Client Analysis in Teacher Education: What Some Canadian and South African Teachers Identify as their Professional Development Needs

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The client analysis conducted in this study explores the professional development needs of 11 language teachers, five in South Africa and six in Canada. The study employs a questionnaire and interviews to discover how each teacher's background and context affects his or her perceived professional development needs. Interviews show that teacher educators cannot necessarily predict teachers' professional development needs based on their backgrounds and contexts alone. A variety of inputs from recipients over an extended time is desirable and would yield more accurate predictability of an individual's professional development needs. This would result in teacher education programs that more accurately meet a teacher's real needs.

L'analyse effectuée dans le cadre de la présente étude visait à explorer les besoins en perfectionnement professionnel de 11 enseignants de langue dont cinq en Afrique du Sud et six au Canada. Un questionnaire et des entrevues ont révélé à quel point les antécédents des enseignants et leur contexte affectent leur perception de leurs besoins en perfectionnement professionnel. Les entrevues ont indiqué que les formateurs d'enseignants ne peuvent pas toujours prédire les besoins en perfectionnement professionnel des enseignants uniquement à partir de leurs antécédents et leur contexte. Divers renseignements recueillis des enseignants sur une période prolongée permettraient de mieux prédire leurs besoins en perfectionnement professionnel. Le résultat en serait que les programmes de formation des enseignants satisferaient mieux les besoins réels des enseignants.

Background

Part of my 1999 sabbatical leave involved an analysis of language teachers' professional development (PD) needs. I was particularly interested in how teachers' personal and educational backgrounds, institutional and classroom contexts, and the sociopolitical environments in which they lived and worked might affect their perceived PD needs. As a teacher educator I wanted to ensure that I was attending to the opinions of practicing teachers in client analysis, by which I mean one part of the needs analysis in educational programming. The purpose of client analysis is to obtain background

information from potential program participants such as the potential participants' age, sex, learning style, educational background, experience in the content area, context in which they are involved, learning supports, and other factors that will affect the content and design of the educational program to ensure that the program addresses their goals and needs. My objective was to adapt client analysis to gather information from practicing teachers.

To this end I set out the following objectives:
- to learn what practicing teachers had to say about their personal and educational backgrounds, teaching contexts, and sociopolitical environments;
- to conduct a client analysis that gathered data provided by practicing teachers;
- to explore links between the above information and perceived professional development needs.

My interest in teachers' backgrounds and contexts was partly fueled by a *TESOL Quarterly* article by Freeman and Johnson (1998) that stressed the importance of taking a broad view of a teacher's knowledge base when developing programs for teachers. This broad view is complex, and accounts for teaching as it is practiced as well as how it is learned. Freeman and Johnson note that teacher educators must take a holistic, long-term, constructivist view that includes the sum of teachers' experiences and how they interpret what they learn in teacher education according to their own teaching contexts. The authors highlight the following three domains "in which teachers learn and practice their craft ... the teacher-learner, the social context [this also includes the social and political climate], and the pedagogical process" (p. 406). I was interested in using this framework to help inform the language teacher education curriculum, and especially in ensuring that teachers' identified needs reflected these domains. Although Freeman and Johnson do not provide sample questions for teacher educators that would help gather this information, the questionnaire that I developed in this small-scale study was designed to gather some of the information suggested by querying the actual experiences of teachers.

Although I did not develop a formal hypothesis, I predicted that when asked to determine their PD needs, language teachers' most urgent needs would be based on immediate pressures such as their current classroom situations, the needs of their students, and pressures to incorporate the latest pedagogical trends. For example, if teaching English for academic purposes (EAP), teachers' expressed PD needs might focus on teaching academic reading and writing skills. If they were teaching elementary students, the teachers might focus on the need to know more about topics such as cooperative learning and materials development. If communicative language teaching was the pedagogical trend, they would want to learn more about it.

Freeman and Johnson (1998) concur, stating that the content of language teaching programs "must be understood against the backdrop of teachers' professional lives, within the settings where they work, and within the circumstances of that work" (p. 405). I also anticipated that level of education might play a role in teachers' expressed PD needs. For example, those with master's degrees would be more interested in language teaching theory than those with undergraduate degrees or teaching diplomas. Many of my predictions were borne out in this study. However, I believe it is important that others seek the input of teachers on their PD needs to verify my conclusions.

Researcher Bias

Boyle (1981) states that programmers such as teacher educators must be aware of the values they bring to client analysis and state these values up front. Moreover, it is important that educators and educational programmers be answerable to the recipients of education as much as is feasible, obtaining from them a high degree of input and involvement in program development. It is for this reason that I interviewed practicing teachers to obtain their feelings on their PD needs.

