

Copyright  
by  
Hsiu-Lien Lily Chiang  
2003

**THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE FOR HSIU-LIEN LILY CHIANG  
CERTIFIES THAT THIS IS THE APPROVED VERSION OF THE  
FOLLOWING DISSERTATION:**

**EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN AN  
EXEMPLARY TAIWANESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Committee:**

---

Stuart Reifel, Supervisor

---

Angela Valenzuela

---

David Kahn

---

Elaine Horwitz

---

Elaine Danielson

**EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AT AN  
EXEMPLARY TAIWANESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**by**

**HSIU-LIEN LILY CHIANG, B.A., M.A.**

**DISSERTATION**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

**AUGUST, 2003**

## **Dedication**

To the Lord, my parents, and my dear family members

## **Acknowledgements**

It has been a blessing to have taken this untrodden road of doctoral learning in a foreign culture, where there have been challenges to my limits in many aspects. Yet, the provision and gains from the Almighty have been beyond my own understanding, and I can hardly recount enough the blessings I've received through every person and every incident that He has put into my life during these years' stay in Austin.

First of all, my heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr. Stuart Reifel, for his continuous support and guidance throughout these years of academic work. His attention to quizzical looks on his students' faces, his social constructivist approaches, his sincerity and integrity as a scholar have taught me valuable, life-time lessons in education and in life. Special thanks are owed to Dr. Elaine K. Horwitz for her caring and instruction in theories of second language acquisition; and Dr. Elaine Fowler, for her teaching in language acquisition, thoughtful advising, and thorough review of this dissertation. I also want to thank Dr. David Kahn for the first qualitative research course I took from him and to Dr. Angela Valenzuela for her encouragement and guidance about conducting fieldwork and qualitative studies. Also, I owe thanks to Drs. Henry Trueba and Lisa S. Goldstein for their company and assistance through the challenging times of my doctoral study.

I am indebted to the four teachers who participated in this study for their sharing, cooperation, and friendship. Special thanks go to Annie Chin-Hsin Hong, Dr. Meei-Ling Liaw, Dr. Fu-Hsin Su, and Dr. Li-Szu Huang for their assistance and advice in the process of conducting and writing this study.

I especially want to remember Dora Huang, Janice Chi, Cathy Kohl and her family, Karen Evans and her family, Pastor Philip Hsu, and Estelle Wang for the love and support they've shared with me. Special thanks I extend to Laura D. Havlick,

Michelle LaSeur, Tsui-Chin Hsu, and Pattie Rose for their friendship. I am also obliged to these sisters and brother in Christ for both their prayers and financial support: Yayi Tseng, Man-Li Kuo, Jia-Yin Fu, Pei-Fen Li, Esther Yang, Faith Chen, May Lu, Sue Chen, K. H. Cheng, Echo Lin, and Steven Liu. Finally, my wholehearted appreciation goes to my parents for their unconditional support, my brother, Dr. Jiayo Chiang, for his thoughtfulness and provision, and my sister, Lilian Chiang, for her understanding and for caring for my parents during my absence.

# **EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AT AN EXEMPLARY TAIWANESE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

Hsiu-Lien Lily Chiang, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2003

Supervisor: Stuart Reifel

This study examined how context and teachers' beliefs contribute to Taiwanese English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers' practices at the elementary school level. Four EFL teachers were recruited in this participant/observational study conducted at a suburban elementary school in southern Taiwan appraised as one of 100 exemplary schools nationwide. Data were generated over a six-month period from interviews, classroom observations, document analysis, informal and email conversations, and informants' stimulated recalls from watching their videotaped classroom instruction. Member checking and triangulation with data from multiple sources, through multiple methods, were employed to establish trustworthiness.

The findings indicate that, with varying degrees of identification with the national guidelines, the four English teachers conceptualized practice in concert with their personal beliefs about English learning, teaching, their teacher role, and unique context factors. The teachers' practices were not affected by either the municipal guidelines for English teaching or school-level curriculum. Feeling themselves and English programs to be loosely coupled to the entire school organization, the teachers offered highly similar classroom practices because the constraints of current elementary English teaching did not allow them to put their beliefs into practice. Beliefs about self and about context appeared to be salient references when deciding how much to commit

themselves to English teaching and the school. During the study, the four teachers made career decisions about whether to leave or stay in the profession as a result of their teaching experience at the specific school.

This research study serves to document the new feature of English teaching at the elementary school level in the reform. Implications for practice include to tighten the coupling of the EFL teachers and practices with the school-based curriculum development (SBCD) construct and the school community, to improve the effectiveness of EFL teaching by recognizing teachers' different stages and needs, their beliefs and theories of practice, and the importance of developing their reflective skills in pre- and in-service teacher training programs. Suggestions for further research are to explore whether EFL teachers' beliefs and practice are context-specific, or whether teachers of similar background share specific beliefs and practice in common.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM.....	1
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM .....	6
REFORMED GRADES 1-9 CURRICULUM .....	7
<i>The Framework of Grades 5-9 English Curriculum.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>English Learning Environments in Taiwan.....</i>	<i>14</i>
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	15
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	15
DEFINITION OF TERMS .....	16
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	18
<b>CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>19</b>
A SENSITIZING FRAMEWORK .....	19
<i>Pre-active Factors .....</i>	<i>22</i>
Context factors .....	22
Teacher characteristics .....	22
<i>Teacher Decision Making .....</i>	<i>23</i>
RESEARCH ON TEACHERS' BELIEFS .....	24
<i>Definition of Teachers' Beliefs.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Nature and Categories of Teachers' Beliefs.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Sources of Teachers' Beliefs.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Planning and Implementation Decisions.....</i>	<i>35</i>
Teacher Planning .....	36
Implementation Decisions.....	38
CONTEXT FACTORS IN TEACHING .....	42
<i>New Curricular Paradigm in Taiwan.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Common Problems Between Teachers and Administrators.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Teachers' Lack of Curricular Knowledge and Related Training.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>The Principals' Instructional Leadership.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Loose Coupling in the School Mechanism.....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Parent-School Partnership .....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Studies on English Teaching/Learning at the Elementary Level .....</i>	<i>54</i>
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	63
<b>CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>65</b>
A PARTICIPANT/OBSERVATIONAL STUDY.....	65
FIELD ENTRY .....	67
SETTINGS .....	71
<i>English Education in Ocean City .....</i>	<i>72</i>

<i>Happy Whale Elementary School</i> .....	74
Geographical Contexts & School Development .....	74
Parents and Parent Involvement .....	75
Students' Characteristics .....	77
Teachers' Characteristics .....	78
School Administrators .....	79
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES .....	80
<i>Preliminary Studies</i> .....	80
<i>The Main Study</i> .....	82
<i>Languages</i> .....	85
DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES .....	85
PARTICIPANTS .....	88
<i>A Chronological Introduction</i> .....	88
<i>Four Teachers' Accounts and Typical Classes</i> .....	89
Kathy's Journey to Secure Her Status As an English Teacher .....	89
Kathy's Account .....	90
Kathy's Typical 40-Minute Class .....	94
Sophie's New Journey to the Elementary School .....	98
Sophie's Account .....	99
Sophie's Typical 40-Minute Class .....	102
Stanley's Turnabout from the Cram School to Public Schools .....	107
Stanley's Account .....	107
Stanley's Typical 40-Minute Class .....	109
Mable's First Full-Time English Teaching Job at Happy Whale .....	113
Mable's Account .....	113
Mable's Typical 40-Minute Class .....	116
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	121
<b>CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>122</b>
THE TEACHERS' CONCEPTUALIZATION OF GOALS AT MULTIPLE LEVELS .....	122
COMMONALITIES INSIDE THE GUIDELINES .....	128
<i>Text Served as a Core of English</i> .....	129
<i>Procedure of Text Selection &amp; Curricular Plans at Happy Whale</i> .....	130
<i>Content Areas, Compilation of Teaching Materials, and Teaching Resources</i> .....	132
Kathy's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection .....	132
Sophie's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection .....	138
Stanley's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection .....	144
Mable's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection .....	149
<i>Teaching Approaches</i> .....	155
Beliefs about Language-Rich Learning Environments .....	156
School-wide Learning Environments .....	156
In-Class Learning Environments .....	161
<i>Kathy's Teaching Approaches</i> .....	161

<i>Sophie's Teaching Approaches</i> .....	164
<i>Stanley's Teaching Approaches</i> .....	167
<i>Mable's Teaching Approaches</i> .....	170
Teachers' Use of English as the Language of Instruction .....	173
Instruction in Writing .....	183
Two Untouched Guidelines .....	185
<i>Assessment</i> .....	187
COMMONALITIES OUTSIDE THE GUIDELINES .....	192
<i>An Emphasis on Discipline</i> .....	193
Kathy's Beliefs about Discipline.....	193
Sophie's Beliefs about Discipline .....	198
Stanley's Belief about Discipline .....	203
Mable's Belief about Discipline.....	207
<i>The View of EFL Programs in the School Organization</i> .....	214
Lack of Partnership between the English Teachers.....	215
Disconnection of English Teachers from Other Teachers and Administrators .....	217
IDIOSYNCRATIC BELIEFS .....	229
<i>Kathy's and Sophie's Beliefs About Remedial Teaching</i> .....	229
<i>Kathy's Beliefs about Detailed Documentation</i> .....	233
<i>Mable's Service-Oriented Beliefs about Her Teaching Role</i> .....	242
FINDINGS .....	247
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	258
<b>CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>260</b>
SENSITIZING FRAMEWORK REVISITED: CONCLUSIONS .....	261
EFL PRACTICE AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL .....	265
<i>EFL Practices</i> .....	265
<i>Instructional Decisions</i> .....	266
Curriculum-level instructional decisions.....	266
Lesson-level instructional decisions.....	270
Task-level instructional decisions.....	273
Organizational Decisions .....	273
Implementation Decisions.....	275
Teacher role .....	275
Language learning focus and task type .....	277
Time frame and Teacher-centered tasks .....	278
<i>Teachers' Beliefs</i> .....	281
Teachers' Belief Systems.....	282
Effect of Teacher Education Programs.....	286
The Needs of the Local School Community .....	292
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	295
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	299

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	301
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>303</b>
APPENDIX A. ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR ELEMENTARY ENGLISH CURRICULUM (2003) (TRANSLATED BY AUTHOR) .....	304
APPENDIX A-1. PROFICIENCY INDEX FOR BOTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PERIODS (TRANSLATED BY AUTHOR) .....	309
APPENDIX A-2. PROFICIENCY INDEX & CORRESPONDING BASIC CAPABILITIES (TRANSLATED BY AUTHOR).....	316
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS MODIFIED FROM AYERS (1989) (TRANSLATED BY AUTHOR).....	320
APPENDIX C. CONSENT LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL OF HAPPY WHALE ELEMENTARY	323
APPENDIX D. CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS.....	324
APPENDIX E. AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE RESEARCHER.....	329
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>VITA.....</b>	<b>359</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	A Sensitizing Framework .....	21
Figure 2:	The Municipal Department of Education in Ocean City .....	70
Figure 3:	Sensitizing Framework Revisited.....	262

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

English teaching at the elementary level is a new feature of education reform in Taiwan. The goal of this study was to explore how Taiwanese English teachers' beliefs and contextual factors, including the national reforms, school and classroom settings, contributed to their practices in a suburban elementary school setting. A participant/observational paradigm was employed to achieve this goal through analysis of classroom observation, videotaped classroom instruction, audiotaped stimulated recalls on videotaped instruction, informal conversations, and documents. In this chapter the political and social contexts of the reform and the reform movement in Taiwan are examined, including a brief history of the educational reform, the philosophy and characteristics of reformed elementary education, as well as the framework of Grades 5-9 English Curriculum. The importance of studying this new practice in the context of the newly reformed curricular model at the school level is addressed.

For the purpose of understanding EFL teachers' beliefs and practices at a Taiwanese elementary school, the educational reform, which sets the stage for elementary education must be addressed. Yet, this reform, which has unfolded at a fast pace and has widely attracted the general public's attention and debates, has its roots in specific political and social issues of the reform. Hence, this backdrop of the educational reform cannot be neglected.

#### **The Political and Social Contexts of the Educational Reform**

With the global economy moving downward, the ruling party of the country has not been able to propose effective plans to improve the economy and moderate the increasing unemployment rate ("The ruling party," 2002). Educational reform, given that insufficient budgets were available, has suffered from being treated as a political

chip with its attempts to actualize policy, which has been known as “Changing while Doing” (making constant changes or modifications while still in the process of implementing the reformed curriculum) in the press (“No changing while doing,” 2002). The financial deficit prevented full-fledged support in the budget both for reconstructing areas damaged by the big 1999 earthquake and for implementing the reformed practices in education (“To reduce discrepancies,” 2002). Financial depression has especially affected the population in the lower socioeconomic (SES) ranks. The economic impact has destabilized the society and given rise to higher crime rates, more suicides, broken families, and changes in family structure (“Insufficient budget,” 2000; “High criminal rate,” 2001).

In the field of education, the teachers who are approaching the retirement age of 65 and who want to retire cannot do so because the government does not have enough money to pay their pensions. College graduates with teacher qualifications cannot find openings at elementary and secondary schools because the economic depression and limited openings have made the teacher screening tests more competitive than ever (“Harder to teach,” 2002).

Since educational reform went through its two-year experimental phase beginning in 1999 and has been officially in place nationwide for one full year since August 2001, many believe it is high time that those who have reviewed and discussed the reform raise their voices and ask for careful revisions and modifications (“Comprehensive review and improvement,” 2002). The most commonly and intensely questioned of the newly reformed practices are the constructivist approach employed for math teaching, *the Multiple Schemes for Entering High Schools*, and the learning of more than one spelling system by elementary students in the area of language arts. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education (MOE) reported favorably on their first-year review of the reformed practices at a national conference (“National conference,” 2002). They once again declared their determination to implement the reformed model in the nine-year compulsory education required in Taiwan. “As long as it’s the right direction

to go, there's value to keep going," the Head of Department of Elementary and Junior High School Education concluded (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Among the numerous reforms the ruling party of the country has introduced to revive domestic finances, one has caused dismay among teachers at all levels. The decision to stop the long-time exemption from paying income taxes that soldiers and elementary and junior high school teachers have enjoyed ("Soldiers and teachers," 2002) has caused the teachers to voice their disagreement with the steps the government has taken. On Teacher's Day, September 28, 2002, 100,000 teachers protested on the streets for the first time in history, appealing for unity, dignity, union, and negotiation prior to the implementation of important policies. They demanded that they be regarded with dignity instead of as owners of a vested interest in refusing to pay income tax, an image the MOE had projected in the press. They appealed for the right to unite and to organize teachers' unions. And they also protested the disrespectful attitude the MOE had shown—no notice, communication, or negotiation with the National Teachers' Association on the teachers' large-scale protest in the streets ("Teachers' rights," 2002). Although several of the issues were addressed by the MOE, two issues remain unsettled even after the teachers' peaceful demonstration. First, representatives of all the parents' associations after the demonstration asked the Premier to propose concrete steps for evaluating teachers' teaching as professionals to ensure that students receive the quality education they deserve ("To eliminate unqualified teachers," 2002). Second, the MOE asked the teachers to decide what kind of union they wanted: a labor union or a professional-type union that would promote research and standards of professionalism ("Teachers' rights," 2002).

Meanwhile, several legislators have continued to have sharp debates with MOE officials and decided to freeze for the year 2003 the three billion new Taiwan (NT) dollar estimated to be needed to implement the nine-year compulsory education and *Multiple Schemes for Entering High Schools* until the MOE proposes concrete solutions to the many problems emerging from the reform ("The budget frozen," 2002).

Many aspects of English education programs mandated in the reformed elementary curriculum have been discussed. As a response to the general public's wish to start formal English education earlier (Shih, 1998; "English required in elementary curriculum," 2002), the MOE approved the offering of English programs to fifth and sixth graders in public schools. To meet the needs this change required, 3,300 English teachers were recruited, trained, and certified by MOE in 1999 through a series of teacher training programs. Yet, this group of qualified elementary teachers has been mostly attracted to and hired by big cities where English had already been offered starting in lower grades. Schools in the countryside and remote areas cannot find qualified English teachers (Shih, 2001; "Not hard to realize," 2002; "Elementary English teaching," 2002). Even though English education has only been offered to fifth and sixth graders in the reformed curriculum, the flexibility and power given to local governments has resulted in differences in the starting grade for learning English ("English teaching, a wild battle!" 2002). Many cities and counties mandated English education beginning in the first grade while others started it either in the second, third, or fifth grades. The discrepancies in school resources in English education between metropolitan areas and remote countryside areas have severely affected the starting grade for English teaching and the students' rights to receive a quality education ("English teaching, a wild battle!" 2002).

Some professors and scholars worried that improper teaching hampered English learning by young children at a younger age while the public firmly believed in starting English learning earlier ("Should English learning start early?" 2002). Some areas debated hiring native speakers to teach elementary level students ("Native teachers," 2002), while others said that people should not overemphasize the importance of English learning, to the detriment of students' mother tongue and other potential dialects ("English is the trend," 2002; "Don't let English strangle other potentials," 2002). Education Minister Huang said that, according to the survey done in November 2001, by MOE, 11% of all the elementary and junior high school students nationwide have learned English after school since the first grade. The survey results explained the

phenomenon of various proficiency levels within any given class of young learners in the public schools of Taiwan (“Elementary English,” 2002). Moreover, while more discussion was on the lack of opportunity and incentive to speak English in Taiwan, MOE has proposed a six-year plan to cultivate the “electronic” generation’s talents with a focus on English, computer technology, life-long learning, and vitality of the youth (“Strengthen international competitiveness,” 2002). One of the activities will be an all-English summer camp for 1,500 students and 1,800 teachers to experience English-speaking environments each year. Thirty outstanding teachers will be sent abroad for further studies so they can return to serve as seed teachers in the field.

In line with the island-state’s expectation for its citizens to join in the global village competently and confidently, the president and the premier have highly recommended that English be the second official language of the country within six years (“Second official language,” 2002; “From a foreign language to the second official language,” 2002). The attempt to lift the status of English from a mainstream foreign language to a second official language of the country has generated a white-hot discussion. While scholars and professors continuously expressed that it was far too early in time and too complicated in practice to elevate English to an official status in Taiwan (“English as official language,” 2002), others argued that the second official language should be selected from among more qualified languages, such as aboriginal, Hakka, or Southern Ming/Taiwanese dialects (“Language sustaining culture,” 2002). One legislator challenged and interpellated the Premier in English in the Congress to highlight the importance of English for internationalization (“The Premier,” 2002). It is reported that the Premier has asked MOE officials to research how to measure the English-speaking ability of government employees and how to incorporate the results into better annual reviews (“Public employees, English, and annual review,” 2002). More and more elementary school principals, on the other hand, are attempting to build up bilingual learning environments or even bilingual programs with the participation of homeroom teachers (“To train children,” 2002; “Bilingual education,” 2002). After all,

the lack of qualified English teachers is a crucial problem to solve prior to all-round implementation of English programs in elementary settings (“It’s worrying,” 2002).

In sum, both the government and public acknowledge English as an important tool to boost its citizens’ competency to be a part of the international community and increase the nation’s competitiveness and improve its image. Although the nation’s economic and social problems have impacted social stability and couldn’t sufficiently support the enactment of the educational reform, the general public has had high expectations toward English education. Local governments and elementary school principals have been eager to jump on the bandwagon and score points, so that various versions of policies mandate different starting grades for English learning in the cities islandwide. It gives rise to an insufficient number of English teachers, especially for the remote countryside areas, and causes a popular debate on the quality of English teachers nationwide for the elementary school level. When and how did this educational reform movement develop? A brief history of what educational reform encompasses and how the reform has evolved follows.

### **A Brief History of the Educational Reform**

To answer the needs of Taiwan’s economic development and the expectations of various sectors of the society, the Ministry of Education, approved by the Executive Yuan, has called for comprehensive nationwide educational reform (Ministry of Education, 2003). It is thought that the educational system has been too rigid and over-centralized under the supervision of the government to accommodate the needs of a modern society. Traditionally, emphasis on learning by rote and on high-stakes examinations for entering higher education has been regarded as the single objective of formal schooling. General attention has been put solely on the face value of equity in the chance to participate in competitive exams, instead of fostering citizens’ genuine interest in learning and developing their potential, and the long-lasting capabilities required by the trend toward globalization (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

*General Report on Educational Reform* in 1996, released by the Commission on Educational Reform under the Executive Yuan after an in-depth study of two years, presents five major directions for the reform: 1) decentralize schools; 2) bring up the achievement of each student; 3) make education of all levels accessible; 4) raise the quality of education; and 5) establish a society of life-long learners. Combining the recommendations of the General Report with proposed long-term policies, the Ministry of Education drew up 12 implementation plans and issued *The Educational Reform Action Plan* in May 1998 to carry out the reform and to monitor its effects.

*The Educational Reform Action Plan*, scheduled to be put into practice between 1999 and 2003, mandates the following 12 reforms: (1) consolidating elementary education, (2) making pre-school education widely accessible, (3) consolidating existing systems for teacher training and continuing education, (4) creating dynamic and quality technological and vocational education, (5) achieving excellence within higher education, (6) encouraging lifelong education and information education, (7) promoting family education, (8) improving education for disabled students, (9) enhancing education for aboriginal students, (10) providing accessibility to the paths for education, (11) re-establishing counseling systems, and (12) advancing education research and funding (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Many of these projects apply to schools of all levels. But the implementation of Grades 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines for elementary and junior high schools has directly impacted and remodeled the infrastructure of the compulsory education of the nation. In the following sections, its philosophical framework, the core values, and its characteristics will be addressed to better understand elementary education in the context of the reform in Taiwan.

### **Reformed Grades 1-9 Curriculum**

The Ministry of Education announced the Temporary Guidelines for the nine years of compulsory education in the year 2000, and they have been implemented comprehensively since 2001. In January 2003, the revision was finished, and the formal

guidelines were announced, after modification was made for better clarity (“The Guidelines for English curriculum,” 2003; Ministry of Education, 2003).

According to the report of the Ministry of Education, the underlying philosophy of the reformed curriculum is deeply influenced by the trends of humanism, post-modernism, and constructivism for the goal of building a learning society. Humanistic philosophy advocates that “the right to learn” is as basic as other human rights. To teach every student with individualized instruction and assistance is the task in student-centered classrooms. Consistent with post-modernist theory which supports decentralizing schools and giving back teachers’ and students’ autonomy, the school-based curricular development model should replace the centralized model with standardized texts nationwide. Third, in open democratic societies, knowledge has been made accessible through multiple communication systems, and the knowledge structures are inclined to integrate across the lines of single subject areas. Abandoning long-standing, segmented subject areas, Grades 1-9 Curriculum aims for curriculum integration. Last, the constructivist philosophy views learning as a process characterized by the learner’s autonomy and learning initiative, in which the importance of life experience is acknowledged. Learning environments emphasize offering the learner the central role and opportunities to construct new knowledge and to attain comprehension through hands-on activities and dialogues with peers and teachers (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

The reformed curriculum values open education, multiple intelligences and multiple channels of learning for individual development, and advocates developing students’ abilities for real-life application. Openness is conceptualized as entrusting autonomy to the city or county level, the school level, and class level with regard to curriculum development, text compilation, variety of teaching materials, and multiple modes used for assessment. This multiple approach focuses on fully developing multiple intelligences through multiple modes of assessment, and the design and enactment of Multiple Schemes for Entering Senior High Schools (since 2001). In addition to the single scheme of taking written entrance exams that was used in the past,

junior high school graduates can now seek to enter senior high schools via applications and interviews. The schools are benefitting as a result of the new focus on school-based curricula. With ten basic capabilities as curricular goals, the student gains the ability to apply knowledge rather than loading up on texts—“abilities that they can take with them, not a heavy bookbag they can’t carry.” Tests on basic capabilities replace the highly competitive entrance examinations of the past. In addition to written tests and exams, applications, interviews, and evidence of specialized talents provide multiple means for entering higher education (Ministry of Education, n.d.). The characteristics of the Grades 1-9 Curriculum consist of the topics in Sections A through F that follow.

#### A. Seven Major Domains of Learning

The new curriculum ensures consistency by connecting the learning of the six-year elementary school with that of the three-year junior high school and by integrating learning experiences across subject areas. The traditional, segmented subject-teaching approach is replaced by a teaching approach that integrates subjects into domains of learning, targeting seven major domains. The seven major domains of learning consist of language arts, health and physical education, art and humanities, social studies, mathematics, nature and technology, and integrated activities. Within those domains, English is included in language arts along with Mandarin Chinese and one indigenous language for fifth and sixth graders. For first, second, and third grades, social studies, art and humanities, and nature and technology are combined and called the learning domain of “life.”

#### B. Ten Basic Learning Capabilities

The new curriculum concentrates on 10 basic learning capabilities or skills, which students require to develop their potential and to learn how to adapt to and improve their living environment. They start with self and everyday life and move to arranging learning activities and applying interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

#### C. School-Based Curriculum Development

The reformed curriculum requires decentralization. Individual schools have to form their own committees for curriculum development and develop their own

curriculum responsive to local needs and resources. The school jointly designs 20% of the curriculum with a group representing parents, community leaders, and teachers. Teachers enjoy a greater degree of autonomy in designing their own teaching materials and activities (Ministry of Education, 1999).

#### D. Six Important Issues Included

The new curriculum proposes six important issues to be covered in various learning domains so that the student will be more in tune with the changes of modern society. The issues are technology and information, environmental protection, gender awareness, human rights, career planning, and home economics.

#### E. Local Culture Education

The purpose of including local culture education in the curriculum is to foster a love for one's hometown and a sense of identification with his/her indigenous culture, in addition to promoting ethnic and social harmony. Folk art and one of the 13 indigenous languages, including Southern Ming (known as the Taiwanese dialect), Hakka, and 11 other indigenous languages, should be introduced in the curriculum in line with local needs and resources available (Ministry of Education, 1999).

#### F. English Teaching at the Elementary Level

Declaring it a "contemporary trend and social demand," the Ministry of Education decided that English instruction should be instituted for all elementary school fifth and sixth graders with the aim of boosting the English proficiency of citizens from their early years. English teachers for elementary-level teaching about 2,600 teachers have been selected and certified from a total of 50,000 examinees in accordance with the Teacher Training Act (1994), on their successful completion of the teacher training program. These certified teachers started their teaching in the school years of 2001 and 2002 (Ministry of Education, 1999).

A more thorough introduction of the framework of English curriculum at the elementary school level is required to better understand this new feature of the reformed elementary education. In the following section the framework of English Curriculum regulated by the Guidelines for Grades 5-9 English Curriculum will be addressed in

terms of the expected goals, its philosophy and characteristics, and what scholars and experts have suggested for implementation. Appendix A includes sections from the MOE Guidelines addressing the topics of the Curriculum Guidelines for English teaching, proficiency index for both elementary school and junior high school levels, and how EFL teaching corresponds to the Ten Basic Capabilities spelled out in the reform.

### **THE FRAMEWORK OF GRADES 5-9 ENGLISH CURRICULUM**

The Guidelines, compiled by a committee of professors in English Departments designated by the Ministry of Education, describe an urgent need for English competency that people in Taiwan commonly recognize, in view of frequent global contact in many disciplines. According to the national guidelines for the subject of English, three primary goals are outlined: (1) to cultivate students' basic English communicative competency, (2) to cultivate students' interest and strategies in English learning, and (3) to improve students' understanding of domestic and foreign cultures.

The basic philosophy of the English Guidelines emphasizes a learner-friendly, learner interest-centered, communication-centered approach for the elementary and junior high school levels in order to correct an overemphasis on accuracy and form in English education in the past. An eclectic teaching method centered around Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is suggested, for this approach targets communicative competence in context, which is an ultimate goal shared among foreign language learners. Shih and others (2001) elucidate that a Communicative-Approach-oriented eclectic method, which embraces both process-oriented and product-oriented teaching, is not a single method for elementary or junior high school levels. According to Shih (2001) and Chan (2000), the philosophy of this teaching approach incorporates other compatible teaching approaches, such as Totally Physical Response (TPR), Whole Language Approach, Cooperative Learning, and Multiple Intelligences, and allows teachers flexibility to adopt other teaching methods/approaches for effective instruction in an English-As-a-Foreign-Language

context. Shih (2001) explains that teaching through TPR makes learning easy and fun; Whole Language Approach upholds the wholeness and integrity of language learning and application; and the essence of Cooperative Learning and Multiple Intelligences encourages students of various competence levels to develop their individual potential through teamwork in various in-class activities and small-group discussions.

Interactive teaching approaches which are lively and fun are encouraged rather than a teacher's one-way transmission of language knowledge, for example, lecturing on grammatical structures. The hope is that students will learn English through exposure to the language in many different ways and through an emphasis on comprehension and practical language use. Interest in learning and students' access to content are more important. To avoid constantly correcting errors, the teacher should give encouragement at all times and provide student-centered instruction. Therefore, teachers should consider ways to sustain students' motivation to learn, how not to increase students' learning workload, whether the amount of materials taught is adequate, and the levels of difficulty.

The Guidelines differentiate the fifth and sixth grades and the three years of junior high school as two stages. The emphases of instruction for the two stages vary. For children's flexibility in learning pronunciation, the instruction for fifth and sixth graders should focus more on improving listening and speaking abilities, assisted by reading and writing activities. For junior high students, the instruction should be on all four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To naturally and gradually connect to the junior high school curriculum, the fifth and sixth graders should learn from colloquial daily communication, abundant listening and speaking experiences, and the timely inclusion of simplified reading materials and writing drills, such as tracing, copying, and filling in words and phrases. The proficiency index is written respectively for these two stages in three broad categories: (1) language competency, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and pragmatics, (2) interest and strategies in English learning, and (3) customs and cultures (See Appendix A-2).

The guidelines for implementation are given under five sections: content area, compiling teaching materials, teaching approaches, assessment, and teaching resources. The Guidelines on content area suggest what should be included in the curricula for both elementary and junior high school levels with respect to topics and language forms, communicative functions, and the language per se. As for the language itself, the basic skills to cover or goals to achieve are delineated respectively in terms of alphabet, pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence patterns. The Guidelines for English Curriculum have been broken down into a total of 40 categories in its five sections which are used to help analyze and make sense of the data on the four informants' practices in later chapters of this study. The complete Guidelines for implementation are translated and can be found in Appendix A-1 with a breakdown of the 40 categories. The Guidelines also propose comprehensive lists of topics, language forms, communicative functions, and both 1,000- and 2,000-word basic vocabulary as references for compiling curriculum and selecting teaching materials.

The Guidelines admit that the elementary English curriculum, due to limited teaching hours and easy content, can hardly cultivate or fully realize the ten basic capabilities promoted by the educational reform. However, it anticipates fulfilling part of the essence of the ten basic capabilities through thematic, communicative activities and related teaching arrangements. The Guidelines provide a chart of topics, communication functions, and activities, which students of both age groups can do to attain each of the ten basic capabilities (see Appendix A-3). The MOE announced that the Guidelines would be revised on a large scale in two years because English teaching would be extended to third and fourth graders beginning in 2005 ("The Guidelines for English curriculum," 2003). In addition to the intended curriculum drawn by the government, how has the general public and the school environments responded to this national policy and curricular change?

## ENGLISH LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN TAIWAN

According to the national reform, English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) education is incorporated along with official Chinese and another school-selected local dialect under the category of language arts. In addition to the emphasis on integrating curriculum across various subject areas, communicative competence in early EFL learning has been formally declared as a nationwide goal to make Taiwan's citizens capable of effective international communication (Yang, 2001; "To emphasize English teaching," 2002). The long-used Audio-Lingual and Grammar-Translation Methods, with which the majority of current inservice teachers and parents experienced their formal English education, have been losing ground.

From the standpoint of international economics and political power, English has been acknowledged by the Taiwanese people as a mainstream language and, therefore, an emphasized subject for regular schooling and numerous kinds and levels of important exams. As evidenced by the social mobility (attributed to the popularity of traveling abroad), and the higher academic and economic status enjoyed by English-speaking Taiwanese, English learning for the general public is instrumentally motivated (Ho, 1998). Compared to the past, the learning environments in Taiwan today are much more English sensitive (Yang, 2001). Not only are numerous English-as-a-Second/ Foreign-Language (ESL/EFL) programs popular throughout all sectors of the population at privately-run language schools (also known as cram schools or *bu-shi-ban*) for students from pre-K to adults, the market is full of imported English books, children's literature, audio- and video-tapes for English learning, computer-assisted English learning software, and English-learning magazines. More and more English programs appear on TV and on radio. The English language is used not only for commercials and signs but also in broadcasting systems at public areas and on mass transportation vehicles. Regular English storytelling, attracting parents with young children, has become a popular component of bookstores big and small. It is obvious, then, that the public, the market place, and the general socio-cultural

environment supports the goal of the reform—to attain communicative competence in English.

### **Statement of the Problem**

English programs offered to young children at preschool and elementary levels after school have been a popular elective trend in Taiwan in the last few decades. National reform in education, begun in the school year of 2001, has restructured elementary education in Taiwan. Young children nationwide receive EFL education at a younger age, that is, from the age of 10 or younger, instead of from the age of 13 as in the past. EFL programs have become a new component within the infrastructure of school-based curriculum. Given that elementary schools and teachers are entrusted with autonomy for curriculum development at the local level, EFL programs in the context of educational reform deserve our close attention.

Given the socio-cultural contexts and the efforts the government has made, EFL education has been enacted nationwide since the 2001-2002 school year within the curricular constructs which this educational reform has mapped out. But how individual teachers have been implementing the EFL programs at the local level is not yet known and deserves empirical studies to find out.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Commonly, one or two EFL teachers are expected to utilize the available limited resources and offer weekly 40- or 80-minute programs to about 400 to 500 students. How do individual teachers conceptualize EFL programs and policies in the social milieu of Taiwan? How do EFL teachers view the complexity in practices at the local level? How do individual teachers take into consideration in their teaching personal characteristics, values, beliefs, and contextual concerns in accommodating the social trends and reforms? In a brief report on the current implementation of EFL programs and problems encountered in four regions of Taiwan (Shi, Chang, Shen, Su, & Tseng, 2001), a team of teacher college professors unanimously emphasized the discrepancies

between available EFL teachers and necessary resources among urban and rural areas in all four regions. How does an individual school respond to local needs and orient its EFL programs in the school-based curriculum model?

Through individual EFL teachers' experiences, this study explores how teachers' beliefs and context contribute to EFL practices in an attempt to examine the preceding questions on EFL education in Taiwan. Studies in the field of language teaching have extensively focused on teaching methodology. Few studies have either explored EFL classroom settings at the elementary level or taken into account its context, especially how teachers' voices can be heard in the challenge to change brought about by educational reform. By looking into the EFL programs in their social and cultural contexts, this study aspires to contribute to better understanding of the reformed English language teaching/learning as seen through the eyes of the local participants.

Therefore, the research question to be answered is:

How do context and teachers' beliefs contribute to Taiwanese EFL teachers' practices at a suburban elementary school in southern Taiwan?

### **Definition of Terms**

**Teachers' beliefs:** In this study, the term *teachers' beliefs* refers to, as Woods (1996) did, the entity of what teachers embrace, including attitudes, values, beliefs, thinking, images, knowledge, conception, working principles, practical knowledge, and implicit theories.

**Elementary EFL education:** This term means English-as-a-Foreign- Language (EFL) teaching at the elementary school level. Since English is not the primary language for most people living in the country, students have limited exposure to English when they leave the English class, as opposed to ESL settings. Freeman and Freeman (1998) say that this difference in the total amount of exposure to English distinguishes EFL and ESL settings.

**EFL practice:** The term refers to what the participant teachers do with regard to implementing English-as-a-Foreign-Language teaching, including facial expressions, verbal and non-verbal behaviors, plans or arrangements due to concerns relating to English teaching/learning (Brown, 1994).

**Context:** As Freeman and Johnson (1998) urged that language teachers learn from what they do within the social, cultural, and institutional contexts where teaching occurs, the word *context* in this study refers to the context in which EFL practice is situated at various levels—classroom, school, city, and national. Therefore, it includes multiple levels of context, in which elementary EFL education has been enacted, from the social, political, and cultural aspects of the educational reform, the national guidelines for the curriculum, to regulations and policies at the municipal and local level, to the arrangements and environments of the classroom for English class at individual schools.

**Grades 1-9 Curriculum in the Educational Reform of Taiwan:** Grades 1-9 Curriculum, started nationwide in 2001, is one of the 12 important projects in the Educational Reform Movement. It refers to the implementation of curriculum with consistency by connecting the learning of the six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school education under a set of national guidelines compiled for all seven subject areas for the nine years of compulsory education (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

**The Guidelines for Grades 5-9 English Curriculum:** As regulated in the Guidelines for Grades 1-9 Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2003), fifth and sixth graders at the elementary school level are mandated to receive EFL instruction throughout the three years in junior high school. Different from the guidelines for other subject areas, the Guidelines for English curriculum are written only for Grades 5 to 9, instead of Grades 1 to 9. They will be referred to as “the Guidelines” throughout this study.

**English subject teacher:** English teachers at the elementary school level do not supervise intact classes as homeroom teachers do, but serve as teachers who are

primarily in charge of teaching English, or are required to teach other subjects if necessary (Ministry of Education, 1999). Therefore, English teachers at the elementary schools are English subject teachers or English specialist teachers. They are called alternatively as EFL teachers in this study.

**MOE certified English teachers:** About 2,600 teachers were screened in 1998, then trained, and certified as qualified English teachers for teaching at the elementary school level by the year of 2001 and 2002 when English was comprehensively implemented. These teachers, only 60% of whom completed the certification process, are referred to as MOE certified English teachers in this study (Ministry of Education, 1999; Shih, 2001).

**Teacher Screening Tests:** According to the *Teacher Training Act* (1994), teachers who successfully complete teacher training and are certified are eligible to attend teacher screening tests for a teaching position, held either by the local government jointly with schools or by individual schools. Teacher screening tests, usually lasting for two days and including written, oral tests, and a 15-minute teaching demonstration, are set up for formal elementary teachers and one-year substitute teachers separately.

## Chapter Summary

This study was conducted to understand how context and teachers' beliefs contribute to EFL practices at the elementary school level in Taiwan. Since EFL education is a new feature of the reformed elementary education curriculum, the political and social contexts of the reform, the reformed elementary education, and the framework of Grades 5-9 English curriculum were introduced in turn. Then, I addressed how little we know about this new phenomenon in its context and how little attention has been given to EFL teachers' voices in the challenge of reform. Chapter Two will review the literature in both general education and second/foreign language education on what teachers' beliefs are, from where teachers' beliefs are derived, and how teachers' beliefs contribute to their practices.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will start with a brief introduction of a sensitizing framework that I used before and during the fieldwork to assist my understanding of the phenomenon I studied. Then I will review the literature on teachers' beliefs, teachers' planning and implementation decisions in both general education and ESL/EFL education. I next will review the research on contextual factors pertaining to the phenomenon of elementary English teaching in Taiwan, including the model and studies on school-based curriculum development, instructional leadership, loose coupling in school mechanism, parent-school partnership, and reflective teaching. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion of how teachers' beliefs and context at various levels can contribute to better understanding of both internal and external determinants of English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) practice in the elementary school setting at a time when drastic changes of the reform have called forth new challenges. I intend to inquire into the intertwining phenomena of context, teachers' beliefs, and EFL practice to depict the complexity of EFL teachers' thoughts and actions at a Taiwanese elementary school.

#### **A Sensitizing Framework**

Only in recent years have researchers started to inspect the cognitive components of how second language (L2) teachers' beliefs and decisions influence second language instruction (Smith, 1996; Woods, 1996). Little research to date has been done on the ways EFL teachers' voices and perspectives are understood, including the beliefs of EFL teachers which contribute to their practice. In her study of teacher decision making in the adult ESL classroom, Smith (1996) has mapped out a framework, which I consider the most comprehensive model to emerge from the

existing literature on teacher decision-making in regular and L2 classroom-based research. As Smith (1996) compiled and used the framework of relationships to guide the direction of her study, I employed Smith's model, with some modifications to accommodate the nature of children's language learning, to sensitize my data collection with references and guidance as I approached the complexities of the phenomena studied. However, while not forcing the data to fit the pre-existing categories in her framework, I have compared the findings which emerged from the data with the sensitizing framework I had before the fieldwork. In the following, I will discuss how the sensitizing framework (Figure 1) of this study is different from Smith's (1996). Then, the review of literature will follow to support the framework of this study.

## PRE-ACTIVE FACTORS

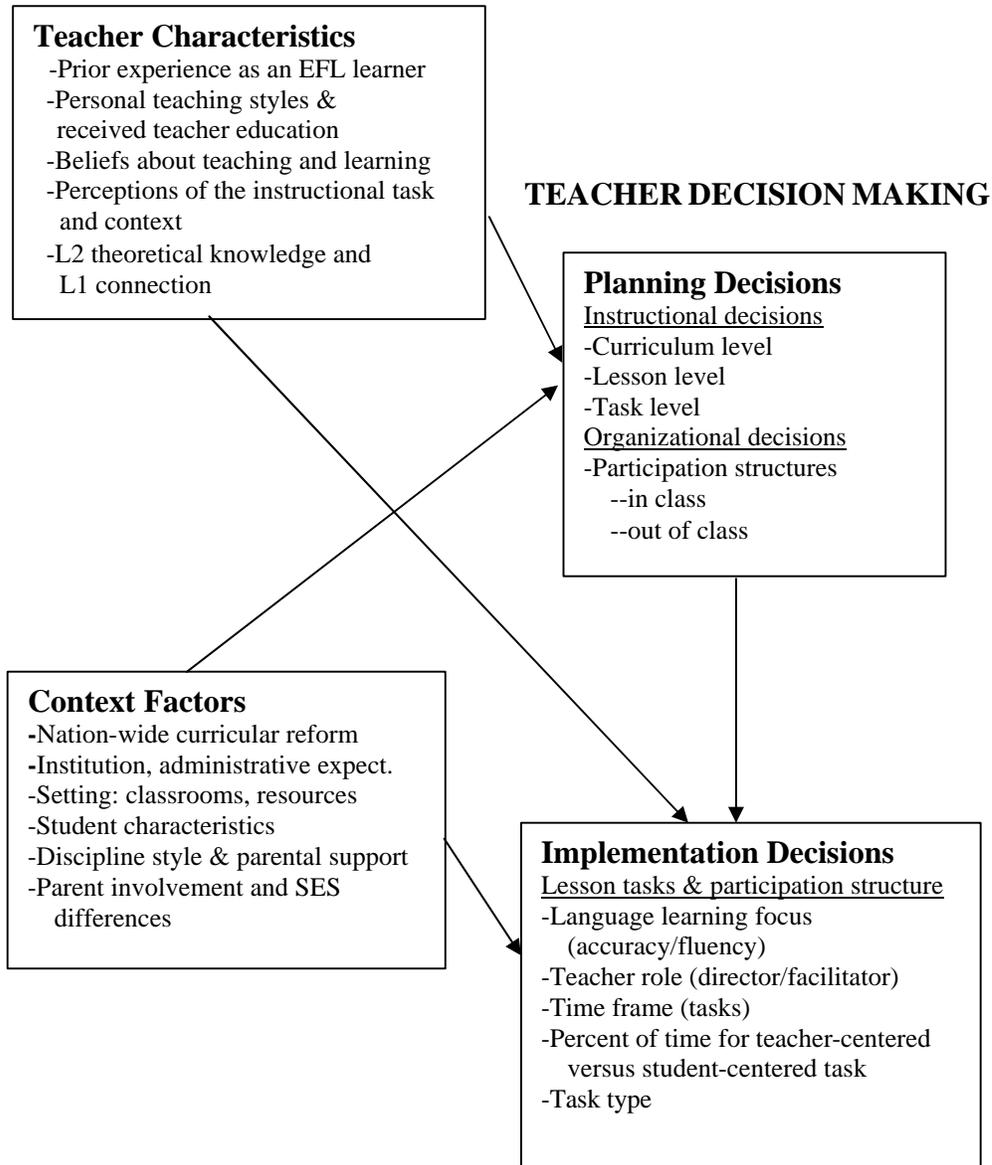


Figure 1: A Sensitizing Framework

## **PRE-ACTIVE FACTORS**

Pre-active factors on the left side of Figure 1 include teacher characteristics and context factors. In the following section, I will compare Smith's (1996) version and my original version (Figure 1) on teacher characteristics and context factors, then address my modifications in these two areas and support them with related literature.

### **Context factors**

Smith's (1996) framework recognized institution, setting, and students as the only three context factors which couple with ESL teachers' decision-making in the adult classroom. For my study in an elementary school setting, I needed to take into consideration the context factors of the reformed curricular constructs of EFL education in Taiwan as well as parents' involvement and expectations. Before beginning the fieldwork for the main study, I also included discipline style (Chao, 1992, 1993, 1994; Lin & Fu, 1990; Chen & Luster, 1999) and parents' socioeconomic status (SES) (Dalgado-Gaitan, 1990; Epstein, 1996; Lareau, 1987, 2000) as important factors which may have helped to explain the parents' role and participation in the school setting (Gestwicki, 2000; Stevens, Hughes & Nurss, 1993). Whereas, since my study mainly targeted the EFL teachers' perspectives, not enough data was elicited from the parents to decide whether any propositions or inferences on parents' discipline styles or SES background substantively contributed to either the EFL teachers' beliefs or practices.

In my sensitizing framework, the area of *context factors*, as does Smith's (1996), has two arrows, each pointing to *planning decisions* and *implementation decisions* on the right side of the chart, referring to a cause-and-effect relationship.

### **Teacher characteristics**

Based on Shavelson and Stern's (1981) review of literature, Smith (1996) identified three most relevant factors under teacher characteristics that affect teachers' decisions in planning and implementation—teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning ESL, perceptions of the instructional task and context, and L2 theoretical

knowledge. Yet, I incorporated two more criteria—prior experience as an EFL learner, personal teaching styles and received teacher education—since teachers’ prior experience as learners and the effect of teacher education have been revealed by research as major factors in teachers’ belief formation and day-to-day practice (Borg, 1998; Chu, 2001, Goodman, 1988; Horwitz, 1985; Johnson, 1994; Pajares, 1992; Weinstein, 1988, 1989, 1990; Yang, 2000). Furthermore, I expanded Smith’s *L2 theoretical knowledge* to include teachers’ knowledge about the connections between first (L1) and second languages (L2) (Ervin-Tripp, 1974; Dulay and Burt, 1974; Hakuta, 1990; Huang and Hatch, 1978; Knupfer, 1992; McDougall and Bruck, 1976).

Therefore, the area of *teacher characteristics* in my sensitizing framework includes five criteria given equal weight: prior learning experience, personal teaching styles and received teacher education, beliefs about teaching and learning, perceptions of the instructional task and context, and L2 theoretical knowledge and L1 connection. As Smith’s (1996) framework also showed, this pre-active factor of *teacher characteristics* in my sensitizing framework has arrows pointing respectively to *planning decisions* and *implementation decisions* on the right side of the chart.

## **TEACHER DECISION MAKING**

On the right side of Figure 1 are teachers’ *planning* and *implementation decisions*. Under *planning decisions* are teachers’ instructional decisions and organizational decisions. Instructional decisions could be at the task level, lesson level, or curriculum level. The participation structure under organizational decisions, according to Smith (1996), concerns the way students are organized for learning tasks, including as a whole class, in small groups, in pairs, or as individuals. The implementation decisions, including lesson tasks and participation structure, encompass the focus of language learning (on accuracy or fluency), teacher role (more a director or a facilitator), time frame of tasks, ratio of time in either teacher-centered or student-centered tasks, and task types.

Smith said that concepts of task and participation structures are important foci of research not only in communicative and task-based language teaching in ESL classrooms but also in many studies on ESL classrooms themselves. Teachers' practices in planning, implementing, and reflecting stages have been viewed as units of analysis in regular classroom research as well (Erickson, 1986).

The two boxes of *planning decisions* and *implementation decisions* on the right side of the chart mainly remain unchanged from Smith's. There is a unidirectional arrow pointing from *planning decisions* to *implementation decisions*, indicating that planning decisions pave the way for implementation decisions.

### **Research on Teachers' Beliefs**

Teachers' beliefs are repeatedly affirmed in research not only to affect their perceptions and judgments in the teaching process but also to influence classroom performance, because beliefs, as a filter, are firmly coupled with prior expectations, and former practices and habits, and are thus hard to change within short time spans (Clark, 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Johnson, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Munby, 1982; Pajares, 1992; Weinstein, 1990). In language teaching, how teachers' cognitive processing can shed light on classroom practice and teacher education has just begun to gain attention. In the following, I will first define teachers' beliefs, before discussing the nature and categories of teachers' beliefs, and the sources of teachers' beliefs found in literature on both general education and ESL/EFL language teaching.

#### **DEFINITION OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS**

Prior to 1975, the dominant research paradigm, the process-product approach, had been the primary focus when studying teaching effectiveness in any subject field. Teaching, instead of being viewed as a cognitive operation, was examined as behaviors and activities to be measured in terms of students' learning outcomes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Freeman, 1996; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). After a paradigm shift in the 1970s, researchers have given back to teachers their key role in real classroom settings,

that is, teachers, much more than being knowledge transmitters, learn, shape, and are shaped by the process and context of teaching (Freeman, 1996). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) described teaching as a situation in which a dynamic interaction takes place among persons, things, and processes in an immediate environment. They believe that a classroom situation has a history, a future, and directionality, which center around the teacher's thinking and doing, determined by personal knowledge. Research from different perspectives on how teachers' thought processes contribute to understanding teachers' behavior in the complexity of classroom teaching provides insights on effective teaching and teachers' professional growth (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Peterson, 1988; Peterson & Comeaux, 1987, 1990; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978; Shavelson and Stern, 1981).

Beliefs vary in strength, in kind, and develop constantly over time into a form of system or network which then becomes resistant to change (Block & Hazelip, 1994). Clark and Peterson (1986) described teachers' beliefs and theories as "the rich store of knowledge that teachers have that affects their planning and their interactive thoughts and decisions" (p. 258). Having adopted Nisbett and Ross' (1980) interpretation, they distinguished knowledge from beliefs or theories, seeing it as more organized and cognitively structured understanding. Thereafter, many more terms are proposed in studies of various kinds of teachers' cognitive reference, such as perspective (Janesick, 1977), conceptions (Freeman, 1990), principles of practice (Elbaz, 1981, 1983), implicit theories (National Institute of Education, 1975, cited in Clark & Peterson, 1986), situated knowledge (Leinhardt, 1989), practical knowledge (Calderhead, 1988; Elbaz, 1981), personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, 1987), intuitive screen and guiding images (Goodman, 1988) and images (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Clark and Peterson (1986) claimed that, despite somewhat different meanings underlying each term, "they hold in common the idea that a teacher's cognitive and other behaviors are guided by and make sense in relation to a personally held system of beliefs, values, and principles" (p. 287).

However, teachers' thought processes and actions cannot be examined out of context, but are always situated in a physical setting, in which constraints, opportunities, or external influences may derive from sources at various levels, such as the individual classroom, the school, the principal, the community, or the curriculum. Clark and Peterson (1986) considered constraints and opportunities indispensable factors to be included in any study on the process of teaching, since they learned from research findings in their review of research on teachers' thought processes that the task demands and teachers' perceptions of the task intensely influence teachers' thought processes. According to them, task demands and teachers' perceptions of the task, defining the extent to which teachers are given responsibility and participate in the decision-making process, refer to constraints and opportunities at work.

Woods (1996) found in his study of ESL teachers' self reports of their teaching practices that it is impossible to determine whether their interpretations reflect what they know, what they believe, or what they believe they know. Not only has the distinction between knowledge and beliefs been blurred, but also types of knowledge, such as declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge when the subject matter is language. Woods gathered teacher's beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge into one and viewed them as one interwoven network. Similarly in the current study, I encountered the same difficulty and will use beliefs as a term which includes also assumptions, knowledge, values, principles, and implicit theories—that is, the teacher's cognitive frame of reference—to avoid confusion and ambiguity. But what does the existing research inform us about teachers' belief systems?

### **NATURE AND CATEGORIES OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS**

Shulman (1987) described teaching as a cyclical, on-going process moving from comprehension of purposes and subject matter structures, to transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and then to new comprehension, which leads on to another new cycle. Among these phases of pedagogical reasoning and actions, transformation is a key construct and refers to a teacher's transforming the content knowledge he or she has

to forms that are comprehensible to students of different levels of abilities and backgrounds. It involves processes including preparation, representation, selection, and adapting and tailoring to student characteristics. Based on his study of novice teachers, Shulman posited that teacher knowledge can be classified into at least seven categories, and these types of knowledge have a dynamic quality to grow:

1. Content knowledge: the amount and organization of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher;
2. General pedagogical knowledge: those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter;
3. Curriculum knowledge: with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as “tools of the trade” for teachers;
4. Pedagogical content knowledge: the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others;
5. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics;
6. Knowledge of educational contexts: ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and
7. Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. (Shulman, 1986, pp. 9-10; 1987, p. 8)

Elbaz (1981, 1983) proposed viewing teachers as individuals who hold and actively use knowledge in distinctive ways to shape their work situation and guide their classroom teaching. She argued that teachers, as autonomous agents in curriculum and instruction, draw on a variety of sources of practical knowledge to manage the tasks and problems encountered at work. Therefore, the practical knowledge teachers hold had situational, personal, and social aspects, while experiential and theoretical orientations evolved as well in the course of her study on an English teacher. Elbaz (1981, 1983) wrote that this practical knowledge encompasses five categories—

1. Knowledge of subject matter: teachers’ knowledge of discipline subject matter;
2. Knowledge of curriculum: teachers’ knowledge about how to adopt, adapt, and develop materials appropriate to the situation;
3. Knowledge of instruction: knowledge derived from practice, of instructional routines, classroom management, student needs, and the like;
4. Knowledge of self: self-knowledge, and teachers work toward personally meaningful goals in their teaching;

5. Knowledge of the milieu of schooling: teachers' knowledge is based on, and shaped by, a variety of interactions with others in their environment—teachers, students, administrators, the prevailing social ethos, and encounters with researchers. (1981, p.47)

Elbaz's (1981) study informs us that teachers' knowledge is generally built on their experiences in class and at school. Teachers' practical knowledge not only contributes to their handling of problems arising from work but also is used to yield consistent practice. Therefore, what teachers know, as Elbaz put it, is "dynamic, firmly grounded in the individual's inner and outer experience, and open to change" (p. 67).

Along the line of Elbaz's practical knowledge construct, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) defined teachers' personal practical knowledge as "a body of convictions and meanings, conscious or unconscious, that have arisen from experience (intimate, social, and traditional) and that are expressed in a person's practices" (p. 7). Accordingly, this kind of knowledge results from circumstances, practices, and happenings that have personal and affective meanings to the teachers themselves. Golombek (1998) elaborated on teachers' "personal practical knowledge" which Elbaz (1981), Clandinin (1985), and Clandinin and Connelly (1986, 1995) have defined. Golombek (1998) drew on the support of teachers' experiential knowledge from Dewey, Elbaz, and Clandinin and Connelly and expanded their view that teachers' personal practical knowledge is not only moral and affective, but also consequential because teachers' knowledge and actions affect students and teachers alike. From data elicited from two L2 teachers, Golombek (1998) reported four kinds of personal practical knowledge:

1. Knowledge of self: the identities the teachers refer to as they reconstruct their experience, such as language learner, teacher, and spouse;
2. Knowledge of subject matter: the disciplinary knowledge that a teacher uses in the classroom, such as input from readings, classes, professors, and other experiences that shape their understandings of L2 learning and teaching;
3. Knowledge of instruction: the pedagogical knowledge teachers draw upon to teach and to make sense of their teaching, no matter general or specific, including knowledge of the role of teachers and students, the role of the classroom and the settings in language learning, the role of lesson plans, the objectives, evaluation of students and tasks, interaction with students; and

4. Knowledge of context: the institutional and sociopolitical setting along with the time, place, and actors within the setting. (pp. 451-2)

Golombek (1998) concluded that, through narrative reconstruction of two ESL teachers' experiences as teachers and learners, the teachers' knowledge was interwoven and thus used in a holistic way in response to the givens of context. Their personal practical knowledge was permeated with moral, affective, and consequential concerns of the strategies they used in the classroom.

Collinson (1996) explored how exemplary teachers exercised three forms of knowledge in ways that they could structure the physical, social, and intellectual environment of their classrooms. The three types of knowledge are—

1. Professional knowledge: subject matter, curricular, and pedagogical knowledge;
2. Interpersonal knowledge: relationships with students, the educational community, and the local community;
3. Intrapersonal knowledge: reflection, ethics, and dispositions. (p.1)

Collinson concluded from the description of the exemplary teachers she studied that teaching is a “holistic and complex web that reflects [teachers’] ways of thinking and ways of being” (p. 15-16) How and why these teachers make decisions is closely associated with their beliefs, assumptions, and the dispositions they hold. Teachers not only need to continuously update their professional knowledge on their own initiative, rely on interpersonal knowledge to interact with the educational community, but also to employ intrapersonal knowledge for introspection and reflection.

In ESL teaching, Day and Conklin (1992) studied 57 ESL pre-service teachers in master's level teacher education programs in the United States and found that the respondents did not share consensus in the emphasis of the four types of knowledge—content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and support knowledge:

1. Content knowledge: English language courses in syntax, semantics, phonology, and pragmatics, and the literary and cultural aspects of the English language;

2. Pedagogic knowledge: knowledge of teaching strategies, beliefs, and practices, regardless of the focus of the subject matter, such as classroom management, motivation, decision making;
3. Pedagogic content knowledge: the knowledge of how to represent content knowledge in diverse ways that students can understand, the knowledge of how students come to understand the subject matter, what difficulties they are likely to encounter when learning it, what misconceptions interfere with learning, and how to overcome these problems, such as teaching the four skills;
4. Support knowledge: the knowledge of the various disciplines that inform our approach to the learning and teaching of English, such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, research methods, second language acquisition, linguistics. (Day, n.d., p. 3-4)

In EFL settings of Taiwan, Lin's (2000) qualitative research studied what professional knowledge elementary English teachers should have, using the hermeneutic circle. Through interviews with college professors and teachers currently teaching English to children, Lin (2000) concluded that for quality teaching elementary English teachers should have subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of general elementary education.

From her review of the literature on the nature of teacher's knowledge, Liu (2002) summarized that the knowledge an elementary English teacher has should cover four categories—subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and context knowledge. She found in her case study that the elementary English teacher relied on subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in her lesson preparation. Pedagogical content knowledge, context knowledge, and general pedagogical knowledge interacted with each other and affected the interactive teaching. All the four kinds of knowledge the teacher had influenced her postactive reflection.

In sum, elementary English teachers' beliefs may incorporate beliefs about self, beliefs about context, beliefs about subject matter, and beliefs about curriculum and instruction. However, the types of beliefs, being constantly evolving, may have been woven into one belief system and been applied holistically and fluidly in response to the particulars of the school context.

## **SOURCES OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS**

How do teachers develop their beliefs? Social contexts are never static, and McGillicuddy-De Lisi and Subramanian (1996) defined three processes by which people generate beliefs. Some beliefs are directly adopted from the culture. Some are shaped by the experiences framed by the culture. For instance, each individual shares similar experiences as a child, as a member of a family and a community, and as a parent or teacher. These experiences shape their beliefs about children, development, and overall schooling. Last, personal beliefs are constructed in the course of transactions between changing individuals and changing cultures.

Shulman (1987) concluded that teachers' knowledge base comes from four sources: accumulated content knowledge, educational materials and structures, formal teacher education, and "wisdom of practice," that is, from practical experience. Elbaz (1981, 1983) believed that teacher's practical knowledge stems from inner or outer experience, while Golombek (1998) posited that L2 teachers' experience as teachers, learners, and persons outside the classroom, personal and interpersonal factors, and professional knowledge all contribute to teachers' personal practical knowledge. Each context reshapes the teachers' knowledge, as this knowledge is exercised to meet the particular givens.

Grossman (1988) said that multiple sources form teachers' knowledge. "Apprenticeship of observation," Lortie (1975) suggested, teacher education, and classroom teaching experience contribute to the development of pedagogical content knowledge, while disciplinary knowledge in teacher education helps to develop prospective teachers' subject matter knowledge and curricular knowledge. Grossman & Richert (1988) reported that six novice English teachers acquired their conceptions of the subject matter from the coursework of teacher education and general pedagogical knowledge from field experiences, such as classroom organization and management.

The beliefs of ESL pre-service teachers in Johnson's (1994) study emerged from images (1) of their formal language learning experiences, (2) of their informal language learning experiences, (3) of themselves as ESL teachers, and (4) of the teacher

preparation program. The elementary English teacher in Liu's (2002) study built her knowledge base through apprenticeship of observation, teacher education, practical teaching experience and reflection, workshop experience, and use of the teacher's guide and other materials. Among these, apprenticeship of observation, teaching experience, and reflection were reported to have contributed the most. Richards and Lockhart (1996) summarized from existing research that the sources of L2 teachers' beliefs may be drawn from (1) their own experience as language learners, (2) experience of what works best, (3) established practice, (4) personality factors, (5) educationally based or research-based principles, and (6) principles derived from an approach or method. Tai, et al. (2000) studied 20 elementary English teachers and found that they had different pedagogical content knowledge. The teachers' accumulated teaching experience, formal teacher education courses, and English language competence all contributed to the development of pedagogical content knowledge in this group of Taiwanese elementary teachers.

To sum up from the literature, even though the teachers' beliefs tend to blend into one system and that system is used holistically as an (interpretation) frame, various sources of teachers' beliefs are still recognizable. They include personality factors, prior learning or teaching experiences, teacher education, the teaching contexts, apprenticeship of observation, and related reading of either research findings or other materials. However, much more research on teachers' beliefs has been done on pre-service teachers and on the effect of teacher education. What do these empirical studies inform us of teachers' beliefs and practice?

Goodman (1988) reported that the perspectives the pre-service teachers held in teaching stemmed from earlier experiences as pupils, and that helped them make sense of new information. These pre-service teachers viewed teaching primary as a problem of control which they needed to resolve at work prior to facilitating children's growth. Having expressed beliefs that led to their actions, these teachers, however, had a variety of guiding images and teaching strategies associated with their verbal expression. Pajares (1992) said that the visual guiding images prospective teachers bring with them

into teacher education programs are based on early experiences as students, characterized by Lortie (1975) as “apprenticeship of observation.” Calderhead and Robson (1991) identified the nature and scope of images pre-service teachers brought with them into teacher education and how these images interacted with other forms of knowledge and were translated into action. Weinstein (1988, 1989, 1990) discovered from his studies that pre-service teachers tend to overvalue affective student outcomes instead of cognitive student outcomes. Hence, he proposed that narrative and biography can be employed to better understand how early experiences contribute to shaping their beliefs about teachers and teaching before helping them to develop a more balanced view. Johnson (1994) found that pre-service ESL teachers lacked adequate exposure to alternative instructional practices and tended to rely on their formal language learning experiences and to teach the way they were taught. Consistent with Goodman’s (1988) suggestion to offer concrete and illustrative examples in teacher education, Johnson (1994) posited that providing pre-service teachers concrete models of alternative instructional practices to observe and experience creates opportunities for them to improve professional perspectives. These researchers all suggested facilitating professional development through cultivating skills for self monitoring and reflective teaching (Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Goodman, 1988; Johnson, 1994; Weinstein, 1989, 1990).

Feiman-Nemser (1983) said that teacher education offers pre-service teachers, when learning to teach, both formal knowledge through coursework and first-hand experience through fieldwork. However, it is not clear what the knowledge base of this profession should consist of. Grossman and Richert’s (1986) two-year study on six novice teachers’ knowledge growth in the teacher education programs found that the kind of knowledge these novice teachers acquired from coursework and field experiences differed qualitatively. From fieldwork, they learned practical survival skills—general pedagogic knowledge, such as classroom management and organization, students’ understanding and misunderstanding of their subject matter. From their coursework, they reported acquiring their conceptions of the subject matter for teaching

and their sense of pedagogical ideals. Zheng (1992) concluded from his study that novice ESL teachers had not developed their knowledge of the students taught or pedagogical content knowledge. Therefore, beginning teachers were less able to employ appropriate teaching strategies in order to transform subject matter knowledge into forms that were pedagogically powerful in teaching students of various backgrounds.

Smith (1996) discovered that ESL teachers' assumptions and principles governing their teaching approaches are unique to each individual. In other words, teachers are inclined to choose and modify theoretical concepts based as much on their own personal beliefs as on the need to support their practical classroom situation. Individual beliefs and prior experiences of what works well to achieve their instructional goals in the specific context are the direct references for decision making. Connelly and Clandinin (1986) proclaimed that what distinguishes experienced teachers from novice teachers is that they continuously know the rhythm of various cycles, a rhythm in which social order of the setting, teacher's personal practical knowledge, and cyclical structure regarding contact time, pace, curriculum, and content are interwoven.

In Borg's (1998) study, an experienced EFL teacher through in-service training recognized that the grammar-learning strategies he used as an L2 learner could be put to good use, even though they contradicted a communicative approach, and thus he initiated a process of redefining his beliefs about grammar teaching. Prior learning experience, therefore, should be one of the prominent factors contributing to teacher characteristics. On the effect of teacher education, Borg (1998) indicated that in-service training has an impact on teachers' classroom practice only when it is consistent with the teachers' existing beliefs. The EFL teacher in Borg's study learned willingly from teacher training the notion of learning styles, and it had an influential formative effect on his pedagogical system. Both his educational and professional experiences accounted for most of his instructional decisions.

Horwitz (1985) said that prospective teachers attended her foreign language methods class with pre-existing belief systems, which may have inhibited their receptiveness to the new information, and an issue which should be directly addressed

in class. Yang (2000) supported Horwitz's (1985) findings with evidence from a sample of prospective Taiwanese EFL teachers that language teaching is deeply rooted in personal experience and thus resistant to change. Like those researchers mentioned earlier, they both indicated a need for prospective teachers to make their beliefs explicit prior to monitoring their practice through critical reflection. Congruent with what Horwitz and Yang found, Mok (1994) added that teachers at different stages of their teaching careers have different needs, and that teacher educators should note this difference in designing teacher education programs to meet various needs.

Chu (2001) discovered that prospective EFL teachers in Taiwan had a significant attitude change in favor of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at the end of a teacher training program. However, those teachers' positive beliefs about the Audio Lingual Method were deeply rooted in prior experiences and were maintained unchanged. Yet, Pajares (1992) asserted that researchers have recognized the power of early enculturation of belief development but have not explored it enough.

EFL education at the elementary school level is a new feature in Taiwan since the 2001 school year. What are EFL teachers' beliefs about elementary English teaching? Where do their beliefs stem from? And how do their beliefs shape and are re-shaped by the practice and context? An inquiry into these questions should be able to shed new light on the new phenomena in public schooling in Taiwan.

## **PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS**

Johnson (1994) wrote that an investigation of teachers' beliefs should include what the teachers say their beliefs are, what the teachers intend, how they behave, and what they actually do. Comparing teachers' planning with their implementation decisions may further manifest teachers' beliefs and concerns when they translate their thought into action, and better acknowledge the complex process of teaching, as well as its effectiveness (Clark & Peterson, 1986). In this section, first, I will define planning and implementation. Then, I will discuss what the literature and empirical studies have

found about why and how teachers plan and implement their classes in both general education and ESL/EFL teaching.

### **Teacher Planning**

Clark and Peterson (1986) have said that studying teacher planning is challenging, for it is not only a practical activity but also a psychological process. Planning, therefore, has been defined by researchers as “the things that teachers do when they say that they are planning” (Clark, 1983, p.7). On the other hand, theories and methods of cognitive psychology have been drawn upon by another group of researchers to examine how teachers take into account means and ends and compose a framework which is in concert with personal visions and which guides future actions. Following the categories of preactive, interactive, and postactive thoughts Jackson (1968) has distinguished, Crist, Marx, and Peterson (1974, cited in Clark & Peterson, 1986) and researchers thereafter have retained the distinction between interactive and preactive thoughts and decisions due to their qualitative difference. Conversely, researchers seem to have combined teachers’ preactive and postactive thoughts under one category of “teacher planning,” since the teaching process is a cyclical one, and the distinction between these two phases has become obscured (Clark and Peterson, 1986).

Clark and Yinger (1979b) found that elementary teachers planned for three primary purposes: First, they planned to reduce uncertainty and anxiety and to feel confident and secure with a sense of direction. Second, planning helped them to collect, organize, and learn the materials, to arrange time, and to construct activity flow. Finally, preactive planning guided the interactive process of instruction, such as how to organize students, how to set up the physical classroom environment, what activity to start with, and what to base on for teaching and evaluation. McCutcheon (1980) added that some teachers planned to meet the administrative requirement by turning in their plans to the school regularly. Some teachers also made thorough plans for substitute teachers because they especially needed background information about a specific classroom or school. Experienced teachers during a school-year course engaged in eight types of

planning—weekly, daily, long range, short range, yearly, term planning, unit planning, and lesson planning (Yinger, 1977; Clark & Yinger, 1979b). Among them, unit planning, weekly, and daily planning were done most often and were most important. Lesson planning, however, was never an important part claimed by experienced teachers, but was heavily emphasized in teacher education (Clark & Yinger, 1979b).

The findings of several studies posited that the structural and social arrangements of the classroom were always defined early by the teacher, changed little throughout the school year, and exercised a strong influence on the content of instruction and the sequence of topics (Clark & Elmore, 1979; Clark & Peterson, 1986). Clark and Elmore (1979) reported that a second grade teacher drew on her review and reflection on the previous year in her yearly planning, modified the content, sequence, and pace of instruction with her experiences using the published materials, and established a sense of ownership and control of content to be taught. Taylor (1970) indicated that teachers started the course-planning process with the context of teaching as their first concern. Next, they took into consideration students' interest and teaching objectives. Zahorik (1975) found from 194 teachers that the decisions teachers made prior to teaching could be put into eight categories—pupil activities, content, learning objectives, materials, diagnosis, organization, instruction, and evaluation. Among them, the most frequently mentioned decisions were pupil activities, content, and objectives. It manifested that teachers' planning is not always a linear process that starts from specifying the objectives, as Tyler (1950) has suggested.

Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978) and Borko and Shavelson (1991) both discovered that teachers spent most of their planning time on the content to be taught, then on the strategies and activities to be arranged in the instructional process. The smallest amount of time was spent on objectives. Brown and Wendel (1993) revealed that novice secondary teachers did not believe in a need to plan for classroom management, or what to do when unforeseen events arose. Yet, classroom control was a pivotal issue when they viewed themselves as knowledge transmitters. Planning and teaching content was their primary concern, as existing research suggests. For good

teaching, they believed in using a prescribed planning model, in adopting instructional approaches their own teachers used, and in routinely utilizing commercially-produced materials to save time in planning.

Chen (2000) found that social studies teachers in Taiwan used mental planning and seldom wrote detailed lesson plans as taught in teacher education training. They complained that teacher education programs transmitted Western theories and approaches which were not practical in the local context. Within the constraint of preparing students for the entrance examination for high schools, the teachers focused their planning on the textbook content, while others strived to include more current events in instruction. In this social and cultural context, the informants considered that advice from experienced teachers played a more helpful and crucial role in teacher planning than what the teacher education program had taught them. Tai's (1999) grounded theory study showed that EFL teachers at the junior high school level went through a process of curriculum negotiation when they recognized that the curriculum was governed by many pre-determined conditions, and that they should identify the features of their teaching context before they decided what must or could be taught. The teachers' expectations were reported to have changed due to their interaction with context-specific conditions, while the teachers' knowledge evolved in the meantime. In Liu's (2002) study, the EFL teacher opted to select textbooks from publishers who could offer many teaching resources in order to focus the limited time and effort available for planning for learning activities. In the teacher's preactive planning, she modified the sequence of topics based on the difficulty levels of the units with an aim to finish teaching the entire texts within the planned time range. Aligned with the above-mentioned research findings, either content coverage or activities were these EFL teachers' primary concerns.

### **Implementation Decisions**

Implementation decisions, according to Smith (1996), refer to how pupils are arranged for certain tasks, language learning focus, teacher's role, teacher-centered

versus student-centered tasks, and the allocation of time. And yet, Wehlage (1981) expressed that, based on his experiences working with student teachers and schools, teachers rarely reflect upon their assumptions, beliefs, and practice. Some have suggested that institutional policies and practice may hinder teachers' reflection, some argued that the context of the teacher may affect teachers' reflection (Goodman, 1985; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). Konopak and Williams (1994) found inconsistency between the elementary teachers' beliefs about vocabulary learning and the materials and routines they chose. The results showed that what teachers do is mostly guided by what they think, but some other research also has manifested that teachers' beliefs are not always realized in the classroom. In another study, Wilson, Konopak, and Readence (1992) examined an English teacher's content area reading beliefs, decisions, and instruction. Both consistencies and inconsistencies between theoretical beliefs and classroom instruction were found. This teacher made instruction choices consistent with her beliefs on the written instruments but expressed theoretical beliefs inconsistent with her classroom practice. And the researchers attributed the inconsistencies to the environmental factors of the classroom.

