PORTRAITS OF THREE TEACHERS’:
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TRANSFER OF LEARNING

By

CHING-YI TSENG

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Washington State University
College of Education

DECEMBER 2006

©Copyright by CHING-YI TSENG, 2006
All Rights Reserved
To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of CHING-YI TSENG find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Joy Egbert who supported me in this study. I have been lucky to have her as my advisor and supporter. I have learned a lot about researching and writing from my conversations with her over my academic work. I would like to thank her for her support and encouragement in this research. I appreciate her time and thoughtful suggestions. I would also like to thank the following committee members: Dr. Mary Roe and Dr. Tom, who offered important insights into this study. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their love and encouragement while I completed final data collection and analyses for this research.
Chair: Joy L. Egbert

The transfer of professional development experiences is a primary concern for teachers. The purpose of this study is to explore the process of teachers’ transfer of learning. This study illustrates the factors that influence teachers’ transferring during professional development experiences. I also describe the qualitative research methods that I used during this study. In this study, three descriptions of teachers are given to illuminate how each person’s attitudes and perceptions developed in this professional development experience. The findings indicate how these three teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of professional development experiences and commitment to the material influence the transfer of knowledge from the course into the reality of the classrooms.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

1. **INTRODUCTION** .............................................................................................. 1
   - Introduction.................................................................................................. 1
     - The Statement of the Problem................................................................... 1
     - The Statement of the Purpose .................................................................. 4
     - The Significance of the Study ................................................................ 4

2. **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE** ....................................................................... 5
   - Introduction................................................................................................. 6
     - Research of Professional Development Experiences............................... 6
     - Research of Transfer of Learning .......................................................... 7
     - Theoretical Foundation ............................................................................ 11
   - Summary ........................................................................................................ 17
     - The Research Problem .............................................................................. 17

3. **METHODOLOGY** ............................................................................................. 18
   - Introduction................................................................................................. 18
     - The Research Questions............................................................................ 18
     - The Research Site: The SRE Online Course Scheme ................................. 18
     - Participants............................................................................................... 22
     - Data Collection: Data Sources ................................................................. 23
     - Data Analysis Procedures ......................................................................... 27
     - Trustworthiness ......................................................................................... 31
     - Confidentiality and Ethics ...................................................................... 33
     - The Limitations of the Study .................................................................. 33
   - Summary ........................................................................................................ 34

4. **FINDINGS** .................................................................................................... 36
   - Introduction................................................................................................. 36
LIST OF FIGURE AND TABLE

1. Six factors to transfer .................................................................................................. 12
2. Participants in the study ............................................................................................. 23
3. Methods for analyzing data sources and codes.......................................................... 30
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to God,

who gave me both wisdom and patience.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The efficiency of learning behavior for students is often guided by a teacher’s decision making process. The teachers’ teaching contexts and personal beliefs are important for the students’ optimal learning because each teacher’s beliefs will determine the type of instruction that teacher will use and how it will impact students’ learning (Leeferink & Klaassen, 2002; Lipson & Wixson 2003). The information presented in this chapter describes the disconnection between teachers’ professional development experiences and the implementations of the new knowledge in the classroom. This chapter provides a general introduction to this study by presenting: (1) the statement of the problem, (2) the statement of the purpose and (3) the significance of the study.

The Statement of the Problem

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) reported that professional development experiences often trigger or enhance teachers’ strategies and improve the quality of teachers’ attitudes (Henke et. al, 2000). Professional development experiences can provide a context for teachers to easily associate with the school’s reform and understand their students’ academic improvement. However, although teachers are involved in professional development experiences, there has been a lack of connection between professional development experiences and teachers’ implementation of knowledge gained from those experiences into the reality of their classrooms (Ashdown, 2002; Ball & Cohen, 2000; Cobb, McClain, Lamberg & Dean, 2003; Jackson, 1971; McLaughlin, 2002; Orlich, 1981; Tyler, 1971).