I conducted part of this study when I was in South Africa between January and March 1999. Because five of the 11 respondents were from South Africa, it is likely that this study includes my own cultural bias. South Africa has a complex mix of cultures. During my stay I took each teacher's response at face value and did my best to speak to a wide variety of people to reach an understanding of the past, present, and future of the country and its people. Although this study focuses on client analysis, not cross-cultural differences, I am nonetheless concerned that my own culture and my judgments about what is happening in South Africa are reflected. Again, it is important that South Africans themselves conduct this kind of study as they have the deepest understanding of their cultures and the current dynamics in that nation.

Client Analysis

Client analysis or understanding is a major component of needs assessment. The established adult education literature states that the purpose of needs assessment is to identify the gap between the present situation and what should be (Boyle, 1981; Devlin, 1996). Field theory of motivation (Boyle) has been used as a way to explain how clients or the potential participants in an educational program, such as a teacher education program, identify their learning needs. Field theory of motivation suggests that when potential clients are in a state of disequilibrium (e.g., regarding what they need to know in the workplace), they may seek learning opportunities to regain homeostasis. Others agree that one's sense of competence is related to this theory.

The widely accepted view also presents similar formal and informal ways of conducting client analyses (Boyle, 1981; Caffarella, 1994; Devlin, 1996; Percival, 1993), stating that combining types of needs analysis helps overcome the strengths and limitations of each (Boyle; Percival). Caffarella's strategies for client analysis are similar to her strategies for generating programming ideas that include how much participant involvement the programmer, or in this case the teacher-educator, desires. This elicits a high degree of teacher input regarding their PD needs.

Cervero and Wilson (1994) take a critical view of programming, asking the question "To whom is the adult educator ethically and politically answerable?" (p. 5). They see educational programming as a social activity that involves the democratic and humanistic process of negotiation. This process suggests the necessity of dialogue between adult educators and the recipients of an educational program (Boyle, 1981). This view is intriguing because it is connected much more closely to the direct input of those who will be involved in receiving the program. This view also implies that client input is sought and the curriculum revised as clients participate in the learning event (Cranton, 1989).

Methodology and Sample

This is a qualitative study using a questionnaire administered to volunteer respondents. The questionnaire was designed, as suggested in the article by Freeman and Johnson (1998), to gain as much knowledge as possible on how teachers "learn and practice their craft," that is, about teacher-learner relationships, about each respondent's teaching and social context, and about the pedagogical process by which each learned and now practices his or her profession. The initial goal was to develop individual teacher profiles as well as each teacher's perceptions of his or her current PD needs. It was not designed to elicit quantitative or comparative data. However, interesting patterns exist in the relationships between each teacher's expressed PD needs at the time responses were received and his or her background, teaching, and sociopolitical context.

The main purpose of the study was to obtain teacher profiles and to relate each teacher's personal and educational backgrounds, teaching contexts, and sociopolitical contexts to their thoughts on their current PD needs. The sample was not intended to be statistically representative or large enough to draw generalizations. The responses have, therefore, not been subjected to formal cross-case analysis. Rather, interview responses for each participant are explored and discussed in the Discussion and Conclusions section.

I pilot-tested the questionnaire with six English-language teachers in Western Canada who agreed to participate. I hoped eventually to use their responses in my findings. I asked English for EAP teachers to participate because I knew I would be meeting with EAP teachers in South Africa and

wanted some teachers with similar backgrounds. I also approached teachers in a Western Canadian settlement agency simply because I knew the teachers in that setting. Because these teachers were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate, they could not be considered a representative sample. Three Canadian respondents were teaching in university EAP programs that comprised young adults primarily from Southeast Asian countries. The EAP students were hoping to improve their English so that they could gain admission to academic study at the university level. The three other Canadian teachers were working with adult newcomers to Canada. Their students were from a variety of nations and had a variety of educational backgrounds. The students' goals were generally to participate successfully in Canadian society.

Teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire in writing. They were also asked to give suggestions that would improve the design and wording of the questionnaire for use with other teachers. Minor revisions were made to the questionnaire for use in South Africa, eliminating redundancies and clarifying and reordering some of the questions. The questionnaire contains 55 questions designed to obtain a teacher profile and to identify teachers' perceived current PD needs. The questions were subdivided into five broad areas: About your education; About your PD; About your teaching; About your context; and About your students.