On the other hand, researchers have defined teachers' interactive decisions as conscious choices made by the teacher to implement a specific action during classroom instruction (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Clark and Peterson concluded, based on the results of related studies and given that interactive decision-making is a rather intense demand, that teachers averaged making one interactive decision every two minutes. Therefore, Shavelson and Stern (1981) argued that routines, which Yinger (1977) found to be the principal product of teacher planning, are employed to minimize the conscious decision-making load on the teacher during interactive teaching, while activity flow is maintained and students' behavior is thus predictable. Doyle (1986, 1992) posited that teachers use tasks to frame both curriculum and pedagogy since tasks are intertwined with the structure and flow of action in classroom environments. When the teaching procedures are routine and familiar to students, the flow of classroom activities will become smooth and well ordered. On the other hand, the causes which prompted

teachers' interactive decision-making were reported to mostly originate with the teacher or the environment, while student behavior appeared to be the sole antecedent of teachers' interactive decisions (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

In ESL teaching, Nunan (1992) found that most of the interactive decisions nine teachers made were on classroom management and organization, and that their prior planning decisions served as a structure or framework for the successive interactive decisions. The six pre-service ESL teachers Johnson (1992a) studied reported making interactive decisions to promote student understanding (37% of all interactive decisions), to enhance student motivation and participation (17%), or to retain instructional management (15%).

Along this line of research, Clark and Peterson (1986) posited that experienced teachers in Calderhead's studies seemed to have better developed knowledge structures about classroom teaching and learning situations than novice teachers did, such as the home backgrounds of students, the range of knowledge and skills to expect from students, the likely number of students who might need special help, and the types of misbehaviors and discipline problems that might occur (Calderhead, 1981, 1983, cited in Clark & Peterson, 1986). The difference between the high and low efficacy English teachers in Lin's (2002) study at the elementary school level stemmed from their varied perceptions of sources of efficacy. The two teachers generally employed similar teaching strategies and routines but different approaches in classroom management. Opposite to the existing research, the high efficacy teacher resorted to authoritative teacher control in classroom management, while the low efficacy teacher tended to use a humanistic approach and felt frustrated at students' discipline problems in class.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) have categorized the instructional routines in ESL/EFL teaching into three phases—presentation, such as presenting a dialogue, new language functions; practice, through certain activity to practice the new language forms or functions; and then feedback, giving to the learner. Celce-Murcia (1991) said that the typical sequence of class was presentation, practice, and communication, starting with a warm-up and ending with a brief summary or review, a quick comprehension check, or

an assignment that helped students relate what they had learned to their real life. Cheng (2000) observed two elementary English teachers. Both of them followed the routines of review, presenting new materials, and practice through various activities. Though the more experienced teacher tended to employ more varied teaching activities, the two teachers mostly did whole-class practice due to the constraints of time, big classes, and limited kinds of teaching props.

Chiang (2000) studied the English teaching at a private elementary school in Taiwan and found that classroom instruction was mainly composed of activities and games. The constraints of big classes with multiple competence levels challenged the teachers' lesson planning. Different from other subjects, disruptive student behaviors arising from out-of-control situations in playing games impacted the teachers' skills for classroom management. Upper-grade students were generally less motivated in attitudes and class participation. Liu (2002) reported that her case-study teacher utilized very limited content knowledge in her instruction. This elementary teacher's pedagogical content knowledge primarily resulted from her cram school teaching experience and constantly evolving experience in the elementary school setting while the school did not provide enough assistance for her knowledge construction and development. The teacher spent most of her efforts attracting students' attention to learn through fun teaching and activities that allowed students to move around, hoping to decrease disruptive behavior and maintain a good atmosphere in class.

To sum up, the research on teachers' decision making has opened a window to better understand teachers' cognitive worlds. However, Freeman (1996) has pointed out that the way contexts of place and time shape what teachers think and do in their teaching should definitely be scrutinized. He proposed that context, when referring to place, can include levels such as classroom, school, community, and national levels which encompass policies, expectations, and cultures of teaching; when referring to time, it can include the contexts of teachers' life histories and professional life spans, and how all these influence the teachers' thinking about teaching and learning. He said,

Together these contexts of place and time provide macro frames in which the defined processes of decision making operate. To fully understand teaching as decision making, one must grapple with and account for these frames of context. (p. 363)

But none of the empirical studies to date conducted in elementary school settings in Taiwan explored the contexts of place and time in enough depth to reflect the national policies and expectations on the reformed school construct, when the researchers put their focus of attention on the practice on the local level. Therefore, the research design of this study aims to focus on the teachers for an extended period of time, in order to depict how different levels of context factors exert influence in shaping and reshaping individual teachers' beliefs and practice.

### **Context Factors in Teaching**

Clandinin and Connelly and others (1995) described the context where school teachers work as teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, but as for the phenomena of elementary English teaching this study aims to explore, the context, more as Freeman (1996) has posited, includes context at various levels—classroom, school, community, municipal, and national. As described in the previous chapter, educational reform has given rise to a discontinuity in new and old educational goals and correspondent pedagogy (Spindler, 1997). In this section, I will first review the literature on school-based curricular model on the national level that comprises issues such as teachers' knowledge in curriculum development, instructional leadership, loose coupling mechanism of school, and parent-school partnership. Then, studies done in Taiwan on EFL teaching and learning will be addressed.

#### **NEW CURRICULAR PARADIGM IN TAIWAN**

EFL programs, from the school year of 2001, are nested under the school-based curricular model at the elementary school level. Marsh (1992) has stated that school-based curriculum development (SBCD) has covered a wide range of variations in many Western countries over the last 20 years. The SBCD model rejects the

top-down approach in favor of centrally-based curriculum development. Instead of a head office in an educational system deciding what each school should teach, how it should teach, and how it should be assessed, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) (1979) says that SBCD requires a continuous process of evaluation and decision-making at the school level for selecting, creating, and modifying the curriculum in response to the specific needs of the teachers, students, and parents involved.

### **COMMON PROBLEMS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS**

Marsh (1992) indicated that the common problems of this curricular model include lack of time, expertise, finances, external restrictions (such as those from parents and employers), and a threatening school climate (e.g., lack of effective and sympathetic leadership). Sabar (1985) recommended a cautious attitude toward the positive evaluations of SBCD; further research, he wrote, is still needed on long-term effects. Sabar also shared some concerns raised by SBCD practitioners in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Israel: the mixed quality of curriculum materials, complicated teamwork relations, challenges in adapting teacher education programs to new needs, the need for ongoing in-service training, the importance of systematic research and experience, the rearrangement of organizational structures in schools, and partnership-building between the teachers on the periphery and in the center.

To document the progress of SBCD in Taiwan, Chen and Chung (2000) visited six elementary schools and six junior high schools as the first stage of a two-year research project. The teachers' professional confidence and readiness in developing the schools' curriculum appeared still to be years away. After exploring the new curricular model for two years, most of the administrators and teachers were puzzled and frustrated by the lack of a clear picture and definite direction of the SBCD approach. They also expressed concern over the possible consequences of losing parents' trust and causing a decrease in students' competence levels in various school subjects. The school administrators questioned the teachers' willingness, skills, and ability to

implement the new curriculum, while the teachers complained of a lack of administrative support and difficulties in team teaching and sharing responsibilities with colleagues. They further identified in-service training, workshops, and external advisory specialists as urgent needs.

The SBCD model attempts to re-distribute power among pupils, parents, teachers, and community groups. While SBCD has made education a more participatory process, however, CERI (1979) has indicated that the distribution of responsibility may create its own problems. The framework of SBCD requires not only that teachers be educated, but also all who are involved in the process of curriculum development. This curriculum reform demands a high degree of competence and dedication, and this is especially hard to realize when it comes to the volunteer roles of parents and community partners. The credibility of the SBCD model can be undermined if the voice of any party involved is not taken into account. The SBCD model is such that “only by changing all the necessary factors can change really take place” (CERI, 1979, p. 31)!

Fan and Wu’s (2002) case study on an elementary school’s SBCD reported findings consistent with the existing literature (Chen, 2002; Tang, 2002). Due to insufficient related knowledge and time, the teachers and parents involved had a very limited level of participation and decision making in curriculum development. Though various parties were invited to participate, the traditional top-down model of decision making was retained, and the final decisions remained on the shoulders of the principal who employed a controlling leadership style. Negative experiences impacted the faculty’s willingness to participate in SBCD, such as feeling stressed out by an unduly heavy workload, feeling their quality of instruction and quality of life impeded, feeling insecure and doubtful about the curriculum quality. Contrary to what the reform urged, the teachers’ old habit of reliance on textbooks did not emancipate them from the rigidity of the standardized curriculum they had experienced in the past.

From the above-mentioned two cases, the re-distribution of power, leading to supporting teachers’ professionalism and autonomy in curriculum development, seems unlikely to happen at this initial stage of reform. On the contrary, teachers will probably

take on extra work in developing school curriculum on top of their regular teaching load. I suspected that it would be the reality that elementary teachers in this study would have to face.

### **TEACHERS' LACK OF CURRICULAR KNOWLEDGE AND RELATED TRAINING**

Scholars say that Grades 1-9 Curriculum in Taiwan has incorporated important concepts, such as school-based curriculum, curriculum integration, null curriculum, competency-based curriculum, and accountability and has brought forth a big challenge to practitioners (Chen, T. L., 1999; Chou, P. I., 2002; Liaw, 2000). The difficulties of the above cases seem to lie in the teachers' lack of knowledge to transform the national guidelines into practice and the principal's leadership style in respective school contexts. P. I. Chou (2002) posited that teachers may not have the ability and knowledge to adequately transform the big volume of curriculum guidelines for all the subjects into practice due to two reasons—the lack of training in curricular design and theories, and the inherent problems in the guidelines. Currently-teaching elementary teachers used to follow very detailed curricular standards regardless of students' individual differences, but now they are asked to interpret and conceptualize the basic, long-term curricular goals in the guidelines into concrete, applicable teaching objectives. Without sufficient training, they may find it formidable. In addition, the connections between the goals and proficiency index, between the formats of proficiency index across subjects, and between the content and writing of the proficiency index in various subjects, all have discrepancies in themselves. It gives rise to confusion for the teachers and administrators at the local level.

Both Liaw (2000) and P. I. Chou (2002) proposed approaches for teachers to integrate subjects at the elementary school level. Yet, curriculum integration is not simply an organizational device requiring realignment in lesson plans across various subject areas. Rather, it challenges ways of thinking about what schools are for, from what sources curricula emerge, and how knowledge is used (Jacobs, 1989). Curriculum integration begins with the idea that sources of curriculum ought to be problems, issues,

and concerns posed by life itself. In practice, possible barriers for curriculum integration result from the teachers' prior expertise and professional development (Jacobs, 1989). Almost all the teachers and educators have built their professional identities in an educational system organized by subject-matter lines (Tang, 2002). It challenges the existing ideologies that elementary school teachers commonly share, as well as programs of teacher education, which must turn their effort toward cultivating practitioners with multi-disciplinary knowledge and encouraging creative, collaborative instruction between colleagues from different disciplines (Chou, P. I., 2002; Hsieh, 2002; Jacobs, 1989).

Even though the municipal and school levels have held workshops and seminars for teachers to upgrade their ability and knowledge in SBCD (Chen, 2002), an encouraging leadership and administrative support is still needed to facilitate teachers' participation and efforts in curriculum development and implementation. The question arises: Do school principals have the competence to take up the instructional leadership role to guide the curriculum design in general or in specific subjects, such as English?

### **THE PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

School principals everywhere have been given leadership roles in instruction and curriculum on top of the administrative leadership role they have primarily played in the past. Instructional leadership originated in the Effective School Movement in the 1960s when the equity of opportunity for education and learning achievements were the issues under close scrutiny. This movement concluded that the role and function of school principals' instructional leadership should be underscored to contribute to building effective schools (Lezotte, n.d.). It was found that the principals of effective schools generally can draw up concrete goals for school development, actively participate in curriculum- and instruction-related activities, have high expectations toward teaching and learning, and demonstrate sufficient knowledge in administrative and instructional leaderships (Lezotte, n.d.; Yang, C. S., 2002).

Johnston's (1992) study of three elementary principals rated as outstanding instructional leaders manifested three characteristics shared among them: a clear vision of school development, a view of leadership as a team effort, and active participation in various school activities. They believed in managing and supervising curriculum and instruction. They took the initiative to build active learning environments for students, teachers, and parents, and to promote teachers' professional growth. They also actively communicated with related parties. The factors which contribute to instructional leadership are principals' beliefs (Dwyer et al., 1983), received professional training (Corkill, 1995; Sabo, 1992), sufficient time spent at school (Fullan, 1982), amiable school atmosphere, support from community representatives and higher authorities of education (Yang, C. S., 2002).

Tsai and Wang (2002) reported seven factors influencing a principal's performance in instructional leadership in their case study on a principal in a village, small-size school in southern Taiwan. They are: personal characteristics, accumulated experiences in curriculum development, the size of school, teachers' characteristics of this school, a second facilitator of the school change, support from the local authority of education, and the characteristics of parents in a village community in southern Taiwan. This principal's instructional leadership was highly contextualized and was coupled with his personal characteristics, such as dedication, caring about the needs of teachers and students, leadership skills in interpersonal communication and negotiation.

Yang (1999) examined what predicaments elementary principals had encountered in the reformed curricular model and what possible solutions were available. He concluded that when elementary principals took the instructional leadership role, their major predicaments were the lack of knowledge in curriculum and instruction, insufficient time, and the unsound system of principal evaluation. For effective improvement of instructional leadership, the principals should have both pre-service and in-service training. Higher authorities of education should decrease unnecessary meetings or activities so the principals can devote enough time on campus and minimize their interference with schools and principals. C. S. Yang (2002)

especially pointed out that the most damaging task for the principals was to take charge of school building construction, which consumes too much time. A better system of evaluation should be built to correct the focus on rating only the principals' administrative leadership, as in the past, and to reinforce the principal's role of instructional leadership.

When implementing the new Grades 1-9 Curriculum at the local level, Wang (2001) stressed the importance of the principal's instructional leadership. His task is to guide his school through a transformation process in which the school curriculum can be compiled with not only a basis consistent with the original design in the guidelines, but also an accommodation of local factors to a certain degree. Lu (2002) recognized the first urgent needs for taking the leadership roles as empowering the principals with professional knowledge in instructional leadership and the principals' actively communicating and collaborating with faculty.

When individual schools are given the accountability to operate and enact effective schoolwide curriculum with focused instructional and administrative support, the malfunction of the school mechanism might derive from the discontinuity between new and old educational goals and pedagogy in the educational reform, as "loose coupling" was found in the 1970s in the schools of the United States.

### **LOOSE COUPLING IN THE SCHOOL MECHANISM**

In the 1970s and 1980s, researchers and theorists did a wide-range search for descriptive models for school institutions. The concept of "loose coupling" was proposed by Karl Weick (1976) among the studies on issues of school system administration, management and leadership, culture and alternative organization models taken from the business world (Lack, n.d.). Firestones (1984) views "loose coupling" as a sensitizing concept in the study of schools as organizations and the relationship between instructional configurations and organizational structure of schools. Popularized by Weick (1976) and developed by Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) and Meyer and Rowan (1977), this approach views schools as loosely coupled systems, in

which subunits, or “stable subassemblies” in Weick’s term, are responsive to each other but separate and independent from one another (Weick, 1976). Glassman’s (1973) definition said that when two units have few variables in common or share weak variables, they are loosely coupled. On the contrary, tight coupling is a situation where rules are followed based on shared consensus and a system of inspection combined with feedback to improve compliance (Weick, 1982). Deal and Cellotti (1977) said that loose coupling refers to two organizational characteristics when applied to districts or schools: “the absence of tightly regulated linkages within or between organizational levels”, and the “lack of agreement within or between levels,” for instance, the members of various units hold “different, or even contrary, perceptions of the school setting and its functioning” (p. 14). This concept suggests that, instead of treating a school as a rationally coordinated whole, administrators have limited abilities to shape, coordinate, supervise, or evaluate the instructional process and product. Meyer and Rowan (1978) claimed that instruction is “decoupled” from the administrative structure of schools.

What does loose coupling reflect and imply for school organization and administration? Deal and Celotti (1977) reported three general conclusions from their five-year studies on the relationship between instruction and organizational structure and process in 34 school districts in San Francisco. First, teachers’ methods of instruction were unaffected by organizational or administrative factors at the school or district level. Second, whether teachers worked with a teaching team or not, the way teachers worked together was unaffected by higher echelons. And third, the three levels of educational organization—district, school, and classroom—operated rather autonomously, which showed vertical and lateral segments only loosely relating to one another. Loose coupling is viewed as a means of adaptation of the organization “to survive in a complex, turbulent environment when tight control of activities is impossible” (Deal and Celotti, 1977, p. 18). With basic categories and characteristics controlled, such as place, subject, and role, school administrators know that activity assessment, coordination or inspection might encourage conflict and undermine support, and only “take it as a matter of confidence or faith” (Deal and Celotti, 1977,

p.18). Stromquist (1980) found that administrators of community-based local education agencies only manifested control over key areas that affected the school's legitimacy. What constituted "teacher," "student," and "subject matter" were carefully defined while little attention was paid to supervision of course content and instructional methodology.

Weick (1976) indicated that in schools sets of elements can be coupled—intentions and actions, yesterday and tomorrow, means and ends, and process and outcome. Adding to Weick's list, Firestone (1984) studied the coupling of roles, for example, teacher and administrators, and teacher and teacher. He specified seven important coupling mechanisms and measured the degree of coupling in schools through a multisite, multirespondent survey approach since the looseness of coupling may vary among units of the school. The seven coupling dimensions he used to measure the degree of coupling are horizontal communication, vertical communication, centralization of instruction, centralization of resources, rule enforcement, goal consensus, and morale. Firestone and his colleague repeatedly came to the same conclusion—almost all the elementary schools in their studies had more centralized authority over instruction and higher goal consensus than all the high schools, even after size, specialization, and gender composition variables were controlled.

Deal and Celotti (1977) said that structural looseness has multiple advantages. It may help organizations 1) to adapt to changing conditions more easily than tightly coupled organizations, 2) to save time and energy supervising instruction and the staff, and thus 3) to lessen conflicts when autonomy is given to personnel, instead of dealing with the complexities of collaboration, negotiation, and interpersonal strain. Loose coupling reduces coordination costs—time, money, and skills to hold meetings, coordination, policy development, planning, and evaluation activities. On a personal level, teachers, rather than being coordinated or controlled, view themselves as self-reliant professionals. However, loose coupling may reduce individual and organizational effectiveness. Teachers complain about the loneliness and isolation of their roles, which affects overall teacher morale. Administrative control is less easily

maintained, and loyalty and authority tend to go downhill. Without basic consensus, structural looseness may contribute to conflict and frequent turnover of educational innovations. Innovation and change without broad-based organizational support will always cause problems. As these two researchers have found, little agreement between superintendents and principals, between principals and teachers, or among teachers themselves about important aspects of organization on a daily-basis gives rise to distrust and rumor.

As Weick (1976) has suggested, Firestone (1984) concluded that tight coupling should promote change quickly throughout a school. He claimed goal consensus, rule enforcement, and horizontal communication are three coupling mechanisms found to relate to enhancing change and tighter coupling in a school. Likewise, Deal and Celotti (1977) suggested that administrators carefully delegate responsibility, define goals and objectives and then create policies and roles to achieve those goals and objectives. They also should recognize and exercise personal influence in agreement with the sources of energy inherent in the school organization. These suggestions seem appropriate to all the parents, teachers, administrators, and students involved in the school community at the time of reform, where reorganization of both instructional and administrative structures is required to subsume a consensus of goals through close collaboration at the school level. Therefore, the concept of loose coupling may apply to every party attending the school community. As for the other partner in the school-based model—parents—little research has been done, especially in the school context of Taiwan. What do we know from the existing literature in various areas about parents' participation and partnership in elementary English teaching and learning?

#### **PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

Educators and researchers generally acknowledge the interconnectedness between school and family as an important avenue to successful child development and school performance (Stevens, Hughes, & Nurss, 1993; Lareau, 1987, 2000). In this recent educational reform in Taiwan, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has

acknowledged the importance of parent-school partnership in education and specified the need to include parents and community representatives in developing Grades 1-9 school-based curriculum responsive to the local needs. Like instructional leadership, positive home-school relationship has been recognized as one of the correlates critical to effective schools (Lezotte, n.d.). Parents' values, perceptions, and efforts as well as past learning experiences, identified by Savignon (1976) as home environment or "out-of-classroom" variables, inform and generally circumscribe the lives of children and thus influence the outcome of schooling (Goodman, Goodman, & Hood, 1989). Parent-school partnership has been emphasized in this reformed, school-based curricular model in Taiwan. Yet, as in the study of Chen and Chung (2000) on SBCD, the parents and community members participating at the local level were not represented enough in the curriculum discussion at the school where Fan and Wu (2002) conducted their study.

Compared to Euro-American parents, Chinese parents tend to possess different values and beliefs underlying their child-rearing practices and styles of interaction with teachers at school. Chao (1992, 1993, 1994) indicated that the cultural notion of "training" proves to be a distinctive feature to describe the Chinese parenting. Chao (1993) stated that valuing education and scholarship has its roots in the thousands-year-long history of the Chinese people as a moral virtue, a means for upward mobility, and a way to honor your family and community. Tobin, Wu, and Davidson (1990) disclosed that to discipline or govern the child is a responsibility shared by parents, teachers, and adults interacting with the child, signaling an expression of their love and concern for that child. The notions of authority, conformity, self-discipline, and hard work are still emphasized in Chinese society, while teachers used to be viewed as the only authority in education (Stevenson & Lee, 1990). have teachers and parents moved toward more solid agreement in their beliefs and goals within the reformed construct as partners as claimed by the reform goals?

McWilliam, McMillen, Sloper, and McMillen (1997) examined four philosophical perspectives which underlie early education and child care programs

regarding their position on working with families. They are (1) families as victims, either dependent on the professionals for help or resenting professionals for having no trust in the family's ability to care about their child; (2) families as a necessary evil, believing that school and family are separate entities and have no need to be linked; (3) families as consumers, viewing parents as buyers or recipients of services, whose satisfaction is the key to a successful business; and (4) families as partners, seeing the relationship between parents and teachers as one of equal decision makers in the program operation. When the need to offer comprehensive services and family-focused practices is increasingly addressed in a drastically changing society, Lerner (1997) said that the principles of family support programs provide early childhood programs opportunities to improve practice. Family support programs focus their work on whole families instead of on pupils' individual needs. The Family Resource Coalition (1992, 1996) headquartered in Chicago has identified a set of guiding principles for program content and relations when working with families in the field of early education. According to Lerner (1997), the principles may have been elaborated on but have not changed significantly. The five principles are (1) partnership relationship: parents recruited to participate, volunteer, share decision making, and work as program staff, etc.; (2) empowerment: offering the knowledge and skills parents lack for empowerment; (3) cultural competence: parents bringing in their home culture and feeling accepted and valued to share in the school community; (4) services to build parenting strength: providing information and services to strengthen parenting skills and knowledge; and (5) voluntarism: enhancing the involvement of parents on a voluntary basis.

Wu (1998) found that most of the teachers in her study showed positive attitudes toward parent involvement, but the principals generally recognized that the methods currently used to facilitate parents' participation were not satisfactory enough. Principals showed more positive attitudes toward parent involvement than teachers. The scholars in Wu's (2001) study expressed that parents should serve as volunteers at school, attend school activities, and participate in the decision-making process at

school. However, the obstacles which kept parents from participation were the constraints and psychological factors parents had. What roles do parents usually play when participating at school? What philosophies do teachers embrace in relation to parents participating or not participating at school?

Inter-institutional linkages, as Lareau (2000) claimed, result from reasons other than values possessed by parents of different social classes and educational levels. Institutional standards, educational policy implications, changing cultural systems, and social structures all relate and explain parents' differential access to and participation in school. The MOE has clearly designated the important role of parents' involvement in education and parent-school partnership in the reformed construct, but how has this vision been put in practice? Although my study focuses mainly on the teachers' voices and perspectives and may not have been able to solicit data from parents of different social classes, this study can still help to demonstrate the micro-level social interaction process between teachers and parents and shed light on how teachers view parents and parent-school partnership building. Since a paradigm shift has taken place in elementary education, do recent studies on English teaching and learning reflect the desire for more parent involvement and greater partnership? Or what do the studies reveal about the phenomenon?

#### **STUDIES ON ENGLISH TEACHING/LEARNING AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL**

More and more discussions and studies on English teaching and learning (EFL) have been done at the elementary level since English education at elementary schools started recently and attracted the general public's attention. While some scholars have revealed their concerns about the adequate prerequisites and readiness for implementing English teaching at the elementary level (Chen, 1998; Dai, 1998; Huang, 1998; Liaw & Chen, 1998; Su, S. F., 1999b; Wei, 1999; Yu, 1998), Dai (2002) detailed the theoretical support from research in various areas for offering English programs to all elementary grades. He pointed out that implementing English teaching at the elementary level is especially a positive response to parents' expectations and provides equal opportunity

for education for the sake of social justice. Further, he reminded his constituents that learning a new culture and a holistic perspective as citizens in the global village should be deemed more important than learning a new language.

Scholars and experts have proposed insights and suggestions in this initial stage of elementary English teaching. Since Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been upheld as the mainstream teaching approach in the national guidelines for Grades 5-9 English curriculum for cultivating students' communicative competence, some scholars have elaborated and demonstrated how CLT classroom teaching would be implemented (Chen, T. L., 1998; Lin, 2000; Shih, 2001; Wang, 2002; Chan, 1999a, 1999b), while some found how differently (even wrongly) elementary teachers have interpreted it in their English teaching (Cheng, 2001; Chan, 1999b). Many of them have pinpointed a need for “eclectic” teaching methods and put much weight on introducing five teaching methods/approaches of TESOL methodology to satisfy the teachers' immediate needs for more effective practices in Taiwan (Chen, T. L., 1998; Chan, 1999a, 1999b). Those five teaching methods/approaches regarded as better approaches for elementary students—Totally Physical Response (TPR), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Audio-Lingual Method, Direct Method, and the Natural Approach—will be briefly discussed in the next sections.

1. Totally Physical Response (TPR)

This method upholds that listening fluency should be the goal at the beginning of foreign language learning as children acquire their first language. The learning strategy is to have students attend to English commands with physical response until they are naturally ready to show speaking, reading, and writing competencies. The teaching process starts with comprehension attained through teachers' modeling of commands with corresponding movements. Next, students listen and respond to the teacher's commands. Then, students say and respond to the commands, followed by variations the teacher gives by combining several commands. The emphasis at the initial stage of learning is on imperatives with movements to achieve comprehension. Meaning is the focus, and learners'

mistakes should be accepted as normal as young children learn to talk (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

This approach underscores training in communicative skills to properly use the language with various people in various contexts. The learning activities designed are for true communication, of which information gap, choice of contents and ways of expression, and giving feedback are the corollaries. Language practice is provided through activities or real-life tasks to be solved in groups or pairs for more opportunities to use the language and to share and negotiate. The teacher is a facilitator, offering learning environments with authentic language which will interest students. Accuracy and fluency are both emphasized, but giving an acceptable form to gain comprehension is the principle behind dealing with learners' mistakes (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

3. Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual Method was first employed to train the American army for overseas services during World War II with distinguished effects, and later was used in regular foreign language teaching. Language learning is viewed as a process of habit formation through mimicry and repetitive practice. Systematic and mechanical practice of sentence patterns through various kinds of drills, such as choral and individual drills, question-and-answer drills, transformation drills, substitution drills, follow after mastering a passage of dialogue and its role-play practice. Mistakes should be corrected immediately to avoid forming bad habits (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

4. Direct Method

Direct Method became popular to correct the overemphasis on grammar knowledge and translation. This teaching method forbids the use of learners' native language, translation, or memorization but directly teaches the target language through the teacher's speaking the target language and using real objects, pictures, gestures, and facial expressions to enhance comprehension. The teaching primarily

focuses on listening and speaking through continuous question-and-answer and discussion. Learners acquire grammar and the language through induction from abundant exposure to the listening and speaking exercises, and the teacher will remind learners to self correct the mistakes they make (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

#### 5. The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach derives from theories of second language acquisition and is based on Krashen's five hypotheses. It distinguishes classroom learning from acquisition in natural settings as children acquire their mother tongue. Acquisition is attained with sufficient comprehensible input at a degree little higher than the learner's capability. The rules learned help the learner to control their own speech by correcting, editing, and monitoring. As in the acquisition of the first language, the learner follows a natural order and learns certain forms or rules. Lowering the affective filter by removing fear, anxiety, low motivation from the learning environment enhances learning. The Natural Approach encourages learners to speak without correcting mistakes or forcing them to respond in the target language right away (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Among all the teaching methods and approaches, studies showed that Totally Physical Response (TPR) and the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) seem to be most commonly seen in English programs for young children. Similar to the Direct Method, many English programs at cram schools nationwide allow the use of only English among teachers and students, and primarily work on listening and speaking skills through question-and-answer drills, games and competitions, as did teachers in elementary school classrooms (Chu, 2002; Tseng, 2001; Wu, J. L., 2001).

In addition to encouraging elementary teachers to skillfully make use of these five teaching methodologies, scholars and experts have given relevant advice through published articles. From the neurological perspective Y. L. Yang (2001) wrote that it is possible for elementary children to develop English in a foreign-language setting as long as there is enough input, exposure, and work on phonology. Scholars encourage

elementary practitioners to start teaching young children by building children's phonological awareness (Chu, 2002; Hu, 1999; Hu, 2002; Li, I., 2000). Some have urged not neglecting the importance of fostering early literacy (Chen, 2000; Chu, 2002; Su, F. H., 1999b).

A good many studies have encouraged literature-based instruction in EFL classrooms from the Whole Language Approach and other perspectives (Cheng, 1999; Hsu, 2002; Huang, 2002; Wu, 1999; Yang, 2000; Yang, 2001) while some have experimented with literature-based teaching in elementary settings, an approach which resulted in effective learning outcomes (Liaw & Chien, 2002; Nantz, 2002; Shen & Huang, 2001; Shen & Chang, 2002). Some have discussed the age factor of EFL learning (Liaw, 1998), policy planning of language programs (Chen, S. J., 2000), and the use of texts and teaching materials (Chen, C. L., 1999; Chan, 2000; Shih, 1999; Tseng, 1999; Witton-Davis, 2000). While Tseng (1999) found that the majority of elementary English teachers preferred adopting textbooks available on the market to compiling teaching materials by themselves, S. F. Su (1999) warned about culture domination resulting from using texts by foreign publishers. But several others argued that teachers should have ability in curriculum design and material compilation and opted for teachers' compiling teaching materials for class (Shih, 2000; Shou, 2002).

Some reported or surveyed the implementation of certain English programs (Gui, 1998; Shih, 2000; Shou, 2002; Tsao, 1993; Tseng, 1998). T. L. Chen (1999) and Wei (1999) were concerned about the five biggest difficulties elementary English teachers encounter—each teacher's teaching too many students, in big classes, mixed with multiple competence levels, with insufficient instructional time, and challenges in classroom management. Yeh (2001) suggested multiple methods of assessment different from the traditional paper-and-pencil tests so teachers could better improve instruction. C. T. Chou (2002) reminded the public that starting English education at the elementary level is to stimulate students' learning interest and phonological awareness, both of which serve as a sound foundation and to positively encourage future English learning. The essence of the national Guidelines for English curriculum, according to him,

highlights the connection between elementary and junior high school levels in the development of both language learning strategies and syntax structure. However, no study has been done to examine how individual teachers conceptualized the national guidelines in their program design and instruction.

Huang (1999) suggested an L2-only approach for beginning EFL teaching from the perspective of Chomsky's Universal Grammar hypothesis. For not letting translation reduce the amount of input, delay the development of L2 processing mechanism and, hence, hinder L2 acquisition, Huang considered the L2-only instruction would force the learners to engage in meaning negotiation and enhance intake processing through L2. Although Atkinson (1987) saw the use of L1 as a learner-preferred, humanistic, and time-saving strategy, Danchev (1982) justified its limited use from a translation/transfer perspective, since translation is a natural and inevitable phenomenon in L2 acquisition. However, Harbord (1992) argued that teachers, who resort to L1 as a time-saving strategy in teaching, might have had inadequate training in explaining in L2 and designing exercises to encourage the use of L2. He believes that L1 should only be used to inspire discussion and speculation, to develop clear and flexible thinking, and to increase teachers' and students' awareness of the interaction between L1 and L2.

In Tseng's (2001) study, most of the students agreed with the instruction exclusively taught in L2 with limited L1 explanation but objected to an L2-only approach due to their inability to ask questions in L2. Students did not take the initiative to use English after class, while only 11 percent of the students were said to have often used English in class even though English was the language of instruction and played a predominant role. Tseng inferred that it was due to the teachers' design of instruction, which was primarily lecture-based, teacher-student practice, distant from the nature and objectives of CLT.

Yang (2002) revealed the results of the experimental English programs in Hsinchu City one year before the nationwide enactment of English teaching at the elementary schools. She found that, in the absence of regulations and curricular guidelines, the four schools in her study lacked well-mapped-out curriculum or effective

teaching. Teachers held similar beliefs about the goals of elementary English teaching but taught with very different approaches. Parents gave strong support but held expectations variant from the policy regarding the instruction hours, age to start English learning, and teachers' qualifications.

Therefore, a major issue concerning EFL programs nationwide at the elementary level, which has aroused extensive discussion, is teachers' qualifications and the quality of the certified EFL teachers (Chen, C. L., 1998; Chen, S. J., 1998; Huang, 1998). Shih (2001) evaluated the Ministry of Education (MOE) Primary School English Teacher Training Program conducted from 1999 to 2001, under which 2200 (62%) trainees completed required preparation, as "an unprecedented emergency program." She reported that it not only served to meet the need of the new policy of the country but also was regarded as "satisfying, useful, and practical" by the trainees. Though having a solid rationale in its program design, the drawbacks of the program, most trainees reflected, lay in the insufficiency of instruction hours on TESOL methodology and some trainers' insufficient background in elementary settings and learners. Also, the one-year teaching practicum of those English teachers was not supervised by English language professors but only by professors in general elementary education. Chan (2000) described several English teacher preparation programs for the elementary level in Taiwan. He pointed out that the English teachers certified by the MOE vary in background and motive for this certification. Chan advocated offering English language training and English teaching methodology classes to general elementary pre- and in-service teachers to answer the shortage of qualified English teachers at elementary schools nationwide. However, he argued that four-year training in college and levels above and a professional certification system nationwide is a must to promote the professionalism of teaching English to children in the long run.

To meet the need for sufficient qualified teachers for English teaching at small-size schools, Wu (2001) proposed to equip general elementary teachers for English teaching through a school-based professional growth approach. As Chan (2000) also posited, Wu showed the results from her action research that homeroom teachers,

who already had complete training in general pedagogical knowledge and were trained for one and a half years, not only had good command of classroom management but also contributed to better learning effects since they knew their students well, spent much more time daily using English with the students, and could better integrate English with other subject areas.

Supporting what Chan (2000) and Wu (2001) have suggested, Lu (1999) described how she strives to teach effectively with the inherent limitations of the current English teaching construct. Having served as an elementary English and homeroom teacher for two years, Lu (1999) described the challenge of enacting English programs in regular schooling when popularizing the cram-school teaching approach by offering children fun games. Endeavoring to set up an English learning environment in and out of class time, she mentioned that the importance of tactics for a successful class lay in building a pleasant atmosphere with discipline emphasized in big classes, and her role as a homeroom teacher, who has a better mutual understanding with students and exposes her students to classroom English all the time. Nevertheless, Chu (2002), Liaw & Chen (1998) and Wu (2001) raised a question of whether the cram-school teaching approach packed with fun games works so effectively that it should be adopted predominantly for elementary level teaching. Liu (2001) questioned whether the knowledge the teacher had resulting from cram school teaching experience adequately prepared her for elementary school teaching. Tseng (2001), affirming that English teaching seemed to have successfully motivated students' learning in his study, urged teachers to carefully evaluate the effect of their use of games and songs in class, since they are found to be the most welcomed teaching activities among students.

That English teachers should be able to reflect on their practice and examine whether they make knowledgeable decisions and arrangements in teaching is strongly supported by ESL/EFL scholars and teacher educators (Chu, 2002; Day, n.d.; Freeman, 1991; Richards, 1998; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Shih, 2001; Su, F. H., 1999a; Yang, N. D., 2000). Calderhead (1988) said that existing research on teacher cognition, teachers' knowledge, and the context of teachers'

learning has potential to extend our understanding of the role of reflection in teacher education, but the concept of reflection requires further examination in the light of empirical research on teaching and how teachers learn to teach. Along this same line, Freeman and Johnson (1998) stated that language teacher education, lagging behind the research on general education by nearly a decade, has just begun to shift focus from teaching methods and materials to language teachers to understanding and improving English teaching practice. They advocated a reconceptualization of language teacher education which is responsive to “the sociocultural processes of learning to teach” (p. 397). Mok (1994) and Shih (2001) both posited that learning to teach requires a longer process than any short-term teacher training programs can achieve.

Reflective teaching should be incorporated in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. By reflective practice, Day (n.d.) meant the critical examination of all aspects of the entire knowledge base as the prospective teacher is engaged in the experiences and activities in the classroom. Su (1999c) suggested applying Wallace’s (1990/1993) reflective model to the teacher education programs for Taiwanese English teachers at the elementary school level, for Wallace has put equal weight on trainees’ knowledge of the profession and previous experience. Freeman and Richards (1993) argued that second language teacher education, informed by research on teacher cognition and knowledge, should shift its focus to a more bottom-up approach by recognizing teachers’ personal interpretation of the teaching method and practice and encouraging teachers to examine their beliefs, principles, and values through a process of decision making, reflection, analysis, and assessment. Putting it in Schon’s (1983) term, teachers should engage in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, or in Genishi, et al.’s (1995) term, researchers should investigate teachers’ “theories of practice” in order to learn how academic theories respond to concerns of practitioners and how theories of practice connect to current theory. All those calls for practicing teachers to make their instructional decisions and personal interpretations explicit are congruent with the intent of this study to look into

elementary English teachers' beliefs in a broad sense, incorporating values, assumptions, principles, knowledge, images, and implicit theories.

To date, most of the empirical studies in the elementary school setting have focused on the causal relationships between teachers' variables and students' learning outcomes, such as teachers' qualifications, teaching methodologies, teaching materials, or students' personal variables, including age, gender, grade levels, learning attitudes, and motivation (Cheng, 2000; Chiu, 1998; Pan, 1997; Su, Y. R., 2000). Chiang's (2000) case study was conducted at a private elementary school while Liu's (2001) study explored an English teacher's knowledge base. Neither of them took into account the context with the national Guidelines for English education under which the individual teachers worked.

Carlgren and Lindblad (1991) claimed that research on teacher thinking is inclined to isolate teachers from their social and historical context. When they shifted their focus onto the interplay between internal and external determinants on teaching in specific teachers, they found that teachers see themselves isolated from the world outside school in changing times. Parents are not only possible resources but also a threat, while schools are only sites for temporary alliances and negotiation among individuals. Cultures and conflict should be all taken into account when we attempt to better understand teachers' thoughts and actions in a time when educational changes are being made. Likewise, at such a changing time in Taiwanese elementary schools, this study intends to explore both internal (teachers' beliefs) and external (the context at various levels) determinants on EFL teachers' practice.

## **Chapter Summary**

I started this chapter with a sensitizing framework that I used to guide my study before and during the fieldwork, which encompassed *teacher characteristics* and *context factors* as pre-active factors which lead to teacher decision-making, including *planning decisions* and *implementation decisions*. Then the review of literature on teachers' beliefs, teachers' planning and implementation decisions in general education

informed us that more and more studies on teacher cognition have been conducted in real classroom settings. Although many research studies tend to categorize and examine specific types of teachers' knowledge base, the way teachers activate and make use of their beliefs is a complex, situated, personal, and more holistic process. Teachers' planning and implementation decisions are found to have a cyclical nature. In ESL/EFL education, research on teacher cognition and knowledge in general education has been drawn upon to understand language teachers. However, most of the studies have been conducted on pre-service and novice teachers. Not enough research has been done in classroom settings. Especially scarce are studies on EFL teachers' beliefs at the elementary level. The few existing studies on ESL/EFL teaching show that teachers vaguely follow a sequence in teaching.

Next, the review of the research on contextual factors indicated that little has been done to understand the reformed elementary education in Taiwan, when many new constructs have just been included, such as school-based curriculum development, the principals' instructional leadership, and parent-school partnership. Finally, I concluded that the studies conducted in Taiwan on elementary EFL teaching have mainly focused on teaching methodology instead of investigating teachers' perspectives and interpretations of their teaching. The little research on teachers' knowledge and beliefs has failed thus far to examine EFL practice in its socio-cultural context. Hence, this study proposed to better understand EFL practice in the elementary school setting by taking into account context and teachers' beliefs as two major determinants.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to understand how context and teachers' beliefs contribute to the English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) practices at a local level—a suburban elementary school in southern Taiwan. The goal was to capture the subtlety of the new phenomenon of EFL instruction in the elementary school under the reformed infrastructure by presenting multiple voices from practitioners in the field. In this chapter, I will explain the rationale for using a participant/observational approach. Then, I will introduce the participants and settings, outline data collection and data analysis procedures, and present the biographic accounts and typical classes of four EFL teacher participants of the study.

#### **A Participant/Observational Study**

In the field of second language teaching, the issues of culture and socioeconomic status as well as the ideology underlying language programs are always associated with outcomes since programs with different constructs have been offered to young children to enhance their adaptation to the mainstream school system, constructs such as immersion programs, native language instruction, dual language programs, and ESL programs (Escobedo, 1993; Dyson & Genishi, 1991; Genishi & Dyson, 1984; Genishi, 1999; Trueba, 1988). Under the constructs of the educational reform movement in Taiwan, English teaching has become context-specific at various levels—the city, the school, and the class, by individual teachers—and can only be understood from insiders' perspectives on how they interpret relevant information from without and negotiate with their beliefs from within and finally translate planned lessons into practice.

According to Bruner (1985), understandings about behavior cannot be achieved separately from the meanings that people attribute to their lives and circumstances. By emphasizing the subjectivity of human beings, Lubeck (1998), as have other

postpositivist researchers, claims no value-neutral science “because knowledge is a human construction, and actions and events are open to multiple interpretations” (p.288). She especially points out that “context affects what people learn and how they understand” (p.288). In Tabachnick’s (1989) terms, any social event is “embedded in a social context,” and is constantly evolving (p. 155). There is a need to derive meanings for an event “plausible within the cultural context” (p.155). A postpositivist research paradigm, which aims to establish verisimilitudes of “how humans experience the world” in context-sensitive settings, suits my attempt to study the EFL practices, which are embedded in multiple contexts: 1) the broader social and cultural context of the reform movement in Taiwan, 2) a school-level context which features a working-class population in a labor-intensive neighborhood, and 3) a classroom level context characterized by teachers’ interpretations and conceptualizations of various factors. Through interviews, conversations, observations, stimulated recalls, and interactions in the school community, I will describe the teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and values that emerged in natural settings, using the teachers’ own words to reveal the complexity of English teaching at a suburban elementary school (Calderhead, 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

Context, teachers’ beliefs, and practices are not static but dynamic and constantly evolving. The process of changing elementary education in Taiwan as a result of the reform will inform us of the kind of change, or resistance to change, that occurred and how individual teachers integrated their past, their present experiences, and their planned future in the profession (Tabachnick, 1989; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). A participant/observational study allowed me to perceive the constant interactions in the school community and to generate interpretations co-constructed with the informants for insights, because field research on teaching serves to “make the familiar strange” and visible for better understanding from a holistic viewpoint (Erickson, 1986).

## Field Entry

Beginning in 2001, the elementary schools island-wide were to comprehensively implement the reformed curricular model and offer compulsory English programs to elementary students. I planned to focus my dissertation study on how individual English teachers worked day in and day out in school contexts as elementary schools launched into a new curricular innovation—respective schools were to develop their own school-based curriculum responsive to the local needs. Therefore, I defined two criteria for finding the appropriate informants for my study: (1) English teachers who had interest in participating in my study, felt relaxed enough to share their insider's voice, and felt secure under close scrutiny by the researcher and later by the public after the study was finished and published; (2) English teachers who were working at an elementary school using the reformed curricular model. I did not include a specific number of years of English teaching experience as one of the working criteria for screening the informants because I thought it would be good to see how teachers of different backgrounds and prior teaching experiences teach and interact within their school context.

I met the first of the four informants in this study while I was collecting data for one of my preliminary studies; a teacher trainer friend introduced me to a group of English teachers currently teaching at elementary schools in Ocean City (a pseudonym). She was one of the trainers at a prestigious college of foreign languages that the Municipal Department of Education in Ocean City had entrusted with the job of training the elementary school teachers for English teaching. The 30-hour program was composed of both the English language content and English teaching methodology. The list of names she gave me included those teachers in her class who participated more actively and seemed more enthusiastically geared to English teaching. I talked with and interviewed all seven elementary English teachers on the phone and found that among them Kathy (a pseudonym of the teacher's choice) was highly motivated to have more discussions with me. As I was wrapping up the interview, Kathy expressed her strong interest in more related research which would enhance her professional growth. She

volunteered to be my informant when I mentioned the rough plan of my dissertation study.

I met Kathy in person in December 1999 and found that she met my first criteria. This led to the need to visit the school where Kathy worked—that is Happy Whale Elementary School (a pseudonym) in this study—to see if it was possible to situate my study in this school context.

My teacher trainer friend had a very good connection with this principal, and she introduced me to him via phone calls before I called him personally and made a visit to the school. In fact, he was one of the office leaders at the school where my father taught about 10 years ago. From that visit, the only confirmations I obtained were that the principal supported studies related to local culture and that he had told Kathy that she thus would have powerful resources from a researcher like me. He didn't tell me about the school itself but pointed out that, as a new school, the school put more weight on the year-group units (or grade-level teams) instead of individual classes. A copy of consent letter from the principal is appended (see Appendix B).

It was the first year of the school (1999), and the school as a whole was devoted to school-based curriculum development (SBCD) training and hands-on implementation of their programs. Their new campus was still under construction, and they were borrowing the classrooms of the major elementary school they branched from. The offices were crowded in the basement of their classroom building. After a short talk, the principal asked Kathy, the only English teacher then, to his cubicle and left us to talk while having lunch together. That was my first face-to-face meeting with Kathy. She showed me the portfolios she had made to better understand what she had been doing in her first year of teaching at this newly-founded school. I was impressed to see how much effort Kathy, as the only English teacher at Happy Whale, had invested in additive, holiday-related teaching, all on her own initiative. Kathy told me that the issues of how to do action research and how to develop school-based curriculum were targets of their regular Wednesday program for teachers' professional growth. This visit ensured that Happy Whale was a school which had adopted the SBCD model in its first

year and had been continually developing its school-based curriculum. I did not look for other possible informants at other school sites since Kathy at Happy Whale met the two criteria that my study required.

Kathy and I began an email correspondence, and she shared with me her ideas regarding English teaching. In spring 2000 and fall 2001, I did two other pilot studies at Happy Whale. One was a qualitative study on Kathy's beliefs and English teaching practices. First, I used William Ayers' (1989) interview questions for a threshold interview with Kathy (see Appendix B). I wrote up an ethnographic account of Kathy after a series of interviews. I analyzed Kathy's teaching using the beliefs and goals she made explicit and examined the consistencies and inconsistencies between her beliefs and practices. In the other study, I gave surveys to both administrators and teachers and parents of primary grade students to ascertain their views on several aspects of English teaching and learning. In the meantime I stayed in the field for one month and observed Kathy's class to better orient myself to view Kathy's job in its specific school culture. I gained a better knowledge of this school, which was in its second and third years of developing its new campus under the structure of the school-based curricular model.

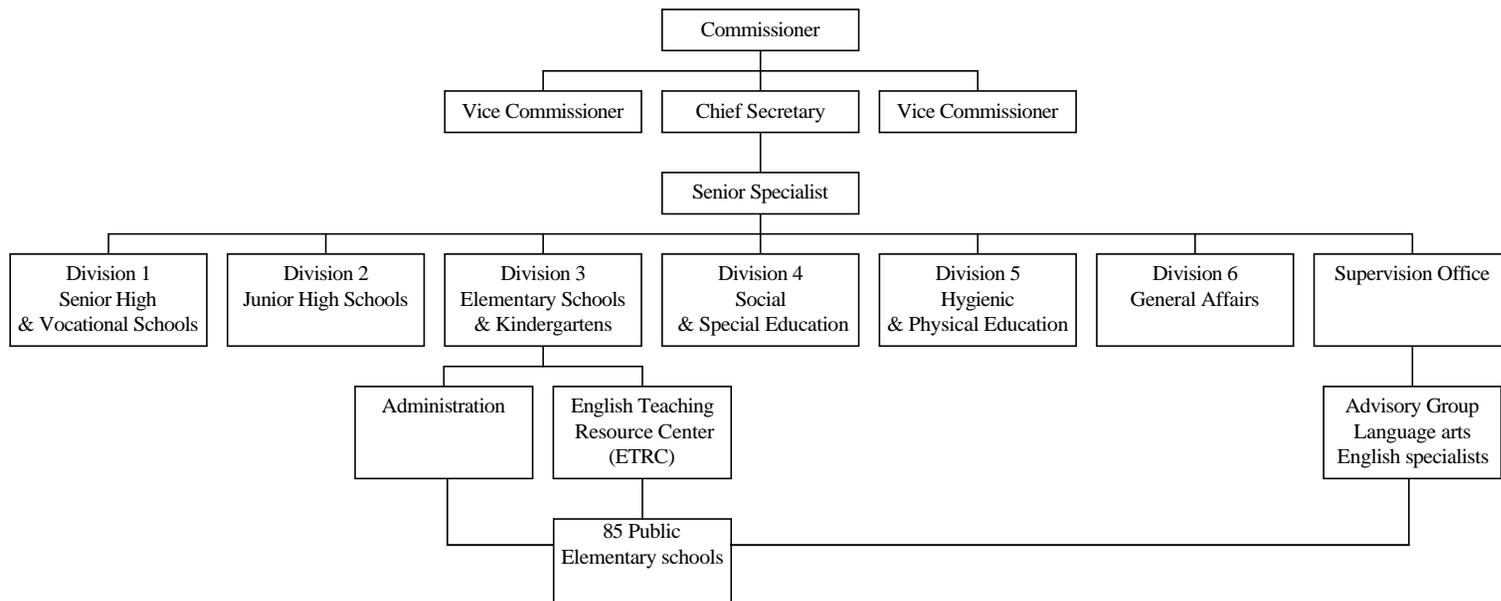


Figure 2: The Municipal Department of Education in Ocean City

I decided to collect data from May through October 2002 because it was about the end of the first year that English education and the reformed SBCD model were officially and comprehensively implemented at elementary schools nationwide. To document the feedback and evaluations various parties made after its first year, I entered the field again for the main study and started collecting data in the last two months of spring semester 2002 (that is, May and June 2002) with a focus on Kathy, Sophie (the second English teacher Happy Whale hired in its third year), and their instruction at Happy Whale. That was followed by two summer months that I continued to interact with my informants in out-of-class scenarios until I lost touch with both of them temporarily. I also participated in the screening tests and witnessed how two different English teachers were chosen to fill the openings for the new school year. Additionally, I collected data from two municipal organizations—English Teaching Resource Center (ETRC) and the English-specialist in the advisory group instituted under the Municipal Department of Education, responsible for elementary school English-teaching at the city level. I also interacted with two scholars involved in the promotion of elementary English education with an attempt to better understand the phenomenon of elementary English education from different perspectives. In the new school year of 2002, I spent as much time as possible with Stanley (a pseudonym) and Mable (a pseudonym of the teacher’s own choice), the two new English-teacher informants, while continuing to interact with the rest of the faculty at Happy Whale. The four teachers all signed a copy of consent form (see Appendix D).

## **Settings**

To better understand the school where the study was situated, this section will describe the policies and experiments regarding elementary English teaching and learning in Ocean City, and the contexts of Happy Whale Elementary School.

## **ENGLISH EDUCATION IN OCEAN CITY**

Ocean City is a large, metropolitan city, rapidly expanding in the south of Taiwan. In 1978 the city had experimented with English teaching at its elementary schools for the first time. However, a more comprehensive experiment teaching English to fifth and sixth graders began in 1995, three years earlier than the policy announcement from MOE, and included one session per week for three consecutive years in the time slot arranged for group activities. Teacher training programs at the city level had been held to train current elementary school teachers who either had an English major in college or had interest in English teaching (“Teacher training,” 2000). From the school year of 1997 forward, all fifth and sixth graders participated in English education programs, while the third and fourth graders were not included until 1998 (Dai, 1999; Chiu, 2000). Therefore, while the national guidelines mandate English programs for the fifth and sixth grades nationwide, the local government in Ocean City commands its third and fourth graders to start English programs to further its local vision to foster communicative competency in its citizens for intercultural encounters.

To promote English education in Ocean City, the Municipal Department of Education reorganized its compulsory education advisory group into a local consulting and research center with a group of language teaching specialists in 2001 and set up an English teaching resource center (ETRC) in June 2002 (“English teaching resource center,” 2002). In the past two years, the ETRC has been extending the national guidelines of English curriculum for fifth and sixth grades to grades three to six. Based on the set of curricular guidelines, they are aiming to compile for the 85 public elementary schools a set of English texts, embedded in the social contexts of the city and uniquely suitable for Ocean City’s vision toward the outside world (see Figure 2 for the structure of Elementary English education). In addition, another mission of the center has been to establish a website with English teaching resources for practitioners.

In contrast to the focus on teaching materials and resources, the language arts specialists in the advisory group were composed of on-loan current teachers serving at both elementary and junior high schools, selected through screening tests. Two teachers,

one junior high teacher and one elementary teacher, excelled respectively in teaching Mandarin Chinese, English, and the Taiwanese dialect. Their primary job was to help translate national policies to practices at the local level, while research on local phenomena had just begun to receive more of their attention. From visits and interviews, I found there was only one advisory group specialist who was directly familiar with and involved in elementary English teaching, while the resource center was staffed with 16 full-time substitute teachers serving for one year. Yet, both the sub-committee of language arts specialists in the advisory group and the resource center within a specific school with a school-based curriculum on English provided English education workshops, teaching resources, and statistical data about the English programs of the city. The two entities were of equal rank and sometimes gave overlapping services to the English teachers at the 85 elementary schools.

In a break with the past, the applicants who attended the joint screening exams of English teachers, held by the Municipal Department of Education or individual schools, had to have a certificate of qualification approved by the MOE prior to undergoing a series of screening procedures in 2002. Only 10.5% of applicants obtained job offers at elementary schools, while 8% filled openings at junior high schools (“College graduates,” 2002).

According to the surveys done by the ETRC, 42.5% of the English teachers in the school year of 2001 were originally elementary teachers who finished the city’s training, but in the school year of 2002 only 24.3% were. In the school year of 2001, 20.15% of the English teachers were qualified teachers approved by MOE, while in 2002 26.4% were. The other half of English teachers currently teaching at elementary levels are uncertified, with an English major in college or graduate schools (Huang, 2002, July; English Teaching Resource Center [ETRC], 2002).

When the MOE responded to the parents’ complaints revealed by the press about insufficient qualified English teachers and marked discrepancies existing between cities and remote areas, the Ministry of Education announced that no English programs should be offered to lower grades, which are not yet regulated by the national

guidelines. The Municipal Department of Education of Ocean City echoed this announcement by asking the respective schools to closely follow three “No-No” regulations in lower grades (“Three No-No policies,” 2002), that is, no regular hours used for English teaching to first and second graders, no native-speaking teachers, and no extra fee to be paid by parents for the lower grades’ English programs. From the survey results, 22 schools offered English programs to lower grades in 2001 and 8 schools in 2002 (Huang, 2002, July; ETRC, 2002).

### **HAPPY WHALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The study was conducted at Happy Whale Elementary, a medium-size school (in terms of Taiwanese schools, about 800 students) where the new curricular model has been developed and implemented since the school was initially opened in fall 1999. At that time, the new curricular model was still in its experimental phase. Now, the school, with its early start running the reformed model, is considered a pioneer and an example for the schools in Ocean city as well as in southern Taiwan.

### **Geographical Contexts & School Development**

Situated in a suburban industrial area, the school was founded as a natural outgrowth of an older school. The school district was in a still-developing neighborhood with a mainly working-class population. In its initial stage, the school accommodated about 900 pupils in 27 classes in the school year of 2001 and 28 classes in 2002, was staffed with 53 teachers in 2001 and 56 teachers in 2002, 7 student teachers in 2001 and 21 student teachers in 2002 (School Report, retrieved Nov. 11, 2001; Statistical information from the Personnel Office, retrieved Oct. 28, 2002). And around 100 mother volunteers, growing from seven to ten groups, participated in different kinds of tasks at school. The school was near multiple systems of transportation: a natural harbor, an airport, and a southbound cargo railroad. To develop a curriculum responsive to local communities and resources, the school pinpointed four core areas as features of their school-based curriculum: communication systems of both the local harbor and

airport, astronomy, and environmental protection. The principal, in his early forties, emphasized to the school faculty that to run the new school with a new curricular model was “like developing virgin soil” in such a suburban district (Interview, 5/24/02).

Happy Whale moved to its new and modernized campus in its second year and grew from 740 to over 900 pupils. The classroom design, excluding the traditional classrooms for first grade classes, was based on a grade unit, with spacious indoor, convertible public areas good for collaboration and teamwork. They had sufficient astronomical equipments to develop their school-based curriculum in astronomy (School Report on Experimental Implementation of the Reformed Model, retrieved Nov. 11, 2001).

The school, with its contextual factors analyzed in the report on their experimental implementation of the reformed curriculum model, stated that its suburban location resulted in a high teacher turnover rate. In Taiwan, population and all kinds of facilities, government offices, social and cultural resources are centered in the downtown areas and spread to the outskirts gradually when the center becomes saturated with people and the land cannot accommodate any more construction. Hence, the first place people choose to live and work is metropolitan--urban areas rather than suburban districts, or remote places.

Happy Whale had two school buildings. They were in great need of additional school buildings but the tight budget of the municipal government forced their construction plans to be put on hold. The school felt pressured because parents petitioned local governmental representatives to force the school to allow their children to enroll, even though a municipal policy limited the total number of students that campus could serve (School Report, retrieved Nov. 11, 2001).

### **Parents and Parent Involvement**

On the topic of community resources, the school reported that their parents were of lower socioeconomic status (SES)—about 87% were laborers—and, accordingly, the financial and manpower assistance they could supply to the school were limited (School

Report, retrieved Nov. 11, 2001). The laborer parents didn't show much willingness to participate in school operations, and the majority believed teaching should be geared for academic achievements. The economic depression impacted not only the parents' financial assistance to the school but also the willingness and the extent of the support local entrepreneurs offered.

A Parents' Committee composed of parent representatives was elected from among the parents who volunteered or who were recommended by the parents in each tacit class or each year group. The leaders and members of the Parents' Committee regularly met at the beginning and the end of each semester, and represented the parents in important school meetings for decision-making, such as employment and evaluation of teachers, annual plans for budget and school development, SBCD committee meetings. There was a group of mother volunteers (around 100 persons each school year), who worked in small groups and assisted with school tasks, ranging from campus clean-up, library chores, traffic safety, to activity arrangement for parents. However, the administrators admitted that parents tended to primarily volunteer for labor-consuming tasks, and that parents' participation in the decision-making process at school was still limited or even "symbolic" because not many parents came to the school and spoke their opinions (Interviews, 5/24/02, 8/21/02).

Some parents viewed the new curriculum as too activity-oriented to result in in-depth understanding on the part of the students. To counteract that activity emphasis and to ensure academic competency, the parents sent their children to after-school programs and thus increased the students' overload in learning (School Report on Implementation of the Reformed Model, dated April 16, 2002). A teacher expressed, "the administrators at Happy Whale have mostly followed the ways of its mother school in this district in many aspects, such as appointing specific parking areas for vans of various after-school programs to pick up the students, regular meetings and contacts with the after-school programs in order to inform those programs about what and how the school curriculum has been doing" (Interview, 6/24/02).

## **Students' Characteristics**

The school claimed that the majority of students were from simple and sincere families, but they generally were short of sufficient family support or exposure to cultural resources. "A high rate of single-parent families and intergenerational childrearing exists in this school community. The pupils tend to have less tolerance for frustration, less perseverance in routines and basic practices, and less commitment to following social rules and regulations. Children are usually entrusted to after-school programs for care and supervision while the parents are busy earning a living. Problematic behaviors resulting from family factors have been a heavy burden for school counseling" (School Report, retrieved Nov. 11, 2001). All the four English teachers in this study consistently commented that the students at Happy Whale, though not as creative or advanced, were naïve and willing to learn in English classes compared to students in the capital city in the north, in the urban area of the city, or at the neighboring school (Interviews, 5/16/02, 6/25/02, 9/19/02, 9/24/02, 9/26/02, 10/03/02).

Classes offered to students with special needs started in 2001. The number of students with special needs has not been calculated but is estimated to be 5% of all students in the country---that translated to about 45 students at Happy Whale (Fieldnotes, 10/28/02). They were included in general intact classes and pulled out for individually prescribed instruction by two trained special education teachers. The implementation of inclusive education began in Taiwan when *the Special Education Act* (1997) was revised and announced. According to this Act, the school should place students with special needs in regular classes to satisfy student's learning needs in the least restrictive environments. The number of regular students should be reduced to compensate for the additional workload. The homeroom teachers should attend workshops and seminars on special education and should receive related professionals' consulting services. No concerns of or mechanisms for students with special needs were employed in the intact classes where those students were placed. Most often, subject teachers or substitute teachers were not informed beforehand by individual homeroom teachers of the number and the needs of the special students unless questions were

raised by the subject or substitute teacher (Fieldnotes, 8/28/02, 8/30/02; Interviews, 9/05/02, 10/17/02).

### **Teachers' Characteristics**

Teachers at the elementary level include mainly homeroom teachers and subject teachers, depending on what position people seek at individual schools when they take the teacher screening tests. Homeroom teachers are general teachers who supervise an intact class in the homeroom, are with the students the whole day, and have close interactions with parents and administrators for all student-related affairs. Subject teachers, who are specialists in various subject areas, are generally fewer in number. Although subject teachers teach mainly one specific subject area, they actually have gone through training in teaching all subject areas at the elementary level and usually need to teach courses other than their specialization. Subject teachers, having very similar responsibilities at work, share administrative tasks with all the other teachers. The only difference between homeroom and subject teachers is whether they have an intact class to supervise on a daily basis. A small number of substitute teachers are employed for periods ranging from only several hours to fulltime for a year to temporarily assume the jobs left behind by the teachers who are on leave for further study, military service, or maternity.

The ratio of female to male teachers was almost 3 to 1. The average age was around 30, and more than 60 percent were novice teachers with less than five years teaching experience (School Report, retrieved Nov. 11, 2001). The ratio of teachers attending inservice master's and doctoral programs rose from 5% in the first year to 7.5% in the second year, 9% in the third year, and 23% in the fourth year.

The teachers, described in the school report, were of similar strong backgrounds and receptive to new information, but they may not have been as adept as experienced teachers in class management, teaching experiences, or teacher-parent interaction. Parents tended to question their child's teacher's teaching when their approach obviously differed from that of after-school programs off campus (School Report,

retrieved Nov. 11, 2001). In the year-end report of the implementation of Grades 1-9 Curriculum, the school reported that the teachers were not motivated to get involved or take leading roles in curricular development, for it was heavy work and no allowance or decrease of teaching hours was provided. The discussions required for teamwork in various groups (year groups, administrative groups, groups of respective learning domains, etc.) exhausted the teachers with undue workload. Expected to be professionals with autonomy in the reformed model, the teachers found it impossible to find time to keep narrative teaching files of any kind for further reference or to use for action research (School Report, dated April 16, 2002).

### **School Administrators**

Under the principal, there were four top-rank administrators heading four offices: the Office of Studies, the Office of Students' Affairs, the Counseling Center, and the Office of General Affairs. The four office heads took turns presiding over their office for at least two years before they were qualified for training as future principal candidates. Physically, the Office of General Affairs was separate from the others, located on the first floor of the building, and the other three offices occupied three sections in one big office on the fourth floor, in the center of the building. On the one hand, as one of the 12 reform mandates in *the Educational Reform Action Plan* (1998), it was a new experiment to integrate the business and educational resources in the Offices of Studies, Students' Affairs and Counseling to provide more focused and effective service to the student and to consolidate the affective aspect of the learner. On the other hand, the shortage of school space made this office arrangement necessary. The desks of the three heads were facing their own group of teachers. In their mid-thirties, the three office heads interacted closely and were accustomed either to talking at their seats or to walking up to one another for a discussion.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collected for this study incorporated the data elicited from the preliminary studies I had conducted at Happy Whale Elementary, especially the data about the English teacher, Kathy. The case study on Kathy was done from the middle of November to the end of December 2000. The survey study and a field observation were done from the middle of May to the end of June 2001. The following sections will describe the data collection procedures during the preliminary studies and the main study, followed by data analysis procedures.

### **PRELIMINARY STUDIES**

The case study on Kathy's beliefs and practices at Happy Whale in fall 2000 allowed me to "produce a narrative text [of Kathy] which describes and links together influences, events, people, and experiences that contributed to the creation of the teacher as she finds herself today" (Ayers, 1989, p. 7-8).

First, William Ayer's (1989) interview questions in three categories—the reflective practitioner, the autobiographer, and the whole person—were adopted to interview Kathy in depth on the phone (see Appendix B), especially about individual learning habits and attitudes in general, prior EFL learning experiences, prior teaching experience, and belief formation concerning EFL teaching and learning. Kathy's classroom instruction to a second grade class was videotaped for three consecutive weeks, transcribed, and analyzed according to what she claimed to achieve in teaching. Data were also collected from follow-up phone interviews, clarifications from email correspondence, member checking and feedback on my data analyses and interpretations.

Both consistencies and inconsistencies between her beliefs and practices were found. There were consistencies in emphasizing disciplined behaviors and order in class, her role as a mediator to a foreign language and culture, and her goal of broadening the pupils' views through introducing cultures and interpersonal skills. The inconsistencies were between her beliefs about her teaching and her teaching pedagogy,

materials, tasks and participation structure in class. Also, another inconsistency resulted from divergent expectations of different parties--students, other teachers and herself as an EFL teacher.

At my request, copies of a survey with four question items on levels of satisfaction and 37 question items on personal conceptions were given to teachers, administrators, and parents of Happy Whale in 2001. The findings showed that more than half of the teachers (57.1%) thought that the current EFL programs were satisfactory while 58.7% of the parents had no concrete perceptions of the programs offered to their children, 24.8% were dissatisfied, and 16.4% were satisfied. This study not only supports the findings of the existing literature that teachers' prior experiences are a decisive factor in belief formation (Brown & Wendel, 1993; Horwitz, 1985; Johnson, 1994; Yang, 2000) but goes further, positing that teachers' personal interest is a key factor in determining levels of satisfaction with programs. These factors and the survey results were true of the parents as well.

While I collected data for the survey study, the month-long observation in Kathy's classroom and at Happy Whale offered me the opportunity to examine the nuances and subtlety that I might have missed to triangulate Kathy's beliefs and practices from the previous study in the fall semester. I was able to situate myself both in the school and classroom contexts of Happy Whale while starting to build rapport with the faculty and administrators. In addition, a visit to Kathy's family on her parents' invitation during this month granted me the opportunity to triangulate previous data elicited from her self-reports.

From the preliminary studies discussed above, it is obvious that teachers and parents have discrepancies in their perceptions of EFL education for young children. They both welcome the newly reformed EFL guidelines and policies for elementary level students. The teachers and parents all recognize the difficulties in recruiting parent involvement and establishing teacher-parent partnerships in education while enacting a curricular model that is totally novel to both teachers and parents. Deep-rooted

perceptions about education are resistant to change. This change, along with tension, clashing of roles, values, interests, and re-education, may not come easily.

### **THE MAIN STUDY**

As my sensitizing framework has shown, legitimate data can be found in different areas, sources, and topics. As a participant observer, I gathered data through both formal and informal interviews, observations inside and outside of classrooms, fieldnote-taking, and from school or community activities. To show respect to the EFL teachers' autonomy and to cover the variety of class structures, I observed two or three classes/sessions per week of each EFL teacher's classes—Sophie's first and third grade classes on Mondays, Kathy's second and fifth grade classes on Tuesdays, Mable's first, second, and third grade classes on Wednesdays, and Stanley's fourth and sixth grade classes on Tuesday mornings. I offered help as a teaching aide to the EFL teachers, such as preparing pictures or props for instructional needs, in order to have more natural interactions with them.

As I had done with Kathy, I translated and adapted Ayers' (1989) interview questions to do in-depth entry interviews with Sophie, Stanley, and Mable. The data from the teachers about individual learning habits and attitudes in general, prior EFL learning experiences, teaching at elementary school, and belief formation concerning EFL teaching were probed further when individual teachers brought up similar or contrasting ideas.

Each class session was videotaped for the teachers' stimulated recall either after class or at the end of the week. I conducted stimulated recall sessions every other week with Kathy and Sophie so as not to exhaust the informants; however, I decided to do them once a week with Stanley and Mable in the new semester to have time to interact with the informants regularly and to elicit more sufficient data. In the stimulated recall sessions with Kathy and Mable, respectively, the teacher and I watched the video together. Both of us could stop the video for clarifying, commenting, or questioning any

component related to personal approaches, beliefs, planning decisions, the implementation of decisions or to examine the impact from any contextual factors.

The participants' narratives through stimulated recall were audiotaped and transcribed. Narrative transcripts were completed later for ongoing analysis. This method of using information from each teacher's subjective reportings and reflections provided data which could be obtained through observation and helped to make explicit the perceptions underlying the participants' teaching in general (Woods, 1996).

Stimulated recall did not work in Sophie's and Stanley's cases. Rather than taking initiative and reflecting on their teaching, they preferred that I ask them questions. The time arranged for stimulated recalls served as interviews. Therefore, for Sophie and Stanley, I played the videotape of their teaching and prompted the teachers to either reflect upon or clarify certain incidents in class, teaching procedures, and related practices with the beliefs they had articulated beforehand. I categorized the data elicited as interview data. Kathy provided me a copy of her lesson plans of each session for the stimulated recall sessions. On the other hand, I didn't insist on collecting the other three teachers' lesson plans until later when better rapport was built. However, Sophie's unexpected schedule change and my loss of contact with her due to her leave resulted in no lesson plans collected from Sophie. She gave me two copies of her former lesson plans instead. Stanley did not give me his lesson plans until I was wrapping up my data collection, while Mable only gave me one lesson plan since she only wrote simple steps and did not view them as helpful to my study.

Whenever I went to Happy Whale, I took fieldnotes. In order to provide a more consistent analytic stance, I wrote in-process memos and weekly reflections. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) say that producing in-process memos will help the fieldworker to identify and develop interpretations, questions or themes from the fieldnotes. I wrote analytic memos and weekly reflections throughout the research process, but I incorporated them into my fieldnotes.

Sophie, Stanley, and Mable all commented that they either didn't like writing or had no time to write, so I abandoned the idea of keeping a dialogue journal as proposed

in my dissertation proposal. On the other hand, the dialogue journal kept between Kathy and me for continuously exchanging views, questions, ideas or information did not continue after one month, because Kathy became unexpectedly busy at the end of the semester.

I offered to be a substitute teacher when I entered the field. This substitute-teacher role, as I planned in my dissertation proposal, did contribute to giving me a legitimate status and entry points to interact and converse more with other teachers, and thus grasp the dynamic of this specific school culture, including giving me access to more fellow teachers' and parents' views toward EFL teaching and learning. But I did not do any substituting in the new semester because I put more focus on eliciting data from the two new English teachers since I already had rapport and familiarity with the school community. Also, I tutored low-achieving students one morning a week with mother volunteers in order to project myself more into the school community and obtain more access for dialogue with parents. The mothers I became acquainted with through this process naturally provided me their views and information when I made my intent known to them.

I decided to interview the principal once a month in the first month of my field entry because I felt that the principal took a predominant leadership role. Data were also collected from several administrators in both formal and informal conversations when appropriate. With permission from the principal, I attended SBCD curriculum-related meetings, workshops, school events, parent-teacher interactions, meetings of the parents' committee, and activities in the community to obtain more cultural knowledge from insiders. For better understanding of the contextual influences, I collected related information and documents about primary education from this school, English Teacher Resource Center, the language arts advisory group under the Municipal Department of Education of this city, the government, and workshops organized by publishers in the field. I brought up related information in the conversations with the EFL teachers and others to gain insiders' knowledge as well.

## **LANGUAGES**

The use of English, Mandarin or even the Taiwanese dialect was decided by the participants and the occasions while I conducted the study. The participants used mainly Mandarin mixed with English and the Taiwanese dialect in most of their lesson plans, stimulated recall interviews, and both formal and informal interviews with me. I wrote my analytic memos and reflections in either English or Chinese, depending on what I felt most comfortable with at a particular time. I personally transcribed and selectively translated the data which were quoted in the final write-ups; however, two college students of foreign languages helped with transcribing work when the interviews piled up. The Chinese-English translation of collected data and documents was crosschecked for accuracy by one EFL teacher friend of mine who teaches at a college in Taiwan.

I translated the national guidelines for Grades 5-9 English curriculum into English. The English translation was verified for accuracy through back translation by a doctoral student friend of mine and further approved by a professor who is familiar with the phenomena of English teaching at the elementary school level. The English introduction of the political and social contexts, the educational reform, and the framework of Grades 5-9 English curriculum was read and revised by another professor who has been engaged in studies on issues regarding elementary English teaching and learning.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

I analyzed and interpreted all of the data collected on an ongoing daily basis during data-gathering in order to stay current with data emerging from multiple sources. This approach is consistent with the constant comparative method which Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain. In order to systematically make sense of the rapidly growing and evolving data, I reread the fieldnotes, journal entries, transcripts, and related documents and wrote reflections every weekend, as Goldstein (1997) does. Later, I brought the questions, dilemmas, and tentative analyses generated

each week back for further clarification or explanation from the participants in the following week.

