers and their consequent attributed understanding of another teacher from overseas. It is this shared uniqueness that has led Michelle to position herself with these colleagues as a member of that particular community of teaching practice.

Extracts two and four identified the importance of the worldliness of members of the community of practice in order for the NESB beginning/novice teachers to feel comfortable and able to engage in the community. In the first small story of Extract six, this importance has been reiterated. The second small story of this extract however, provides an alternative perspective on working with colleagues from other countries and from whom this group of participants has found acceptance into their communities of practice.

In the second small story, Michelle has identified the colleague of the story as Japanese rather than a non-specific member of the community of practice. This distinction carries importance in that a discourse of culture is introduced into the story through her explanation of her interactions with him:

I was being like in Japan. In Japanese culture that values hierarchical order, I should not argue with my supervising teacher nor say something against his opinion, as he is much higher than my position. I was there to learn from him, and preferably help him …
avoid asking many questions as I thought it wastes his time.

From her own Japanese background, Michelle has found herself acting towards this teacher in an Australian context in the same way she would had she been in Japan. This does not mean that he has not accepted her as a member of the community of practice but in fact shows her flexibility in being able to adapt to suit the attributed expectations she believes he has of her in that community. Two of the functions of the community of practice as discussed in Chapter 3 relate to the transmission of knowledge for the professional development of members of that community and the development of individual member’s professional identities. Michelle has positioned herself through a discourse of hierarchy at a much lower level in the community of practice than this particular teacher – he is much higher than my position. In doing so and as part of Japanese culture Michelle has minimized any interaction with this member of the community and made it more difficult for herself to access the tacit knowledge needed to develop as a teacher. She further demonstrates this through not asking questions and trying to figure out what he wanted me to do. There is no indication of any level of comfort with her interactions with this member of the community as there had been with the two in the earlier small story. All of her actions were based on an attribute attitude of Japanese cultural expectations that she believed her colleague had. Michelle has used her reported thoughts (I thought) in justifying her actions. Reported feelings have been used in this small story, I felt the relationship was not natural at all. This is the first indication that Michelle was not comfortable in this interaction but in fact unnatural. The use of “but” as a cause and effect conjunction (Butt et al., 2001) immediately after this reported feeling alerts the reader to the coming of the cause of this feeling of unnaturalness. This cause was identified in her reported behaviour: I behaved in ways that I believe considered as polite in Japan. Michelle then justifies her reported behaviour as a means of satisfying an attributed expectation or feeling of her colleague. It is at this point where Michelle has turned from being sure of the correctness of her approach to this colleague to beginning to question her actions. This comes from the use of the word “guess” in I guess my
The supervising teacher also felt that way denoting uncertainty and the elaboration I mean, he may be different if he was with intern who is not from Japan. It is as if Michelle has drawn on her cultural background because she believes this is the expectation of her Japanese colleague yet acknowledges that the situation would possibly be different for a beginning teacher who was not Japanese.

The worldliness, or overseas travel experiences, of the colleague teachers in the small stories has impacted on the interaction Michelle explains in her account of her experiences in this particular community. It is in fact Michelle’s own worldliness that provides the differences in the interactions accounted for. Throughout this extract Michelle has positioned herself as a participant of this particular community of teaching practice. Her level of comfort with the French and Taiwanese teachers has allowed her to interact and promoted a sense of acceptance and therefore she has been able to learn from them. Michelle’s cultural approach to her Japanese colleague has self-positioned her as a legitimate peripheral participant of the community of teaching practice.

Further to the discussion on Worldliness, the following extract (Table 12) taken from Rachel’s diary supports the importance for these beginning/novice teachers to have colleagues with overseas experiences in their communities of teaching practice.

Table 12.

Extract seven taken from Rachel’s electronic diary

| (Teacher name) had been living in The Philippines for a year. She said that because she had been in living in the Philippines, she understand how it likes to be a foreigner and she said that she likes Asians. I shared about where I come from and how I come to Australia with her … She really understands my problems and gives me a go. I find a great encouragement from her confidence in me. Indeed, her confidence has been a great encouragement to overcome my obstacles. (DR) |

Rachel has used a small story to talk about one of her colleagues in her community of teaching practice. The indirect reported speech of the colleague (She said … ) has been used twice in the second sentence of the account to provide
authenticity to the story of understanding. The first part of this story sees the colleague positioning Rachel as both a foreigner and an Asian and thus distinct from herself. There is the transmission of empathy in the words *she understand how it likes to be a foreigner* drawing a parallel to her own time living in The Philippines where she herself would have been classed as a “foreigner”. The use of “understand” denotes this empathy yet at the same time this could be interpreted as a softening of the positioning of Rachel as a foreigner. Similarly the use of *she likes Asians* also indicates that Rachel is being positioned as different from the other teacher. The linking of the two clauses with the conjunction “and” creates a sense of affinity with Rachel along with a softening of that positioning as the Asian foreigner through the use of “understanding” and “likes”.

The story continues with Rachel’s sharing of her background. The use of the word “shared” denotes familiarity or a sense of comfort in her interaction with the other teacher. This could have flowed from the colleague’s apparent acceptance of Rachel.

“Understands” has been used with reference to the colleague in the story again, this time in relation to undisclosed “problems” that Rachel has. Twice the teacher is stated as having confidence in Rachel. It can be interpreted through the use of “confidence” that the established member of the community of practice has accepted Rachel into the community and is assisting in her development in the profession.

An Australian colloquialism “gives me a go” has been used by Rachel to explain the fairness of the colleague teacher in providing Rachel an opportunity to demonstrate what she can do as a member of that particular teaching practice. The use of a colloquialism could indicate that Rachel is comfortable in using Australian expressions appropriately and perhaps is not as much of a ‘foreigner’ as she has positioned herself.

Rachel’s story typifies the feeling of comfort and acceptance into the various communities of teaching practice that these beginning/novice teachers have when working with others who have been or come from overseas.
Summary

Wenger (1998) has stated that engagement in the community of practice is reliant on the interactions between members of that community and membership of the community of practice is determined by the established members of that community. From the earlier extracts and these two extracts, the beginning/novice teachers of a non-English speaking background feel that they are accepted into their communities of teaching practice by those who have had overseas experiences. This affinity with teachers possessing this worldliness results in feelings of comfort and confidence in their roles and interactions in their communities of practice and provides them with the opportunities to develop and grow in their professional spheres.

Engagement requires new and established members of the community practice to know which members to approach for advice and how to approach those members (Wenger, 1998). In Extract six Michelle has reflexively positioned (Davies & Harré, 1990) herself as lower in a cultural hierarchy than the Japanese teacher in her community of teaching practice. However, in her small story involving the other two teachers, she feels much more comfortable in asking them for advice. Between these two small stories, Michelle has identified that she must approach the teachers in each story in a different way and has also recognized which ones she can more comfortably approach for advice.

Sub-theme: Acceptance

Belonging to a community of practice, as discussed in Chapter 3, involves the dimensions of engagement, imagination and alignment (Wenger, 1998). Imagination entails the sense of knowing, or imagining, that others in the same role do the same type of work in a similar way (Wenger, 1998). This sets up the personal expectations of a particular role for the person entering that job. In my research, imagination becomes the expectations of the beginning or novice teacher of the teaching profession and specifically the role of the teacher. Imagination requires the social interactions with others in the community of practice to develop the individual’s notion of the work role (Wenger, 1998). The level of interaction between established members, or old-timers, of the community of practice and the newcomer may be a way that a newcomer can determine his or her acceptance into that community.
particularly as acceptance of a newcomer into the community of practice is determined by its members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This sub-theme extract illustrates the different levels of imagination that may exist between NESB and Australian beginning/novice teachers.