Previous research on professional development experiences has focused primary on one
Many studies have examined the implementation of professional development experiences, with results indicating that teachers think the teaching strategies provided during professional development would not be used immediately or would not be useful in a real classroom (Berryman, 1994; Eick et al, 2003; Herrington et al, 2002; Hopkins, 1997; Rigden, 1996; Risko, 1995; Rhodes & Bellamy, 1999). According to these studies, most teachers rarely see professional development experiences as a continuing and consistent process because they often think that professional development experiences do not apply to their classrooms (Ball & Cohen, 2000). Whereas, these studies have focused on providing teachers with effective strategies in the classroom, this research found that teachers have a hard time catching up with the lectures about theories in professional development programs. This circumstance causes difficulty for them in applying the strategy in their real classrooms. Because teachers often have limited time to participate in professional development these professional development experiences do not give the teachers enough time and discussion for them to practice the lesson, and consequently, they have trouble in identifying the strategy for their classroom (Ball & Cohen, 2000).

Minimal research attention has been directed toward exploring the factors that influence teachers’ transfer of learning from professional development experiences and we lack a detailed picture of the process for transfer of learning. Often teachers who finish professional development experiences both reject and accept some of professional development experiences. These factors have not been explained or explored in detail. However, there is growing recognition of the factors of transfer of learning in many fields today. Employers are spending a growing amount of money to investigate and explore how their employees transfer what they learned from training sessions in order to benefit their work settings (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).
Consequently, the factors that influence the transfer of learning are an important step in the process of learning in any professional development training because employees must be able to apply the material they learned in order to improve their work environment and output (Ngew, 1998; Perkins & Gavriel, 1988).

Knowledge transferability is a “multifaceted problem” at the center of professional learning. Often the question of transfer of learning is stated in Pea as (1987): “How can knowledge acquired in formal education be transferred appropriately to everyday life and work situations?” (p. 639). In the transfer of learning literatures, generally the focus is on these three issues: far and near transfer, cultural influences and individual differences. The earlier views of professional development experiences tended to focus almost exclusively on strategies that are effective in the classrooms. However, the factors that influence teachers’ transfer of learning has not been explored. Therefore, the arguments surrounding such multifaceted research and the transfer of learning are influenced by many elements including far and near transfer, cultural influences and individual differences, as explained in Chapter Two.

From the standpoint of professional development experiences in general, the primary concern and desirable end is that the knowledge can be implemented effectively in classroom because the transfer of knowledge will require learners to inform their thinking in life outside of professional development experiences (Perkins & Salomon, 1988). Accordingly, focusing on far and near transfer, the cultural influence and the individual differences is important in the process of the transfer of learning. Furthermore, examination of transfer issues requires a clear understanding of what is meant by transfer as well as the identification of factors that affect transfer. Chapter Two presents a framework for understanding the transfer process where I will clearly explain the above two major points. In this framework, the transfer process is described
by Bruner (1971), in terms of attitude, compatibility, activation, practice, self-loop and information flow. These six factors of transfer will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

**The Statement of Purpose**

Transfer of learning is important in the understanding of the teacher’s process of learning from professional development experiences and how they apply new techniques in their classrooms. Transfer of learning also provides a lens to view multiple factors that influence teachers as they learn to teach and apply new knowledge to the classroom. However, in professional development there is a disconnection between professional development experiences and the classrooms. Teachers are not able to identify the strategies they learned from professional development experiences and thus are not able to implement them in classrooms. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore the process of teachers’ transfer of learning in professional development experiences using a multidimensional framework and examine the factors that influence teachers’ transferability.

**The Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study are significant in that they add to the existing body of knowledge on teacher education and reconsider the findings from previous professional development research. Professional development experiences are being reformed to construct links with classrooms, addressing appropriate strategy and content area matters. However, the factors that influenced transferability of teacher learning have been sparsely explored during professional development experiences. Theoretically, the information from the study can motivate researchers to investigate more on the factors that influence teachers’ transfer of learning in professional development experiences. On a substantive level, this study contributes to the literature concerning the factors of transfer of learning that intertwines the complex
interactions of the professional development experience. Therefore, the insights about professional development experiences from this study may assist education policy makers and teacher education program administrators to design and modify professional development experiences.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Current professional development experiences have been reformed to construct links between teaching contexts and professional development experiences, such as by addressing matters of appropriate strategy and content area (Ball & Cohen, 2000; Bartell, 2005; Orlofsky, 2001; Rhodes & Bellamy, 1999). However, the factors that influence teachers’ transfer of learning have rarely been discussed. Understanding teachers’ transferability while attending professional development experiences is a major concern because it is related to teachers’ learning and teaching, students’ upgraded learning ability, and the benefits of overall professional development experiences. The following review of literature explores the factors that influence teachers’ transfer during professional development experiences and describes transferability as a learning framework.