As I reflected on the data, themes and categories emerged. Wolcott (1994) posits that description, analysis, and interpretation are the primary means to derive meaning from the collected data. First, I wrote to allow the data "to speak for itself" (p.10), to identify key features and emergent themes, to connect the data with personal experience, with both similar and contrasting cases. I then translated and broke down the national guidelines into 40 categories and examined how the four teachers' beliefs and practices were congruent or incongruent with what was regulated for the English curriculum nationwide. The Guidelines were translated back from English to Chinese and verified by two Taiwanese professors. Thereafter, I compared both the commonalities and idiosyncratic beliefs of the four teachers with my sensitizing framework and noted what emerged in order to provide structure or explain the inter-relational nature of beliefs and practices in different domains. I examined whether the sensitizing framework closely represented the school culture under study. I made modifications, supplemented, or expanded the framework in order to reflect and construct the local meanings. Merriam (1998) says that "comparing elements within a classification system can lead to tentative hypotheses and explanations" (p. 157).

Among the methods Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested to establish the credibility of research, prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing were strategies that I employed for establishing trustworthiness of this study.

"If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.304). It takes time to build rapport and a sense of trust with the participants before the participants are willing to honestly talk from their insider's points of view. Glesne (1999) argues that "time is a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data" (p. 151). My well-established rapport with Kathy made my data collection from her class go smoothly. With Kathy's assistance, I obtained access to school documents, other faculty members, and the school community more

easily. I stayed in the field for six months to immerse myself in the culture, while persistently observing and interacting with the subjects in order to discover what was the true nature of the site and to understand how the insiders perceived the events in their daily lives. With a seat provided in the central office, I not only had opportunity to observe how my informants interacted with the school context but also was able to personally interact with teachers and administrators on a daily basis.

Among the four modes of triangulation Denzin (1978) proposed, I employed technique and source triangulation. Data were gathered from different sources with data collection techniques and compared. These data sources were interviews, participant observation, stimulated recall, documents, and informal conversations. And the data compiled came in the forms of collected documents, both formal and informal interview transcripts, fieldnotes, videotaped classroom transcripts, and email correspondence. The sources included not only the EFL teachers but also their fellow teachers, the principal, administrators, other SBCD committee members, parents and people in the local community.

Effective member checking may occur during three stages of naturalistic research: during the process of data generation, after initial data analysis, and before completion of the final manuscript, which reports study results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was done when I shared my interview transcripts with the participants. They were encouraged to add, clarify, correct, or reflect on the transcripts. Through sharing the drafts of findings and interpretations with the participants, the participants and I examined the accuracy of the interpretations and personal meanings represented. Another function that Glesne suggests that member checking can provide is to develop new ideas and interpretations that are previously unnoticed. The rationale is for both the researcher and the researched to "grow in their interpretations of the phenomena around them" by sharing working drafts (Glesne, 1999, p. 152). At this point, participants concurred with my descriptions, offered changes, or clarified errors in my interpretation of what had been discussed, for rigor and credibility.

As I mentioned in the section on language used in this study, one EFL teacher friend of mine was asked to crosscheck my Chinese-English translation of the transcripts and related documents. The second teacher friend of mine, unable to fulfill what I had planned in the dissertation proposal, became too occupied with her own data collection and could not audit my data collection procedures. Thus, my teacher friend could not offer me assistance throughout the process of this study for the sake of trustworthiness as Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend. Familiar with children's EFL education in Taiwan, she only audited my fieldnotes, extracted patterns with me from the videotaped instruction of the teachers, and examined my perceptions of fieldnotes before I came back to Austin.

Because the researcher, as the primary instrument in qualitative research, always brings with her a filter of personal values in all the observations and analyses, the reader should be aware of the biases that I brought with me in conducting the study (Merriam, 1998). My autobiography is appended to inform the reader of my personal stance and values regarding English learning and teaching (see Appendix E).

## **Participants**

Four EFL teachers were recruited for this study. In the following, a chronological introduction of the four English teachers at Happy Whale, the stories of how each teacher became a teacher, and their typical class will be addressed.

### **A CHRONOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION**

In the first two years of Happy Whale Elementary School, all English classes and English-related activities were taken charge of by one single teacher, Kathy, who had finished the training in Ocean City and passed the screening exam of Happy Whale as an English-specialist teacher. In its third year, a second English teacher, Sophie (a pseudonym), was recruited for the increasing number of classes. She was hired as a one-year substitute teacher at the school for she had just finished coursework in the MOE's teacher-training program and was doing her teaching practicum to complete her

certification. My entry to the field (May 6, 2002) coincided with the last two months of Sophie's year of teaching practicum, and the ending of Kathy's third year at Happy Whale Elementary. In other words, it was when the first year of official enactment of the new curricular model was about to end.

At the turn of the next school year, Kathy went to the U.S.A. for her master's study, Sophie left with her certificate as a qualified English teacher after a close look at the elementary setting. With a turnover rate over 33%, 16 new faculty were recruited for the school year of 2002, including the two English teachers. The position of head of studies was filled by a subject teacher, Mr. Gong (a pseudonym), who came back from an on-loan post at the Municipal Department of Education.

The two new English teachers were both teachers certified by the MOE. One was a male teacher, Stanley, with more than 10 years' English teaching experience at a privately-run language school. The other was Mable, a novice teacher, who finished her secondary and college education in the States. Starting in the school year of 2002, the English hours for fifth and sixth graders consisted of two, 40-minute sessions per week. But for the younger students, it remained the same, one session weekly.

#### **FOUR TEACHERS' ACCOUNTS AND TYPICAL CLASSES**

Following are the four English teachers' accounts and their typical 40-minute classes. They are arranged in the chronological order of the school years they served at Happy Whale.

#### **Kathy's Journey to Secure Her Status As an English Teacher**

*I found English teaching my favorite choice of career, but I need to secure my status with qualifications competitive with those MOE certified teachers. People won't question my professionalism any more if I get a master's degree from the States. I find that I'm a person who loves seeking change and innovation all the time—I hope to continually learn something new. By then I may not want to stay with the same role as an English teacher for long.*

When the study was conducted, Kathy was a third-year teacher at Happy Whale and taught 13 English classes to second, fifth, and sixth grades and eight sessions of

Social Studies to sixth graders. She taught three sessions fewer than the required number (a total of 24 sessions per week for all elementary teachers nationwide) because of the administrative tasks she took charge of for the school year of 2001.

### ***Kathy's Account***

Kathy never thought of going into the teaching profession, even after graduating from college. With a major in engineering, she sought work in her field in northern Taiwan's best national industrial park, a job that would offer her chances to visit other countries and cultures on business trips—an added benefit, she thought.

While she was looking for work in her home town, Ocean City, she was also seeking her parents' permission to move north to pursue her dream—an ambition which her parents regarded as inappropriate for women "from a traditional, Chinese viewpoint," she said—when her sister asked her for a favor. In her sister's absence, Kathy took notes in a class tailored to help candidates prepare for the big nationwide exam used to select teachers for the few elementary school positions available. Curious about her own ability, she decided to take the exam herself, and passed! She earned a teaching position after training for one year at a teacher's college and passing another screening exam. A happenstance led to her accomplishing a goal that many female college graduates spend years pursuing. On her first try, she passed the difficult national exam and was on her way to entering what many Taiwanese consider the ideal and most prestigious profession for females—teaching.

The only regret she had about becoming a teacher was that she would not get to travel regularly to meet people of different cultures, as the engineers in the industrial realm could. On the other hand, she welcomed escaping a sexist work world where women were paid less than men and denied opportunities for promotion. To her surprise, Kathy found teaching liberating: the EFL teacher training she had undergone created a classroom environment that was strikingly different from the rigid, solemn atmosphere she had experienced throughout her years as a student and exam-taker. "Most of the EFL teaching knowledge and pedagogy I have come from a 30-hour

training program I enrolled in at my own expense because it interested me, and it changed my mindset about English teaching." Her eyes opened wide when the trainer modeled the "teacher as actor" approach, instructing the future teachers to release any concern for "personal image." She embraced the concept of being a lively, creative, and even innovative mediator through whom young children could love learning English. "I don't want them to cram for academic requirements at after-school language programs. It's cruel and pressurizing. I personally had that kind of experience when I started my junior high years [at the age of 13]. I would like to give them different experiences in learning." Kathy wanted her students to pick up learning strategies and learn with interest and fun instead. She hoped that the students would fall in love with English learning and ultimately sustain their interest as life-long English learners because of loving her as their first EFL teacher. Despite her frustration and the unpleasant experiences she had while undergoing her entrance examinations in the process of schooling, she remembered how her fondness for her teachers had motivated her to succeed in learning English at different stages of her student years.

"I was a well-disciplined learner from my early youth, and I earned considerable praise and recognition from teachers at different levels," Kathy said, recalling her school days. She said that the English teaching back then focused mainly on grammar and sentence patterns. As a habit, she learned and memorized the vocabulary first, then sentence patterns, and then how those were put into the articles. At one time she had a hard time memorizing those vocabularies because teachers then didn't teach you how to sound the words out with phonics. "I performed pretty well in English because I really had met some good teachers at cram schools. I feel that I learned certain subjects well because I liked the teacher's teaching." Her desire for her students to love her as an English teacher was rooted in her prior learning experiences. Kathy later added that, on top of her father's demand for self-responsibility, teachers' praise and encouragement had triggered her competitive nature beginning in her childhood. She recalled the influence of a well-known English teacher she had as a senior high school student at a cram school. "The grammar concepts I learned from that teacher helped me to manage

with ease the English class I had in college. Even now I have a habit of analyzing the sentence structures whenever I see long sentences.”

But she did not want to become like some older teachers, who stuck to their safe, familiar routines and offered no stimulation to their pupils. "I'm really worried that I'll grow old like that. I will surely resent myself for not having worked harder!" She recalled the inspiration and encouragement she had gained from seeing how her elementary teacher, now in her fifties, still strived to become a better English teacher. And this senior teacher, once her mentor, still had discussions with her, learned from her, and supported her approach to teaching young children.

In addition to being influenced by the models of former teachers, she reflected upon being empowered as a new EFL teacher by the simplicity and receptiveness of suburban children. "I found that children in suburban areas tend to show more supportive attitudes than those in urban areas who have more access to more resources and variant approaches in EFL programs." This realization inspired her to search for authentic materials and to develop innovative learning experiences that would effectively introduce English as a new school subject for elementary pupils. "I saw them so responsive [to my teaching], and it gave me a lot of confidence when I was still exploring and laying a foundation for EFL teaching."

However, she lamented the shallow values of families from the highly commercial and industrial segments of society. Kathy indicated that some parents gave their children the message that it was not necessarily useful to spend much time studying. "Like so many fast-food restaurants on the street, they want something fast, something which helps them to win profits without toil; some achievement, but not necessarily achievement in general learning." She became very familiar with these values, which she felt encouraged the pursuit of immediate success without hard work, when she became a teacher. Kathy appreciated how her parents had worked hard to place her with good teachers in after-school programs and how, as working-class parents, they took turns going back to school themselves when their children were high school students and had less need of them. She commented that her father was

determined to become independent from his big family which was involved in an illicit gambling business. She saw him going through junior high, senior high, business administration programs at college, and now community college classes every day after a full day of construction work. She benefited from their example and their teaching of old values relating to human relationships.

Being a non-traditional teacher in a school setting requires tremendous courage and energy, particularly when one is the sole EFL activity organizer in the school's first years. "The only time that I thought of leaving this profession was when I felt I didn't have sufficient English ability to teach.... Along with this is the pressure I sensed from the teaching environment [concerning teacher qualifications]. The other EFL teacher we have [in the third year of the school] is a qualified one, who went through the EFL teacher training program [and had a B. A in English]." Kathy did not feel competent in English when she tried certain teaching pedagogies, but she was dedicated in organizing English-learning activities both in and out of the classroom to allow students more access to learn English. Concerned for the children's learning and her needs for professional growth, she decided to improve her qualifications by doing her master's study in the United States.

She did not obtain the support of her family to follow her dream of being an EFL educator until recent years. Her beloved parents, concerned about "losing face" and mindful of the "deep-rooted social meanings of degrees and qualifications," discouraged her and urged their daughter to withdraw from the position before she was kicked out. Kathy says she tends to refrain from talking about her profession at home.

"My parents share the common perceptions of society, that females belong to the fields of the humanities while males belong to the areas of science and technology." Then, as both Kathy and her sister were in the same trade, Kathy's parents considered her sister a better teacher than Kathy because she dressed like female teachers and acted feminine as opposed to Kathy's usually wearing jeans, good for energetic learning activities. Besides, Kathy's sister appeared as a more competent teacher to their parents since they all emphasized the importance of building and employing good rapport and

interpersonal relationships with parents and people with resources from all walks of life. “Well, I know the significance and benefits of that, but I don’t spend enough time and energy on it. Personal efforts and good work are to me personally most basic and override any other factors, though the popular culture always goes the opposite direction.” Kathy said she wanted to have something good to remember when she got old. She liked to ask constantly, ‘What else can I do for the children?’ rather than what some influential people could do for me.”

“You know what,” Kathy said, “my mother has a better idea of what I’m doing at school now ever since she and my cousin visited me at school for an astronomy activity. Kathy was excited that her parents had changed their view after all these eight or nine years. They encouraged her to fulfill her plan for further study in the States ahead of schedule if she did hope to come back and claim one of the limited openings for elementary teachers. They even helped her produce teaching aids and props for big activities. Kathy was touched that her parents, whom she had found hard to live with after moving back home after graduation, had now become her prop manufacturers at home, working as teammates with her and discussing her teaching goals. With their approval, Kathy is fulfilling her long-sought dream—to learn a new style of education *and* to meet peoples of different cultures. For the time being, she is a master’s student in bilingual education in New York state. “I feel that I’ve found a career I really love, and I know I have a lot to learn at this stage besides just the degree I want to prove my qualifications!”

### ***Kathy’s Typical 40-Minute Class***

A couple of minutes after the bell rang, a class of 30 students gathered in the hall outside the language room. “Dress right!” The commands of the class leader gradually quieted down the restless group, and two or three straight lines started to take form. When the class looked ready to her, Kathy went out to them with a serious look on her face and permitted the class to enter the room.

The second-grade children took off their shoes, put their shoes on the shelves by the door, wore name tags around their necks, and sat on the floor in assigned spots with only their text in hand. The class was divided into six groups, in double lines forming three sides of a square. The blackboard in the front made the fourth side of the square, with the teacher standing in the front near the board, facing the class.

“Good morning! How are you?” Kathy greeted, and the class all chorused, “I’m fine. Thank you, and you?” After responding to the class, Kathy called, “Sun!” “Here!” A group of five or six students at the far right of the room replied loudly. The teacher called the roll of the groups by their group names: Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and Jupiter, while she pointed to the magnetic cut-outs of those planets on the upper right corner of the blackboard. This was obviously an attempt to incorporate the school’s curricular focus on astronomy. Kathy followed with routine questions.

Kathy: How’s the weather?

Class: It’s sunny.

Kathy: Sunny! Is it windy?

Class: No, it’s not.

Kathy: Is it hot?

Class: Yes, it is.

Kathy: Very good. How old are you?

Class: I’m 8 years old.

Kathy: Good. (With a pause.) What color is it? (Pointing to her top.)

Class: It’s pink.

Kathy: What color are these? (Pointing to her jeans.)

Class: It’s blue.

Kathy: Good. They are blue. What color are my socks? (Lifting up her left foot and pointing to it.)

Class: It’s white.

Kathy: **THEY ARE** white. (She spoke with an emphasis on the words “they are.”)

Kathy went on to point to the socks and T-shirts of several students and repeated the same questions before she grasped a pile of flash cards from the desk on the right side of the room. She reviewed key words on color from the previous session. Very quickly, the students said what color they saw in complete sentences, “It’s red. It’s green,” as Kathy took each card from the top of the pile of flash cards she showed to the

class. It took Kathy about five minutes to finish all the routine and review jobs. She walked up to the planet cut-outs and put up one piece of magnetic picture tokens for each group under each planet cut-out. Some students yelled, "Yeah!" Some students shared the excitement of getting a point with their group members, while the students all looked more spirited after Kathy's action.

Kathy then introduced the new materials for the week. She wrote "I" on the board, drew a heart to the right and then a line to represent a blank to be filled in. Kathy said, "I like," and she put up a flash card of elephants first before she finished the sentence, "I like elephants." She went on to write the same sentence again to the right, but put a cross on the heart. She said, "I don't like snakes." She put up flash cards of a couple more animals and then of colors while repeating the same sentence pattern again and again. In the process, Kathy walked to a boy, pretended to be displeased, and said in a mock pettish tone, "Handsome boy, why aren't you paying attention?" When the boy blushed, she continued and came back to the board. More and more students read along with her when they understood what she was doing. The students seemed to have picked up the pattern and were able to say sentences such as, "I like yellow. I don't like orange."

Kathy followed with a song to reinforce this new sentence pattern. Kathy asked the class to listen carefully to a song she was about to play on a tape recorder and see if they could tell her what colors were mentioned. Kathy played the song once and stopped after each sentence when it was played the second time. After the students gave her the color word in each sentence, Kathy sang the sentence to them and put up the flash card of the color on the board. Kathy asked the students who said the right color word to add one more point to their group on the board. The students happily and quickly did it. The first paragraph of the song read, "I like pink. I like blue. I like yellow. I do, too. Pink, and blue, and yellow, too. I like pretty colors." At this moment, Kathy found that she didn't have enough magnets close at hand. "Danny, please bring me six magnets. Six. One, two, three, four, five, six." Kathy asked for help from the boy with ADHD (Attention Deficit & Hyperactive Disorder), who was constructing a

picture with different sizes of magnets on the white board in the back of the room. The boy apparently couldn't understand Kathy's English and had a puzzled look. His classmates helped by telling him in Chinese what the teacher wanted. After receiving a thank-you, Danny went back to his work on the whiteboard, and Kathy continued the listening and singing practice with the class. This process went on until the other two paragraphs of the same pattern were listened to and sung.

When the students saw Kathy walk toward the scoring board, the students who were acting up quieted down right away, while some others sat upright since they had tended to loosen up and had begun to fool around on the mopped wooden floor of the room. Peers began to call on their group members to behave and look at the teacher when they either didn't get a point for the group or saw the teacher up front with a serious look taking off points from their groups.

Not letting the learning atmosphere die out by interruptions or long pauses, Kathy continued to develop the topic for the day by asking, "What color do you like? I like..." Kathy waited for the students to say the colors they liked. "I like orange. Who likes orange?" Some students raised their hands very fast, others more slowly. Kathy taught them to say, "me too." The class said it together. She went on to practice this question-and-answer drill three or four more times with the students by substituting "orange" with other colors. Kathy continued to ask the small groups to choose a color for their group. Kathy then told them, "I like green. Who likes green?" The groups that chose the same color should say, "Me too." She let these groups add one more point to their scores on the board. She continued this guessing game four or five more times.

Last was group work time. Kathy gave each group a pink sheet with an empty grid and explained in simple English first, as she drew a similar grid on the board. "Ask your group members what colors they like. And check the colors like this." She gave them some more instruction in Chinese, telling them that they could write numbers to represent the colors instead of writing the color words. The students began to circle around their group and do the given task. Some lay down on their chests while others either squatted or knelt around their teammates. Kathy lifted her voice and told the

students in both English and Chinese, “Only one person is in charge of writing on the grid, OK?” Kathy walked around the groups to see how they were doing. She stopped at the groups that needed help or further guidance. Some groups argued whether they should write the color words, some groups simply wrote numbers on the sheets, and in some groups students spelled out color words for their teammate who was writing on the grid. Several loud voices arose among the sounds of discussion and negotiation.

Some students went up front by Kathy when they finished their task. Kathy didn’t rush the class to wrap up but knew that the groups were about done when more and more students went to her to hand in the sheets. She decided it was time to double check the students’ work before class was dismissed. She stood, holding her right hand up. She silently waited for the students to go back to their spots and calm down by doing a long five-second countdown with her fingers. The class came along immediately by the time she had counted to three. She thumbed through the sheets and asked, “Who likes red?” Some students raised their hand without saying “Me too.” Kathy reminded them once again. “Who likes yellow?” Several said, “I like yellow.” “Me too,” replied some other students. After she had done this two or three more times, the bell rang. Kathy stopped and walked up to the board and asked the class to count the points with her. “One, two, three, four, five. Five points for Mars. One, two, three, four. Four points for Jupiter. Mars is the winner today. OK, Mars, stay to get your stickers, and the others can leave now. Goodbye!” The class once again said in unison, “Goodbye, Kathy. I love you, Kathy!” The students went out by twos and threes, while some lingered for their rewards or to play with the toys the teacher used as teaching aids.

### **Sophie’s New Journey to the Elementary School**

*In the past, I was an outsider to elementary schools, curious about what’s going on inside. I should say that I’m more fortunate than others to have not only this chance to experiment with something different but also no pressure in this tryout in an elementary school setting. The primary reason for me to work at the elementary school was actually for my two kids. As an insider, I might be able to give them a hand when they are not fairly treated or at the edge about to trip*

*and fall. I'm not an aggressive person, nor do I have an ambitious goal as a mom! It's bliss to spend more time with your kids, to go to school and come back home together.*

Sophie was the second English teacher at Happy Whale. With a one-year post as a substitute teacher, Sophie became involved in English education at this school site from August, 2002 to June, 2003 and, therefore, could be recruited in my study, for she was in charge of half of the English classes (14 English classes to first, third, and fourth grades and 10 PE classes to fourth graders) and served as a similar yet contrasting case to Kathy in this study. It was the last two months of Sophie's year-long stay at Happy Whale when I entered the field in early May. At one point I lost contact with Sophie because, first, she left Happy Whale to accept another job offer; next, she took her children to Australia for summer vacation, and then, she lost her cell phone with which she contacted the outside world. I finally resumed contact with her via a weekend gathering and email correspondences in the latter months of the fieldwork and afterwards.

### ***Sophie's Account***

Sophie reflected that her family had not needed to worry about her academic performances since elementary school days. There were no after-school English programs for children when she was small. Sophie remembered that her English was so-so at the junior high school level but then she got a very high score on the joint entrance exam of junior colleges. She was accepted by a well-known college of foreign languages and began her five-year learning in two foreign languages with encouragements and recommendations from parents and relatives. Viewed as a black horse, racing ahead of the pack, Sophie said it was as if a light bulb suddenly went on in her head in her third year of college. She won an award for her schoolwork and was driven by a strong interest to go through college, to spend one year studying in England and one more year in Madrid. "I was so fascinated to do grocery shopping at the market place with the natives. How much I enjoyed chatting with the vendors in their language in the target culture!" Sophie stated that she was not an aggressive person. Her biggest

dream was to spend a couple of years in some countries she hadn't been to in South America and polish her language again.

Although people thought Sophie was talented in languages, she argued that she went through a learning process too, and that this process trained her to be a speaker sensitive to pronunciation and articulation. She admitted being very picky and intolerant when her students swallowed all the final consonant sounds when they spoke. Yet, she told parents proper pronunciation required a process when they complained about their children's English pronunciation and accent.

Sophie admitted that she started to earn pocket money her senior year in junior college by either tutoring or teaching English at cram schools. But she never thought of being a full-time teacher: "I believed that I would stay in the business field since I enjoyed dealing with foreign buyers. I was like fish in the water. It was really a turning point when I came back to Ocean City from northern Taiwan and began English teaching full time instead of part time as in the past." Her intention to teach English part time was to satisfy her sense of achievement when seeing her students learn from her. "Teaching itself is enjoyable, especially when you see your students attain some achievements after some years," Sophie said. But she believed that what made her stay for 11 years at the same post after getting married was a Scorpio's character trait, to "hang in there until the mission is accomplished!"

Sophie said that she met several good trainers at the cram school where she worked. As a coordinator of the children's programs, she constantly and directly dealt with both native and non-native teachers about curricular arrangements. She had to hire native and non-native teachers using interviews and teaching demonstrations, arrange teacher training programs, schedule teachers' classes, supervise the co-teaching teams of native and non-native teachers, and so on. Her easy-going and approachable leadership style made her interactions with colleagues more like that of friends and equals rather than boss and subordinates.

Sophie still got frustrated once and thought of leaving her job when she encountered bottlenecks in abiding by the prescribed policies of the administrative

system. But another long-lasting problem that Sophie wrestled with lay in the working hours at cram schools. Sophie felt drained working until 10:00 p.m. every day for a long period of time and was longing for a change to a 9-to-5 job. “Every day you’re still working when your families go home after work and school. It’s always a challenge to a mom with young children!” With the advent of educational reform, Sophie jumped into the environment of an elementary school, curious to find out more about it. She said the TESOL methodology course in the teacher training program was not geared to the practical needs of elementary level teaching, for the professors she met were not only arrogant, with strong beliefs in theories, but also short of practical experience in the elementary setting. However, she said she was facing another juncture in her life at the end of her teaching practicum. “Should I spend the rest of my life this way?” To stay or not to stay was Sophie’s dilemma.

Before Sophie was able to compete with other candidates for the opening at Happy Whale as a substitute teacher, she had to pass the competitive exams held by the MOE and finish the whole teacher training program. Sophie was about to finish her one-year teaching practicum at Happy Whale and complete her certification by the MOE as a qualified English teacher. “My husband and several family members all encouraged me to try the elementary teaching job so I could have more time to spend with my kids. That’s the primary reason I sought certification.” She saw seeking certification as giving up all her past credentials and starting all over again from zero, though she heard that more than 1,000 English-teachers-to-be, from a total of 3,300 people screened by the MOE, had left and given up in the process.

It was a big decision for Sophie to have spent two years going through all the tough work in the certification process. At this point Sophie, in her early forties, was evaluating what she had perceived at Happy Whale, and speculated that perhaps two years were enough to know what English teaching was like at the elementary school level, and that she might not want to invest the rest of her life in it! “Eighty percent of the problem which made me want to leave is the intensive use of my voice. But I don’t

regret it at all because, being more fortunate than others, I had this chance to experiment with something different.”

Sophie left Happy Whale at the end of June. Sophie had been very low key at Happy Whale, and nobody knew where Sophie had gone to work when she left Happy Whale. One time during a short interim chat, the principal inferred to me that Sophie had gone back to her previous job for a better salary. “I heard that her boss asked her back with better pay. Our school to her is like a small temple to a big monk—too small to keep her!” Sophie was surprised that people had this association. As a matter of fact, she was pleased with her new job. According to Sophie, it was a new language school, where a series of texts some elementary schools used in the United States were adopted and only taught by native teachers. They emphasized that their students wouldn’t have problems connecting with the curriculum if they wanted to study in the U.S. This was a new business a native friend of hers had started, and he wanted her assistance on both the administration and promotion of the programs, since she knew both the Chinese and English languages.

According to Sophie, it was a 10-to-5 job, which not only expanded on her prior experiences but also updated her in English and in the business world. She had time to spend with her kids at home and enjoyed working with good friends at work. Sophie has enjoyed her new lifestyle so far, and this job seemed perfect for her. It positively answered all her concerns and struggles at this stage of her life. She had regular working hours which allowed her to take good care of her two school-age children. She was able to keep working on English teaching and learning, something she had a strong interest in, in an amiable atmosphere at the workplace with good friends.

### ***Sophie’s Typical 40-Minute Class***

A class of 30 third-grade students arrived in twos and threes. They left their shoes on the shoe shelves, their bookbags on or around the shelves, and came into the language room with their texts and workbooks. Sophie used the language room slightly differently than Kathy did. Sophie usually used the whiteboard for class, which was put

at the front of the north wall. The whiteboard was much smaller than the blackboard, about 35x84 inches, on a frame with wheels on its four legs. The students sat on the floor, facing the whiteboard, or facing toward the computer room which was on the other side of that north wall. It took Sophie about five minutes or so to set up her amplifier and microphone and to get ready with her flash cards and props after she came back from the PE class, which she usually taught outdoors on the race course or in the gym.

“Quiet! Don’t make a sound now. Quiet! It’s class time. OK, time for class. Don’t talk now,” she asked the class in Chinese to calm down and began the class by greeting the students in English and asking routine questions as their noisy talking died down:

Sophie: Good morning, class!

Class: Good morning, teacher!

Sophie: How are you?

Class: I’m fine. Thank you, and you.

Sophie: I’m fine. Alright, roll call. Dogs! (Sophie pointed to the six illuminated pictures of animals, 5”x5” in size, and called the groups in order from right to left. The team names she gave to the students were dogs, bears, monkeys, spiders, turtles, and octopus.)

Class: Here! (The groups of students answered loudly as the class began.)

Sophie: How’s the weather? (She repeated the question again by pointing to the sky outside the east side of the room when the class didn’t respond right away.) How’s the weather?

Class: It’s sunny.

Sophie: Is it sunny? Sunny? Can you see the sun?

Class: No...(while some were still wondering.)

Sophie: No. It’s...(she waited for the students to answer her.)

Class: It’s cloudy.

Sophie: Good! It’s cloudy. Is it windy?

Class: No, it’s not windy.

Sophie: Is it cool?

Class: No, it’s hot.

Sophie: Yes, it’s hot. It’s cloudy but...(waiting for the class to answer with her) hot. What’s the date today? (Sophie went to the whiteboard and wrote the word “date” on it.)

Class: It’s...(one or two students said “March.”)

Sophie: March, April...May (when she slowly said each month, she made hand gestures to remind them what she had taught them as a mnemonic.)

Class: May...23.

Sophie: May 23. 23<sup>rd</sup>. It's OK. May 23. (She repeated when she was writing the date on the board and struggled with herself about the proper way to teach the children how to say the date.) Good. Is everybody here? Is everybody here?

Class: Yes....(some sitting in the front said in Chinese that Ken was not here.)

Sophie: OK, Ken is...(she waited for the class to finish the sentence.)

Class: Ken is not here. (Sophie: not here. Sophie joined them and completed the sentence with the class.)

Sophie: OK, everybody, stand up. Stand up. Quickly! Let's do the chant. Eye, eye...

Class & Sophie: See, see, see. Ears, ears, hear, hear, hear. Mouth, mouth, eat, eat, eat. Nose, nose, smell, smell, smell.

Sophie usually continued to review old materials by reciting chants followed by question-and-answer drills. For example, "What do you see with? What do you hear with? What do you eat with?" It was Sophie's habit to give each word a fixed gesture or body movement in order to help students remember the words.

Sophie continued to ask in Chinese, "What are the five short vowels?" While the class finished doing some movements and tried to re-settle themselves on the floor, Sophie wrote on the whiteboard "A, E, I, O, U" in a vertical line. When she tapped on each letter from top to bottom, the students would say its short vowel sound. Then they said the long vowel sound of each the second time she tapped each letter. Suddenly she stopped and tried to get the attention of some boys who were fooling around. "Hey, listen here," Sophie said in Chinese with a louder voice. The students seemed to have more trouble uttering the short vowel sounds of O and U, and no difficulty at all in saying the long vowels. "Look here and listen closely," Sophie reminded the whole class before she repeated the short vowels again for them, with emphasis on "O" and "U." This was followed by sounding out words on the flash cards. Through this step Sophie checked to see if the students could apply the rules. Words on the flash cards were given to each group to sound out for winning points.

By the final month of the semester, Sophie spent more time reviewing phonics, doing repeated practices with the letter cards the students tore from the pages in the

back of their textbooks. However, the students either didn't bring the books to class or hadn't torn out the cards from the book. The students became noisy and lost in their card-tearing work when Sophie asked the students to simply share with classmates sitting next to them. This chaotic situation made Sophie speak louder and consumed more time getting their attention so they could follow what she said. "Quickly, quickly. No, I said 'tap.' Make a word sound 'tap' with your cards." Sophie cruised around the groups. After about seven minutes, she urged the class to put the cards away after some practice. "Quickly, quickly."

As a third step, Sophie usually introduced new content to learn for the week with flash cards, which were about letter-size (8 1/2"x11") , with big, colorful pictures and black, lower-case words printed at the bottom. Sophie spent time guiding the students to sound out each word on the cards using the phonics rules they had learned. For the first few words, Sophie led them step by step—decide whether it was a short or long vowel in the word, what sound it had, how to blend the consonant and the following vowel together, and finally, how to add in the final consonant sounds. After this modeling, she encouraged the class to sound out the remaining words on their own. However, more and more students diverted their attention from class to their own things close at hand.

Although the students sat in six small groups, there were always one or two students in each group who didn't pay attention to the whole-class practices and played among themselves. Sophie would make use of her scoring board when she found students straying from her teaching. She would give or take off points by marking a small circle or a cross under the logos of each group. But for some reason, the markers were dried out, which made Sophie's writing on the board difficult to read.

Sophie picked up another set of flash cards on computer accessories. The class reviewed the words, "computer, mouse, printer, and disk" first, before she asked a series of questions for more practice. "Who has a computer at home? Raise your hand. Say, 'Yes, I do.' OK. Who has a mouse at home? Raise your hand. Say, 'Yes, I...do.' Very

good. Who has a disk? What color is your disk? Roger? Pink? Sandy? Yellow? Good! Who has a purple disk? You? And you? Green and yellow? Cool!”

Sophie tried several markers and found one that would write: “1. Turn it on. 2. Turn it off. 3. Save it. 4. Print it out.” She told the class to say the corresponding number when she said a sentence among the four. The students needed to recognize the words, using phonics rules while listening to the teacher read aloud. Next, Sophie switched the jobs. When she said a number, the class would say the corresponding sentence on the board. For example, when she said “three,” the students would say “save it” in response. Next was a three-minute listening comprehension drill in the workbook. While listening to the CD being played, the students would check either of the two pictures based on what they heard. For instance, they checked the picture with a computer when they heard “I have a computer.” They checked the picture with a printer when they heard “Do you have a printer? Yes, I do.” Once again, Sophie quickly went on to the next activity. She told the students to hurry up and put away their books while one boy asked, “What’s the last question?” Sophie was busy getting another activity ready. “Never mind. Put your book away. Quickly! Quickly!”

On the topic of computer accessories, Sophie seemed to find it hard to do a game about computer, mouse, printer, and disk. Instead, she wrote the words for colors on the board one after another for the class to sound out. Then she handed out two big, plastic toy hammers to two boys on different teams. When Sophie said, “hair, hair,” the two students ran to the board and hit on the word “black.” The faster one won a point. When it was a tie, the two players played the finger-guessing game to decide on a winner. Everybody said “paper, scissors, stone” together and witnessed both the guessing process and the result. The same game was repeated several times in order to give each team a chance to score. Usually, Sophie let the students express their excitement in the competitive atmosphere of the game and made it the last activity before class was over. If there were still a couple minutes left, she would ask the class to recite a song or a chant, do a short Totally Physical Response (TPR) activity to get

the class together as a whole, or add the scores to decide who the winners for the week were before the class was dismissed.

### **Stanley's Turnabout from the Cram School to Public Schools**

*It's like a long turn about course. I didn't mean to teach at the cram school. Back then I didn't have the vision to see that regular schools are more stable and long-term places to work at than cram schools. Without such a detour, everything would have been different...including whom I've married! But I stayed all those years because of my personality. Once I gave up my chance, I've waited until this time to work at a regular school!*

Stanley passed the teacher screening tests, including a written test, a 15-minute teaching demonstration, and an interview, in mid July and immediately obtained the job offer as a formal English teacher at Happy Whale. His new job started August 2002. In the school year of 2002, Stanley taught a total of 21 sessions per week—two sessions per week to fifth and sixth graders and one session weekly to fourth graders. Three sessions were deducted for the administrative tasks he was in charge of this school year.

### ***Stanley's Account***

Stanley recalled that the year he finished junior high and stayed home preparing to retake the entrance exam for junior colleges and high schools marked a turning point in his English learning. Due to his strong interest in English learning, Stanley was fascinated by it and was determined to learn it well. Without the guidance of any specific teacher, and without going to any language program, he taught himself throughout the whole process. Stanley polished his listening comprehension by listening to English programs on TV and doing free talks with native speakers at church. Describing himself as a stable and devoted learner, Stanley made an effort to learn English well with such a zeal that he found electronics too dull for him to continue with, even after his diligent and fellowship-winning work in it for two and half years.

He remembered learning English beginning in junior high school with a grammar translation approach prevalent at school, but had switched his focus to English

listening and speaking from his junior college years on—indulging in English listening and speaking in his extracurricular activities throughout the five years of junior college; this was followed by three years enjoying mainly native teachers’ classes at the English department of National Taiwan University. “In my case, one journey led to another journey without seeing it beforehand! I can assure you that I spoke much more English in the junior college than at university!” Stanley believed that the way his life unfolded depended on how he did in the important exams. He didn’t really know what his aptitudes were, what his strengths were, or what his ideal job would be.

He started teaching English at a cram school before he graduated from junior college. “Everything depends on chance. Chance just happened.” A senior at school who was a friend of his started a cram school with a partner and invited him to help out. After Stanley graduated from university, he was invited back, and his career of teaching children English lasted more than 10 years before he became certified to teach at elementary schools. “Back then I didn’t have the vision to see that regular schools are more stable and long-term places to work than cram schools even though I had opportunities to teach at public schools. I stayed all those years because of my personality.” He said that in the last four or five years at the cram school he mostly did hiring and training, and planned language activities and policies.

Stanley reflected that in the past only cram schools embraced an approach focusing mainly on developing listening and speaking competencies. It was very natural for him to work at the cram school among all other alternatives because of his own English-learning strategies. He said that this educational reform movement allowed him to turn from cram school to public schools after all these years. He viewed the completion of his certification as an elementary English teacher a long but necessary process to become a legitimate elementary teacher. The teacher training program, to him, was not very satisfactory—he rated it 2 on a 5-point Likert scale. “Only the part on testing was impressive enough,” he said in retrospect.

Stanley observed that certified teachers went through tremendous stress in competitive screening tests when they finished the training and sought a formal position

at elementary schools. “There are definitely many openings if you don’t care that you teach at some remote and far-away places. But it matters that where you work satisfies you and your family as well.” After the one-year teaching practicum at a school close to Happy Whale, Stanley accepted his colleagues’ suggestion to compete for the post open at Happy Whale. Its heavy workload worried him; however, his reluctance to tolerate the stress of more screening tests made him accept the position at Happy Whale. From his teaching practicum in the preceding year, Stanley found that the elementary school setting was one where he could bring his talent into full play.

### *Stanley’s Typical 40-Minute Class*

Each of Stanley’s fourth, fifth, and sixth grade classes came and stopped at the outer door which led to the hallway to the observatory area, for the temporary English classroom was originally the briefing area for the observatory. A class leader came in and reported to Stanley that they were ready outside the door after the leader had given English commands—hands up, hands down, squat down, and be quiet--and quieted down the whole class. Stanley then checked to see if the students were disciplined and ready for class, and gave them permission to come inside the room. The students filed past the huge bulletin board which separated this English room area from the hallway leading to the adjoining facilities. Boys sat together, as did the girls, according to their school number, on the padded benches in rows quietly and orderly.

Stanley made “No Chinese” a rule for his class whenever they came for class. He always waited and watched closely to see if students sat properly and conformed to proper discipline. Stanley greeted the class and started teaching when he felt satisfied with the class order.

Stanley: Good morning!

Class: Good morning!

Stanley: How are you?

Class: I’m fine. Thank you, and you?

Stanley: No more “I’m fine. Thank you, and you?” Don’t you remember what I said last time?” (Stanley had enough when the students always gave this “standardized” answer to his greeting.)

Some students: Pretty good.

Stanley: Good! OK, say “Pretty good!”

Class: Pretty good.

Stanley: Alright, no more “I’m fine. Thank you, and you?” Next time when I say “How are you?” what should you say?

Class: Pretty good.

Stanley: How’s the weather?

Class: It’s sunny.

Stanley: What? I cannot hear you. (He put his right hand on the ear.) Louder!

Class: It’s sunny. (They said it loudly.)

Stanley: Good! Is it raining?

Class: No.

Stanley: Hey! (Stanley went to his desk on the right and got a dodge ball out. He saw two boys in the back playing who didn’t notice he had been looking at them, so he voiced a warning to them and came right back.) What’s your name? (Stanley threw the dodge ball to a boy in the front and asked the boy to answer his question.)

Boy: My name is John. (Stanley held out his hands for the boy to throw the ball back to him.)

Stanley: How are you? (Stanley threw the ball to a girl in the third row.) Don’t you avoid the ball. The more you try to avoid the ball, the more I’ll try to throw you the ball.

Girl: (Her classmates around helped her.) Pretty good.

Stanley: How do you say Moon Festival (said in Chinese) in English? (He threw the ball to a tall boy in the middle.)

Boy: (The boy looked at the boys around him for help. One or two boys said “Moon Festival” loudly to him.) Moon Festival.

Stanley: How do you say Teacher’s Day (said in Chinese) in English? (Stanley threw the ball to a girl on the far right.)

Stanley took the ball back after asking seven or eight questions and seeing that the students were not as excited. He grasped a stack of flash cards from his desk. “What is he?” He showed the class the first flash card on the top of the pile. “He’s a policeman,” the class answered according to the picture they saw. Stanley continued to ask “Is he a doctor?” The class simply said “no.” He asked them to say “no, he isn’t.” Repeatedly, Stanley reviewed all the six occupation words with flash cards by asking the students to practice answering both WH (who/what/when/where) and yes/no questions.

After enough practice on vocabulary and sentence patterns, Stanley continued using these cards for a game. He placed the stack of cards on his chest so it faced him

and drew one from it. He quickly shook the card with the picture facing downward, then covered the card on his chest again and asked, “What is he?” He would pick one of the students with hand raised on either the boys’ or girls’ team to say the word that went with picture they had glimpsed. He always gave boys and girls alternative chances to score for their teams. One point, symbolized by one of the magnetic pictures of animals or lovely designs (about 3”x4” in size), was given for a correct answer and put up for the teams on the two sides of the whiteboard. As part of the classroom routine, the students said “Thank you, Stanley” every time after Stanley gave a point to their team, and he answered with a salute, “you’re...,” waiting for the class to say “welcome” and finish the sentence, to give them more opportunities for language use.

Stanley repeated this activity four or five times and then gave the class a final review. He showed each flash card again. After the class named each picture using a complete sentence, “He is a soldier/She is a nurse,” Stanley put the flash card onto the whiteboard. “Oops! Upside down. Say ‘upside down.’” He taught the class this expression when the opportunity arose. Hereafter, he put several cards upside down on purpose so the students could repeat this newly-learned phrase. However, he did it very skillfully—he showed mock clumsiness by putting several cards upside down, and the students were amused by this unexpected, fun move their teacher made. One card wouldn’t stick firmly on the board and slipped downward. Stanley put it back, but it slipped down again. Stanley turned around and put it back while saying “be good!” to the card. “Say ‘be good.’”

It was midway through the class, and Stanley started to work on the text. “Please open your book.” One student asked him in English, “what page?” Stanley was excited by this unexpected teaching opportunity and wanted the whole class to ask him “what page” together. “Page 7. Please turn to page 7 of your book.” First, he let the class listen to the reading of the text and then repeat sentence by sentence after the CD. The second time, he encouraged the class to read the text by themselves. Stanley usually followed the book and the reading of the CD closely, but stopped for a few more practices after each section. Each unit of the text typically had a short dialogue, a vocabulary section, a

read-and-match and a read-and-check exercise, as well as a section on phonics. On the unit on occupations, the dialogue covered those sentence patterns on which Stanley had repeatedly drilled the class beforehand. In the midst of practice, Stanley went over to a boy whom he had warned using eye contact several times, and said with a very serious look, “sit properly!” Several boys around sat upright right away along with the boy Stanley had targeted.

The phonics section was organized in a pyramid format. Stanley followed the book by introducing the short vowel I sound, then asked the class to sound out gradually longer sentences, beginning by saying the word “pig,” then “big pig,” then finally the whole sentence—“a big pig hits a mini pig.” For some fun, Stanley asked the class to practice saying this sentence faster and faster until the students were competing to see who could read faster and more accurately.

When Stanley saw the spirit in the students’ eyes die out, he asked the class to stand up and he gave them a simple TPR game to refresh them. He gave only two commands—“stand up” and “sit down”—and the class needed to listen and do physical responses accordingly. However, Stanley used opposite gestures or body language in an attempt to confuse or mislead the students as he gradually accelerated the pace of the game. The students had to pay close attention to catch up and became extremely excited as they had to make quick judgments before they made any move. Stanley stopped when he caught several students making mistakes and when he thought the classroom atmosphere was lively enough.

This activity was followed by either listening to the CD for listening comprehension exercises in the workbook or by Stanley’s correcting the students’ workbooks and documenting the scores of their work with the assistance of a student while the students were given time to do individual practices. When the bell rang, the class stood up on commands, like troops:

Stanley: Stand up. Atten-....

Class: Tion! Yes, sir!

Stanley: How do you say Teacher’s Day (said in Chinese) in English?

Class: Teacher’s Day.

Stanley: What do you say to the teachers on Teacher's Day?

Class: Happy Teacher's Day!

Stanley: Very good! What do you say before you go?

Class: Thank you, Stanley!

Stanley: Row 1, 2, and 3!

Students in row 1, 2, and 3: Goodbye, Stanley!

Stanley called on groups of students sitting nearby to say "goodbye" and then leave the room one group after another. But the students on duty that day were asked to stay and tidy up the whiteboard and the room.

### **Mable's First Full-Time English Teaching Job at Happy Whale**

*Everything happens for a reason. If I don't get a job offer right away, it means He wants to let me experience more and learn more. I don't feel miserable about it, neither do my family members. I believe there will be a position somewhere for me. I feel pretty glad and lucky to have found my life-time career though... It leads me to where I am. I'll probably end up with something confusing along the road when the years go by. But I believe something will lead me onward when it happens.*

In early August 2002, Mable passed the other sets of teacher screening tests which Stanley had taken. This separate set of screening tests was to recruit one-year substitute teachers. According to the exam regulations, the written test was cancelled because there were fewer than ten applicants. Mable did a 15-minute teaching demonstration, went through an interview and obtained a job offer to substitute in the position that Kathy left vacant while on leave from Happy Whale. Mable's job started in August 2002, and lasted until July 2003. She taught 15 sessions of English to first, second, and third grades and nine sessions of Health and PE per week to second and third grades.

### ***Mable's Account***

Mable recalled having been punished and crying all the way home for not bring her handkerchief to school the second day of her first-grade year. She suspected that it resulted in her tendency to abide by rules from the time she was young. Mable called

what she had in her junior high school “traditional teaching,” featuring heavy schoolwork, quizzes and tests, all for the single goal of going to a good high school through successful achievements on the competitive entrance exams. Mable appreciated how much less stress her parents had imposed on her. “As a seaman, my father was always away from home. My mother only required me to finish my homework every day. She never asked me to go to cram school or after-school programs of any kind as most of the students usually did.” Although her parents did not demand that she excel with academic achievements, she refused to accept three more years of senior high school education with its academic pressure. Mable looked up high schools in the U.S.A., sent out the applications, and got accepted by a high school run by a Seventh Day Adventist church in California. Her parents couldn’t refuse to let her go when a seemingly unreachable daydream in their view was realized because of their daughter’s determined actions.

Mable remembered that the school was a strict Christian high school. Without any ESL class at this small school, Mable said that she was immersed in the English-speaking environment and suddenly understood the language in her third month at school. “With the limited English I had learned in junior high, I just couldn’t finish the assigned reading from class before curfew.” Mr. Chapman, the teacher of American history, amazed her by spending his own free time teaching her very basic things. “I still remember the picture of Washington he drew for me!” This personal experience made Mable reflect on the collective achievement Taiwanese teachers aimed for in teaching big classes. “How the teachers teach in Taiwan is the way to teach the majority, the quick students. They just don’t have time to guide you step-by-step or to wait for the slower ones.” Having Mr. Chapman as her model, Mable believed that no one is stupid and hoped herself not to overlook individual needs among students.

With a major in international business, Mable hated doing only paperwork and email correspondence in the office. In retrospect, she realized she was a service-oriented person from her experience as an ice cream server, after seeing the satisfied smile on customers’ faces that resulted from her service. To spend more time with her parents,

Mable came back to Taiwan after eight years in the U.S.A. However, she found the working conditions in the field of business “so intolerable” to her as a female. It was not the shining picture that education in the college of business had painted of the work world in Taiwan, but a place where women were belittled as secretaries.

With her parents’ encouragement, Mable attended the screening tests held by the MOE to prepare English teachers for the elementary level. With many unknowns, she tried and passed. Mable felt that the teacher training program in the following two years was not directly helpful in the field, but more or less prepared her for the reality of teaching. She admitted that it was the first time she was exposed to theories in language teaching, and she absorbed them like a sponge. However, she reported that she hadn’t learned much from the six credit hours of TESOL methodology taught by the native speakers who were currently teaching at cram schools. She rated her satisfaction with the overall teacher training program between 2 and 3 on a 5-point scale; that is, between OK and satisfactory.

Mable was astonished to find teaching so much fun and full of surprises when she served as a substitute teacher while taking courses for her certification. Mable admitted that the real-world teaching experience not only helped her to reconceptualize what a teaching job was like but also to realize that it was a career she wanted to devote herself to. “I used to have stereotypical ideas about teaching. I thought teachers only needed to take care of a group of children, doing the same things over and over and meeting nobody. And they are there forever till they die.” She rejoiced that she had found a treasure in teaching and would not wander around any more trying to find an ideal job, like friends of her age. Mable suspected her classmates in teachers’ college pursued a teaching job for the good salary and long vacation in times of economic depression instead of a zeal for teaching. But for her, she said that, with luck, she had found her life-time career after a muddled start.

Mable expressed that the four years back in Taiwan seemed like ten years because she had done so much during this period of time. “Leaving for the States was a turning point in my life; coming back, another turning point. Being a teacher is another

turning point. I used to wonder why I just couldn't find a job I liked. But you know, everything happens for a reason." Drawing from the Christian values of her parents and from her experiences studying at a Christian high school, Mable explained that she had undertaken the whole process with a positive outlook.

### ***Mable's Typical 40-Minute Class***

Mable wore a yellow-and-black canvas pack around her waist everyday at school and anywhere she went on campus. She clipped on her top a small wireless microphone and put a small control box with two 3A batteries for her amplifier and microphone in the pack (about 8"x 4"x2" in size). With an upright amplifier, about the size of a letter-size index box, in one hand, Mable carried another big blue canvas bag on her right shoulder that had been compliments of a publishing company. Inside were texts, flash cards, and other necessary aids. She had a pair of slippers ready in her bag as well, for teachers and students at Happy Whale had a habit of wearing indoor slippers on the mopped tile floors inside the classrooms and leaving their shoes or sneakers on the shelves outside the doors.

Mable usually wore sneakers with her outfits of a T-shirt and slacks. When the bell rang, she traveled to each class for English class with the above-mentioned equipment. The first thing she did after she arrived in the classroom was to plug in the amplifier and get her microphone ready for class. Shortly thereafter, she greeted this second-grade class and, right away, roughly divided up the big class of 30 into three to five smaller groups, according to how the students in each intact class were seated. To begin the class as soon as possible, she usually asked the students to hurry up and give their groups a name. She quickly wrote the names on the board that the students said, such as lions, elephants, butterfly, and drew a big circle under each name whether the primary grades could read it or not. Each group took turns cheering for their group, "Lion, lion, go! Go! Go!" She started giving points when the groups cheered spiritedly, gradually adding eyes, mouth, ears, and three hairs to the circle under each group's name to form a happy face.

Mable took her character cut-outs on short sticks out of her big bag and asked “Who is he?” “He is Peter.” “Who is she?” “She is Sandy.” She reviewed all the characters of the text one time, one after another, and told the class the characteristics of each one in English, using hand gestures to help them understand. “Remember? Sandy has a bow on her head. Amy has an apple on her dress. Harry has glasses on his face, and Peter is a frog.” Some boys jokingly called Harry “Harry Potter” in Chinese and later using a similar Taiwanese homonym, but Mable firmly told them “no” in English each time they said it. She went through the cut-outs again randomly without asking for a word. The class knew they were required to say the names and did it successfully. Mable went on and asked them to say each name three times in a row. “Very good! Everyone got one eye.” All the groups got one eye on their circle.

Mable got her text out while she said, “OK! Now let’s open your book. Page 17!” The students were guessing by saying aloud the numbers seven, seventy. “Seven-teen,” Mable said once again. When a boy yelled the correct number in Chinese, Mable responded with a nod, “There you go!” All the students were busy finding the right page in their book. While waiting, Mable noticed that the elephant group was well behaved, and said, “Oh, Elephant, you got another eye!” She held her open text toward the class and pointed to the words as she read along. “Hello, hello, hello, Sandy! Hello, hello, hi! Hello, hello, hello, Amy! Hello, hello, hi! Hello, hello, hello, Harry! Hello, hello, hi! Hello, hello, hello, Peter! Hello, hello, hi!” A couple of students read along, though Mable didn’t ask them to the first time she read. But she told the class in English that it’s very easy, and they did it again with her.

“Do you want to listen to the CD?” Mable tended to ask the students in normal-speed English if they wanted to do something she had planned to do with them. Only one boy said “yes” loudly while the others watched the teacher without any response. “Yes? OK! Let’s listen to the CD.” Mable took the CD to the CD player in the front corner of the room. While waiting, she said loudly from the corner, “Today, if you get the most points, you can get a stamp.” She repeated it right away in Chinese to make sure that the students understood and were encouraged. Following the reading from the

CD, Mable held up each character cut-out and waved it sideways while most of the students were looking at their book. “Let’s do it again. This time, you get two points if you can read well.” The class read louder, and she gave the Tiger team two points. “Do you want to play a game?” The class felt lost and didn’t say anything. After Mable repeated her question, a boy loudly replied “no!” Mable immediately said her question in Chinese, and the students gave her a quick answer—Yes!—when they heard “game.” The teacher asked them to read the text one more time before she gave them the instructions for the game.

She told the students how to play the game in English first and then in Chinese. She assigned each group a character from the text to play. The teacher started to say the lines in the text by putting her hands on her waist and bending her knees as she spoke. When she finished saying the lines, she called on another team to do the same thing. The game went on as names of different teams were called out. Mable started the game by giving a demonstration. When she called on the Turtle group, they didn’t stand up on a count of five. Mable spoke Chinese, explaining that she wanted to take one point from the group. The Turtle group noisily argued. Some students angrily called out several names of their classmates and wanted them to stand up. Mable wanted them all to sit down and restart the game. Yet, Mable said, “hmm...you don’t look high-spirited. Stand up, everybody. Sit down. Jump.” She pumped their spirit up by giving these TPR commands three times. This time the game progressed much more smoothly. However, more and more students became onlookers, not bending their knees, not participating but looking around, or just talking while waiting for their turn. Mable didn’t stop them or deduct any points from the teams, though she made it clear before the game that points would be taken off if they didn’t bend their knees. The participation level varied a lot when the rules were not followed closely. Yet, the game was not stopped but lasted for another five minutes. Smiling, Mable continued the game when some students went faster and faster. Finally, Mable cut in and ended it. As some students complained, Mable counted “five, four, three, two, one. Shhh...” and gave out points to one group.

Mable took the character cut-outs from the desk and led the class in reading the lines of the text sentence by sentence. When she announced another competitive game where the students would repeat the same phrase over and over, the students got into a short discussion with their neighbors. One said, “I don’t want to play any more,” while another dominant child demanded that his teammates speak louder in the upcoming game. Mable called out “Hey! Five, four, three, two” and stopped as soon as she heard loud noises. This time, the teacher went to each group and randomly showed them one character, telling the group to say the first part of the line, “Hello, hello, hello, Harry!” The other groups were all supposed to respond “Hello, hello, hi!” This game lasted for another one and half minutes before Mable played the CD again for the students to read along with. Mable reinforced disciplined behavior by giving points again but right away quieted some students when one or two students got too loud. “Hey! Shhh...Turtle, I want to punish your group! Read the chant once again on your own.” Before the Turtle group began, Mable warned one particularly uncooperative boy, “Ken! Ken! You’ll have no break if I need to call on you again! You’ve been called on twice already.”

The whole class followed the CD once again after the Turtle group read along with the CD. Finally, the chant was done. Before Mable got out Eric Carle’s storybook, a boy asked, “when will we have a break?” Mable told him to wait until the bell rang. She reminded the class in Chinese that they could follow the storybook and do the body movements later after she said it in English.

Mable: From Head to Toe. From Head to Toe. (She tapped her head and lifted up her foot when she repeated the title the second time. From Head to Toe (said in Chinese). (She directly opened to page 1.) I am a penguin, and I turn my head. Can you do it? Can you do it? (when she said it twice, she waited to see the students’ response, but no one made any. She then turned her head several times.) Hey! (Right away, she saw Ken acting up.) OK, Ken, come to see me after class!

Class: Too easy! (One boy yelled out in Chinese while some were listening, some were doing their own things quietly at their seats, and some others walked up closer to the front to see the illustrations in the book.)

Mable: I am a giraffe, and I bend my neck. Can you do it? (Mable bent her neck, and asked the question again.) Very good! (she said, looking happy when more and more students started to follow and do the movements.)

Mable read the book once in five minutes and repeated the last sentence, “I can do it,” several times. She summed up by saying the last sentence twice in Chinese, but no Chinese was used during the reading. Mable turned to check the time on the clock that hung on the right side of the blackboard and asked if the class wanted to listen to the story again. The class gave various responses. Some wanted to look at the illustration of the gorilla, some wanted to see the camel. Mable wanted the students to quiet down, “Shhh...Speak English if you want to talk!” Some boys kept on acting up—some were talking, some were holding one another while some continued the big body movements they had just done. Mable didn’t spend time disciplining the students but kept on reading the story. This time the majority of the students followed the book and did the movements faster. “Do you like the story?” Mable asked when she finished it the second time. Nobody replied. She tried to calm the class down by counting “five, four, three, two, one” and also by giving points.

Mable immediately said she wanted to teach them a song and wrote it on the board. “What’s that?” “I can’t read!” “All English! Only Americans understand!” “What are you writing, Teacher?” Mable didn’t pay attention to those reactions but started having them repeat the lines after her. Mable used a couple of simple but large gestures with the lines while she taught them this goodbye song. “Hey! Five, four, three, two...” The class said “one.” Suddenly, they all did the gestures and movements when Mable announced that the best group would get two points. For more practice, she asked the class to sing in turns in a happy tone, a sad one, and a mad one, but the bell rang. A student reminded her of the ringing bell before she finished singing—“Goodbye, Mable. Goodbye, Mable. Goodbye, Mable, so long! See you again. See you again. See you again, tomorrow!” The class was dismissed when she said “Goodbye” to them.

## **Chapter Summary**

This study attempted to capture EFL teachers' beliefs and practices at the elementary school level, which were embedded in the social context of a suburban, labor-intensive neighborhood, an SBCD-exemplary elementary school, and the educational reform in Taiwan. The participant/observational approach allowed me to examine how individual teachers think and act in response to the natural settings at work.

Data collection included the data elicited from the preliminary studies I had conducted at this specific school, including a case study of the first teacher from mid-November to the end of December 2000, and a survey study and a field observation from mid-May to the end of June 2001. The main study was from May 6 to the end of October 2002. Member checking and triangulation with data from multiple sources, through multiple methods, were employed to establish trustworthiness.

In addition to an introduction of the school context and the EFL-related policies at the city level, the biographic accounts and typical classes of the four teacher participants were finally presented so as to better understand their beliefs and practices, which will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

This study explored how beliefs and context contributed to the practices of four English teachers in the same elementary school setting in Taiwan. From constantly comparing and analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that the four English teachers had some teaching routines and approaches in common while a good many variations existed across individual cases. Since the Guidelines for Elementary and Junior High School English Programs (the Guidelines) have proclaimed national goals and set the parameters for elementary English education, the Guidelines were employed to analyze the four teachers' practices. To answer the research question of the study, this discussion of how the teachers' practices resulted from their beliefs and the contextual factors will be divided into three parts: (1) commonalities the four teachers shared within the Guidelines, (2) commonalities the teachers shared outside the Guidelines, and (3) idiosyncratic beliefs salient to the teachers' practices. Before I answer the research question, I will discuss how these four teachers viewed the Guidelines and other contextual factors at the city and school levels.

#### **The Teachers' Conceptualization of Goals at Multiple Levels**

Chan (2000) said that elementary English teaching in Taiwan was confronting the issue of how to prepare qualified English teachers to effectively teach students good quality materials using adequate teaching approaches. He names teachers, teaching materials, and teaching approaches as three keys crucial to the elementary English programs at this initial stage of implementation. Chan inferred that teaching materials seem to be more important than students. Contextual factors, such as the students' characteristics and the schools' goals and expectations at the local- and school-levels, have been downplayed. The three key elements Chan (2000) points out echo two of the four commonplaces of curriculum Schwab (1962) delineates. But how do these three key elements work together to serve the vision, missions, and goals that each school has

proclaimed and has been developing? When we come to look at EFL programs at the school level, we can no longer view English programs as a content area separate from its context. Fang (1996) criticizes research on teaching for having been conducted in a decontextualized and objectified manner with teachers' behaviors and students' achievement conceived in a linear relationship. However, the four teachers in this study had done much thinking, and decision-making had been in process before they walked into the classroom to implement the planned lessons. In their planning of English programs at Happy Whale, how did these four English teachers conceptualize the national Guidelines, city-level guidelines, and the local-level school-based curricular plans?

Kathy had attended school-based workshops and training sessions on Grades 1-9 Curriculum since the first year Happy Whale was founded and learned with the rest of the faculty about implementing the new curricular model. She reflected about how she conceptualized the messages from various sources:

I really agree with the goals claimed by this educational reform, like the Ten Basic Capabilities for the student to achieve, because I believe that elementary education is basic for character building. I think what the Guidelines for the English programs say is wonderful. I read the Guidelines closely when they were released, and constantly went back to them, trying to internalize them so I could know what and how to do my teaching plans based on the indicators. I try to base my teaching goals and selection of activities on the Guidelines since the school doesn't really give me any goals to follow. Well, Happy Whale gives me room to develop my own stuff, a philosophy I believe in. There were times that I tried to integrate the school-based curriculum in astronomy with my English programs. But, in the end I was only able to tie in related vocabulary words the students might find useful. That's all I did. (Stimulated recalls, 5/15/02, 6/14/02; Email correspondence, 2/18/03)

Kathy was not given guidelines on the school level and sought guidance from the national Guidelines. She also took the initiative to couple her teaching with the school-based curriculum at Happy Whale but didn't achieve much. The principal recognized Kathy's efforts and supported her rationale that both the terms and subject matter knowledge of astronomy were too hard for the English programs to cover

(Interview, 5/24/02). With a supportive attitude toward the national guidelines, Kathy disagreed with only one thing—the city-level English guidelines.

The responsible office once asked for all English teachers' suggestions and wanted the municipal guidelines to be approved by all English teachers later, but before long, they finalized them by breaking the national guidelines down for four grade levels. To me, this is not a careful attitude. (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02)

Kathy considered it a necessary step for the city-level guidelines to have been approved by the English teachers of Ocean City, as the responsible office had claimed they were, in order to show a prudent attitude which might guarantee their applicability and accountability at the local school level.

Sophie said that she decided to come to Happy Whale for her year-long teaching practicum because it was one of the new schools that had been enacting the new curricular model. She read through the national Guidelines once and cited them when writing teaching plans. As for the school-level English teaching, she was given autonomy to decide what to teach and how to teach:

I came knowing nothing about Grades 1-9 Curriculum, but after six months I became familiar with it. I heard that the school gave [English teachers] a lot of room and flexibility to do your own programs, and I found it's true. They don't expect you to do a performance showing what the students have learned [like some other schools]... The national Guidelines? Look, they are at my desk, for my use in writing the proficiency index on the teaching plans we have to do each year. To me, they are only broad directions. I read the English guidelines once after I came to Happy Whale, for I needed to know what I'm supposed to teach--you know, to know the parameters they have set up for the English course. That's all. So, I dare not say that my teaching matches the goals of the school, but at least, I don't go against them. (Interviews, 5/16/02, 5/30/02)

Sophie didn't convey a positive attitude about the city-level guidance when asked if she had read the guidelines of Ocean City, because she recalled the negative judgments she had heard in a talk by the principal in charge of compiling the city-level guidelines:

The municipal guidelines? I know, it's done by the Peace School [a pseudonym]. So?! You know what? One time last semester when I was at that

school for an English workshop, this principal held such a favorable view of four-year teacher college graduates. He criticized us, saying that we certified teachers only have better pronunciation than regular elementary teachers. He said that we know nothing about classroom management. I was like...uh! (Interview, 5/30/02)

As for the school's core curriculum on astronomy, Sophie admitted that the reason astronomy was not introduced in the English programs was because of the discrepancies between the difficulty of subject matter knowledge in astronomy and the beginning levels of the students in English. But she expressed her willingness to try teaching an integrated curriculum, if there was an opportunity.

In meetings among language arts teachers they've discussed the difficulty of integrating astronomy with English class. I think we still can introduce some simple ideas about the solar system in English, if they insist. I'd be glad to do it if someone asked me to team up, but nobody did. (Interview, 5/30/02)

Stanley's talk about school-based curriculum was very limited. Whenever I tried to find out what he thought by bringing up related topics after meetings or workshops on the topics, he cautiously replied, "it's always good to know more." Stanley said he had taken all the required courses on Grades 1-9 Curriculum in the teacher training program, and he wasn't interested in talking about topics related to school-based curriculum development.

The required credits on Grades 1-9 Curriculum were done in a very intensive way, like two or three days in a row. It's not directly related to English teaching...To do school-based curriculum...depends on respective subjects, I guess. As for English, it mainly focuses on developing listening and speaking abilities. Maybe we can find something very easy related to the topic of astronomy. But most of the time, when we let students sing Christmas songs and make Christmas cards, we're integrating with music and arts, right? (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/10/02, 9/17/02, 12/06/02)

He also shied away from talking about the English guidelines at the national and city levels by saying that they were only references or broad directions to aim for.

Every teacher has his own individualistic style and approach in teaching. How to attain consistent goals is a big problem. National goals, such as the Ten Basic Capabilities, are for assessing the end-product. Big directions taken as

reference...The school didn't give us any goals or expectations as far as English teaching was concerned, nor any limitations. I think they may not know anything about it either. It depends on the English teachers' personal understanding of what should be taught and how you're going to do it. (Interviews, 9/10/02, 10/10/02, 12/06/02)

Stanley mentioned that he read through the national English Guidelines once when he was doing his teaching practicum:

I read it through at Harbor School [a pseudonym] in order to know what has been regulated and what to cover in class. Basically, the proficiency index is about listening and speaking competencies most of the students should attain. I feel that it's mainly listening and speaking. What I can do is to give as much practice as I can. (Interviews, 10/04/02, 10/22/02, 2/25/03)

Stanley seemed to believe that his own goals did not contradict any other set of goals, based on his limited knowledge of the national guidelines for education, the English guidelines, and the lack of information he had on the municipal guidelines or the school's expectations. He "preferred to teach only English for now unless he was asked to" associate with the school-based curriculum (Interview, 10/04/02).

Mable, on the other hand, purposefully chose Happy Whale for she knew this school was well known for its comprehensive implementation of the reformed curriculum model. As a novice teacher in elementary education, she determined to learn as much as possible about school-based curriculum development for her career needs.

I agree with the concepts in the national guidelines about the kind of education we want to offer the students. If they're gonna[sic] stick to [the reformed model] long enough, I made up my mind to develop myself for this elementary teaching job. So, that's the rationale of my decision to come to Happy Whale. I knew it's gonna[sic] be tough, for Happy Whale is known to be a school with a heavy workload. But I'd better get in tune with the reformed mode at the beginning of my career. (Interviews, 8/23/02, 8/28/02)

Mable compared Happy Whale to a big, traditional school where she had previously worked in terms of curriculum development, and felt fortunate to see Happy Whale a step ahead of other schools. However, she found English teaching/learning separate from the whole mechanism of school-based curriculum. To her, Happy Whale

was progressive in developing their school-based curriculum, but not in English teaching:

I find that Happy Whale is really implementing the reformed model, not like the schools where I did my teaching practicum. They had only a small group of people doing the work and they didn't know what they were doing. Yet, I'm quite disappointed at their attitudes toward English teaching/learning at Happy Whale. I thought, as a progressive school in the reformed model, they might be very enthusiastic in promoting English teaching/learning, but I don't receive any information about what they expect from me as an English teacher. It's so different from the schools I worked at in Taipei. They wanted to know clearly how you're gonna[sic] teach their students. I'd rather they told me how they want me to build up my English curriculum within the framework of the school-based curricular plan, and what I should plan for each grade level at Happy Whale. But they only gave you a general concept in the meetings. (Interviews, 8/23/02, 9/05/02)

From what she knew about the reformed curricular model, she felt it would be difficult to translate the requirements into class-level or school-level English programs. At my request to talk about her views on both the national and municipal English Guidelines, she admitted that she had not read them. After a quick browse, she disagreed with the broad and vague statements of indicators and the arbitrary matching of language skills or functions to the Ten Basic Capabilities:

The Ten Basic Capabilities are really too big to actualize in such a limited time. I don't know what they're gonna[sic] achieve. The problem lies in the absence of an environment for students to exercise and build up those capabilities. There should be some way to attain these goals, but how? And the proficiency index, how are those many goals gonna[sic] be attained within two years, given so little instruction time? Look at this, "[section] 2-1-6 can use simple classroom expressions." What does it mean "can use"? One sentence or ten sentences? "Can understand simple dialogues and daily-life expressions." I know my students can follow me and repeat them. I hope that they "understand," but how can I tell if they really understand and can use the expressions in the proper context if I only have 40 minutes every week with such a big group of students? They don't look helpful or concrete to me for my teaching needs. (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02)

Mable felt that the proficiency index for reachable objectives needed to be defined and clarified.

The four teachers' understanding and internalization of the guidance of goals set out at multiple levels varied from paucity to sufficiency, from indifference to whole-hearted dedication. To three of them, the national guidelines seemed too broad and vague for day-in-and-day-out use in the classroom. Chou (2002) highlights that the proficiency index proposed in the Guidelines sets out only general goals. For lesson planning and implementation, teachers need to analyze the proficiency index further and transform them into concrete teaching objectives which describe what specific contents or behaviors students will attain after a certain teaching process. She writes that for flexibility and autonomy allowing the local levels to teach more effectively, the Guidelines only affect basic requirements, and that teachers are unable, due to insufficient knowledge and training, to be held accountable for curriculum development based on those proficiency indicators. Sophie, Stanley, and Mable had a hard time visualizing the Guidelines as objectives attainable in practice, while Kathy needed to go over the Guidelines again and again "to internalize" them into her plans.

As for the Guidelines at the city level, Kathy didn't agree with the compilation procedures while Sophie refused to abide by them because of the negative attitude the principal in charge had toward the credentials of certified teachers. Stanley and Mable were not aware of their existence when I mentioned them. At the school level, the four teachers responded differently to the lack of school expectations. Kathy and Sophie once attempted to integrate English with the school-based curriculum but didn't succeed. Stanley preferred relying on his own teaching goals and plans, while Mable felt disappointed that English programs were left out of the school's progressive development.

In line with individual teachers' attitudes and interpretations of the contextual goals, what did the teachers share in common in practice?

### **Commonalities Inside the Guidelines**

Based on the Guidelines newly revised in 2003, the teachers' practices will be addressed on the five areas the Guidelines have regulated for curriculum

implementation—content areas, compiling teaching materials, teaching approaches, assessment, and teaching resources. In this section, I will first introduce how texts served English teaching at the elementary level, the procedure of text selection at the school level, and then discuss the teachers' beliefs and the commonalities they shared inside the Guidelines.

### **TEXT SERVED AS A CORE OF ENGLISH**

The four English teachers in this study did not compile the main body of teaching materials for their classes but drew in supplemental materials which were consistent with their teaching objectives. The curricula they offered each semester were mostly curricula based on the texts either they or their predecessors chose at the end of the prior school year. Except for the supplemental materials each teacher introduced, the content of materials the teachers taught, the ways the teaching materials were compiled, and the teaching resources that accompanied the texts were basically those provided by publishers of the texts available on the market, either domestic or foreign. Yet, teachers' beliefs in many respects shaped the ways they used the texts and presented the materials in them. Therefore, beliefs relevant to text selection and use will be discussed in connection with three areas--content areas, compiling teaching materials, and teaching resources.

Since each of the four teachers had included materials of their own choice, the discussion will include two parts. One will focus on the ready-made texts they used for class, including how the teachers respectively viewed the texts in light of the Guidelines in the three areas, and what strengths and weaknesses they found in the texts used. The second part will cover the supplemental materials that individual teachers selected and provided in class, including what teaching goals the teachers had determined for various grade levels, and how individual teachers used the selected materials to serve their planned teaching goals. When the four teachers evaluated the texts, they talked about the content, the compilation of the texts, and teaching resources provided by the publishers. In addition to the difficulty of separating the three areas, the four teachers in

this study did not share much in common in these areas. The other two areas--teaching approaches and assessment--will be discussed later in this chapter.

According to Shih (1999) and Chan (2000), the English texts available for elementary levels in Taiwan have to be evaluated and approved by the educational authorities, such as National Institute for Compilation and Translation, Provincial Institute of Teachers, and Taipei Municipal Institute of Teachers, before they are available for the teachers to select. The general procedure of adopting a text is as follows. After the screening process by the educational authorities, English teachers at the local levels, with the professional autonomy given by this educational reform, are able to choose from among the six to ten approved texts the ones that are compatible with the local features of their communities and schools, and the needs and characteristics of their students. Then the texts are recommended to a school-level committee for the final decisions (Shih, 1999). But, how did individual teachers view the already-approved texts used for curriculum implementation at Happy Whale?