Extract eight (Table 13) was taken from one-third of the way into the focus group meeting and follows a discussion in which Kelly was asking Sheree if she were to be in a staff room in Sri Lanka if people would accept her and interact with her because of her colour and accent. Sheree had responded that Kelly looked similar to others in Sri Lanka which was multicultural so colour would not be an impediment to interaction. However as Kelly has an accent that would be different from everyone else’s in that Sri Lankan staff room, she would probably find that some people would interact with her and some would not.

**Table 13.**

**Extract eight taken from the face-to-face focus group meeting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utterance</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Ke:</td>
<td>And that’s the point I really wanted to make. It’s just it is easier if we as people that we know we come from a different environment and we know that we have to go a few deeper steps in order to be accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Ke:</td>
<td>It’s not only more steps, it’s deeper, where we have to ponder more, we have to think more, we need to work harder. You know, that is the expectation that you probably, we should always have when you go to another country. It’s no different to any person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.A:</td>
<td>yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Ke:</td>
<td>that goes to any country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.A:</td>
<td>no, it’s everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.Ke:</td>
<td>you gonna have to face more challenges, you know.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“And” has been used by Kelly to introduce utterance one. She has used this discourse marker to bracket her upcoming statement with a previous topic (Schiffrin, 1987). The completion of this sentence with “that’s the point I really wanted to make” (utt. 1) develops the statement into a newsmarker (Gardner, 2001) or an indicator to the listener that new information to explain this “point” is forthcoming. The next sentence in this utterance contains the inclusive pronoun “we”. “We” has been used five times in utterance one. By using this inclusive pronoun,
Kelly is grouping the NESB participants together as “people ... (who) come from a different environment”. Using “different” distinguishes this particular group of people from others implied as the referents – in this case, teachers from Australia. Kelly has positioned the participants as a group separate from the Australian teachers. The point that Kelly is clarifying is worded with declarative statements that indicate a statement of fact. This is evident from the use of “we know” twice in the utterance and in fact in the one sentence. The point being made here is that the members of this group (the NESB participants) know that they have to work a lot harder than an Australian person to be accepted by other teachers. The amount of extra effort on the part of these NESB teachers that Kelly sees as required in order for them to be accepted by other teachers is reflected in her choice of “deeper” (utt.1).

Alyson’s use of the German “ja” (utt.2) demonstrates her agreement with Kelly’s statement. She does however use “extra steps” (utt. 2) in her agreement where Kelly used “deeper steps” (utt. 1). This change of adjective is recognised by Kelly in utterance three where she corrects Alyson and stresses “deeper”. The use of “deeper” indicates that for Kelly, there is much more than a superficial extraneous effort needed by the NESB teachers for them to be accepted into their communities of teaching practice. She then goes on to explain what she believes this group of teachers must do in order to gain acceptance: “we have to ponder more, we have to think more, we need to work harder” (utt.3). Through this expansion of her explanation, Kelly is stating what she believes is a fact “known” by this group. The continued use of the inclusive pronoun “we”, four times in utterance three illustrates this inclusivity of the members of the focus group. In other words, Kelly is stating that as NESB beginning teachers, they know that they will have to work harder to demonstrate their professionalism and suitability for the role of teacher in Australian schools.

The next sentence in utterance three begins with the discourse marker “you know” to indicate upcoming information (Schiffrin, 1987). At this point Kelly is stating that this requirement of needing to work harder and “deeper” is a stated fact that anyone moving from one country to another is aware of and, in fact, expecting in their working roles. She has moved through self correction from the hedge
“probably” to “should always” (utt. 3) to indicate the known-ness of this expectation and has globalised her original point to extend beyond teaching to any working role by expanding her explanation to include “any person … that goes to any country” (utt. 3 & 5) and that challenges must be expected (utt.7). The use of the discourse marker “you know” to conclude the utterance seven marks the presentation of the prior information of the expectation of challenge (Schiffrin, 1987).

Alyson has shown her agreement with Kelly’s point and explanation through utterances four “yeah” and six with the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) “everywhere” in “no, it’s everywhere”. Although Alyson has used both a positive and a negative discourse marker (Schiffrin, 1987) the positive relates to agreement with Kelly’s statement that “deeper” work is not unexpected. The negative marker reflects her agreement with Kelly that “it’s no different to any person … that goes to any country”.

**Summary**

This extract has identified that expectations of this group of beginning/novice teachers necessarily need to be different from other beginning/novice teachers who are Australian. Therefore these teachers should not imagine that their work in their roles is the same as other new teachers, because they are from another country. The repeated use of the inclusive pronoun “we” demonstrates the understanding by the speaker that this group of NESB teachers share the knowledge that other teachers in their communities of teaching are expecting more from them if they are to be accepted into their particular communities and indeed as professional colleagues. This “point” raised by Kelly and explained and agreed to throughout this abstract, self positions the NESB beginning/novice teacher at a different level to the native Australian beginning/novice teacher and therefore the imagined role as a teacher could be then inferred to also be different.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, the extracts from the accounts of the research participants were presented as representative of the sub-themes identified through the data. These sub-themes of skin colour, appearance, conversational participation, worldliness and acceptance were raised under the macroproposition or major theme of interaction.
The extracts from the participants’ accounts reflected their sense of (non)belonging through engagement and imagination in their particular communities of teaching practice.

These extracts were interrogated using critical discourse analysis supported by positioning theory and tools such as small stories, noun and pronoun use, reported speech and thought and attributed thought, speech and feelings, acknowledgement tokens and discourse markers. Further “tools” from sociolinguistic narrative analysis and conversation analysis were used to intensify the analysis of how language constructs the social world of the participants. The analyses revealed, through investigation of the interactions accounted for, the (re)positioning of this group of beginning/novice teachers with respect to members of their communities of teaching practice. The analyses showed both interactive and reflexive positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) of the NESB beginning/novice teachers.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, will present a synthesis of the findings of the analysis. Each of the analyses has, in this current chapter, been summarized using the sub-themes that emerged from the data. A synthesis such as that presented in the following chapter provides a contextualization of the analyses within the theoretical framework of the study – communities of practice.
Chapter 7

Synthesis of the Analytic Findings into the Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The previous chapter has provided the analysis of the extracts taken from the corpus of data generated during the research process. While segmenting the analysis into sub-themes under the macroproposition of interaction it was quite evident that there was overlap amongst the sub-themes. In this chapter, a synthesis of the analytic findings is presented to enable a contextualization of the sub-theme analyses within the theoretical framework. Firstly I have linked the data and the literature that used communities of practice to identify the community of teaching practice that was elicited from the participants’ accounts. Then I have shown how and where the accounts reflect acceptance into and membership of communities of teaching practice. Finally I have discussed the elements of belonging to a community of practice and linked these to the analyses.

Communities of Practice

Communities of practice provide a forum for the transference of knowledge, particularly that knowledge which is tacit, to develop and improve practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1997, 1998). The transference of knowledge is dependent upon the interactions between the members of that particular community of practice. The literature using a framework of communities of practice reviewed for this thesis showed that communities of practice can be formed specifically for the exchange of information that will develop professional practice (Wesley & Buysee, 2001; Au, 2002; Palincsar et al., 1998; Zorfass & Rivero, 2005; Fisher & Bennion, 2005) or can be informal groupings, as identified by Lave & Wenger, that provide social interaction during which the transfer of knowledge or experiences between members of that group, occurs (Hildreth et al., 2005; Green, 2005; Lesser & Storck, 2001).
From the literature reviewed that used communities of practice as a framework, it was further identified that communities of practice allowed for the social construction of knowledge amongst its members (Palincsar et al., 1998; Fisher & Bennion, 2005; Green, 2005; Hildreth et al., 2000; Lesser & Storck, 2001), the development of its members’ professional identities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, Green, 2005) and encouraged, through social interaction, reflection on practice (Green, 2005; Wesley & Buysee, 2001; Zorfass & Rivero, 2005). Social interaction therefore was found to be an essential component in the transference of knowledge within the community of practice. The individual’s interpretation of interrelationships with other members of the community of practice shapes and represents that individual’s self identity within that community (Wenger, 1998). It is this identity, derived from the experiences of interactions with members of the community practice (Wenger, 1998), that positions the individual with respect to the community of practice. In this thesis the participants’ verbal and written accounts of their experiences in their particular communities of teaching practice were used as the corpus of data.

