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How to best prepare future second language teachers is the subject of a continual debate among faculties and institutions involved in language teacher preparation. This article proposes an alternative critical framework to the traditional model for language teacher preparation programs. The authors argue that these programs need to do more than just transmit knowledge regarding teaching and learning a second language; they need to encourage future language teachers to go beyond the simple issues of teaching a second language in the classroom. In order to understand what their future task will require from them and what kind of knowledge and understanding are necessary to shape their own pedagogical practice, future language teachers should be engaged in an inquiry about learning and teaching languages. Such a quest will allow them to examine their own local and global environment (sociolinguistic context) and the aim of teaching a second language (curriculum and social expectations), and how these will affect their own beliefs and teaching practices.

This article introduces the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model developed by the authors as a theoretical and methodological framework for language teacher preparation. The dialogic SSS inquiry-based model suggests that three Ss—second language acquisition (SLA) theories, sociocultural theories regarding SLA, and sociolinguistic theories—should make up the content knowledge in language teacher preparation. However, the content knowledge proposed here is not to be perceived as static knowledge. Instead, future language teachers will engage through critical reflection in the exploration of each of these fields in order to gain greater un-

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The dialogic SSS inquiry-based model allows future language teachers to develop an understanding of what is involved in teaching a second or additional language and the roles that the SLA, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic fields of inquiry play in shaping their pedagogical practice. The model also suggests that the goal of the knowledge-building process should be more than a mere accumulation of factual knowledge. The critical dialogic and inquiry process will help future language teachers to shape their own social and pedagogical practice through the coconstruction of understanding and knowledge.

Background

The dialogic SSS inquiry-based model arose in response to the continuous challenge of finding the most effective way of preparing teachers to teach a second or additional language at the University of Calgary. It evolved from the inquiry-based model developed in the Faculty of Education for the Master of Teaching (MT) program (a two-year post-degree BEd program). The inquiry-based model supports the view that the mandate of the teacher preparation program is to prepare student teachers to develop the skills and knowledge they need to respond to current challenges in teaching practice as well as the continuous changes taking place in our society and in the global world. The inquiry-based model also promotes the concept of reflective practice (Schön, 1983, 1991), whereby student teachers engage in critical reflection about their self-

perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions regarding their teaching practice.

The language teacher preparation program at the University of Calgary falls under the umbrella of the MT program. We prepare teachers of French and other languages to teach in bilingual and multilingual contexts. The dialogic SSS inquiry-based model for language teacher preparation follows in the footsteps of the inquiry-based approach promoted in the MT program. In addition, the model supports a Vygotskian view of learning, in which knowledge building evolves through a coconstruction process. Student teachers are regarded as needing not only to engage in critical thinking about their own assumptions, beliefs, and understanding, but also to subject their thoughts to the critical analysis and reflection of others.

The following questions guided the developmental process of the proposed model:

1. What methodological approach will best prepare future language teachers?
2. What theoretical framework would support a move away from traditional modes of knowledge transmission to an approach that fosters critical reflection, inquiry, and coconstruction of knowledge among future language teachers?
3. What content knowledge do language student teachers need to gain through their training?
4. How can we best prepare future language teachers to support the language acquisition process of language learners in their sociocultural, economical, and political context?

5. How can we use a dialogic inquiry-based learning model in language teacher preparation?

By posing those questions, the authors themselves have engaged in the critical reflection and coconstruction that are promoted in the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model. One of the beliefs inherent in the model is that language teaching theories and approaches do not constitute a static bulk of knowledge that can be transmitted from experts to novices without being questioned and investigated by student teachers. As indicated by Lightbown and Spada (2006), a variety of SLA theories have competed for the spotlight over the past 50 years. Language teachers cannot afford to abide by a single theory to guide their teaching practice. They need to learn to question and evaluate each theoretical claim in order to seek understanding and to make pedagogical informed choices that respond to the continuous changes taking place in our world and the challenges that these create for language classrooms.

The Dialogic SSS Inquiry-Based Model

Dialogic inquiry-based learning is a more than a simple pedagogical practice. It represents an epistemological view that corresponds to the notion that knowledge is a social construct rather than an objective and static reality. The dialogic inquiry-based model first reflects Dewey's theory of inquiry, which posits that knowledge is created through a process of transaction (Dewey, 1938/2001; Wells, 1999). It also reflects the Vygotskian perspective that regards knowledge as socially and dialogically constructed and language as a mediated tool in that process (Vygotsky, 1985; Wells, 1999; Wertsch, 1985).