#### **PROCEDURE OF TEXT SELECTION & CURRICULAR PLANS AT HAPPY WHALE**

As the single English teacher at Happy Whale for three years, Kathy played an important role in choosing English texts. She had to choose texts for Sophie's class in the semester before Sophie came to Happy Whale. Later, Kathy and Sophie teamed up and chose the texts in the semester before Stanley and Mable were hired by the school. Kathy expressed her incompetence at discerning non-native-like content in the texts:

In my teaching practicum year, I heard the native teachers at work say that they didn't use some patterns compiled in the domestic texts we had for class. This message alerted me, and I have tried to pick texts compiled by foreign publishers since then for I myself don't have the ability to discern this problem. (Email correspondence, 2/18/03)

But this premise that Kathy held was modified when she was required to choose texts for Sophie's class. She avoided more expensive foreign texts and selected the ones "among those general texts which met the taste of the majority of teachers" (Email correspondence, 3/24/03). Later, she and Sophie reached consensus in text selection by

comparing the content of their old texts with that of the new ones to learn which ones connected better with the old texts and showed progression in topics, vocabulary, sentence patterns, and so on.

If the contents were similar, we tended to favor the ones which offered more contents in reading and writing. We also wanted to avoid selecting all texts from one or two publishers for people would suspect that we had some under-the-table deals with specific publishers. After the texts were finalized, Sophie and I started to write the syllabi for all six grades with reference to proficiency index in the national Guidelines. The syllabi were put into the school's complete grade-by-grade curricular plan ready for approval by the Municipal Department of Education. (Email correspondence, 3/24/03).

Shih's (1999) study showed that most of the elementary schools in three major cities did not have a committee responsible for English text assessment and selection but decisions were made by a few English teachers. At Happy Whale text selection was approved by teachers teaching the same subject area. The selected texts in English were sent for approval by the committee of language arts teachers as part of the formal procedure for text selection. This process was more of a formality than anything else, since no faculty appeared competent to review the texts used for a subject area or language other than their own. The leader of the language arts committee commented, "Are we supposed to simply put a rubber stamp on the lists? We can't tell what's in those English texts anyway." (Fieldnotes, 6/12/02).

Mr. Gong, the Head of Studies, commented that basically the English syllabi were left alone though they were juxtaposed within the school's complete curricular plans. They were not reviewed at either the school level or the city level:

Based on my experience working on-loan in the Municipal Department of Education in Ocean City, they don't review the English syllabi of each elementary school because they are mainly following a unit-by-unit order of certain texts. And their texts are supposedly the ones already approved and screened by the MOE authorities. (Interview, 8/15/02)

Therefore, even at an exemplary school progressively developing the Grades 1-9 curricular model, such as Happy Whale, English programs were juxtaposed in the

school curricular plans with other subject areas but were, in fact, totally separate from the ongoing school-based curriculum development.

## **I. CONTENT AREAS, COMPILATION OF TEACHING MATERIALS, AND TEACHING RESOURCES**

Individual teachers' beliefs about curricular goals determined the kinds of texts they would choose to attain the planned goals. Each teacher's beliefs and concerns about contextual factors will be discussed prior to understanding how they assessed the texts and adopted the texts in instruction as well as what and how they introduced supplemental materials.

### **Kathy's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection**

Kathy's text selection was based on her beliefs about what role she played in the elementary setting, what the young learners should learn, what she believed valuable in English teaching and learning, and how she viewed effective teaching:

I hope that my pupils will fall in love with English learning because of loving me as their first EFL teacher. Through me, they get to perceive different experiences in learning and further generate everlasting interest in learning English. Therefore, I always try my best to give them some novel English learning experiences on top of the more rigid arrangement of contents in the texts, like games, songs, elaborated learning activities. For example, I bring in my experiences of understanding American culture and offer them culture-related learning activities both in and out of the classroom. So, whenever I can, I choose a thinner text to allow me more time and flexibility to work on holidays and culture since language is closely connected to its culture. (Interview, 11/11/01)

As a mediator between the young learner and the foreign language being learned, she intended to introduce culture along with the English language. She felt a need to offer more varied learning experiences other than texts. Through culture-related activities, such as introducing Thanksgiving, Christmas, and related crafts works (Interviews 11/11/01, documents, 11/28/01, 5/28/02), Kathy expanded her classroom teaching into outside classroom activities. To reinforce the language skills and topics introduced in each lesson, Kathy put in learning activities. The supplemental materials

she incorporated were mainly songs, culture-related materials, and small-group tasks designed to enhance learning. To illuminate the importance of encouraging a learning atmosphere on campus, Kathy commented, “It will be the most effective if children can pick up English as they pick up their mother tongue!” (Interview, 11/11/01) Yet, she once admitted that her oral English competence didn’t allow her to do storytelling or employ other authentic materials, such as children’s literature (Interview, 1/20/02). The quality of wholeness and integrity, that Whole Language Approach encourages, in her teaching materials was not yet evidenced though she repeatedly emphasized her goals in “preparing children for the future by teaching them learning strategies, facilitating their interest and fondness in learning, and letting them obtain various experiences in the process” (Interview, 11/11/01).

Kathy’s selection and presentation of certain teaching materials echoed Tai, Cheng, and Yeh’s (2000) finding that elementary English teachers’ confidence in their own English competence influenced the presentation of the contents of their teaching materials. But Kathy didn’t follow closely the instructions and orders of lessons in the texts, which was inconsistent with what Tai, et al. (2000) concluded from those teachers who did not feel confident of their language abilities. A main explanation for this situation might be Kathy’s English teaching experiences in the prior three years and her one year of teaching practicum. Kathy’s concern about coherence in her teaching materials and teaching procedures, timely introduction of holidays, and consideration of difficulty levels for different grades was consistent with Tai, et al.’s (2000) findings about experienced English teachers.

Kathy admitted that she could only write broad goals for English education at Happy Whale when she was required to do so by the committee of language arts teachers. She wrote goals saying that first and second graders should be able to greet people in English and manage basic classroom English. Third and fourth graders should be able to introduce themselves, their families, and friends, while fifth and sixth graders should be able to answer questions and state reasons in English (Document, 11/28/01). Compared to the two-stage indicators in the English Guidelines, these goals Kathy

chose were from the indicators for speaking competency for both elementary and junior high stages. In addition to Kathy's confession of an insufficient ability to write well-rounded objectives, another reason Kathy wrote only goals on speaking ability stemmed from a consensus decision among the language arts teachers after they received the message from the principal that the school should emphasize more training on the students' ability to express themselves (Document, 11/28/01, Email correspondence, 3/24/03).

The more concrete objectives she bore in mind for different grades to achieve guided her classroom practices and selection of learning activities:

For upper grades, we spend more time on phonics. I don't introduce as much phonics to primary grades as I do short dialogues because they seem to pick up dialogues more easily than phonics. I introduce third and fourth graders to the concept of vocabulary words, but I show first and second graders pictures so they can say the corresponding words. I don't even intend to teach first graders the alphabet for I'd rather let them acquire it in due time from class. However, I had to deviate from my own beliefs on this and yield to the parents' expectations in order to show parents some observable, immediate achievements such as knowing the alphabet. (Interview, 4/9/02)

Kathy revealed that parents' expectations influenced her curricular decisions, and that her understanding of what parents expected played a role in her use of texts. Also, strategies concerning how to convince parents were exchanged among her colleagues. This echoed the school's report on how parents emphasized their children's academic achievements:

With the advice I've gotten from many experienced teachers, after I finish teaching every lesson, I always ask my students to open their texts with me and at least read the text over. This is especially to assure the parents that we DO [emphasized in tone] use the text and ACTUALLY [emphasized in tone] finish the contents of each lesson in class. Parents in Taiwan put so much weight on texts and learning from texts! (Interview, 4/9/02)

On the issue of text selection, Kathy perceived parents' indirect complaints once and felt deeply hurt. The reason was twofold. First, "they didn't trust [her] ability to make professional judgments" (Interview, 6/24/02). Second, they didn't come to her for

an explanation but talked among themselves. “It made me feel helpless, too, because I didn’t know whom to reach to make my position known on this specific issue. This seriously defeated me in treating parents as legitimate partners” (Interview, 6/24/02).

Kathy, who taught second, fifth, and sixth grades in the semester when this study was conducted, said that she had to select texts from among the already-approved ones for fifth and sixth graders, while there was no limitation on text selection for primary grades since the implementation of English programs had only been mandated for fifth and sixth grades at the elementary level. Therefore, she found big differences between the texts she chose for the second graders and those for the upper grade students. The texts basically met the requirements of the Guidelines; however, Kathy was hesitant to agree that the texts for upper grades were interesting enough because “they looked more like the junior high school texts—rigid and heavily loaded with key words and sentence patterns” (Email correspondence, 3/24/03). The text she chose for the second graders, on the other hand, was “an intentional pick of texts with less dense contents” which allowed her flexibility in doing learning activities (Interview, 11/11/01).

The strengths Kathy found in the texts selected were the audio teaching resources the publishers offered, such as songs and chants on tapes or CDs, for listening comprehension practices. The design of the texts was geared to foster listening comprehension, and put basic sentence patterns for communication in context. The texts generally included selected daily-life topics, which students understood and picked up without difficulty. However, she felt that the topics in the texts were too general and often did not include the ones which were relevant to elementary students’ lives.

I saw a lesson on playing dodge ball in a text once. I was so thrilled because it’s the sport elementary students often do at school. I almost chose that text, but I didn’t. The reason is that all the other lessons in the text were not well designed, nor was the teachers’ manual. (Email correspondence, 3/24/03)

According to Kathy, the text’s intention to keep the contents simple and focused had resulted in insufficient language input. She recognized a need to cover more alternative expressions for a communicative function, for example, “very well, fine,

OK, not well, so-so,” for answering people’s greetings. Yet, she expressed her concern about insufficient teaching time and the students’ ability to absorb more in order to achieve real communication:

I especially struggled about how to cover more alternative expressions of daily-life interactions in a 40-minute English class when the texts mostly provided simplified, uniform two-sentence dialogues. It seems that I teach my students fixed question-and-answer short dialogues, but I am concerned whether the young learners will be overwhelmed by all the alternative expressions for doing one communicative function before they achieve real-life communication. (Email correspondence, 2/18/03)

Kathy mentioned that she heeded her upper graders’ suggestions before finalizing text selection as well as planning new curriculum. But rather than doing whatever her students suggested, she consulted the Guidelines before she decided what to do. She found this process triggered more self-reflection as a teacher:

I never got a chance to ask what my primary grades were interested in, but I did ask the upper grade students to give me feedback on what they enjoyed most in the curriculum and what they would expect to have in the following semester, after a semester ended. Then I went back to the Guidelines to check if what the students preferred matched with the requirements and what I should prepare my students for when they graduate and go on to the next stage. You know what? I find that teaching sixth graders especially helped me to review what I have been teaching them in past years! It’s so different from teaching lower grades. Once when I couldn’t decide which text to pick, I asked some students to browse through several texts that I had screened and picked. “Look at the print, the topics, artwork, layout, etc.” It says in the Guidelines that “the compilation of teaching materials should be based on the student’s interest and needs.” So, I asked them! (Email correspondence, 3/24/03)

Kathy really embraced what the Guidelines said, and it enhanced not only her actions in serving her students’ interests and needs but also her reflective thinking on her teaching.

The text she selected for her second graders was compiled by a British publisher, and did not encompass a variety of learning activities, language forms, or introduction of alphabet or phonics. But she introduced alphabet and phonics in class after taking into account the parents’ expectations. And yet, she stated that time didn’t allow her to doublecheck the selection of vocabulary words in specific texts to be sure

the publishers had listed the two kinds of vocabulary words required by the national Guidelines:

But I neither knew nor checked if the vocabulary words of the texts were among the ones on the suggested checklist or if the students picked up at least 200 words for production or not. I didn't see categories of "words for production" or "words for recognition" listed in the texts, and assumed that the texts should have no problem on this issue since they had gone through the national review and been approved. It's too much work for me, given that I have busy administrative tasks to do on top of all the teaching hours. (Email correspondence, 2/18/03)

Witton-Davies (2000), who advocated the content-based approach as better suited for elementary English teaching, surveyed ten texts for children compiled by foreign publishers. He concluded that all the texts reviewed as language-based were widely used in Taiwan. The text Kathy adopted for second graders, according to Witton-Davies, had less of a language-based approach but a void of coherence in the units or other content-based features, such as stories, learning skills, intercultural awareness, or overarching curricular topics. Given that Kathy intended to introduce culture-related topics and learning activities to reinforce the topics in the text, it seemed that she compensated for the content issue raised by Witton-Davies by making that text serve her beliefs and the teaching objectives she had mapped out for students, instead of the other way round (Ben-Peretz, 1990).

Richards and Lockhart (1996) concluded from existing literature on language teaching that the evaluative decisions teachers make after class contribute to the planning decisions for successive lessons, and that teachers' planning, interactive, and evaluative decisions are thus interconnected. Woods' (1996) study suggested that the cyclical nature of planning, action, and assessment makes both curricular change and teacher change possible because the on-going interpretation of events resulting from the process contributes to the teacher's belief system to evolve and develop expertise in teaching. In Kathy's case, it is obvious that curricular change had been made to accommodate parents' expectations. Phonics and the alphabet were taught in the second grade class. From practice, she found that primary grades picked up simple dialogues

more easily than phonics. Through consulting the Guidelines, Kathy incorporated more perspectives, such as upper grade students' interests and opinions on text selection, and reflected about how she had been teaching and where she had been leading the sixth graders. As the school-based curricular model claims to make the curriculum responsive to the local needs, Kathy at least had included the voices from parents and students on a class level.

### **Sophie's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection**

The 2001-2002 school year at Happy Whale was Sophie's first year working in a public elementary school setting after 11 years of teaching at a well-known cram school. Sophie regarded her job teaching real beginners from scratch as the hardest, but she viewed it as an extremely important part from three perspectives—students' language learning, the elementary school context, and the perspective of a mother. First, she recognized that children are still developing, but her practices tended to follow a behaviorist approach. She found children receptive to experience:

I remember doing experiments with children. I gave them different accents, and they copied what you gave them. It's interesting to see how they can be molded, especially in pronunciation. So, it's important that they have good pronunciation to listen to and imitate right from the very beginning. And this is what I can give them. (Interview, 5/15/02)

Sophie emphasized to me that even at the cram school not every teacher could teach beginners well because "beginners are the hardest group to teach!"(Interview, 5/15/02). She strongly rejected the common suggestion that general elementary teachers should be legalized to teach English at the elementary level. "English, the whole thing, is much more than simple ABC. To become an English teacher is not something you can achieve simply by taking some courses. It requires solid English competencies" (Interview, 5/15/02).

The second aspect of her view of her role was the elementary school context she encountered in her teaching practicum year:

I find English is the weakest component at elementary schools. No matter how good those teachers' English was before they graduated from teachers colleges, their English gets rusty once they leave school and stop using it. This is what language learning is like! So, I'm like a silent but diligently-working farmer assigned to plow this piece of farm that nobody else in this community can plow. (Interview, 5/15/02)

Sophie didn't explain how she reached the conclusion that elementary teachers were ignorant about English, but her statement was supported by evidence from different teachers and administrators, a topic which will be discussed in the section on the commonalities the teachers shared outside the Guidelines.

Sophie admitted that this teaching situation may have made her feel alone, but it helped her to keep her distance from interferences.

After all, English is not a core in our school-based curriculum. Elementary teachers generally have a fear of English learning and avoid talking about or admitting it because they are sensitive about it. My job here is to make the students' learning more colorful, and I see the effect among my students already. But I play only a subordinate part. The major parts of the student's school life are the homeroom teachers and the parents in terms of their influence on elementary students' development. I'm like a thin thread connected to the major thread in the fabric. I'm not capable of playing the major role here, and I don't long for one either. It's like you're in a corner, but you're protected from getting too involved. Personally I don't like to be in the spotlight anyway. So I keep a low profile all the time. (Interview, 5/16/02)

The images, as Clandinin (1985) terms them, of teachers, that Sophie herself had described of her roles, sounded extremely profound, stemming not only from her personal experiences but also from her recognition of the subunits and their function in the institutional organization at Happy Whale. However, the image of her role contributed to the way Sophie conceptualized her teaching plans and managed her classroom, which will be described in a later section.

She told me what she loved about teaching. But Sophie's long-time background as a teacher and coordinator of children's programs at a cram school surfaced frequently in her conversations about various topics. This is how Sophie compared English teaching in two different settings--the elementary school and the cram school:

I enjoy seeing students learn English and benefit from the strategies I've taught them, and save them from a lot of trouble in learning. It's rewarding to see students progress. But [the students at cram schools] at least are very motivated, and they need to pass the final placement test to go to a higher class. And it's totally different here at the elementary school. Not to mention the big classes, the first graders' attention span is really short. Many students are not motivated, and this school setting didn't place any restrictions on them. They go on to a higher grade even if they learn nothing. This is the way it is! (Interview, 5/16/02)

Within the last two months of her year-long teaching practicum, Sophie expressed her deep helplessness with the unmotivated students at Happy Whale—"They just don't want to learn. What can you do?" (Interview, 5/16/02) Sophie, in fact, felt frustrated with the form of the English programs—40-minutes per week, big classes with students of various English competences, unmotivated students, and no requirement to give tests. But she immediately saw it as part of the problem in elementary English teaching nationwide, "this is a policy problem, beyond what one school can manage! They told me it's almost impossible to split a big class into two smaller ones, and that the daily schedule is too full to add any more English classes" (Interview, 5/16/02).

Recognizing these difficulties, Sophie emphasized the importance of selecting appropriate texts with the hope of improving the dissatisfying learning situation:

In such a big class with mixed levels, the selection of texts is especially crucial. I chose a text which would not bore advanced students, which let the real beginners learn something, and which in-between students could enjoy. I insisted on buying a listening comprehension workbook which accompanied the text. The workbook serves multiple functions, too. First, it keeps the students busy. Then they have some listening comprehension drills which are easy to do and give them a sense of accomplishment. (Interview, 5/16/02)

However, buying one more book was not an easy task that she could deal with even with her professional judgment and autonomy. Sophie smiled briefly before she recounted the struggle she had with the lead teacher of her year group on the workbook issue. She said,

I'm pleased with myself because I insisted on buying the workbook at that time even though the lead teacher warned me of possible complaints from parents. She said that our working-class parents didn't like teachers to continually change and buy new texts. But I've finished the old text! NT\$ 130 for a new text and its workbook. Is it such an unacceptable deal? Then she wanted me to take full responsibility. She said if any parents called to complain, I myself should call and explain to the parents about my decision. But, you know what? Not a single parent complained! (Interview, 5/30/02)

When exercising professional autonomy and judgment in text decisions, she felt a lack of understanding and support from her colleagues.

The third perspective from which Sophie saw her job as exceptionally important was from her stance as a mother of two elementary-age children:

In the past, I was like any of those mothers who didn't know much about what they were doing within the elementary school walls but entrusted my children to the teachers' hands. I feel I'm more fortunate because I'm here to step out and become my children's help any time maltreatment or improper things occur; that may be seldom, but it does happen. I know how helpless parents can feel sometimes. (Interview, 5/16/02)

She stated that one of her purposes for working in a public school system—to help her own children—stemmed from her alignment with parents as consumers, who should monitor what the service provider was doing and how, being as McWilliam, et al. (1997) termed it—"families as consumers." As for English teaching, she elaborated on her understandings about working-class parents:

I don't really know what the parents here expect from English teaching for their children. The school never held this kind of meeting or discussion before, or I would surely attend. So, I would need to infer from what I know in order to draw up my teaching objectives...But probably my understanding of this group of parents is not as objective as homeroom teachers since they have constant contact with them, but I don't. The parents of Happy Whale students are mostly working-class. From my understanding, they hold two attitudes. One is that they're busy making a living and have no time to get involved at school. So, they pay no attention to what the teacher is doing. The other one is that they don't know English, and that they are content as long as their children keep on learning something from class. And they don't interfere since they don't know English. Therefore, can you see how important English teachers are? I feel that I'm entrusted with the responsibility to make the students learn something. But

the parents don't even know how to evaluate my teaching. So, it's a job of conscientiousness, you know? You must do your best. (Interview, 5/16/02)

As Sophie said, her inference about what working-class parents thought and expected from school might have stemmed from her limited contact with parents and the contrasting information she obtained from her teacher friends at other school districts about how parents of higher SES intruded upon and impeded teachers' instruction and the school administration (Interview, 5/16/02). However, no related data solicited from working-class parents in this study could further triangulate with or justify Sophie's inference.

With the texts and workbooks decided on, and considering parents' expectations, how did Sophie use the texts? What concrete objectives did she hold for different grades? What did she plan to achieve in her teaching? Sophie projected another image of what her students were like and what she longed to achieve:

Well, different from students in an urban area, the majority of Happy Whale's students are real beginners without any or enough [exposure to English]. I treat them all like people with digestion problems since I don't get a chance to diagnose them beforehand. So I give them minimum contents and pick the ones which are most useful, easy to digest and absorb. A small amount but presented in a variety of forms. This is the principle I have for this group of students. Then their parents will soon see the muscles grow on them. So, I teach them useful expressions, such as "No big deal! Shame on you. I beg your pardon," etc. One useful sentence per week! I encourage them to practice in class, and then say whatever they can to their parents after school. Then the parents will recognize what they've learned because parents want to see immediate results. I introduce songs and chants for instant learning so that the students can feel good about themselves. On the other hand, they'll have something to show people when there are visitors on campus. (Interview, 5/16/02)

Sophie majored in English and Spanish in her junior college and college years. She expressed her love of learning languages and of the time she spent in England and Spain interacting freely with local people. She believed in the practicality of language learning; that is, "language is for daily-life use" (Interview, 5/16/02) As a mother as well as a teacher, she took into account what learning outcomes would convince the parents she was doing her job.

She mentioned her willingness to include suggestions parents brought to her:

Once a fourth grader's mother suggested that English teacher could cover the useful sentences printed on the teacher-parent contact book. The fourth grade homeroom teacher relayed this message to me since this mother wrote it on the contact book. I'm glad to cooperate. I took in the mother's idea and have been doing it each week. It's compatible with what I've been doing anyway. No sweat at all! (Interview, 5/16/02)

Sophie mentioned another function of using texts was to give parents a basis for their expectations and a sense of security:

Young learners tend to use the textbook to do some matching exercises, to color some pages and to sing some songs. On top of that, young learners' textbooks are served[sic] mostly for their parents to have something to expect—knowing in advance what their kids will be learning grants them a sense of security, I guess. (Email correspondence, 1/21/03)

But she had different objectives for different grades. Sophie emphasized mainly oral practice for first graders. “They only need to understand what is said while third and fourth graders should be able to recognize the vocabulary words with phonics concepts” (Interview, 5/16/02). She expected the first graders to be able to recognize and trace the alphabet. She wanted the third and fourth graders to sound out words, not necessarily to be able to memorize or write the key words.

According to Sophie, all the texts available on the market were compiled similarly. Whether or not she herself chose the texts, she believed that she “had abilities accumulated from experience to teach well”(Interview, 10/25/02). She recognized that the texts she used commonly featured easy-to-understand contents and vivid illustrations. She liked the design of various forms of drills, such as rhymes, songs, phonics, dialogues, listening comprehension drills, with each unit targeting one single grammatical function. However, she found some contents either not practical enough or not able to interest certain age groups of students. Given this problem, Sophie emphasized that it was the teacher's job to “modify the texts to make the class fun and informative” (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). Drawing on teaching useful daily-life

expressions and adding body movements to songs and chants were tactics she used to achieve this end.

Similar to Kathy, Sophie took into consideration the expectations of parents in her teaching practice and, as one of the goals, she expected the parents to see the students' learning outcomes and be convinced of her conscientious work. She seemed to agree with the parents and was willing to take their suggestions. Homeroom teachers acted like mediators or information providers between the parents and the English teacher as a subject teacher. Their support seemed crucial so that better communication with parents could take place. However, Sophie recognized that her role was subordinate compared to the major roles of parents and homeroom teachers. She preferred to take a diligently-working but passive stance and keep a low profile in the school community, because she believed that English was not a core in the school-based curriculum and that the difficulties she encountered in English teaching were beyond what one school could change or solve.

Compared to her long experience in cram school teaching, Sophie acknowledged that the English learning environment at Happy Whale lagged. She employed teaching materials, such as songs, chants, and one useful sentence per week and aimed to give students a sense of achievement and motivate their learning with fun. Yet, she didn't know what to do with the unmotivated students within the infrastructure of a public school system which placed no restrictions on the students who didn't learn. The helplessness intensified Sophie's beliefs in the more structured programs at cram schools, including small classes, and placement tests before going to a higher level.

### **Stanley's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection**

Stanley reflected that his English learning soared the year when he was preparing to retake the junior college entrance examination. That was a turning point because he switched his major from electronics to English in his junior college years, and then spent over 10 "fun" years at a cram school. Thanks to the reform movement he had the opportunity to fulfill his long-time dream of teaching in a public school system:

After being taught with a grammar translation approach for three years at junior high, I started self learning English with zeal through listening to English programs on the radio and television. I have worked on listening and speaking competence since then, making use of all possible opportunities—constantly participating in the English conversation club at school, finding native speakers at churches to talk to, attending the Toastmaster Club to practice English presentations. So naturally I went to teach at cram schools after graduation because only cram schools offered English conversation classes and gave children fun English classes. All the English classes of all levels at that time were geared toward academic achievements in tests and exams through grammar translation approach. It's been a long turn around. To teach English in the fun way that cram schools have been doing, seems to be what the reform wants for the elementary level! (Interview, 9/03/02)

English learning for Stanley was “to be able to speak what natives speak” in real life (Interview, 12/06/02). He thought that “the fun of language” was to be able to say one thing in various ways (Interview, 9/17/02). He believed that learning foreign languages should start early because, from experience, he noticed that little children weren't afraid to make mistakes which was consistent with the affective filter hypothesis Krashen (1982, 1991) proposed. Stanley also believed that the top priority of his teaching at the elementary level was to trigger students' interest in English learning. “This is the first time in their lives that students are introduced to English. So, a primer is to help them enjoy English learning, to feel that it's not hard and to encourage them to go on learning, for it's a long journey to learn a language well.” These were his expressed goals at Happy Whale (Interview, 9/17/02).

If I can take care of the majority of students, that's good enough given all the difficulties and limitations in the elementary school environments— big classes, 40 minutes per week, various competency levels of students, and so on. Besides, it's impossible for them to learn English well at this stage when they are just starting. I don't expect to do much or to achieve much. How far can you go with so little teaching time? If I expect more, that's torturing myself! You know? So, one thing that I'm pretty sure of is that it's impossible for me to “bring up the achievement of each student” as they proclaim in the educational reform. I tell you! (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/17/02, 10/04/02)

On the other hand, he believed that the parents should play a part by exposing the students to English learning also. The school should provide support by encouraging

parents and students and ordering tapes that were designed to accompany the texts. He was astonished that the school, the teachers, and the parents didn't encourage students to buy tapes for use at home.

How come the English teachers didn't encourage buying tapes in the past? It's so important for them to listen to English in an EFL context after school! The school should ask if the parents need this service and order it for them. It's not too complicated. The parents shouldn't expect their children to learn English well with only 40 minutes per week. Right? I was so surprised that Happy Whale didn't have this common practice that other schools have! (Interview, 9/03/02)

Stanley noted that in two consecutive years, he taught whatever texts the schools had chosen and given him. He believed that English teachers should have the ability to cope with any texts by adapting the texts to his/her personality traits and teaching styles. However, he didn't like the texts available on the market very much:

I might have my own concerns when I adopt certain textbooks. But you know, you always need to balance your personal teaching styles and personality traits with the compilation of certain texts before you use them in class. I especially find the texts nowadays different from the texts I like, which gave more stratified arrangements based on grammar. The texts they compile for the communicative approach mix up all the sentence patterns. I sometimes treat different patterns as separate parts to teach. (Interview, 9/03/02)

His teaching approaches may contribute to a clash with the text compilation and his views on the Communicative Approach. This will be discussed later in the section on teaching approaches. But what objectives did he plan to attain with the texts given? How did the texts serve his objectives? What supplemental materials did he draw on for these purposes?

Basically, I focus on giving as much listening and speaking practice as possible in class. Therefore, to be in tune with my own teaching styles, I always use the listening comprehension workbook which the publisher designed for use with the main text. In addition to the opportunities I always offer for language use in class, I let students listen to the CD of the text, read the text, read along, and imitate while doing the exercises in the text and the workbook. They have opportunities to speak English anytime in class. Last year in lower grades, I gave them more rhymes. This year, I teach only fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. I

expect them to be able to listen a lot and speak a lot in class, including reading the texts. How are they going to keep what they have learned in mind if they can't read? (Interview, 9/03/02).

Stanley emphasized the importance of providing as much listening and repeating practice as possible in class so that students could get familiar with the materials taught. He spent time ensuring that students could read from the texts as a way to retain what they had learned.

Stanley heard that parents at Happy Whale once complained that teachers didn't finish the entire texts in class. He was very careful and said that his way of using the texts wouldn't get him in trouble. "I closely follow the text, lesson by lesson, section by section. Parents won't get a chance to complain to me because I never skip any lesson in the text. I teach them all and make sure that the students can read"(Interview, 9/03/02). The other key to his teaching was to make the whole process fun with games and other strategies, which will be addressed later in this chapter.

But it's still not enough to have only the materials in the texts. I teach them useful sentences and phrases whenever opportunities or right moments arise. This is the most valuable part of my teaching, I think. It's fun and easy to use stuff, for example, "What page? Lousy! Upside down. Be good." They can always remember and say it out loud. (Interview, 9/03/02)

Stanley fully utilized the exercises provided in both texts and workbooks and found tapes or CDs indispensable not only for his classroom instruction but also for the students' after-school practice. Stanley felt that the materials in the texts were basically practical and close to daily-life situations. But he thought the content areas of the texts were not fun enough. The songs and chants did not attract the students to learn actively, and the phonics sections were too long and used examples that were too hard. Some games suggested in the teachers' manual were not good for big classes. Stanley usually followed the texts closely, and he wished that the publishers had offered big posters of the scenarios in the texts or videotapes, or CD ROMs for various teaching situations (Email correspondence, 4/03/03).

Though dissatisfied with the texts used, Stanley said it was not practical to compile his own teaching materials. Consistent with most of the primary reasons why elementary school teachers refused to compile their own teaching materials in Tseng's (1999) study, Stanley said that he could not afford to do so in terms of time, energy, and workload. "Besides, having limited knowledge in compiling materials, you need to invite college professors to help you evaluate and revise your materials. Who has the interest to do such a huge project for you?" (Interview, 9/03/02)

Once again, parents' voices about the teachers' use of texts played a part in Stanley's decision-making process and reinforced his beliefs about thoroughly going through each section of the texts in class. He made sure that he finished the entire text, so parents wouldn't have a chance to complain to him. This blanket teaching procedure went hand-in-hand with his belief that students should be able to read from the texts in order to learn and retain what they had learned. He relied on the texts; he finished every exercise and listened to the CDs accompanying the texts and workbooks but, according to Stanley, neither sufficient teaching aids for various instructional use were provided by the publishers nor were enough useful, daily expressions included in the texts. The teachers at Happy Whale did not habitually encourage the parents and students to buy tapes or the CDs accompanying the texts, which contradicted Stanley's beliefs about after-school practice and exposure to English with the use of tapes and CDs. This phenomenon convinced him to proclaim that it was impossible either for him to teach students well or for students to learn English well with only 40 minutes per week, and that parents had a responsibility for their children's English learning. Also, the school and teachers were responsible for promoting the buying of tapes for after-school practice. He seemed to say that it required the whole school community to stand together to encourage English learning in and outside classroom, at least to affirm the need of buying and using tapes and providing this service as an option to parents and students.

### **Mable's Beliefs about English Teaching, Learning, and Text Selection**

Mable believed that language is for use and that it requires a receptive environment to build language competence. She drew on her own experience of self help in applying for high school in the States, adjusting herself to a foreign country, and studying through to a college degree:

Having refused to go through a stressful high school life in Taiwan, I applied and was admitted to a Christian high school in the States with the simple English I learned in junior high. I remember it only took me three months to understand what people were saying. So fast! Of course, I had to listen to English all day because I had no other Chinese people around. I listened to music, watched TV, went to the movies, went to class, and did a lot of reading. Totally English. But in Taiwan, it's totally Chinese or Taiwanese. The students have no environment in which to use the language they're learning. (Interviews, 8/23/02, 10/03/02)

With this conviction, she intended to give the students a setting which was more conducive to English learning. She talked about two teaching experiences she had, which were very satisfying to her:

I worked at an after-school program where primary grade students came everyday for 90 minutes. I didn't teach or ask them to repeat after me systematically what I spoke to them. Instead, I spoke English all the time, and they naturally picked up what I said because one day I found them answering the office clerk's roll call questions in English (because she asked in English too) for me when I was busy doing something else. They amazed me. The other case is when I taught as a homeroom teacher in my teaching practicum. I taught them all subjects except English and PE. But I used classroom English, like "wipe the blackboard," "line up," "time to clean up," whenever I could. The students picked the words up and used them naturally in context. So, I firmly believe in language in use. (Interview, 8/23/02)

The 2001-2002 school year at Happy Whale was Mable's first year to be a full-time English teacher. It was a brand new experience for her. How did she transfer her prior experiences and beliefs to her 40-minutes-per-week classroom?

Well, my central idea of teaching is practice. Since the students get no more English after my class, what I can do is offer opportunities for them to practice one single language skill over and over again through various activities. So, I read and screen the ideas of activities in the teachers' manuals a lot. I speak English all the time too, but I don't expect them to understand it all, but I simply

want them to listen to more English. That's all. I would love for them to spend time at home listening to English, say 15 minutes everyday, to radio, ICRT [International Community Radio Taipei], cartoons, videotapes. A lot of listening contributes to good intonation. As for oral practice, I'm sorry to say that the only way might be to go to cram schools. To build up a good learning environment, I think it would be nice if we could promote a 15- to 20-minute English time during breaks at school.(Interviews, 8/23/02, 8/28/02; Stimulated recall, 9/03/02)

Mable expected the students to have more exposure to English in class, at school, and at home. She believed in regularly listening to English and recognized that cram schools were the place to improve speaking. However, from her prior teaching experiences she commented that parents were "asking too much" (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02). They didn't make an effort to "provide a learning environment or set a good example" while "wanting their children to be able to speak English and take the initiative to listen to tapes and do the learning on their own" (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02).

Mable did not have high hopes for the primary grade students' English learning. "I don't expect them to have good pronunciation or learn conversational skills. What I care more about is whether they are interested in learning English or not" (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02). Accordingly, the goals she set for first and second graders were to develop an interest in learning and to have basic concepts of the English language. Third and fourth graders should be able to recognize the alphabet, while fifth and sixth grade students should be able to speak simple dialogues and form a habit of using the language (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02). Yet, Mable claimed to be different from general English teachers for she believed that students knowing how to conduct themselves at the elementary school level was even more important than how many vocabulary words they could say. This belief, coupled with her beliefs about children's ability to think and their need to cope with real-life turmoil, governed her use of children's books in class.

I think our education always neglects the human part and emphasizes academic achievements too much. To me, the most crucial part is the person. How to interact with others, how to learn to respect them, how to balance between pride and confidence, and so on. And I find that stories easily bring in all those topics

for young students to think about and learn from. Therefore, I read stories to students every other week. Hopefully, they find it helpful and related to their own needs, because I saw more and more students suffering from family problems or emotional problems. I believe that children do calm down and think if you let them. (Interviews, 8/23/02, 8/28/02; Stimulated recalls, 10/03/02)

With only six credit hours in English teaching methodology in the teacher training program, Mable admitted that she had very limited knowledge about English teaching and wanted very much to learn (Interviews, 8/23/02, 8/28/02). She was especially fascinated by storybooks because she witnessed the power of reading stories--her friend's constant reading of storybooks to her son contributed to the three-year-old's exact retelling of the stories (Interview, 9/19/02). Wanting to experiment with literature-based teaching, Mable said that she never thought of making her storybooks match the topics of the texts in any way. Her purpose was "for [the students] to listen, to enjoy listening, with no need to do anything else" (Stimulated recall, 9/19/02). She said that she chose mainly books which would interest students, and the ones from which students could easily "grasp the message, such as 'how much dad and mom love you, learn to respect others.'" (Stimulated recall, 9/19/02)

She expressed her wish to "get rid of texts if [she] could," but she felt obliged to finish the planned lessons since "it's what [she's] supposed to do" (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02). Therefore, Mable basically followed the texts and had students do the exercises in the workbooks. Every other week, she read a storybook once or twice to the class. She commented that the texts she used attracted students to read them because of their easy, comprehensible contents, illustrated in bright colors. All of them included songs, chants, phonics, and sometimes stories. But still, the contents centered around listening and speaking communicative skills and tended to be "broken pieces targeting certain sentence patterns" which elicited only "students' mechanical responses" (Email correspondence, 3/23/03).

These texts only offer certain forms of the English language to students, but lack more complex content. You don't stop at 'I'm fine, thank you' when you talk to people. Right? We talk about things happening around us, but our textbooks don't provide us that kind of help. Again, reading! Through reading, we learn

how words can be put in different sentences or situations, and of course, we also gain knowledge or information to speak to other people. (Email correspondence, 3/23/03, 4/02/03)

Echoing Nantz's (2002) comment on limiting the students' future options by solely emphasizing listening and speaking skills, Mable stated the lack of substance in the English texts commonly available on the market would hinder development of students' communicative competence. In response to Li's (2000) urge to let young students "just listen" in English class, Mable commented about her idea to let her students listen and appreciate the language when she read stories. Yet, Mable's intention was more to sensitize the learner's perception of intonation in the long term instead of following Li's recommendation on motivation, self-confidence, or anxiety. "A lot of listening contributes to good intonation," Mable said (Interview, 8/23/02). Mable did attempt to offer authentic materials so her students could connect with daily-life experiences, as the Guideline I-1-a and Liaw (2000) suggest, but she felt limited by insufficient time and class size to discuss the stories with the students. Mable's beliefs in building an encouraging learning environment with more holistic teaching materials that children's literature provided echoed her beliefs about educating the person instead of transmitting to the students fragmented language knowledge. They were consistent with the philosophy of Whole Language Approach, which F. H. Su (1999b) and Cheng (1999) have advocated. Yet, the five- to ten-minute long storyreading section which wrapped up Mable's instruction every other week seemed very incongruent with how Mable had formulated her teaching for the major part of class time—that is, repetitive, out-of-context practices of one single sentence that students chanted and spoke in games. Mable revealed that she did not feel confident enough to totally give up the texts and provide a literature-based English curriculum yet, but this may be her next experiment in this profession (Email correspondence, 4/2/03).

Mable mentioned that her beliefs in language learning and teaching stemmed from her personal prior experience studying in the States, witnessing her friend reading

stories to her son, and seeing how her students in the after-school programs picked up the language through sufficient exposure to English in the environment. Without a natural environment for using English after class, she believed that parents had a responsibility to expose their children to more English at home, and that 15 to 20 minutes of English during break time could make the school environment more conducive for the students to learn. An idea of a community-based learning environment was implied in her beliefs, in which students developed holistically through authentic materials, such as children's literature, instead of through broken pieces and mechanical responses of dialogues.

Mable's use of texts convinced her that students could not learn to speak more than just perfunctorily. However, she felt obliged to finish teaching the texts according to her pre-set plans and not confident enough to act on her beliefs about children's literature. She only spent the last five to ten minutes of class introducing stories, and she recognized that inadequate time and the size of the class were two obstacles to discussing the stories in class.

In sum, all four teachers used the texts as the core of their curriculum. They especially benefited from the audio resources provided along with the texts by the publishers. All of them acknowledged the focus of compilation on listening and speaking skills in the texts they used, as the Guidelines regulate. However, they all felt it insufficient, and thus drew on supplemental materials. Kathy introduced holidays, and provided culture-related activities and integrated tasks in class. Sophie added songs, chants, and useful sentences and phrases every week, which students absorbed easily, giving them a sense of achievement. Like Sophie, Stanley gave useful daily expressions whenever appropriate. He taught as many alternative expressions as he could to make real communication possible. Mable introduced children's literature for more meaningful materials that were relevant to real life to help students enjoy listening and make connections.

On the other hand, how did practices contribute to the four teachers' beliefs? Kathy found second graders more receptive to short dialogues than phonics concepts.

The limitations Sophie encountered, such as large classes, unmotivated students, and no testing requirements, made her lean more toward the accountability of more structured programs offered at cram schools. Stanley recognized that, without students practicing after school with tapes, it was impossible for him alone to be held accountable and to teach the students well with such little teaching time. The parents and the school played a part in students' English learning as well. Mable would have liked to experiment with a literature-based English curriculum, because she did not find the texts effective for teaching students how to speak beyond single phrases. She could hardly discuss the stories she introduced to her students because of the constraints of insufficient time and class size.

The concerns of parental expectations and emphasis on learning from texts played a part in three of the four teachers' (Kathy, Sophie, and Stanley) decision-making on texts and teaching objectives. Kathy, especially, suffered from the parents' misunderstanding and indirect way of making their complaints known. Although the four teachers seemed self-reliant in planning, deciding, and implementing their own English programs on the school and class levels, the reliance of English subject teachers on the homeroom teachers to reach or obtain information from parents emerged, for example, in Sophie's case when she recommended that students buy a new workbook. Stanley believed that the school should encourage parents and students to purchase tapes for after-school practice. Stanley and Mable believed that parents had a responsibility to provide students a more conducive environment at home for English learning, while Mable proposed to set up English time during breaks at school to increase the students' exposure to English. The four teachers all recognized the role of parents on the issue of text selection and a richer environment for English learning at the elementary level. Kathy took into account upper grade students' interests and opinions. Acknowledging that she played a subordinate role in the elementary setting, Sophie did not feel supported by the homeroom teachers on her decision to buy one more workbook. Stanley and Mable similarly included parents and the school as relevant parties to English practices.

As for the contents of the texts, Kathy noted that there should be topics and contents more relevant to elementary students. Sophie said that the practicality of the lessons, more connected with students' interests, should be improved. On the text compilation, Stanley pointed out issues of length, degree of difficulty, and attractiveness of the sections on phonics, songs, and chants. The teaching resource all four teachers used widely in class, though not brought up in any of the stimulated recalls but seen in my classroom observations, was flash cards that they used for reviews, presenting new words, and for games and activities (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02, 5/14/02, 9/03/02, 9/04/02; stimulated recall, 5/28/02). On top of tapes and CDs, Sophie, Stanley, and Mable used workbooks for more listening comprehension drills in class. Kathy, Stanley, and Mable all mentioned consulting the teachers' manuals provided by the publishers (Interview, 9/24/02, stimulated recalls, 5/21/02, 9/26/02, 10/03/02). Stanley expected more teaching resources, such as videos, CD ROMs, games for big classes, and big posters of scenarios to be provided for classroom use. Mable, on the other hand, disliked the fragmentation in the material centering on sentence patterns or communicative functions. She preferred children's literature to provide real-life and meaningful contents to the students.

## **II. TEACHING APPROACHES**

As the four English teachers embraced very different beliefs about English learning, English teaching, and the objectives they attempted to fulfill in teaching, it is not hard to imagine how differently the individual teachers implemented classroom instruction. After triangulating what individual teachers said they intended to do with what they actually did in class, three commonalities emerged in the area of teaching approaches regulated by the national Guidelines: (1) beliefs about language-rich learning environments at school and in class (III-1), (2) the teacher's use of English as the language of instruction (III-3), and (3) instruction in writing (III-8). They will be discussed in the following sections. Finally, a short discussion will be presented on two

guidelines in the area of teaching approaches, guidelines which none of the teachers had included in their practices.

### **(1) Beliefs about Language-Rich Learning Environments**

Guideline III-1 suggests that language-rich learning environments in class or schools are a crucial key to success in English teaching. The four teachers shared basic views about building language-rich learning environments. Among them, Kathy's self report of the activities she had organized in the previous years could not be triangulated with field observation. Sophie's decision to leave Happy Whale at the end of June 2002 resulted in my inability to investigate whether she would do what she intended. However, Kathy's rationale for organizing learning activities, evident in her third year, and Sophie's decision to leave the job both provided evidence of the contextual constraints of Happy Whale. The general agreement among the four teachers on how to promote better learning environments will be discussed. Like other commonalities they shared, their enthusiasm and ways of actualizing their beliefs varied. The teachers' beliefs about school-wide learning activities will be addressed first, followed by how they built their classroom settings as language-rich learning environments.

#### ***School-wide Learning Environments***

Among the four teachers, only Sophie talked about preparing students for talent-show-like presentations at the end of semester. Yet she left the elementary teaching job before I could observe how she put this idea into practice. Her views on building school-wide learning environments were twofold. First, "the school administrators and parents [had] a need to know how students have been doing in class," and the students needed "some sense of achievement" presenting what they had learned (Interview, 5/16/02). Due to the deep frustration with forming partnerships with parents and fellow teachers, Sophie expressed a strong desire to offer English classes of several levels to teachers and then to parents. Sophie acknowledged that English was "the weakest component in the elementary school setting," so she conceptualized that

providing English learning for teachers could contribute to elementary teachers' confidence in English learning, better mutual understanding between homeroom teachers and English subject teachers, and obtaining their support in English teaching (Interview, 5/16/02). She believed that elementary teachers who gained better knowledge of what and how she taught could "help to directly or indirectly communicate with parents" for her because "they [were] much more powerful than only one or two English teachers" (Interview, 5/16/02). By so doing, a better atmosphere and support system would be built up on campus, which would serve to encourage the students' learning at the school level. "All parties will benefit from it," Sophie claimed (Interview, 5/16/02).

The other three teachers, though they had practical experience organizing and implementing school-wide English-learning activities, had very different agendas and rationales for building conducive learning environments in and out of the classroom. Kathy, on her own initiative, coordinated and implemented many class and school-wide activities from her first year at Happy Whale. To experience the target culture and to have opportunities to use English were what Kathy intended to offer to the students:

It is so important to offer students opportunities to make use of the language instead of learning a lot but using none. I didn't have enough time and effort to do communicative tasks in class. But my introduction of American culture on various holidays allowed the students to experience another aspect of the language they have been learning. As for other activities...For example, shopping center activity was geared to let students learn how to buy breakfast using English. It offered them opportunities and settings to experience the use of language. This is very important, I guess, especially for our EFL setting, because we have no need to use English for any purpose. Although those activities I organized were not on a daily and constant basis, they encouraged learning through using English in context. (Interview, 1/20/01; Email correspondence, 1/17/03).

Kathy hoped to bring exploration of the world into her classroom. She said, it was, in a broader sense, "another form of encouraging positive interpersonal relationships," starting with understanding the culture of the language the students were learning (Interview, 3/09/02). This overarching belief stretched from her strategies to

maintain discipline to her perceptions of what elementary education should do for the students served and to her curricular decisions about teaching values and cultures.

In the past, Kathy introduced Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas in class and organized related activities, such as Halloween dress-up and crafts making, thanks-giving notes, and Christmas caroling in the school community (Documents, 1/07/99, 1/10/00). She helped her second graders do a storybook exchange and be pen pals with my first grade students at a Chinese School in Austin (Document, 2/18/00). She arranged an exchange of students between Happy Whale and an urban American school, so they could experience different school lives (Document, 5/17/01). With the assistance of mother volunteers, she arranged a shopping center activity-- students selling and buying breakfast using English (Document, 2/28/01). But, as mentioned in the previous section, Kathy stopped organizing English-learning activities in her third year due to her heavy administrative tasks.

On the other hand, Stanley and Mable were closely involved with school-wide English activities in the first semester they came to Happy Whale. First of all, they both set up English learning centers as required for each subject area to fulfill the school's expectation of exposing students to independent learning opportunities on campus (Fieldnotes, 9/9/02). About three weeks later, Mable was asked by the Head of Student Affairs to offer five minutes of English teaching twice, at students' morning assemblies on Moon Festival and Teacher's Day when these holidays came around. Mable prepared flash cards of pomelos, moon cakes, fireworks, barbecue, and introduced in English the activities people in Taiwan usually do on Moon Festival evening. She wrapped up the presentation by leading the students in saying the key words with her (Fieldnotes, 9/20/02). For Teacher's Day, Mable briefly introduced Confucius and taught the students to say "I appreciate Mr. or Miss So-and-so for something he/she does." With this sentence pattern written on a long strip of paper, Mable gave the audience the example sentences four third-grade students had practiced beforehand (Fieldnotes, 9/27/02). Two months later, responding to the school's expectation for a school-wide English learning activity, Mable with Stanley's assistance organized

trick-or-treating for Halloween. One week before Halloween, Mable and Stanley spent some time in class teaching students how to decorate a trick-or-treating box and a rhyme to recite when they went trick-or-treating on campus (Fieldnotes, 10/22/02, 10/23/02, 10/24/02). The Wednesday morning before Halloween Day, the students were encouraged to dress up and “trick-or-treat” teachers and students (Fieldnotes, 10/29/02, 10/30/02).

Stanley thought that these activities had a direct and powerful impact on students and taught them holiday-related vocabulary words and expressions in the same way he taught outside-the-classroom supplemental materials:

These seasonal activities are just like providing students supplemental learning materials outside the classroom. This kind of activity, of course, more directly and powerfully works on their learning. We can also introduce them to local culture in English since it's easy to find related materials. The same is true for astronomy-related topics, I think. (Interview, 12/06/02)

However, Stanley did not agree to one administrator's request later to offer this kind of school-wide learning activity regularly. “It's a little too much now,” Stanley said in a very soft voice with a couple of chuckles. From Stanley's perspective, it was unwise for the administrators to overload the faculty with extra projects:

I think it's enough to go on stage once or twice. Of course, that [kind of activity] would be good! But why can't the administrators at higher levels step into our shoes and think about us? I know there are similar things going on at other schools, too. They cut into the teachers' teaching hours. They should have the sensitivity to know that teachers need to feel balanced in some way if they want to do it for a long term. It's like they're adding to the teachers' workload. But at the end, what[sic] will these people feel? (Interview, 10/04/02)

Mable didn't give the five-minute English teaching as high an appraisal as the Halloween trick-or-treating. She commented on its lack of substance:

I don't see the point of giving this kind of short teaching at the morning assemblies. Who is it for? The faculty? Or the students? It's too short to see any effect on the students! (Stimulated recall, 9/26/02)  
[As for the trick-or-treating], the students all learned the rhyme I taught them and enjoyed it. I even saw some timid boys saying the rhyme to get candies. I

was amazed and pleased to see them make a breakthrough like this! (Stimulated recall, 10/30/02)

Mable added that she didn't like the idea of five-minute English teaching, but that she consented to do it with the intent of helping out the Head of Student Affairs. "I saw her suffering from having no ideas about what to offer to the students at morning assemblies. I felt that we are in the same boat and agreed without hesitation" (Stimulated recall, 9/17/02). Head of Studies, Mr. Gong, was impressed by the highly motivated performance of students in those learning activities, but at the same time reflected upon a need for better planning and organization. Mable happened to agree with Mr. Gong on the superficiality of the school-wide learning activities they had organized so far:

These holiday-related activities basically are good for the students to use English. In fact, it needs more careful planning from a holistic perspective, such as how to bring out the story behind every holiday, with domestic and foreign being given equal weight. The five-minute teaching at the students' morning assemblies was very superficial, I should say. (Interview, 12/07/02)

Moreover, Mable admitted that her preparation for the regular class was hampered by having to take charge of these unexpected, extra activities. "After all, a teacher's primary responsibility is instruction" (Stimulated recall, 9/26/02). The assignment of unexpected work to be accomplished within a short time gave her stress and anxiety about the outcome and deprived her of basic preparation time for class. As Mr. Gong said, "well-thought plans may be a need" for the good of both the students and the teachers involved.

Although their rationales to have school-wide English activities were different, Kathy and Sophie were more self-motivated, while Stanley and Mable perceived the need to organized English learning activities as a top-down request from the administrators, something added on top of their classroom instruction. However, Kathy, Stanley, and Mable all attempted to balance this extra workload with their other tasks. They all believed in the benefit of offering students opportunities to use English; however, Kathy seemed to have embraced this belief more positively. The stress and

extra workload resulting from the belief caused Stanley and Mable to reflect on what activities might work better and how. It also made Stanley believe that a humanistic working environment was where the administrators took into consideration a reasonable workload for their faculty. They both thought that the administrators should not exhaust the teachers with extra tasks on an on-going basis. Apparently, the teachers and administrators did not share consensus on how to build a language-rich learning environment for the students they served.

### *In-Class Learning Environments*

Generally speaking, the four teachers all acknowledged the importance of building a conducive language learning environment in class by speaking as much English as they could and organizing classroom activities which were fun for the students. The use of English will be addressed separately because it is addressed in Guideline III-3. In the following sections, the commonalities which individual teachers had in organizing and implementing their instruction will be discussed, including teaching procedures, how they interpreted CLT, and the incorporation of games, songs, chants, or small-group tasks.

None of the teachers spent time decorating their classrooms with print to make them language-rich learning environments. The primary reason lay in the school's shortage of rooms and the use of rooms on a temporary basis for English class (Interviews, 5/13/02, 9/03/02). Due to limited weekly instruction time, the teacher spoke most of the English in class during the students' early stages of language acquisition (Curtain & Pesola, 1988). The classes of the four teachers were highly teacher-directive and generally followed similar teaching procedures—warm-up and review, presenting new materials, reinforcement drills, and wrap-up.

#### *Kathy's Teaching Approaches.*

In addition to the basic teaching procedures, Kathy paid close attention to the development of her classroom instruction, composed of several activities connected

coherently one after another. “I knew something was wrong if I didn’t make the order right. The lack of a coherent connection made me feel awkward when I was teaching,” Kathy expressed (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02, 5/28/02).

She bore in mind several premises, which helped her develop a more consistent sequence to maximize students’ learning:

First, I start with easy parts. That is, help the students get familiar with the key words of the unit, for example, colors. Then I do extended activities to reinforce the new contents. I always try to go from the easy to the more difficult, to do chorus practice prior to individual drills, big group work prior to small group or individual work. (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02)

As shown in Kathy’s typical 40-minute class, she started with colors, then continued to teach how to express what color the students liked or didn’t like. That was followed by describing objects with color words. Next, she associated colors with vehicles, which connected with the topic of the next unit in the text. Kathy developed her curriculum at both the session level and unit level by extending parts into longer but manageable chunks. The procedural knowledge Kathy relied on the most was always practice given to the whole class in unison prior to efforts spent on individuals. If she expected small groups to finish a task, she had the big class practice doing the task first. If she expected individual students to be able to do such a task, she gave time for small group practice, which assured the achievement of individual students.

To her, following a proper sequence and making gradual progress ensured the students’ learning, especially the real beginners who never went to after-school English programs at cram schools:

I think the intention of offering English programs at public elementary schools is to provide English learning opportunities to those who cannot afford to go to cram schools, not to those who have been learning at after-school programs. But, conversely, the real beginners are the ones who seem slower and are more easily left out in big classes before they have a chance to catch up with the majority of other students or to keep up with the teacher’s pacing of the class. I’m concerned that the voices of those who are more advanced due to their after-school learning override the ones of the real beginners, so that I would rather teach at a very slow pace for the sake of their learning. (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02)

She verbalized almost a form of social justice on the kind of learning she could provide to the culturally disadvantaged groups in the school context. Unexpectedly, Kathy acknowledged that this made her teaching different from that of the other English teacher, Sophie. “Her pace of teaching is so fast, but I would rather take it slow but solid” (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02). Kathy commented that her working-class family background made her acknowledge how important it was for students from working-class families to learn and achieve academically. She recalled how her parents had set good examples for her. “As a high school student, I saw my parents taking turns going back to school, finishing high school and getting a college education after work every evening. I wonder if our parents at Happy Whale set such good examples for their children” (Interviews, 11/11/00, 11/28/00).

With about 30 to 37 students in a class, the teacher could hardly pay enough attention to each student. To compensate, Kathy resorted to peer pressure in small groups for better classroom management and group competition to motivate attentive learning (Interview, 11/28/00). In the learning activities, students from small groups were picked to participate and win points for their groups. Yet, to assure that the majority of the class had a chance to participate, practice, perform, or get individual attention in the big class, Kathy insisted on picking different students each time for activities in class—to give an opportunity to as many students as possible, as everybody was given only one turn! Again, there was a principle of order when she picked students to come to the front for learning activities.

I always pick a couple of more advanced students because they understand what I ask and raise their hands first. They serve the function of modeling to the rest of the class. Then I try to keep the chance open to everybody. Last, I pick a couple of students who don't pay attention in class. I need to check on them and give them a second chance to learn. My students all know my habit of not calling on the same person twice, and they remind me if I repeatedly call on somebody. (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02)

In small groups, tasks, such as a simple poll on “what color do you like?” or a game matching vehicles of the same colors, offered each student time and opportunity not only to have some fun but also to learn from peer interactions.

I usually put it at the end of each session when they have done enough practices. Through this, the more advanced students in each group will help their members to learn while finishing the tasks. I'm pleased to find that they enjoy teaching their classmates. Some even prefer their peers' teaching to mine. It's a solution to make up for the discrepancies among students with a variety of competency levels. This opportunity for cooperative learning satisfies different needs—the more competent students become more confident and fulfilled while those in need of help obtain focused assistance in the process. (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02)

To Kathy, group work also functioned as a discipline strategy, which will be addressed in the section on commonalities outside the Guidelines, as well as one of the ways to offer peer teaching for remedial purposes, which is covered in the section on idiosyncratic beliefs of the teachers.

Like the elementary teachers Cheng (2001) has studied, Kathy thought she was doing CLT as long as she taught dialogues in the texts and used English to communicate with students in class. However, her approach was more in line with the Audio Lingual Method. She admitted that TESOL methodologies might not be what she would resort to when she was busy teaching and working. "It seems that many theories or methods have fused together--Direct Method, TPR, Communicative Approach--so that I didn't think of or rely on one specific theory/method in my lesson planning," Kathy reflected (Email correspondence, 1/17/03). She believed that her learning activities, such as group-work tasks and the school-wide shopping center activity, were for students to attain real-life communication.

As for the use of songs and chants, Kathy was excited to see that her second graders were fond of singing songs or reciting chants she had taught a long time ago with gestures and body movements (Curtain & Pesola, 1988). Hence, Kathy let the primary grade students enjoy singing and chanting English songs when she led them to the school gate and saw them off for the day (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02).

#### *Sophie's Teaching Approaches.*

Sophie expressed that the three principles which guided her lesson planning were (1) to make sure that students learned something each week, (2) to allow them a

chance to open their mouth and practice, and (3) to have fun in her class (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). She intended to attract the slower students' interest "through providing a relaxing, pleasant, yet slightly informative learning environment" (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). She remembered she had picked up the teaching procedure beginning with a warm-up from some teachers' manuals in her early years of teaching and this was reinforced in her years teaching at the cram school:

I believe these teaching procedures must have been experimented with and proven effective, not as our proficiency index in the Guidelines. Several trainers at our cram school emphasized these, too. My routine always starts with reviewing the contents from the previous week because we meet only once. While I have their attention, I give them new things along with some listening comprehension drills. They listen to the exercises in the workbook. The new contents are thus reinforced through repeated stimuli from the recording, plus they gain a sense of accomplishment when they do the exercises correctly. (Interview, 5/16/02)

She found that the routine of warmup, presentation, reinforcement, and wrapup had worked throughout the years of her teaching. "Of course, personal teaching style comes from gradual development and accumulation of experience. You incorporate your teaching experiences, and you make adjustments to fit with your own personality and your students' characteristics" (Interview, 5/16/02). Sophie also believed that pupils tend to remember only what they have actually experienced and what is in harmony with their preferences. This was why she chose daily-life related vocabularies and sentences for her students rather than the contents in the texts.

Sophie spent time doing phonics each week, but she did not guide first graders to read as she did the third and fourth graders. "I saw that over half of my students were able to use phonics to sound out words. It's not a big deal, but a useful skill they can rely on in the years to come" (Interview, 5/16/02). Sophie recognized it as a small but meaningful achievement. Another important component of her class—songs and chants--Sophie found effective in the curriculum. As she expected them to absorb easily what she taught, the students enjoyed reciting and doing body movements along with Sophie (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02). "We did a lot of chants," Sophie said (Interview, 6/27/02).

Consistent with Curtain and Pesola (1988), Sophie gave physical clues to her actions to help the students remember the words and their meanings. However, the songs and chants, for instance, “eyes, eyes, see, see, see; mouth, mouth, eat, eat, eat,” seemed much too simplified and were not the popular songs or rhymes reflecting the target culture that Curtain and Pesola regarded as “best choices” for children to experience as authentic materials of the target language (p. 264). Probably it was a concern of Sophie and others that a larger vocabulary load in children’s songs from the target culture might exceed what beginners could manage, though a more varied selection of songs and chants, including some from the target culture, might reflect more cultural authenticity, as well as expose them to structures of the new language.

The games Sophie commonly used focused on recognizing vocabulary words through phonics concepts she had been teaching throughout the semester. Although the introduction of games sometimes did not match coherently with what Sophie was teaching or reinforcing, it was obvious that to motivate students’ interest, to review as many categories of vocabulary words, and to give students a variety of activities “to have fun” were Sophie’s primary concerns. However, because Sophie didn’t make it a priority to maximize opportunities for as many students as possible to participate, long waits to take turns were always a problem in teaching big classes (Curtain and Pesola, 1988).

Like Kathy, Sophie thought that she employed CLT, in addition to Direct Method and TPR in her teaching, since she had a lot of interaction with her students through question-and-answer drills and took into consideration students’ daily life experiences. However, as Cheng (2001) has found, Sophie’s question-and-answer drills and even games were practices of certain fixed sentence patterns instead of real communicative functions. Pair and group work in games were only for giving controlled answers to the questions the teacher asked, not for any kind of communication. Communicative tasks were far fewer than mechanical or meaningful drills in Sophie’s class (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02, 6/10/02).

### *Stanley's Teaching Approaches*

Obviously Stanley already knew quite well what to expect at Happy Whale from his prior year of teaching practicum at a neighboring school, Harbor School. Since he complained that he didn't get enough orientation and information about the texts, or curricular plans the local government had approved, he carefully focused his attention on how his day-in-day-out instruction should be arranged:

In our context, English is not what we use every day. It's impossible to learn without relying on repetitive drills. I learned last year how students would respond to my teaching. If they like to come to your class, it's very likely that they will try harder to speak English with you gradually. Following a particular routine—warm-up, review, new materials, practice and wrap-up—is necessary to motivate students' interest to interact with the teacher in class. (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/17/02)

Repetitive drills and fun were two primary criteria in Stanley's mind. Having compiled and published a book on games to play in English teaching years ago, Stanley used games to warm up, to review learned vocabulary and sentence patterns, and when the students became less spirited (Interview, 8/09/02). One of his common activities, used for warming up the learning atmosphere, was simply giving "stand up" and "sit down" commands. All the class needed to do was listen and do Totally Physical Response (TPR). After practicing a couple of times, Stanley would make opposite gestures or use body language attempting to cause confusion or mislead the students. Most of the time, he accelerated the pace as the activity unfolded, so that the students would pay closer attention so they could catch up and make judgments before they moved (Fieldnotes, 9/03/02, 9/11/02; Interview, 9/03/02).

He used flash cards for review most of the time (Fieldnotes, 9/03/02, 9/24/02, 10/15/02). In addition to question-and-answer drills, Stanley made variations by using flash cards in guessing games to motivate students to do repetitive practice. "Giving them unexpected surprises and a feeling of not knowing what will happen next is the gimmick that I use to attract [the students'] attention even in very fixed and routine practices," Stanley revealed.

“Being competitive tends to be so effective for children,” Stanley asserted (Interview, 9/10/02). He paced the class procedures and games fast enough to build a good atmosphere. Stanley gave the students a game or a fun activity to “defrost” them whenever he saw “the light in their eyes die out” after a long roll call or some simple exercises (Interview, 9/10/02). He knew that children like being playful or even naughty. He gave hints of Taiwanese or Chinese words with similar sounds when teaching new English words. Take “ciao,” an Italian word for “goodbye,” as an example. Stanley thought that students would like to say “ciao” more instead of “goodbye” because coincidentally it sounded the same as the Chinese word, “to lay stiff.” “I take advantage of an opportunity to catch their attention. When they like saying this word, they pick it up in no time. This is my purpose. I don’t think everybody agrees with my idea, but I won’t call it a bad tactic when it serves a purpose most of the time” (Interview, 9/10/02).

Stanley used the sounds certain English words had that were similar to Taiwanese or Chinese characters as a mnemonic strategy to help students learn in a fun way. He added that sometimes students were trained to be sensitive to and aware of similar sounds in the three languages (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/24/02). Hence, Stanley said that naughty students appealed to him because they helped create a lively mood in class, while shy and tearful children were, in his view, those who required some counseling efforts to grow healthier (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/17/02).

He adopted roleplay or chances to mimic so students could have fun after doing plain, boring drills.

I always feel that students tend to become low-spirited especially when I teach them sentences. I become more traditional when there is not much room for variation. For instance, I only gave them some [substitution drills] when we learned “I have an English class today.” They came up with “I have a Chinese class today, I have a math class today, I have a PE class today.” For more fun, I encouraged students to mimic the nasal sound of the speaker they heard on the CD, taught them to act like a director, saying “one, two, three, camera, NG, and cut,” as practice. I teach them useful stuff like these, too, as chances come up. (Interview, 9/10/02)

Aware of the classroom dynamic that Clandinin and Connelly (1986) say distinguished experienced teachers from novice teachers, Stanley reflected on the qualities experienced teachers like him had in teaching:

I think the sensitivity to know where your students are affectively and where you are directing them to is something that makes you different from a novice teacher. Novice teachers may have put their focus solely on the text they're following. They might be unable to make quick associations and draw in something related or fun. But, as for me, creative ideas sometimes pop up, without or beyond lesson planning, as I interact with my students or as the chance comes up. (Interview, 9/24/02)

Stanley regarded the useful, daily sentences he added into his teaching the most valuable part of his teaching. "You'd be surprised if you counted how many sentences like these I've taught them" (Interview, 9/24/02). To create and provide chances for students to repeatedly practice the sentences learned was one big feature of Stanley's teaching.

See? How many times they've said 'upside down' today in class? Not only today, later as we run into the same stuff every time, I repeat it to reinforce it. This is the primary reason why my vocal cords wear out. I know that only a small number of students learn and benefit from it. Most of them forget. But it's always like this. Better something than nothing! If I give them nothing, nothing at all will happen. If I give them repeated stimulus, there should be some effect. Language learning, in particular! It's hard to learn a language that you don't have a chance to make contact with if you don't learn through repetitive practice. (Interviews, 9/10/02, 9/17/02)

Without question, Stanley's teaching was primarily geared toward the Audio Lingual Method, judging from Stanley's use of repetition, substitution drills, role play and mimicry, so students could learn through stimulus, overlearning, and habit formation. Stanley believed he did Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) because the contents he taught were mainly conversational topics centered around listening and speaking skills (Interview, 12/06/02). However, according to the categories Paulston and Bruder (1976) have distinguished among teaching activities, Stanley's teaching activities were mostly mechanical drills which focused on a habit-formation process to

pick up correct forms of the language, assisted by some meaningful drills which gave controlled answers, such as the review game with flashcards and asking about weather when class started (Fieldnotes, 9/10/02, 9/24/02). Stanley gave pedagogic tasks, based on Nunan's (1989) categories, instead of real-world tasks. These were choral and teacher-student drills, and no pair work or group work on applying or integrating various skills was given in class (Fieldnotes, 10/15/02).

As Stanley said, teachers tended to choose teaching approaches and texts compatible with their own personal qualities. He said that he used different methods, such as TPR and Direct Method, as he tried to use only the target language and no Chinese in class. Although Stanley equated Silent Way with reading the teacher's lips for understanding and did not have a comprehensive view about CLT, he basically adopted teaching methods and strategies consistent with his beliefs and objectives. As long as his students enjoyed the fun Stanley provided, he would not see, as he showed in the study, the need to add "a little communicative twist" to make mechanical drills more meaningful, as Halliwell (1992) and Shih (2001) suggest.

As Curtain and Pesola (1988) also found, Stanley emphasized a competitive atmosphere and offered suspense by giving students unexpected tricks and novel games to play. He chose games which were easy to play and would move quickly for as many people to get a turn as possible. Experienced and aware of the classroom dynamic, he knew very well when to stop the games before the students' interest began to wane (Curtain & Pesola, 1988). Yet, Stanley admitted that it was "impossible to teach the entire session through games without more traditional drills" (Interview, 9/17/02). He questioned how much students actually learned from the fun teaching he provided and "what drawbacks lie behind the effect of fun teaching?" (Interview, 9/17/02)

### *Mable's Teaching Approaches*

Mable said that CLT sounded to her like a better model among the TESOL methodologies she learned in the teacher training program, although she was unable to connect it to her experience since she had no prior English teaching experience and was

relying only on her experience studying in the States (Interview, 12/07/02). Cheng (2001) reported that elementary teachers found it hard to apply CLT in their large classes, and thus CLT could not be the only teaching approach used in class. Mable believed in this as well. She used TPR to recapture students' attention when they were restless or acting up. For first graders she used more sing-along with gestures, and pretend accompanied by voice inflections (Fieldnotes, 9/19/02; 10/03/02). She admitted, "I used the Audio Lingual Method, too" (Interview, 12/07/02). Mechanical drills were the biggest portion of exercises that Mable offered to primary grades. Far from communicative drills, Mable's students very often did repetitive drills for a single phrase, word, or even a single sound. Open-ended questions were often posed to stimulate discussion and communication each time Mable read a storybook to the class (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02).

In her first semester at Happy Whale, Mable really wanted to teach the students how to meaningfully answer the question, "how are you?" This might have been the single communicative emphasis Mable wanted her students to learn for the whole semester. She said,

I hate to hear students replying "I'm fine. Thank you, and you?" every time I greet them. It seems that they don't think about what they are saying, but parrot a one-and-only-one answer. So I try to teach them more choices, like "so-so, very well, not very good." When they keep on giving the same old answer, I tell them this story. One day when a person got hit by a car, the people around asked him, "how are you?" He answered, "I'm fine. Thank you, and you?" The students all understood the point I made. (Stimulated recall, 9/26/02)

Mable believed in more holistic materials to help students learn to think. She recalled how she tried different teaching approaches.

At first, I gave students exciting games as others do. Let them move, run, and have fun. But I find that I don't know at all what they've learned in the process of playing games. I don't want my students to become robots repeating meaningless things over and over. Now I prefer some drawing and writing tasks at the end of a session, which help them calm down and think. They need time to be able to reflect and associate what they learn with their personal life experience, I guess. (Stimulated recall, 9/05/02)

Mable had reflected on and experimented with the possibility that reading stories to her students would help them make connections with their daily-life experience. When the semester began and after she introduced herself to the students, Mable gave some drawing and writing tasks to the students so they could tell her who they were and what they liked or didn't like. This kind of task decreased as she started to follow the texts more closely.

Mable's belief in easy reading and writing tasks as communicative tasks corresponded with Savignon's attempts to correct Taiwanese teachers' overemphasis on listening and speaking skills at the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching in November 2002 (Fieldnotes, 11/08/02). Yet, as discussed in the section on text selection, Mable felt obliged to follow and finish the texts by the end of the semester. She kept on giving games in which students only practiced one single phrase or sentence the whole time. Mable did notice if groups were evenly matched and had equal opportunity for success but, as Cheng (2001), Chu (2002), and Curtain and Pesola (1988) recommend, the teacher should have taken into account the actual amount of learning compared to the amount of time spent in games. It would have been better if she had spent the same amount of time reading stories to the class.

As for songs, Mable introduced a goodbye song for wrap-up every week. She preferred the popular children's songs from the States to the songs the local publishers wrote for practicing certain language patterns. Lack of substance and authenticity of the language setting were her concerns and rationale for choosing songs (Curtain & Pesola, 1988). Like Sophie and Kathy, she found songs as effective and enjoyable for primary grades as the chants they learned in the texts.

In sum, except Kathy's group work time, all the other three teachers' classes were highly teacher directive, that is, all students passively responding to one single teacher's questions or commands with predictable answers. The reproduction of language that students made was repetitive phrases, sentences, or sentence patterns. With the small portion of supplemental materials individual teachers added in, the teaching materials were limited to the contents in the texts, and the activities the

teachers primarily employed were competitive games with very minimal language use. Making the class fun with games was one of the top concerns which all four teachers strived to attain because they believed that a fun class motivates students' learning. Mable, on the other hand, attempted to introduce the fun of learning to her students through children's literature, but she did not abandon comprehensive use of games in class. Songs and chants appeared to be direct and effective materials that elementary students picked up easily in foreign language learning. With a mixture of TPR and the Direct Method, the four teachers mostly employed the Audio Lingual Method instead of Communicative Language Teaching as they had reported, though respective teachers tended to draw on different teaching philosophies--Kathy purposefully built a construct of cooperative learning in her teaching, Stanley blended in the philosophy of the Direct Method, and Mable intended to offer more immersion experience in class.

As the teachers themselves struggled, two salient issues emerged from their teaching: the limitations of communicative materials provided in the texts (compared to more holistic and authentic materials) and insufficient exposure to English in and outside the classroom. Could the goal of building students' communicative competence be attained with so much weight of teaching put on repetitive, mechanical drills? Given all the teachers' endeavors to expose the students to as much listening and speaking in class, how much did the students really benefit from English being taught either 40 or 80 minutes per week? Could other physical equipment or facilities help to compensate for the shortage of instructional time and allow students to explore the English language in their free time on campus?

## **(2) Teachers' Use of English as the Language of Instruction**

The Guidelines say that the teacher should speak as much English as possible in teaching to improve the students' listening and speaking skills. All four teachers, whether they acknowledged this guideline or not, believed in exposing the students to more spoken English in class. However, they used varied approaches to carry out this belief.