From the analysed data, the social interactions that are accounted for by the participants are those that occurred between colleagues who occupied the same physical spaces as the participants. In a school context, this would be most typically, the staff room. This reference to the staff room as the community of practice can be seen for example in “i always participate in chat especially when its sports ... in staffroom chats” (utts. 24 & 25 Extract four (FVNESB1)) and “… (sic) we having a lunchtime or morning tea” (utt. 2 Extract five (IJ)). The most common point for informal interaction occurs in the staff room to which a particular teacher ‘belongs’. Typically, the teachers in the staff room then form a community of teaching practice whose informal interaction promotes the professional development and identity of the members. Within each staff room is the potential for the sharing of knowledge and negotiation of meaning of the practice of teaching through informal social interaction (Wenger, 1998). This was in fact found to be the case as reflected in Justine’s account of informal interaction in her community of teaching practice:“… we will talk about how we are teaching things yeah, talking about some students’ behaviour or something where they have some other strategies I can use ... so we were sharing ideas” (utt. 2 Extract
five (IJ)). The staffroom, where there is the most opportunity for informal social interaction emerged as the communities of teaching practice from the accounts of the participants. The physical proximity to other members of the community of practice is important in fostering the opportunities for reflection on practice through informal discussion (Hildreth et al., 2000; Wenger, 1998). Therefore it is argued that while the staffroom in a sense is the *formally* formed community of teaching practice- made so through the physical structure of the school, it is through the *informal* interactions that provides the old-timers of the staff room with opportunities to pass on the tacit knowledge necessary for the professional development of the newcomers to that community of teaching practice.

**Acceptance**

Acceptance into the community of practice is determined by the members of that particular community (Wenger, 1998). In Extract one, Sheree accounts for resistance to her acceptance into that specific community of practice. A discourse of Race was used in explanation of her account of the lack of welcome she encountered from the members of that community because she was not an Australian: “... Oh, foreigners, foreigners’ she screamed that word” (utt. 5 Extract one, (FFNESB)) and her reference to “...It is their protected area, ... this profession is only for Australians ...” (utt. 1 Extract one, (FFNESB)). Susan, in Extract three talks of exclusion and justifies this also through a discourse of Race identifying in her account that “(m)aybe it’s because they see I am different” and the fact that she teaches Chinese as reasons for non-acceptance into that community of practice. Both Susan and Sheree’s accounts of non-acceptance in their particular communities of practice are balanced with accounted evidence of acceptance into other communities of teaching practice. For example, in Extract four Ian and Michelle felt welcomed into their communities of practice as shown in “Kerryn says: *but did they make you feel welcome to join in?* Ian says: *ye* Michelle says: *yes.*” (utts. 34, 35, 36 Extract four (FVNESB1)) and in Extract five, Justine accounted for her acceptance as an “equal” by her colleagues. The participants have indicated through their accounts that if there are members of the community of practice who have travelled overseas or indeed originally come from another country,
then this worldliness has contributed to the acceptance of the participants into those particular communities of teaching practice. This acceptance has been attributed to an ‘understanding’ of the participants (Extracts one, two, four, six and seven) and the use of a discourse of Care (e.g. kind … they care … listen … I could feel at home” (Extract six (DM)). In Extract eight Kelly has used a discourse of Race to account for the need for the participants themselves, as NESB teachers (“we come from a different environment”), to “ponder more, … to think more, … to work harder” (Extract eight (FFNESB)) in order to gain acceptance into the community of practice.

The power of acceptance into the particular communities of practice has therefore been variously constructed through a discourse of Race. This power lies with the existing members of the community of practice as identified by Wenger (1998) although Kelly’s account reflects opportunity for influencing that decision of acceptance.

**Membership**

Wenger acknowledges that there can be situations of non-membership of a community of practice arising for example, through unfamiliarity with a role or lack of knowledge of ways of engaging with others in that community. A tension between desperately wanting to be part of the community of teaching practice and the ability or knowledge of how exactly to do this was evident from the “virtual conversation” between Michelle, Rachel and Ian. Rachel reached a point where she wanted to know from Ian what the “secret” to joining the community of practice was. When participation in casual conversation was revealed by Ian as the key, Rachel quickly came up with not understanding the conversation as her excuse for not joining in. Michelle said that she felt welcomed to join in but from her “discussion” did not. It could be interpreted that Michelle and Rachel did not know how to join the casual conversations and justified their non-participation through their own reasons of not enjoying the same sorts of things as the members of those communities of practice.

One form of membership of a community of practice has been identified as that of a legitimate peripheral participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As newcomers to the profession of teaching, membership as legitimate peripheral participants of a
community of practice would be expected by the participants of this research. This expectation is evident from a review of the policy documents which formed the macrostructure for the analysis of the data in this thesis (see Chapter 4). Within these documents, National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching (TQELT, 2003), Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Cross-sectoral Strategic Plan 2006 – 2009 For Queensland (Francis, Newham & Harkam, 2005) and The Queensland College of Teachers Code of Practice (BTR, n.d.), collegial support for the development of teaching practice and in particular the support for newcomers to the profession are clearly stipulated. A discourse of Care – not only for classroom students but also for colleagues, is evident throughout these documents. Table 14 provides examples of this discourse. As graduates of universities in Queensland, the participants in this study would have been aware of the implications of these documents and expectant of collegial support and therefore acceptance as legitimate peripheral participants in any community of teaching practice.

Extract one (FFNESB) showed Sheree being positioned by a colleague and taking up that position at the edge of a community of teaching practice – essentially becoming a non-member – accounted for through her physical appearance. Susan in Extract three self-positioned herself in the same way (IS). There was no apparent resistance from Sheree or Susan to this positioning. Through their own accounts, these participants have reinforced the position using a discourse of Race. Rachel and Michelle have identified conversational participation, for example, Rachel: “they thought I would not understand what they would said” (Extract four FVNESB1) and Michelle: “... i don’t share many interests ... ” (Extract four FVNESB1) to self position on the edge as non-members of their particular communities of practice referenced in this extract. Conversely, in other extracts, participants have accounted for positioning within the community of practice referred to, and in some instances this has been attributed to the worldliness of other members of those communities. A discourse of Hierarchy was used to account for Michelle’s take up of a position as a legitimate peripheral participant of one of her communities of practice in Extract six (“... I should not argue ... he is much higher than my position” (DM)).
The positioning with respect to the communities of practice with which the participants of this research found themselves in contact could be interpreted as having resulted in either non-membership or placement at the edge of the particular community, or as legitimate peripheral participants. No definitive statement regarding the positioning of the participants, as a group, with respect to membership of their communities of teaching practice can be made because each account is a unique reality peculiar to a specific participant. For the same reason, the causes of the positionings are not generalisable. However there is indicated through the accounts, that the care and concern and nurturing expected by the participants was evident where established members of the community of practice had overseas travel experience (Extracts one, two, four, six, seven) or the casual conversational skills of the participant were exercised (Extracts four, five).

**Belonging**

As discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, there are three distinct modes of belonging to a community of practice as identified by Wenger (1989): engagement, imagination alignment, none of which are mutually exclusive of the others (Wenger, 1997). Engagement involves the development of identity from experiences and interactions with other members of the community of practice, and through these experiences allows for the imagination of collegiate ties with others performing the same or similar roles (Wenger, 1998). Alignment provides an opportunity for seeing how the practices engaged in performing a role, align with an employer’s or system’s expectations (Wenger, 1998).