Research on Professional Development Experiences

We are in a “knowledge explosion” era; everyone needs to gain the latest knowledge in order to benefit their life and career. Similarly, in professional development experiences, teachers’ development becomes important because a successful and effective teacher is often influenced by good instruction over time. Effective instruction by teachers is not only impacted by the initial preparation program but also by ongoing professional development experiences (Bartel, 2005; Levin, 2003).

The goal of professional development experiences is to help teachers to gain what is new in their profession in order to deal with the constant changes of society and students’ understanding levels (Orlich, 1981). In addition, teachers need updated knowledge in their
teaching context in order to prepare themselves for unpredictable situations in classrooms. In general, however, professional development experiences often fall into routine work circumstances for teachers because they are required to attend professional development to retain certification and advance on their pay scale. In addition, research claims that professional development experiences are “isolated and neglected,” and that programs do not include a correctly situated process for teachers to implement what they have learned from theory into actual practice (Ball & Cohen, 2000; Cobb, McClain, Lamberg & Dean, 2003; Jackson, 1971; McLaughlin, 2002; Orlich, 1981; Tyler, 1971). Teachers often think there is no connection between the information they gain in professional development experiences and the real situations that they encounter in schools; in these situations they do not feel that what they learn will be immediately useful in teaching (Berryman, 1994; Eick et al, 2003; Gonzalez, 2000; Herrington et al, 2002; Hopkins, 1997; Rigden, 1996; Risko, 1995).

Research on Transfer of Learning

As Bruner (1977) claimed, through general principle and strategy learning, the learner transfers knowledge from one context into another. In other words, transfer means that learner is able to apply what he/she learned into a situation he/she faces. This is a major concern in the educational process (Bruner, 1977; Perkins & Salomon, 1988; Prawat, 1989). In any professional field, training is necessary for staffs to improve themselves in their particular area of specialization. However, the application of knowledge often fails to transfer into the workplace (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Taylor, 2000). Therefore, a discussion of the factors that influence transfer must be briefly pursued.

Factors that Influence Transfer
The process of transfer involves three different factors: first being near and far, which means the learner’s ability of transfer depends on the range of the knowledge that he/she learned. As to the reason for the failure of knowledge transfer, Perkins and Salomon (1988, 1992) concluded that it was due to the range of knowledge transfer. They assert that transfer can be separated into two different kinds: near and far. Near transfer refers to the learner who has practiced in routine circumstances; for example, the teacher learned a certain strategy from the course and practiced in a context similar to what was faced in the course. Far transfer has a different character than near transfer; the learner learns the knowledge with abstract information, and the context seems dissimilar to that in which the learner is currently involved. For example, a sixth grade teacher learns a strategy that is designed for an adult reader at a second grade reading level. Therefore, this teacher might apply this basic reading knowledge to practices and activities for the specific reading level. The above definitions of the near and far transfer can be found in the following study. Griffin (1995) set up two map tests to see her students’ transfer of learning. During the instructional phase, the students were assigned to find routes from point A to point B on the map of the Florida State University campus, a large outside area. During the transfer test, the students were required to navigate the science library on the FSU campus, which is on the inside of the building. Even though these two maps have similarity such as the legend and the index, the result was that there was no transfer of learning from the instructional phase.

The factors on transfer of learning are not only about near and far transfer but also there are other theories on factors that influence transfer. Various researchers concluded that there are two other factors that influence the learners’ transferability: individual differences and cultural influence. Among the factors that influence professional development experiences, teachers’
beliefs and values are key elements. Due to all the fact that teachers’ work experiences under multiple circumstances in their instruction area, in general teachers make decisions based on their personal experiences, assumptions, perspectives in the teaching context, and/or previous professional development experiences (Freeman, 1994; Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Griffin, 1995; Kaufman, 1966; Levin, 2003; Lipson & Wixson, 2003).

According to Anderson and Holt-Reynolds (1995), teachers bring their beliefs into professional development experiences to learn what they think is worthwhile for their teaching context. For example, teachers who believe that teacher-centered instruction should be the main feature in the classroom will respond to the idea of cooperative learning in a negative way (Kaufman, 1966). In turn, while they are involved in these professional development experiences, the individual factors and assumptions will affect what knowledge they want to learn, and consequently, how to apply them into the reality of the classroom. In an example of this, Downe et al (2004) interviewed some of the trainees in a workshop and found out they felt the content of the material was not new for them. Therefore, their individual attitudes and perceptions fueled a lack of motivation to learn and apply the knowledge in their job because they felt that they already knew it. Consequently, individual differences are important when exploring teachers in professional development experiences because individual attitude and perception impacts learning and the application of knowledge on the factors that influence transfer of learning.