Kathy recalled how students at first rejected her speaking English in and out of English class. She not only believed that habits could be changed over time but also affirmed that the unsophisticated nature of students and the lack of exposure to English or English-related resources in the suburban areas may have made them feel uncomfortable initially, as they encountered the difficulty of understanding an unfamiliar language:

I prefer the students at Happy Whale. In comparison to the sophisticated students in the urban area with all the many cram school programs, native teachers, resources and opportunities to learn, the students here don't have as much exposure. They are naïve and unsophisticated. They disliked it that I spoke more English, especially when I also spoke it in a non-English class. "I don't understand. I don't know what you're saying," they kept on saying. Of course, they got used to it over time. And you can always manage their emotional uneasiness by talking nicely to them, giving them some praise and encouragement. They get satisfied easily with even little tiny rewards, too, but the kids in urban areas don't appreciate, or even despise, small little things you give them as rewards. (Interview, 1/20/02)

Kathy spoke simple English at a speed slower than the normal speed of native speakers. I suspected it was congruent with Kathy's speaking competency. She once admitted that her oral English competence didn't allow her to do storytelling or use other authentic materials, such as children's literature (Interview, 1/20/01). Whenever the class couldn't follow Kathy's English, she employed body language, modeling, or repeated or rephrased her sentences for the students to lower the level of difficulty and to make her language comprehensible. In a stimulated recall session she said:

See? [The students] didn't follow when I asked, "Does everyone have a card?" The yellow card in my hand must have confused them. They thought I was asking who had a yellow card. [I asked: What do you usually do when they don't get you?] See? I went to grasp the hand of the boy next to me, who had a green card. I raised his hand and answered, "yes, I do," when I said the question again. Pointing to someone who does it right is how I usually do, too. There are always a couple of advanced students who follow what I'm doing and can serve as models. For primary grades, gestures and body language are most helpful because it makes your words more understandable. (Interview, 5/15/02)

Although Kathy's English may not sound as fluent as natives, she took time to make her talk comprehensible in class. She firmly insisted on saying "no Chinese" on her part, not on the students' part, and wondered why some English teachers gave a direct Chinese translation right after they finished saying something in English. "Isn't it in vain to speak English first when the students know that you will give the Chinese right away?" (Interview, 5/15/02)

I don't allow myself to give a Chinese translation. My students know it, too. When they came to ask questions, they didn't ask "Kathy, how do you say 'policeman'[said in Chinese]? Instead, they asked how do you say "this" or "number one" in English. (Interview, 5/15/02)

Kathy made her belief known to the class. She spoke to the student with special needs, Gordon, in English, too. When she tried to include him by asking him to bring her some magnets from the whiteboard on which he was forming pictures with all sizes and colors of magnets, she used hand gestures and repeated simple sentences several times as if she was teaching the whole class simultaneously. "Gordon, would you please bring me five magnets. Magnets..." She picked up one magnet by her and showed the boy. "Five magnets." She raised her right hand, showing five fingers to him. "Five. One, two, three, four, five. Five magnets." She counted with her fingers folded down. She did enhance the learning of the whole class—because everyone was sure about what Kathy said and in Chinese helped Gordon to understand and do as asked.

On the other hand, Sophie spoke fast. She admitted that "[she] spoke faster and needed to slow down," (Interview, 5/16/02) but she didn't usually remember to do so in her fast-paced class (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02, 5/20/02, 6/10/02, 6/17/02). Sophie herself expressed how hard it was to employ English-only instruction:

I tried. It didn't work out. I can't compare the situation here with that at cram schools. It's totally different. I don't even know if it's indigenous to the students' characteristics in this district. But it's obvious that students gave up trying when you spoke more English. So I think to myself: probably a lot of students are in between. If I speak a bit more English, they give up trying by not listening. They listen when I add in some Chinese. Then why not give them some Chinese? Then I should take into consideration the progress of my teaching. I'm supposed to finish the whole text by the end of semester. If I insist

on all-English instruction, then I need to really slow down and work on their listening comprehension throughout the whole semester. But you know, that doesn't necessarily suit the needs of those students who are slower and fall behind. I need to keep their attention focused on me. If I lose them by speaking too much English, they might not sit still in class. (Interview, 6/20/02)

Compared to her old practice of having English-only environments at the cram schools, Sophie repeatedly emphasized to me, "40 minutes, not an hour per week of English, what do you expect?" She believed that the amount of English which students could pick up and retain would be very limited, since they were exposed to it for so short a time—"like the dragonfly touches on the water!" (Interview, 6/20/02) In addition to commands, TPR activities, and body movements she used with her English instruction, her fast-paced teaching didn't allow her to stop, repeat, or rephrase her questions to help ensure the class' understanding. Instead, she called on advanced students to tell the class what she meant in Chinese, or she gave a Chinese translation right after she said something in English once or twice (Fieldnotes, 5/23/02, 5/30/02, 6/30/02).

Sophie: Snack. What's snack? (Some students said "snake" in Chinese.) No! When you go on outings, what do you bring with you? Chocolate, chips, candies. Snack. Snack bar, where you buy all those kinds of snacks. Do you have a snack bar at school? (Nobody answered. She said in Chinese right away—"fu-li-she".) What's the place called, where they sell snacks?  
Class said "fu-li-she," snack bar in Chinese. (Observation, 5/13/02)

Sophie: I am at a zoo. I see lions, tigers, elephants. Kenny, what's "zoo" in Chinese?

Kenny said "zoo" in Chinese.

Sophie: Yes, (in Chinese) what do you see in the zoo? What animals?  
(Observation, 6/17/02.

Different from the other three teachers, Stanley upheld a "no Chinese" rule in class and demanded that his students speak only English whenever they saw him on campus. Stanley recounted with a tone of pride that he trained the students he taught in the previous year to greet and speak English to him:

It's like they see a sign on your head saying "no Chinese" whenever they meet you on campus. And I taught them all—all possible expressions they'll use in

daily life. Even their principal noticed that all the students interacted with me in English. You shaped them into such a habit. But wasn't it exhausting? Of course, it was. Even the classes I didn't teach came speaking English to me because they wanted to show off whatever they've learned. To put it beautifully, you're the most popular person on campus. You know, it's something only English teachers can achieve. (Interview, 8/09/02)

However, Stanley said that the teacher should compromise and add in one or two Chinese sentences to make himself comprehensible when he saw that the students were puzzled or lost in the midst of class:

I think giving sentence-by-sentence Chinese translation is a little redundant, too much! The principle is: You can use more Chinese when the semester starts but speak more English and less Chinese gradually. Speak as much English as they can take, but you need to stop and adjust if they look puzzled and feel lost in your talk. I believe listening to more English surely helps. (Interview, 9/17/02)

But he mentioned that students did not necessarily understand what the teacher said in English all the time. Echoing Krashen's (1981) hypothesis on "comprehensible input," Stanley said, "another important thing is to speak easy English the students can understand. It's no use if you keep on talking fast and about incomprehensible things. So, you need to monitor and check whether they understand you or not" (Interview, 9/17/02). For example, he asked, "what's Moon Festival?" and wanted the students to tell him in Chinese of this holiday. He said that he didn't expect everybody to know or remember what he had taught, even though he kept on reinforcing what he had taught. He picked one or two more advanced students who understood the teacher's question to tell the class the answer in Chinese. Stanley believed that, "by so doing, 'no Chinese' instruction was attainable" (Interview, 9/17/02).

Mable claimed that an environment favorable to foreign language learning was vital for learning, so she not only spoke English all the time in class but also believed students should form a constant habit of listening to English—"listening to English 15 minutes a day at home, promoting a 15- to 20-minute English time during breaks at school"(Interviews, 8/23/02, 8/28/02; Stimulated recall, 9/03/02).

She spoke English as soon as she arrived at the classroom. She tended to speak normal-speed, native-like English in class. She slowed down and repeated what she said only when the class needed to follow the commands she gave to proceed to another teaching procedure, such as opening the text to a certain page, doing certain exercises in the workbook, and so on. However, Mable had a habit of giving a direct Chinese translation right after she said something in English. Therefore, the question Kathy raised recurred here--how much English would her students absorb after they found out she would give a Chinese translation immediately? Further questions that might follow from this procedure are: How much normal-speed English could the primary grade students learn if the words were not repeated, familiar, or comprehensible? How do teachers decide whether their speaking is beyond the students' ability to comprehend or a little harder than the students' actual ability (that is, "*i+ 1*"), as the literature (Krashen, 1982; Huang, 1999) advocates?

In accord with Mable's beliefs, she attempted to give as much exposure as possible and "[didn't] expect [the students] to understand all"(Stimulated recall, 9/03/02). At the beginning of the semester, several times a couple of students directly told her, "I don't understand English; what do you write on the board? It's all English; We don't understand; That's what Americans read." Several others chimed in to see how Mable could solve this problem for them. When it happened for the first time, Mable stopped what she was doing and asked the boys in Chinese, "Who's Mable?" "That's you!" "That's right! Then you understand English! Why did you say that you didn't?" The boys quieted down without a word (Fieldnotes, 9/04/02, 9/11/02, 9/18/02) After this process, Mable decided not to respond to similar questions again. "They just want to test your boundaries. You know. At best, you will follow their will and say 'no English' any more. That's what they actually want, I know!"(Stimulated recall, 9/19/02)

Mable got no response from a majority of the class or a "NO" answer from several students, several times in the first month of school when the class could not understand her question, such as "do you want to play a game?" Therefore, she had to say the question in Chinese again (Fieldnotes, 9/03/02, 9/17/02, 9/24/02). Chinese

translation was her usual strategy; Mable did not try any other ways to hint at, explain, or illustrate what she meant. However, one or two quick students sometimes understood and yelled out the answer in Chinese.

Mable: Open your book to page eight. Page eight.

A boy yelled “page eight” in Chinese.

Mable: There you go! (Observation, 9/03/02)

It saved Mable from translating, but she seldom purposefully called on students to give a Chinese translation to the class. Only once in the second month of school, Mable gave a longer talk. After she finished, she wanted to check how much her students understood. She asked, “who knows what I said?” A boy raised his hand and told the class in Chinese what he understood. According to Mable, by doing this, she tried to monitor how much the class understood (Stimulated recall, 9/19/02).

Mable’s endeavor to use more English was evidenced by her style of presenting new lessons to first graders via storytelling. “Long, long time ago, Mr. Bear moved to the forest. He met Mr. Bug. ‘Hi, hello. I’m Mr. Bug.’ ‘Oh, hi, how are you? I’m Mr. Bear.’” Mable pretended to speak like a powerful bear or speak as soft as a bug. While Mable was telling this made-up story for at least 2 full minutes, she used four character flash cards as aids to enhance the first graders’ comprehension. As a habit, Mable would check the students’ comprehension, asking, “what did I say” in Chinese. Getting no response from the group of first graders, since some of them had wandered away in the middle of the story, Mable immediately retold the complete story in Chinese. Mable expressed opinions similar to Sophie’s:

If [the students] cannot understand my English, they’ll just give up following my teaching. To speak Chinese allows them to follow along. But it’s impossible to speak English for the whole session. It will drag your schedule down and make you unable to finish teaching the whole text by the end of semester. (Stimulated recall, 10/11/02, 10/18/02)

However, Mable warned the students who talked and chatted in class to “chat in English if they [wanted] to” (Fieldnotes, 9/13/02; 9/27/02, 10/11/02). Yet, she regarded the “no Chinese” rule of some English teachers and cram schools as unreasonable for

young children who did not know enough English to talk only in English. She said, “I believe the ‘no Chinese’ rule is for the teacher, not the students” (Stimulated recall, 9/05/02). However, she gave a “no Chinese” rule as punishment to those who were inattentively talking in class “because they were too noisy” (Stimulated recall, 9/13/02). I wondered whether this punishment stigmatized English speaking in an enhancing environment for foreign language learning that Mable was trying to build in her classroom. Apparently, the emergence of the discipline problem contradicted Mable’s beliefs about the “no Chinese” rule for students and about building an enhancing environment. How Mable viewed and managed discipline problems will be discussed further in the section on commonalities outside the Guidelines.

Atkinson’s (1987) three reasons for allowing limited mother tongue use in the classroom showed more or less in all three of these teachers’ practices. First, it was a learner-preferred strategy for the learners to translate without encouragement from the teacher. Danchev (1982) further assures that translation/transfer is a natural phenomenon in second language acquisition, almost inevitable even when no formal classroom learning takes place. Second, Atkinson regarded it a humanistic approach to permit students to say what they want by using their mother tongue. Kathy, Sophie, and Mable seemed to have taken this stance and allowed the students the use of Chinese in class. Last, Sophie’s and Mable’s concerns about time and schedule for finishing the texts were congruent with Atkinson’s third reason—an efficient use of time when they gave explanations in Chinese. However, Harbord (1992) said that checking comprehension of a listening or reading text in the first language deprives students of an important source of language acquisition. Moreover, the teacher’s one-to-one translation to save time will very possibly impress the students that word-for-word translation is a useful technique, and hence render them unwilling to take risks or develop their own “internal model of interlanguage to try to induce rules” (Harbord, 1992, p.353).

As for his concern about getting students’ attention by lowering student anxiety and making teacher talk more comprehensible with the help of first language (L1),

Harbord (1992) said this was a justifiable aim but, still, may very likely have a negative effect on the overall use of second language (L2) in the classroom. He suggested what Duff (1989) also recommended, which Danchev (1982) termed “functional translation,” that is, making students aware of the dangers of translation by comparing translation of single words to phrases in context. However, these may not be appropriate topics for primary grade students but a task for teachers to learn alternative L2 strategies so they can easily and effectively provide more comprehensible input in class and check on the learner’s comprehension as the teaching unfolds.

In sum, Stanley aimed for “no Chinese” instruction similar to what most of the cram schools in Taiwan had been doing. As Huang (1999) proclaimed in his study, Stanley made “speaking English” a requirement in class and on campus when meeting the English teacher. Stanley’s upper grade students responded positively, though they were quieter in class and, as he reported, an English-speaking environment was built by forming such a habit among the students. How he incorporated this “no Chinese” rule with other classroom arrangements and contextual factors, such as discipline and group competition, influenced the outcome. This topic will be further elaborated on in the next section on commonalities outside the Guidelines. The advantages of developing students’ communication strategies and thinking in English in an all-English classroom pointed out by Huang (1999) should be examined more closely through more longitudinal studies. The students in Stanley’s classes showed little evidence that the “no Chinese” rule worked, probably due to their need of a silent period or a larger quantity of comprehensible input, issues which were beyond the scope of this study.

On the other hand, Sophie, who came from an “all-English cram school” background, intended to use only English in class but found it impossible to keep students’ attention by speaking only English. She wondered if it was the characteristics of the students in this school district, but apparently Stanley had worked it out with upper grade students at Happy Whale and perhaps at his former school. Just as Sophie had compromised by speaking both English and Chinese, Mable tended to give more direct sentence-by-sentence Chinese translation to the class to ensure students’

comprehension. The only time she didn't give a Chinese translation was when reading a story. As a novice teacher, Mable did not hesitate to speak normal-speed English in class and displayed inconsistencies between her beliefs and practices, such as whether her speech as a teacher was comprehensible or not, or aiming for a supportive classroom setting but asking students to chat only in English.

Perhaps due to Kathy's non-English-major background, she spoke English more slowly than the other three teachers and made sure that her English was comprehensible in various ways-- repeating, modeling, using body language clues. She believed that less exposure to English and other related resources made the students at Happy Whale feel less comfortable in listening only to English at first. She was tolerant as students went through a habit-formation process of listening to only English in and even out of English class. By speaking English to include the student with special needs in class, she modeled comprehensible English to the whole class. Insisting on a "no Chinese translation" rule for herself, Kathy allowed the use of Chinese in class by the students. Kathy said some students tried harder to use English when they observed her actions.

Since whether English should be adopted as the language of instruction and how much Chinese should be given were issues based on the teachers' individual beliefs and decisions, the use of English and underlying beliefs generally affected how teacher and students interacted on the classroom level and how this language rule was implemented with other disciplinary rules. For example, Kathy spoke to the special student in English as well. Students were allowed to use Chinese in Kathy's, Sophie's, and Mable's class. Sophie and Mable were more concerned about the pacing of teaching and the progress of teaching the texts. Sophie interacted with students on disciplinary issues in Chinese. Mable attempted to employ the rule of using only English to chat as a suppressor to manage the classroom. Kathy saw that primary grades enjoyed reciting and singing and gave them more when they were leaving the campus. Whereas, Stanley extended his rule of using English only in class to any encounters the students had with him outside the classroom with an intention to build an English-speaking community by enacting this "no Chinese" rule. He brought this rule with him from his cram school teaching

background and deeply believed it was effective, from his previous year's experience at an elementary school. Yet, Sophie and Mable compromised their "no Chinese" expectations hoping to give students more comprehensible language input either to keep students' attention focused or to make progress and finish the texts by the end of semester. Both Sophie's and Mable's beliefs about speaking as much English in class were modified by the difficulties in practice—student motivation, classroom management, and pressure to finish the texts.

### **(3) Instruction in Writing**

Guideline III-8 (see Appendix A) says that for the elementary level, the students only need to copy or trace in writing either the alphabet, vocabulary or sentences. Kathy seldom gave writing assignments to be done in class. But students did have an opportunity to do simple writing in integrated tasks in group work time. Once in a mini-survey task, the groups asked what color their group members liked and recorded the answers on grids the teacher gave to each group. Kathy allowed each group to decide whether they wanted to write down the names and color words or simply numbers and the first letters of the words (Stimulated recall, 5/28/02). Various groups did the grids differently. Some groups even engaged in spelling, writing, copying, correcting, and monitoring skills in addition to using discussion, negotiation, planning, and organization skills needed in the group work (Fieldnotes, 5/28/02, 6/02/02.). Kathy mentioned that her upper grade students basically had no problem doing the exercises in the workbooks on their own outside class. She graded their assignments in her office (Fieldnotes, 6/10/02, 6/11/02)

Sophie said that she wanted the first graders to trace the alphabet (Interview, 5/15/02); however, the students didn't do it in the last two months of the semester. Most often, they put a tick mark by the right answers in the workbooks when doing listening comprehension exercises (Fieldnotes, 5/23/02, 5/20/02, 6/10/02, 6/17/02).

Among the four teachers, only Stanley gave constant writing assignments for his upper grade students to finish and have graded in class (Fieldnotes, 9/17/02, 10/15/02,

10/22/02). Stanley noted that some exercises in the workbook were not well-designed, for they required the students to spell and write the words out on their own, but memorizing key words was not what elementary students should achieve at this stage. When he encountered these situations, he wanted the students to check their texts for the correct spelling and copy it to the workbook, instead of his spelling out the words for them to write down. Most of the time, according to Stanley, the students only had to copy the words in the texts or workbooks (Interview, 9/24/02).

Stanley commented that, to keep from using his voice so constantly and intensively in language teaching, he attempted to find teaching strategies that would allow him to rest his voice while keeping students busy learning. Grading students' writing assignments in class served this purpose, too:

It serves several purposes. One is that the students get feedback from me right away and know what mistakes they made. Then my vocal cords get some rest from talking. And I don't need to spend time outside of class to correct the assignments. Their grades can be recorded in my record book right away, with the class leader's help. (Interview, 9/24/02)

Mable asked the second and third graders to either trace or copy the upper and lower cases of two letters each time, sometimes in class and sometimes as homework. The exercises the students usually did in the workbooks were primarily matching, ordering, and unscrambling the words, or checking off the right pictures (Fieldnotes, 9/23/02, 9/30/02). At the beginning of the school year, Mable gave English names to the students who didn't have one. For a couple of weeks, the students could not read or write their names. Mable was surprised that so many students did not remember their own English names, and she spent much time asking the students to copy their names from the board where she had written them (Stimulated recall, 9/12/02). It could have been a very good teaching opportunity for the whole class on the alphabet, but Mable made it a one-on-one process, which didn't achieve much, but kept the majority of the class waiting and hence fooling around.

In sum, Stanley gave upper-grade students more structured and constant writing assignments throughout the semester. As a tactic for Stanley to rest his voice, the

students finished exercises either in their texts or workbooks. They were mainly copying vocabulary words or sentences. Mable's second and third graders regularly did alphabet writing in addition to matching, ordering, and unscrambling words, and checking the right pictures in the workbooks. By comparison, Kathy's and Sophie's classes did very little writing in class. I did not observe Sophie's students tracing the alphabet, as she indicated in the interview, but instead ticking the right answers when doing listening comprehension exercises. Writing was not a central component of the tasks Kathy gave to small groups. Kathy's students wrote in the forms and formats decided upon by each of the small groups. Therefore, the writing job was manageable and meaningful to the students. It seemed that the strategies used to teach writing and the arrangements of writing activities in class depended on the teachers' individual concerns and focus of teaching. For instance, Stanley viewed it as one strategy to rest his voice when asking students to do writing assignments in class. Writing the exercises in the workbooks was mostly what Sophie, Stanley, and Mable gave in class, but Kathy believed that her upper grade students could do them on their own outside the classroom.

#### **(4) Two Untouched Guidelines**

Two guidelines were never included in the four teachers' practices: (1) the use of basic, interesting stories and other reading materials to foster the students' interest and reading ability, and (2) realia, such as menus, timetables, itineraries, maps, or signs from real life, to be employed as reading supplements. Kathy herself collected many children's books and similar teaching materials, but she didn't use them widely or intensively in class. On the topic of traffic, she drew on a children's book on traffic signs in the States to reinforce the concepts of traffic lights and signs (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02). However, introducing reading was not Kathy's primary teaching objective. Insufficient teaching time and the unavailability of large-format books for big classes had made Kathy give up reading activities and focus totally on listening and speaking activities (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02). Once again, she admitted that her English language

competence may have limited her selection of teaching materials, especially children's literature (Interview, 1/20/01).

Sophie thought that introducing children's literature might be a good way for elementary students to enhance their English learning, if teachers were given more instructional time (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). Stanley usually spent half of his class time leading the class in doing either exercises in the workbooks or reading along in the texts. However, according to Stanley, this could not equate with reading activities where readers read interesting books of their own choice (Phone Interview, 3/20/03).

Mable did introduce children's literature every other week. That method may motivate students to read on their own to some degree, but Mable's reading activity only lasted for 5 to 10 minutes. A big class may have difficulty clearly seeing the pages of the books. Students could hardly perceive what reading was like from this brief experience. The stories were usually read over once or twice, and the storybooks, or English-version of authentic materials of any kind, were not accessible to the students for hands-on self-exploration anytime outside the class.

Realia, such as menus, timetables, itineraries, maps, or signs from real life, were not used in these four teachers' classrooms. Reading, in comparison to listening and speaking activities, did not carry any weight in the teachers' curriculum. Realia were not collected for teaching use in the same way as the flash cards, or props used for games and activities, such as big plastic hammers, sticky balls, and so on. I suspected that English teachers in general recognized listening and speaking communicative skills as the only goals regulated in the Guidelines, though the four language skills are actually inseparable and enhance one another (Cheng, 1999; Nantz, 2002; Su, F. H., 1999b).

As discussed in the previous section on how the four teachers built their classrooms as language-rich learning environments, the primary teaching objective of all of them was to master certain usage of oral English, including language forms and functions. Neither were the school-wide English learning activities organized on a constant basis with well-thought plans, nor did the in-class learning environment offer

students enough print in the environment or authentic materials available for students' hands-on exploration on their own, such as basic readers, storybooks, maps, menus, and other real-life materials. To take Stanley's and Mable's assertion of insufficient exposure to oral English a step further, the students' exposure to reading and writing skills was nearly neglected in these four teachers' classroom as well as on campus. Insufficient instructional time--40 or 80 minutes per week—might be the primary reason that the teachers focused only on listening and speaking skills.

### **III. ASSESSMENT**

Among the four teachers, Sophie was not required by the school to give students grades. Therefore, she did not do formal assessment of her students (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). According to the Guidelines, English programs are only mandated for fifth and sixth graders. Ocean City mandated that third and fourth graders would receive English education, but English class was arranged in “group activity” time, as was English class for first and second graders (Interview, 5/25/02). Thus, Sophie had no need to report grades for English. In the following paragraphs, the way the three other teachers did assessment will be discussed.

Kathy only had to give grades to her fifth and sixth graders, though she said that she always remembered how students performed in the previous week's class and assessed students' progress based on her classroom observation (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02). After teaching the same groups of students repeatedly for the past three years, she said that it was not as hard as her first year, trying to remember the names of at least 400 students (Interview, 1/20/01; Fieldnotes, 5/23/02, 5/28/02).

I can't afford to do formal assessment given only 40 minutes of class per week. I judge their learning from how familiarly and confidently the students respond to my questions in class. I don't have time to understand my students' levels of competencies or needs beforehand. (Interview, 1/20/01)

But for fifth and sixth graders, Kathy not only gave written midterm and final tests but also group or individual tasks to be prepared and assessed in class. Kathy said that the written tests included writing upper and lower cases in the print style, matching

the pictures to correct vocabulary words or sentences, and writing the missing letters in the words that the teacher read (Fieldnotes, 6/12/02). Kathy asked for her upper grade students' opinions, consulted the indicators in the Guidelines "to see what they require the elementary students to achieve," and finalized three activities for mid- and end-of-semester assessment: self introduction in English in at least five sentences, small group performances of chants, and English nursery rhymes (Email correspondence, 2/28/03). On top of all these activities, she took into account regular participation, attendance, and the quality of assignments. "I was quite satisfied with their performance because they all took them seriously and helped one another in groups," Kathy said (Email correspondence, 2/28/03).

As discussed previously, Stanley not only graded students' workbook assignments but also gave both oral and written tests at the middle and end of the semester (Interviews, 9/17/02, 9/24/02). On the written tests, the students should be able to write both upper and lower cases of the print style of the alphabet, match pictures to corresponding vocabulary words, or match Chinese sentences to corresponding English ones. He said listening comprehension questions were included in the written tests. For the oral tests, the students should be able to answer the teacher's questions, about three or four questions per person, and read a short dialogue of the teacher's choice in the assigned units they had prepared. Stanley said that he finished testing a class of about 30 students one-on-one within 40 minutes (Phone interview, 3/20/03). Stanley gave one hands-on project to his students, that is, finding information on the Worldwide Web and, in small groups, using it to make Christmas cards (Interview, 9/17/02). He also included the products and group work in his end-of-semester assessment.

Among all these methods of assessment, Stanley said that he found oral tests especially crucial to know how individual students were doing in big classes:

I find that it is really necessary to give one-on-one tests because in big classes you only know how the top and bad students performed. You never know about those who are in between. Last year at Harbor School, I was surprised at some students' performance on the oral tests. They did learn and could answer my questions. I was surprised and pleased by their positive responses. See? How

much I could have missed if I didn't do it one on one?! Of course, there were also students who knew nothing. I gave them very low but passing grades. Here at Happy Whale, the grades I gave ranged from 80 to 90 for average students. (Phone Interview, 3/20/03)

Mable also gave primary grade students both written and one-on-one oral tests. There were usually three sections on the exam sheet: one matching or filling-in-the-blank section on vocabulary words and pictures, one on copying the letters the teacher dictated, and last, the sample dialogue that Mable used for oral tests. Under the sample dialogue there was a 4-point Likert-scale listing for accuracy, response, pronunciation, and intonation, and a space for the teacher's comments. On the bottom was a space for the parents' signature and comments back to the teacher. Among all these sections, the oral test counted 70%, alphabet writing, 20%, and the other section, 10% (Documents, 11/04/02, 2/17/03).

Mable said that on average, she wrote two to three narrative phrases about the student's learning problems, and attitude or participation problems, while she also gave numerical grades which parents were used to (Email correspondence, 2/17/03). How did the parents respond to her comments? Mable said,

I got only eight or nine parents' comments back. They didn't say much. They are like, "Thank you, Teacher." "Keep on good work." "Please give my child more attention." Those who commented were usually the ones whose children got good grades, I discovered. I think that they all spent time with their children doing schoolwork, and that they want the teacher to give more attention and care to their children in class, too. (Email correspondence, 2/17/03)

Mable said that she started giving this kind of assessment when she student taught in northern Taiwan. "Parents there responded more and kept on calling you for information regarding English learning," Mable continued, saying, "parents here at Happy Whale were quiet; I don't get many responses from them" (Email correspondence, 2/17/03). Although the school only wanted her to report the grades of the third graders, she followed her old habit and gave every parent a report of their children's English learning. "Then they know what I base the grades on" (Email correspondence, 1/21/03).

From the four teachers' practices on assessing students' learning, it is obvious that assessment is a three-level issue: national, school-level, and the teachers' individual decisions. The assessment on the fifth and sixth graders has been regulated by the Guidelines, and the teachers did not contradict the Guidelines when they decided how to assess students. Although Ocean City has mandated English education for third and fourth graders, the school had to decide whether to report the grades and in what subject area the school put the English curriculum within their school-based curricular plans. In Happy Whale's case, Sophie was not required to report the third graders' grades in English in the school year of 2001, but the school asked Mable to file the third graders' grades in English in the following school year. As for first and second grades, individual teachers were not asked to give grades by the school but could act in accord with their beliefs. Both Sophie and Kathy didn't do or present formal assessment in primary grades while Mable gave each of her 450 students a report sheet with both quantitative and qualitative assessment to take home for parents' reference. Using a little space on the report sheet, Mable tried to elicit parents' voices and suggestions. In Kathy's case, she consulted the Guidelines and invited her upper grade students to suggest what projects to do and to be included as part of the assessment.

The methods of assessment employed by the three teachers seemed to echo what each of the individual teachers valued, believed in, and incorporated in instruction. What did their practice contribute to their beliefs? The teachers tended to rely on interactive decisions they made on students' understanding in the middle of instruction. Kathy said that she judged students' learning from how familiarly and confidently students responded to her questions in class. Stanley admitted a need to give one-on-one oral tests because he never knew whether the majority, the quiet students, learned in big classes. Although Stanley and Kathy closely observed and monitored the students' performance and progress in class, they acknowledged that they could not possibly pay enough attention to individual students in big classes nor do formative assessment and portfolios which demand a tremendous amount of time to build up for individual students. Mable didn't reflect on how the practices had changed her beliefs about

assessment; however, she seemed satisfied with her current method of assessment and had held on to it these two or three years.

Yeh (2001) encouraged elementary English teachers to put more weight on attitude goals, such as the formation of positive learning attitudes and learning strategies, than the content goals that Halliwell (1992) distinguished as two categories of language learning goals, when students are beginning to learn a foreign language at the elementary level. The weight of assessment placed on the content goals, including the four skills, then increases as the students progress. Mable explicitly commented on her students' learning attitudes and class participation in qualitative form, but Kathy and Stanley did not elaborate on how they incorporated their observation of students' learning attitudes and strategies, but they did take into account the students' participation and attendance in class, and their written assignments.

Though getting limited feedback from the parents, Mable offered her assessment and comments to parents so they could understand their children's learning at school, as Yeh (2001) and Sutherland (1999) advocated. Yet, the teachers generally made no reflection on the effectiveness of teaching, appropriateness of the textbook, or the effectiveness of the syllabus, those areas where Sutherland (1999) and Yeh (2001) claimed the teachers can benefit from assessing students' learning.

In sum, when the three teachers gave grades, they incorporated the students' performance on oral and written tests. Mable even gave narrative statements accompanying the numeric grades and left room for parents to respond. It seemed thoughtful to include the parents in this way when the parents needed information about how to help their children. Neither Stanley nor Kathy gave narrative statements in the assessment. As they both taught upper grades, they both gave more questions on the written tests. Yet, Stanley seemed to focus more on listening and text reading as he had in his instruction, while Kathy emphasized more the variations, such as group performance of songs and chants, and short self introductions in English. The methods of assessment seemed to echo what individual teachers valued and believed in. Due to different policies on various grade levels, the teachers' assessment on students' learning

showed three-level decisions—national Guidelines regulated for assessing fifth and sixth grades, school-level decisions on assessing third and fourth grades, and teachers' individual decisions on assessing first and second grades.

As the Guidelines suggest, the three teachers had employed multiple forms of assessment. Learning attitude and degree of participation had also been taken into account and were reflected in the grades. Mable even gave all her students, around 450 in total, some narrative statements as part of the assessment. Although Stanley and Kathy closely observed and monitored the students' performance and progress, they admitted it was beyond their ability to pay enough attention to individual students in big classes or to do formative assessment and portfolios. The follow-up checklists Wei (1999) has proposed for both teachers and parents to help promote young learner's independent learning habits after school seemed practical to decrease the workload of the English teachers in doing assessment, and also to shift the responsibility of learning more onto the shoulders of the learner and the parents. After all, the English teachers in the present mode of English education had only 40- to 80-minutes of instructional time, but they took charge of teaching more than 400 students. In the current educational reform, a school-home partnership has been encouraged. The English teachers may not be the only ones who should do multiple forms of assessment of the students' learning. This study raised several questions for me: Should the students themselves build up their own learning portfolios with the parents' assistance? Or should the English teachers take full charge?

### **Commonalities Outside the Guidelines**

Data analysis revealed two commonalities that were shared by the four teachers, beyond what the Guidelines required: an emphasis on discipline, and the view of EFL programs in the school organization. They will be addressed in the following sections.

## **(1) AN EMPHASIS ON DISCIPLINE**

Five most difficult problems underlying the existing construct of English programs prevalent at the elementary level are reported in the literature--big classes, insufficient teaching time, varied competence levels in each intact class, too many classes for one single teacher, and challenges in classroom management (Chen, T. L., 1999; Wei, 1999). Dealing with these construct limitations that teachers in Taiwan generally encountered daily, the four elementary English teachers unanimously named discipline as their top concern in regard to classroom arrangement and program implementation. The teachers' beliefs about discipline were uniquely intertwined with and embedded in individual teachers' lesson planning, classroom setup and seat arrangement, selection and practice of learning activities, as well as teacher-student and teacher-teacher interaction. However, their beliefs about discipline were not at all monolithic. The four teachers had very individualistic ways of implementing their beliefs about discipline.

### **Kathy's Beliefs about Discipline**

According to Kathy, it was part of the school culture that "the faculty of this school were united in the importance they attached to disciplining the children" (Interview, 1/20/01). In addition to the school-wide system of rewards, both homeroom and non-homeroom teachers had their own sets of rules to honor or punish students in each intact class. Most used various kinds of charts that they put up in the classrooms to record students' performances in groups (Fieldnotes, 5/11/02, 5/21/02, 9/03/02, 9/04/02).

Kathy had trained her class to march in lines quietly from their own classroom to the language room on the fourth floor. In the hall outside the classroom, the class leader would give commands to put everyone in straight lines. At this moment, Kathy always went out to them and made sure that they had calmed down and were ready for class before she gave the class permission to come into the room. If they could not achieve this requirement for class, they would be told to go back to their homeroom and

start again (Interview, 11/11/00). Kathy pointed out several functions of using this particular procedure before class started:

First, the students are readied for class through the practice of self-discipline. Second, it is training them to show respect toward others when they quietly walk past other classrooms and offices. Last, after I demand that the students behave before they enter the room, I hope that they will remember what is expected of them. I can more easily accomplish classroom discipline by taking on a more relaxed mood and leaving my own angry mood outside the door. (Interview, 3/09/02)

Kathy regarded this disciplinary routine as good training for her students, a component in education which Chao (1992) found among Chinese parents, and one that she herself needed to transform her moods when she walked through the door. Kathy said, “apparently the students did behave better after this ritual,” and in retrospect, “even Sophie witnessed this and felt like trying the same thing next semester” (Interview, 1/20/01).

Group competition is another tactic Kathy used to see who could be the most disciplined, perform best linguistically, and cooperate best (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02). During competitive activities, Kathy frequently reminded the class that she would end play whenever the children became noisy or were not behaving. Every now and then, groups would yell triumphantly to express their sense of achievement when points were added to their groups. On the contrary, if Kathy went to logos on the board in the middle of class, it signaled that the teacher was not satisfied with their messiness and was prepared to take points away from groups (Fieldnotes, 5/15/02).

“This is to motivate them to do good work. I don’t know if there are better ways, but at least it brings a positive effect,” Kathy reflected (Interview, 1/20/01). She said young children enjoyed team competition and were so cooperative that they did not necessarily need to decide which team won by calculating the final scores. More often than not, time constraints did not allow her to finalize these scores (Interview, 1/20/01). Kathy emphasized the importance of rules for rewards and punishments so non-homeroom teachers could achieve better classroom management.

Subject teachers like me have far less time interacting with the students, so that rewards are used to enhance discipline and order. Praise and encouragement prove effective to a degree, with primary grades in particular. I give very small cookies, candies, or stickers as well to the winning groups at the end of the class. As for higher grade students, I don't usually use rewards because they become proud and arrogant too easily. (Stimulated recall, 5/28/02)

Kathy mentioned that she had worked out her own strategies for maintaining discipline and order in class. She recalled her zeal to work as an ally with the homeroom teachers by carrying out their regulations in English class in her first year at Happy Whale, but she had to make an effort to build her own disciplinary rules since she got no response from any homeroom teachers (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02). By her third year, she didn't worry about the students' discipline code but had different concerns about students of different grade levels:

Second graders generally become very self-disciplined learners after one year of training, a sharp contrast to first graders; whereas, discipline is not a problem in fifth and sixth grade classes for they know the rules very well. My concern about them is whether they learn what they should to move upward to the junior high school curriculum. (Stimulated recall, 5/28/02)

Kathy tended to give more oral warnings and commands to the class before class started but mainly resorted to silence and warnings using gestures, such as the five-second countdown, after the class session began (Fieldnotes, 5/21/02, 5/28/02, 6/04/02, 6/11/02). Despite a more relaxed classroom culture that Kathy deliberately constructed by using exaggerated body language (Fieldnotes, 5/21/02, 5/28/02, 6/11/02), she still assumed the institutional power and control vested in her as a teacher (Interviews, 1/20/01, 3/09/02). Her strategies for maintaining order and discipline included pauses, T-shaped hand gestures to indicate "stop," and warnings in a funny and exaggerated voice indicating time-outs. Students were not allowed to speak without raising their hands. There were times that Kathy stopped teaching, either silently doing a five-second countdown with her fingers or waiting with a T-shaped hand gesture, while waiting for the class to quiet down, whenever order and discipline needed to be reinforced (Fieldnotes, 5/21/02, 5/28/02, 6/11/02; stimulated recall, 5/28/02). Whenever

the teacher quietly conveyed her dissatisfaction with a discipline-related problem, more sensitive pupils would yell “Shhh...” or “Quiet!” in Chinese to remind the class to behave appropriately (Fieldnotes, 5/21/02, 5/28/02, 6/04/02, 6/18/02). “I won’t hurt my vocal cords by yelling. And I found it more effective to calm them down quickly if you stop talking to them. Then I can resume my normal tone and go on teaching” (Stimulated recall, 5/28/02)

Kathy reflected that she was a very self-disciplined student from the time she was little (Interview, 11/28/00) and admitted that, maybe due to the influence of tradition, she could not tolerate students’ disorder in class:

It disturbs me when I see the students not sitting in order or misbehaving in class. Maybe I should learn to lower my standards, but what I am concerned about is that it will take more effort to discipline them later if I relax the rules. To benefit the whole class, a class should abide by the general regulations. I don’t have time for the students to come up with their own regulations, for there are only 40 minutes of English class per week. Besides, I would be the one who suffers because I might forget the different sets of regulations because I teach 13 classes. The intent of an organized class will be lost when the teacher cannot make sure that the agreed regulations are carried out in class. (Interview, 1/20/01)

She thought about her practices very often. After talking about classroom management with me, she said that she sounded like she was giving military training to her students, and she had assumed that teachers had power since she saw her own teachers use it when she was a student. “I don’t want to act like any of them, though it really works for managing big classes,” Kathy said (Interview, 3/09/02).

Kathy was more lax with the students during group-work time. It was often the high point of the class. Five or six students sat, squatted, or lay on the floor and worked together in a circle on the tasks Kathy gave. They taught and helped one another. Kathy gave guidance to each group as she walked around. From time to time, students yelled in triumph, argued about right or wrong procedures, or reminded one another to take turns. Class was often wrapped up by counting scores or asking a couple of questions to make sure that each group had finished their task (Fieldnotes, 5/21/02, 6/04/02).

Kathy's emphasis on discipline not only served to keep big classes motivated through group competition but also echoed her beliefs about the goals of elementary education—to cultivate good personalities, as was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. To her, a positive and lively personality benefited the respective child more than knowledge of language. She paid individual attention to those with special needs in class and showed a certain level of understanding of most of her students. One day when class had just begun, she went over to a hyperactive student, "Gordon, do you think you can behave better today? Show me you're good. OK?" During the class, she twice went to a boy to get his attention (Stimulated recall, 6/04/02). "This student just transferred from another school. He felt happy when I paid attention to him but blushed when I noticed him distracted by something else" (Stimulated recall, 6/04/02). In addition, she tried to include the hyperactive student as much as possible by giving him opportunities to be a helper: bringing more magnets to the teacher, spreading out the flash cards, holding the props for games, etc. Kathy contentedly stated,

This class is above average as far as discipline and interpersonal relationships are concerned. They not only accept the special student but also encourage and assist him in many aspects. I think their homeroom teacher has done a good job in guiding such a class with a special student in it. (Stimulated recall, 6/18/02)

For smooth lesson implementation in big classes, Kathy had divided up the students and resorted to peer pressure, peer competition, and cooperative learning in small groups, which helped her cope with the discrepancies resulting from having students of various competence levels. She avoided tension in her voice or a tense atmosphere in class by using nonverbal tactics. With only 40 minutes per week to interact with each class, Kathy abided by her discipline routine closely and used small rewards in primary grades to strengthen the effect. To balance her strict attitudes on discipline, she built a more relaxed atmosphere by using exaggerated body language whenever she needed to remind the students of the expected behavior, instead of punishing them. Moreover, she gave individual attention to those in need, including a transfer student and a student with special needs.

Small groups, which enhanced peer pressure, peer modeling, and cooperative learning, was also one of the strategies she employed for classroom management, for students to do communicative tasks tied to the planned curriculum, and for an opportunity and a small portion of time to pay attention to individual groups. The nonverbal strategies she used for discipline, such as the silent five-second countdown with fingers, T-shaped hand gesture, and standing next to the scoring system on the board, enabled her not to overuse her voice.

### **Sophie's Beliefs about Discipline**

Sophie exclaimed, “English teaching [at an elementary school] is totally different from the situations at cram schools! Absolutely!”(Interview, 5/30/02) Facing big classes that mingled unmotivated students with students of various competence levels, she continued to underscore the importance and necessity of teachers’ prior teaching experiences, “See? With all the experiences I had in the past 11 years, I still encounter difficulties in disciplining students and doing classroom management. Not to mention new, inexperienced novices just graduated from school! I tell you experience plus enthusiasm to try out makes one a better teacher!” (Interview, 5/30/02)

She couldn’t forget the comments a principal had once made about certified teachers’ ability to do classroom management:

He said that the group of certified teachers screened by the MOE has only better pronunciation, but not the rest of basic skills required, such as how to discipline students or do classroom management, for elementary levels. He supported and preferred the general elementary teachers currently teaching after some training in English and English teaching. (Interview, 5/15/02)

So as not to be looked down upon by the homeroom teachers as “impotent,” she tried to take care of classroom management problems by trying different methods.

First, Sophie paid attention to small-group and seat arrangements. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Kathy and Sophie shared a classroom. As Kathy’s class did, Sophie’s class sat on the floor in groups in a big U-shape facing the teacher each time they came to the room for class. Yet, Sophie used the whiteboard on the north wing for class while

Kathy preferred using the big blackboard fixed on the south wall. Having no desks and chairs in this room allowed much space for body movements and vigorous physical activities, something the students couldn't do in their homerooms. Sophie had most of her classes in this language room unless her class time conflicted with Kathy's. However, Sophie expressed her helplessness about the restrictions of the room for English instruction:

The teacher next door in the computer room demanded that I should not let students jump, run, or do any exciting movements that would cause the elevated, wooden floor to shake and cause problems in the central processing unit of the master computer. It's supposed to be fun and a high for the students in class. But...it's a reality I face. Live with it! What else can I do? Compared to other schools where there is no room set aside only for English class, I should be content! (Interview, 5/15/02)

The way Sophie grouped her students evolved when she took into account more factors.

At first, I tried to put students of different competency levels together in a group before the first semester started. I surveyed how long each student had studied English, and I evenly divided students of different learning backgrounds into each group with a leader who had at least two years of experience. Later, people suggested that I take discipline into consideration. As a teacher, you need to adjust whenever needed until you feel satisfied. (Interview, 5/15/02)

Hence the grouping arrangement in Sophie's classes that I observed was somewhat randomized with a more well-balanced distribution of students' background in English learning. Each group, more or less, had a mixture of several different competency levels. The groups competed in games, in participation, and in discipline to score as winners of the day and to obtain the teacher's rubber stamp of encouragement on their texts (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02, 5/20/02). Yet, Sophie did not rely on the scoring system as closely as Kathy did. The most common method Sophie resorted to during class was verbal threatening which she viewed as a futile struggle:

Sometimes I told the kid that I would write a note to his parents on the teacher-parent contact book. But some homeroom teachers would be uneasy with that. It seems to intrude on their territory if I do not inform them in advance

of my need to contact parents. So, I cannot discipline the kid efficiently. Sometimes, I said that I would invite their parents to sit in and observe them in class if they misbehaved again. Actually I love to have parents come sit in, but it won't work in practice because the students, as expected, will behave well and their parents would see no problems at all. The parents will never believe that their children could possibly misbehave in class. But if you cannot do what you say, the threatening will not go any further. No use at all! Sometimes I told them not to make me give up on them. I believe not a single child wants to be given up on. In short, there's only so much I can do. (Interview, 5/30/02)

Sophie found that disciplining students well required teamwork with homeroom teachers and parents to be effective, but she knew it was not easy to ally with these two parties either. First, she believed that she could not convince the parents of the need to observe their children in class. Then, she was afraid she would either intrude on the homeroom teachers' territory or complicate the interaction with the homeroom teachers, which led to her deep sense of helplessness and frustration:

After all, homeroom teachers can manage the students under their control more easily. Students listen to their homeroom teachers instead of the subject teachers, because subject teachers can't do much with them. So you can sometimes make use of the homeroom teachers' power over the students. For example, tell the student who doesn't behave to go back to his or her homeroom teacher and receive some kind of punishment. (Interview, 5/30/02)

As a first-year teacher in the elementary school setting, Sophie spent a lot of time and energy figuring out how to team with homeroom teachers for better classroom management, which affected whether she could smoothly implement what she had planned for class:

It took a long process to adjust and learn how to interact with homeroom teachers. At first, I didn't bother the homeroom teachers at all. I thought that it must be very exhausting for them to deal with their students every day all day long. It is overwhelming when I only need to deal with my students once a week, so I can imagine how much work they are facing daily. I tried to be considerate and handle the discipline problems all by myself. Later, people gave me suggestions on asking for homeroom teachers' assistance. So, in the second semester I resorted to their help more. But later on I came back to the original stance because of the different individuals I encountered. As a matter of fact, my feeling of frustration doesn't simply come from students but from many sources. (Interview, 5/30/02)

In addition to the frustration of seeing unmotivated students, she recognized the limitation of the classroom setting—no vigorous learning activities allowed because of the computer system next door. When she tried to accommodate the difficulties of teaching big classes with multiple competence levels, she put students in small groups but still suffered from not being able to form cooperative relationships with homeroom teachers who spent much more time with students and could easily exercise influence or power over them. Throughout the two months I interacted with Sophie, she talked a lot about how differently individual homeroom teachers interacted with her, aiming to enhance classroom management which benefited both the learner’s learning and the teacher’s teaching (Fieldnotes, 6/22/02). “I know it is also an issue of personality,” she affirmed (Interview, 5/30/02). Sophie said she hated to “touch cold fish” and would withdraw right away when she sensed people’s indifference in any form. “Some people gave me very negative feelings, leaving me reluctant to go back for any communication again. Scorpios, as I am, are observant and dedicated, but not overconfident!” (Interview, 5/30/02)

Sophie said to discipline students in anger only made her vocal cords hurt. I did not see her punish or discipline students in class (Interview, 5/30/02). She never stopped the class to show the students she had reached her limit, but stopped one individual student who was walking around in class and warned him to stay after class for a talk (Fieldnotes, 6/10/02). “At most, I give a time-out for a couple of minutes after class. Or I ask them to promise me to behave better next time. But easier to promise than to improve!” (Interview, 5/30/02) Sophie kept on reminding the class or the misbehaving students by calling their names, or threatening them more. “Kenny, it’s the second time now. Don’t let me call your name a third time.” She said that she found herself nagging all the time after she started teaching at Happy Whale. “Kids forget things easily, so you need to remind them about certain things every now and then. Good behavior is strengthened every time you emphasize it. But I become a nagging mom here. Nag, nag, nag” (Interview, 5/30/02). Echoing her dual role as a teacher and also as a mother of two children, who put up with children with more tolerance than single female teachers,

she said, “you can’t aim at waiting for the class to be 100% disciplined, or you’ll run out of time. Remember, I have a text to finish by the end of the semester. I need to keep on going and make progress according to the syllabus no matter how” (Interview, 5/30/02).

Sophie suffered from using her voice so intensively in class. But she eventually decided not to have surgery to remove the callus on her vocal cords, “for the problem would recur if [she] kept on using [her] voice” as her job required her to. Before every session began, she set up her amplifier and microphone for class. “I’ve tried two sets of microphones and amplifiers. They only relieve your intense work to a certain degree, even if they are of excellent quality and function well” (Interview, 5/30/02). In addition to her 14 sessions of English class, in which she talked intensively, she had 10 sessions of PE class, in which she raised her voice and yelled because she had no microphone to use outdoors. “At some big schools, you don’t need to teach any other subject except English for they have more English classes than the hours their English teachers can teach.” She affirmed that it was due to the size of Happy Whale that English subject teachers needed to teach more than English classes. Repeatedly she claimed, “Eighty percent of my debating to leave the job lies in the voice problem! Simply to teach English well, you need to take into consideration all those related factors!” (Interviews, 5/30/02; 6/20/02; 6/27/02). From time to time, she made use of her secret weapon—a drawer full of cough drops. “Care for one? Any brand names you want!” (Interview, 5/30/02)

During her first year of teaching at an elementary school Sophie struggled with how to effectively discipline big classes before she could implement the planned lessons. Although she had a classroom set-up similar to Kathy’s, she resorted more to verbal strategies for disciplining students: continually reminding students what to do, threatening students--of their homeroom teachers’ punishment, of inviting parents to sit in, of her giving up on them—in short, being a ‘nagging mom.’ In addition to facing unmotivated students and limitations on the classroom, she found it impractical to ally with homeroom teachers for better classroom management, though she acknowledged

the homeroom teacher as the primary and powerful role model for each intact class. She relied on using a microphone but still suffered from tension in her voice. Among all the sources of frustration, Sophie pointed out that the intensive use of her voice due to class management and big-class teaching was her primary concern in deciding whether she wanted to continue this elementary teaching job.

### **Stanley's Belief about Discipline**

Stanley repeatedly commented that, different from the cram schools, “you have all kinds of students beyond your control or expectation in the big classes at elementary schools” (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/17/02). They included students of various competence levels in English, unmotivated students, and students with special needs, “all mingled together, and we teach them in intact groups without screening them into different levels.” He claimed that most of the students at cram schools were “better motivated or from well-off families, placed in leveled classes of about 12 to 15 students. The only thing that I’ve modified in my teaching slightly based on my first year’s teaching practicum is to demand discipline” (Interview, 9/17/02, 9/24/02).

According to him, the urgent need to work on students’ discipline would serve multiple functions. First, it would make big-class teaching easier. Second, he expected that well-behaved students would ensure the proper maintenance of their temporary classroom located so close to the school’s important astronomy equipment. Last, Stanley believed that well-disciplined classes would decrease the tension in his vocal cords from intensively raising his voice. “You cannot teach long if you spoil the students without disciplining them” (Interview, 9/24/02)

From the very first day of the new semester, Stanley trained his classes with the routine that he expected in class: to march to the room in ordered lines, to follow the English commands the class leader gave—“hands up, hands down, squat down, be quiet,”--to show readiness at the door and wait for the teacher’s permission to come in, to sit properly on rows of padded benches, to be dismissed not on the bell but at the teacher’s English commands, and to leave the room in small groups after answering

some review questions (Fieldnotes, 9/03/02, 9/04/02). Stanley paid constant attention to individual students, checked if the students sat properly, and stopped whenever discipline needed to be emphasized again (Fieldnotes, 9/11/02, 9/17/02). Stanley expressed his intent to make the housekeeping rules part of his English teaching:

From another perspective, all these procedures help to give the students more exposure to English at the same time. In only a couple of weeks, can't you see them pick up all those imperatives in the process? "Squat down, we're ready, come in, close the door." Later on, I'll let them take turns giving English commands like the class leader when all of them get familiar with these sentences. This is one of the ways they pick up language (Interview, 9/10/02)

As Stanley's goal of teaching was to familiarize students with daily, useful expressions, he expected to and witnessed the students pick up those English commands quickly. This routine, set up for better discipline, was consistent with Stanley's belief in repetitive practice as well. First, as in TPR activities, the students listened and followed the commands given by a couple of leaders each time they came to class. After enough exposure to listening and responding to the commands, Stanley expected all the students to be able to take turns and give commands later on.

After the class started, discipline was still a crucial factor for a successful class. Deeply rooted in his cram school teaching background, Stanley believed that making the class fun was the key to motivating students to participate and speak. To really get mad and spoil the fun atmosphere was a taboo for English teachers:

A taboo we English teachers specify at cram schools is to get mad in class. To make your class fun, you can't always have a long face in front of them because what you want is their interaction with you in class. The routines help to set boundaries for the big groups, because English class is always like this: when the students get excited in the fun games, they become noisy and wild. When they're too wild, you can't get them back easily or go on teaching. If you're too loose, they become wild. If you're too strict, they dare not open their mouths to repeat or speak. (Interview, 9/03/02)

Stanley expressed a need for the teacher to be sensitive to the class dynamic for flexibility, and to keep fun and discipline in balance. He resorted to eye contact and mock anger as primary strategies to balance his fun, exciting approach to teaching.

I always maintain eye contact with the troublesome ones. Let them know that you will keep on giving them warnings and chances to behave better. I won't single them out until they go too far, like annoying or interfering with the students next to them. I pretend to be mad in the process as soon as I notice the misbehaviors erupt. But, you know, you need to come back to normal right away, or you'll ruin the lively atmosphere of class. A serious look of mock unhappiness always works. No need to say anything fierce. At most, a time-out in the corner for a couple of minutes will do. (Interview, 9/03/02)

Stanley acknowledged that children were vulnerable to hurt from teachers' harsh words. Therefore, he didn't scold or punish any misbehaving student harshly. Stanley reflected that in the past he had witnessed some students being hurt by teachers' verbal punishment and expressed his wish to be viewed as a role model for the students:

I try to remember that children are vulnerable most of the time. I don't want them to remember me as a teacher who gives them verbal abuse or negative comments that they will carry around like a tattoo throughout their life. I will ask the time-out student to stay for a friendly talk after class. If he could feel that I like him even after he has done something mischeivous and that he is not holding grudges, that's what I want to see. I hope that they see me as a role model to look up to and learn from, rather than being remembered with negative or even hostile feelings. Some day in the future, they will feel like coming back to visit you. (Interview, 9/03/02)

Stanley controlled his moods and adjusted his facial expressions fast enough to go on teaching without serious interruption. In the middle of letting the class follow the CD and imitate the roleplay of a dialogue, Stanley spotted a boy leaning on his classmate repeatedly while the other boy kept avoiding him. He walked up to him with a serious look,

Stanley: Hey, what are you doing?" (He paused for a second and walked back to the front. He came back to the reading of the CD and the repeating of the class.) Wait, (with a big smile Stanley stopped them) you didn't make the nasal sound as the man on the phone did. Do it again.

Class: What are you doing *now*? (The students joyfully emphasized the nasal sound of the word "now" and continued to read.) Nothing! It's snowing outside. (Transcript, 10/15/02)

As discussed in the section on teaching approaches, Stanley employed group competition between boys and girls and TPR exercises to excite the students'

participation in class. In line with maintaining an exciting atmosphere of learning, Stanley also intended to run the class quickly enough so that students had no time to digress or fool around. He stopped the students by reminding them “no Chinese” when they didn’t speak English. Even when they wanted to complain, Stanley told the students in question, “Say ‘he hit me.’ Say ‘I’m sorry’ to him.” Such complaints did not happen often. It was hard to tell if the “no Chinese” rule or the requirement to speak English helped quiet the students. Stanley’s class, blended with laughter and moments of his serious looks, flowed between tense and relaxed times. Stanley’s emphasis on discipline seemed well integrated with these teaching strategies. “I’m pretty satisfied with the students’ overall performance; they are more motivated and rule-obedient than the students I had last year at Harbor Elementary,” Stanley said.

Stanley admitted that the temporary classroom was not ideal for writing activities or vigorous activities with its fixed padded long benches. He found this semi-open-space classroom more susceptible to interruptions than a regular classroom, but these interruptions resulting from off-campus visitors were sometimes useful in keeping the students “on their toes.” Stanley commented, “it’s better than having no room to use or having class in their homerooms. Their homerooms are semi-open spaces, too. They regularly cause interference to the adjoining classes. Even worse!” (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/10/02)

Stanley regarded the students with special needs as usually increasing the subject teachers’ burden during teaching hours and dragging down the progress of teaching, but Stanley reflected that he did not see any such problems in upper grades this year. Stanley inferred that upper grade students showed more discipline than those in primary grades, and that he could not tell which were students with special needs. In regard to discipline, Stanley revealed his recognition of his role as a subject teacher and of how he interacted with homeroom teachers:

It’s not the responsibility of the subject teacher to teach the students how to conduct themselves. But showing respect in class is so basic that I’m always reinforcing this when I demand discipline. Basically, I don’t go to the homeroom teachers for help. I won’t go to them unless I find particular students

difficult to handle and need further background information. I don't even know if it helps for them to write on teacher-parent contact books and contact parents. So far, the only information I've gotten from the homeroom teachers is how their students are eager and look forward to my class every week. But that's what I can tell from how they reacted to me in class. That's all. My contact with homeroom teachers is very limited. (Interviews, 9/17/02, 9/24/02, 10/04/02)

Stanley said that he was self-reliant in his classroom management. By making efforts to discipline students, he was doing more than his role as a subject teacher required—he was teaching students how to show respect in class. He also felt self-sufficient in his teaching role. He already knew students liked his class from their responses in class, not from the information the homeroom teachers offered. Stanley was content seeing that students were successfully motivated, and that he had no need to raise his voice or yell, which he deemed a critical element in whether a teacher left his teaching job!

The strategies he adopted for classroom management were: a routine to come to class with English commands, “no Chinese” in class, group competition, keeping the class upbeat, and making eye contact and using mock anger as a warning without ruining the fun atmosphere for class. Finally, a time-out and a friendly talk after class might be given to the misbehaving students. These strategies were carefully used to contribute to his primary teaching objective—that is, to motivate students to participate and verbally practice English. Therefore, Stanley made an effort to control his moods and adjust his facial expressions fast enough to continue his class with fun.

### **Mable's Belief about Discipline**

“It's nearly impossible not to be firm and strict in such big classes we have in Taiwan. This is what I found out from my work in the previous year as a homeroom teacher!” (Stimulated recall, 9/19/02) In addition to her short-term, after-school teaching experience, Mable had teaching experience at elementary schools as either an English subject teacher or a full-time homeroom teacher. She explained how these two roles were different to her:

As an English teacher, you had just a little time with the students, doing fun games and stuff. Students always came to talk to you after class like friends. But being a homeroom teacher was a totally different thing. I think my beliefs about discipline have changed quite a bit. They didn't need a friend, but clear boundaries! So, I set rules and followed the rules closely. I always make myself look stricter and build up students' concepts and expected behaviors first and gradually loosen up. But, another advantage of being a homeroom teacher is that you're with them all day. They build up a sense of what they should and shouldn't do. As I claimed to the parents last year at the beginning of the school, I absolutely emphasized that proper manners are far more important than how much knowledge you learn.(Stimulated recalls, 8/28/02, 9/19/02)

Therefore, the first thing Mable did with the class when the semester started was to make her rules clear to them—"Please try your best to speak English. Please be quiet. Raise your hand if you have something to say. Please do not eat in my class. Please do not walk around. Please respect others" (Fieldnotes, 8/28/02, 9/04/02, Email correspondence, 3/18/02). Mable wanted the class to suggest some ways of punishment for the rule breakers that they felt would be acceptable. "Any punishment would be fine as long as I don't physically or mentally hurt the students," Mable explained. "But most of the time, I gave a lot of eye contact to warn the misbehaving students. Then I called on them or went to them with verbal warnings. If they were caught three times, I usually made them stay for a talk after class," telling how she generally managed difficult students in class, because she believed that "we can do nothing if the students are not ready!" (Stimulated recall, 9/05/02)

Mable preferred having class in the students' homeroom. "Then I know how their homeroom teacher regulates them, such as the ways they are rewarded for group competitions, and I can reinforce their homeroom teacher" (Stimulated recalls, 9/05/02, 9/12/02). Sometimes, the homeroom teachers stayed at their desk in class and gave Mable some basic, timely assistance, for example, they stared at the students acting up or even intervened to deal with the students with special needs who became too physically vigorous (Stimulated recall, 9/26/02).

Usually, Mable let students sitting in two long, adjoining rows be one group. They competed in small groups to gain points, and Mable gradually put strokes on the

board until a smiling face showed up (Fieldnotes, 9/04/02, 9/05/02). The students cared about the scores they got. Mable said, “every time I walk up to the board, the students quiet down and wait to see who gets points, but I don’t really give points with a serious intent. I give points to encourage those teams who fall behind” (Stimulated recalls, 9/19/02, 9/26/02). She didn’t want any group to fall behind and then give up trying. In addition, she did not expect every child to participate in the games or to follow what everybody was doing. “Everybody has moods, and I don’t want my students to be like robots doing the same things all the time.” Mable commented that she was influenced by the American culture, which respected individuality and allowed individuality to play a role in class (Stimulated recall, 9/12/02). She gave individual students a certain amount of autonomy to decide whether they wanted to play games or not. This was congruent with her belief about children’s ability to think, and it allowed her students some time to calm down and think in class. Like Sophie, the reward Mable gave to the winning group was a rubber stamp on their texts. When the class was dismissed in a hurry, the winning group got their rubber stamp from Mable after class in the midst of chaos (Fieldnotes, 9/25/02, 10/9/02). There was no external evidence from the students to reveal how strong this incentive had been for them.

On the other hand, Mable did not hesitate to stop the class and confront the rule breakers (Stimulated recalls, 9/5/02, 9/12/02, 10/11/02). She said her service-oriented philosophy in teaching was to ensure that every student learned from her class, and having them follow rules helped (Email correspondence, 3/18/03). Like Sophie, she gave verbal warnings, “Tim, it’s the second time now. Don’t let me call your name a third time.” She called out to the misbehaving child, “Come to the front and teach if you don’t want to sit there. Let me sit at your seat” (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02, 10/11/02). More often, she asked the students to give her reasons to justify their behaviors. One time she punished the entire class by having them copy the Chinese texts in several units because nobody in the class admitted putting a lump of chewing gum on a student’s seat when they played a “changing-seat” game (Stimulated recall, 9/12/02). The tension simmered at those times because the students usually said nothing in

response to the teacher's public display of anger. Mable admitted that "this was not effective, for the students did the same thing again" (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02).

In Mable's case, direct confrontation in the midst of class did not effectively solve the discipline problems. Her beliefs about individuality and giving individual attention and autonomy seemed to create more difficulty in classroom management, especially when there were regular rule-breakers. Disciplining individual students raised the tension between the teacher and students in the midst of class. Mable once observed, "it's so unfair to those who behave and are ready to learn. A small number of students hampered the learning of the entire class!" (Stimulated recall, 10/11/02)

In her first semester at Happy Whale, Mable especially felt frustrated and stuck with several regular trouble-makers in a third-grade class. She found it hard to deal with them alone and sought the assistance of their homeroom teacher, but the homeroom teacher did not respond to Mable, for she did not have high standards of discipline but tolerated the class' misbehavior. Twice Mable's sneaker was kicked far down the hall; Mable became annoyed and frustrated and suffered throughout the whole semester because no teacher in this year group was willing to take the initiative to discipline the riotous class, which was influencing the whole year group:

Basically I don't expect homeroom teachers to do anything for me because I've been one and know how busy they are. But this class is exceptionally terrible; even the teachers of their year group recognized it. Look, this class has been so wild and noisy that other classes next to them were going downhill in terms of discipline and order. Not only did this homeroom teacher avoid talking to me, like I've been picking on her class and giving her trouble, but the other third-grade teachers seem to be afraid that I'm going to make them lose face or something. They just wanted to soothe me. I don't agree with them because they are spoiling the misbehaving ones. But what else can I do? I feel so depressed...no way out! (Stimulated recall, 9/19/02, 10/03/02, 10/11/02)

Mable started to resort to verbal threats to the trouble-makers of this class. "If you want to act boorishly, go do it to the principal!" Mable reflected that generally elementary students were afraid of the principal. She didn't know why. She said that another new strategy she used was to ignore those students, "I think it worked to some

degree. I'll be content if they can leave me alone when I teach. I feel so much pain every time I need to teach this class!" (Stimulated recall, 10/11/02)

Mable believed that homeroom teachers shaped their class, and that she saw how the homeroom teachers taught from how the class behaved. Yet, as Happy Whale's classrooms were of a new design, emphasizing a large public space and a more collaborative relationship among the year group, there were no walls or doors to completely separate each intact classroom area. Mable acknowledged this as a source of interference and noise when one class was not behaving. "Therefore, teamwork and consensus among the year group teachers become especially important," Mable concluded.

Mable used a wireless microphone pinned on her top and an amplifier to the side, as Sophie did, but she didn't find it very reliable.

It was my doctor's idea. He thought that I used my voice too intensively. But how can you motivate students when you speak softly? I can't convince myself either. I get excited and raise my voice when I teach and lead students to do activities and games. It really hurts my voice. Oh! Also when I teach phonics. But I'm not hesitant to use my voice when I see students motivated to learn. (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02)

Mable believed that strict discipline was a must when teaching big classes. She also believed that each intact class was their homeroom teacher's product. Although she did not expect homeroom teachers' assistance, she still felt frustrated by the inability to team with third-grade teachers to improve the students' discipline, a task which seemed beyond her ability alone. She usually stopped the class and confronted the misbehaving students, but it didn't solve the discipline problems. She resorted to group competition, rewards, verbal threatening, and copying the texts as discipline strategies. To her, a problem with her voice was something she could not avoid when she became excited or when the students were motivated to learn.

In sum, the four teachers all believed in setting up rules and routines to maintain discipline and ensure effective teaching in big classes, but their approaches and degrees of control varied and were also intertwined with their beliefs in other areas. Kathy

emphasized group work in which peer pressure and peer teaching took place for the students to learn both discipline and language skills, because she believed in character building and cooperative learning. Using group work, Kathy was able to pay more individual attention and cope with the problems of discrepancies among students of multiple competence levels. Contrary to Kathy's nonverbal strategies to reinforce discipline in class, Sophie resorted to verbal reminding, warning, and threatening, even though she didn't find them very effective. She mostly employed group competition in class, but she struggled with how to make classroom management more effective and attempted to form alliances with homeroom teachers. Although she believed that homeroom teachers played a major role in students' lives at school, she found that teamwork with homeroom teachers was a personality issue and couldn't be easily achieved. Discipline problems were the most difficult issue for Sophie as a first-year elementary teacher. She found herself playing a nagging mother's role and suffered from overuse of her voice and knowing how to handle unmotivated students in class.

Stanley used more strategies to ensure that his class was fun, which motivated students to open their mouths and practice. He believed in offering opportunities for students to repeat what they had learned, so that he made discipline part of the routine in which the students picked up daily, useful expressions. He believed that discipline kept the big class under control even if the students became excited in games, and that it decreased excessive use of his voice. Influenced by American culture, Mable believed that students should be given space for individuality so they would not act like robots because, to her, students were able to calm down and think. Therefore, she did not follow her rules very closely and gave students some autonomy for making choices. However, it challenged her enforcement of rules. Through group competition and rewards, she gave students incentives to behave, but she encountered some difficult third-graders and got no collaborative assistance from the homeroom teachers. She threatened and confronted misbehaving students in class, though she regarded it as unfair for the ones who were ready to learn.

In Lin's (2001) study, the elementary English teacher with high efficacy emphasized discipline from an authoritative stance much more than the teacher who had low efficacy but employed a humanistic approach in classroom management. Lin expressed that, contrary to the existing literature which shows that teachers with higher efficacy tend to rely on a more humanistic approach in classroom management, the two teachers in her study resorted to extrinsic reward systems to manage students' learning behavior and classroom discipline though they both gave praise and encouragement. She infers that it is due to the teachers' recognition of the students' developmental stages, in which discipline needs to be reinforced by others and the exterior environments. It seemed that the four teachers in my study all shared concepts similar to the two teachers in Lin's study. They all used extrinsic reward systems and various strategies to keep the big classes under control. The efforts they put into discipline building and classroom management highlight the challenge of teaching big classes of multiple competence levels. Kathy and Stanley also successfully lessened the degree of tension on their vocal cords and supported their teaching approaches and goals through the disciplinary strategies they adopted.

In short, English subject teachers, having mostly 40 minutes per week with students, were expected to be self-reliant in regard to classroom management on the classroom level prior to implementing the planned lessons in big classes. The four teachers developed their own strategies in concert with their beliefs about teaching objectives, about elementary education, and about English teaching. Yet, Kathy learned to work on discipline on her own through a process that extended from expecting some cooperative work with homeroom teachers to relying on herself and building her own discipline routines and strategies. Sophie and Mable both had frustrating experiences interacting with homeroom teachers on discipline issues. Stanley had minimal contact with homeroom teachers and successfully maintained the classes with his own set of strategies and routines. Sophie, Stanley, and Mable mentioned informing parents of specific students' problem behavior but questioned its effect because they were unsure how homeroom teachers acted as intermediaries. Sophie wished to have parents more

involved in class and threatened her students by proposing to invite parents to class, while Mable threatened her students with punishment either from their homeroom teachers or from the principal. Though these English teachers tried somewhat unsuccessfully to form alliances with homeroom teachers in regard to discipline, they recognized that enforcing their own disciplinary rules was essential because they had such little time to teach big classes. Moreover, the unavailability of a classroom exclusively for English teaching aggravated the difficulties in teaching. The design of non-separate classrooms or interference from adjoining rooms caused the teachers extra workload in classroom management.

## **(2) THE VIEW OF EFL PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

The four teachers in this study unanimously expressed a lack of information for making curricular decisions. They were either unsure of the school's expectations or parents' expectations about English teaching. And they were not made aware of already-approved school curricular plans to orient themselves for the new semester. There was also a lack of communication, unintentionally or purposefully, between the English teachers and the administrators and teachers of various groups at different levels. As already discussed in previous sections, the four teachers had very idiosyncratic reasons underlying their agreement of beliefs about various issues; they recognized a void of needed information and basic communication from their interaction with the organizational structure of Happy Whale but reacted to this phenomenon differently in concert with their individual belief systems. Despite all the differing beliefs and practices, these four English teachers also had very minimal interaction and teamwork with each other and taught autonomously on the classroom level. From the evidence collected from the four teachers as well as from other sources, an image of English programs loosely coupled with the subunits of the school organization emerged. Both the lack of partnership between them and their disconnection from other teachers and administrators will be addressed in the following.

### **Lack of Partnership between the English Teachers**

The four teachers in this study had very different backgrounds, beliefs, and teaching practices. In the school year of 2001-2002, Kathy, Happy Whale's first full-time English teacher in her third year of teaching, shared all the English classes and the language classroom with Sophie, who was completing her certification with a year-long teaching practicum as a substitute teacher at Happy Whale. In the school year of 2002-2003, both Kathy and Sophie left. Stanley was hired to fill the vacancy of the second full-time English teacher, while Mable came to serve a year-long post when Kathy took leave for master's degree study in the U.S.A. Seldom did these two pairs of teachers share or team up as the smallest professional group on campus (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02, 10/23/02). Being polite and following the prevalent work ethic, neither of the four teachers took the initiative to bring up their interaction with each other or each other's teaching until I asked them why they had no adequate interaction or collaboration as a team in compiling grade-by-grade English teaching plans on the school level. I suspect the teachers' limited and indirect discussion on this topic stemmed from the Chinese culture of not speaking ill of people behind their back.

After three years' observing Happy Whale's implementation of a school-based curricular model through teachers' frequent collaboration in small groups, Kathy, commented that "interpersonal relationships do not happen easily," even if a group of teachers met regularly (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02). It was the same story for Kathy's interaction with Sophie even though they had frequent contact when sharing the same classroom for a school year. Kathy admitted that she did not know how Sophie actually taught. She only heard Sophie speaking fast in class whenever she passed by the classroom (Fieldnotes, 5/21/02). Kathy reflected,

I did have dialogues with the second English teacher, but they were very limited in time. Therefore, growth through this mode hardly took place. It also depended on whether the other person had the willingness and time to talk with me as a professional, even if I had this intention. To the contrary, I find it easier and more fruitful when I called a couple of English teachers at other schools. [One was Kathy's mentor, and the other was an acquaintance she made in the teacher

training programs.] I benefited from talking to them even though our talks were not comprehensively long. (Email correspondence, 1/21/03)

On the other hand, Sophie showed very little knowledge about Kathy as a colleague. Sophie once said to me that she heard Kathy was going to study in the United States for a master's degree but was not sure what area Kathy would study and why (Fieldnotes, 5/13/02). Sophie regarded attending seminars and workshops as the way to develop professionalism because "being one of the only two English teachers at school [she] really [didn't] think [she had] enough choices when it [came] to having other expert teachers of the same subject to talk to" (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). In Sophie's view, Kathy was a strict teacher, who neither suffered from tension in the voice as she herself did, nor had problems disciplining students. "[Kathy] suits elementary school teaching," Sophie commented (Interviews, 5/15/02, 6/20/02). On the contrary, Kathy thought that it would "bring students' bliss if Sophie stayed because she's an experienced teacher and teaches well" (Fieldnotes, 7/14/02, 7/15/02) even though she considered Sophie too lax in maintaining the tidiness of the classroom they both shared (Fieldnotes, 6/28/02). In the last two months of the semester, I noticed that the only extensive discussion Kathy and Sophie had was on text selection for the new school year, which was part of the required school procedure (Fieldnotes, 6/04/02, 6/12/02).