The questionnaire was constructed so that South African teachers could choose to respond in writing or in an interview. I did this because I knew that teachers would not necessarily be available for interviews when I was in their region. One elementary school language teacher and one EAP teacher chose to respond in writing, and three chose to respond via interviews.

Five South African teachers volunteered. As with the Canadian teachers, they were asked if they were available and willing to participate and, therefore, again, are not representative of all South African teachers. Two were Black and three were white South Africans. Two were teachers of the Xhosa language working in the elementary school system in the Eastern Cape with students aged 8 to 12. I met these two teachers through my association with a teacher educator and thought their experiences and perceptions would enrich the study. The other three were EAP teachers in university settings, two from Eastern Cape and one from Kwazulu-Natal. The EAP teachers were working with students who spoke traditional African languages and had obtained senior matriculation.

Findings

This section highlights responses according to the major sections of the questionnaire. I summarize responses in paragraph and table form. To ensure anonymity, the teachers are identified as follows: SA1 and SA2=teachers of Xhosa in elementary schools; SA3, SA4, SA5=South African EAP teachers

in universities; C6, C7, C8=Canadian EAP teachers in universities; C9, C10, C11=Canadians teaching adult newcomers to Canada.

About Your Education

This set of questions asked teachers about the contexts in which they grew up, the schools they attended, languages they studied, and how they studied languages.

The teachers grew up in a variety of locales from rural, to small urban, to large urban. All attended schools in the public or Catholic system. Only SA1 and SA2, teachers of Xhosa, had attended disadvantaged schools, that is, schools with few resources (i.e., few supplies and little equipment, inadequate buildings, classes of over 40 students, etc.) and teachers with low levels of teacher education. The three South African EAP teachers all said that they had attended schools with well-trained teachers, class sizes under 35, and resources similar to those we would find in a middle-class school in Canada. Canadian respondents uniformly said the schools they attended were average in terms of resources. An average school in Canada would be one found in any middle-class neighborhood with adequate supplies and equipment and qualified teachers.

All teachers had studied languages in school or as adults. All Canadian teachers had studied French, a school requirement, although only one said she had achieved an advanced level. All but one Canadian respondent had studied other languages. Methods used to teach these languages included structural approaches, grammar translation, audiolingualism, communicative and experiential approaches, and immersion. Only one respondent expressed dissatisfaction with language teaching approaches and methods, although three stated that they had achieved low levels of competence given the length of language study.

South African teachers similarly studied a variety of languages. SA1 and SA2 spoke English as an additional language. SA1 had studied English, Sotho, and Afrikaans and spoke all but Sotho at an advanced level. SA2 had studied all those languages plus Zulu and achieved advanced levels in all. Both these teachers described approaches used as structural or grammar translation. Although both disliked structural approaches, they admitted that they had learned from them. Those who spoke English as their mother tongue (SA3, 4, and 5) had all studied Afrikaans. Only one said that she had achieved an advanced level; all others said they achieved either intermediate or beginner levels of competency. Two had also studied Latin, and one French. Methods used were usually grammar translation, but in one case audiolingualism. SA3, 4, and 5 all expressed dissatisfaction with their language-learning experiences.

About Your Professional Development

This section queried teachers' formal and informal language teacher education experiences as well as employment as language teachers. Teachers were asked what motivated them to enter the field, about their long-term professional goals, what they would still like to learn about language teaching, and their preferred ways of participating in PD. Teachers were also asked what they had learned about themselves and their teaching throughout their language teaching careers.

All EAP teachers in both countries held master's degrees in TESL or applied linguistics. Canadian teachers in settlement agencies had bachelor's degrees plus a certificate in TESL, whereas the South African elementary school language teachers held pre-degree-level teaching diplomas.

Teachers were asked to list their reasons for entering the field of language teaching, their current professional goals, and what they would still like to learn about language teaching (see Table 1).

When asked why they chose particular areas for further learning about language teaching, four of the five South African teachers said that these were directly related to their current work (one did not respond to the question). Canadian teachers were not asked on the pilot survey why they chose particular topics for PD. Several respondents, C7, C9, C10, and SA2 expressed the desire to pursue a further degree related to language teaching.