A range of discourses across the extracts as shown in Table 14 has been elicited from the accounts of the participants. These discourses have been used to account for the positioning of the participants with respect to their specific communities of teaching practice. Each of the three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination and alignment, will now be discussed with reference to the analyses of the participants’ accounts and in particular, the discourses identified.
### Table 14.

**Table of discourses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Extracts: Two</td>
<td>They really try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>We will talk about how we are teaching … about some students behaviour … strategies … sharing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Really kind to talk to me, they always cared me, open to listen to my stories. I could feel at home with them, Understand, likes Asians, gives me a go, encouragement, confidence in me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>From Chapter 4 Working collaboratively to enhance professional practice, support provided to other teachers, supportive of learning needs of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Documents: National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme: Cross sectoral Strategic Plan 2006-2009 For Queensland Queensland College of Teachers Code of Practice</td>
<td>Opportunities for teachers to lead their own learning, and that of their colleagues; encouraging networks and communities of practice as contexts for professional dialogue, and sources for theoretical inputs, practical advice, and mentored reflection; communities of practice as a means of learning for teachers through which skills and knowledge can be developed. Responsibility for provision of support and assistance to new members of the teaching profession,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Extracts: One</td>
<td>Foreigners, Sri Lanka, Australians, abo thing, Bulgaria, Philippines, migrant, blending with them, these people, my colour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Rest of the others, appearance, Anglo-Saxon, different ethnic background, Pakistan, Greek, different country, Asian, accent, Germany, full Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>See I am different, Chinese, Aussie Language barrier, I wanted to be like Aus, other australian teachers, I would not understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Language barrier, I wanted to be like Aus, other australian teachers, I would not understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>French, Taiwanese, Japanese, Japanese culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>Philippines, Asians foreigner, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Different environment, go to another country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Extracts: Two</td>
<td>At top Values hierarchical order, should not argue, nor say something against his opinion, he is much higher, I was there to learn from him, preferably help him, avoid … questions … waste his time,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Engagement

Engagement in the community of practice is dependent on interaction at all levels between the members of that community in order for the transference of knowledge to occur and assist in the professional development of those members (Wenger, 1998). For some of the participants in this research, the accounted experiences of interaction demonstrated their engagement in their specific communities of teaching practice as ranging from a position of engagement to a position of non-engagement.

Engagement in the community of practice was identified in Extract four (FVNESB1) where Ian indicated that to avoid being excluded from interaction, he showed an interest in the discussions that were occurring between the other members of that community of practice, particularly informal discussions (sports). This was the position taken up by Justine in Extract five (IJ). The account of interactions in Justine’s case involved professional knowledge being shared in an informal manner (“... how we are teaching things ... students behaviour ... strategies ... sharing ideas”) and casual conversation (“normal daily conversation like how’s the husband”). In her account, Justine used the inclusive pronoun “we” indicating inclusion in that community of teaching practice. This willingness but particularly the ability to participate in informal discussions during which opportunities for the imparting of valuable professional knowledge can occur could be seen as a factor in contributing to engagement in the community of practice.

Michelle and Rachel, in Extract four (FVNESB1), and Susan in Extract three (IS) did not account for engagement with the members of their particular communities of practice. When it came to the informal interactions, Michelle and Rachel positioned themselves outside of the interactions (“i found that i don’t share many interests ... ” (utt. 17); “I donot like hearing gossips” (utt. 18)) while Susan’s accounted experience was one where “people ... don’t talk to me”). Within this extract (Extract four), a discourse of Race has been used to account for the related experiences of the participants particularly with respect to engagement in their communities of practice and most especially during informal discussions (e.g. “tea time” (utt. 14)). Susan has accounted for having to “work everything out”
(IS) herself while she sees other teachers involved in interactions through which they can learn this tacit knowledge to improve in their professional roles in that school using a discourse of Race to account for her non-engagement. Similarly, Sheree has used a discourse of Race in Extract one to account for her lack of engagement in one community of teaching practice. In Extract three, Alyson has also used a discourse of race to account for her experiences in engagement in her community of practice. Here she has identified her accent as the reasons why the “guy from Germany” (utt. 21, FFNESB) is the “only one” (utt.23, FFNESB) who interacts with her although some of the other members of the community of practice do try and include her in their interactions. As such, Alyson’s account does not reflect full engagement with that community of teaching practice.

Extract six (DM) provides examples of engagement in a community of teaching practice as demonstrated through a discourse of race, discourse of caring and a discourse of hierarchy (see Table ). Michelle, in this extract, interacts comfortably with and learns from teachers who are worldly particularly those who are non-Australian nationals who have welcomed informal interactions with her and she has accounted for this through a discourse of caring. While interactions with another teacher have been accounted for through a discourse of hierarchy, her account reflected engagement with the community of teaching practice. In this particular situation, Michelle’s ethnicity provided her with the insight to effectively interact with members of her community of practice.

Engagement with a community of practice has been accounted for through both a discourse of Race and a discourse of Care by the participants. This is particularly evident when the sub-theme of worldliness has been raised. The “comfort” in interacting with members of the community of practice who have this worldliness through an accounted “caring for” or “understanding of” the participants can be seen to reflect, for most of them, their engagement in those communities of practice. That is, where there are communities of practice where some members have worldliness, the participants have accounted for engagement in that community.

While the sub-theme of worldliness recounted through a discourse of Care has shown its effect on engagement with the members of the community of practice, it is worthy of note that this was not a consideration recounted in the instances of Ian and
Justine. There is no evidence from the data to support these differences except perhaps background. Ian’s work for many years as a taxi driver (II) and Justine’s schooling in Queensland (II) may be contributing factors. Alternatively, Kelly has made an insightful comment: “… we know we come from a different environment and we know that we have to go a few deeper steps in order to be accepted” (utt. 1, Extract eight, FFNESB). It could be that this has been recognised by Ian and Justine who have taken a position of power in influencing engagement as opposed to the deficit position, supported through a discourse of race and taken up by other participants in their accounts of their experiences of engagement with some communities of practice.

(Split) Imagination

As beginning or novice teachers, the imagination mode of belonging to a community of teaching practice could have been informed by experiences from two fronts. The first of these could have been during their practicum sessions as part of their teacher preparation courses where communities of practice in practice would have been observed. This could have tempered their view of membership of a community of teaching practice so that as beginning or novice teachers these research participants would have a pre-determined imagination of their roles and imagined expectations of membership of a community of practice. This view is evidenced through Extract three (IS) where Susan imagined that she would “… make new friends” as a novice teacher and that members of the community of teaching practice would help her.

Secondly, imagination would be a product of lived experiences as a member of a community of practice. From Susan’s interview extract, her lived experience as a novice teacher would provide her with the imagination that teachers of Chinese are not valued (IS) and especially that if a teacher looks different from members of the community then engagement with members of that community of practice may not occur (IS).

Running through the extracts is a discourse of Race that has affected the imagination of these research participants. In a sense, all but two of these participants have developed a split imagination. From the analyses it would seem apparent that
most of these beginning or novice teachers as a result of *their* lived realities can imagine a sense of belonging or acceptance into a community of teaching practice where there are members of that community who have travelled to, or come from, other countries. If they encounter a community of teaching practice in which this is not the case, then they imagine that it is because of themselves, through physical appearance or accent, that they will either position themselves, or take up the position, of membership at the edge of that community of practice.

As part of the university teacher preparation courses, familiarisation with policy documents would be expected. As a result of this, the beginning or novice teacher would imagine that all members of the community of teaching practice to which they were now attached, would reflect those elements of professionalism through accepting the new teacher as a legitimate peripheral participant of that community of practice. It would not be unusual, as a beginning or novice teacher, to imagine that the discourse of Care in these documents (see Table 14) would translate into acceptance of the newcomer into the community of practice.