The Contributions of Dewey and Vygotsky

Dewey's contribution. Two aspects of Dewey's theory of inquiry will help to explain the application of the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model in a language teacher preparation program. First, knowledge is not to be perceived as a static reality but rather as a process of transaction between the organism and the environment. Knowledge is not only the outcome of the meaning-making experience or transaction between the learner and the environment; it is also part of the actual meaning-making experience (Biesta & Burbules, 2001). In addition, knowledge is temporal, because it always involves background knowledge (antecedents) as well as the meaning that is created through the transactional experience. Thus knowledge goes through temporal modifications, and the process of inquiry should be understood as a sequential process that never reaches an absolute end. Knowledge is constantly evolving through a continual, reoccurring building process. Therefore, ultimate or true knowledge cannot be perceived as the goal of knowledge building, "because every settlement of a situation engenders *new* conditions that, in turn, occasion *new* problems, and then the cycle begins again" (Dewey, as cited in Biesta & Burbules, 2001, p. 57).

Second, the transaction between the organism and environment occurs when the learner is faced with a situation to which he or she does not know how to respond or that he or she perceives to be in conflict with what was indicated by antecedent experiences. Therefore, a need to inquire about the situation is created. Dewey explained that this process does not happen only in the mind of the learner; rather, it involves a transaction between the organism and the environment, and this process is being controlled or directed through the learner's reflections or thinking process (Biesta & Burbules, 2001).

Vygotsky's contribution. Vygotsky's theory of mind has also greatly contributed to the theoretical framework of the dialogic SSS

inquiry-based model. The sociocultural learning perspective, based on Vygotsky's notion of knowledge, has created greater recognition of the role of language as a means of negotiating meaning and of constructing knowledge and understanding in the social context (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Wells, 1999, 2001). The sociocultural perspective supports the notion that the inquiry process promoted by Dewey needs to take place through a dialogic process that involves language as a cognitive and social tool for negotiating understanding and for coconstructing new knowledge. It also support the view that the learning process is mediated through collaborative and critical dialogue between learners (Mercer, 1995; XXX, 2005; Vygotsky, 1985; Wells, 1999).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

The SLA field of inquiry is often described as the study of the process by which learners acquire languages in addition to their native tongue. The field of SLA represents a wide range of theoretical and methodological perspectives based on empirical research into how languages are learned.

When student teachers embark upon language teacher training, they are confronted with a vast body of theoretical knowledge that can provide more confusion than guidance. Most language teacher preparation programs require that their students enroll in courses about SLA theories and teaching methodologies. Most SLA courses involve an overview of theoretical and methodological currents in the field. In addition to traditional perspectives such as behaviorism, students are introduced to Chomsky's universal grammar theory as adapted for second language acquisition (Krashen's model), as well as such cognitive and developmental SLA theories as information process, connectionism, and interactionism (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Methodology textbooks may be based on different theories

or on one specific theory, and the course may or may not address the connection between theories and methodologies. Although the theoretical and methodological focus of SLA courses varies, it is safe to say that student teachers are exposed to varous SLA approaches to the complexities of second language acquisition.

However, there is a tendency in the SLA field to promote some theoretical views over others. For example, although sociocultural and economic context, learning styles, and gender are recognized as playing a role in the learning process, they are often regarded as secondary factors. For example, an SLA handbook by Doughty and Long (2006) argued that cognitive theories are central to the field of SLA and provide the most scientific and objective explanation of how language learning takes place. In the traditional knowledge-transmission model of language teacher preparation, student teachers are often presented with such beliefs and are not given the opportunity to engage in an inquiry and coconstruction process vis-à-vis the content knowledge presented to them.

Student teachers enrolled in language teacher preparation programs bring with them various background knowledge (or antecedents) from the fields of linguistics, psychology, and education, as well as their own language learning experience. The traditional mode of knowledge transmission found in most current SLA courses does not take such antecedents, experiences, and understanding into account, nor does it promote critical reflection and inquiry regarding the content knowledge presented. This perception about traditional delivery of SLA courses is not unique. There is growing concern about the inadequacy of the model currently used in second language teacher preparation courses (Gorsuch & Beglar, 2004). Traditional SLA courses continue to perpetuate a positivist epistemological stance that regards knowledge as being the true reality. Student teachers need

more than traditional lectures on SLA theories and methodology. Adopting the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model will enable SLA courses to move away from the notion that student teachers are there to fill up their "teacher's toolbox" with SLA theories and approaches.

The adoption of a dialogic SSS inquiry-based model in SLA courses would allow student teachers to engage in critical reflection and inquiry into various issues related to the SLA process:

1. What kind of information does the SLA discipline provide regarding acquisition versus learning?
2. How can theories of L2 acquisition inform teachers in their own pedagogical practice?
3. Does imitation have any role in the learning process?
4. What is the difference between explicit and implicit focuses on form? Is one better than the other?
5. What is the role of interlanguage and errors in SLA?