Teachers selected a variety of ways of participating in PD including formal education, experiential learning, video self-observation, reading, learning from colleagues (in workshops and seminars, working with mentors), observing and being observed by others, research, learning from students, and student feedback. Teachers also talked about their participation in informal learning activities, which included attendance at conferences and PD workshops, reading books and journals, taking short courses, membership in professional organizations, creating materials, giving presentations, observing and being observed by others, exploring Web sites, participating in computer listservs, traveling, and working in a variety of teaching contexts. Teachers all noted that their informal learning was usually related to a specific interest in TESL or their current teaching situation. As one Canadian teacher said, "Right now I am very interested in Web-based teaching and would like to read more about that and incorporate it in my teaching" (C6). Teachers tended to select practical PD opportunities. Another said,

> The kinds of books I find helpful vary greatly depending on my needs or type of contract I am working on. For example, recently I have been coaching new T's [teachers], so for this I look to diff[erent] resources than for dealing with my own classroom issues. (C7)

Table 1

Respondents' Reasons for Entering TESL, Professional Goals, and What They Would Like to Learn About Language Teaching

	Reason for becoming a language teacher	Professional goals	What respondents would still like to learn about language teaching
SA1	liked reading stories; encouraged by a teacher	continue teaching ESL; perhaps develop interest in photography	cross-cultural orientation, teaching listening
SA2	wanted to be a nurse, but encouraged by mother to be a teacher; inspired by volunteer work and possibilities of communicative language teaching	further study (BEd)	cross-cultural orientation, skills integration, materials development, communicative language teaching, syllabus planning, program planning and evaluation, experiential activities, cooperative learning, experiential learning; practical skills empowering teachers in the classroom
SA3	enjoyment of English and working with people	continue teaching ESL; doctoral study	teaching listening, teaching speaking, teaching writing, CALL
SA4	circumstances; primary school teacher training and employment finally led to EAP	more research; possibly doctoral study	teaching reading, teaching grammar, vocabulary development, materials development
SA5	through employment in academic literacy	continue teaching ESL; research	materials development, testing and evaluation, content-based language teaching
C6	discomfort teaching French because not fluent, so I began teaching English	continue teaching ESL	computer use
C7	needed more interaction at work; language teaching related to previous employment; had positive experience teaching overseas	less classroom teaching and more teacher training or administration	language acquisition research focusing on grammar and pronunciation
C8	a revelation; became interested when browsing in the library; to pull together my university study, interests, personality, and strengths	continue teaching; may branch out in the area and look for ESL work beyond the classroom	language acquisition (especially vocabulary), computer assisted language learning (CALL)
C9	career change due to job dissatisfaction; ESL volunteer work led to realization that it was a more fulfilling career	moving from teaching into program development, particularly in CALL; career may be at a juncture.	course and program design, effective use and integration of technology, computer program selection, CALL

Table 1 (continued)

	Reason for becoming a language teacher	Professional goals	What respondents would still like to learn about language teaching
C10	helped a relative learn English; enjoyed cross-cultural sharing	further study at master's level	learning a language using one approach
C11	love of language, drama, work with people, multicultural experiences. and volunteering led to TESL overseas and TESL study in Canada	continue teaching ESL and working in the arts	teaching in multilevel classes, encouraging group work

Several Canadian teachers said that they had little time for reading the professional literature when teaching full time, but might consult books on pedagogy.

When asked about what they had learned about themselves through their PD activities during their teaching careers, the teachers answered as follows:

SA1: I must vary my teaching activities; I need collegiality; I need feedback from colleagues, students, and parents.

SA2: patience and empathy; not everyone is a natural language learner; I'm inspired to learn languages to relate better with my students.

SA3: I've had to become more outgoing, more patient, and more student-centered.

SA4: I've learned to hear what students have to say and not spoon-feed them so much; I value student input more and try to make education empowering; I balance communicative and structural approaches now as both are necessary; I now see teaching and learning as a process.

SA5: I'm a good facilitator; I'm good at keeping silent; I can be objective with my students; students say I have a sense of humor; I'm more realistic about what I can do; each time I teach, I have to act like I'm teaching content for the first time.

C6: teaching is energy-enhancing; I am passionate about teaching; I am constantly learning from my own investigation, colleagues and students.

C9: I've learned: I'm a perfectionist and a work-a-holic; I have learned to be less so; I need to learn and be challenged; I like to create, design new things; I also need to see things through so that I can see the results; I like to focus on students' specific learning goals more than counseling them.

C10:   I like sharing with students in an interesting learning environment.

C11:   I love working with people, but need to break from it to regroup my energy; my cultural sensitivity is useful.

C6, C7, and C8 stated that this question was too involved for them to answer adequately. This question was answered more adequately in interviews as the interviewer could probe responses.