Imagination therefore plays a role in expectations on encountering a new community of teaching practice. For most of the research participants, their imagination of teachers and their professional roles would be met and this imagination of their role is dependent upon the ethnic mix or worldliness of members of the community of practice. For these beginning or novice teachers, this split imagination would allow them to cater for new communities of practice they encounter and allow for their positioning with respect to members of that community of practice. Imagination would then allow them to legitimately contextualise their positions as “colleagues”. For the other participants, Ian, Justine and Kelly, their imagination of others in the beginner or novice teacher role remains relatively unchanged. Ian and Kelly have acknowledged that effort is needed on the part of the beginning or novice teacher to participate in conversation or work harder to show interest and involvement in the community of practice and to assist in imagining oneself as a colleague of other members of that community.
Alignment

The lived experiences of the teacher participants of this study, seen through the analyses of the extracts at a local level, provide an opportunity to align these experiences with global expectations of teachers. These global expectations have been identified in Chapter 4 as the policy documents informing employers and systems in Queensland education – forming the macrostructure of the analysis. A discourse of Care is evident through these policy documents (see Table ) and as such would be expected to be emulated at the local level in the schools. This in fact was found to be the case where members of the communities of practice had overseas travel experience. These colleagues were recounted as engendering a feeling of comfort to the NESB newcomers of that community of practice (e.g. Extracts one, two, six and seven) and in so doing enabled informal interaction for discussion and development of practice. In other communities of practice where the beginning or novice teachers of this study had positioned themselves, or taken up positions on the edge of the community, opportunities for involvement in professional dialogue and reflection on practice with colleagues became restricted. Informal interactions provide forums for the exchange of ideas and experiences that can aid in the professional development of the newcomer.

It could then be inferred that meeting other expectations of the macrostructure such as those involved in the provision of an education to the school students would have been more difficult when positioned at the edge of a community of practice and not as a legitimate peripheral participant of that community. Thus it would have been more difficult for the NESB beginning or novice teachers in this position to see how their practices align with professional expectations. This outcome could be explained through Kelly’s insistence on a need to “go a few deeper steps ... where we have to ponder more, we have to think more, we need to work harder ... ” (utts. 1 & 2, Extract eight, FFNESB) and that this would have to be on their own, without, necessarily, the support of colleagues. Conversely for those participants for whom engagement in the community of practice occurred alignment with system expectations would have been provided through the informal discussions and learning process.
A linguistic community of practice

Through the analysis of the data the emergence of a further community of practice made up of the participant group in this research can be identified. The research project itself has enabled a space in which the participants have been provided with an opportunity to “come together” through their accounts. The process of generating the data has therefore effected the formation of a linguistic community of practice.

As the data were generated, a connectedness between the participants in terms of their shared experiences emerged through the language employed to account for their individual experiences. This connectedness was reflected in the identification of the sub-themes that emerged as recurring across the data and that were subsequently used in the analysis in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Opportunity for engagement in this linguistic community of practice was enabled through the generation of data via the focus groups in both the virtual and face-to-face sessions. These focus groups provided forums for the individual participants to share and learn from the experiences of other participants. Furthermore, the focus groups provided support for the developed split imagination and alignment of their roles in a community of teaching practice as beginning or novice NESB teachers as discussed above.

Evidentiary support for the development of this linguistic community of practice can be drawn from the language used in the generated data. For example, the use of “Australians” (Tables 6, 7), “Aussie” (Table 8) or “Aus” (Table 9) when discussing colleagues in their communities of teaching practice promotes a recognition of the members of this community of practice as sharing characteristics that make them distinct from Australians. The use of the inclusive pronoun “we” (Tables 7, 13) is another indication that these participants have linguistically linked themselves and become a community of practice. Kelly’s utterances in Table 13 have grouped the participants as a community of practice by using “we” to include all the attending participants and stating the need to acknowledge “com(ing) from a different environment” (Table 13, FFNESB utt. 1). This is further supported
by the extract from Rachel’s electronic diary where she identifies herself as a “foreigner” (Table 12).

Learning of each other’s experiences and learning from each other has occurred in this community of practice. Specifically, Kelly has positioned herself as an old timer in this community of practice in her giving of advice to the participants in order to move from the edge and towards the periphery of their respective communities of teaching practice (Table 13). Ian has also provided the “secret” to movement towards membership of their communities (Table 9).

This linguistic community of practice, formed through the language used in generating the data has provided a space for interaction and learning from experiences of its members.

**Conclusion**

Communities of practice have been used as the theoretical framework within which this study was conducted. From the data analysed, the communities of practice the research participants have referred to is the staff room to which they were assigned. While the staff room could be considered a formally structured community of practice, it is the interaction amongst the staff that enables the passing on of the tacit knowledge necessary to function effectively within that school and useful in developing professional knowledge.

While there was much overlap in the data analysis across the sub-themes used, overlap also occurs within this theoretical framework. The link throughout is interaction and the data reveals the way in which interaction affects acceptance into, membership of and belonging to a community of practice. Through analysing the effects of the interactions, a range of discourses were identified across the extracts.

The data have shown that acceptance into, and membership of, the community of practice has been at times at the edge of the particular community of teaching practice – almost as a non-member. The positioning was either a self-positioning or take up of a position by the beginning or novice NESB teacher. A discourse of Race was used by participants to account for their positionings. Where a discourse of Care also occurs, particularly when the sub-theme of worldliness emerges, then positioning
is taken up as a legitimate member of that community of teaching practice – a legitimate peripheral participant.

Belonging to a community of practice involves three modes: engagement, imagination and alignment (Wenger, 1998). The data have revealed that informal interaction has affected the sense of belonging. Where engagement has been effected, imagination and alignment could occur. Alternatively, the data have revealed that some participants developed a split imagination.

Furthermore, through the generation of the data, a further community of practice consisting of the participants of the study has emerged. This community of practice has been identified as such through the language used by the participants when accounting for their individual experiences in their communities of teaching practice.

This chapter has synthesised the data analysis within the theoretical framework of communities of practice. The following chapter will consider implications of the study.
Chapter 8

Implications of the Study

Introduction

In addressing the central issue of the thesis: How are beginning and novice teachers of a non-English speaking background positioned within an English speaking community of teaching practice? I referred to two sub-questions:

- *Who positions beginning and novice NESB teachers in English speaking communities of teaching practice?* and
- *In what ways does a community of practice position NESB beginning or novice teachers for taking up professional identities?*

The outcomes from a discourse analysis of the data showed that the positioning of the beginning and novice NESB teachers, prepared in Queensland universities as teachers, was as:

- Self-positioned on the edge of the community of practice
- Positioned by members of the community of practice, and a take up of that position, at the edge of the community
- Positioned as legitimate peripheral participants and a take up of that positioning by the NESB beginning/novice teacher.

Positioning has been shown as being at the *edge* or as a *legitimate peripheral participant* of the community of teaching practice. The synthesis of the analysed data presented in Chapter 7, highlighted the impact of the *worldliness* or overseas experiences of members of the community of practice on the positioning of the beginning or novice NESB teacher and the take up of that teacher’s professional identity. Therefore, in this final chapter, I will discuss the implications of these emergent issues at the higher educational level, for the registering authority, for the employing authority, and on my own role with the support group. Through this
discussion I will show how the sub-questions for the research have been addressed. This discussion links the findings to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

**The edge or the periphery?**

Throughout the synthesis of the data in the previous chapter and indeed in the chapter on the analysis of data, I have used the word “edge” to describe the sense of place representing the position of the beginning or novice NESB teacher. “Edge” has been used deliberately. From the data, it would appear that there is, at times, a step prior to becoming accepted as a legitimate peripheral participant (Wenger, 1998) of the community of teaching practice. At various times the participants in my research have either self-positioned or accepted a position on the edge of the community of practice – not as a legitimate peripheral participant.