The last factor of cultural influence means that learner’s transfer of learning is influenced by the environment in which the learner knowledge is influenced such as the content of the design and support from peers and instructors and external rewards (Pea, 1987). Pea (1987) defined that transfer of knowledge is more influenced by environments, as well as by prior
knowledge learned that carries over from one experience to another. For instance, many organizations spend a lot of time and money on training although the knowledge does not transfer into the working environment. There are too many individual factors and structures in our culture and in the organization that could affect the learners’ transfer into the working environment, factors such as the design of the program and the related personnel support in their learning (Cromwell & Kolb, 2002; Kupritz & Reddy, 2002). In these studies, support from supervisors and the feedback and rewards from management showed a high level of application and transfer of learning to the work settings. Taylor (2000) found that support from the instructor increased the learners’ ability to transfer learning. They attempted to apply to their workplace what they learned in the course. Furthermore, the content of design and lack of time for practice in general are also considered factors that influence negatively on the transfer of learning. In addition, as Billett (2002) investigated, the period of working experiences is also a key factor for workers to transfer and implement learning to their professional career.

In conclusion, the teachers in professional development experiences are having a hard time implementing what they have learned in their classrooms. Some teachers who finish professional development experiences still fail to transfer their learning into the reality of teaching because they find it difficult to implement their learned skill in their classroom. In general, the above research results showed that near and far transfer, cultural influence and individual differences were factors that influenced the transfer of learning in professional development trainings. This discrepancy between professional development experiences and the reality of the classroom illustrates the need to explore the factors that influence teachers’ transfer of learning, which is the purpose of this current study. The following section will discuss how through Bruner’s transferability of learning framework the researcher can identify the factors that
influencing on teachers’ transfer of learning. This framework will enable the researcher to understand and explain why and how the process of learning transfer can be achieved through professional development experiences. Even though this theoretical framework described children’s transfer of learning, the components of this framework are the same for adults in professional development experiences. Bruner described that learning situations between children and adult are not different. For example, children will make a change if he/she finds a mistake in their prior knowledge. This is the same as in adults’ reaction when they find there is a disconnect between their prior and current professional development experiences. In other words, both children and adult react the same way towards adjustments in prior knowledge. In addition, this framework illustrates a broader application than other studies and may help give a clear picture. For example, some studies only focus on either cultural influences or individual differences that could affect the transfer of learning. This framework also covers previous studies of far and near transfer, individual differences and cultural influences by providing more understanding about the factors that influence transfer of learning and the process of transfer.

**Theoretical Foundation**

*Transferability of Learning*

Bruner (1977) stated “Learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us later to go further more easily” (p. 17). In professional development experiences, teachers should not only learn from the program, but also be able to transfer new information into their classrooms. The process of learning, whether the learner understands what he/she is dealing with and how the learner understands the activities that he/she learned, is crucial to whether or not the knowledge transfers into his/her teaching context (Bruner, 1977).
For Bruner (1971), learners solved problems differently depending on the experiences they had and knowledge they possessed. Therefore, these individual differences will affect how they gained knowledge and successfully transfer knowledge to the reality of classrooms. In addition, the factors of environment also influence learners’ ability to do the knowledge transfer. The examination of the transfer of learning requires a clear understanding and explanation of what is meant by transfer as well as the identification of factors that affect transfer. The following are six factors of transferability as identified by Bruner: (1) attitude, (2) compatibility, (3) activation, (4) practice, (5) self-loop and (6) information flow as presented in Figure 1.
Bruner identifies the first factor of transfer as attitude. According to Smith and Doren (2004), if the learner’s attitude towards material did not change to a positive attitude then the knowledge displayed in the training will not be used in their work settings. In other words, teachers who come to professional development experiences bring their preformed attitudes as they view the content and judge whether it would fit in their classroom or not. For example, a longitudinal study by Levin (2003) discovered that teachers brought their prior beliefs to professional development experiences and this influenced their attitude toward the course because those personal values impacted their thinking. Consequently, Bruner (1971) claimed that attitude is the master of the fundamental idea of the transfer of learning because learners need to recognize that the knowledge that they learn will be beneficial for them and that it is indeed worth knowing (Orlofsky, 2001).