The model will allow courses in SLA theoretical and methodological perspectives to promote reflective practice among future language teachers regarding not only their own beliefs and assumptions about how languages are learned but also how they learn their own second or additional languages. Student teachers will also be invited to engage in a process of inquiry and coconstruction of knowledge regarding the theoretical and methodological perspectives presented to them.

Sociocultural Theory of SLA

The application of Vygotsky's theory of mind, often called the sociocultural theory of learning, has been increasingly recognized in SLA research as a theoretical framework for understanding SLA processes and pedagogies (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). As suggested by Gass & Selinker (2001), "the learning of second language is a multifaceted endeavor" (p. 398). Therefore, it is also crucial that future language teachers become familiar with the implications of sociocultural theory in second language learning.

Vygotsky's theory of mind explains how meaning is culturally constructed and how language is the mediated tool used to organize and control the higher mental functions of humans. Thus sociocultural theory provides a theoretical perspective on how language is used as a cognitive and linguistic tool in social interaction to coconstruct knowledge of the target language. The sociocultural learning perspective, based on Vygotsky's notion of knowledge, has created greater recognition of the role of language as a means to negotiate meaning and to construct knowledge and understanding in the social context (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The Vygotskian perspective also addresses the development of new skills at the social and psychological level. Vygotsky explored the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as a means of explaining how learners become ready to perform a new skill. This concept has important implications for the process of learning a second language. First, it reinforces the notion that learning takes place through social interaction; through that interaction, the psychological dimension of learning is not only supported but also extended with the help of another learner. The social dimension of learning new skills is referred to as *scaffolding*: "Scaffolding is the dialogic process by which one speaker assists another in performing a function he or she cannot perform alone" (Ellis, 2003, p. 191).

The sociocultural theoretical perspec-

tive provides tools for understanding how cognition and knowledge are dialogically constructed in the context of learning a second language (Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002). In the last decade or so, a greater number of studies have been concerned with the concept of peer–peer social interaction, collaborative dialogue, the role of ZPD, and scaffolding in the L2 learning process (de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Donato,1994; Ohta, 1995, 2001; Pellerin, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2000). Future language teachers need to be become familiar with these more recent currents in the field of SLA. We cannot limit the discussion of SLA to strictly cognitive theories as some authors would suggest. The adoption of a dialogic SSS inquiry-based model would allow future language teachers to engage in critical reflection and inquiry about issues related to peer–peer interaction, collaborative dialogue, and the roles of ZPD and scaffolding in the second language learning process:

1. How can language be used as a cognitive and mediated tool in the process of negotiation of meaning during peer–peer scaffolding and collaborative dialogue?
2. How can collaborative dialogue—in which peers engage as they work together to solve problems in the target language—help to further develop the second language learning process?
3. Does the nature of the activities and tasks affect the nature of the dialogue and the second language learning process?

Sociolinguistics of Change

More and more studies are is examining the role of learners' cultural identities and investment in learning (Norton, 2000). Not only do we have to understand cognition and make sense of knowledge in interaction or collaborative work; we need to have a larger picture of discourses about learning and teaching a language, as well as how these discourses occur, and with what consequences. The sociolinguistics of change addresses global issues and power relations through linguistic and social practices (Dalley and Roy, in press). It derives from critical sociolinguistics, which is the study of how local practices inform global issues in time and space (Heller, 2002). The historic and present contexts are very important to understanding how people live, speak, act, and react. The sociolinguistics of change—in addition to examining, describing, and analyzing linguistics and social practices through the study of language—focuses on bringing changes. These changes can be effected during teacher preparation and professional development activities, as well as in classroom settings.

Use of the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model allows future language teachers to engage in a dialogic inquiry-based learning process about issues related to language learning from a global perspective. They will ask the following questions in order to better understand ideologies and their own perspectives on language:

1. What are the discourses regarding learning and teaching languages in our society?
2. What are the discourses related to bilingualism and multilingualism?
3. What are language policies? How do they affect specific populations?
4. How are language learning and teaching related to our own identity and culture, in our day-to-day life?

During their practicum, future language teachers can ask questions about the classroom context:

1. What discourses take place in the classroom?
2. Who are the teachers, administrators, and students that make up a specific school or classroom community?
3. What knowledge is transmitted? How, and to whom? And who benefits?
4. Who stays marginalized, and why?
5. Most important, in order to bring change, what should I do—and how—to change the current situation?

By understanding their own and others' perspectives, as well as the contexts of where they will work and how they build their own contexts, future language teachers will be better prepared to understand consequences and to effect changes. The sociolinguistics of change adds an important dimension to the understanding of language learning and teaching, stereotypes (Auger, Dalley, & Roy, 2007), languages issues, and cultural and linguistic identity (Norton, 2000). By examining their own language and social practices—that is, how people use their languages to express who they are in society—and those of their colleagues and students, future language teachers should be able to deal with issues related to languages.