Kelly (FFNESB) stated that as teachers coming from a country outside of the one in which they were teaching, the NESB teachers should be expecting to work harder to prove themselves before being accepted into the community of practice. That is they, should expect to be on the edge prior to being recognised as legitimate peripheral participants. This is similar to the finding of Mabokela and Madsen (2003) who found that the competence of the minority teachers needed to be proven to their colleagues. Han investigated the changes in themselves that preservice teachers had to make in order to become “local teachers” (p. 21) and accepted. Such changes were not pursued nor were they evident in the examination of my data.

Hartley (2003), Santoro (1997) and Han (2005) found that there was a lack of acceptance into the communities of teaching practice that their research participants were working in, due to the ethnicity of the research participants. This positioning at the edge of the communities of teaching practice by the existing members of that community has been reflected in the findings of my thesis. However, I found that at times it was the NESB beginning/novice teachers who positioned themselves on the edge of the community of teaching practice and this was often dependent upon the ethnic constituency of the community of practice. To justify this positioning or the take up of the positioning imposed by current members of the community of teaching practice, the NESB beginning or novice teachers referred to their own skin colour,
appearance as points of difference from existing members of the community of practice and non-participation in informal conversations.

As stated by Wenger (1998) “identity in practice is … produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities” (p. 151) and the “social interpretation” (p. 151) of that participation. Therefore the interactions and engagement in the communities of teaching practice will shape the professional identities of the members of those communities. This interaction also allows opportunity for the exchange of ideas and experiences to socially construct knowledge and develop skills related to the practice of the community (Wenger, 1998). When positioned at the edge of a community of practice it is difficult to develop a dominant professional identity that reflects “being a good teacher”. As with, for example, Mabokela and Madsen (2003) and Santoro (1997), my research participants were not provided the opportunity to develop their professional identities due to their positioning at the edge of the community of teaching practice. When positioned on the edge of the community the beginning or novice teacher would find difficulty in accessing the tacit knowledge of the experienced teachers (e.g. Hartley, 2003; Han, 2005) further supporting the possibility of impediment to fuller professional development.

Impact of worldliness

My research found that positioning as legitimate peripheral participants of a community of practice occurred when there were members of that community of practice who were from overseas or had travelled overseas. This knowledge of travel and other countries I called in my data analysis, worldliness. My research participants accounted for a sense of comfort in these communities of teaching practice. Where worldliness was encountered, the professional identities of the beginning or novice teachers could begin to develop. In these communities of teaching practice, the beginning or novice NESB teacher felt as if he/she was understood, listened to and cared for.

Kamler, Santoro and Reid (1998) in their demographic study found that the majority of minority teachers were employed as teachers of LOTE. In my study, eight participants taught a language other than English as one of their teaching areas. Two
of these teachers were not LOTE trained (IR, IK). This could reflect an interpretation and application of designated “expertise” as found by Mabokela and Madsen (2003). The “value”, or lack of it, placed on that expertise or subject by the community of practice dictates the positioning of the teacher by existing members of the community of practice (IS).

It is likely that teachers of LOTE have that worldliness resulting in a higher probability of acceptance into and positioning of a NESB beginning or novice teacher as a legitimate peripheral participant of that community of teaching practice. However, a cautionary note regarding the “pigeon holing” or labelling of the NESB beginning or novice teacher needs to be sounded. All of the teachers of my research were teachers of more than one subject area and some were not even qualified or working as teachers of LOTE (teaching areas are tabled in Chapter 4). It is not at all clear in the participants’ accounts which communities of practice were referred to (e.g. LOTE, Science, or Mathematics communities of practice) when accounting for interactions in those communities.

**Implications**

Two major implications have arisen from the research for this thesis. The first involves time in transition to membership of the community of practice and the second is the tension between the willingness and the ability of the beginning or novice NESB teacher to participate at all levels as a member of the community of teaching practice.

For some of these participants, their positioning at the edge of the community of teaching practice is rationalised through their accounts. However, one must question the amount of time needed to be served at the edge before there is acceptance as a legitimate peripheral participant. Through their accounts, the participants have used small stories that told of their experiences as beginning teachers (that is during their internships or at least third practicum experiences) and as novice teachers. This means that they were spanning at least two years of experiences and still, in some instances as noted in the analysis, accounting for positioning at the edge of their communities of practice.
The concept of time to transition to legitimate peripheral participant is closely linked to the frustration accounted for in the small stories of the willingness of these participants of the research to participate fully as members, albeit legitimate peripheral participants, and their positioning on the edge of that community. The lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) of these participants has emerged from some of the small stories as a possible reason for their continued positioning at the edge of their communities of teaching practice. Without the social and linguistic codes of the dominant group, the participants found interaction with members of the community of practice difficult. This was demonstrated through the request for “the secret” to acceptance by the dominant group (Extract four, FVNESB1). As this cultural knowledge is developed into a useful asset, it can be used to assist in joining informal discussions and so aid in the transition into and acceptance as a legitimate peripheral participant of the community of teaching practice. However, opportunity for this development needs to be provided. In terms of the community of practice framework, the trajectories these beginning or novice teachers have for themselves are being frustrated due to the time taken for them to move from the stage of being on the edge of the community of teaching practice.

Recommendations

1. At the higher educational level

A culturally diverse teaching workforce has been acknowledged in the literature as beneficial in catering for the increasingly diverse student populations in schools (e.g. Becket, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Waldschmidt, 2002). From the literature reviewed, it was shown that teachers need to have knowledge of different cultures to assist in the development of effective classroom management strategies that in turn can enhance learning (Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Weinstein et al., 2004). Access to this knowledge, including the use of languages, was found to be essential particularly in ensuring fairness and equity in working with classroom students, in courses involved in the preparation of new teachers to cater for school students in culturally diverse classrooms (e.g. Gallimore, 2005; Sharifan, 2005; Shnukal, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2004). The programs in place, however, were found not to always be effective in addressing the needs of the culturally diverse teacher preparation students (e.g. Au & Blake, 2003; Hartley, 2003; Hernandez Sheets & Chew, 2002; Kato, 1998) particularly when teaching in a school in which the new teacher is of a minority
culture (e.g. in the Australian context see, Han, 2005; Hartley, 2003; Kato, 1998; Santoro, 1997).

It is clear from the literature that the university level has not been successful in preparing minority group teachers for working in a cultural majority classroom. Attention to the preparation of the cultural minority teachers and their preparation for participating effectively with colleagues should be considered especially with the increasing trend toward “Internationalisation” in universities. This is a difficult recommendation in that the workplace is contextual and perhaps as such, assistance should be provided at that point (see below). Support groups similar to the one that I run, could prove helpful in easing that transition from preservice teacher to novice teacher.

2. The registering authority

At the registering authority level, there needs to be a system of support to assist new NESB teachers who have graduated from local universities in developing their professional knowledge. In Queensland, this was found to be offered to teachers from overseas who are seeking registration for teaching in Queensland schools. This would indicate recognition of the need for support for teachers from other countries yet assumes no similarity of need for non-English speaking background teacher graduates of Queensland universities. This need has been shown in my research to exist. The registering authority should be extending their support to the beginning or novice teachers who are of a non-English speaking background. This support would provide an opportunity for the beginning or novice NESB teacher to develop networks or communities of practice with like-teachers and has the capability of engendering confidence in practice in these teachers.