About Your Teaching

Questions in this section related to respondents' teaching philosophies, teaching strategies, materials used, and self-perceptions of teaching strengths and limitations. Table 2 lists how respondents saw their roles and classroom practice.

Respondents generally said their teaching differed from how they were taught, but that they sometimes used structural activities to address student needs. Teachers said that they had developed their teaching based on a combination of personal factors (e.g., personality, their own learning style), teacher education, and student needs. As one teacher said, "I want learning to be active, fun, dynamic, useful, hands-on, successful, interactive, and I strive to make this my teaching style" (C6).

Although six of the respondents used textbooks in their teaching, all made use of supplementary and self-made materials. One Canadian and four South African teachers used entirely self-made materials tailored for the specific course and student needs.

In discussing their teaching strengths and limitations and challenges as teachers, respondents answered as shown in Table 3.

About Your Context

In this section teachers were asked details about their teaching situations and responsibilities, institutional support, and about strengths and limitations of the teaching context. They were also asked about sociopolitical challenges experienced by language teachers.

Respondents' teaching situations are discussed above. In addition, all had the necessary qualifications for teaching in their institutions, and all felt highly responsible to their students and their institution. The Canadian institutions in which these teachers worked tended to favor primarily communicative language teaching, as did the teaching contexts of SA3 and SA5. The Canadian institutions also favored content-based teaching. A single preferred teaching approach was not necessarily specified in South African elementary language programs.

Teachers' responsibilities included teaching; program, curriculum, and materials development; and keeping student records. Many were also involved in placement testing, textbook selection, computer lab maintenance,

Table 2
Respondents' Teaching Goals or Role in the Classroom and How These Are Achieved

	Goals or Role in the Classroom	How Goals or Role Achieved
SA1	to facilitate, coach, mentor	encourage student exploration; inductive learning; experiential activities
SA2	to organize, facilitate, coach, mentor, and provide knowledge	N/A
SA3	to facilitate, coach, mentor	N/A; difficult in large classes
SA4	to organize, facilitate, coach, mentor, and provide knowledge	bring in guests to provide content; group work
SA5	to organize, facilitate, coach, mentor	constructivist approach; holistic and experiential activities
C6	to include and empower students; to promote active learning; to make students responsible for their learning	student-centered; students do as much of the work as possible; experiential activities
C7	to organize knowledge, facilitate, evaluate, coach/counselor; provider of knowledge	communicative language teaching because of its breadth; group work balanced with independent work
C8	to facilitate use of English for communication, as a tool for academic study, to form relationships, and for self-expression; cross-cultural understanding; student empowerment	communicative language teaching; content-based teaching; eclectic include activities that encourage self-expression
C9	to organize and provide knowledge, lead, manage, motive, encourage, support, and be responsive to students goals, needs and input; to model	use a variety of activities reflecting a number of teaching philosophies; communicative activities to promote active learning
C10	to organize and facilitate so that students can communicate with others	communicative language teaching; use of many visuals
C11	to organize, facilitate, coach, mentor, and teach	use a variety of activities to promote extensive practice; encourage humor to alleviate student stress

special projects, and administration. All the South African respondents mentioned research as an expectation, but did not expand on what this meant. None of the Canadians mentioned research as an expectation. All teachers reported that they felt a sufficient measure of responsibility and control over their work.

There was a range of responses related to institutional support (i.e., facilities and resources, salaries and benefits, and PD support). C9, 10, and 11 all said that they had good resources, adequate support in the ESL unit, adequate opportunities for PD through workshops and funding to conferences, and that salaries, although comparatively low, had improved somewhat. They did not perceive that benefits were adequate and did not think that

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Table 3

Respondents' Strengths, Limitations, and Challenges as Language Teachers

	Strengths	Limitations and Challenges
SA1	attending courses and workshops; trialing materials and different approaches	N/A
SA2	relate well to the students; I'm one of the few trained African language teachers and the language is my mother tongue	amalgamation of programs and ideas such as outcomes based education has caused uncertainty about where and what I will teach in future
SA3	approachable; explaining hard concepts	I don't speak the local language
SA4	ability to simplify difficult concepts; noticing when students don't understand	sometimes can't anticipate student problems
SA5	good facilitator; ability to promote constructivist learning; good at motivating; student-centered	I lose my focus easily; can be disorganized; try to do too much
C6	energy, organization, passion for teaching	sitting in meetings; office politics; committee work
C7	identifying students' needs so that I can make classes relevant and interesting	I spend too much time preparing lessons, which is energy draining
C8	ability to create a classroom "community"; building students' confidence; identifying and meeting student needs; patient; organized;	using materials or activities that promote critical thinking and the development of "world citizens"; little background in business English and teaching using advanced technology; finding required energy for full-time teaching
C9	continued interest in learning and improving my teaching; openness to feedback; willingness to change and try new things; organized; methodical; interest in students	perfectionism; tendency to be overly repetitive; time management; programming knowledge
C10	creative, patient, easygoing, cross-cultural sensitivity	do not speak other languages job instability; lack of recognition for what teachers do in our institution
C11	communication skills, cross-cultural skills; ability to use humor and drama; imagination; love of people	organization, record-keeping meeting student needs effectively in heterogeneous classrooms