Compatibility

The second factor that Bruner identifies is compatibility, which means the learner needs to be able to adjust the new material into what she/he already knows. Ehrenberg (1983) indicated that in professional development experiences it is often not emphasized that learners need to have a clear understanding related to the associated tasks. Many teachers finish professional development experiences but without a clear concept of what they were doing or a reflection on how this works within their teaching context. Therefore, the result would be a disconnect between the professional development experience and the teaching context. Thus, learners need to bridge the connection and integrate what they themselves know with the new knowledge that they acquire and their existing old knowledge; thus the transfer of learning can be accomplished.
Through this kind of compatibility, learners will discover the principles that they would not have sensed or realized before because it helps them to be more interested in the transferability of their knowledge (Bruner, 1971, 1977; Prawat, 1989).

**Activation**

The third factor that Bruner identifies is activation, which means the learner needs to experience success with content endeavors, spurring her/him on to further attempts. In positive activation, the work environment often provides an original place to ensure that the successful transfer of learning has occurred. An example would be those learners often activated by organizational decisions such as money and promotion (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Ngeow (1998) indicated that learners succeed with the transfer of learning, because of employer’s requirement that they increase their skills. Another type of activation that spurred the learners on is their desire to learn; the learners want to receive the information in order to succeed in the professional field.

In professional development experiences, learners can be activated from the work environment, and with satisfaction from the assignments and activities that they are involved in and through these activities, they are rewarded with competence (Orlofsky, 2001). In the transfer of learning of professional development experiences, activation serves an important role because it is an impetus to motivation for the learners to keep up on the transfer of the learning process (Bruner, 1971).

**Practice**

The next factor that Bruner identifies is practice, which means the learner needs the opportunity to use the skill that requires combining learned material with context-based activities. Ehrenberg (1983) notes that practice is always an important tool in an ideal program.
Therefore, if the transfer of learning is to be properly facilitated in professional development experiences, then teachers need opportunities to practice what they have learned in order to combine the knowledge they learned with the teaching context. Consequently, providing the learner with enough opportunities to practice the skills used in problem solving and knowledge transfer into work settings is necessary (Orlofsky, 2001). Therefore, Orlofsky (2001) suggested that it is important to build some of these practice sessions within the confines of class time. In addition, the instructor can function as facilitator and sounding board and can provide assurance that learners are on the right track before they are left to their own work settings.

_Self-Loop_

Another factor is self-loop, which means the learner must be able to explain or restate what she/he has just done. Bruner (1971) claimed that successful learners are able to explain what they have done and can describe the process with others. In addition, it is a process of internalizing the knowledge so that they can transfer their learning into another context. For example, when learners go back to their work settings, they are able to define and understand the strategy that was used specifically rather than use it without understanding and knowing the reason (Orlofsky, 2001). Furthermore, Ehrenberg (1983) argued that learners should consistently consult with their colleagues about what they have learned because the result of communication with others will result in successful learning transfer. Accordingly, Cromwell & Kolb (2002), communication with colleagues is an important process of learning transfer because it is an affecting factor that impacts learner performance on the tasks.

_Information Flow_

The final factor is information flow. Bruner asserts that the learner needs to manage the amount of material learned in order to problem solve. In professional development experiences,
teachers often found that what they learned from the courses that did not fit into their classroom, so they could not apply what they learned because the teachers could not determine and manage how the strategies learned from those professional development experiences were beneficial in their classroom settings. Bruner (1977) pointed out that the learners need to convert the learning into accessible, digestible information in their work settings (Orlofsky, 2001). The converting of information flow is an important component of the transferring of learning because the learner will fix and contrast what they have learned and then convert it into their suitable situation. Therefore, in order to make information more accessible and digestible, learner’s ability to grasp, sort through, process, and digest information becomes important.

In summary, the ability to transfer learning often accompanies the teacher’s understanding regarding how this knowledge can be applied in his/her classroom (MsLaughlin, 2002). In present professional development experiences research, “re-experience” is an essential component in professional development experiences. For example, the teachers need to scrutinize their own disposition, communication preference and learning styles; in so doing, the transfer of learning can be applied in their learning and teaching context. In addition, in order to have a better transfer of learning, ongoing conversation of colleagues and support from the professional reading is necessary in professional development experiences (Perry, 2004). Overall, the major component of the transfer of learning is the teachers’ attitude on why the professional development will benefit and facilitate them in their classrooms. When teachers have a sense of understanding and belief in the professional development experience then the transfer of learning may be initiated.