3. The employing authority

Kamler et al. (1998) found a need for support to be provided for NESB teachers in rural schools. My research has shown the need for support for NESB teachers is also needed in city schools. A community of practice is a logical place in which a beginning or novice teacher can learn from those with experience to develop her own practice and look to the old-timers, or experienced teachers, for support and advice. Therefore the value of a community of practice as a forum for constructing
knowledge and professional identities that will enhance the learning of the classroom students and promote the teacher’s own professional development is undeniable (Wenger, 1997, 1998). The literature on communities of practice promotes an underlying assumption of acceptance of a new member into that community. My research has indicated that this is not necessarily the case. In the accounted for experiences constituting the data of this study, my participants have reported on instances where the sense of belonging to a community of teaching practice did not occur due to their being of non-English speaking backgrounds.

At the level of the employing authority, three steps need to be taken. Firstly, there should be a formally appointed mentor from the community of practice (staffroom) to which the beginning or novice teacher has been allocated. This old-timer of the community of teaching practice should be provided with cultural background information to help in interacting with the beginning teacher. Secondly, a mentor who has the attributes of worldliness (that is, who has had overseas travel experience) also needs to be appointed to mentor the beginning NESB teacher. This is important as from my research, I have shown that it is those people who have the “worldliness” with whom the beginning or novice NESB teachers have been comfortable. The community of practice formed here is with the two mentors and the newcomer. Through having the mentor with worldliness, it is probable that the newcomer will feel more supported and comfortable in interacting to the point where if it has not occurred already, interaction between the staffroom mentor and the newcomer can begin to occur more naturally and informally. The flow on effect of this community of practice is access for the newcomer to a) the staffroom community of teaching practice and b) the staffroom community of teaching practice to which the other mentor belongs if indeed that is another staffroom. Thirdly, a community of practice consisting of early career teachers should be developed as a further support mechanism. This community of practice does not necessarily need to be constructed in a physical space, but could be formed virtually through chat rooms as used in the generation of data for this study. Finally, it is up to the representatives of the employer - that is the administration of the school, to ensure that the beginning or novice teacher is developing professional knowledge to inform practice in the classroom. The principles of communities of practice include the development of practices that achieve the organisational goals, in this case, student learning (Wenger,
therefore the benefits of ensuring support is offered and provided to the newcomer are vital to the school in its provision of quality educational outcomes for its students.

The implications of my research with respect to the employing authority apply equally to any professional organisation. It is in the best interests of the organisation to promote best practice and cultivate a means of passing on from old-timer to newcomer, the tacit knowledge that assists in efficient and effective practice through the social construction of knowledge (Palincsar et al., 1998; Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Westheimer & Kahne, 1993).

The model in Figure 4 below is a representation of the intersecting communities of practice of which the NESB newcomer to any organisation could belong. Informal participation in the second (worldliness) mentor’s community of practice would be a beneficial by-product of the mentoring community of practice. Membership of the mentoring community of practice would provide opportunity for the newcomer to align with the professional bodies that govern the particular profession, such as the Queensland College of Teachers and the policy documents that provide direction for the profession. This particular community would legitimise the newcomer as a peripheral participant and provide a comfortable or “safe” forum for the social construction of knowledge to develop professional practice (Palincsar et al., 1998; Wenger, 1998). The notion of membership of more than one community of practice is not unreasonable given the positioning on the edge of a community that has been shown to occur through my research and the possibility of that positioning proving an impediment to professional growth and development of professional identity. Membership of more than one community of practice will provide a better sense of alignment with organisational goals by providing access to a broader spectrum of knowledge. It is anticipated that, if the model is followed, a smooth transition into the newcomer’s own community will eventuate in a faster passage of time than currently indicated by my research. Membership of this, the staffroom community of teaching practice, will provide the opportunity for the newcomer to begin his or her trajectory in the professional field.

The model represented in Figure 4 is dynamic and fluid. It raises an awareness of the NESB newcomer’s lack of the dominant group’s cultural capital and suggests a
means of developing that cultural capital. All communities of practice identified can exist simultaneously. New communities of practice can emerge from original communities. Once the newcomer has developed a sense of belonging to the staffroom community of practice, albeit as a legitimate peripheral participant, the mentoring community of practice may dissolve as its task has been completed (Wenger, 1998). The community of practice consisting of newcomers to the organisation may also dissolve in time but through membership of it, it is anticipated that several other informal communities of practice will emerge.

**Figure 4.**

*Model of communities of practice (CoP)*

Within an organisation many communities of practice may exist, some formal and some informal, and each with its own specific role. Underlying each and every community of practice are the functions identified earlier in this thesis: allowing social construction of knowledge, the development of professional identities of the
members and the promotion of reflection on practice – all through informal interactions. While communities of practice may be formed for a specific purpose, others occur informally. In the model generated from my research, there are both formal (Mentoring community of practice, Newcomers community of practice) and informal communities of practice (the staffroom communities of practice and communities of practice formed from outside connections – any of which may have come from formally organised communities of practice). Thus, from any of the formal communities of practice, informal communities may emerge.

**Implications of the study on my role**

At this point it is important to reflect now on the outcome of the research and consider in what ways it has impacted on my and will change my role with regard to the support group at the university level. I still believe in the importance of the support group - more so now than before. It is clear that through the community of practice developed as a support group and the informally developed “networks” or communities of practice from the group, the members of the support group can be empowered with confidence in their skills of interaction that can be transferred to the professional workplace. This was an outcome of the support group that I had not considered before but which I now see to be of the utmost importance. I do recognise that the transference of the interaction skills developed as a result of the support group community of practice will need to be clearly explained to the members of the group. An understanding of the importance of communities of practice and their role in developing practice will need to be explained in terms of the schools and teachers the preservice teachers will be working with. This will be difficult for the preservice teachers as the supervising teachers perform the dual role of mentor and assessor. This perhaps flows into the workplace role on becoming beginning or novice teachers and could be impeding their interactions with members of their new communities of practice. Therefore my role from herein has transformed into one of a transition enabler as well as that of a lecturer/mentor. Outcomes from my research support the importance of developing in the support group members more self confidence in initiating and enacting interactions in an unfamiliar situation.

The enablement of the transition into the community of teaching practice could be assisted through the use of the data generated to develop the linguistic community
that emerged through my research. It would be feasible to provide samples of the accounts generated by the participants when discussing interactions in their particular communities of teaching practice to the support group members. The support group members could then analyse the language used and the scenarios described to suggest alternative approaches. Therefore, the support group members are provided with an opportunity to learn from the research. In this way, the support group members can be potentially empowered with the agency to transition more quickly as legitimate peripheral participants than the research participants and so begin their trajectories through their own communities of teaching practice.

The research involved in this thesis has shown the importance of continuing with the use of formally or informally gathered data to help in informing subsequent groups. However, I will focus between practicum sessions on discussing and socially constructing, with the support group members, ways in which they can understand or interpret the messages they receive when interacting with members of the communities of teaching practice. A journal, sketchy or detailed, of accounts of their experiences would be helpful in this. A journal allows for the inclusion of thoughts and feelings. An analysis of the language used in these accounts would provide the individuals with an understanding that it is through their own words, feelings and thoughts that they accept positionings in their communities of practice. In essence, they become teachers as researchers of their own practices.

In approaching the group sessions in this way, I would hope to equip the members of the group with their development of engagement, alignment and imagination (Wenger, 1998) to assist in their acceptance into and positioning with respect to their communities of teaching practice as beginning or novice teachers. It is also possible that the support group community of practice remains intact fully or partially as an informal community of practice that fits into the model in Figure 4 as a CoP outside of the workplace but one through which its members can continue learning from each other’s experiences.

**Further research**

This thesis has made explicit the nature and extent of a community of teaching practice by focusing on a group of participants who were variously positioned at
times on the edge of their communities of teaching practice. All of the participant NESB teachers were prepared in *Queensland* universities as teachers. Empirical research in this area has not been done before. My research forms a theory-practice nexus, creating the opportunity to move ahead and encourage a productive transition into a community of practice. More research, in different school settings, in the area of newcomers who are of non-English speaking background to a professional workplace is recommended particularly with a view to refining and developing the model put forward to ensure a vital component of the workforce is supported and not lost due to the time taken to become a legitimate peripheral participant of that community.