Stanley and Mable, in the following school year, were the only two English teachers at Happy Whale, but they neither shared the same room for class nor sat in the same office. As discussed in the section on *Beliefs about Language-Rich Learning Environment*, Stanley and Mable apparently had more discussions, for the administrators decided to hold more English-related activities on campus. Yet, Stanley admitted that it was hard to collaborate with the second English teacher. "Every teacher has his own individualistic style and approach in teaching. How to attain consistent goals is a big problem" (Interview, 10/10/02). When asked whether there was a need for the two English teachers to integrate what they taught, Stanley said, "Maybe, a need to exchange information so as to ensure that the contents of the curricula from lower to

upper grades [were] well connected” (Interview, 12/06/02). Although Stanley agreed with a need for the two teachers to discuss and compile a school-wide English syllabi “for students’ good,” Stanley and Mable never discussed how to connect their grade-level curricula and teaching goals (Interview, 12/06/02; Fieldnotes, 10/29/02).

Mable, on the other hand, did not think that it was easy to have in-depth discussions with the second English teacher. “He was not very motivated in organizing activities as the school told us to. I needed to take the initiative and didn’t find him willing to join in actively. Probably he’s more devoted to his sports team and regular practices than this” (Interview, 12/07/02). Instead, Mable had more discussion with the colleagues in her office and obtained more English-teaching information from workshops off-campus than from Stanley (Fieldnotes, 10/25/02, 10/31/02, 11/2/02). The school did not require comprehensive curricular plans from the English teachers, plans which needed to be consistent with the well-thought teaching objectives written for each grade. Therefore, Mable considered English teaching a very individualistic issue at the elementary level—“it depends on who the teacher is and how his or her teaching reflects his or her philosophy!” (Interview, 8/23/02; stimulated recall, 10/17/02).

In sum, neither Kathy and Sophie nor Stanley and Mable had much communication or many discussions as the only two English specialist teachers at Happy Whale. As the four teachers pointed out, time constraints, personal teaching styles, and personality traits were the primary reasons which hampered development of the partnership. Furthermore, the teachers’ motivation and personal agenda to fulfill seemed to be another explanation for the lack of partnership between the English teachers. The more motivated parties, such as Kathy and Mable, sought opportunities for professional dialogues from workshops off-campus.

### **Disconnection of English Teachers from Other Teachers and Administrators**

The English language has been included in the school curriculum at Happy Whale since 1999, its first year, while it was not officially mandated and implemented nationwide for fifth graders and above until 2001. The three rationales behind this

curricular arrangement were as follows. First, learning the most widely used foreign language was consistent with the school's vision of "educating happy explorers in the global village" (Wong & Wang, 2000). Second, since the school grew out of its mother school, the parents generally expected the new school to offer similar, if not equal, curriculum as the mother school originally had. While the mother school offered two sessions per week, one session by regular teachers and the other session by native teachers at parents' own expense, to all grades, Happy Whale at least offered one session to all students weekly. Last, the administration determined that it was not difficult for one English teacher to take care of all the English teaching for the twenty classes.

As Sophie indicated, for the single purpose of teaching English well, "a lot of factors should be taken into account" (Interview, 5/30/02). Teachers share a common schedule and the same student body, facilities, community environment, and administrative team. Interaction and interdependence are inevitable and, in a school-based curriculum construct, collaboration of various teams at the local level is required (Sabar, 1985). Kathy, who had worked in this construct longer than the other three teachers, perceived the loneliness and isolation of her role from the others:

It seems that I have the full autonomy to decide what to do in practice, but my autonomy is limited by the pressure coming from the parents through the principal. I feel all alone and don't know whom to talk to and work with when I want to organize an activity. The school cannot provide me enough support for professional growth. Sometimes, the administrators even expected me alone to offer learning activities of different competence levels to meet the needs of different groups of students, when I did take the initiative to coordinate them. (Email correspondence, 1/17/03)

Kathy felt alone without any support from administrators at work. In addition, no supervision over instruction took place at Happy Whale. Kathy was either the only or one of the two English teachers on campus, and she took on her shoulders the responsibility of building more conducive school environments for English learning on top of her regular teaching duties. She wished for more help from colleagues but didn't receive it (Interview, 3/09/02). She stopped organizing English learning activities in her

third year while taking on a heavier administrative load and preparing for her leave for further study. Kathy knew how to stay firm since she had been acquainted with this school culture for a longer time.

Without doubt, it's defeating to see colleagues leaving. But as I evolved from the experiences, I chose to draw back a little for self protection because you'll never finish the work they give you. When the administration is running like this, I need to plan for myself as everyone else does. See? So many teachers took exams, passed, and went to do their master degree studies either part time or full time. It's better being busy doing your own study than busy doing endless projects for nothing! This year, they insisted that I take up such a heavy administrative role. So then I cut off the English activities I used to hold for the students and put more efforts into preparing for my upcoming master's study in the States. I know what I want, and I stand firm about it (Interviews, 5/21/02, 6/25/02).

Kathy asserted that the morale among teachers was definitely affected by the high turnover rate and the unbalanced workload distributed among the more experienced teachers, since the novice teachers needed time to learn about the operations of the new curricular model and to adapt to the new school environment. The school, in the report on their experimental implementation of the reformed curriculum model, stated that its suburban location resulted in a high teacher turnover rate. However, Kathy and Stanley mentioned in separate interviews that two other older schools in the neighborhoods did not experience a high turnover rate (Interviews, 6/25/02, 8/09/02). Thus, the high turnover rate definitely was not a direct result of Happy Whale's suburban location.

Sophie, on the other hand, did not blame the school for the limitations she recognized in elementary English teaching. She thought the predicament of English programs was "beyond what a school [could] do, but a policy problem for the city, even the government to solve" (Interview, 5/30/02). The most intolerable thing to Stanley at the beginning of the new school year was the unavailability of the English syllabi in the school's curricular plans and the details he needed to prepare for his classes, as well as for the formal occasions, such as the PTA meetings (Interview, 9/03/02). Mable, on the other hand, felt disappointed at Happy Whale because its efforts in English teaching

were not as vigorous as were its renowned practices implementing the Grades 1-9 Curriculum (Stimulated recall, 10/03/02).

As did many elementary school principals, the principal claimed that English and computer literacy were the two most important tools for young generations to pick up for the work world. He said that these two skills were widely acknowledged in present-day education in Taiwan (Interview, 5/24/02). He continued to predict that he would need to work and communicate with native teachers in the near future in the elementary school setting (Interview, 5/24/02). More than once, the principal lamented about inadequate teacher education in the past—“they didn’t provide us enough training in English in the past. Who should we appeal to?” (Fieldnotes, 8/28/02, 10/23/02) The principal embraced the concept of making the school environment conducive to English learning by holding more culture-related learning activities; and he felt pleased with Happy Whale students’ performance in the activities arranged for Moon Festival, Teacher’s Day and Halloween (Fieldnotes, 8/28/02, 9/27/02, 10/30/02). On the other hand, Mr. Gong, the Head of Studies, opted for a well-thought-out plan for English activities and for improving the school environment for English learning. He admitted the elementary personnel’s ignorance of English and highly anticipated the participation of English teachers in the school-based curricular development:

I would say that English is the weakest part of teacher education at teachers’ colleges. It may be this insensitivity to take English into consideration in the school-wide curricular planning. The activities we organized on holidays definitely are emergency measures and shallow in structure and in substance. I highly anticipate the participation of English teachers on our SBCD committee. Teachers of different backgrounds can learn from one another. But at the same time, the English teachers may need to develop their understanding of school-based curriculum development at the same time. (Interview, 10/22/02)

All the evidence supported Sophie’s assumption that “English [was] the weakest component at Happy Whale and maybe at other elementary schools as well” (Interviews, 5/16/02, 6/20/02; Email correspondence, 1/20/03). It also revealed the administrators had within-level disagreements on English activities.

The group of second-grade homeroom teachers discussed with Mable why the principal did not make the rounds of inspection on campus. The more experienced teachers concluded, “First, he’s too busy to do this. Second, he doesn’t care about teaching. All he cares about is evaluation and assessment--all kinds of assessment. He wants good reports on everything but quality instruction!” (Fieldnotes, 10/18/02; Interview 10/11/02) Mr. Gong echoed these teachers’ views and repeated exactly what Kathy said about the principal’s leadership style, “[the principal] focuses so much on beautiful exterior wrapping. He always wants things to look good” (Fieldnotes, 9/19/02, 10/18/02). Yet on the issue of walking around on campus, which others interpreted as a positive move showing his concern about instruction, the principal explained that not doing rounds of inspection was a “trust” given to his faculty (Interviews, 10/07/02, 10/09/02, 10/11/02).

Without “equal-to-equal communication at all” (Interview, 10/22/02), Mr. Gong said that the talks the principal gave to the office heads were mostly top-down commands on jobs to be done rather than a give-and-take discussion, negotiation, or communication between equals. Consistent with what Fan and Wu (2002) have found in their case study of an elementary school’s school-based curriculum development (SBCD), Happy Whale’s operation of SBCD maintained a traditional top-down approach among the school personnel. The final decisions were still determined by the principal because of the principal’s leadership style. As for the instructional leadership the principal was supposed to assume in the new curricular model, Mr. Gong asserted, “I really doubt it, for the principal hasn’t taught for quite a long while. The teachers know much better what topics the students are learning and what precise objectives there are” (Interviews, 8/22/02, 8/28/02).

What about the operations of year groups and the committee of language arts teachers, to which English teachers belonged in Happy Whale’s school-based curricular framework? Kathy criticized the policy at Happy Whale of assigning each subject teacher to a year group:

This school differs from other schools on this. What do subject teachers have to do with the homeroom teachers in the same year group? Nothing! But it's compulsory here. The problem is that this kind of grouping is only good for homeroom teachers, not subject teachers! Homeroom teachers share a lot of common ground and spend a good amount of time communicating with one another. I feel left out or caught in struggles even though I am assigned to a group. Those administrators just couldn't understand the down side of this policy. Sometimes, collaboration doesn't happen so easily in this way. (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02)

She claimed to have tried in her first year at Happy Whale to work with the homeroom teachers as allies to better discipline the students by stating via a letter her hope of reinforcing the homeroom teachers' system of rewards and punishments in her English class. "But who cared? Nobody responded! I needed to work on my own. In addition, the year group only wanted you to share the workload with them, but nobody can share your work in English teaching" (Stimulated recall, 5/28/02). Kathy echoed what Sophie perceived and felt in her first year at Happy Whale. Although the reformed model demanded collaboration and teamwork among teachers, Sophie felt she was given the cold shoulder when trying to form cooperative relationships with homeroom teachers. "It's very theoretical when they talk about collaboration. Probably what they care about and refer to is what and how to integrate content areas of different subjects, rather than consistent attitudes and values toward students' behaviors" (Interview, 5/30/02). Likewise, as a newcomer she felt left out of the existing operations of the school culture at Happy Whale:

I asked for advice on standards for giving students scores from a couple of new teachers whom I felt closer to. But later a homeroom teacher asked me to raise my scoring standards because the scores were too low for a student to qualify for a scholarship. Is it so-called professional autonomy? Theoretical, again! I was willing to abide by the existing rules, but I'm an outsider. I had no clue, and nobody told me. (Interview, 6/20/02)

Sophie affirmed that "there's a gap" between the homeroom teachers and the subject teachers and between her and the year group she was assigned to. She was surprised to find that young, third-year teachers acted as senior teachers at Happy

Whale. “Three years! And they are conceited with the way they work!”(Interview, 6/20/02)

On the other hand, Stanley felt that maintaining a basic relationship with homeroom teachers was enough because he had learned at his previous school that teaching English was a very self-reliant role at the elementary level. “The schools usually don’t know what English teaching is about and give you no expectations or goals to achieve” (Interview, 10/04/02). The involvement he had with his year group was limited to attending regular weekly meetings, where he felt tired of, and sleepy in, the “long and boring process in which not a bit related to his English-teaching job!” (Interview, 9/03/02)

Mable was the only one who enjoyed the interaction with her year-group teachers. However, she felt the homeroom teachers were unable to support her English teaching in a broader sense:

I’m really lucky to have this group of teachers [second grade] to work with. They provide me most of the information I need regarding learning problems of individual students and the school context. I had prior teaching experience as a homeroom teacher and felt in tune with what they talked about in the regular meetings. Yet, I have to rely on myself and read related books for my needs in English teaching. But, see! I just can’t work with the third-grade teachers! (Stimulated recall, 10/17/02)

As discussed in the section on the teachers’ beliefs about discipline, Mable was frustrated dealing with some third graders’ discipline problems and could not obtain collaborative support from their homeroom teachers. In addition, Mable found that the homeroom teachers did not actively provide her information about their classroom arrangement or the needs of the respective classes, such as the condition of their students with special needs. She had to go to them and ask for the information she needed (Stimulated recalls, 9/05/02; Fieldnotes, 9/05/02, 9/12/02, 9/26/02).

According to the four teachers’ experience interacting with homeroom teachers on the single issue of discipline, consensus on goals between subject teachers and homeroom teachers seemed hard to reach. Agreement among teachers on which of students’ self-discipline skills required the most attention was based on whether

individual homeroom teachers shared similar values and beliefs with the English teachers. All the teachers regarded the interaction with the year groups they belonged to as not very helpful to their English teaching jobs. Only Mable felt supported with the information her year group offered, but no substantial collaboration really happened between English subject teachers and general teachers in any of these four teachers' year-groups.

As for the committee of language arts teachers, through which the English teachers connected with other language arts teachers and further with the operation of the committee on school-based curriculum development or curriculum-related decisions at Happy Whale, Kathy stated her willingness to fulfill her responsibility as a committee member, but did not see much professionalism develop in the group:

I always listen to them even when it's not about English. I learn from listening to other specialist teachers. After all, methods of teaching one language are transferable to another language. I try to participate in the discussion and make a contribution, too. Of course, this kind of meeting cannot really promote my professionalism in English teaching and learning. But I'll be there and do my part as required by the school policy. This is how I see it. (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02)

Sophie didn't ever mention the operation of the committee of language arts teachers, while Stanley and Mable thought that the information exchange with other language arts teachers was very limited. They both acknowledged that English was very different and, hence, separate from either Mandarin Chinese or the Taiwanese dialect. Most of the time, the more experienced teachers on the committee suggested that a newly formed group distribute jobs just as they had in the past, bypassing any discussion or even communication. As Mable said, "from my business-major background, I like this way; we get jobs done efficiently without wasting time discussing or negotiating" (Stimulated recall, 9/19/02). In my fieldnotes I wrote,

Not much discussion and negotiation commonly took place in various kinds of meetings at Happy Whale—year groups, committee of language arts teachers, and committee of SBCD. They don't find discussion valuable or even necessary when they already have heavy workload and deadlines to meet. The most important ritual which happens in the group work may be dividing up tasks

among members and drawing lots to decide who gets the hot potato--the reporter role for the group tasks. (Fieldnotes, 8/23/02, 9/13/02).

Head of Studies, Mr. Gong, reflecting upon how to promote the teachers' professional development through dialogues within small groups, expressed his views, which were consistent with my observation:

Insufficient teaching time interrupted by meetings and deadlines to meet really hampers the teachers' development of professionalism at the elementary school level. I suspect that informal discussions will work out better and more efficiently than sitting in meetings. Of course, I see a need to develop our teachers' professionalism in their areas of interest in order to make committees work effectively. Otherwise, the quality of in-depth discussion is always at the mercy of time constraints. (Interview, 10/22/02)

English subject teachers seemed loosely coupled with the subunits they were assigned to. Through teamwork and collaboration of small groups, the school-wide curricular plans had been compiled and implemented. However, no substantial group discussion took place in the groups the English teachers attended which might have contributed to professional development. As mentioned in the section on text selection, the other language arts teachers felt incapable of determining whether or not the texts selected by the English teachers were appropriate, even though the school procedure required them to play this role.

Kathy noted that the school administration not only could not provide opportunity on campus for professional growth but also did not allow her to attend workshops off campus on Wednesday afternoons. They wanted all the faculty to attend on-campus workshops without exception (Email correspondence, 1/17/03). Sophie believed that the school should have provided her opportunities on campus for professional growth, if they had had this ability (Interview, 5/15/02). Stanley revealed his great interest not only in workshops on English teaching but also in all sorts of skill-based workshops and sports contests, such as referee training, fire protection, volleyball contests for teachers, pool contests for amateurs, and so on. He considered these various opportunities other than English teaching appealing incentives for working in an elementary school setting (Interviews, 9/03/02, 9/10/02). Like the efforts

he made in the previous school, Stanley formed a team with colleagues and played sports after work regularly. He considered it a good way to keep balanced with the stressful work at Happy Whale (Interview, 8/09/02, 10/04/02). Further, Mable was specifically interested in understanding more about the reformed Grades 1-9 Curricular model and various teaching approaches in English learning, such as those used by some bilingual programs and the programs at American schools in Taiwan.

The administrators did not acknowledge the English teachers' needs or the difficulties they encountered in practice. When asked if he found the English teachers' interaction in the year groups satisfying, Mr. Gong answered, "Must be good, I guess. The only problem I know that they've been struggling with is the shortage of a classroom for their English teaching" (Interview, 8/15/02). As evidenced by the abundant amount of data, the four teachers all acknowledged that they and their programs were independent from the whole school's operation, and that they relied especially on their personal beliefs in relation to school context to make curriculum-related decisions. For instance, Kathy stopped coordinating any more culture-related activities for her English class in the 2001-2002 school year after she was asked to take on a heavy administrative role. She balanced her workload this way when she couldn't refuse the school's personnel requirements but also needed to prepare herself for her master's degree study in the States in the following semester.

Sophie knew that she couldn't solve her problems of overusing her voice and interacting with indifferent teachers. She tended to remain silent at work and was always debating whether elementary teaching suited her. Stanley specified incentives other than English teaching at the elementary schools and was enthusiastic about pursuing self-fulfillment through forming sports teams and building good rapport with sports buddies. He determined that it was an impossible mission to teach each student well but targeted motivating half of the students to learn English and claimed a need to balance his heavy workload at Happy Whale by playing sports.

Happy Whale was one of the 45 elementary schools evaluated as exemplary among the elementary schools nationwide (The Elementary & Junior High School

Education, Ministry of Education, announcement posted on Sep. 30, 2002). When the principal announced this piece of good news to the faculty, I especially paid close attention to the teachers—they maintained a serious look as they usually did in the meetings. Not a single teacher felt excited about it! Stanley explained, “it may signal for more work instead of being able to feel relaxed” (Fieldnotes, 9/19/02).

Mable viewed it as a flaw when the administrators asked the teachers to take on extra jobs irrelevant to teaching. “Unreasonable requests are when teachers are asked to do something extra, something irrelevant to teaching. The school should think seriously to what degree they’re using their teachers at work” (Interview, 10/17/02). She said that she gave up her previous habit of offering remedial teaching to individual students when she felt the work at Happy Whale too exhausting. Whether these kinds of decisions were directly or indirectly reflected in their practices, their beliefs about themselves and about the school context they knew played an influential role in the teachers’ decision-making and teaching process. How the context-specific nature of Happy Whale was highly intertwined with and frustrated the four teachers’ willingness to augment their practices was salient to their EFL teaching.

Congruent with Deal and Celotti’s (1977) discussion on loose coupling, Kathy and Sophie complained about the isolation of their roles, while Stanley preferred taking a self-reliant role within the structural looseness to prevent being coordinated or controlled. The four teachers held differing and sometimes contrary views. No communication happened in those groups formed as subunits under the administrative structure and school-based curricular construct. That the English teachers were disconnected from other subunits supported the lack of horizontal communication, one of Firestone’s (1984) seven coupling dimensions.

Neither the principal nor Mr. Gong knew the actual needs or the frustration of the English teachers. They believed that the biggest need of the English teachers was a room set aside for English teaching. As discussed in the section on holding English-learning activities to improve school-wide learning environment, the English teachers, Head of Studies, and the principal did not share consensus on what and how

often the activities should be held. They thought that the English teachers worked well with their year groups, since they followed policies about when the groups should meet and how appropriate deadlines were enforced, while the four teachers encountered varying problems teaming with homeroom teachers. Vertical communication (Firestone, 1984) was missing between the English teachers and the principal and the Head of Studies.

As Deal and Celotti (1977) have found in their study, the English teachers' methods of instruction were unaffected by organizational or administrative factors at the school or district level. Whether or not teachers worked with a teaching team, the way teachers worked together was unaffected by higher authorities or offices. And finally, the classroom of each English teacher operated rather autonomously. In Deal and Celotti's words, the autonomy the four teachers enjoyed "showed vertical and lateral segments only loosely relating to one another" since none of the faculty or administrators had enough confidence to show concern about the English programs at Happy Whale. Instead of collaboration, negotiation, and interpersonal communication in the subunits of Happy Whale, the teachers tried to reduce the coordination costs, including time and skills to hold meetings, planning, and evaluating activities. On a personal level, the four English teachers, rather than being coordinated or controlled, viewed themselves as self-reliant professionals (Deal & Celotti, 1977). Yet, on organizing school-wide English activities which were highly principal- and administrator-centered, Firestone's coupling dimension (1984)--centralization of resources--was illustrated. Rules and policies were enforced even though teachers held differing views. To promote additive projects and activities and to enforce rules and policies for good review scores might have been the key areas that the administrators of Happy Whale stressed to maintain the school's legitimacy (Stromquist, 1980).

The principal's busy schedule from playing multiple important roles at the school, city, and national levels not only hampered his coupling, his intentions with actions, but also undermined the rapport and support of the faculty at Happy Whale. His top-down authoritative leadership style negated the redistribution of power among the

teachers as they developed school-based curriculum through teamwork. Teamwork in small groups under the SBCD construct did not encourage collaboration through in-depth discussion and negotiation but was a mechanism to share the workload and meet the deadlines. Holding numerous projects and workshops resulting from the principal's good relations with local education authorities increased the workload of the faculty at Happy Whale and affected the turnover rate. The high turnover rate influenced the school's curricular development and normal rotation of heavy administrative roles. Teachers tried to find their place in the school context to meet their personal agendas. Supervising instructional activities in the classroom was not the principal's first priority; instead his goal was to excel in the reviews of projects and evaluations of all kinds. Being rated a "Signpost 100" exemplary school obviously was a key honor, which the principal touted as evidence of the school's legitimacy, but his view was not shared by the teachers. Contradictory to Firestone's (1984) finding of elementary schools' having tighter coupling than secondary schools, Happy Whale Elementary did not exhibit more centralized authority over instruction, nor higher consensus about goals, but evidenced structural looseness.

### **Idiosyncratic Beliefs**

The four teachers shared commonalities within and outside the Guidelines, which have been discussed in previous sections. Moreover, three salient idiosyncratic beliefs arose from the data—(1) Kathy's and Sophie's beliefs about remedial teaching, (2) Kathy's beliefs about detailed documentation, and (3) Mable's service-oriented beliefs about her teaching role.

#### **(1) KATHY'S AND SOPHIE'S BELIEFS ABOUT REMEDIAL TEACHING**

In the interviews and stimulated recalls, Kathy and Sophie both expressed an urgent need to have remedial teaching, a need they believed resulted from the teachers' inability to pay enough attention to the slower students in big classes of mixed levels. Mable said that she had offered remedial lessons at two previous schools where she had

worked, but she had stopped doing this because her job at Happy Whale was too busy to take on one more task like this, and the number of students who needed remedial lessons was too big (about two students in each of her 14 classes) for her alone to accomplish (Email correspondence, 3/17/03). On the other hand, Stanley was not convinced that remedial teaching was a good idea since there was “always a big and endless need to remedy no matter what standards you impose on students’ learning” (Interview, 10/16/02). Stanley honestly and firmly admitted that he could not possibly pay enough attention to every student in his big classes, and he advocated lowering the standards and expectations in teaching since the infrastructure of the elementary English teaching “[had] its inherent limitations” (Interview, 10/04/02). “If you expect too much, it only makes you suffer and struggle as a teacher” (Interview, 9/17/02). “How to remedy and cope with the big need?” Stanley asked, as he shared Mable’s doubt and viewed remedial teaching as a formidable task (Interview, 10/16/02).

Kathy claimed that offering remedial teaching to students who fell behind was one of the suggestions made by a language arts teacher helper in the advisory group of the Municipal Department of Education when the language arts teachers at Happy Whale looked at the gap and attempted to propose solutions between curricula of the elementary and junior high school levels. Kathy stated that she saw the need but decided not to do remedial teaching by herself because she would have had “no break time” at work (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02). Therefore, she incorporated her version of remedial teaching into her class arrangements and activity designs in the form of group work.

As already discussed in the *In-Class Learning Environment* section and *An Emphasis on Discipline* section, Kathy conceptualized discipline as being maintained through peer pressure, peer cooperation in group competition, and cooperative learning through group work time, where she expected more advanced students to model and teach the less advanced ones. Kathy felt satisfied that second graders enjoyed tutoring their peers, and that it benefited both parties at the same time:

Whenever I gave them time to review and get ready for competitive learning activities, such as guessing the occupations of the characters in the pictures, the students were especially enthusiastic to teach one another how to say those occupations. I see it as a form of remedial teaching that peers can do. (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02).

She saw a need to offer remedial teaching particularly to the sixth graders who were about to graduate and face a higher level of English curriculum. Unable to find time to offer remedial teaching herself, Kathy set up peer tutorial sessions (Fieldnotes, 5/28/02, 5/30/02). Using a scheme similar to peer teaching in group work, the sixth graders who needed assistance in English learning were encouraged to pair up with more competent classmates of their own choice. Kathy mentioned that she had interviewed one-on-one those sixth graders who scored under 80 and did not perform confidently on the midterm of their final semester at the elementary school. At a time when the students had no class, such as lunch break, the paired students all came to the room used for counseling for a tutorial session, sessions which lasted for one month. Although the 18 students who decided to accept this offer were weak in different areas, Kathy told them to cover writing upper and lower case alphabet letters, basic phonics, such as letter-sound correspondence, and dictating basic vocabulary words. She gave the student tutors small gifts as rewards and praised both parties if their tutored peers passed the tests Kathy gave at the end of the semester. Kathy felt excited about the outcomes—10 out of the 18 passed. She expressed contentment that the students took this tutorial session seriously and showed up regularly for a month (Document, 6/15/02).

Kathy reflected that it was not a small achievement to have helped and boosted ten more students in need. This adaptation of remedial teaching served not only the students in a user-friendly way (since they were served by a classmate friend of their choice instead of the teacher herself) but also Kathy, the teacher, when she could not afford in her busy schedule to do enough sessions of remedial teaching to 18 students.

Sophie, on the other hand, proclaimed a desperate need to arrange remedial teaching for slower students even though she left Happy Whale at the end of the

2001-2002 school year, and no more observation could be done to triangulate how she carried out what she had intended. She mentioned her failure to implement remedial lessons to a couple of students in this school year:

Whenever I asked the students to come after school, they told me either they had after-school programs to go to or they didn't have time. What I think possible is to offer remedial lessons during the 20-minute recess time in the morning, but no one wanted to come because it sounded like punishment to them when they could play instead. This applied to all grades. (Interview, 6/20/02)

Sophie continued to insist that she really wanted to set aside a time slot for those who needed to catch up. "Even once a month would be some help to see if any breakthrough could happen," Sophie stated (Interview, 6/20/02). In accord with Sophie's talk on the "conscientious" nature of the teaching job and on the inappropriateness of putting so many students of different backgrounds and different competence levels in a class, Sophie assured me that remedial teaching deserved a try—"we shouldn't give it up until an experiment is done to prove its ineffectiveness!" (Interview, 6/20/02)

In fact, remedial teaching was only one of several actions Sophie planned to take if she had decided to stay with the teaching job at Happy Whale or another elementary school. Deeply frustrated from her first year teaching at Happy Whale, Sophie schemed how to make the school administrators, fellow teachers, and parents understand the difficulties the English teachers encountered in order to find better solutions for improvement. Including remedial teaching, Sophie proposed to open her class to parents and administrators, to communicate with homeroom teachers about the need for teamwork, and to write on the teacher-parent contact book to inform parents of students' problem behaviors, if necessary. She believed that to keep all the related parties—school, homeroom teachers, and parents--well informed of the students' learning as well as her efforts was a good beginning for better collaboration. Other than Kathy's adoption of cooperative learning suggested by Shih (2001), Wei (1999), and others, Sophie's voice from a practitioner's point of view seemed to respond to the questions posed by scholars, such as T. L. Chen (1999), Wei (1999), and S. F. Su

(1999b) on the primary predicaments elementary English teachers faced. Sophie would have opted for an “action-speaks-louder-than-words” approach, if she had stayed, by putting in extra endeavors in and out of classroom, such as remedial teaching and forming collaborative relationships through communication, to facilitate her practices and to cope with context-specific factors. She seemed to say that the school-based curricular model, as S. F. Su (1999b) posited, does not offer a solution in itself to promote either collaboration or English teaching at the elementary level! Sophie expressed a need for communication at the school level.

In sum, Sophie learned from practice that remedial teaching, even though once a month, was worth a try to assist the students who fell behind in the big classes with multiple competence levels. Along with her plan for remedial teaching, she recognized that basic understanding, communication, and collaboration with related parties were indispensable for her to teach English at the elementary level. Sophie wished the whole school community could attain understanding about her teaching and the difficulties she encountered as an elementary English teacher. Kathy’s employment of peer teaching stemmed from her observation of students’ needs, especially sixth graders who would meet new challenges from the junior high school curriculum, a suggestion from a teacher consultant, and the time constraints she faced. Kathy discerned from her practices that students, no matter whether second or sixth graders, learned easily and enthusiastically among peers. She “felt great” when she saw how a suggestion from a teacher consultant in the advisory group could be effectively implemented and resulted in more sense of achievement for the students helping or being helped. Kathy extended the use of cooperative learning among peers from inside the classroom to outside-the-classroom tutorial sessions.

## **(2) KATHY’S BELIEFS ABOUT DETAILED DOCUMENTATION**

Kathy, in her third year of English teaching, had documented her English teaching in the portfolios she built up as she went along, including detailed lesson plans, teaching logs, English-learning activities that she had organized, as well as her

reflections upon each activity. At the request of the school for teachers to offer teaching portfolios for end-of-semester assessment on teaching, Kathy started documenting her teaching process, and she reported that she “developed more in-depth reflections on English-related policies and activities” as the years passed and her experience accumulated (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02).

Directly beneficial to her practices was her habit of writing and keeping detailed lesson plans before and after class. Kathy gave me her lesson plans as reference to compare the planned and actual lessons of the day every time we did regular stimulated recalls on her teaching. Kathy expressed that she did not have time to do lesson planning at school:

I kept thinking about the lessons for a whole week before I took out a pen and wrote it down. It was usually done on weekends when I felt more relaxed at home. I always tried to take into account every factor, such as the procedures and teaching methods, like how to review certain vocabulary words, how to reinforce a certain language function, which props or aids to prepare, and seat arrangements as well. (Email correspondence, 2/21/03)

She wrote her lesson plans in the format of a chart with columns for date, lesson planned, teaching aids, time needed for each activity, lesson actually implemented, and remarks. In the lesson plans, written in both Chinese and English, Kathy listed the steps of her teaching, drew out the pictures she was about to draw on the board in class as well as the checklist she would use for group work. She always came back and filled in the last two columns after class with the actual progress and important events that had happened in certain classes, since she wrote the lesson plans for individual grades, not for individual classes. Kathy noted that she had been using this format for lesson planning since her first year of teaching at Happy Whale. With only minute changes in the spacing of those items in the past three years, she kept all her lesson plans, written on both sides of the page, in a file, to keep her document file thin (Document, 5/31/02).

Sophie, Stanley, and Mable all kept simple, step-by-step itemized lesson plans. Stanley asked, “who has the time to write complete and detailed lesson plans, as they teach you at the teachers’ colleges?” (Interview, 9/17/02) Sophie and Stanley both kept

their lesson plans in regular notebooks, stating what pages of exercises and what activities they would cover in class on what date, while Mable wrote simple steps on her texts (Document, 10/30/02). Consistent with what Richards and Lockhart (1996) concluded from existing research findings, the four teachers planned their lessons as sequences of activities, or teaching routines, but did not focus on the needs of a particular group of students. They did not closely reflect upon their teaching objectives either, since the teacher's objectives, as discussed in the section on text selection, were broad ones and could hardly guide their session-level lesson planning, for example, giving more oral practice for primary grades, or being able to sound out words with phonics.

Mable said, "with my lesson plans on the texts, I know what to do next in the middle of the class. It helps me not to panic from not knowing what to do next" (Email correspondence, 2/17/03). As a novice in the field of English teaching, Mable habitually read the teachers' manuals and screened the activities or games she could choose for the reinforcement of certain language skills of the day. But Kathy demanded more than just knowing something to do next. She targeted a logical and coherent development of teaching, in which learning activities she designed on her own were well elaborated and connected, one after another. Therefore, she wrote as thorough plans as she could in her lesson planning process, and she remembered why she arranged the series of activities in a particular sequence. Kathy expressed that her learning background in the Audio-Lingual Method, her major in engineering, and the models she witnessed in teacher training programs might have all contributed to her emphasis on coherence, which showed itself as a structural framework in her planning decisions and teaching procedures (Email correspondence, 4/30/02).

As discussed in the section on Kathy's teaching approaches, Kathy noticed it when she did not follow her plans to teach with a coherent arrangement of procedures. In the dynamic and constantly-changing process of implementation, the four teachers in the study expressed that they basically implemented their intended lessons with high fidelity. Sophie said that the discipline problems in certain classes might result in doing

fewer activities than planned or than other classes (Email correspondence, 1/21/03). Stanley found that a mechanical problem with his CD player often hampered the progress of his instruction (Interview, 9/03/02), while Mable often had to make changes to her plans because she could not find her teaching props or aids when she needed them in the midst of teaching (Stimulated recalls, 9/12/02, 10/03/02). Kathy sometimes forgot her exact sequence of activities in the middle of teaching and had to correct herself by adding in a transition step to smooth her connection (Stimulated recall, 5/21/02). As Johnson (1992) found from six preservice ESL teachers she studied, the interactive decisions the four teachers made were primarily related to students' understanding, students' motivation and participation, and the teachers' instructional arrangement. The instructional arrangements those four teachers managed in the teaching process included equipment such as CD players, teaching props and aids, discipline problems, and the coherence of teaching procedures.

In the stimulated recall sessions with me, Kathy tried her best to understand from the videotapes of her class if she had missed any students' responses in class, and appraised what she had done in class (Stimulated recalls, 5/21/02, 5/28/02). Kathy's self-initiated reflections were the core of the stimulated recall sessions Kathy and I did (Fieldnotes, 5/28/02). She appraised her class from various aspects. She surprised herself by how well she corrected the misplaced sequence and connected certain activities, how efficiently she used the props and arranged the learning settings, how well students understood her and performed, how effective certain activities were to enhance students' learning, how well individual students or groups of students learned, and how certain decisions and arrangements on the spur of the moment illustrated some of her beliefs (Fieldnotes, 6/12/02). Kathy was the only one of the four teachers who drew on the Guidelines and proficiency index in the Guidelines and reflected on how her practices could match the regulated goals, since she was also the only one of the four teachers who positively embraced the philosophy underlying the national guidelines and endeavored to exercise them in practice.

I know that I can't do much to attain most of the Ten Basic Capabilities with so little teaching time. But at least I know that what I've been doing was consistent with the fifth and sixth Basic Capabilities. That is, "respect, care, team work" and "culture learning and cross-cultural understanding." (Email correspondence, 3/24/03)

In comparison, the other three teachers did much less reflection on their practices for two possible reasons. First, they were not as motivated as Kathy (or not motivated at all) to reflect upon their practices in order to make improvements. Sophie and Stanley especially were both experienced cram school teachers for more than 10 years. They showed much confidence in their teaching and little interest in theories or research. Rather than reflecting upon their practice using the prompt of the videotape of their teaching, they preferred answering questions posed by me (Fieldnotes, 5/16/02, 9/03/02). Stimulated recall, hence, did not actually happen with Sophie and Stanley, so that I called the data collected, interview data. The other reason might be the simple lesson plans they kept. These lesson plans may not have covered enough in scope or captured enough of their thinking process, such as what they had taken into consideration in developing certain language functions, or why they had decided to introduce certain activities. Therefore, they could not recall enough planning decisions so as to make connections with the interactive decisions they made during implementation, or to connect the evaluative decisions they made after the lesson with the ones they viewed in the videotapes of their teaching in the stimulated recall sessions with me. This was especially Mable's case as well. Compared to Sophie, a more experienced teacher, who "read the entire texts inside out" before she did lesson planning, Mable admitted that she did not read through the whole text and did not know what to expect in the following unit when she was planning for a new unit (Email correspondence, 1/21/03; Stimulated recall, 9/03/02). In the stimulated recall sessions, Mable commented much more on classroom management and discipline problems of specific students than the effects of lessons on students (Stimulated recalls, 9/19/02, 9/26/02).

The evaluations the four teachers made of their own teaching, as Woods (1991) and Richards and Lockhart (1996) also found, were generally in concert with their personal beliefs about English teaching and learning. For instance, discipline was always a focus in practice and in reflections of the four teachers. Repetitive drills provided by a series of activities were arranged differently along with specific strategies or concerns. Sophie employed mainly question-and-answer drills to check the students' comprehension and mastery of skills and focused on phonic skills. Stanley evaluated whether students' discipline maximized their listening and speaking practices in class. Among the four teachers in the study, Kathy and Mable were motivated to do stimulated recalls and examine their practices because they both had enthusiasm for professional growth in English teaching, while Sophie and Stanley did not share the same interest at this life stage. But upon closer scrutiny, what Kathy and Mable respectively reflected in the stimulated recall sessions placed different weight on the overall effect of lessons on students, and varied in the scope and perspective they put on their practices. I infer that their years in English teaching and the habit of reflecting upon their practices made all the difference. Mable, in her first-year of full-time English teaching at Happy Whale, longed for a well-rounded development of her professionalism by participating in this study. On the other hand, Kathy had been reflecting on and documenting her English teaching career for the past three years and was anticipating a two-year study for a master's degree. Different degrees of immediate need for professional development underscored their reflectivity on their practices.

In addition to filing all the detailed lesson plans for three years, Kathy wrote teaching logs and personal reflections not only on related issues but also on the activities she coordinated:

I document the process of my teaching for many purposes. First, I can see my own growth from experience. This year I feel I see more and more in-depth on some topics in English teaching. I have done a lot more thinking, especially on the differences between homeroom teachers and subject teachers. Definitely, there's a need for communication. I want to put my experience as a subject teacher on record and come back to it in the future because I might not take the same role again. Besides, I hope that something can be done to improve

elementary English teaching after you finish your study at our school. (Stimulated recall, 5/15/02)

Kathy showed her enthusiasm for developing her professionalism as an English teacher at the elementary school level from the time she began her participation in my preliminary studies at Happy Whale. Kathy said that her knowledge about English teaching came from her teaching experiences as well as three training programs--a 30-hour EFL teacher training in 1997, and a 144-hour English teacher training program in 1998 and a 48-hour training program in 1999, both sponsored by the Municipal Department of Education of Ocean City. Kathy's motivation stemmed from her zeal for English teaching; however, her intention to secure her position as a qualified English teacher further impelled her to pursue a master's degree in bilingual education in the States.

I find English teaching my favorite choice of career, but I need to secure my status with qualifications competitive with those MOE certified teachers. People won't question my professionalism any more if I get a master's degree from the States. To see the world has always been my desire since I was little, and then, impacted by the uncertainty of our national policies on the qualification of elementary English teachers, I decided to rely on myself by getting a degree. I find that I'm a person who loves seeking change and innovation all the time—I hope to continually learn something new. (Stimulated recall, 6/25/02)

Kathy revealed that the uncertain policies on how to evaluate and certify general elementary teachers currently teaching English were among the reasons that motivated her to develop herself as a teacher. To the contrary, Mable had obtained her certification from the MOE but still sought opportunities to develop her professionalism, because she admitted the six credit hours of TESOL methodology had not sufficiently prepared her for the English teaching job. Moreover, personality, values, and educational background played key roles in their different degrees of motivation. As Kathy said, she was strongly driven and inclined to look for and try out innovations because of two reasons—one, the extrinsic requirements on teacher qualification, the other, intrinsic, her own personality traits. Mable admitted that she was not as diligent as other teachers in the profession for she refused to think about work-related issues after work, and she

did not spend enough time reading related books about the profession. Yet, Mable believed that she could teach English somewhere else besides elementary schools if she could not pass the teacher screening tests for a formal post. She expressed that her Chinese writing was not competitive enough on written tests since she did her high school and college education in the United States. But if she could settle down in the elementary school setting, she planned to do further study in the field in English-speaking countries to develop her professionalism.

Conversely, to satisfy the need for professional growth, Sophie considered attending workshops and seminars held by the English Teaching Resource Center on the city level as one possible venue. She lamented over her voice problem, which hampered her teaching at the elementary level, and the impossibility of polishing her foreign languages by immersion in the target cultures any more because of her two school-age children. “Another possibility to look at to both develop professional credentials and meet the needs of my two children is to upgrade my qualification to teach English at junior high schools,” Sophie stated, centering her concerns around the needs of her children. Stanley believed that there was no good role model nationwide in English teaching that he could admire to improve his practices:

I think it’s nearly impossible to find an English teacher nationwide, who uses only English and teaches each of his or her classes successfully without tension on his or her voice. Besides, the students are crazy about his or her teaching, learn very well, and have high quality learning achievements. This is what I long for at this moment but feel unable to attain. If MOE can find such a person to teach me how to improve my teaching, this is whom I’ll admire whole-heartedly. Or I can only learn one or two strategies from different teachers. (Interview, 9/03/02)

Stanley, though confident and not interested in improving his instruction, affirmed the need to advance his professional credentials through obtaining a master’s degree offered to inservice teachers. He saw elementary teachers primarily seeking a master’s degree in his teaching practicum year—“there’s indeed a need to raise your limited salary with a master’s degree” (Interviews, 8/09/02, 9/17/02). He imagined himself upgrading his

career, either meeting the qualifications to teach at junior high schools, like Sophie, or settling down at a different elementary school, where he felt more suited.

In retrospect, Kathy, a qualified English teacher on the municipal level, was not only devoted to her favorite profession but also under pressure to pursue a qualification recognized by all levels. She actively sought opportunities to attend related training and research studies of mine for professional development. Kathy said that the feedback of her students was more direct help than the teacher training programs for improving her English teaching, even when she incorporated what she had learned from the teacher training programs. But her detailed documentation of the journey as an English teacher manifested her evolving skill of reflectivity as did the stimulated recalls with me.

Sophie and Stanley, as MOE certified teachers, found the training in TESOL methodology in the teacher education program not satisfying but part of a required procedure to become certified teachers. They primarily relied on their long-time teaching experience at cram schools, and both underscored the importance of prior experience to teaching English well. Sophie and Stanley were more like the practitioners Genishi, et al. (1995) described, on the “atheoretical” end of the continuum. Being confident and self sufficient in teaching, they seemed sensitive and responsive to the class dynamic in the process of teaching and felt no need to reflect on their practice through doing stimulated recalls with me. They deemed attending workshops the best way to gain new information. Mable, a MOE certified teacher and a novice in the elementary school setting, felt not well prepared by the teacher education program but benefited most from students’ feedback and responses in class when learning to teach. More like the first-grade teacher in Genishi, et al.’s study, Mable held “multitheoretical” and contradictory beliefs about theory and classroom practice. Her beliefs were less integrated than those of the other more experienced teachers and appeared highly experiential in nature, varied in source, and specific to a given class situation, governed by her own personal practical knowledge, as Genishi, et al. have described. Her need of professional development justified her motivation to reflect on her own teaching, in spite of its limited depth and scope.

In all four cases, the teachers' beliefs about the social contexts and about themselves, such as English competence, decisions about personal lifestyles, confidence about their practice, and how to develop professionalism, determined how and how much they respectively reflected on their instruction. These factors contributed to both Kathy's and Mable's varied degrees of motivation and depth of reflectivity. Kathy's detailed documentation of her teaching practices was one of the evidences, which manifested not only her personal endeavors to develop professionalism but also the progressive scope and depth of her reflections as a teacher. On the other hand, Kathy's practices contributed to her recognition of the need to improve her teaching, her reflectivity as a professional, and to her reflection about the role differences between homeroom teachers and subject teachers. To the other three, the reflections on their practices were limited in scope and depth, and probably not significant enough to change or modify their beliefs, but remained subservient to their beliefs.

### **(3) MABLE'S SERVICE-ORIENTED BELIEFS ABOUT HER TEACHING ROLE**

Mable's view of her teacher role as a service provider distinguished her from the other three teachers. Although Sophie justified herself as a mother with the students' parents and thought it was the teacher's job to be conscientious and to be monitored by parents, she didn't elaborate on her beliefs of "families as consumers." I suspect that Sophie's view of parents as consumers was one she had brought with her from her previous job as a coordinator of children's English programs at the cram school. Her philosophy of "parents as consumers" had not developed as comprehensively as Mable's, except for her acknowledgement that English teachers should show parents some small but very visible achievements of their students, because parents couldn't wait to see what their children had learned. On the other hand, even though Mable's beliefs sometimes contradicted themselves, as novice teachers did (Genishi, et al., 1995), her service-oriented beliefs permeated her talks and touched several areas—instruction as a first priority in her belief system, her rationale for disciplining

students, her service to parents, her willingness to teamwork with colleagues and administrators.

Mable stated that after she assumed the teaching role, she found teachers to be a combination of a leader-type figure and a service provider. Mable recognized herself as a service-oriented person and enjoyed seeing the satisfying smile on the faces of customers she served. Due to her business-major background, Mable came into the elementary school setting and approached her job with this conviction. She said,

Some teachers told me that elementary teachers in the past could go grocery shopping and window shopping when they had no class. Now after the educational reform, those teachers feel it is hard to adjust and meet the challenges. To me, I have no adjustment problems because I don't have old baggage like they do. I can't even identify with them. I think I have come to serve people as a teacher. I don't think it's good for those teachers to go out shopping. What if your students had problems and need your assistance? (Stimulated recall, 10/17/02)

Mable preferred what most cram schools did to sell their commodities. The teachers at cram schools call the parents and inform them of the programs they provide. With enough understanding, the parents then can decide whether to choose their service or not, or whether they are willing to work together for their children's English learning. Mable believed, "[elementary education] should be like this! Teaching should be service-oriented!" (Stimulated recall, 10/17/02)

Applying her service-oriented belief in the classroom, Mable decided to serve her students better at the price of giving up some opportunities to attend workshops and seminars. "The topic is on Grades 1-9 Curriculum, something I personally want to know better, but that won't directly benefit my students in English" (Fieldnotes, 10/03/02). Mable convinced herself that teaching should be her primary job as a teacher, and thus that she should choose workshops which did not conflict with her teaching schedule.

Mable believed that an English teacher should have a good command of English in order to provide quality instruction. She believed that everyone can learn given enough attention and encouragement. "If the students can't learn, it must be the adult's problem to figure out how to modify the teaching so it is more understandable"

(Interviews, 8/23/02, 8/28/02; Stimulated recall, 10/03/02). She compared the education she had received in the States with what she had had in a Taiwanese junior high school, and concluded that teachers in Taiwan were under stress to see the students succeed on the entrance exam and had no time to pay attention to individual needs or wait for slower students in big classes. She recognized that this was a teacher-centered approach, which served only the teacher's convenience; however, she believed that teachers shouldn't look at the majority, but rather individual students.

In the first two weeks of the new school year, Mable insisted on spending time and greeting her students one by one. She learned from the American culture that she should give students individual attention "to make them feel special" (Stimulated recall, 9/03/02). She gave students the right to choose whether they wanted to play a certain game instead of asking students to do things uniformly without exception—"like robots" (Stimulated recall, 9/12/02). However, she insisted that discipline was another priority in class to ensure that every one enjoyed an equal right to learn. She didn't want to spoil students by accepting or tolerating their bad behaviors, but informed them of what the boundaries were, because the big class was the reality in public schooling in Taiwan. "The best quality of my service is to ensure that everyone learns from my class. That's why we have class rules to keep it together," she said (Email correspondence, 3/18/03). Her service-oriented beliefs thus supported her beliefs about discipline and about students' ability to make choices in class.

To serve the parents, Mable was willing to inform them of their children's learning in class and adopt parents' suggestions or comments to make her teaching more efficient. She welcomed parents to come to her for advice or learning methods to help students learn better. And she was surprised to see that what most parents had wanted from her in the past was primarily to provide information about cram school programs or English learning materials. However, based on her teaching experience in the capital city, parents of higher SES or higher education were highly involved at school and "tended to intrude on teaching" (Interview, 8/28/02). She also thought that parents in general were inclined to have high expectations about their children's English

learning, anticipating that their children would take the initiative to listen to tapes or CDs at home and practice speaking English even though in a Chinese- or Taiwanese-speaking home environment. Hence, she believed that teachers “should listen to the parents but not necessarily take in what they said” (Interview, 8/28/02). From her observation, neither the parents nor the school of Happy Whale was affluent, and the parents were more conservative and did not express their opinions. As McWilliam, et al. (1997) have concluded from research on early childhood education in the United States, parents in Mable’s view were not knowledgeable consumers who knew how children learned English better, what to adequately expect, or how to get involved in their children’s learning at home and at school.

On the other hand, Mable, agreeing with what an American School in Taiwan had been promoting, argued that parents should learn and grow with their children. She believed in offering classes to parents for empowerment, such as computer classes, English classes, and classes of other skills. The parents of the school she served in the capital city once asked Mable to offer an English class to them, because the parents themselves could not understand or further assist the children in reviewing their English lessons. Mable supported the parents’ proposal to learn with their children, but the parents’ busy schedule did not allow the class to happen. At the request of the community representatives, Mable started to teach an English class of 28 students from the school neighborhood of Happy Whale as a community service in the second semester of the 2002-2003 school year (Email correspondence, 3/18/03). Although not directly teaching the parents, this community service functioned as another form of empowerment to the parents, since the students were from the families that could not afford English programs at cram schools (Larner, 1997).

Mable saw the school as a company she worked for and served as an employee. Mable was committed to doing her job well, to being positive and responsible, and to teamwork. When the administrators came and asked her to organize activities, she believed that she was “in the same boat” and should offer service as long as she could (Stimulated recall, 10/17/02). Therefore, she agreed without hesitation and took on the

responsibility of offering a five-minute short teaching session about holidays, coordinating trick-or-treating on Halloween, and collaborating with Stanley and me on an English-learning workshop for the faculty, while her partner shied away from any extra workload.

Nevertheless, Mable acknowledged that it was a flaw of Happy Whale to exhaust its faculty with additive work irrelevant to teaching, as she upheld teaching as a teacher's primary job. She believed that the high turnover rate resulting from the excessive workload would hamper the school's curricular development and influence the students' learning (Stimulated recall, 10/17/02). Mable expected that more experienced teachers would act like teammates and offer help to those who were in need, such as the third-grade homeroom teachers who needed to improve students' discipline. Mable believed that the principal should have had another agenda if he did not show that he valued instruction by making visits to the classrooms. She expected the principal to treat students as consumers and focus his work on them rather than on his personal future. "How could the principal have a better future if his students didn't have a better future?" (Stimulated recall, 10/11/02)

Mable reflected that in the 2002-2003 school year she had heard a lot of sad stories that happened in students' families. Mable agreed with Stanley that English teaching at the elementary level nowadays was a very individualistic matter—"it depends on who the teacher is and the way his or her teaching reflects his or her philosophy" (Stimulated recall, 10/17/02). As for Mable, she believed in the power of children's literature. She knew that the workload at Happy Whale and 40 minutes per week did not allow her to do much, but Mable expected to play a caring, nurturing role and guide her students with children's literature, which might help the students to make connections and cope with the turmoil they encountered in daily life.

In sum, Mable revealed that her service-oriented beliefs about her teacher role combined with her other beliefs, such as about giving individual attention, about every student's ability to learn, about the teacher's primary task, and her understanding about her students, parents, and school administrators in this context-specific setting,

informed her practices, which featured a small component of children's literature. The quality of service provided may have been hampered by the school's flaw of not regarding teaching as the teachers' primary job and exhausting them with additive, irrelevant tasks.

## **Findings**

In the preceding presentation, how teachers' beliefs and contextual factors contributed to the four English teachers' practices were made explicit through the teachers' own narratives. Findings will be reported in the following in an outline format in three areas—contextual factors, teachers' beliefs, and classroom practices.

### **I. Contextual Factors**

#### **1. Curricular goals on the national level**

Data from the interviews and stimulated recalls showed that the national guidelines did not impact the teaching practices of the participants in this study. Two of the teachers read through the national guidelines once in their teaching practicum year to know what they were supposed to cover in class. In email correspondence, one teacher admitted to have sought specific guidance from the Guidelines while the fourth one had not thoroughly browsed through them before she taught. Three of the four teachers saw the proficiency index as broad directions that were hard to achieve, while the other needed to read it repeatedly to internalize them. None of them transformed the general goals in the Guidelines to concrete teaching objectives as Chou (2001) has suggested.

#### **2. Curricular goals on the city level**

The contents of guidelines on the city level were not known to any of the teachers. Nonetheless, two of the four teachers held negative attitudes toward the city-level guidelines, either because the improper procedures were used in finalizing the guidelines or because of personal, affective factors.

#### **3. Curricular goals on the school level**

##### **a. Administrative influence**

Curricular goals at the campus level were impacted by inconsistent instructional leadership, high workload responsibilities, and ineffective channels of communication which left the teachers of English to construct their own goals based on their beliefs, and thus, their practices were only loosely coupled with the school organization.

In both formal and informal conversations, the four teachers acknowledged that teaching English well involved other factors at the school level, such as teaming with homeroom teachers, and responding to administrative expectations. They said that no school-level guidelines or objectives were given for them to refer to in compiling classroom-level English curricula, but that they based their practices on individual beliefs and interpretations of the context at the local level. Evidence from both the English teachers, other teachers, and the administrators pointed to the school personnel's ignorance of English at Happy Whale and the busy schedule of the principal contributed to the void of effective instructional leadership on campus. There were gaps in communication and misunderstandings among the administrators, subunits of regular teachers, and the four English teachers. The unrealistic expectations for holding school-wide English learning activities as well as heavy administrative tasks increased the stress and workload of the four teachers and contributed to a high turnover rate. Three of the four teachers, in stimulated recalls and interviews, revealed that their morale was affected, as the school only valued rule enforcement so it would receive good reports from reviews. These good reports helped ensure its legitimacy, regardless of its faculty's excessive workload which might have deprived teachers of quality preparation time for instruction. The lack of horizontal communication with the other English teacher and homeroom teachers, of vertical communication with administrators and lead teachers of various committees, and of consensus on teaching goals left the four teachers and their English classes loosely coupled to the entire school organization (Firestone, 1980).

b. Curricular influence

The teachers relied on their personal beliefs and interpretations of expectations in relation to the school context to make both curricular decisions and their own career plans. The four teachers believed that they were expected to be self-reliant and self-sufficient at the school level since they were the only two persons each year with expertise in English teaching.

After triangulating data from different sources, it is clear that syllabi for English class were juxtaposed in the school curricular plans with other subject areas but were totally separate from the school-based curriculum. They were not reviewed at either the school level or the city level because the local education authorities found that English classes at various schools basically followed the order of lessons in certain texts, the compilation of which had been already reviewed by authorities at the national level. Furthermore, two of them considered it hard to integrate astronomy—Happy Whale’s school-based curriculum—with English classes due to the discrepancies between the difficult terms and content knowledge required in astronomy and the beginning English levels of students.

#### 4. Curricular goals on the classroom level

Data from various sources and across the four teacher informants showed that English was not perceived by the school administrators as a priority in the curriculum, either in physical space assignment, or in professional support. The four teachers declared that English was neither a core nor an emphasized subject in the school-based curriculum at Happy Whale, and they felt themselves and their English programs separate from other groups at the school. In addition, three of the English teachers needed to teach other subjects to meet the required number of weekly teaching hours. The rooms used for English teaching were not only temporary, due to a shortage of classrooms, but also subject to interferences from adjoining rooms. They had no adequate communication, teaming, or professional dialogues with the groups of teachers they were assigned to, as the school-based curricular construct required. Thus, they felt that their English teaching was not well supported by the homeroom teachers, year groups, administrators, or even

parents, on the issues of disciplining students, informing parents of their decisions, encouraging English learning with tapes, and supervising students' after-class learning.

## II. Teachers' Beliefs

### 1. About elementary education

Three of the four teachers, in both formal and informal conversations, expressed the belief that the primary goal of elementary education was to build students' character. These teachers' beliefs about elementary education contributed to their beliefs about emphasizing discipline, about what teaching materials to introduce, and about their teaching approaches, such as whether to give students individual attention or to create an opportunity for cooperative learning.

### 2. About language/English

The teachers' beliefs about the usefulness or advantages of knowing English impacted their practice. Two teachers believed that language is for daily use, while one saw language as inseparable from its culture. Their beliefs about language affected decisions on supplemental materials, what learning activities to offer in class, and teaching approaches.

### 3. About English learning

Three of the teachers believed that it was better to learn a language earlier, consistent with what prospective teachers believed in Horwitz's (1985) and Yang's (2000) studies, while two of them believed that learning a language well is a long journey. Two teachers strongly believed that students should regularly listen to English at home in the EFL context of Taiwan where using English was not common in daily life. Three of them viewed going to cram schools a must for enough exposure to learn English well over the long term. The teachers' beliefs about English learning were closely related not only to their prior learning experience, as the literature also notes (Horwitz, 1985; Johnson, 1994; Mok, 1994), but also to their prior teaching experiences (Mok, 1994), and contributed to what they believed about English teaching.

#### 4. About English teaching

Based on both the teachers' talks and classroom observations, teaching objectives the participants set up were broad and similar in that they included: oral practice of short dialogues for primary grades, recognizing the alphabet and sounding out vocabulary words with phonics concepts for middle and upper grades. They expected upper grades to form a habit of using the language.

The instruction was geared to all six grades. Given that broad range of English proficiency, teachers made decisions based on their beliefs about the purpose of English programs in public elementary schools. The four teachers saw motivating students to learn as a primary goal for the beginning elementary level, echoing what Horwitz (1985) and Yang (2000) have reported on prospective teachers in their studies. Just as the prospective teachers in Horwitz's (1985) and Yang's (2000) studies agreed with extensive listening and repeating, all of the teachers in this study believed that repetitive practice and a receptive environment were required to build English language competence. The two teachers with long-time cram school experience thought teaching at the elementary school was totally different from teaching at the cram schools. Given the limitations of the current teaching environment, they didn't expect to achieve much. The teachers' beliefs about English teaching intertwined with their beliefs about themselves and about the context. These beliefs contributed to what the teachers planned, taught, expected to attain, and how they assessed the students' learning. Based on these beliefs, the teachers decided how they interacted with the school community, and what responsibilities they took on as English teachers.

#### 5. About motives for elementary English teaching

The teachers' prior learning and teaching experiences as well as family factors contributed to their career decisions to become elementary English teachers. Two of the teachers thought that they had found their favorite career in elementary English teaching. Two of them came to teach at an elementary school for the regular 9-to-5 working schedule at public schools. The teachers' career decisions

evolved, such as quitting elementary English teaching, pursuing further professional development, or seeking a better school environment, as a result of the teaching experience they obtained at Happy Whale.

6. About elementary English teacher role

In accord with Yang's (2000) findings, three of the teachers believed that it was important for the elementary students to learn the English language correctly from the very beginning, especially pronunciation. The four teachers all acknowledged that their job was to introduce the beginning-level students to a new learning experience within the limited time allotted. They each approached their task a bit differently: Two saw themselves as mediators, one as the first teacher to introduce English to the students, and one as a subordinate role to assist the primary role homeroom teachers and parents played. They acknowledged, in the interviews and stimulated recalls, that not much could be done within the current curricular construct.

7. About teacher training education they received

In interviews and stimulated recalls, the three MOE certified teachers viewed the teacher training programs as a necessary step to obtain the teaching credential and commented that what they gained from the component of English teaching methodology was less helpful than the component of training in general elementary education. They pointed out that the native speakers sent from cram schools and the professors from teacher colleges in the teacher training programs offered either teaching styles prevalent in cram schools or impractical materials disconnected from the elementary school settings. Two of them said some professors even showed their ignorance of teaching English to young children and despised the trainees with cram school backgrounds. The other teacher who obtained training and credentials in English teaching sponsored by the Municipal Department of Education commented that the training programs were mediocre. The four teachers had varying degrees of misunderstanding of certain TESOL methodologies, such as erroneous interpretations of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as

Cheng (1999) also found. Two of the four teachers admitted having limited knowledge of English teaching and were motivated to seek further professional growth. The teachers who had less teaching experience in elementary school settings tended to have more discrepancies between their beliefs and their practices.

#### 8. About professional development

The four teachers all acknowledged that attending workshops on English teaching was the most helpful way to develop professionalism. One of them longed for opportunities to visit schools using different models of English teaching. One teacher kept detailed documentation of her teaching as an English subject teacher in her portfolios for the past three years. Different degrees of immediate needs for professional development, personality, values, years of English teaching experience all contributed to the varying degrees of motivation and depth of reflectivity shown by these two teachers. On the other hand, the other two teachers who had long-time cram school teaching experience were more confident in their teaching and less interested in improving their practices or professionalism.

### III. EFL Practices

#### 1. Teaching Materials

The four teachers all treated the texts available in the market as the core of their curriculum. Two of the teachers didn't object to using children's literature in class as long as instructional time was increased, while one teacher believed in what children's literature could offer to the students, as the Guideline I-1-a, Liaw (2000) and Nantz (2002) all suggest. In practice, however, she felt obligated to finish the texts and was not confident enough to implement a literature-based curriculum. In concert with the teachers' individual beliefs on what language and language learning should be, two of them believed that more daily-life and alternative expressions, songs, and chants should be added as supplemental materials, one of them believed in introducing culture-related materials and small-group tasks, while one preferred reading children's literature to teaching

fragmented pieces of dialogue which elicited only mechanical responses from students.

## 2. Text selection

In accord with what Shih (1999) has found, that text selection was mostly done by the English teachers at respective schools without a concrete index for text selection, the selection of texts at Happy Whale was done by the English teachers and then finalized by the committee of language arts teachers, as the school procedure required. Although the teachers generally believed that teachers should have the ability to cope with any texts by adapting the texts to their personality traits and teaching styles, one teacher believed in choosing more native-like texts, and underscored the importance of text selection to suit the students' needs at all different competence levels. The connection between difficulty levels of contents was a primary concern when two teachers were choosing texts for the next school year. Another teacher believed in choosing the texts more consistent with personal teaching beliefs and styles, while the fourth teacher wished to get rid of texts because she didn't believe that students would learn to speak more than greetings from the texts on the market. One of them heeded her upper grade students' suggestions on text selection and curricular arrangement, while at the same time consulting the national Guidelines about what to prepare her students for.

## 3. Use of texts

The four teachers believed that the texts they had from the market basically met the requirements of the Guidelines since they were similar and already approved by the authorities. The strengths of these texts included the design of various forms of drills, such as rhymes, songs, phonics, dialogues, listening comprehension drills, with each unit targeting one single grammatical function. The contents were easy, comprehensible, and presented practical daily-life situations with vivid illustrations. The audio teaching resources, such as listening workbooks, tapes and CDs, the publishers offered were what they relied on for listening comprehension practices in class. However, the drawbacks were: (1) the

topics were too general to be relevant to elementary students' lives; (2) the intention to keep the contents simple and focused resulted in insufficient language input; (3) some topics were not able to interest all age levels; the songs and chants were not fun enough.

#### 4. Parents' Expectations

Three of the teachers believed that using texts provided students' parents a sense of security when they knew what to expect. Two of them believed that parents also played an important role in students' English learning. All of the participants recognized that they were obliged to finish teaching the texts, so that they not only closely followed the texts but also made sure that students read over the texts in class, as parents generally expected teachers to do. Three of them also insisted on using listening workbooks accompanying the texts. Two of the teachers thought that parents played a part in providing their children enough exposure to English after school. Three of them also believed that they needed to convince parents about what the students had learned because parents always wanted to see learning achievements. Parents' expectations played a key role in three of the teachers' decision-making processes about teaching objectives for English class, such as knowing the alphabet for primary grades.

#### 5. Classroom Practices

Sharing commonalities both within and outside the Guidelines, the classroom practices of the four participants were very similar, including prominent teaching approaches, teaching procedures, focuses of lesson planning, and both interactive and evaluative decisions they made during and after class. Their idiosyncratic beliefs only resulted in small variations in practice.

Due to limited weekly instructional time, the four teachers, though having various views on whether and how Chinese should be used in class, spoke as much English as they could in class and gave only tracing or copying jobs in writing as the Guidelines require. Although they had differing views on what activities and how much English teachers should take on, the four teachers generally agreed

about providing students with opportunities for language use in either school-wide or in-class learning contexts, which was also consistent with the Guidelines. The other commonality the four teachers shared was the use of multiple modes of assessment of students' learning. None of the four teachers gave any kind of readers or real-life reading materials in their teaching, as the Guidelines suggest.

The four teachers' practices also shared commonalities outside the Guidelines. The classes of the four teachers were highly teacher-directive and generally followed similar teaching procedures—warm-up and review, presenting new materials, reinforcement drills, and wrap-up—to motivate students' interest in classroom interaction and enhance effective learning. They emphasized disciplinary rules and group competition for rewards to enhance classroom management. The Audio Lingual Method (ALM) was their predominant belief and teaching methodology, with small variations resulting from idiosyncratic beliefs, for example, a series of disciplinary routines, group work time, offering as many opportunities for students to speak English, reading children's books. Common learning components in their classes were the alphabet and phonics, reinforcement through repetitive drills, and competitive games among groups.

This study expands what Chu (2001) concluded, that the preservice teachers in her study, though having gained significant attitude change in favor of CLT, did not change their deep-rooted beliefs in the Audio Lingual Method. Consistent with Cheng's (1999) findings, the four teachers could not articulate what CLT activities should be and thought they were implementing CLT when they mostly employed ALM. The four teachers' practices were highly similar and basically echoed their beliefs about how to accommodate the limitations the existing literature has pointed out about the current construct of elementary English teaching—that is, big classes, intact, with students of multiple competence levels, insufficient instructional time, too many classes for one single teacher to teach, and the challenge of classroom management, as T. L. Chen (1999) and Wei (1999) posited.

The four teachers' lesson planning all focused on planning sequences of activities following their fixed teaching routines as Richards and Lockhart (1996) also observed, instead of focusing on the needs of a particular group of students as Clark and Yinger (1979) found. The interactive and evaluative decisions the four teachers made during and after class were primarily about the students' understanding, motivation and participation in class, and the teachers' instructional arrangements, as Johnson (1992a) also reported in her study. Instructional arrangements the teachers in this study primarily made included the use of teaching aids and CD players, and attending to discipline problems and the flow of teaching procedures.

#### 6. Remedial Teaching

Three of the four teachers admitted that the constraints of instructional time and class size hampered the possibility of observing and doing justifiable assessment on individual students' learning, even though three of them had already incorporated multiple modes of assessment as the Guidelines suggest. Two of the four teachers expressed an urgent need to offer remedial teaching, a need they believed resulted from the teachers' inability to pay enough attention to the students who fell behind in big classes of mixed competence levels. Two of them viewed remedial teaching as a formidable task and advocated lowering the standards and expectations in teaching, since the current infrastructure of elementary English teaching had so many inherent limitations.

#### 7. Many differing beliefs resulting in similar practices

The four teachers' beliefs were made explicit across many areas; however, only a few beliefs were reflected in daily practice and resulted in very similar classroom teaching, given that English teaching was only allocated 40 or 80 minutes per week. The data showed that the beliefs not only contributed to concordant practices, but were also modified or strengthened in ensuing instructional decisions and practices, as Richards and Lockhart (1996) and Woods (1996) have posited. Seldom did the four teachers mention or reflect on their

employment of subject matter beliefs. When making curricular-related decisions in the context-specific setting, the four teachers' beliefs in different areas were interrelated and interwoven, as Johnson (1992a) and Woods (1996) also found. The teachers especially relied on their beliefs about the context, and about their own needs and concerns. Salient to the study, the four teachers took context-specific factors, such as excessive workload, a high turnover rate, a lack of instructional leadership, and the loosely coupling of English programs with both vertical and lateral units, as important references in deciding how much they should commit themselves to their English teaching and to the school. This study confirms the conclusion that Tai (1999) reached on the contribution of complex social contexts to secondary English teachers' curricular planning in Taiwan.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I presented how the EFL teachers' practices shaped and were shaped by their beliefs as well as the contextual factors. The analyses of practices were done in light of the national guidelines and were organized into three categories—commonalities shared within the Guidelines, outside the Guidelines, and idiosyncratic beliefs individual teachers held. Prior to the discussion of what the teachers shared in common inside the Guidelines, I addressed how the teachers conceptualized the goals at national, city, school, and classroom levels.

As texts served as the core of English curricula, I discussed first the procedure for text selection and how EFL programs related to the curricular plans of the school in this chapter. The commonalities of the four teachers' practices were presented, after comparing and contrasting with the Guidelines, under the subcategories specified in the Guidelines; that is, content areas, compilation of teaching materials, teaching resources, teaching approaches, and assessment. The first three subcategories were clustered into one because the teachers based their teaching on the textbooks and commented on these three areas as aspects of one issue. The teachers' practices were consistent with their

beliefs about English/language, about English learning and teaching, and about their English teaching role at the elementary school

The commonalities the four teachers shared outside the Guidelines were their emphasis on discipline and their view of the English programs and themselves loosely coupled to the school. As for the idiosyncratic beliefs, two teachers claimed an urgent need to offer remedial teaching to those students who fell behind in big classes. One teacher was highly motivated in professional development due to various reasons; she resorted to detailed documentation of her teaching as a means for reflectivity. Another teacher viewed her teaching role as service-oriented and thus interpreted her tasks and interactions with parents, colleagues, students, and administrators differently from the others.

Finally, the findings were reported in an outline format, respectively, in the areas of contextual factors, teachers' beliefs, and their practices. In order to answer the research question, an in-depth discussion and conclusion will follow in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to explore how context and teachers' beliefs contribute to Taiwanese English teachers' practices at the elementary school level. A six-month participant/observational study was conducted at a suburban elementary school in southern Taiwan, where the enactment of its school-based curriculum development has been appraised as one of the 100 exemplary elementary schools nation-wide.

The findings, as listed in the previous chapter, reveal that the context at the national, city, school, and classroom level exerted varying degrees of influence on practices. The practice has been shaped by the teachers' beliefs about elementary education, about English/language, about English learning and English teaching, and about their teacher roles. The teachers also held beliefs about motives for elementary English teaching, about teacher training education they received, and about professional development in the field. The EFL practices encompassed the issues of what teaching materials to use, text selection, use of texts, parents' expectations, classroom practices, remedial teaching, and how differing beliefs underlie similar practices.

The results indicate that the four English teachers with diverse backgrounds and beliefs respectively defined and constructed elementary English programs in response to their personal beliefs about English learning, teaching, and their teacher role, as well as unique context factors of the school, rather than linking closely to the national guidelines. The teachers' practice was not affected by either the municipal curriculum guidelines for English teaching or the school-level approach in curriculum development. Feeling themselves and English programs loosely coupled to the entire school organization, the teachers acknowledged that the current constraints on elementary English teaching did not allow them to put their curriculum-related beliefs into practice; nonetheless, the four teachers' classroom practice was found to be highly similar. Both their beliefs and expectations toward English teaching and learning had

been challenged as they interacted with varied needs of students, and with the unrealistic expectations of the school and the parents. The teachers' beliefs about self and about context appeared to be salient references when deciding how much the teachers should commit themselves to their English teaching and the school they served. During the study, the four teachers' career decisions evolved as a result of their teaching experience at their specific school: one quit elementary English teaching, one left to pursue further professional development, and two others expressed their desire to seek another, better school environment.

This chapter will first address the modifications to the original sensitizing framework which have been derived from the process of comparing the pre-planned framework with the empirical data from the fieldwork (Figure 3) so as to better depict the studied phenomenon. Then, based on the re-examined sensitizing framework, I will discuss how the findings of this study support, differ from, or contribute to the existing literature. Finally, implications for practice, limitations of this study, and implications for further research will be addressed.