Summary
This chapter has described how some research address the means by which teachers should learn in professional development experiences, and some research provide the factors that impact mainstream teachers within professional development experiences. Therefore, this present study would like to explore the discrepancy in previous research by explaining the transferability of teacher knowledge within professional development experiences. By explaining the factors of process of the teachers’ transfer of learning in professional development experiences, this study may result in suggestions for improving teacher education.

The Research Problem

To date, the majority of studies on teacher professional development have focused on pedagogy and content area issues that help teachers apply them to the classrooms. The literature shows that current professional development experiences have not prepared some teachers due to the difficulty of the connection between the school learning and the reality of the classroom. Therefore, we need to understand more about teachers’ transfer of learning as a core element in professional development experiences. The purpose of the current study will be focused on the factors of transferability of teacher learning, in order that in the long run, programmers of professional development experiences can design more effective teacher education.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The selection of professional development experiences has undergone many years of study and research. However, the transferability of teachers’ learning during professional development experiences has rarely been researched. In Chapter Two, I discussed the need for a study of teachers’ transfer of learning in professional development experiences. This chapter will discuss the methods used in the current study, describing the purpose, the research site, participants, data collection, and data analysis. In addition, the trustworthiness, confidentiality, ethics and the limitations of this study are discussed.

The Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to provide a process description and explanation of the factors of transferability of teacher learning by examining the transferability from the professional development experience of three classroom teachers to real classroom contexts. The research question for the proposed study is “How do classroom teachers transfer the knowledge gained through professional development into the reality of everyday teaching?” Within this framework, three component questions guide the study:

1. How do teachers perceive the process of transfer?

2. What changes in knowledge do teachers experience as a result of their professional development experiences?

3. How do their methods of instruction change?

The Research Site: The SRE Online Course Scheme
This study was conducted during the 2004-2005 school year in a seven-week, web-based, graduate-level course at a university in the Northwest. The course was based in the WebCT online environment. The course development was supported by a state grant and was designed to enable in-service teachers to explore issues of reading strategies. The course was entitled *Scaffolding Reading Experiences for Second Language Learners*. In this course, participants learn about Scaffolded Reading Experiences (SREs). SRE is helpful to the teachers because it gives them a chance to understand how their ELLs learn to read and how teachers can help improve ELLs’ learning. Furthermore, the effective use of SREs can help teachers to achieve and develop a balance that addresses the varied needs of all the students—not just the ones that excel, but also those that struggle, and those in between. SRE is a set of pre-, during-, and post-reading activities specifically designed to assist a particular group of students in successfully reading, understanding, learning from, and enjoying a particular selection. Each of these components serves a different purpose, as briefly explained below.

*Pre-reading activities*

Prepare students to read an upcoming selection. They can serve a number of functions, including getting students interested in reading the selection, reminding students of things they already know that will help them understand and enjoy the selection, and pre-teaching aspects of the selection that may be difficult.

*During-reading activities*

It included both things that students themselves do as they are reading and things that teachers do to assist them as they are reading (for example, students reading to teachers, teachers reading to them, or students taking notes as they read).

*Post-reading activities*
Post-reading activities serve a variety of purposes. They provide opportunities for students to synthesize and organize information gleaned from the text so that they can understand and recall important points.

In this course, participants had a private e-mail account (Internal mail). The syllabus, rubrics for the assignments and additional references were displayed in the content of the course. WebCT also enables students to download audio/video related to this course and to submit assignment files. In addition, the discussion forum is a place for participating teachers to post the required postings. With respect to time and work required, the course was equivalent to a three-credit graduate-level course. Before the seven-week course started, there was a one-week introduction unit designed to familiarize the participants with the online learning environment and the content of the course. During this week, in addition to contribution to discussions, the participants were required to finish two assignments: a position paper drafted by the International Reading Association and a reflection cartoon. The goal of these two assignments was for the participants to consider how the ideas of the article and cartoon will fit in with or fail to apply in their teaching context and the challenges that they might encounter. Furthermore, they were intended to show the participants’ prior understanding of professional development experiences and to develop a common language for acquainted WebCT and SREs.