institutional administration always supported them. One said this lack of support might be a communication problem; another said she did not feel her work was validated by administrators. C6 thought the building needed repair and that work spaces were too small. Two of the Canadian EAP teachers (C7 and C8) said that the question related to administrative support was too vague (this question was later revised). Both said that they received a PD allowance, but C8 said it was too low. C6 said benefits were fixed in her institution and that she received PD support of $400-$500 annually. This question was revised for South Africa as a check-off with an option to provide additional information. Table 4 provides results of South African responses.

Table 4
South African Teachers' Perceptions of the Adequacy of Institutional Support

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5
Existing resources	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Purchase of resources	yes	no	yes	yes	no
Time to plan lessons, keep records	yes	no	yes	yes	no
Personal needs (e.g., visit to doctor)	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Salaries and benefits	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Classroom facilities	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Students' facilities	no	yes	no	yes	no
Teachers' facilities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
PD support	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

When asked about collegial support, all but one teacher responded positively. SA1 added that teachers are not always willing to share expertise and materials. This teacher was also concerned with the lack of cross-cultural understanding between white school administrators and Black teachers.

When asked about their teaching contexts, respondents' indicated the main strengths were collegiality; qualified, confident, enthusiastic, professional staff; good resources; small class size; PD encouragement; support for innovation; availability of child care for students; cultural diversity; and connection with the larger community. The main limitations or concerns were that there was less enthusiasm from administrators than teachers; constant changes in the unit; uncertainty of contract work; burnout and staff morale; curriculum deficiencies; limited opportunities for advancement; small physical facilities; lack of materials for teaching African languages; poor connection with the larger community; lack of cross-cultural understanding; large class size; lack of teacher confidence; constant need to be accountable; lack of understanding from administration regarding what is achievable in short time frame; and weak administrative leadership.

When asked about challenges related to language teaching, Canadian teachers cited workload, salary, physical facilities, and job security. Job security was a general concern that related to fluctuating student enrollments and uncertain government funding. Because of Canada's size and the distribution of new Canadians, the need for teachers is limited in small centers, especially if one wants to specialize. One Canadian respondent said lack of ESL training was an issue. Another noted that lack of recognition of English-language teaching as a profession is limiting in a number of ways.

South African teachers' responses often reflected their tumultuous history and ongoing problems in the school system (Samuel, 1998). The elementary teachers cited the following needs: parental support; teacher education;

need to change poor teacher attitudes; and standardization and acceptance of the national language policy. They noted that amalgamation of previously disparate systems was disorienting for teachers. They pointed out that in spite of changes, there were still many poorly run and poorly resourced schools with low teacher morale. They also said that new policies such as outcomes-based education and the national language policy were not yet understood or accepted by all teachers and that some lacked the confidence to implement new policies. Both SA1 and SA2 noted that the African language they teach could be endangered because of pressures on students to learn English, although in their school there was much support for their language. Both noted that cross-cultural understanding and acceptance of the variety of existing South African cultures were major issues. SA1 noted that proper language modeling in school is a challenge because non-native teachers of English do not always speak the language well. One South African EAP teacher agreed that it was important to maintain an acceptable standard of English for university study. One South African EAP teacher noted that some students were ambivalent about studying with white teachers. On one hand, they realize that white teachers often have the strongest academic backgrounds to ensure delivery of quality education; on the other, the legacy of apartheid had created tension and credibility issues for some instructors. Finally, one EAP teacher said that large classes and students underprepared for postsecondary study were major challenges.

About Your Students

The questions in this section related to details about language students. According to respondents, their students' language-learning goals corresponded closely to the courses in which they were enrolled. South African elementary students were required to study at least two official languages. EAP students were studying English for academic study and to a lesser extent for employment. New Canadians were studying primarily to participate in society and to gain employment and citizenship. Questions related to teachers' perceptions of students' needs, challenges, learning preferences, and strengths are listed in Table 5.