As stated earlier, the discussion of SLA cannot be limited to a single field of inquiry. The integration of the sociolinguistics of change as content-knowledge in language teacher preparation has one main goal: to encourage future language teachers to ask themselves questions and try to answer them. Through this self-ques-

tioning and inquiry process, future language teaches can gain greater understanding of the second language teaching and learning process, as well as the implications it can have in shaping their own pedagogical practices. Future language teachers will also be able to examine language practices and issues in their classrooms and make appropriate changes.

The Adoption of a Dialogic SSS Inquiry-Based Model in the MT Teacher Preparation Program at the University of Calgary

The BEd MT program at the University of Calgary promotes a view of the teacher as knowledgeable, thoughtful, and deeply caring about the responsibilities of the vocation. According to the program handbook of the Division of Teacher Preparation,

> To become a teacher requires strong preparation in subject matter knowledge, development of pedagogical skills, and acquiring the ability to make good judgements in practice. Theory and practice are always intertwined, and one of the challenges of learning to teach is to understand both the theory and practice of teaching as they are lived in classrooms and schools. Therefore, the MT Program stresses ongoing and intensive integration of university and field experiences. That integration is central to learning experiences in the program. (University of Calgary, 2007, p. 3)

The program is divided into different sections such as field, field seminar, case studies, and curriculum inquiry seminars, to name a few. It is through their course work and field experiences that students are able to ask questions

and reflect on their own learning and teaching in order to further develop their pedagogical practice. The MT program and the language teacher preparation program make use of the inquiry-based approach and the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model in the following ways:

1. Field and curriculum inquiry and field seminars encourage future teachers to engage in problem solving about issues related to classroom practices and to local and global contexts.
2. Field and curriculum inquiry and field seminars enable future teachers to experience different points of view regarding approaches to teaching a second language.
3. Blended learning (campus and online), fieldwork, action research, and e-journaling allow future teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry projects on classroom-based issues.
4. E-journaling, the Celebrating Inquiry conference, and publications such as the Faculty of Education's *Field Notes* contribute to the community of inquiry in the field of second language teaching.

The Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary is a unique environment in which future language teachers can ask questions, engage in critical thinking, pursue collaborative work to construct knowledge online or face to face, and discuss local and global issues related to language. The uniqueness of the teacher preparation program allows students to build an understanding together and to build a community of practice.

Conclusion

The debate regarding how to best prepare our future second language teachers will continue. However, "disagreement is as important as agreement in keeping participants engaged in knowledge building . . . without some disagreement there would be no need to communicate and therefore no dynamic change" (Wells, 1999, p. 111). Language teacher preparation needs to promote this notion of debate through a process of critical reflection, inquiry, and co-construction in order to create greater understanding about second language teaching and learning. The dialogic SSS inquiry-based model presented in this article provides the necessary theoretical and methodological framework to support this view of critical reflection and co-construction of knowledge through dialogue and inquiry about second language learning and teaching.

This article promotes the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model as a theoretical and methodological shift in language teacher preparation. One of the main tenets of the model is that language teacher preparation programs need to move away from traditional dissemination of knowledge in favor of dialogic and inquiry-based learning. Language teacher preparation can no longer be perceived simply as a means of delivering methodologies and approaches. Language teacher preparation has a very important mandate: to prepare future language teachers to face the challenges of the language classroom, which represent the continuous changes happening in our society and in the global world. Therefore, we need to promote the notion of reflective practice, whereby future language teachers engage in a critical reflection and inquiry process about their self-perception, beliefs, assumptions, and understanding regarding second language learning and teaching.

Another important aspect of the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model is the necessity to integrate theoretical and methodological perspectives as content knowledge for addressing the complex phenomena of second language teaching and learning. The present model suggests the integration of three fields of inquiry related to teaching and learning a second language: SLA, sociocultural theory, and the sociolinguistics of change. However, the content knowledge related to each field of inquiry cannot be perceived as a static concept or an objective reality. The integrated content-knowledge perspective needs to be understood as a tool that will allow students to engage in reflection and inquiry regarding how each field can contribute to shaping their social and pedagogical practices. As Gass and Selinker (2001) have suggested, all SLA theories contribute to our understanding of what happens in teaching and learning a second language; "none of them alone is able to account for the total picture" (p. 399).

This article is intended to act as a catalyst to promote understanding and dialogue regarding the potential that the dialogic SSS inquiry-based model holds for second language teaching and learning. It provides the necessary theoretical and methodological framework to support the suggested move away from traditional mode of disseminating knowledge found in current language teacher preparation programs, and toward a greater reflective practice and inquiry-based approach to knowledge building for future language teachers.

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