The intensive seven-week graduate-level course provided in-service teachers with an opportunity to apply those strategies in their classrooms simultaneously; thus they were able to discover impediments while achieving continuous improvement. The course involved three activities: (1) discussion postings, (2) Learn-Apply-Ponder (LAP) and (3) Before, During, and After Reading (BDAR) assignments. Also included were colleague-to-colleague presentations. In the seven-week format, each unit lasted from Monday through Sunday. Initially, the course
was designed to start on 9 September 2005, and end on 21 October 2005. However, the
instructor extended the final assignment due dates until 19 December 2005. During this course,
there were some teachers who did not punctually submit the assignments due to their confusion
and time constraint.

In the discussion forum, the participants were required to post two questions and three
comments driven by the readings; they were to be posted by each Friday at 10:00 p.m. For
example, the participants would post how the textbook affected and matched their classroom
settings. In the Learn-Apply-Ponder (LAP) activity, the participants composed a LAP log entry
for each assigned reading, and each response consisted of three pieces for each of the seven
units. Each LAP log entry needed to be posted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday of each unit. For
example, the participants composed what they learned from the textbook and the course, how
they applied what they learned from the SRE to their classroom, and finally, their ideas and
reflections about using the SRE in their classroom. In the Before, During, and After Reading
(BDAR) assignment, the participants were to critique, apply or propose an aspect of scaffolded
reading experiences for unit one through unit six. Each unit need to be posted by 5:00 p.m. on
Saturday. For example, the participants would receive a situation from the video to think about
what facet of the SRE should be used.

Participants from different disciplines worked individually or in groups, for seven-weeks
to post questions and comments on the discussion forum to design and apply LAP and BDAR
lessons of every central reading—the lessons could be ones that had been taught previously or
not. By the end of the course, participants had worked through the various scaffolded reading
experiences elements for their school district, sharing what they learned with colleagues through
presentation. During the process, participants were expected to examine and develop their
thoughts about the practice of teaching from the readings and from the video they watched. A range of assignments encouraged participants to reflect on both the lesson and the teaching of their classrooms.

**Participants**

The course selected for this study was an elective course in the ESL endorsement and a masters degree program and had no prerequisites. It was designed specifically for participants in the grant project. There was a wide variety of teachers who took the class at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Initially, there were approximately twenty-five teachers signed up for the course. However, two districts of teachers dropped the project before the beginning of the term for administrative reasons. In addition, some teachers dropped out because they felt that the course was too intense and they could not maintain it while working in their classrooms. Therefore, there were three school districts with a total of eleven teachers who participated in the entire course.

After the data collection began, I selected teachers based upon their willingness to finish the course on time and participate in the related questionnaires, surveys and interviews. Five people completed all of the data collection materials, but I selected three who were teaching and who had ESL students in their classrooms. There were four teachers who fell into that category. These four teachers were distributed among three school districts. Because there were two teachers in the same school district, I chose the one who had the stronger opinion that could provide more information toward this course. For the selection of participants I used convenience sampling (Cresswell, 2005) hoping to describe multiple individuals that differ on some characteristics. Each teacher selected was from one of those three school districts, and was believed to portray unique and varied participant characteristics of transferability of professional
development experiences according to individual circumstances. This study focused on three teachers: Wendy, Rena and John (pseudonyms were use to protect their identity) — two females and one male. The teaching careers of the participants in this study are fairly typical of the range of professional development experiences of ESL teachers (elementary and high school) and a mainstream (middle school) teacher. Their classroom teaching experiences range from four to ten years and cover a variety of grade levels and school contexts, although they all resided in the Northwest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Wendy</th>
<th>Rena</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Level of Instruction</td>
<td>ESL upper elementary</td>
<td>Mainstream 6th grade middle school</td>
<td>ESL high school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Participants in the Study

Data Collection: Data Sources

As Levin (2003) asserts, disposition impacts how teachers apply materials learned from professional development experiences in their classrooms. Whether in the school or out of the school these dispositions affect the transferability of materials learned from professional development experiences because they influence the method of development. These dispositions were examined in order to determine challenging factors influencing transferability from the professional development experiences into the classroom. For example, teacher’s knowledge prior to professional development experiences, the current teaching context and the support from the school could impact their professional development experiences. Consequently, the data sources for this study included: (a) background survey; (b) pre- and post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire; (c) course documents, which include assignments, discussion postings and
dissemination projects; (d) course experience surveys; (e) open-ended interviews; and (f) additional writing and e-mail correspondence from each participant responding to questions the instructor posted. In addition, the pre- and post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, course experience survey and open-ended interviews were constructed based on Bruner’s (1971) features of learning transferability framework as discussed in Chapter Two. In the data sources, the interviews and course documents were primary data sources for this study.