**Conclusion**

A culturally diversified workforce is vital in sustaining a culturally diversified nation. Due care and attention needs to be afforded to those who enter the workforce and the notion of communities of practice provides a clear and logical space for transitioning smoothly from institutions of education to the school workplace. Assumptions that “one size fits all” are not productive, as seen in the literature reviewed and the research conducted for this thesis. Employers and professional bodies need to ensure they are providing a “fair go” for all workers. Intense research is needed to facilitate productive transitions from higher education into the education workforce. This study has laid a solid foundation for more work in this field of education research.
Appendix One

Information and Consent Forms
Dear

Thank you for considering participating in this study.

The Study
Differences in culture of teachers and students and teachers and colleagues can cause difficulties for the teacher of a non-English speaking background. This study aims to identify the ways in which NESB beginning teachers work in the Queensland education system. From this study, it is anticipated that indications of further research to provide information for a support program will be provided.

The Researcher
Kerryn McCluskey, who is a teacher educator and registered teacher in Queensland, is a PhD student who will talk to you about your experiences as a beginning teacher in Queensland schools.

The Research Project
The study will request that you consent to:

- Be interviewed on about your teaching experiences,
- Audio-taping of the interviews,
- Participation in focus group sessions which will be recorded electronically and by audio-tape, and
- Keep a diary of events over a six month period.

The interviews and focus group sessions will be conducted by Kerryn McCluskey at an agreed to location. These interviews and focus group sessions will help identify any cultural differences you feel exist in your professional environment and the difficulties for you that these differences may cause.

The interviews and focus group sessions will be audio-taped or electronically recorded, with your consent. The diary is needed to record your reflections of your teaching.

Confidentiality and Privacy
When transcribed, the audio-tapes and electronic versions of the interviews and focus group sessions will not contain your name or any identifying information, to protect your privacy. After transcription, the tapes will be erased. A coding system will be used instead of your name for Kerryn alone to identify the data. The coding system is important for you as, if you decide at any time to withdraw from the study, your data can be removed and destroyed.

All information provided will be used only for the purpose of this research.

Results
The results of the study will be published in an anonymous way. It will not be possible to identify you from the publications. The results of the study will be made available to you prior to their publication.

Further Information
If you would like any further information regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Kerryn on 0412 571300 at any time or by email at kmcclusk@bigpond.net.au. Should you have any concerns that require you to contact an independent person, you may contact the Manager, Research Ethics at Griffith University via email address research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Kerryn McCluskey
The Third Space

Participation Consent Form

PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET TO KERRYN MCCLUSKEY at 3 Durham Street, Alexandra Hills, 4161.

BEGINNING TEACHER'S NAME (Please print)...............................

I understand that I am not required to participate in this research project if I do not wish to do so and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without needing to explain my reasons for withdrawing. No loss of benefit or treatment will occur as a result of my withdrawal nor will a penalty be incurred.

I understand that even though my participation is anonymous and the data will be de-identified, that others might recognize my contribution.

I have read the information sheet and the consent form. I agree to participate in The Third Place study and give my consent freely. I understand that the study will be carried out as described in the information statement, a copy of which I have retained. I realise that whether or not I decide to participate is my decision. I have had all questions answered to my satisfaction.

Beginning Teacher's Signature: ______________________________________

CONTACT EMAIL AND PHONE_____________________________________

A summary of the outcomes of the research will be provided to all participants. In any publications of the project, no use will be made of the actual names of schools or individuals involved.

Gold Coast. Logan. Mt Gravatt. Nathan. South Bank

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The Third Space
A research project conducted by Kerryn McCluskey
Griffith University

Consent form for participation in Interviews and Focus Groups

I understand the Interviews, where undertaken, will

- involve discussions with the researcher; prior to the beginning of the project block.
- require my availability for a maximum of one hour on each occasion.
- be audio taped by the researcher and that these audiotapes will be erased once transcribed with my anonymity preserved.

I understand the focus group sessions will

- will involve participation in approximately three discussions during the project block.
- require my availability for approximately one and one-half hours on each occasion.
- where face-to-face, be audio taped by the researcher and that the audiotapes will be erased once transcribed with my anonymity preserved.
- where electronic, be saved in electronic format with names removed for anonymity.
- will focus on a discussion around the key research question:

How do beginning teachers of a non-English speaking background construct an identity within the English speaking community of teaching practice?

Teacher's Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

Gold Coast, Logan, Mt Gravatt, Nathan, South Bank
Appendix Two

Examples of Initial Coding
I: ... I was in several capacities, architect, assistant architect things like that. And so, now at this point I've been working nearly 10 years in Australia but I just don't want to continue with that profession and I thought now is the time because I've been working for the rich all of this time, and I get the well paid, but I said okay I'm in Australia I'm really grateful the Australia has provided me a safe living. That's the only thing. In Sri Lanka we had everything materially and professionally, everything we had, but what we didn't have was the safety so that is the reason we came here.
K: mm
I: So now we are here, I feel really free and safe and so I thought I'll do something because I don't need very high salary or to kill myself for work, because the family has grown up and materially we have got everything, so I can be relaxed financially and do something and so I thought although not money wise highly gained from teaching, I can do a lot to this country, because this is my second home and I've got second life like for my children. Safety.
K: mm
I: And if we going Sri Lanka, sometimes we could have terror, wars and terror and stuff like that. Here it is another aspect we are gaining a lot as well and that's why I thought, this area, teaching and again when I thought of trying really I thought my children were in secondary school when we came here. The things they were telling me from the school and coming how the children are suffering, abuse of children and lot of things I would apply for secondary education maybe for my kids. Primary children probably have the same things, but I thought because secondary kids you know, bit understanding kind of age, I'll go to secondary and help these kids out. So that's why I thought secondary children...

I: ...I started the planning masters because planning and architecture go side by side, but half way through I thought no I can do better for this country through the kids, even through planning I studied about Native Title. I read a lot about natives, I just said this is awful how much they going through, had gone through and still going through, how sad the situation is so I thought okay I go to country as a teacher and I help these kids. So when the country education kind of their group, I can be very close to the teenagers
R: The problem I might face, maybe when sometimes I need to explain something and then the kids don’t understand the language, that I use, or maybe I need to explain more times, change the way or what I am explaining about. (p1)

I: You’re not expecting to experience, or have you heard anything about how students may react to you, because you are Chinese? Are you expecting any problem in that area or do you think not?

R: Yeah, I think I expect a bit because, I know, I am, English second language, English is my second language cultural background. I think I expect that student might, might go about some of my, my English words are well, explained it right or something like that. I think, I will tell them that, even English is my second language, but I still come to Australia, I went to Australian high school as well, so basically I’m accepting the same knowledge as you do now. So I think there shouldn’t be have any problems for me to teaching you. Besides I’m not teaching English, I’m teaching another language as well, so isn’t that, the other language you are learning now is more important than my English talking about. (p4)
B: ...Then at the beginning I heard the first time that you have, before I went to university I knew already that the way of most Australians shut down when they realise you are not a native speaker. A lot of people, I think it has to do with it that it's more difficult to understand, you have to concentrate more and some people don't want it. But with me personally, I think a lot of people were already put off when they heard my name. They didn't even try to say it that was the attitude with a lot of people. They just, the name was the first hurdle and that was it. Because they can't say it or didn't want to say it and I didn't mind if they say it wrong but I realise that happened very often to me when they hear name, that's it... (p5)

B: ...some people feel threatened because I'm a German native, I see when they do mistakes, but I do mistakes in English and I know that, but a lot of settled teachers don't want to be caught if they do something wrong. And I know I with language teaching there is lot that's not right. A lot of mistakes. ...(p5)


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