Discussion and Conclusions

As noted above, the purpose of this study is to examine through client analysis insight into individual teachers' backgrounds, contexts, and the links to expressed PD needs. This section deals with how the responses reveal relationships between individual teachers' identified PD needs and their classroom and sociopolitical contexts as well as their previous experiences and education. This section focuses on what did and what did not seem to have the greatest impact on a teacher's PD choices.

Table 5

Teachers' Perceptions of the Needs, Challenges, Learning Preferences, and Strengths of Language Learners

	Needs	Challenges	Activity Preferences	Strengths
SA1	cross-cultural education, writing, grammar	opportunities to speak target language outside class; parental input and support	active learning, group work, informal learning activities	speaking and listening
SA2	cross-cultural education, speaking, listening, writing	opportunities to speak target language outside of class affects motivation; parental input and support	informal learning activities: story telling and games	listening and reading
SA3	instruction and practice in 4 skill areas, especially reading and writing	breaking away from rote learning; becoming active learners	students feel uncomfortable in situations requiring real communication	motivation
SA4	general and subject-specific EAP, reading, writing, cross-cultural education	institutional racism, cultural difficulties, disadvantaged education system; students not from a culture of learning	variety from traditional to active and informal learning	motivation, speaking and listening
SA5	EAP, reading, writing	disadvantaged education system	oral activities: simulations, role plays, etc.	motivation; rapport with teachers; ability to meet challenges
C6	instruction and practice in 4 skill areas	working with homogeneous groups who revert to speaking in L1	group work, experiential learning, group work	motivation
C7	speaking and listening	motivation (for some); lack of time to master needed study skills	variety of activities; group work	motivation; ability to memorize
C8	vocabulary development, speaking, listening; more time to develop students' skills	lack of time to master needed study skills; determination to use English outside of class	varies; many like experiential activities and authentic communication with Canadians	motivation; strong academic backgrounds
C9	depends on students' educational backgrounds; authentic speaking practice; confidence	becoming active learners; confidence to communicate in public	activities requiring passive learning	motivation; resourcefulness
C10	practice in speaking and writing	lack of time funded to learn English	group work, games, grammar drills	motivation; active; cooperative; peer support
C11	instruction and practice in 4 skill areas	taking risks; confidence in using English	varies, depending upon personality, learning style, previous learning experiences	cooperative with and supportive of each other

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It is interesting that all the teachers' desire for particular areas of PD did not seem particularly affected by their early experiences in school or language-learning. Although past negative language-learning experiences and a conscious or unconscious desire to improve that experience for others did not seem to have motivated any of the respondents to become language teachers, all seemed aware that there were better ways to teach than those they had experienced and tended not teach as they had been taught. Language teacher education and awareness that there are better ways of teaching and learning may have influenced respondents' teaching and choice of PD topics to some degree. For example, several respondents (see Table 1 above) wanted an expansion and deeper understanding of teaching strategies.

Teachers' PD choices seemed to be affected in a general way by their career goals in that all saw themselves as continuing to teach language. In only one case, however, was a teacher specific; C9, who was involved in computer-assisted language-learning (CALL) at work, saw this as possibly influencing her career as well as a PD need. In only three cases did teachers' PD choices relate to self-identified areas of weakness in their teaching. C8 felt that she knew little about CALL and listed it as a PD need. C10 felt limited by the fact that she did not speak students' languages and identified language-learning as a PD goal. C11 felt challenged by heterogeneous classes and wanted PD related to working in multilevel classes. It is gratifying that there seemed to be general institutional support for PD, although Canadian respondents said that the support was inadequate.

Formal qualifications tended to be the same for each employment group. When teachers' responsibilities in their institutions are examined, it is evident that all teachers in this study practice similar duties. Crandall (1999) notes that often teachers find themselves in a variety of settings, carrying out tasks beyond those they prepared for during teacher education programs. However, rarely were teachers' additional duties related to their PD choices. For example, although all South African teachers said they were expected to do research, none chose this as an area for PD. Although most respondents identified materials development as a role, only two selected it for PD. This could be because teachers are not interested in some of their duties or because they feel they are already adequately prepared in this area. It is not surprising, for example, that the teacher who disliked administration also did not select this as an area for PD.

Perceived weaknesses of institutions also did not seem to influence PD choices. For example, frustrations related to class size and connection with the larger community did not translate into chosen areas for PD.