### **Sensitizing Framework Revisited: Conclusions**

*Teacher characteristics* and *context factors* are the pre-active factors on the left side of Figure 3. After being more grounded in the data and with the support of the existing literature, I reorganized the five criteria in *teacher characteristics* and nested them under types of beliefs in the teachers' belief system. They are beliefs about self, beliefs about context, beliefs about subject matter, beliefs about curriculum and instruction. Under *beliefs about self*, the teachers' family factors, prior learning experiences either as an EFL learner or as a prospective teacher in training, and prior

## PRE-ACTIVE FACTORS

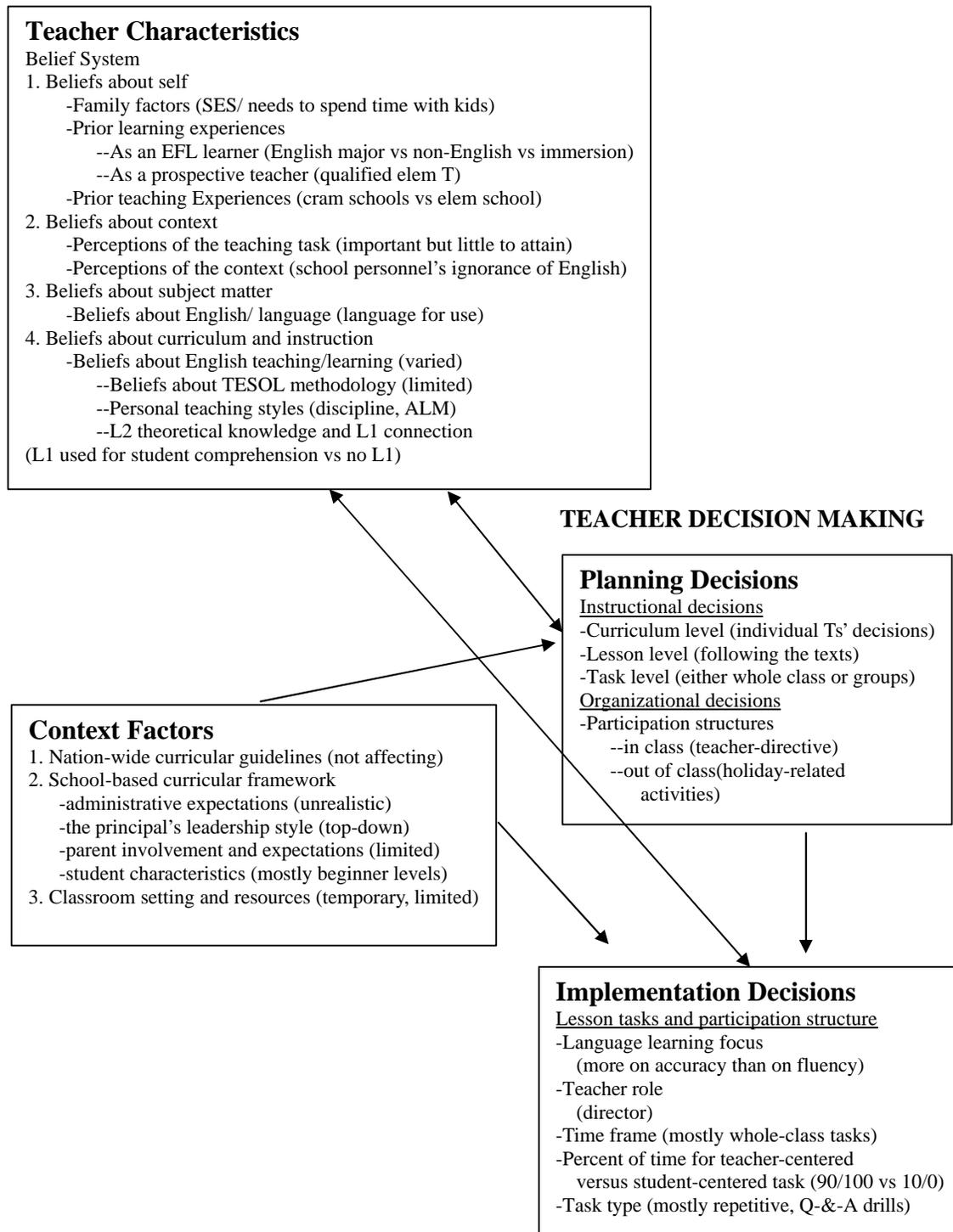


Figure 3: Sensitizing Framework Revisited

teaching experiences were found to be salient from the data. Under *beliefs about context*, I placed teachers' perceptions of the teaching task, and perceptions of the context. Teachers' beliefs about English/language was moved under *beliefs about subject matter*. And beliefs about English teaching and learning went under *beliefs about curriculum and instruction*. Under beliefs about English teaching and learning are teachers' beliefs about TESOL methodology, their personal teaching styles, and their second language knowledge and first (L1) and second language (L2) connection.

As pointed out in Chapter Two, this study focused primarily on how the EFL teachers think and act. In the current study, not enough data was collected from the parents to support the proposition that parents' discipline styles or SES background influenced EFL teaching and learning, as did parents' expectations. The *Context factors* should, therefore, comprise (1) nationwide curricular guidelines, (2) administrative expectations of the school, (3) the principal's leadership styles, (4) parent involvement and expectations, (5) students characteristics, and (6) classroom settings and resources. Among them, items (2), (3), (4), and (5) go under the same subtitle of *school-based curricular framework* as pivotal features of the reformed Grades 1-9 education.

On the right side of the figure are teachers' *planning* and *implementation decisions*, which remain unchanged from the original sensitizing framework. Under *planning decisions* are *instructional decisions* and *organizational decisions*. *Instructional decisions* encompass curriculum, lesson, and task levels, while *organizational decisions* include both in-class and out-of-class participation structures. In the *implementation decisions* box, the five items which inform us of the lesson tasks and participation structure are *language learning focus*, *teacher role*, *time frame of tasks*, *percent of time for teacher-centered versus student-centered task*, and *task type*.

Analysis of the data revealed that the unidirectional arrows pointing from *teacher characteristics* to *teachers' planning* and *implementation decisions* should be changed into two-directional arrows to indicate a dynamic, mutually influencing, or even cyclical relationship. The two unidirectional arrows each pointing from the *context*

*factors to planning decisions and implementation decisions* on the right side of the chart remain unchanged. Each of the changes will be discussed in the later sections.

The unidirectional arrow pointing from *planning decisions* to *implementation decisions* remains the same. Although some data showed that the informants' implementation decisions sometimes resulted in adjustments in their successive planning decisions, I decided not to substitute the arrow from *planning decisions* to *implementation decisions* with a double-headed arrow for two reasons. First, not enough of the data elicited from each of the four teachers manifested this reciprocal relationship. Second, the unidirectional arrow needed to remain to indicate a chronological process from planning to implementation, so as not to cause any confusion.

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions seem warranted:

- (1) The current construct of elementary English education constrained teachers' practices and affected attainment of the curriculum goals pinpointed by the national guidelines. Among the limitations that teachers faced, insufficient instructional time and EFL teachers' subject teacher role especially frustrated them, hampering quality teaching at the classroom level or collaboration with colleagues at the school level. The 40-or-80-minute-per-week instructional time kept teachers from realizing their individual beliefs in practice so that some EFL teachers and school administrators resorted to additive, outside-classroom activities to compensate for that deficiency, a practice which increased their workload and created other problems for the teachers. The loose coupling in the school mechanism and school personnel's ignorance of English made the EFL subject teachers feel disconnected from the school community within the SBCD curricular model.
- (2) The above-mentioned context-specific factors, including the lack of support and resources, parents' and administrators' expectations, along with teachers' beliefs about self, emerged as salient within the teachers' belief systems. The interpretations of the context and individual needs of different professional stages carried more weight than other kinds of beliefs, although the teachers employed their belief system as a holistic, affective, and experiential web to

make sense of their teaching job, their commitment to the school, and further career decisions, consistent with the existing literature. (3) The teachers' beliefs shaped and were shaped not only by the teachers' variations in practice, needs for reflective skills and professional growth, but also by their interaction with the school community. The study reveals that teachers' beliefs can hardly be studied without taking the context into account, and that it is nearly impossible to understand EFL practices without the insight of teachers' beliefs. (4) To go a step further, it is also reasonable to conclude from the current study that, in both teacher preparation and teachers' professional development, teachers' beliefs should be made explicit through training of their reflective skills prior to introducing new knowledge to the trainees or expecting their teaching behavior to change, for teaching is not only highly contextualized but also deeply rooted in personal experiences.

In the following section, I will discuss the findings in light of existing literature, focusing first on the EFL practices, including the teachers' planning and implementation decisions, and then on the teachers' beliefs, including how the teachers viewed and interpreted the context factors.

### **EFL Practice at the Elementary School Level**

To answer the research question, I will respectively address EFL practice, teachers' beliefs, and context factors in the following discussion to examine in depth the phenomenon studied, though, as this and other studies show, these three domains tend to be closely intertwined.

#### **EFL PRACTICES**

As Woods (1996) and other researchers have found, the four teachers' EFL practice was shaped by and congruent with their beliefs. However, from the 40-minutes-per-week programs for fourth grade and below and 80-minutes-per-week for fifth and sixth grades, teachers' differing beliefs were not manifest enough in their classroom practice. Only small variations showed across the four teachers' cases. In the

following sections, the teachers' instructional decisions, organizational decisions, and implementation decisions, including lesson tasks and participation structure, as mapped out in the sensitizing framework (see Figure 3), will be discussed in turn.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL DECISIONS**

The teachers based their planning decisions on the goals they conceptualized for the students at the specific school site. Their instructional decisions can be generally sorted under three levels: curriculum, lesson, and task levels.

### ***Curriculum-level instructional decisions***

Each of the four teachers described their own sets of grade-level goals off the top of their head. Since the school did not have goals for English education, nor were the two English teachers required to discuss and write up a goal statement that they both agreed upon, they tended to have broad and general goals, covering affective aspects (e.g., interest, positive attitudes, motivation), and language skills (e.g., ability to speak simple dialogues, ability to sound out words). The teachers, no matter whether they placed confidence in the national guidelines or not, generally recognized two goals which guided their English teaching to the students whom they considered less advanced or exposed to more limited English than students in urban areas. Their first goal was to motivate students, the majority of whom were beginners, to learn English by having fun in class with a focus on developing listening and speaking skills, as was found in most of the studies done on elementary level EFL teaching in Taiwan (Pan, 1997; Chiang, 2000; Chiu, 1998; Lin, 2001; Liu, 2001; Lu, 1999; Su, Y. R., 2000). Their next goal was to finish teaching the texts within the planned schedule in a semester- or year-long term. Abiding by these two goals, which only encompassed one or two primary goals specified in the national guidelines, individual teachers made their own curriculum-related decisions.

As Chiang (2000) reported, the goals for English teaching at a private elementary school were similarly broad. This school expected lower-grade students to

focus only on listening and speaking skills and to gradually cover the remainder of the four skills in upper-grade years. However, the teachers in Chiang's (2000), Lin's (2001), and Liu's (2001) studies all shared the first goal of the teachers in the current study: that is, developing listening and speaking skills only. The goals of cultivating students' learning strategies and understanding of domestic and foreign cultures, which the Guidelines also stated, were not the teachers' priorities. No concrete learning strategies were indicated or taught, except using phonics to sound out words, though two of the teachers mentioned their expectation for students to acquire some learning strategies. On the contrary, one teacher claimed that the only and biggest achievement which he saw reachable within such limited teaching time at the elementary level was to make *most of* the students (italicized words emphasized by the observed teacher) interested in English learning. He believed that learning strategies should be for students at the junior high school level. A big discrepancy seems to exist between the goals pinpointed in the national guidelines and the goals the practicing teachers embraced at the local level.

Neither did the teachers draw on the city-level English guidelines or school-level consensus in curriculum development as references, nor did the English teachers in each school year collaborate to compile school-level curricular plans, laid out with concrete, attainable, grade-by-grade objectives. Expecting students to acquire English as a tool as important as computer technology, the school administrators did not demand that English teachers establish schoolwide objectives or curricular plans, either. Instead, the teachers based their teaching on the texts and closely followed them so as to convince the parents that they did their job. Similar to the reliance on standardized texts in the past, following the selected texts continues to be prevalent at both the school and the city levels for elementary teachers in general, even though teachers are urged to act as autonomous professionals and curriculum planners with accountability, a situation also reported by H. Y. Chen (2002) and Tang (2002). With the advent of the reform, elementary teachers have turned to texts compiled by and selected from among various publishers.

In English teaching in particular, consistent with what Tseng (1999) has found, teachers doubted their own abilities for curriculum planning, compiling teaching materials, or distinguishing whether the texts were native-like or not. As Tseng stated, some English teachers expected domestic scholars and professors to compile for them teaching materials which were culturally, linguistically, and pragmatically appropriate. Likewise, I suspect that, because they lacked enough training to develop their critical thinking and reflective skills, practicing teachers mostly relied on already-made texts and were not yet well equipped to convert general goals to concrete objectives for teaching, to assess what their teaching has achieved or to detect the issue of cultural domination underlying text selection among foreign publishers, a problem that S. F. Su (1999a) also proposed.

In this study, when they commented on their use of texts, teachers seemed to put more weight on the depth and appropriateness of the English language selected in the texts and how sufficiently the publishers provided teaching accessories for class use instead of feeling concerned about cultural issues. This echoed the findings of existing studies that teachers prefer ready-made “curriculum packages” offered by the publishers, consisting of teachers’ manual, students’ textbooks, workbooks, audiovisual materials, and even tests (Chen & Liaw, 1998; Chiang, 2000; Dai, 1998; Liaw & Chen, 1998, Liu, 2001; Shih, 1999; Tseng, 1999). The findings of this study also highlighted the urgent need for teachers’ professional development in curriculum planning and design, and in ability to select texts with more authentic linguistic contents.

Incorporating local culture in context in the texts has been reported by some teachers in Tseng’s (1999) and Liaw and Chen’s (1998) studies. The teacher in Liu’s (2001) study said that having no room set aside for English teaching made her vision to introduce the target culture impossible to realize. On the other hand, the culture component regulated in the Guidelines, though trying to incorporate an international, global view by briefly referring to “domestic and foreign cultures,” is the less elaborated part compared to the four skills. I see a need for the Guidelines, as an intended curriculum for the nation, to clarify whether the cultural orientation of the

country views the English language as an international language or simply as a mainstream British and American English, as has been recognized in the past. Practicing teachers in this study tended to introduce only holidays commonly observed in mainstream American culture, probably due to insufficient time to provide more variety. It is beneficial for teachers to have acknowledged the close connection between language and culture and to have offered students opportunities to perceive the target culture through hands-on experience. However, cultivating a world view through EFL class may require the teachers to have cultural competence and provide the learners more varied culture-based experiences which reflect values and perspectives in concert with the national goals and the teachers' views of the status of the target language, as suggested by Nostrand (1991) and Pesola (1991).

H. L. Huang (2002) claimed that children in her study, though exposed to a lot of English-speaking videos and children's literature, did not necessarily acquire a satisfying level of cultural awareness. As is commonly acknowledged that it is impossible to teach students English at a younger age without attending to the underlying cultural information, she posited that, ironically, for a long time Taiwanese education has neglected the issue of culture education—neither attending to the need of cultural awareness nor guiding children with accurate attitudes when encountering cultural differences or conflicts. Pesola (1991) proposed that story forms may be a developmentally appropriate approach for children to experience elements of the culture meaningfully. Without doubt, frequency and duration of language classes at this stage considerably hampered the teachers' implementation, a problem Pesola has specified in the foreign language models in the States, and that I also found in my research. The four teachers' visions to introduce culture had to compete with other factors and to be extended to out-of-classroom time. It is appropriate to infer from the current school-level teaching situations I observed that the component of cultivating cultural competence might have been edged out completely with such limited instructional time and without well thought-out plans, and that the goals the national Guidelines have proclaimed seem rather distant from the reality in the elementary school setting, like

unapproachable high hopes and beautiful dreams, if the framework of English education remains without change.

### *Lesson-level instructional decisions*

While Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978), and Borko and Shavelson (1991) say that the teachers in the planning process mainly spend time making decisions about the content of subject matter and what activities to use for presenting the content, Taiwanese teachers, who made actual decisions concerning what to teach and how to teach it on a weekly basis, followed the ready-made texts for content to teach and resorted to resources offered by the publishers, such as flash cards, workbook exercises and CDs and tapes in the curriculum package (Chiang, 2000; Liu, 2001). The central job in the teachers' planning process was to decide the coverage of the lesson and what activities/games to play and when. Because the teachers in this study and those in other studies (Liu, 2001; Lu, 1999) were stressed to finish every detail in the texts by the end of the semester, an urgent need may be to assist elementary teachers to correctly and critically interpret the curriculum materials and flexibly use them in class in concert with their individual approaches to teaching, to better serve the needs of specific groups of students, as Ben-Peretz (1990) terms it, "freeing teachers from the tyranny of the text" (p. xv).

In the meantime, parents' expectations played a part in teachers' planning and decision-making and were believed to have significantly influence students' English learning, as also evidenced by Chiang (2000), Pan (1997), Chiu (1998), Su (2000), and Lin (2001). To make it easy for parents to communicate with English teachers and to inform parents of the danger of placing undiscerning faith in texts may be another important task, along with the need to liberate and empower the teachers' use of texts.

On the lesson level, the four teachers differed from the existing studies and unanimously agreed to supplement the content of the texts with the materials they individually believed valuable for the students, such as useful phrases, daily expressions, small-group communicative tasks, and children's literature, for they

believed that the simple dialogues in each unit could not possibly provide students enough language input needed for basic communication. These variations, as a small component in class (occupying no more than 10 or 15% of time in each session), derived from the teachers' beliefs. In comparison to the text materials, those variations appeared to have more of individual teachers' personal touch and sense of ownership, aiming at more authentic and meaningful learning relevant to students' daily-life experience. Yet, the obligation to finish teaching the texts did not allow enough room for the teachers' self-prepared materials, the value of which they really believed in. Conversely, the selection of activities and games seemed to occupy more of the teachers' planning time, a finding Chiang (2000), Lin (2001), and Liu (2001) support. The teachers' intention to make the class fun overrode the teachers' beliefs about providing more holistic, authentic materials and language input meaningful to the students.

Prevalent in children's after-school English programs, games have played an indispensable role in regular elementary schooling (Chiang, 2000; Chu, 2002; Lin, 2001; Liu, 2001; Lu, 1999; Tseng, 2001). In my study as well as others, some games were for reinforcing the content of the lesson while some games spent too much time practicing one or two simple phrases while many students wasted time waiting for a turn. Scholars and researchers have questioned the value of this cram-school teaching approach (Chu, 2002; Liaw, 1998; Tseng, 2001; Wu, 2001), but teachers tended to neglect the objective of facilitating students' self-initiated learning of communicative skills at the price of exciting students to participate through games, like sugar-coating poor quality food. Along with this approach was the problem for Taiwanese teachers of sustaining order and discipline in big groups of students, which is viewed as closely intertwined with and complementary to promoting learning by Doyle (1992) and will be addressed in a later section on the organizational decisions teachers in my study made.

Chu (2002) and other scholars were concerned about the current practice: Can fun, exciting games lay a solid foundation for students in English learning? Does it lead to early literacy development which determines long-term learning achievement (Liaw

& Chien, 2001; Nantz, 2002; Su, F. H., 1999b)? My study raised several more issues. Reflective skills for teachers to self monitor their instructional decisions should be a key to raise the teachers' awareness of how their instructional preference of using games directly impacted the demand to work on the managerial function and what alternatives could also facilitate students' motivation and effective learning. That is, the teachers should constantly question themselves: What and where do various games or activities lead students to? How much time is appropriate to spend in class, in the forms of games or other activities, so as to attain pre-planned objectives? How can the games effectively build the students' learning or performance? Is the actual amount of learning worth the amount of time spent in games? Other than games, are there other alternatives to motivate students to learn? Can group work better accommodate the discrepancies and needs among students, a tactic one of the teacher participants used? As one teacher in this study wondered how much students could learn through this approach, another teacher reported that she discovered from experience that young children were naturally attracted by stories she read in class. Could reading stories contribute to more authentic and valuable language input to the students than games (Cheng, 1999; Hsu, 2002; Huang, 2000; Liaw & Chien, 2002; Nantz, 2002; Yang, 2000; Yang, 2001)? Apparently the second teacher had strong interest in doing an experiment on literature-based teaching to find out how much "fun" it would be for primary grade students. Should "fun" be necessarily interpreted as playing games which require using very little of the target language in English class? Can it be something else, such as children's literature, hands-on crafts-making in English, culture-based thematic units students pursue with personal curiosity, or problem-solving tasks in small groups?

At this initial stage of English implementation for students at the elementary school level, teachers and parents predominantly associate "fun teaching" with cram-school activity/game-based teaching approach. I suggest the national guidelines, and scholars and teachers with alternative, effective practices should elaborate on how many different ways "fun" can be possibly defined, derived, and provided from the perspective of children's development and learning when "fun" has been pinpointed as

one of the basic principles mapped out with Grades 5-9 English curriculum. With so much doubt raised by studies to date, this move has the potential to liberate the practicing teachers from narrowly equating fun with game-playing, and to offer them many more alternatives they can employ in teaching, especially those leading to the development of early literacy.

### ***Task-level instructional decisions***

On the task level, as commonly reported by other studies on elementary EFL teaching (Chiang, 2000; Liu, 2001; Lu, 1999), the teachers all established and followed routines for increasing the predictability, and maintaining the activity flow, findings confirmed by Doyle (1983, 1992), Shavelson & Stern (1981), and Yinger (1977). The teachers considered warmup activities a necessary step to activate students' learning incentive and to create a good atmosphere at the very beginning of the class, while a review time was particularly important for students' recall of the content learned in a previous week, when class only met once a week. Repetitive practices in the form of teacher-ask-students-answer drills were for reinforcing new materials so that students overlearned them as Chiang (2000) and Liu (2001) reported. The tasks the teachers arranged following their routines had a progressive nature in content, starting with reviewing vocabulary, to answering simple questions, to more variety of questions and longer or harder sentence patterns. The more experienced teachers in my study seemed to have more sequenced and integrated arrangements and connections between activities than novice ones. Nevertheless, in big-class teaching, organizational arrangements became rather crucial to ensure the flow of instructional activities teachers had planned. To what organizational decisions did the teachers resort to support the above-mentioned instructional decisions?

### **Organizational Decisions**

Teachers in this study were highly aware of the limitations in the current construct of English teaching—big classes, mixed with multiple levels of motivation

and English competence, too little time weekly, which T. L. Chen (1999), Wei (1999), Lu (1999), and Chiang (2000) also have mentioned. Without adequate understanding of the four to five hundred students each teacher taught, the teachers felt differing degrees of frustration at the challenge of classroom management. The teachers all saw big language classes as a big problem, for teachers constantly faced competing pressures of maximizing learning with fun and maintaining order. Organizational decisions and arrangements to ensure order in class, such as putting students in groups for competitions, seating arrangements, specific disciplinary rules, were regarded as a top priority along with the instructional decisions to be made. Consistent with what Clark & Elmore (1979) and Clark & Peterson (1986) found, the four teachers made their individually defined rules part of the classroom routines known to the students as early as the first class day.

Those rules included marching to the classroom for class, English commands to get settled down before class, five-second countdowns to quiet down, group competition for good order and participation. Some teachers used microphones for class or more non-verbal strategies than others to reduce the tension on their vocal cords. Some teachers followed the social and structural arrangements they set up more closely and consistently than others. As Lin (2001) reported about a high self-efficacy teacher, it seems that the teachers who observed disciplinary rules more closely reported having more efficient teaching and more satisfying participation of and responses from the students, because students knew what to expect and had clearly-set boundaries.

One of the teacher informants pointed out that English has been commonly recognized as a skill for public performances. One teacher mentioned a need to make students' singing English songs and short skits a talent show to encourage learning and enhance bonding and a sense of community between school and parents, while the other three engaged in holiday-related activities in non-class times, complying with the administrators' expectations to build conducive learning environments. As outside-classroom English-learning activities were viewed as a solution to a lack of adequate exposure to English learning, the teachers either took initiative or passively

responded to the school administrators' expectations by taking on this extra workload. The teachers confirmed the good intention of the school from the stance of the students but felt stressed out and unbalanced from overwork because of all the added activities on top of their regular instructional and administrative tasks.

The allocation of time has been one of what teachers called "inherent limitations of the current curricular framework," (Interview, 10/04/02) "beyond what a single school can improve" (Interview, 5/16/02). Contrary to the private elementary school in Chiang's (2000) study, public schools like Happy Whale had fewer resources available for English teaching and less autonomy to improve the regulated construct. These concerns should be taken into account by the responsible office of the government when they strive to revise the national guidelines to include third and fourth graders in mandatory English teaching in 2005, since the elementary teachers all expressed that the national goals were too hard to achieve with instruction limited to 40 or 80 minutes a week.

### **Implementation Decisions**

As Doyle (1992) has said, instruction and management are two major tasks in classroom teaching; however, they are of two distinct foci. He went on to say that order and discipline is to create a social system, which allows instruction to occur. In contrast, instruction points more to individual learning. But in Taiwanese classrooms, order and discipline in the EFL teachers' eyes seemed to be prerequisites for big-class instruction. In this study how did the discipline issue contribute to decisions about teacher role, language learning focus, task type, and time frame of tasks?

### ***Teacher role***

As part of the routines, the teachers resorted to small-group competitions to keep order after the class started. The teachers usually played a director's role in class and enacted mostly teacher-centered tasks. Some teachers used more purposeful grouping strategies than others, and made the seatwork serve to bring forth more effective

instruction. It seems that the teachers who had better control of the students in class by enforcing disciplinary rules had smoother flow of activity and quality of instruction. This echoes what Lin (2001) has found on elementary English teachers' self-efficacy. Homeroom teachers' assistance and partnership were what those English teachers found effective to improve students' discipline problems, also found by Chan (1999), Chiang (2000), Lin (2001), and Lu (1999). Yet, the teachers learned from experience that teamworking with colleagues was not easy and that they should be self-reliant in disciplining students instead of obtaining assistance from the homeroom teachers. Some of them resorted to non-verbal disciplinary strategies in order to protect their vocal cords from overuse or to restrain themselves from creating tension with students in class.

The teachers in the studies by Chiang (2000), Lin (2000), Liu (2001), and Lu (1999) all acknowledged that the last thing English teachers want to do is to get angry and ruin the encouraging atmosphere for students to speak up, and one of the teachers in the current study also highlighted this "well-accepted taboo among teachers at cram schools." However, how much prior teaching experience (novice or experienced), personal beliefs about education in general (emphasis on character-building or only language learning), and other personal factors (such as being a mother of two, straight-forward temperament, very concerned about time constraint) all led to varying responses and strategies on the part of the teachers when dealing with angry or tense situations in class. More often than not, the teachers expressed that losing their temper did not have much effect on classroom management, either. As researchers have noted (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Doyle, 1994; Weinstein, 1988, 1990), the concern for pupil control appears to be novice or student teachers' central concern. The teachers who had less experience either in English teaching or in the elementary school setting showed a similar tendency and more discouragement in classroom management. In the process, prior experience of what works well to achieve their instructional goals in the specific context did serve as direct references for decision making, as Smith (1996) also discovered.

Two of the teachers, who had each had about 10 years' teaching experience at cram schools, were deeply convinced that teaching in the elementary school setting is much more demanding than that at cram schools. On top of the disadvantage of having big classes, almost all of them attributed part of the difficulty to their subject teacher role, which deprived them of (1) constant contact with and understanding of students, (2) direct channels to inform parents of students' problem behavior, and (3) a vantage point to exercise power over the students, as homeroom teachers do. These distinctions between homeroom and subject teachers contributed to the problems of EFL teaching: subject teachers, spending too little time with students and having no alliances with either homeroom teachers or the parents, exerted no power over big groups of students, compounded by the requirement to teach so many classes so as to meet the basic teaching hours. All these factors accumulated into a big physical and mental demand which frustrated the English teachers most.

### *Language learning focus and task type*

The teachers expressed that their instruction basically followed what they had planned, though they still needed to modify their plans to accommodate context-specific factors because students misbehaved or unexpected incidents happened, such as the CD player didn't work, the teachers couldn't find the flash cards they prepared, students didn't bring required materials to class. The most frequently employed teaching methods were TPR activities, repetitive drills supported by the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), songs, games, and rhymes, as Dai (1998) and Chiang (2000) also reported, so that students had enough practice to absorb the dialogue or sentence pattern taught for the week.

The teachers commonly shared the view that the big-class situation never allowed them to be certain whether individual students learned among the groups. The interactive decisions the teachers made most of the time, as Johnson (1992a) has also found, were to check students' comprehension, to facilitate students' motivation and participation, and to make sure their instructional decisions unfolded as planned

beforehand. Supporting Chiang's (2000) and Tseng's (2001) work, and as reported earlier, these EFL teachers tended to prefer whole-class exercises to pair work or group work for the sake of sustaining order in big classes. The concern for order indeed exercised a strong influence on the selection of instructional activity and participation structure. The lack of instructional time seemed to be another contributing factor.

### ***Time frame and Teacher-centered tasks***

As I have discussed and Chiang (2000) confirmed, the subject teacher role of English teachers did not allow adequate contact with and understanding of students after class. Insufficient instructional time constrained teachers from organizing their classes in variant ways because of the pressure of making weekly progress in teaching. Therefore, the learning activities were usually highly teacher-directive. Student-centered communicative learning activities that Tseng (2001) has suggested, such as pair work and group work, had been viewed as not practical teaching approaches for big-class teaching by the teachers in Chiang's (2000) study. Only one teacher in the current study included this approach to help students integrate what they had learned at the end of each class, while close enforcement of disciplinary rules and correct attitudes toward cooperative learning were observed through year-long training, to assure class order. This teacher commented that her familiarity with students over time and the students' familiarity with her disciplinary rules made this kind of group work operative. Without question, I can infer that these teachers' concerns about order, time constraints, and their individual beliefs about what teaching approach works and how students learn all contribute to the prevalent teacher-centered teaching that Tseng (2001) also specified. For teachers to transform their reliance on mechanical, repetitive drills to student-centered, communicative tasks may take much more awareness and effort than Shih's (2001) suggestion of "a little communicative twist" to teachers when following Halliwell's (1992) urge to make changes. Teachers' beliefs, concerns and interpretations of the limitations underlying the practices reveal that change in action

requires change in thought first, which will be discussed further in a later section on teachers' beliefs.

The curriculum characteristics of the current construct for elementary English programs have been perceived as constraining, rather than liberating teacher action (Ben-Peretz, 1990). Ben-Peretz also claimed that lack of time has been a persistent tug of war at school. For successful bilingual programs, Lindholm (1990) specifically listed duration of instruction as the first of 11 criteria he proposed to attain the goal. Strevens (1987) listed insufficient, excessive time or intensity as one of the ten factors commonly associated with failure in learning and teaching languages. In the EFL context in Taiwan, the hours of instruction has made English not only hard for students to learn but also formidable for teachers to teach. It is not surprising to hear researchers report that elementary students' attendance at cram-school English programs hasn't decreased but has increased after English programs have been offered at the elementary student level (Chiang, 2000; Pan, 1997). Three of the teacher informants in this study even believed that, for substantial progress and better speaking ability, students should go to after-school programs at the cram schools. Hence, we can expect that more students will go to cram schools so as not to fall behind advanced students, and the problem of big discrepancies in English competence among students will just increase. This is contrary to what Dai (2002) and Shih (1997) reported about the government's and parents' expectations with the comprehensive implementation of English education at public schools. In addition, this phenomenon explains that the worry that L2 education would cause interference in L1 learning has been an unrealistic concern, for learners at the elementary levels currently have far too little exposure to English, so that the need to go to after-school programs has increased. As Tseng (2001) and S. L. Yang (2002) found no L1 interference in English learning, I would say that we may need to question the effect of current L2 teaching and learning, rather than thinking it is impeding L1 learning.

As for the teaching objectives the teachers aimed for, two of them felt satisfied when about half of their students learned to speak basic dialogues or learned to use

phonics concepts to read. Two of them saw an urgent need to offer remedial teaching to students who fell behind, while two others expressed that they couldn't afford any more extra work on top of their regular teaching and administrative tasks. After one year's experience working at the elementary level, one teacher aimed at only the majority of students who could follow and lowered his personal standards of teaching when the whole reformed construct in the elementary school setting limited English teaching to a very minimal level. "It's only an ideal, saying that the educational reform intends to bring up the achievement of every child!" (Interview, 10/04/02) If so, is elementary English teaching moving toward the realization of social justice, that scholars claimed as one of the rationales of the reform (Dai, 2002), or moving away from it?

With all the limitations on the elementary school context, some teachers in this study acknowledged that English teachers were not the only parties who should be held accountable for the students' learning outcomes, as Chiang (2000) and Wu (2001) both said. Parents and the school both played a part in the students' English learning. However, have parents who feel incompetent to assist them in English learning been empowered to participate in their children's education if the parents are included as partners to the school? How do teachers see parents in relation to their teaching job? This will be discussed later in the section on *teachers' beliefs*. But does social justice refer to taking care of the majority, the minority, or the students-in-between, in big classes when a single teacher can not attend to everybody's needs? As the scholars have urged (Shih, 2001; Wei, 1999), one teacher resorted to cooperative learning among peers in small groups to cope with this phenomenon and felt satisfied with the peer teaching and peer tutoring both in and out of class. The positive effect on students' affective aspect was especially intriguing, an effect which scholars have not examined enough through empirical studies. It is an area that deserves more empirical research support to provide teachers an option other than the predominant game-based teaching.

Without doubt, the teachers' comments on their job of implementing English programs under the reformed model have arisen from personal belief systems which filter their interpretations of the elementary school context along with many other

concerns. Let's now explore how teachers see, think, and act in regard to elementary English teaching under the reformed school context.

### **TEACHERS' BELIEFS**

It is informative to study EFL practices in light of teachers' beliefs which the teachers made explicit and had relied on to make sense of their world. As I started to better understand elementary English teaching, my review of literature on teachers' beliefs was still partial in that I only saw the tip of the iceberg—that is, teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning which contributes to classroom practice. I recognized it as most pertinent to my topic and listed it, along with prior learning experience, prior teaching experience, perceptions of the teaching task and context, and others, with equal weight as pivotal teacher characteristics (see Figure 2). However, as the data evolved, and literature was searched more exhaustively, categories emerged, and the above-mentioned factors coalesced into a single entity called “teachers' belief systems” with subcategories—in effect, the iceberg itself, part of it obscured under water.

Beliefs in this study, as Woods (1996) did, refer to the sum of assumptions, beliefs, values, principles, conceptions, images, and implicit theories that teachers have. As Figure 3 displays, all the kinds of beliefs seem to come under the whole teachers' belief system, for the findings of the current study show that teachers' belief system worked as one network—complex, constantly evolving, affective, and experiential, since it is grounded in personal experience from many sources (see also Block & Hazelip, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, 1995; Collinson, 1996; Elbaz, 1981; Golombek, 1998). Yet, for the convenience of discussion, in the following I will first address how the four kinds of beliefs—beliefs about self, beliefs about context, beliefs about subject matter, and beliefs about curriculum and instruction (see Figure 3 for detailed subentries)—interconnected and contributed to the teaching practice. Instead of being a separate section, the *context factors* will be discussed with the teachers' beliefs about context. The discussion will be centered around the issues that emerged from examining teachers' beliefs, which, in turn, are (1) teachers' belief systems, (2) sources

of teachers' beliefs, (3) the quality and effect of teacher education, and (4) the needs of the school community.

### **Teachers' Belief Systems**

Bullough (1991) summarized the journey of becoming a teacher as “an idiosyncratic process reflecting differences in biography, personality, conceptions of teaching, [and] differences in context” (p. 48). Even though the teachers' practice turned out highly similar due to all the constraints, Bullough seemed to have highlighted all those factors that could have contributed to the idiosyncrasy of the four teachers in the current study. Among the kinds of beliefs, the teachers' beliefs about self and about context emerged as the most salient factors contributing to those teachers' EFL practice and decision making.

From the four teachers' biographies in Chapter Three, we know that how the teachers evolved into the teachers they are now is a process unique to each one. As for teaching, some of them learned from the modeling of former teachers or mentors, while some held stereotypical or negative ideas about teaching from their apprenticeship of observation until they experienced teaching and obtained “knowing-in-action,” as Schon (1983) termed it. How they learned English as EFL learners was definitely connected to how they taught English, since English teaching at the elementary level is a new phenomenon. Generally, what the four teachers shared in common is that they received more traditional teaching approaches—the Grammar-Translation or the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), from parts (learning vocabulary) to whole (manageable chunks or units)—than their students in this educational reform in which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been upheld as a more preferable approach to build students' communicative competence. Because her study was quantitative, I must infer that the prospective teachers in Chu's (2001) study shared similar learning backgrounds which resulted in a resistant-to-change preference of ALM along with a significant change in attitude toward CLT for English teaching.

Among the four teachers, it seems that the two teachers who both had cram-school teaching experience shared more similar beliefs than the other two. They were both in the early forties, had been English majors in college and thus had more exposure to the English language and literature as well as experience in learning English for communication either through social and educational opportunities or through immersion in the target cultures. Later they both accumulated cram-school teaching experience for more than 10 years. Their beliefs about English teaching apparently were shaped by their prior learning and teaching experiences. They both believed in doing listening comprehension drills in class and chose to supplement the textbook materials with daily phrases and expressions to increase students' language input for real-life talk. Their teaching approach was in tune with the prevailing way children learned at after-school programs, and at the same time, they both found teaching in the elementary school setting more challenging than their teaching at cram schools in the past and felt they should make adjustments to adapt to the teaching context. The teacher in Liu's (2001) study who also had cram-school teaching experience held highly similar beliefs and practice as these two teachers.

Prior learning and teaching experiences led not only to what and how the teachers taught but also to how they viewed their teaching task in the elementary school setting, how they adapted to the work context and to what extent, and what they decided about curriculum and instruction. Meanwhile, their practice in the new teaching context modified and reshaped their repertoire and their belief systems since what worked well in the past at the cram schools did not always work the same when applied in the elementary school context. It has been a reciprocally shaping relationship between teachers' beliefs and practice, a relationship that Smith (1996) did not include in her framework. It is more than reasonable to infer that these two teachers, bringing such distinct motives and prior teaching experience with them to the elementary school setting, were inclined to judge whether the new job conformed to their expectations by comparing to and contrasting with personal beliefs about self and context.

The other two non-English-major teachers shared a similar vision about general elementary education; that is, to put more emphasis on the need to cultivate good character in young children rather than focus on academic achievements. They both described themselves as disciplined learners since childhood and acknowledged the influence of teachers on them, both good and bad. Considering themselves firm about students' learning how to conduct themselves, they believed in teamwork among colleagues to better educate students. They reflected on how the school-based curricular model impacted students' learning and how the school's enactment of the new model was different from that of other schools. Congruent with their beliefs in character building, they tried to include every student, paid individual attention as much as they could, and opted to stop fun games if students did not behave. What they chose to supplement in English class was not language skills per se, but more meaningful, holistic experience that young students could enjoy and associate with their daily life, such as introducing children's literature, small-group tasks, or holiday-related activities. Hence, these two teachers put more weight on the value of general elementary education than that of English education. This priority overrode their beliefs about English teaching and students' learning, and made their instructional goals, focus, their interaction with students in class, and selection of materials different from the other two teachers.

Likewise, with more qualitative difference from the English-major teachers, these two teachers' beliefs about self, about context, about subject matter, and about curriculum and instruction were intertwined as "a holistic and complex web that reflects their ways of thinking and ways of being" (Collinson, 1996, p. 15-16) and, thus, were used in response to the givens of context (Golombek, 1998). Teachers' beliefs not only originated in personal experience but also were expressed in individual practice, a stance similar to that proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) and Elbaz (1981). In these two teachers' cases, they had less prior teaching experience to rely on but were highly motivated to experiment and undertake professional development. How the current context could satisfy their needs and assist them to achieve personal goals in this

profession appeared pivotal. With limited reflection on the subject matter, they had fewer fixed, long-time preferences in teaching but showed more flexibility and openness to various teaching approaches, as well as more inconsistent, or “fluid” in Genishi, et al.’s word, beliefs.

The teachers of the current study held beliefs which coincided with some beliefs held by the group of prospective foreign language teachers in Horwitz’s (1985) study. Both groups of teachers believed that it is easier for children than for adults to learn a foreign language. They both agreed with the importance of listening and repeating a lot in language learning. Also, they both believed strongly in the teacher’s responsibility to motivate students. Compared to the beliefs of 68 prospective English teachers in Yang’s (2000) study and to the participants in Horwitz’s study, both Yang’s prospective teachers and the teachers in the current study shared more commonalities. Both of these groups of teachers believed that learning English should start at an early age. They unanimously agreed with the need for repetitive practice and the function of entertainment/games to facilitate learning. It was commonly agreed upon that English pronunciation should be correct from early on, and that the most important goal of teaching children English is listening and speaking skills for communication. Many more teachers in Yang’s study believed in the need to teach about foreign culture. And a high percentage of Yang’s teachers seemed to hold rational views on the use of games, saying that not all games are suitable for young beginners.

On the other hand, the prospective teachers in Yang’s study seemed much more optimistic about elementary English teaching. They believed the job is “valuable (92%), a good job (50%), and a lot of fun (62%).” It would be interesting to do follow-up studies on the same group of teachers after they had obtained some teaching experience at the elementary level to see if they felt as frustrated and challenged as the four teachers did, if they employed games as rationally as they claimed they would, and if they still hold high self-efficacy and enthusiasm for the field as they did in the training program. Furthermore, due to the quantitative research construct she used, the idiosyncratic factors among individual teachers in Yang’s study were not given enough

attention. This current study has extended what Yang suggested by comparing the teachers' self-reported beliefs with their classroom practices.

From this study, the idiosyncratic process of being a teacher that Bullough (1991) refers to resulted from the teachers' differences in family situations (whether a mother with duty as a caregiver to her children, the breadwinner of the family, or the awareness of her own working-class background), personal dispositions (more cautionary, low-profile, self-protective, or self-initiating, fond of innovation and constant learning), English competence (more fluent in oral competence or not), and immediate needs for professional development (a certified English teacher or not, a formal position versus a one-year substitute teacher position, needs to improve instruction), and resulted in their different choices and organizations of instructional activities, their attitudes toward interaction with students, colleagues, administrators, and a researcher like me, and thus in career decisions and future plans.

Among the sources of teachers' beliefs specified by the literature (Grossman, 1988; Johnson, 1994; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Shulman, 1987; Tai, et al., 2000), the teacher informants of this study referred to students' responses in class as one of the most beneficial sources of feedback in their process of learning to teach, but they seldom acknowledged teacher education or related reading of research findings. Given the belief systems discovered in the study, what could EFL teacher educators do? What do teacher educators need to take into account in teacher education programs?

### **Effect of Teacher Education Programs**

Three of the four teachers were MOE certified English teachers, who had completed 40 credits of training in general elementary education, 120 hours in TESOL methodology program, and 240 hours (or fewer, depending on individual English competence) in English language skills. All of them, remembering positively only one or two courses in general elementary education, appraised the overall programs from strongly dissatisfying to dissatisfying and admitted not having learned much from the training, very different from the more positive evaluation results Shih (2001) had. The

fourth teacher who went through three intensive training programs in two years, sponsored by the Municipal Department of Education, expressed moderate or lower level of satisfaction with the overall training. Yet she found conversing with the peers she met in the training programs beneficial both in developing her thought, actions, and in social support through networking with people in the same profession.

Given that two of the teachers had had long-time cram-school teaching experience, this antecedent made them confident practitioners and indifferent to theories or academic research practices. I suspect that the dissatisfying effect of the teacher training may have partly resulted from the teachers' prior teaching experience and confidence in teaching. Their limited reflection and discussion on their beliefs about subject matter and curriculum throughout this study might have explained their valuing of experience in practice over theory. One of them directly commented in the first meeting with me that theories are usually disconnected from reality and that she had had enough in her schooldays. Later, they both commented that they regarded the teacher training programs more as a mandatory process for certification than as a learning process from which they could benefit by re-examining their well-developed, long-time practices. Both experienced teachers revealed no trust in the English competence or theoretical expertise of academia, not to mention having tolerated the arrogant attitude of some college-professor trainers who downgraded the cram-school teachers' knowledge gained from practice.

Compared to these two teachers' prior teaching experience of over 10 years, the other two teachers had English teaching experience respectively of four years (including one year's teaching practicum) and one year. They both admitted they had insufficient training in EFL teaching and showed motivation to improve their teaching by attending research-related projects and experimenting with innovation in teaching, for they said they had found English teaching at the elementary level their favorite life-long career. They took the initiative to secure opportunities for English teaching workshops off campus and had more frequent contact and active communication with administrators. When English teaching was not well supported by the school administration or other

colleagues, they were willing to participate in related meetings on school-based curricular development but felt themselves peripheral and excluded.

Apparently, the motives the teachers brought with them to the elementary teaching job varied and shaped their commitment to their teaching job and to the school, as Chan (2000) also inferred. However, I would also argue as does Mok (1994) that their prior teaching experience, which contributed to resistant-to-change belief systems, and different needs derived from the different life stages they were in were either negated (by some trainers) or neglected when they went through the teacher training programs and, further, resulted in all these attitudinal differences: toward theoretical knowledge, toward the work and effect of academia and formal teacher education, and also toward how to self monitor their classroom practice.

As Freeman and Richards (1993) claimed, language teacher education has been following a knowledge-transmitter model that has poured to the trainees whatever knowledge base is considered a required command for the real-world classroom. Shih (2001) described the teacher training program three of the teachers in this study had taken (“Primary School English Teacher Training Program”—PSETTP—in her paper) “had a sound rationale” in program design with support from literature to “produce prospective teachers who have excellent English skills, are well informed about EFL teaching methodologies and techniques, and are also equipped with a general knowledge of primary education” (p. 91). Hence, this agenda underlying the training program had endorsed a conceptual frame consistent with the knowledge-transmitter model that has been widely scrutinized by teacher educators; that is, viewing prospective teachers entering teacher education as blank slates (Calderhead, 1996; Freeman, 1992; Wallace, 1991/1993). Regardless of the pre-determined stand teacher educators held, how could this one-size-fits-all program have satisfied the trainees who came with various backgrounds (seven big categories of major fields Shih (2001) found) and prior teaching experience ranging from kindergarten to college levels (66.7% among Shih’s surveyed subjects)? Wallace (1991/1993) claimed that most of the teacher education programs have overlooked the need to find “where the trainees are

at now” when they come into those programs and thus impeded the effectiveness of their training (p. 51).

Mok’s (1994) study suggested that experienced and inexperienced teachers focused on different aspects of teaching. He urged teacher educators to notice that teachers at different stages of professional development have different needs and to accommodate this phenomenon in both pre- and in-service teacher education. In tune with what we have found about the effect of teachers’ belief systems, Horwitz (1985), Yang (2000), Freeman (1991) all advocated enhancing language teachers’ reflective skills and receptivity to new information by making their tacit beliefs explicit. Shih (2001) concluded her evaluation report by suggesting that pre-service and in-service teacher education programs should include the concept of reflective practice. To “upgrade [practicing teachers’] teaching skills,” not only more in-service training programs but also post-certification training for certificate renewal should be provided (p. 103).

However, I suggest that educators should not hold unduly optimistic attitudes toward collective training in which the underlying concept of the training program retains the knowledge transmitter model or values theories from academics over classroom teachers’ theories of practice. Take the teachers’ understanding of TESOL methodology as an example. Three of the teachers had finished related training in the PSETTP Shih (2001) evaluated, while the other teacher had related training at the municipal level. None of the four teachers in this study had clear ideas of what Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is and mixed up several teaching methods/approaches when asked what teaching approach(es) they believed in. By letting them articulate their beliefs and counterchecking with their practice, I found that their predominant teaching method was the Audio-Lingual Method, as was found by Dai (1998) and Chiang (2000), rather than CLT which they believed they used. This echoed the misconceptions Cheng (1999) has found about CLT among elementary English teachers. One teacher admitted that he always considered how he could modify the theories he learned in TESOL methodology course to fit his existing practice. In

other words, he depicted a picture of how his existing belief system served as a filter when he obtained new knowledge as Horwitz (1985), Wallace (1991/1993), and many others have stated. However, what pre-occupations the teachers hold and how they transform the new knowledge into practical instruction through this filter are never examined or made explicit during their training. Therefore, the teacher education seems unable to go further but has been stopped by the practicing teachers' conviction of the separation between theory and practice. Several researchers have talked about what teacher education might need to include to overcome this problem.

Chu (2001) discovered that the deep-rooted beliefs about ALM held by prospective elementary teachers, even though they had a favorable attitude change toward CLT, remained significantly high after the teacher training program, which endeavored to espouse the CLT approach for communicative competence. Horwitz (1985) claimed that more and more prospective teachers supported communication-centered teaching approaches but that "shifts in student opinions do not automatically lead to behavior change" (p. 337). She suggested that prospective teachers have limited exposure to the communication-based activities and are in need of guidance to employ this teaching approach. Tseng (2001) indicated that, digressing from the mainstream teaching approach of CLT, the majority of teachers in his study directed students with passive question-and-answer drills, as the current study has discovered. How to design and implement a student-centered English class with real-life communicative tasks in big classes with diverse competence levels is indeed a tough challenge for teachers coping with all the constraints. Based on the studies of Freeman & Richards (1993), Mok (1994), Wallace (1991/1993), and on my research, to add the missing link in teacher education to facilitate trainees to connect theory with practice, teacher educators should either offer as many possibilities with modeling or create more bottom-up opportunities for the practicing teachers to reflect on their classroom teaching and make knowledgeable decisions.

According to Freeman and Richards (1993), "bottom-up" means not to follow a prescribed set of teaching skills or to be examined by the extent to which the teacher

realizes certain scientific findings or theoretical principles. The teachers, allowed to act on their understanding of what teaching should be like, try to experiment and discover what works through an on-going cycle of decision-making, reflecting, analyzing, and evaluation--a personal interpretation of thought and actions in teaching, which the stimulated recall sessions of this study tried to capture from the teachers. Freeman and Richards (1993) recommend a developmental view, rather than promoting certain theories and principles in teacher education, which allows the teacher's practice to evolve progressively from more prescriptive (based on theories, models, or scientific findings) to more improvisational forms of instruction (based on personal skills, individuality, and accountability). Day recommended ways to facilitate reflection to become more effective teachers--journals, discussion groups, daily or weekly logs (1992?). Others suggested employing biographies or images to understand how teachers learn to teach (Calderhead, 1988). The detailed documentation one of the teachers in this study did of her teaching is one of those methods suggested.

Genishi, et al. (1995) positively recognized practitioners' theories of practice and believed in practitioner-scholar/researcher collaborative and reciprocal relationships to make theory and practice mutually insightful and beneficial. From their study of a first-grade teacher's practice, they discovered that the teacher held multiple theories, though primarily based on one theory of practice, and did "theory-switching" (which to them functions like code-switching) to make her curricular decisions fluid to accommodate the variations among students. The teacher's theories, though contradictory for being eclectic, were found to have incorporated first language, second language theories, and theories of social development and learning nested under whole language theory.

Likewise, EFL programs at the local level in this study seem much more complex and context-specific phenomena than is imagined, since the EFL curriculum construct is under the school-based curriculum model and is situated in a local community with various needs and constraints. The teachers who endeavored to design their EFL programs to align with the reformed infrastructure may have had to struggle

more with the complexity to draw on principles of general elementary education, congruent working principles in special education, concepts of school-based curriculum development, and curriculum integration with TESOL methodology.

The phenomenon of English teaching has been made exceedingly complicated at the elementary level because so many theoretical constructs converge simultaneously. Instead of upholding factional views or being in favor of academic theories, teacher educators and scholars in related fields may need to collaborate across the borderline of disciplines and give more attention and respect to the theories of practice which evolve among respective teachers and school programs, which might vary district to district, school to school, person to person. Savignon (2002) stated that, since CLT has been highly contextualized when applied to ESL/EFL education in many countries, only more empirical studies can inform us of its effect and related problems in the field. While ESL/EFL theories and empirical studies still cannot inform us of all the phenomena in elementary EFL teaching, I believe that practicing teachers should be encouraged to articulate their theories of practice in in-service training programs to provide a more bottom-up approach to how they manage the complexities in the classroom. This approach should contribute to better understanding and improvement of the field.

### **The Needs of the Local School Community**

Coincidentally, the picture of teachers at work that Carlgren and Lindblad (1991) reconstructed from 19 teachers' interviews is not too far from the school situation the four teachers encountered—the lack of allies at work, parents as both promises and threats, and schools not being rational organizations.

The themes the four teachers repeatedly mentioned concerning themselves and their English programs at such an exemplary elementary school, which excelled for implementing the reformed SBCD model, pointed to a structural looseness within the school organization. It was salient that context-specific factors of the school highly intertwined with and frustrated the four teachers' willingness to augment their practice.

The research on American schools' classroom instruction loosely coupled with its organization helps to explain the structural problem of this exemplary Taiwanese school (Deal & Celotti, 1977; Firestone, 1984; Stromquist, 1980; Weick, 1976).

On a personal level, the four teachers, rather than being coordinated in any substantial form, viewed themselves as self-reliant professionals. More than that, they needed to be self-sufficient, for neither resources nor understanding about EFL teaching was available on the elementary school campus. The classroom of each English teacher operated autonomously without any supervision. On the school or district level, the English teachers' instruction was unaffected by organizational or administrative factors since none of the faculty or administrators felt confident enough to show concern about the existing EFL programs. As one informant claimed, the ignorance of school personnel seemed to have isolated them from effectively working as a team. Whether or not teachers belonged to or worked with a team, the ways teachers chose to work were unaffected by higher authorities.

The principal's administrative leadership role overrode his instructional leadership role since his busy schedule, as well as his personal beliefs and dispositions did not allow him to put instructional supervision at the top of his work list. As C. S. Yang (1999) commented on effective improvement of instructional leadership, higher authorities at the municipal level should decrease interference with schools and principals so that the principals can devote adequate time and efforts to build the school community.

Ironically, at a school which was enacting a community-based model which required close collaboration, negotiation, and interpersonal communication among colleagues and small groups, the teachers in general had learned to survive in such a heavily-loaded school structure by learning how to reduce the coordination costs in time and skills required to hold meetings, planning and evaluating activities, and meeting the deadlines and requirements. In other words, as Deal & Celotti (1977) have observed, such leeway under the loose coupling structure helped the school to adapt more easily to the demands of developing school-based curriculum and other conditions in the reform.

Organizing schoolwide English activities to make the environment conducive to English learning was highly principal- and administrative-centered. Rules and policies were enforced no matter whether teachers had differing views or not. To promote additive projects and activities and to enforce rules and policies seem to have been considered the two key areas that would result in good review scores. This is what the administrators put efforts into and how they maintained the school's legitimacy, echoing Stromquist's (1980) findings. Therefore, among the seven coupling dimensions Firestone (1984) proposed to measure the degree of coupling in schools—horizontal communication, vertical communication, rule enforcement, goal consensus, centralization of instruction, centralization of resources, morale—this school only embraced rule enforcement and centralization of resources, omitting the other five dimensions.

Within the SBCD construct, collaboration and professional development did not happen among teachers in groups, resonant with Chen and Chung's (2000) study. Instructional leadership was not the principal's first priority while he was busy playing multiple roles off campus. Echoing Fan and Wu's (2002) study, the principal's top-down authoritative leadership style was retained from past tradition and hampered the essence of the educational reform; that is, redistribution of power among teachers, administrators, parents, community representatives as they developed school-based curriculum through communication and teamwork. Parents and community representatives only played a symbolic role in curriculum-related discussions, as they did not participate at school as active or competent partners yet but waited to be invited to get involved. Hence, the decoupling of EFL programs from the administrative structure highlighted the problematic operation of the entire organization and impacted the interaction among all the parties in the school community.

One of the teachers described her English teaching job in this school context as a lonely but diligently working farmer plowing on a piece of land which no one else can plow; a thin thread linked to and responding to the pull of the major strand represented by the homeroom teachers and parents. She said her job was like nurturing a child with

digestion problems to grow some muscles in a short time so as to convince his parents of his achievement. These images of the loneliness, and a passive and subordinate role as an English subject teacher permeated her data with personal, affective, and consequential meanings. The other three teachers shared similar views though not in such affective tones. They all acknowledged the stress from the unrealistic expectations of parents and school administrators.

Wu (2001) commented that professionalism, which is required to develop a school-based curriculum, demands the acknowledgement and support of teachers, administrators, students, and parents, in addition to the support of funding at the municipal level. Without doubt, the four teachers' interpretation of EFL teaching under the SBCD construct has pointed out an issue of community building, with teachers taking the lead and bearing accountability in curricular and professional development. Although, at this initial stage of reform, lack of partnership due to the school's structural looseness was still the biggest challenge, even among teachers at an exemplary school. The problem of structural looseness signals a crisis in the development of the SBCD model and highlights urgent needs at various levels in the school community in regard to EFL teaching and learning. In the following, I will address the implications of the findings for practice.

### **Implications for Practice**

Given that EFL education nested under the educational reform has just been comprehensively enacted, the findings of this study have implications for practice at various levels.

First, on the personal level, the English teachers should develop not only professional knowledge, but also interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge and skill, as Collinson (1996) proposed. The teachers in the study showed limited reflection on professional knowledge, such as the knowledge about subject matter and curriculum theories, to assist in solving questions arising from lesson planning and teaching. In-service training, especially providing the skills to exercise reflective teaching, should

be an urgent need for teachers to gradually progress toward more student-centered, communication-based teaching. Teaching under the SBCD model, featuring collaboration and teamwork made possible by the interactions of personalities, requires high levels of interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities and expanded thinking about the scope of professional community, rather than remaining safe and content in an isolated classroom.

Second, on the classroom level, more instructional time is required to attain the curriculum goals specified by the national guidelines. In addition, the English teachers are in need of being understood of what they have been doing in class and what their difficulties and frustrations are, while at the same time understanding the expectations of homeroom teachers, administrators, parents, and even the students. As studies show, parents and the public tend to have doubts and concerns about the comprehensive implementation of English education at the elementary school level. Like the teacher with high efficacy in Lin's (2001) study, the teachers felt the stress coming from parents with high expectations, from multiple demands of student needs, and from the limitations of the school curricular infrastructure that inhibited them from improving and being empowered by the work they could achieve. Basic understanding and awareness must come prior to any substantial support, as one of the four teachers urged. More access for EFL teachers to make their voice known and to communicate with parents, colleagues, and administrators as a community is an urgent need.

Moreover, EFL teachers should be trained to acknowledge how their beliefs and context-specific factors contribute to their practices. This would allow them to self monitor and evaluate: 1) whether their teaching is based on knowledgeable decisions and geared toward intended goals or objectives, 2) whether the teaching methods or strategies they apply effectively correspond with what they believe and what they think students and the community need, 3) how the context and individual beliefs have shaped and been reshaped by their practices, and 4) whether there are alternatives to maximize learning by accommodating the constraints from the context, such as implementing programs with varied approaches.

Third, on the school level, the common problems in implementing the SBCD model that Marsh (1992) suggested should be given more attention—lack of time, expertise, finances, external restrictions from parents and faculty, and threatening school climates, such as the lack of effective and sympathetic leadership. “Simply to teach English well involved all the other factors!” This teacher informant said it right, especially under the framework of school-based curriculum. As Sabar (1985) recommended, the most basic but uppermost element—partnership building—should be encouraged whole-heartedly through communicating and connecting the teachers on the periphery (such as the English subject teachers) and in the center (the homeroom teachers and members in the SBCD committee). The extra workload which derived from additive, excessive projects and activities had deprived the teachers of their primary place in the curricular model; that is, to act as curricular planners with professional autonomy engaged in meaningful negotiation and curricular discussion with colleagues. Factitious, external products have taken the place of substantial, bottom-up teamwork in the continuous process of teaching.

The administrators especially need to have basic knowledge of how ESL/EFL programs operate in order to really assume instructional leadership—to effectively support and efficiently negotiate with the English teachers about course objectives which are in concert with the school’s vision and both long- and short-term goals. Hence, teachers’ beliefs and practices will be taken into consideration by the administrators when the SBCD model is fully enacted, and teachers at the local level are held accountable. As Firestone (1984) suggested, communication and goal consensus may be the most urgent tasks that school administrators can undertake to tighten the subunits under the school structure.

Different from the past, parents are required to become partners with schools through various forms of participation. From the English teachers’ perspectives, parents played the role of “a necessary evil” or “consumers,” far away from being partners, terms used by McWilliam, et al. (1997). The expression of parents’ doubts and concerns about English teaching were not encouraged through effective channels so that

information could be obtained to dispel insecurity or doubt and to attain better understanding. Parents' feeling incompetent to assist or supervise their children's English learning was also evidenced in Wu (2001) and my previous studies (Chiang, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). Some parent volunteers and representatives expressed their need and expectation of learning English with their children. This signals an urgent need to provide various forms of support groups and family empowerment programs to build parents' confidence and competency for school-home partnership to take form, as Lerner (1997) also proposed. Access available in the school community or school district includes helpers and volunteers to the English class; basic English conversation classes for parents; or interest groups, for small groups of parents to share and exchange tips and difficulties in helping children's English learning, tips on using English children's literature at home, tips on how to be informed consumers when choosing cram-school English programs, to name a few.

On the municipal level, the guidelines compiled for the citywide EFL education should be introduced to the EFL teachers in workshops or seminars in a format which helps local teachers to compare and contrast the municipal-level guidelines with the national guidelines. Hence, specific goals and local characteristics that teachers all believe in and agree upon with the authorities of education can be incorporated in the EFL curricula at the school level. Thus teachers would not feel confused or frustrated with two sets of guidelines and too many goals to attain.

To provide EFL teachers substantial support and training, the Municipal Department of Education should entrust the responsible offices, such as the advisory group of English teachers and the English teaching resource center, with holding workshops and seminars which take into account individual differences in teacher needs and backgrounds as well as challenges derived from school culture and local communities. Rather than one-size-fits-all collective training of all teachers, small study groups, research groups, and discussion groups by school districts could better develop individual teachers' reflective skills, starting from assisting the teachers to become

aware of their own belief systems, to begin life-long professional development, and to enhance solid networks with nearby professionals.

On the national level, the Ministry of Education should mandate that all the teacher education programs incorporate the Guidelines into teaching methodology-related courses. Therefore, the intended curriculum of the nation would be introduced to the prospective teachers with a view of how they could connect and guide classroom instruction. The parts of the national guidelines which may cause teachers' misconceptions should be further defined or clarified, such as "fun," "practical," "foreign cultures."

In policy accountability, the government should invest in sufficient research with grants and examine the effectiveness of the current EFL education guidelines and framework with an eye toward making modifications and improvements, especially on the existing constraints that elementary teachers currently have been struggling with, in order to ensure quality EFL education with the progression of educational reform.

On EFL teacher education, the teacher education programs should scrutinize their own conceptual view of the process and product of EFL teacher training programs, and how they view the development of prospective teachers' beliefs, and in-service teachers' growth in knowledge and practice. More bottom-up approaches, which empower trainees to rely on what they bring with them, will contribute to more reflective and skillful teachers at work. In addition to professional knowledge and intrapersonal abilities to become self-reflective, interpersonal abilities to effectively and efficiently interact with colleagues, parents, administrators, and students with a sense of community will enable prospective teachers to collaborate more effectively within the culture of the elementary school.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As Kathy's motivation to attend my study for professional development led me to situate the research in this particular school context, this study, hence, had several limitations. First, the second teacher, without a free choice based on personal will, was

recruited into the study to better understand the schoolwide dynamic regarding EFL education. Likewise, the other two teachers in the following year may have felt more of an obligation to participate in an already-existing research project, although I made an effort to respect the teachers' will and successfully obtained their consent to participate to assist me in finishing my doctoral study. Thus, the quality and quantity of collected data from those less motivated teachers might be biased.

Second, for documenting the school's and teachers' year-end assessment and improvements made on implementing EFL teaching in the reformed curriculum, my entry into the field beginning the last two months of the school year and continuing through the first two months of another school year did not allow the study to depict the studied phenomena from a natural starting point, that is, from the start of a semester. Therefore, the self-reports of the teachers about their teaching and undertakings at the beginning of the semester couldn't be triangulated with classroom observation, but available documents and other parties in the school community had to be consulted. Although the school did finish some assessment reports, the unexpected leave of both EFL teachers' from the school at the end of the first school year hampered my intention to observe what improvements the EFL teachers would make in the second school year. The observations I made in the field were from the middle of a semester to the middle of the next semester. Caution is advised when generalizing this study to others unfolding for a whole complete semester.

Another limitation of this study is that case-by-case differences resulted in my having varying levels of interaction and rapport with the four participants. For example, some participants were more articulate than others, and some teachers preferred to stay in a more isolated room most of the time instead of being in regular offices. I may not have comprehensively captured individual participants' understanding and their practice. In the meantime, my prior experience and personal theories in both college-level and cram-school English teaching may have filtered my thought process and biased my observation and interpretation of the study.

Finally, as the educational reform intends to return to individual schools their autonomy to develop their curriculum and thus respond to the needs and features of the local community, every school site is unique due to context-specific factors. As reported, elementary English teachers come from various backgrounds and prior experiences as well. Therefore, the findings of this study are not expected to be generalizable to all English teachers at all elementary schools in Taiwan, though, as confirmed by related literature, many recurring themes and patterns seemed to be common among elementary school settings.

### **Implications for Further Research**

As this study only focused on four teachers' perspectives at one school site, further study can be done at other schools in the same school district to examine whether what the four EFL teachers encountered are context-specific phenomena or commonly shared among the teachers. Studies also can be extended to compare EFL teachers' beliefs and practice at schools in suburban areas with that in urban areas to find out the impact of the context and how teachers and parties in the school community react to the contextual factors.

The teachers recruited in this study included three different kinds of backgrounds—two MOE certified teachers with an English major and long-time cram-school teaching experience, one MOE certified teacher who was new to the field and had a non-English major, one city-level-qualified teacher with a non-English major and four years' elementary English teaching experience. To investigate further how teachers' background and prior teaching experience contribute to EFL teachers' beliefs and practice, further studies can look into what patterns are shared among EFL teachers with cram-school teaching background and how they adapt to the elementary school settings, as Chan (1999a, 1999b, 2000) and Wu (2001) proposed. Or how EFL teachers with various backgrounds, such as English majors versus non-English majors, or English subject teachers versus homeroom teachers teaching English, differ in beliefs, practice, and how they interact with the context.

One of the four teachers held very profound beliefs about her teaching role as service-oriented. It would be intriguing to examine further how her service-oriented views about teaching are similar to or different from those teachers at the cram schools where the customer/service-provider relation may be the core of the language programs they offer. To document whether EFL teachers' views toward parents have changed or not for the partnership construct, studies can also be conducted on a larger scale and explore how elementary EFL teachers interpret their relationship with parents. Among the four types of philosophies that McWilliam, et al. (1997) discussed, what are prevalent regarding the EFL teachers' position on working with families? How can partnership building be facilitated at the local level? What are the obstacles in the way for attaining school-home partnership?

As the four teachers encountered difficulty integrating English teaching with the school-based core curriculum, another direction in future study may also be to examine how EFL teachers can effectively cope with the demand of respective schools in collaborating and team-teaching school-based curricula. More longitudinal studies might be done to scrutinize whether long-term effects evolve as Sabar (1985) and Marsh (1992) warned. Teacher-researcher collaboration in curriculum development and material compilation could be beneficial to the practitioners under the stress of integrating English teaching with other disciplines under the SBCD construct.

## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A. English Translation of the Guidelines for Elementary English Curriculum (2003) (Translated by Author)**

### **I. Guidelines for Instructional Materials**

#### **(1) Topic and subject matter**

The English curriculum should be designed consistent with three principles—being fun, being practical, and being relevant to real life.

- a. The selected content should cover multiple domains and center around the student’s life experiences, such as family, school, food, animals and plants, holidays, occupations, travel, sports, leisure, and so on.
- b. To the best of the teacher’s ability, the content should comply with the essence of the Ten Basic Capabilities for Learners (Appendix 2) proposed for coping with contemporary trends and fostering in students the qualities of modern citizenship.
- c. The materials and activities, compiled or designed, should encompass a wide variety and include assorted subject matter, for example, rhymes, songs, chants, cards, notices, slips, simple stories, letters, riddles, jokes, skits, and humorous articles.

#### **(2) Communicative functions**

- a. Communicative competence for both elementary and junior high school levels should focus on commonly-used communicative functions, including daily language functions and social decorum, such as greetings, giving thanks, making apologies, making requests, asking for directions, making phone calls, and so on.

#### **(3) Language components**

English Alphabet:

- a. English alphabet teaching includes upper and lower cases of both printing and cursive styles. Elementary grades should be able to write upper and lower case printing styles while junior high students should be able to write cursive style also. However, daily writing should use mainly the printing style.
- b. The teacher should strive to write using the printing style on either the board or the student’s corrected assignments.

Pronunciation:

- c. Pronunciation should be fostered through hands-on exercises in listening and speaking activities. In addition to the teacher’s demonstration and instruction,

audio materials (such as cassettes, videotapes, and compact disks (CDs), etc.) should be employed for the students to practice through imitating.

- d. The elementary grades should be able to sound out words through the concepts of letter/sound correspondence in phonics. The junior high school students should be able to use also phonetic systems and dictionaries to know correct pronunciation.

Vocabulary:

- e. The vocabulary selected and compiled in the teaching materials should be based on the two checklists the Guidelines have proposed—1000 basic words for elementary grades and 2000 basic words for junior high students (Note 1).
- f. The elementary grades should be able to speak 200 productive vocabulary words and to spell and write 80 words or phrases before going to junior high school. The junior high school students should be able to master at least 1000 productive vocabulary words before graduating from junior high schools.
- g. Respective text compilers should decide on their selection and categorization of “words for production” and “words for recognition,” and mark them out accordingly (Note 2).

Sentence patterns:

- h. The sentence patterns selected in the teaching materials for both elementary and junior high school levels should be commonly used, basic ones. The teacher should avoid transmitting difficult or abstract grammar knowledge.
- i. The introduction of sentence patterns for elementary and junior high levels should start with common ones, moving from easy and less complex, to more complex. It is better to let the student get familiar with sentence patterns by comprehending their meaning.
- j. The sentence patterns learned in both elementary and junior high school levels should connect well. Timely repetition of certain sentence patterns allows the student sufficient practice and hence the opportunity to learn skillful application.

## II, Guidelines for Compiling Teaching Materials

- (1) Teaching materials for both elementary and junior high school levels include both prints and audio materials.
- (2) The compilation of teaching materials should be based on the student’s interest and needs. The contents should be useful, easily comprehensible, and fun.
- (3) When compiling teaching materials, the teacher should consult the proficiency index and the appendices of listed topics, subject matter, and communicative functions in the Guidelines to ensure attaining the goals of English teaching.

(4) The teaching materials and activities designed for the elementary level should center around cultivating, primarily, listening and speaking competencies and, secondarily, reading and writing competencies. For junior high school level, the goal should be balanced development of the four skills.

(5) The compilation of teaching materials should be consistent with the *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT). Every unit should provide daily-life scenarios for selected themes, sentence patterns, and communication functions. The activities designed should cover a good variety, with an emphasis on promoting communicative competence.

(6) The activities for each unit should center around specific topics or communicative functions. The vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns should be introduced in a spiral, upward model from easy and less complicated to harder and more demanding. Timely review units provide the student opportunities for repeated practices.

(7) Topics, sentence patterns, and communication functions which have been introduced can recur when higher order applications are presented.

(8) The topics should be relevant to the student's life experience, with various language forms reflecting the student's progress in age and in English competence.

(9) The materials should be easy, comprehensible, and fun, with an attempt to include songs, dialogs, rhymes, letters, stories, and skits.

(10) The student's interest and learning outcomes are enhanced when daily-life topics/themes are integrated with a variety of language forms and offer the student varied language learning experiences.

### III. Guidelines on Teaching Approaches

(1) The crucial key to success in English teaching is to build up a language-rich learning environment in schools and classes, which encourages learning through natural contacts with English.

(2) Based on teaching objectives, the instruction should make use of all kinds of materials--audiotapes, videotapes, books, pictures, computer-aided instruction--and expose learners to English using rhymes, songs, jazz chants, simple stories, and cartoons for improving listening and speaking abilities.

(3) The teacher should speak as much English as possible during instruction and thus increase the student's exposure to English listening and speaking.

- (4) Interactive activities and contextualized scenarios for practice are preferred to one-way knowledge transmission by the teacher.
- (5) Comprehension of meaning is the center of listening comprehension training, while the expression of meaning is the core for speaking activities. The use of teaching aids and props facilitates comprehension.
- (6) Simplified interesting stories and short articles can be used to increase interest and ability in reading.
- (7) Realia, such as menus, timetables, itineraries, maps, or signs from real life, can be employed to serve as reading supplements.
- (8) Instruction in writing starts from copying and imitating in the elementary grades. The development of writing competence should start from simple sentence writing, form filling, and guided writing to the writing of easy letters in the junior high school years.
- (9) Adequate reviews and hands-on experiences should be emphasized and take the place of rote memorization for higher interest and better results.
- (10) Supplemental materials should be provided to more advanced students in class to meet individual needs.

### III Guidelines on Assessment

- (1) Multiple forms of assessment are suggested. Formative evaluation can be used more frequently for the elementary level to determine the student's entry behavior of learning and to evaluate individual progress. Portfolios, which document an individual student's performance in all learning activities with related works, can serve as reference for final assessment. Learning attitude and degree of participation can be both taken into account.
- (2) In addition to numerical scores, narrative description is another form of assessment.
- (3) To rely less on written tests for assessing listening and speaking abilities, oral practice, pair work, role play and small group interaction in class all serve to assess listening and speaking abilities. For junior high students, the assessment, based on the teaching objectives, should cover the language components, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, the four skills, and pragmatics. In addition to paper-and-pencil tests, tests on listening comprehension and oral expression should be covered. Assessment can also include the student's attendance, participation in class, learning attitudes, and the quality and frequency of assignments handed in.