Challenges in teaching English in South Africa are related to the nation's tumultuous past and consequent problems in the education system. Although teacher educator Samuel (1998) pinpoints political issues as part of the necessary reeducation of South African teachers, it is only the South

African elementary teachers who saw cross-cultural orientation as an area for development. Although SA1 and SA2 identified some of the common challenges of language teachers in South Africa, all, including SA1 and SA2 chose practical PD topics related to teaching rather than Samuel's more politicized topics. Samuel claims that the teacher education curriculum needs to confront

> the distorted supremacist conceptions of individual racial, linguistic, and cultural heritages, confront the premises underlying existing teachers' ritualized practices of disempowerment, and provide a mirror for ideas that have become entrenched in educators' and pupils' minds about their own practices and capabilities. (p. 577)

He adds that teacher education should address

> the changing conceptions of the teacher as curriculum developer, the changing conceptions of language-learning as the development of communicative competence in a variety of languages, and the issues of power relations among the different languages within South African society. (p. 579)

Teachers' responses related to PD did not reflect Samuel's views.

Canadian teachers also did not choose advocacy, negotiation, or conflict resolution as areas of PD although employment conditions, job stability, and scarce government funding were identified as issues in language teaching. It could be that teachers did not choose these kinds of topics because they did not see them as areas of PD because they are not directly related to the daily practice of language teaching.

The needs and learning preferences of their students had some general impact on respondents' PD choices. South African respondents in all cases perceived that their PD choices were directly related to their work. Although Canadian teachers were not directly asked this question, it could be argued that some PD choices were related to teaching EAP. However, only SA1 and SA2 identified students' needs for cross-cultural orientation and also listed this as an area for PD. SA3's response shows some correlation between student needs and preferences and the teacher's expressed PD needs. Although the lack of clear correlation between teacher PD choices and student needs and learning preferences could be attributed to the wording of the questions and the list of PD choices given, the reasons are probably more complex than this and require further study.

It is noteworthy that most of the Canadian respondents and one South African also selected CALL as an area for PD, as the benefits of computer technology in language teaching are increasingly appearing in the language teaching literature, resulting in pressure to gain expertise in this area. Respondents generally said that they wanted practical PD opportunities.

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Summary

This study explores relationships between 11 language teachers' selected PD choices and each one's background, teaching and sociopolitical context, and education. I had anticipated that a strong correlation between a teacher's PD choices and factors such as academic interest, student needs, trends in language teaching, or sociopolitical context would be revealed. This was not necessarily the case. I had also expected that rather than relying only on teacher educators' prescriptions for inservice program curricula and PD, that teachers themselves could supply somewhat predictable input on their needs based on their backgrounds and contexts, including the reality of the classroom. Such predictability did not occur in this study.

At this juncture, the most that may be said from this study is that an individual teacher's PD choices probably reflect a combination of factors such as personality, personal and academic interests, formal and informal teacher education, needs and preferences of their students, current trends in language teaching, and sociopolitical context. In fact even short-term factors (e.g., an article they happen to have read that week!) may influence a teacher's responses to questions on PD needs. As Boyle (1981) notes, "an opinion expressed on a survey is only an opinion at one moment in time" (p. 159). Thus, as suggested by Freeman and Johnson (1998), long-term client analysis is required.

Although Freeman and Johnson's (1998) identification of teacher's knowledge base is sound and helpful to those of us involved in needs assessment and the development of PD curricula, this study shows that teachers do not themselves necessarily use those domains to identify PD needs. It appears that the use of the three domains in combination with actual input of clients will better equip those planning teacher education programs to formulate curricula and pedagogical approaches for those programs.

For this to happen, combining two or three forms of client analysis is desirable. In addition, focused and in-depth research with teachers over an extended period is required that comprises not only paper-and-pencil surveys, but also focus groups, in-depth interviews, and, as Cervero and Wilson (1994) suggest, sessions in which teachers can discuss and negotiate their PD needs at the beginning and throughout course or program delivery. Meetings in which practicing teachers discuss real classroom problems (Lai, 1993), finding solutions to critical incidents (Currie, 1999), and results of classroom-based action research are examples of this approach. In addition, asking teachers' about their PD needs throughout a teacher education program or learning event and implementing this input will go a long way to ensure that the content remains relevant to them. This can be done directly, through interviews, a suggestion box, dialogue journals, and group feedback meetings.

I hope that this study will encourage language teacher educators to get to know the complex backgrounds, and contexts of practicing language teachers more often, as well as elicit teacher input on PD needs both before and during PD activities. In doing this, we will be able to serve teachers and improve curricula.

The Author

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