#### IV. Guidelines on Teaching Resources

- (1) The teacher is encouraged to employ as much as possible prints, audio-visual media, and teaching aids to attain the expected goals in teaching the four skills.
- (2) Besides texts, the teachers should have an appropriate teacher's manual, student's workbook, tapes or CD for classroom instruction.
- (3) In addition, they can develop teaching aids or supplemental materials for more interesting instruction and better learning results, such as flash cards, posters, pictures of specific scenarios, picture books, basic reading materials, videotapes, and software for computer-aided instruction.

## Appendix A-1. Proficiency Index for Both Elementary School & Junior High School Periods (Translated by Author)

### 1. Language Competency

#### (1) Listening

<b>Elementary school level</b>	<p>The student</p> <p>1.1.1 Can distinguish basic English phonemes.</p> <p>1.1.2 Can distinguish the stress of basic vocabulary, phrases and sentences.</p> <p>1.1.3 Can distinguish the intonation between questions and statements.</p> <p>1.1.4 Can understand common classroom and daily-life expressions.</p> <p>1.1.5 Can understand simple sentences and easy daily dialogues.</p> <p>1.1.6 Can understand the primary contents of rhymes and nursery rhymes.</p> <p>1.1.7 Can understand the primary contents of simple children’s literature and skits through the visual aids of pictures, puppets and body movements.</p>
<b>Junior high school level</b>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities based on the foundation built up from the elementary level:</p> <p>1-2-1 Can appreciate the rhythm and beats of simple poems.</p> <p>1-2-2 Can understand daily-life conversation and simple stories.</p> <p>1-2-3 Can understand the basic contents of simple films and skits.</p>

#### (2) Speaking

<p><b>Elementary school level</b></p>	<p>The student</p> <p>2-1-1 Can sound out alphabet correctly.</p> <p>2-1-2 Can sound out commonly used key words and phrases correctly.</p> <p>2-1-3 Can sound out simple sentences with correct stress and intonations.</p> <p>2-1-4 Can participate in the oral drills in class.</p> <p>2-1-5 Can introduce himself/ herself in simple English.</p> <p>2-1-6 Can use simple classroom expressions.</p> <p>2-1-7 Can use basic expressions for social interactions.</p> <p>2-1-8 Can make simple questions, answers and statements.</p> <p>2-1-9 Can recite or sing songs and rhymes.</p> <p>2-1-10 Can describe pictures with simple English.</p> <p>2-1-11 Can do simple role playing based on pictures or cues given.</p> <p>2-1-12 Can play a role in simple children’s skits.</p>
<p><b>Junior high school level</b></p>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities on the foundation built up at the elementary level:</p> <p>2-2-1 Can use primary classroom expressions.</p> <p>2-2-2 Can participate in the oral drills and discussions in class.</p> <p>2-2-3 Can introduce families and friends using simple English.</p> <p>2-2-4 Can express personal needs, desires and feelings in simple English.</p> <p>2-2-5 Can make adequate self expression and communication according to various contexts and occasions.</p> <p>2-2-6 Can describe daily-life-related people, events, and objects in simple English.</p>

	<p>2-2-7 Can participate in simple skits.</p> <p>2-2-8 Can introduce both domestic and foreign customs and cultures in simple English.</p>
--	--

(3)Reading

<p><b>Elementary school level</b></p>	<p>The student</p> <p>3-1-1 Can distinguish the letters in the alphabet.</p> <p>3-1-2 Can sound out vocabulary with phonics.</p> <p>3-1-3 Can distinguish some basic words and phrases.</p> <p>3-1-4 Can understand simple English signs.</p> <p>3-1-5 Can distinguish common words and phrases in stories, rhymes and songs.</p> <p>3-1-6 Can understand simple sentences.</p> <p>3-1-7 Can follow the teacher or cassette to sing or recite songs and rhymes.</p> <p>3-1-8 Can follow the teacher or cassette to correctly recite the dialogs or stories in the text.</p> <p>3-1-9 Can read and understand most of the simple stories and children’s skits through the visual aids of pictures, flash cards, etc.</p>
<p><b>Junior high school level</b></p>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities on the foundation built up at the elementary level:</p> <p>3-2-1 Can distinguish the cursive writing of English alphabet.</p> <p>3-2-2 Can use a dictionary to check the pronunciation and meaning of words and phrases.</p> <p>3-2-3 Can understand common English signs, charts and graphs.</p> <p>3-2-4 Can recite short stories, articles, etc.</p> <p>3-2-5 Can preview the texts and understand the main ideas.</p> <p>3-2-6 Can understand the plot and contents of dialogs, short</p>

	<p>articles, letters, stories and skits.</p> <p>3-2-7 Can read simple articles of different forms or on different topics.</p> <p>3-2-8 Can understand and appreciate simple poems and skits.</p>
--	--

(4)Writing

<b>Elementary school level</b>	<p>The student</p> <p>4-1-1 Can write both upper and lower cases of the printed alphabet.</p> <p>4-1-2 Can write his or her own name.</p> <p>4-1-3 Can copy the words and phrases already learned.</p> <p>4-1-4 Can copy or make similar simple sentences.</p> <p>4-1-5 Can spell and write commonly used key words and phrases (at least 80 words).</p>
<b>Junior high school level</b>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities on the foundation built up at the elementary level:</p> <p>4-2-1 Can write simple sentences.</p> <p>4-2-2 Can fill out simple forms and materials.</p> <p>4-2-3 Can write simple cards, letters and paragraphs.</p>

(5)Pragmatics

<b>Elementary school level</b>	<p>The student</p> <p>5-1-1 Can correctly distinguish, read and write the entire English alphabet.</p> <p>5-1-2 Can understand and distinguish common English expressions in daily communication.</p> <p>5-1-3 Can use simple daily communication with at least 200 productive words and phrases orally and 80 words and phrases in writing.</p> <p>5-1-4 Can understand letter/sound correspondence through phonics and try to sound out and spell out words.</p>
--------------------------------	--

	5-1-5 Can understand common expressions in daily conversation (such as greetings, giving thanks, making apologies and saying goodbye) and give adequate responses.
<b>Junior high school level</b>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities on the foundation built up at the elementary level:</p> <p>5-2-1 Can apply letter/sound correspondence to sound out and spell out words.</p> <p>5-2-2 Can apply at least 1000 words and phrases in communication through listening, speaking, reading and writing when graduating.</p> <p>5-2-3 Can understand and fill out simple forms, materials, etc.</p> <p>5-2-4 Can understand daily conversations, simple stories or broadcasts, and take notes in simple phrases or sentences.</p> <p>5-2-5 Can understand stories and simple articles and narrate or write the main ideas in several simple sentences.</p> <p>5-2-6 Can understand simple letters, notes, invitation cards and etc. in daily communication and reply briefly orally or by writing.</p>

2. Interest and strategies in learning

<b>Elementary school level</b>	<p>The student</p> <p>6-1-1 Can concentrate on the teacher's instruction and demonstration.</p> <p>6-1-2 Enjoys participating in all kinds of oral practices.</p> <p>6-1-3 Enjoys responding to the questions raised by the teacher or classmates.</p> <p>6-1-4 Actively asks questions to the teacher or classmates.</p>
--------------------------------	---

	<p>6-1-5 Shows curiosity in learning and can give examples or anti-examples.</p> <p>6-1-6 Actively finishes the homework assigned by the teacher.</p> <p>6-1-7 Enjoys reading outside English materials after class.</p> <p>6-1-8 Notices what he or she has learned in English used in daily life or from mass media.</p> <p>6-1-9 Explores the meaning and tries to imitate others when exposed to English in daily life.</p> <p>6-1-10 Enjoys trying to use English when opportunities arise in daily life.</p>
<p><b>Junior high school level</b></p>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities on the foundation built up at the elementary level:</p> <p>6-2-1 Enjoys participating in the oral practices in class.</p> <p>6-2-2 Not afraid to make mistakes, likes to communicate and express personal views.</p> <p>6-2-3 Understand basic English reading skills and hence have greater ability and interest in reading.</p> <p>6-2-4 Understand that the ultimate goal of learning English is for communication and self-expression and that the knowledge of grammar is only a tool for learning instead of a goal in learning.</p> <p>6-2-5 Can actively review the teaching materials and sort them out for summaries.</p> <p>6-2-6 Can actively review and preview lessons.</p> <p>6-2-7 Enjoys making contact with English films, songs, broadcasts, books, etc.</p> <p>6-2-8 Can use simple reference books (such as dictionaries) and actively understands the contents of English he or</p>

	<p>she makes contact with.</p> <p>6-2-9 Enjoys participating in activities which promote English competency (such as English camps, contests of reciting or skits, etc.).</p> <p>6-2-10 Is interested in cultures and customs of various places and seeks opportunities to make contact with other cultures.</p> <p>6-2-11 Enjoys trying to read stories, magazines, and other outside readings.</p> <p>6-2-12 Can actively search for related teaching resources online or from outside materials and shares them with the teacher and classmates.</p>
--	---

### 3. Cultures and Customs

<b>Elementary school level</b>	<p>The student</p> <p>7-1-1 Can understand primary holidays and customs in foreign countries.</p> <p>7-1-2 Can understand how to talk about domestic holidays in English.</p> <p>7-1-3 Can understand some basic international etiquette.</p>
<b>Junior high school level</b>	<p>The student continues to develop the following abilities on the foundation built up in the elementary level:</p> <p>7-2-1 Can understand foreign customs and cultures.</p> <p>7-2-2 Can introduce both Chinese and foreign customs and cultures in simple English.</p> <p>7-2-3 Can understand basic manners in speaking shared in international societies.</p> <p>7-2-4 Can understand and respect different customs and cultures.</p> <p>7-2-5 Has global views.</p>

**Appendix A-2. Proficiency Index & Corresponding Basic Capabilities  
(Translated by Author)**

<b>Basic Capabilities</b>	<b>The ability or attitude English programs can cultivate in students through themes, communicative functions or activities</b>	<b>Elementary school level</b>	<b>Junior high school level</b>
<b>1. Self understanding and potential development</b>	Understand the expressions of body parts.	X	X
	Understand how to express personal interests and hobbies in simple English.	X	X
	Understand how to describe personal appearance and personality in simple English.	X	X
	Understand how to describe a daily schedule in simple English.	X	X
	Understand how to describe personal special skills in simple English.	X	X
	Understand various kinds of occupations.	X	X
<b>2. Appreciation, presentation and creativity</b>	Appreciate the phonological rhythm of English.	X	X
	Recite or sing simple chants, rhymes and songs.	X	X
	Appreciate simplified children's stories.	X	X
	Appreciate simplified literary works.		X
	Appreciate simplified cartoons.	X	X
	Appreciate simplified broadcast, TV programs or films.		X
<b>3. Career</b>	Cultivate basic abilities in English and	X	X

<b>planning and life-long learning</b>	build up a foundation for life-long learning.		
<b>4. Expression, communication and sharing</b>	Use simple classroom expressions.	X	X
	Participate in oral practices in class.	X	X
	Participate in classroom discussions.		X
	Use simple English for daily-life conversations.	X	X
	Use simple English to introduce oneself, family, and friends.	X	X
	Use simple English to express personal needs and feelings.	X	X
	Use simple English to express personal views.		X
	Use simple English to share personal experiences.		X
	Use simple English to describe related people, events and objects in daily life.	X	X
	Use basic expressions for social occasions.	X	X
	Understand how English-speaking people communicate.		X
	Use simple English to appropriately express oneself and communicate with others on different occasions (such as greetings, expressing agreements, apologizing, saying goodbye, etc.).	X	X
<b>5. Respect, care and team work</b>	Cultivate the respect for human rights, gender, disabled groups and minorities through English learning.		X

	Cultivate the ability to care about family, friends, and communities through English learning.	X	X
	Cultivate the concept of environmental protection through English learning.	X	X
<b>6. Culture learning and cross-cultural understanding</b>	Understand both domestic and foreign holidays and customs.	X	X
	Understand both Chinese and foreign customs and cultures.	X	X
	Appreciate simplified children’s literature and thus understand foreign cultures.		X
	Understand the etiquette of the international communities.	X	X
	Appreciate and accept different cultures and customs.	X	X
	Cultivate global views.		X
<b>7. Planning, organization and execution</b>	Use effective foreign language learning strategies to plan for one’s own English learning.		X
<b>8. Use of technology and information</b>	Understand some commonly used expressions in technology and information science.	X	X
	Use technology to improve interest in English learning.		X
	Use worldwide web to search for information.	X	X

<b>9. Taking initiative and researching</b>	Use dictionary and other reference books to check information.	X	X
<b>10. Independent thinking and problem solving</b>	Cultivate problem-solving ability through using English.		X

## Appendix B. Interview Questions Modified from Ayers (1989) (Translated by Author)

### I. The reflective practitioner 教學反省

1. What do you like most about teaching? What are the rewards for you? When do you feel best as a teacher? What are your favorite moments? 對於英文教學,你最熱愛什麼? 你覺得會有什麼所得或回饋? 身為英文老師,什麼時候會令你有最好的感受? 你最喜愛什麼樣的時刻?
2. What is most difficult about teaching? Do you ever feel like leaving the profession? Why? Why do you stay? If you could, what things would you change in your work? 英文教學上最困難的是什麼? 你曾經想離開教職嗎? 為什麼? 又為什麼繼續教書呢? 若是許可的話,你想在你的工作上做什麼改變?
3. Which children appeal to you? Why? Which ones make your work problematic? 哪一種學生會令你喜愛? 為什麼? 哪一種學生會令你的工作困難重重?
4. What is the role of parents in your work? What should it be? 在你的英文教學中,學生家長大都扮演什麼角色? 你覺得他們應該扮演什麼角色?
5. Why is your space arranged the way it is? Why do you follow particular routines? 你如何安排你課室的空間? 為什麼? 你為什麼有某些特殊的教學程序? 這些概念是從哪裡來的?
6. Why do you teach as you do? What criteria do you have in mind? What do you take to be valuable in your teaching? What other teachers do you admire? Why? 你為什麼會用你現在這樣的教學方法教英文? 你腦海裡有怎麼樣的一套標準? 你的教學中什麼是你覺得特別珍貴的? 你還有什麼特別佩服的英文老師嗎? 你為什麼佩服他(們)?
7. What is your role in the lives of children and families? What are your goals for children? How do you meet these goals? 你覺得在你所教的學生和其家庭中,你扮演著什麼角色? 你要如何達到這(些)目標?
8. What is your role in preparing children for the future? Are there any conflicts between your goals and the school's goals? Society's goals? If so, do the conflicts affect the children? 你覺得自己應如何幫助學生預備面對將來? 在你的目標與學校的目標之間,有什麼衝突嗎? 與社會的目標之間,有什麼衝突嗎? 如果有,這些衝突對學生有什麼影響?

### II. The autobiographer 生涯回顧

1. Can you describe any chance factors that led to your becoming an English teacher? Are you sometimes surprised to see what you have become? 請描述當初是否有什麼機緣使你後來成為英文老師? 省視現在的自己,你是否偶而會驚奇自己的際遇?

2. When did you decide to become an English teacher? What did your decision mean to you at that time? What was it about English teaching that interested or attracted you? 你何時決定要當英文老師的呢？當初如此的決定，對你有何種意義？當時你為什麼會對「教英文」感興趣呢？「教英文」對你到底有什麼魅力？
3. What role, explicitly or implicitly, did your family play in your decision to teach English? Do you remember any early experiences that affected your decision to teach English? 不論外顯或默許的因素，當時你家人對你要當英文老師的決定，有什麼反應或影響嗎？
4. Do you remember any outstanding English teachers from your years as a student? What do you remember? Did this influence your decision in any way? 你記不記得學生時代曾經教過你的任何傑出的老師？你對他(們)還有什麼記憶？他(們)對你當英文老師的決定，有任何影響嗎？
5. What was your formal teacher education like? Did it prepare you for the realities of teaching? Is teaching pretty much what you'd expected? When you first taught were there any colleagues or mentors who influenced you? How? 請描述當初成為英文老師之前所受的正規教育。這樣的教育是否幫助你面對「教英文」的真正狀況？「教英文」是否真如你起初所期待的？初為人師時，有沒有曾經影響你的同事或前輩？什麼樣的影響？
6. Can you remember when you felt comfortable as an English teacher, confident with your own philosophy and practical knowledge? 你記得什麼時候開始對自己的教學理念與實務 感覺舒適且具有自信？
7. Can you think of early experiences that continue to influence what and how you teach English now? Can you describe the central teaching ideas that guide your work, and how you came to adopt them? 你可以回想起來現在的教學內容或方法是來自早期某些經驗的影響嗎？你可以描述現今你主要的教學理念嗎？這些教學理念是怎麼來的？
8. Have you changed as an English teacher over the years? How? 身為一位英文老師，你覺得自己這幾年來有什麼改變？

### III. The whole person 全人的省思

1. What is of value to you beyond teaching? Are you involved in any social or political groups? 除了教學之外，你覺得還有什麼有價值的東西？你有參與任何社會、宗教、政治團體嗎？
2. What concerns you most about children and families today? About the state of society or the world? 對現今的孩童與家庭，你最關切什麼？對現今的社會或世界，又最關切什麼？
3. Are you involved in any other projects or interests outside of teaching? What? How are they important to you? 除了教學之外，你還參與任何計劃、研究、或嗜好活動嗎？它(們)對你有何重要意義？
4. What have you read recently that was significant to you? 近來有否讀到什麼對你深

具意義的東西？

5. What do you imagine you'll be doing in five years? In ten years? 請你勾勒一下你在未來五年內會做什麼？未來十年內呢？

## **Appendix C. Consent Letter from the Principal of Happy Whale Elementary**

March 26, 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

Lily Hsiu-Lien Chiang has permission to conduct her dissertation study of English-As-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) education for Taiwanese grade school students at our school during the school years of 2001 and 2002 (that is, from May 2002 to July 2003). As a researcher, she has the permission to observe in class, attend the school activities and events, interview and interact with teachers and parents with their written consent, as well as record and transcribe the data related to the study. Also, she can use the documents the school agrees to release to her for her study.

Sincerely yours,

Principal of Happy Whale  
Ocean City, Taiwan

## **Appendix D. Consent Form for Teachers**

### *Informed Consent to Participate in Research*

#### **The University of Texas at Austin**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) or his/her representative will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

#### **Title of Research Study:**

The meaning of EFL education conceptualized by individual teachers at a suburban elementary school in southern Taiwan

#### **Principal Investigator(s) (include faculty sponsor), UT affiliation, and Telephone Number(s):**

Lily Hsiu-lien Chiang, graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction, 512-371-3391  
Faculty supervisor: Professor Stuart Reifel, 512-471-4089

#### **Funding source:**

None

#### **What is the purpose of this study?**

This study is being conducted for my dissertation research for the completion of my Ph.D. degree. This research examines how Taiwanese EFL teachers form their beliefs in EFL teaching and learning, what philosophy or modifications they have developed

throughout the years and how these teachers construct the curricula both congruent and incongruent with the beliefs they embrace when meeting the challenges of the society. This study is guided by research questions. How do the individual teachers and the respective school culture respond to change? How does the national reform in Taiwan affect the practices of EFL teachers at the immediate interactive level with students? How do the EFL teachers' perceptions and practices influence or reflect their interactions with the school, the students' families and their social levels? With the insights drawn from teacher practitioners, I hope to represent the new phenomenon of early childhood EFL teaching in Taiwan.

The focal participants are the EFL teachers, who administer and implement the school-wide EFL programs in a suburban, working-class populated elementary school. The principal and key informants, such as primary grade teachers, parents and community representatives, will also be included as the study unfolds in the actual naturalistic settings. The duration of the study is about one year, beginning in May, 2002 and ending in May, 2003.

### **What will be done if you take part in this research study?**

Through close discussion with the researcher, the researcher will consistently observe and videotape 2 classes of yours every week. The researcher will serve as an aide in the classes. You will watch the videotapes of your teaching with the researcher, stop the tape whenever you and the researcher feel like to ask, comment, or reflect on certain part of the tape at the end of every week. The researcher will interview you as many times as needed. You and the researcher will discuss various topics which interest either you or/and the researcher through writing in a dialogue journal and informal conversations during the week. The interviews and discussions on various occasions will be audiotaped. Your lesson plans and class-related materials will be collected. Later, the researcher will ask you to read, add, clarify, correct or/and comment on the interview transcripts, drafts of findings and interpretations for accuracy.

### **What are the possible discomforts and risks?**

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. It will take approximately three to five hours a week of your time to work with the researcher on top of your original workload. It may bore you or increase your discomfort when the researcher asks you to reflect on your own teaching and other related issues.

### **What are the possible benefits to you or to others?**

The possible benefits for the participants are the opportunity to express their opinions during the interview process, and help make the teachers, the parents and the administrators aware of their unvoiced beliefs about children's EFL programs. Other members of the EFL program community will be able to learn about different perspectives and concerns of both consumers and providers from this study. Other educators can examine this study as they have to make their decisions about how to

construct a curriculum which is satisfactory to the teacher, the parent, the administrator, and also the young learner.

**If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything?**

It will not cost you anything to participate in this study.

**Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study?**

There will be no financial compensation for your participation in this study.

**What if you are injured because of the study?**

This study involves no physical risks.

**If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?**

**Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin.**

How can you withdraw from this research study?

**If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact: Lily Hsiu-lien Chiang at (512) 371-3391 in Austin, Texas or (07) 716-6721 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.**

**In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, 512/232-4383.**

*How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?*

**Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect**

**the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. If the research project is sponsored then the sponsor also have the legal right to review your research records. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order.**

**If the results of this research are published or presented at meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.**

A pseudonym will be used with your agreement to replace your real name in all recordings. Both video and audio recordings will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. The video and audio tapes will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. They will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the researcher and her associates. Even after they are transcribed or coded, they will be retained safely for five years before destruction after the completion of this study for possible future analysis.

**Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this *study*?**

The researcher will not benefit from your participation in this study beyond completing the study, publishing or presenting the results.

**Signatures:**

**As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name of Subject**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Principal Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **Appendix E. Autobiography of the Researcher**

For as long as I can remember, teaching has been my only career choice, probably because, among all the professionals, teachers were the most familiar and approachable figures to me. My father was an elementary teacher and a profound adult influence throughout every aspect of my life, both at home and in school. My childhood experience with my father had a powerful impact on how I viewed teachers.

My father allowed me to follow him to any corner of the school, where I observed closely all his colleagues, away from the podium, seeing the faces the pupils knew only from class. I found this much more interesting than social studies or reading storybooks. I learned to see elementary teachers as human beings, parents, and beneficiaries of power and vested interest, rather than as the transcendental deities they were in pupils' minds! I was sometimes disillusioned by the real faces of these highly respected teachers when what they said didn't match what they did, or when I found that they only cared about their own kids instead of others'. I soon got into the habit of observing teachers—how they treated different pupils, whom they preferred, how they labeled some, to whom they assigned good and bad tasks, what they valued from children.

Compared to other children, who are expected to be academically outstanding, I was truly blessed because my father never burdened me with overly strict academic standards or pushed me to become a top student. Practicing the abacus, calligraphy, and painting were mainly what my dad's children were exposed to at home. He himself painted frequently. Contrary to most males, he not only kept discipline at home, but was also nurturing, far more nurturing and loving than my mother. Most males in our culture lock their families out of their world, but my father shared his spiritual world with his family through his painting and gave his children all his attention. I know my father's teaching role at home has contributed to my belief about parents as their children's first and most influential teachers.

Grammar translation and, later, audio-lingual approaches prevailed for a long time in the English education portion of Taiwanese formal schooling; thus, these approaches shaped my first years as an EFL learner in junior and senior high in the 70s. However, my father bought me a small tape on English pronunciation by Lilian Chao, also known as the Mother Goose of Taiwan, which gave me a bit more enjoyment in phonetic awareness as I first learned English. Just as I recited Chinese texts in a traditional classroom, reading and sounding aloud the English texts became one of my primary learning strategies. I imagined myself speaking those texts to natives in real-life contexts. I used to tell myself, “How nice if I can really talk like this to natives one day!”

When I started my major in foreign languages and literature at a Catholic college, I intensively interacted with English texts, strict requirements of American nuns, and foreign-looking English teachers in class. This was a turning point in my English learning, for I was required to apply my accumulated repertoire of English in real-world communication, since I literally lived with the target language group every day at school. Through contact in and out of the classroom, I began to see how language and culture are inseparably linked. Learning foreign languages and cultures was not only an end, but also a means to cross-cultural understanding, to a bigger world waiting for my exploration! Since then I have experienced more close-up contacts and in-depth perceptions *in* the target languages and cultures: taking a month-long trip to Europe with my French professor; living in a global village with delegates from many nations made possible by UNESCO; spending one year learning language and culture in Paris; taking students to the States for summer immersion programs; and now studying in Austin for five years for my Ph. D. All these experiences have enriched and enhanced my learning in many respects, just as my early language learning contributed to my later life experiences.

After a long time of “apprenticeship of observation,” it was finally my turn to play *my* role as a teacher! I started teaching when I was still a master’s degree student in Taiwan. My childhood experience in art strengthened my presentations with creative

teaching materials and activities, because ready-made teaching aids for English teaching were scarce back then. My practices evolved as I tried various approaches to English instructional programs. I experienced grammar-translation instruction in my junior and senior high school years, spending time learning English through analyzing grammar texts and selections in adapted readers. In my college years, the audio-lingual method in the language laboratory, equipped with individualized cassette players and headsets, enhanced my accuracy and fluency levels by repetitive drills in listening and speaking comprehension. Accompanied by the need to communicate with native-English-speaking teachers, real-life language use opened my eyes and ears for another level of understanding—the target culture through literature. As I started teaching, I acknowledged the importance of both input and output of the language and hence blended grammar, situation, and everyday topics with communicative tasks and small-group or pair activities. For many years and at many levels I adopted a series of texts written with the functional-notional approach, for I saw the positive effects among students. During the year of teaching and coordinating a children's English program at a cram school, the thing I found most enjoyable was the experience of parents' sitting in class and collaborating with them on their children's learning.

In the later stages of my teaching at junior colleges, my endeavors centered in two areas: inviting students to monitor their learning attitudes, strategies, and outcomes with me, and involving students in both in- and out-of-class opportunities for practical language use by closely collaborating with a native-speaking teacher friend. In addition to regular Saturday afternoon English-learning activities, my teacher friend and I teamed for two years to provide students an immersion experience in the target language and culture. With the hope of giving learners the autonomy to decide what and how they could learn more effectively, I believed that letting students experience the English language in its native culture would give them a more holistic view and make inquiry more meaningful.

Teaching is never a one-way road. Teachers and students support each other. This mutuality is especially true with students who are struggling: the greater the

struggle, the greater the chance for growth, for the teacher as well as the student. Coincidentally, I remember hearing my father make similar comments. I spent time after class with my students getting to know them and learning how better to teach them. The students became my friends and helpers, building my role as an approachable teacher, rather than the only authority in class. Their stories about learning, as well as my long-term status as a learner, served as the crucial connection between my different roles.

I continued to long for opportunities of professional growth to recharge myself in the teaching profession. The five years at the University of Texas at Austin have fulfilled my goals to broaden my horizons, both personally and professionally. To live as an independent grown-up woman away from my family in such an individualistic culture is challenging. Moreover, the academic training at the doctoral level has expanded my knowledge regarding learning theories, curriculum development, cultural foundations, and research methodologies. My specialization in early childhood education has satisfied my desire to couple language learning with early childhood education to provide a better foundation in English education in Taiwan at the elementary level. At best, a good English teacher at the elementary level should be trained to teach the English language and culture as well as to have sufficient knowledge of children's development in general and in language in particular. Likewise, a researcher on the topic requires all these backgrounds.

After all these years, I have evolved from a simple teacher, confined and satisfied with classroom teaching and students' progress, to a practitioner with a broadened view of education embedded in its socio-cultural context, and finally to a participant observer in the elementary school community, a place with which I was intimately familiar because of my father's role in my childhood. Without doubt, we are all products of family, of the culture, and of the socio-cultural contexts in which we are raised. What a thrilling process to have shared and seen the abundance of possibilities at Happy Whale, and, on the other hand, the complexity that each teacher brings from his

or her life journey! From following the journeys of four teachers in the field, I seemed to have relived again my own journey in English learning and teaching.

## **REFERENCES**

## References

- Almarza, G. G. (1996). Student foreign language teacher's knowledge growth. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 50-78). New York: Cambridge.
- Atkinson, D. (1987). The mother tongue in the classroom: A neglected resource? *ELT Journal*, 41 (4), 241-247.
- Ayers, W. (1989). *The good preschool teacher: Six teachers reflect on their lives*. New York: Teachers College.
- Ben-Peretz, M. (1990). *The teacher-curriculum encounter: Freeing teachers from the tyranny of texts*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Block, J. H., & Hazelp, K. (1994). Teachers' beliefs. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 6100-6103). New York: Pergamon.
- Borg, S. (1998). Teachers' pedagogical systems and grammar teaching: A qualitative study. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32 (1), 9-38.
- Borko, H., & Shavelson, R. J. (1991). Teacher decision making. In B. F. Jones & L. Idol (Eds.), *Dimensions of thinking and cognitive instruction* (pp. 311-346). New Jersey: NCREL.
- Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Brown, D., & Wendel, R. (1993) An examination of first-year teachers' beliefs about lesson planning. *Action in Teacher Education*, 15 (2), 63-73.
- Bruner, J. (1985). Narrative and paradigmatic modes of thought. In E. Eisner (Ed.), *Learning and teaching the ways of knowing* (pp. 97-115). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Bullough, R. V. (1991). Exploring personal teaching metaphors in preservice teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 42 (1), 43-51.
- Calderhead, J. (1981). A psychological approach to research on teachers' classroom decision making. *British Educational Research Journal*, 7, 51-57.
- Calderhead, J. (1983, April). *Research into teachers' and student teachers' cognitions: Exploring the nature of classroom practice*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.
- Calderhead, J. (1988). The contribution of field experiences to student primary teachers' professional learning. *Research in Education*, 40, 33-49.

- Calderhead, J. (1996). Teachers: Beliefs and knowledge. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 709-725). New York: Macmillan.
- Calderhead, J., & Robson, M. (1991). Images of teaching: Student teachers' early conceptions of classroom practice. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 7 (1), 1-8.
- Calgren, I., & Lindblad, S. (1991). On teachers' practical reasoning and professional knowledge: Considering conceptions of context in teachers' thinking. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 7 (5/6), 507-516.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). Language teaching approaches: An overview. In M. Celce-Murcia, & L. McIntosh (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. New York: Newbury House.
- Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). (1979). *School-based curriculum development*. Washington, DC: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Chan, Y. C. (1999a). Effective English teaching methodology and its background: Part I. *Elementary School Teacher*, 40 (2), 7-35.
- Chan, Y. C. (1999b). Effective English teaching methodology and its background: Part II. *Elementary School Teacher*, 40 (3), 46-52.
- Chan, Y. C. (2000). A study of the development & trend of children English Education and issues on teachers, materials, and methodology. *Journal of National Taipei Teachers College*, 13, 203-238.
- Chao, R. K. (1992). *Immigrant Chinese mothers and European-American mothers: Their aims of control and other child rearing aspects related to school achievement*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, LA.
- Chao, R. K. (1993, March). *Clarification of the authoritarian parenting style and parental control: Cultural concepts of Chinese child rearing*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the society for research in child development, New Orleans, LA.
- Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development*, 65, 1111-1119.
- Chen, C. L. (1999). English teachers' concerns in text selection. *Curriculum and Instruction Quarterly*, 2(3), 37-50.
- Chen, C. L. & Liaw, M. L. (1998). Prospectus of comprehensive implementing English teaching at the elementary level from the current practice: A case study in Taichung city. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China*. Taipei: Crane, 223-242.

- Chen, F. M., & Luster, T. (1999, April). *Chinese parenting reconsideration: Parenting practices in Taiwan*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the society for research in child development, Albuquerque, NM.
- Chen, H. L. (2000). *Teacher planning: Social studies teachers in Taiwan*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.
- Chen, H. L., & Chung, J. (2000, January). *The implementation of school-based curriculum development: School improvement in Taiwan*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Hong Kong, China.
- Chen, H. Y. (2002). Review of the implementation of Grades 1-9 curriculum: Administration. *Journal of Education Research*, 93, 11-19.
- Chen, S. J. (1998). The predicament of elementary English teaching. *Educational Resources and Research*, 23, 32-33.
- Chen, S. J. (2000). The policy of language programs. *English Teaching and Learning*, 24 (4), 53-67.
- Chen, T. L. (1998). TESOL methodology for elementary English teaching: An introduction to Audio Lingual Method, Totally Physical Response, and Communicative Language Teaching. *Elementary Education*, 39 (1), 6-12.
- Chen, T. L. (1999). A survey of teacher training programs for elementary English teaching. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China*. Taipei: Crane, 205-219.
- Cheng, F. L. (2000). *A study of current elementary English programs in Tainan city*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Tainan Teachers College, Tainan, Taiwan.
- Cheng, J. G. (1999). How to select children's literature for English teaching. *English Teaching and Learning*, 24 (2), 37-46.
- Cheng, J. G. (2001). Elementary English teachers' interpretations and perspectives of Communicative Language Teaching. *Newsletter for Teaching the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(5), 61-76.
- Chiang, H. L. (2000a). *Parents' and teachers' perceptions of EFL programs in Taiwan*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Texas at Austin.
- Chiang, H. L. (2000b). *A preliminary study of parent involvement in EFL programs in Taiwan*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Texas at Austin.
- Chiang, H. L. (2000c). *Consistencies and inconsistencies of an EFL teacher's beliefs and practices: A case study of an elementary EFL program in Taiwan*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Texas at Austin.

- Chiang, G. C. (2000). *A case study of an elementary English program*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Taichung Teachers College, Taichung, Taiwan.
- Chiu, T. M. (1998). *A study of elementary English teaching in Kaohsiung city*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Kaohsiung Normal University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
- Chou, C. T. (2002). Return to the national guidelines: Solution to the gaps between elementary and junior high school curricula. *The Educator Monthly*, 425, 6-11.
- Chou, C. T., & Hsu, J. L. (1989). *The influence of children's early English learning on later English competence*. Funded research report of National Science Council of Taiwan, the Republic of China. (No. NSC-78-0301-H003-11.)
- Chou, P. I. (2002). A closer look at Grades 1-9 curriculum. *Journal of Education Research*, 93, 32-40.
- Chu, S. C. (2001). Elementary school teachers' attitudes toward English teaching methodologies. *Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium on English teaching, Republic of China*. Taipei: Crane, 367-379.
- Chu, H. M. (1998). Teachers for elementary English teaching. *Educational Resources and Research*, 23, 6-11.
- Chu, H. M. (2002). What should elementary school students learn happily from class? *The Elementary Education Journal*, 49 (1), 1-7.
- Clandinin, D. J. (1985). Personal practical knowledge: A study of teachers' classroom images. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 15, 361-385.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1986). Rhythms in teaching: The narrative study of teachers' personal practical knowledge of classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 2, 377-387.
- Clandinin, D. J., Connelly, F. M. (1987). Teachers' personal knowledge: What counts as 'personal' in studies of the personal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 19, 487-500.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1995). *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clark, C. M. (1983). Research on teacher planning: An inventory of the knowledge base. In D. C. Smith (Ed.), *Essential knowledge for beginning educators* (pp. 5-15). Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
- Clark, C. M. (1988). Asking the right questions about teacher preparation: Contributions of research on teaching thinking. *Educational Researcher*, 17 (2), 5-12.

- Clark, C. M., & Elmore, J. L. (1981). *Transforming curriculum in mathematics, science, and writing: A case study of teacher yearly planning* (Research Series No. 99). East Lansing: Michigan State University, Institute for research on Teaching.
- Clark, C. M., & Peterson, P. L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 255-296). New York: Macmillan.
- Clark, C. M., & Yinger, R. J. (1977). Research on teacher's thinking. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 7(4), 279-304.
- Clark, C. M., & Yinger, R. J. (1979a). Teachers' thinking. In P. L. Peterson and H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Research on teaching: Concepts, findings, and implications*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Clark, C. M., & Yinger, R. J. (1979b). *Three studies of teacher planning*. (Research Series No. 55). East Lansing: Michigan State University.
- Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17, 1-19.
- Collinson, V. (1996, July). *Becoming an exemplary teacher: Integrating professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Japan-United States Teacher Education Consortium, Naruto, Japan. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED401227)
- Cong wai yu dao di er guan fang yu—ti sheng quan ming ying yu neng li [From a foreign language to the second official language—promote English competency among the citizens]. (2002, April 4). *China Times*, p. 2.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1986). On narrative methods, personal philosophy, and narrative unities in the study of teaching. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 23, 293-310.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experiences and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Corkill, R. A. (1995). Instructional leadership behaviors perceived as important by teachers and principals for academic achievement in selected south Texas elementary schools. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 55 (10), 3047A. (University Microfilms No. AAC95-06581)
- Curtain, H. A., & Pesola, C. A. (1988). *Languages and children—Making the match: Foreign language instruction in the elementary school*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Crist, J., Marx, R. W., & Peterson, P. L. (1974). *Teacher behavior in the organizational domain*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for R & D in Teaching.

- Da xue bi ye sheng, jin nian jin qi cheng zhao bu dao gong zuo [70% of the college graduates this year could not find a job]. (2002, Aug. 26). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 9.
- Dai, W. Y. (1998). Survey of current English programs at elementary schools. Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China. Taipei: Crane.
- Dai, W. Y. (1999). New trends in the new English curriculum for Grades 1-9. In *Elementary English methodology and materials* (pp. 1-23). Taipei: Crane.
- Dai, W. Y. (2002). The theoretical foundations of comprehensive implementation of English teaching at the elementary school level. *Proceedings of the Nineteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China*. Taipei: Crane, 163-171.
- Dalgado-Gaitan, C. (1990). *Literacy for empowerment: The role of parents in children's education*. New York: Falmer.
- Danchev, A. (1982). Transfer and translation. *Finnlance*, 2, 39-61.
- Day, R. (n.d.). "Models and the knowledge base of second language teacher education." University of Hawaii Working Papers in ESL, Vol. 11 (2), 1-13. Retrieved May 24, 2003, from <http://www.hawaii.edu/sls/uhwpsel/112/day112.pdf>.
- Day, P. R., & Conklin, G. (1992). *The knowledge base in ESL/EFL teacher education*. Paper presented at the 1992 TESOL Conference, Vancouver, Canada.
- Deal, T. E., & Celotti, L. D. (1977). "Loose coupling" and the school administrator: Some recent research findings. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED140436)
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Di er guan fang yu, bian ti yi ying yu [Second official language, President suggested English]. (2002, March 31). *China Times*, p. 2.
- Doyle, W. (1979). Classroom tasks and students' abilities. In P. L. Peterson & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Research on teaching: Concepts, findings and implications* (pp. 183-209). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Doyle, W. (1986). Classroom organization and management. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., pp. 392-431). New York: Macmillan.
- Doyle, W. (1992). Curriculum and pedagogy. In P. W. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 486-516). New York: Macmillan.
- Dulay, H. C., & Burt, M. K. (1974). Natural sequences in child second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 24, 37-53.

- Dwyer, D. C., Lee, G. V., Rowan, B., & Bossert, S. T. (1983). *Five principals in action: Perspectives on instructional management*. San Francisco, CA: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development.
- Dyson, A. H., & Genishi, C. (1991). *Visions of children as language users: Research on language and language education in early childhood*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Writing, University of California.
- Elbaz, F. (1981). The teacher's "practical knowledge": Report of a case study. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11 (1), 43-69.
- Elbaz, F. (1983). *Teacher thinking: A study of practical knowledge*. New York: Nichols.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: U. of Chicago.
- Epstein, J. L. (1996). Perspectives and previews on research & policy for school, family, and community partnerships. In A. Booth & J. F. Dunn (Eds.), *Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes?* (pp. 209-246). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (Vol. 3, pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.
- Ervin-Tripp, S. (1974). Is second language learning like the first? *TESOL Quarterly*, 8, 111-129.
- Escobedo, T. H. (1993). Curricular issues in early education for culturally and linguistically diverse population. In S. Reifel (Ed.), *Advances in Early Education and Day Care: Vol. 5* (pp.213-246). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- English Teaching Resource Center. (2002). Report of EFL teachers in the school year of 2002. Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Author.
- Fan, D. H., & Wu, P. J. (2002). A case study of school-based curriculum development. *Zhang Hua Shi Da Jiao Yu Xue Bao*, 2, 171-198.
- Fan nao guo xiao ying wen shi zi bu zu [It's worrying to have insufficient elementary English teachers]. (2002, Dec. 12). *China Times*, p. 13.
- Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational Research*, 38 (1), 47-65.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (1983). Learning to teach. In L. S. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Handbook on teaching and policy* (pp. 150-170). New York: Longman.
- Feiman-Nemser, S., & Floden, R. E. (1986). The cultures of teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 505-526). New York: Macmillan.

- Firestone, W. A. (1984, April). The study of loose coupling: Problems, progress, and prospects. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. 247264)
- Freeman, D. (1990). *'Thoughtful work': Reconceptualizing the research literature on teacher thinking*. Unpublished monograph. School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT.
- Freeman, D. (1991). "To make the tacit explicit": Teacher education, emerging discourse, and conceptions of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7, 439-454.
- Freeman, D. (1996). Renaming experience/reconstructing practice. Developing new understandings of teaching. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge.
- Freeman, Y. S., & Freeman, D. E. (1998). *ESL/EFL teaching: Principles for success*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32 (3), 397-417.
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J. C. (1993). Conceptions of teaching and the education of second language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27 (2), 193-216.
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (1996). *Teacher learning in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge.
- Fullan, M. (1982). *The meaning of educational change*. Toronto, ON: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Gao she ying yu she xun zu yi wei lai xu qiu [Teacher training in Kaohsiung city prepared sufficient supply of English teachers]. (2000, Sep. 25). China Times. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Ge kui zao ying wen zhi xun [The Premier was interpellated in English]. (2002, Sep. 25). China Times. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Genishi, C. (1999). Between psychology and poststructuralism: Where is L2 learning located? *TESOL Quarterly*, 33 (2), 287-291.
- Genishi, C., Dubetz, N., & Focarino, C. (1995). Reconceptualizing theory through practice: Insights from a first-grade teacher and second-language theorists. In S. Reifel (Ed.), *Advances in Early Education and Day Care: Vol. 7* (pp.123-152). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Genishi, C., & Dyson, A. H. (1984). *Language assessment in the early years*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

- Gestwicki, C. (2000). *Home, school, and community relations: A guide to working with families*. Albany, NJ: Delmar.
- Glassman, R. B. (1973). Persistence and loose coupling in living systems. *Behavioral Science, 18*, 83-98.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White plains, NY: Longman.
- Goldstein, L. S. (1997). *Teaching with love: A feminist approach to early childhood education*. New York: PeterLang.
- Golombek, P. R. (1998). A study of language teachers' personal practical knowledge. *TESOL Quarterly, 32* (3), 447-464.
- Goodman, J. (1988). Constructing a practical philosophy of teaching: A study of preservice teachers' professional perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 4*, 121-137.
- Goodman, K. S., Goodman, Y. M., & Hood, W. J. (Eds.) (1989). *The whole language evaluation book*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Grossman, P. L. (1989). A study in contrast: Sources of pedagogical content knowledge for secondary English. *Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(5), 24-31.
- Grossman, P. L. (1990). *The making of a teacher: Teacher knowledge and teacher education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Grossman, P. L. (1991). What are we talking about anyway? Subject-matter knowledge of secondary English teachers. In J. Brophy (Ed.), *Advances in research on teaching* (pp. 245-264). Connecticut: JAI Press Inc.
- Grossman, P. L., & Richert, A. E. (1988). Unacknowledged knowledge growth: A re-examination of the effects of teacher education. *Teaching and teacher Education, 4* (1), 53-62.
- Gui, S. J. (1998). The practice of English teaching at Ta-Zhi Elementary School. *Educational Resources and Research, 23*, 12-18.
- Guo xiao ying yu jiao xue, jiao zhang: cai fen ji fen zu [Elementary English teaching, Minister says: Group students in levels]. (2002, April 25). *Central Daily News*, p. 13.
- Guo xiao ying yu jiao xue, qi zhi cheng xiang cha ju [Elementary English teaching means more than city-suburb discrepancies]. (2002, July 13). *United News*, p. 3.
- Hakuta, K. (1990). Language and cognition in bilingual children. In A. M. Padilla, H. Fairchild, & C. M. Valdez (Eds.), *Bilingual Education* (pp. 47-59). Newbury Park, MA: Sage.

- Halliwell, S. (1992). *Teaching English in the primary classroom*. New York: Longman.
- Harbord, J. (1992). The use of the mother tongue in the classroom. *ELT Journal*, 46 (4), 350-355.
- Hargreaves, A. (1991). Foreword. In W. Louden, *Understanding teaching, continuity and change in teachers' knowledge* (pp. vi-viii). London: Cassell.
- Ho, M. C. (1998). Culture studies and motivation in foreign and second language learning in Taiwan. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 11 (2), 165-182.
- Horwitz, E. K. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course. *Foreign Language Annals*, 18 (4), 333-340.
- Hsieh, W. C. (2002). The implementation and difficulties of school-based management. *Bulletin of Educational Research*, 48 (2), 1-36.
- Hsu, Y. G. (2002). The evaluation, selection, and teaching of children's literature: Teaching reading through picture books. Proceedings of the Sixth Conference on Children's Literature & Children's Language, Republic of China. Taipei: Fu-Tsuen, 114-137.
- Hu, J. F. (1999). How to help children develop English phonological awareness. *English Teaching and Learning*, 23 (3), 7-14.
- Hu, J. F. (2002). The importance of phonological awareness in foreign language acquisition. *The Elementary Education Journal*, 49(1), 19-28.
- Huang, F. J. (2002, July). *A study of the current EFL practices of elementary language arts*. Paper presented at the meeting of Compulsory Education Advisory Group, Kaohsiung Municipal Department of Education, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
- Huang, H. L. (2002). Children's literature and cultural awareness. Proceedings of the Sixth Conference on Children's Literature & Children's Language, Republic of China. Taipei: Fu-Tsuen, 140-160.
- Huang, T. T. (1999). The need of L2-only English teaching for beginners from the perspective of second language acquisition. Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China. Taipei: 145-152.
- Huang, Y. P. (1998). Concepts and strategies for elementary English teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Educational Resources and Research*, 23, 29-31.
- Huang, J., & Hatch, E. (1978). A Chinese child's acquisition of English. In E. M. Hatch (Ed.), *Second language acquisition* (pp. 118-131). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Jacobs, H. (Ed.) (1989). *Interdisciplinary curriculum: Design and implementation*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Jackson, P. W. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Janesick, V. (1977). *An ethnographic study of a teacher's classroom perspective*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing.
- Jian li bu shi ren jiao shi tao tai ji zhi, you kui dian tou [Premier agreed to eliminate unqualified teachers]. (2002, Oct. 1). *China Times*. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Jiao gai, bu yao bian zou bian gai [Educational reform, no changing while doing]. (2002, July 18). *United Evening News*, p. 2.
- Jiao gai suo xu jing fei bu zu [Insufficient budget for educational reform]. (2000, Dec. 7). *China Times*. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Jiao shi dai dong san quan [Teachers call for the rights they should enjoy]. (2002, Sept. 10). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 2.
- Jiao yu gai ge ying zai jie zai li, tong pan jian tao ge xin [Comprehensive review and improvement are required for the educational reform]. (2002, August 4). *Youth Daily News*, p. 2.
- Jiu nian yi guan duo yuan ru xue, jing fei ai dong [The budget for Grades 1-9 and multiple schemes for high schools has been frozen]. (2002, Oct. 18). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 2.
- Johnson, K. E. (1992a). Learning to teach: Instructional actions and decisions of preservice ESL teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26 (3), 507-534.
- Johnson, K. E. (1992b). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices during literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 24, 83-108.
- Johnson, K. E. (1994). The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice English as a second language teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10, 439-452.
- Johnson, K. E. (1996). The vision versus the reality: The tensions of the TESOL practicum. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 30-49). New York: Cambridge.
- Johnston, J. K. (1992). Three case studies of elementary school principals identified as instructional leaders. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 53 (08), 2624A. (University Microfilms No. AAC92-37664)
- Jun jiao na shui, zui kuai ming nian shi shi [Soldiers and teachers to pay income tax, maybe next year]. (2002, August 22). *United News*, p. 2
- Kagan, D. M. (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 62 (2), 129-169.

- Knupfer, A. (1992). *Crossing the waters: Chinese children's acquisition of English*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Iowa.
- Konopak, B. C., & Williams, N. L. (1994). Elementary teachers' beliefs and decisions about vocabulary learning and instruction. *Yearbook of the National Reading Conference, 43*, 471-485.
- Krashen, S. D. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practices in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. D. (1991). *Bilingual education: A focus on current research*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- Lack, A. (n.d.). "Leadership: Loose coupling." Retrieved May 28, 2003, from <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~adl/essays/loosecoupling.htm>
- Lareau, A. (1987). Social class and family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital. *Sociology of Education, 56*, 73-85.
- Lareau, A. (2000). *Home advantage*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Larner, M. (1997). Creative tension: Applying family support principles to early childhood programs. In S. Reifel (Series Ed.) & C. J. Dunst & M. Wolery (Vol. Eds.), *Advances in early education and day care: Family policy and practice in early child care* (pp. 41-60). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Leinhardt, G. (1989). Math lessons: A contrast of novice and expert competence. *Journal of Research in Mathematics Education, 20*, 52-75.
- Lezotte, L. (n.d.). "Revolutionary and evolutionary: The effective schools movement." Retrieved May 28, 2003, from [http://ali.apple.com/ali\\_media/Users/1000059/files/others/lezotte\\_article.pdf](http://ali.apple.com/ali_media/Users/1000059/files/others/lezotte_article.pdf)
- Li, I. (2000). The pronunciation problems in teaching children English. *English Teaching and Learning, 25* (2), 4-15.
- Li, J. I. (2000). Just listen—the start of elementary English teaching. *English Teaching and Learning, 25* (1), 5-14.
- Liaw, C. W. (2000). The concept and model of curriculum integration in Grades 1-9 curriculum. *Guidance of Elementary Education, 40* (2), 2-13.
- Liaw, M. L. (1998). The myth of younger age in elementary English learning. *English Teaching and Learning, 22* (4), 30-38.
- Liaw, M. L. & Chen, C. L. (1998). Reflections on comprehensive implementing English teaching at the elementary level. *The Educator Monthly, 369*, 24-28.

- Liaw, M. L. & Chien, S. M. (2002). The effect of literature-based English teaching. *Proceedings of the Sixth Conference on Children's Literature & Children's Language, Republic of China*. Taipei: Fu-Tsuen, 68-89.
- Lin, Y. P. (2001). *An inquiry of teacher efficacy of English teachers in elementary schools*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Chang-Hua Teachers College, Chang-Hua, Taiwan.
- Lin, C. C., & Fu, V. R. (1990). A comparison of child-rearing practices among Chinese, Immigrant Chinese, and Caucasian-American parents. *Child development, 61*, 429-433.
- Lin, M. L. (2000). *A study of elementary English teachers' professional knowledge*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Hualien Teachers College, Hualien, Taiwan.
- Lin, S. E. (2000). What is Communicative Language Teaching? *English Teaching and Learning, 24* (3), 29-33.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, G. E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Liu, Y. Z. (2001). *The influence of an elementary English teacher's knowledge on her teaching practice: A case study*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Hsinchu Teachers College, Hsinchu, Taiwan.
- Liu nian nei gong jiao ren yuan bu hui shuo ying yu, kao ji yi deng [Public employees who cannot speak English in six years will get a B for annual review]. (2002, July 18). *United News*, p. 2.
- Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lu, C. Y. (1999). An elementary English teacher's growth and English teaching. *Newsletter for Teaching the Humanities and Social Sciences, 10* (4), 154-166.
- Lu, H. H. (2002). From instructional leadership to curricular leadership: A study of related issues. *Curriculum & Instructional Quarterly, 5* (2), 55-64.
- Lubeck, S. (1998). Is developmentally appropriate practice for everyone? *Childhood Education, 74* (5), 283-292.
- Luo shi ji ceng ying yu jiao xue bu nan [Not hard to realize English at the local level]. (2002, July 10). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 2.
- Marsh, C. (1992). *Key concepts for understanding curriculum*. Bristol, PA: Falmer.
- McCutcheon, G. (1980). How do elementary school teachers plan? The nature of planning and influences on it. *Elementary School Journal, 81*, 4-23.
- McDougall, A., & Bruck, M. (1976). English reading within the French immersion program: A comparison of the effects of the introduction of English reading at different grade levels. *Language Learning, 26*, 37-44.

- McGillicuddy-De Lisi, A.V., & Subramanian, S. (1996). How do children develop knowledge? Beliefs of Tanzanian and American mother. In S. Harkness & C.M. Super (Eds.), *Parents' cultural belief systems: Their origins, expressions, and consequences* (pp.143-168). New York: The Guilford Press.
- McWilliam, R. A., McMillen, B. J., Sloper, K. M., & McMillen, J. S. (1997). Early education and child care program philosophy about families. In S. Reifel (Series Ed.) & C. J. Dunst & M. Wolery (Vol. Eds.), *Advances in early education and day care: Vol. 9. Family policy and practice in early child care* (pp. 61-104). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). The structure of educational organizations. In J. W. Meyer & W. R. Scott (Eds.), *Organization Environments: Ritual and Rationality*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1978). Notes on the structure of educational organization. In J. W. Meyer (Ed.), *Studies in environment and organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education. (1994). *The teacher training act of 1994*. Taipei, Taiwan: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (1996). General Report on Educational Reform. Taipei, Taiwan: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (1997). The Special Education Act. Taipei, Taiwan: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (n. d.). Educational Reform Why & How. Taipei, Taiwan: Author. Retrieved February 10, 2003, from <http://teach.eje.edu.tw/9CC/9CC%20Q&A/eduQ&A.doc>
- Ministry of Education (1999). The 1999 Progress Report. Taipei, Taiwan: Author. Retrieved February 10, 2003, from <http://140.111.1.22/english/index.htm>
- Ministry of Education. (1999, Dec. 10). National Education Development and reform for the new Millennium. Taipei International Conference on Education. Taipei, Taiwan: Author. Retrieved February 10, 2003, from <http://140.111.1.22/english/index.htm>
- Ministry of Education. (1999, July 28). Teacher Preparation for Elementary English teaching. Report of MOE 381<sup>st</sup> Ministry Meeting. Taipei, Taiwan: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2001). A guide for elementary and junior high school English teaching, activity design, and assessment. Taipei, Taiwan: Authors.
- Ministry of Education. (2002, September). Proceedings of 2002 Conference of Nine Years Curriculum Policy & Practice. Kaohsiung, Taipei: Authors.

- Ministry of Education. (2003). Grades 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. Taipei, Taiwan: Author. Retrieved February 10, 2003, from <http://teach.eje.edu.tw/9CC/brief>
- Mok, W. E. (1994). Reflecting on reflections: A case study of experienced and inexperienced ESL teachers. *System, 22* (1), 93-111.
- Munby, H. (1982). The place of teachers' beliefs in research on teacher thinking and decision making, and an alternative methodology. *Instructional Science, 11*, 201-225.
- National Institute of Education. (1975). *Teaching as clinical information processing* (Report of Panel 6, National Conference on studies on Teaching). Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.
- Nantz, Q. L. (2002). Developing a literature-based elementary ELT curriculum for Taiwan. *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching/Fourth Pan-Asian Conference, Republic of China*. Taipei: Crane, 484-493.
- Nisbett, R. E., & Ross, L. (1980). *Human inference: Strategies and shortcomings of social judgment*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Nostrand, H. L. (1991). The levels of cultural competence. In E. S. Silber (Ed.), *Critical issues in foreign language instruction*. New York: Garland.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. New York: Cambridge.
- Nunan, D. (1992). The teacher as decision-maker. In J. Flowerdew, M. Brock, & S. Hsia (Eds.), *Perspectives in second language teacher education* (pp. 135-165). Hong Kong, City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.
- Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62* (3), 307-332.
- Pan, C. H. (1997). *Teaching and learning English in primary schools in Kaohsiung*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Kaohsiung Normal University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
- Pan, H. C. (2002). Elementary principals' roles and tasks in instructional leadership. *Elementary Education, 42* (4), 58-69.
- Paulston, C. B., & Bruden, M. N. (1976). *Teaching English as a second language: Techniques and procedures*. Massachusetts: Prentice-Hall.
- Pesola, C. A. (1991). Culture in the elementary school foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals, 24* (4), 331-346.
- Peterson, P. L. (1988). Teachers' and students' cognitional knowledge for classroom teaching and learning. *Educational Research, 17* (5), 5-14.

- Peterson, P. L., & Comeaux, M. A. (1987) Teachers' schemata for classroom events: the mental scaffolding of teachers' thinking during classroom instruction. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 3 (4), 319-331.
- Peterson, P. L., & Comeaux, M. A. (1990). Evaluating the systems: Teachers' perspectives on teacher evaluation. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 12 (1), 3-24.
- Peterson, P., Marx, R. W., & Clark, C. M. (1978). Teacher planning, teacher behavior and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 15(3), 417-432.
- Posner, G. J. (1989). *Field experience: Methods of reflective teaching*. New York: Longman.
- Quan guo jiu nian yi guan hui yi [National conference on Grades 1-9 curriculum]. (2002, Sep. 13). China Times. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Qiang hua guo ji jing zheng li, quan ying yu yang xi huan jing [Strengthen international competitiveness, offer all-English workshop environments]. (2002, June 12). *Central Daily News*, p. 9.
- Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond training: Perspectives on language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge.
- Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1996). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. New York: Cambridge.
- Richards, J. C., & Nunan, D. (Eds.). (1990). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (1986/1996). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge.
- Russell, T., & Munby, H. (1992). *Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Sabar, N. (1985). School-based curriculum development: Reflections from an international seminar. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 17 (4), 452-454.
- Sabo, L. (1992). *The role of the principal in curriculum implementation*. Unpublished masters' thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.
- San bu zheng ce: Guo xiao di nian ji bu jiao ying yu [Three No-no policies: No English to elementary lower grades]. (2002, Oct. 23). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 2.
- Savignon, S. J. (1976). On the other side of the desk: A look at teacher attitude and motivation in second-language learning. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 32, 295-304.

- Savignon, S. J. (2002). Communicative English teaching in Asian contexts: The challenge for teacher education. *Selected papers from the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching/Fourth Pan-Asian Conference*. Taipei, Taiwan: 162-174.
- Schon, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. London: Temple Smith.
- Schwab, J. J. (1962). The teaching of science as enquiry. In J. J. Schwab and P. Brandwein (Eds.), *the teaching of science*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
- Shavelson, J., & Stern, P. (1981). Research on teachers' pedagogical thoughts, judgments, decisions, and behavior. *Review of Educational Research*, 51(4), 455-498.
- Shen, T.C. & Huang, H. W. (2001). *A study of children's reader responses and writing development in a story-based literacy classroom*. Funded research report of National Science Council of Taiwan, the Republic of China. (No. NSC 89-2411-H-415-004.)
- Shen, T. C. & Chang, S. I. (2002). *The application of storytelling in elementary beginning English class: A study of teacher's scaffolding and students' response*. Funded research report of National Science Council of Taiwan, the Republic of China. (No. NSC 89-2411-H-415-005.)
- Shi, S. J. (1998). Teacher education for elementary English teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.nmh.gov.tw/edu/basis3/24/gy3.htm>
- Shie hui fan zui lu gao, zi shia lu gao, wen ti jie jie shiang shieng [High criminal rate, high suicidal rate, family problems increasing]. (2001, June 20). *China Times*. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Shih, H. Y. (2000). The implementation of elementary English teaching. *Bulletin of Elementary Education, National Tainan Teachers College*, 13, 255-274.
- Shih, Y. H. (1999). The evaluation of English texts for the elementary level. *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China*. Taipei: 213-223.
- Shih, Y. H. (2001). Communicative Language Teaching: New English curriculum for Grades 1-9. *English Teaching and Learning*, 25 (3), 5-21.
- Shih, Y. H. (2001). Evaluation of the MOE primary school English teacher training program. *English Teaching and Learning*, 26 (1), 86-108.

- Shih, Y. H., Chang, H. J., Shen, T. C., Su, F.H., & Tseng, Y. H. (2001, May). Elementary English teaching: A study of the implementation and problems in four regions. *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China, Ming Chuan University*. Taipei: Crane, 551-569.
- Shih, Y. H., Chou, C. T., Chen, S. J., & Chu, H. M. (1999). Current implementation of future orientations of elementary English teaching. *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China*. Taipei: 759-775.
- Shih, Y. H. & Chu, H. M. (1999). The essence and characteristics of elementary English curriculum. *The proceedings of 1998 conference on elementary English teaching, Taipei Teachers College, Republic of China*, 4-10.
- Shou, H. C. (2002). The design and implementation of Grades 1-9 English curriculum. *Guidance of Elementary Education*, 41 (5), 32-37.
- Shuang yu jiao xue, lao shi xing bu xing? [Bilingual education, can teachers do it?] (2002, April 9). *China Times*, p.19.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986a). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986b). Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspective. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 3-36). New York: Macmillan.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundation of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Shulman, L. S. (1992). Research on teaching: A historical and personal perspective. In F. K. Oser, A. Dick, & J. Patry (Eds.), *Effective and responsible teaching* (pp. 4-29). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Smith, D. B. (1996). Teacher decision making in the adult ESL classroom. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 197-216). Cambridge: Cambridge.
- Spindler, G. D. (1997). (Ed.). *Education and cultural process: Anthropological approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Stevens, P. D. (1987). The nature of language teaching. In M. H. Long & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Methodology in TESOL* (pp. 10-25). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Stevens, J. H., Hughes, R. A., & Nurss, J. R. (1993). The influence of parents on children's development and education. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 337-351). New York: Macmillan.

- Stevenson, H., & Lee, S. (1990). The east Asian version of whole-class teaching. *Educational Policy*, 9 (2), 152-168.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Stromquist, N. P. (1980, April). *LEA response to rival education delivery agents: Some evidence of tight and loose coupling behaviors*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED189720)
- Su, F. H. (1995). It's time to cultivate teachers for elementary English teaching. *Educational Resources and Research*, 7, 52-54.
- Su, F. H. (1999a). *Creating a new era of English education for Taiwanese children*. Paper Presented at the Forth CULI International ELT Conference. Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, December 1-3, 1999.
- Su, F. H. (1999b). Elementary English teaching should not neglect reading and writing skill. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning*, Republic of China. Taipei: Crane, 197-204.
- Su, F. H. (1999c). Preservice preparation for prospective English teachers of primary schools. Paper Presented at the English Teacher Education, Tamkang University, Taiwan, April 16, 1999.
- Su, S. F. (1999a). Cultural domination and teaching culture hidden under the use of English texts. *English Teaching and Learning*, 23 (4), 16-25.
- Su, S. F. (1999b). Problems in implementing elementary English teaching. *English Teaching and Learning*, 23 (3), 22-37.
- Su, Y. R. (2000). *Teachers' attitude and its relation to teaching strategies of elementary English teachers in Tainan city*. Unpublished master's thesis, National Tainan Teachers College, Tainan, Taiwan.
- Tabachnick, B. R. (1989). Needed for teacher education: Naturalistic research that is culturally responsive. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 5 (2), 155-163.
- Tai, Y. (1999). *The curricular planning process of English teachers in Taiwanese secondary schools*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.
- Tai, Y., Cheng, Y. H., & Yeh, H. N. (2000). *The effects of elementary English teachers' pedagogical content knowledge on their curriculum making*. Funded research report of National Science Council of Taiwan, the Republic of China. (No. NSC-89-2411-H155-008.)
- Tang, Z. Y. (2002). Review of the implementation of Grades 1-9 curriculum: Teacher education. *Journal of Education Research*, 93, 20-27.

- Taylor, P. H. (1970). *How teachers plan their courses*. England: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Tobin, J. J., Wu, D. Y. H., & Davidson, D. H. (1990). *Preschool in three cultures: Japan, China, and the United States*. New Haven, CT: Yale.
- Trueba, H. T. (1988). Instructional effectiveness: English only for speakers of other languages? *Excellence and Equity in Education: Models for Success* 20, 4, 341-362.
- Tsai, C. T., & Wang, H. Y. (2002). An elementary principal's instructional leadership: A case study of a principal at a rural elementary school in southern Taiwan. *Curriculum & Instruction Quarterly*, 5 (2), 21-36.
- Tsao, S. H. (1993). Survey on current English programs for children in Taipei area. *Bei Shi Yu Wen Jiao Yu Tong Xun*, 2, 49-61.
- Tseng, J. T. (1999). Text selection and compilation for elementary English teaching: A case study of Tainan city. Proceedings of across-the-century conference on elementary English teaching, Pintong Teachers College, 1-20.
- Tseng, J. T. (2001). The effect of elementary English teaching in Tainan city: A students' perspective. *Proceedings of 2001 International conference on the application of English teaching, Ming Chuan University, Republic of China*, 247-260.
- Tseng, T. J. (1998). Move toward globalization with competitiveness: Elementary English teaching in Taipei city. *Educational Resources and Research*, 23, 34-37.
- Tyler, R. W. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wai ji ren shi jiao ying wen, ri ben qian che zhi jian [Native English teachers, a lesson to learn from Japan]. (2002, April 6). *United News*, p. 15.
- Wallace, M. J. (1991/1993). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang, W. K. (2001). Mai xiang jiu nian yi guan de ke cheng ling dao [Instructional leadership in Grades 1-9 curriculum]. *Guidance of Elementary Education*, 41 (2), 2-5.
- Wang, F. M. (2002). The activity design and application of Communicative Language Teaching. *The Elementary Education Journal*, 49(1), 29-40.
- Wehlage, G. G. (1981). Can teachers be more reflective about their work? A commentary on some research about teachers. In B. R. Tabachnick, T. S. Popkewitz, & B. B. Szekely (Eds.), *Studying teaching and learning* (pp. 101-113). New York: Praeger.

- Wei, J. L. (1999). Possible problems and solutions to elementary English teaching. *English Teaching and Learning, 24* (1), 86-92.
- Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 21*, 1-19.
- Weick, K. E. (1982). Administrative education in loosely coupled schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 63* (10), 673-676.
- Weinstein, C. S. (1988). Preservice teachers' expectations about the first year of teaching. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 4*, 31-40.
- Weinstein, C. S. (1989). Teacher education students' perceptions of teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 40* (2), 53-60.
- Weinstein, C. S. (1990). Prospective elementary teachers' beliefs about teaching: Implications for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 6*, 279-290.
- Wilson, E. K., Konopak, B. C., & Readence, J. E. (1992). Examining content area and reading beliefs, decisions, and instruction: A case study of an English teacher. *Yearbook of the National Reading Conference, 41*, 475-482.
- Witton-Davies, G. (2000). Do we have the best materials for teaching children English? The limitations of children's textbooks in Taiwan. Proceedings of the Seventeenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China. Taipei: Crane, 266-276.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Woods, D. (1991). Teachers' interpretations of second language teaching curricula. *RELC Journal, 22* (2), 1-18.
- Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher cognition in language teaching: Beliefs, decision-making and classroom practice*. New York: Cambridge.
- Wu, J. L. (2001). An action research on English teaching as the school-based curriculum and teacher development. Unpublished master's thesis, National Chung Cheng University, Chia-Yi, Taiwan.
- Wu, P. J. (1998). Principals' and teachers' attitudes toward parents' involvement at schools. *Educational Resources and Research, 6* (4), 8-29.
- Wu, P. J. (2001). Parent involvement in education: Practitioners' and scholars' perspectives. *Educational Research, 47* (7), 185-214.
- Wu rang ying yu e sha qi ta qian neng [Don't let English strangle the development of other potentials in children]. (2002, April 29). *Central News*, p. 14.

- Xiao mi jiao yu cha ju, jing fei wen ti shi ou dang qi chong [To reduce the discrepancies in education, the budget is the first challenge]. (2002, Sep. 6). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 2.
- Xiang zhi jiao bian, yue lai yue nan [Harder and harder to go in the teaching profession]. (2002, August 26). *United News*, p. 9.
- Xun lian hai zi kai kuo du tong shu, ying yu neng li ken ding hui ti sheng [To train children to read children's book will definitely increase their English competency]. (2002, August 12). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 13.
- Yang, C. S. (1999). The instructional leadership of elementary school principals—the status quo, predicament, and solutions. *Ji Da xue bao*, 3 (1), 183-236.
- Yang, C. S. (2002). The essence and prospectus of instructional leadership. *Curriculum & Instruction Quarterly*, 5 (2), 37-54.
- Yang, I. L. (2001). Language environment and learning mechanism. *English Teaching and Learning*, 26 (1), 15-27.
- Yang, N. D. (2000). Teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching: A cross-cultural comparison. Proceedings for the Texas Foreign Language Conference 2000. *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education*, 5 (1), 39-52.
- Yang, S. L. (2002). Elementary school English education: A case study. Proceedings of the Nineteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China. Taipei: Crane, 467-478.
- Yang, S. M. (2000). The application of children's literature in elementary English teaching. *Guidance of Elementary Education*, 39 (5), 8-23.
- Yang, S. M. (2001). English storytelling and its application in elementary English teaching. *Guidance of Elementary Education*, 40 (5), 6-11.
- Yeh, S. N. (2000) Multiple modes of assessment for Grades 1-9 English curriculum. *English Teaching and Learning*, 24 (3), 5-28.
- Yeh, S. N. (2001). Multiple modes of assessment for Grades 1-9 English curriculum. In Ministry of Education's *A guide for elementary and junior high school English teaching, activity design, and assessment* (pp. 41-73). Taipei, Taiwan: Authors.
- Ying yu dang dao, mu yu shan bian [English is the trend, mother tongue is marginalized]. (2002, May 31). *China Times*, p. 19.
- Ying yu jiao xue duo tou ma che, guo xiao da hun zhan [English teaching is like a cart with many horses, a wild battle!]. (2002, July 12). *United Evening News*, p. 2.
- Ying yu jiao xue zi yuan zhong xin gua pai. [English teaching resource center (ETRC) opened to serve English teachers]. (2002, June 14). Retrieved from <http://ms3.kcg.gov.tw/ChnNews>.

- Ying yu ke cheng gang yao, liang nian nei da xiu [The Guidelines for English curriculum will be greatly modified in two years]. (2003, Jan. 23). *China Times*. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Ying yu lie guo xiao ke cheng, 47% min zhong zan cheng [English required in elementary curriculum, 47% of the public agreed]. (2002, April, 24). *United News*, p. 5.
- Ying yu lie wei zhun guan fang yu yan, xue zhe: hai zao [English as quasi official language, scholars: Too early to say so]. (2002, July 8). *China Times*, p. 13.
- Ying yu xue xi, yi ding yao jiang di nian ling ma? [Should English learning start early?]. (2002, April 11). *Central Times*, p. 11.
- Yinger, R. (1977). *A study of teacher planning: Description and theory development using ethnographic and information-processing methods*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
- Yinger, R. (1979). Routines in teacher planning. *Theory into Practice*, 18 (3), 163-169.
- Yinger, R. (1980). A study of teacher planning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 80 (3), 108-127.
- Yu, K. S. (1998). The problems and solutions to implementing English teaching at the elementary schools. Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on English Teaching and Learning, Republic of China. Taipei: Crane.
- Yu yan shi cheng zai wen hua de mei jie [Language is the media for sustaining culture]. (2002, Aug. 7). *China Times*. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>
- Zahorik, J. A. (1970). The effect of planning on teaching. *The Elementary School Journal*, 71, 143-151.
- Zahorik, J. A. (1975). Teachers' planning models. *Educational Leadership*, 33 (2), 134-139.
- Zeichner, K., & Tabachnick, B.R. (1985). The development of teacher perspectives: Social strategies and institutional control in the socialization of beginning teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 11 (1), 1-25.
- Zheng, J. (1992). *An exploration of the pedagogical content knowledge of beginning and experienced ESL teachers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queen University, Kingston, Canada.
- Zhi zheng dang wu jing ji zhen xing fang an [The ruling party has no policy to boost the economic depression]. (2002, August 26). *China Times*. Retrieved from <http://andywant.chinatimes.com.tw/scripts/chinatimes/iscstext.exe>

Zhong shi ying yu jiao xue yin ying guo ji hua [To emphasize English teaching for better competitiveness in the international community]. (2002, May 21). *Mandarin Daily News*, p. 2.

## VITA

Hsiu-Lien Lily Chiang was born in southern Taiwan on September 21, 1963, the eldest daughter of Huang-Shan Chiang and Jin-Yu Li. After completing her work at Kaohsiung Girls' High School, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in 1981, she entered Providence College at Taichung, Taiwan. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Providence College in June 1985. She continued to work on her Master of Arts degree in Western Languages and Literature at Providence College. Being a graduate student, she was selected as a delegate representing the country to the 21<sup>st</sup> International Youth Camp held by UNESCO in Seoul, South Korea. In June 1988, she received the degree of Master of Arts from Providence College. During the following two years she was employed as an instructor at Kuo Chi Junior College of Commerce in Kaohsiung, Taiwan before she went to Paris, France, for certificate courses in language and culture. She was employed as an English teacher and head of studies at MacMillan Language School in Kangshan, Kaohsiung county after she came back from Paris. One year later, she was employed by Kao Yuan Junior College of Technology and Commerce, Kaohsiung county, Taiwan, and taught for five years before she came to UT Austin. In August 1998, she entered the Graduate School of the University of Texas.

Permanent address: 12, 6F-2, Te-An Street, Lane 5, Kaohsiung, Taiwan 802

This dissertation was typed by the author.