**Background Survey**

The background survey was used to understand the participants’ periods of teaching, teaching contexts, subject of teaching and previous or current Scaffolded Reading Experiences knowledge (see Appendix A). The survey was distributed prior to the start of class. The purpose of the background survey was to get to know teachers’ prior backgrounds, experiences in teaching and the experiences of professional development. The survey was based off of a previous study (Boxie, 1999), but modified by the grant principal investigator, in order to provide questions that would be representative of the participants’ prior background knowledge.

**Pre- and Post-SRE Knowledge and Use Questionnaire**

The two self-administered stages of the questionnaire were used to understand the participants’ SRE knowledge and use in their classrooms (See Appendix B). The questionnaires were based on Bruner’s transferability as learning framework. Furthermore, the researcher developed the questionnaire with the grant principal investigator in order to create questions that were representative of the participants’ prior and current SRE knowledge. In the process of developing the questionnaire, the literature and objectives of this course were reviewed in order to come up with questions that would result in a better defined understanding of these teachers SRE background. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants both before the start of
class and after the class was finished. The purpose of the first stage of questionnaires was to get to know the teachers’ SRE knowledge and SRE use in their classrooms. The final stage of the questionnaires was conducted to understand the teachers’ knowledge and use after taking the SRE course. In order to get a high response rate, I notified participants first that they would receive a survey/questionnaire, and then I used follow-up procedures for those who had not responded by e-mail. However, some participants were not willing to cooperate with the researcher. Therefore, some of them returned the first stage of the questionnaire, but not the final stage of the questionnaire. Thus, of the completed, returned questionnaire of the five people who finished the study, three were chosen as the final participants.

Course Documents

Documents were collected from online discussion postings, assignments, comments from the instructor and dissemination projects that contained pertinent information. The purpose of document collection is to get to know the process of knowledge transferability in the course. It includes discussions and assignments (LAP and BDAR). The above collections also helped enhance the interview data because the researcher would investigate the consistency between the course documents and interviews.

Course Experience Survey

The course experiences survey conducted at the end of the course was distributed at the same stage as the final questionnaire (see Appendix C). This survey investigated the participant’s feedback about this course. For example, the survey asked whether each participant implemented the SRE and explained and presented strategies to the students and staff of the individual schools. In addition, the survey asked questions regarding the course efficiency and whether or not it benefitted their teaching context and professional development learning. Thus,
of the five participants who completed and returned questionnaires, three were chosen as the final participants.

*Interviews*

The open-ended interviews would best help the researcher gain a detailed understanding of transferability from the course to the classrooms (see Appendix D). Interviews were conducted with teachers on campus at the university or at their school if possible, and phone interviews were conducted when they were not able to come to campus. Interviews were conducted during the course of one hour and were also audio-taped and then transcribed for analysis. The interview questions were aimed at illustrating an in-depth understanding of learning transfer to gather data supplementary to the questionnaire/survey and course documents. For example, the participants were asked about how they view their professional development experiences. This question would explore whether or not the participants had a contradiction between the perception they brought into this course and their attitude toward the professional development experience. The three teachers were asked to talk extensively about what happened in their lives during the course. The interviews yielded additional data about the personal and professional development experiences of the participants.

*Participants’ Writing*

Additional data was collected from each of the participants in the form of written responses to questions posted by the instructor and related personnel via electronic mail. For the most part, these writings were in response to specific questions by the instructor. For example, the researcher and the grant principal investigator were outsiders of the course, but took care of the participants’ needs and complaints. Therefore, there were some emotional electronic mail
correspondences. For example, the students complained that the course was too intensive and the content of the course was not applicable for their classrooms.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The qualitative data analysis methods employed in this study were designed to provide descriptions of participants’ *attitudes* about and *perceptions* of the development transferability over time. In the data analysis, I first did open-ended coding and then imposed Bruner’s framework on the results. The theoretical framework for this study, transferability as learning (Bruner, 1971), also offers a method for describing data from *attitude* and *perception* perspectives in order to correspond to the sources of data. In this study, the framework gave a direction of exploring the process of the participants’ transfer of learning, such as the perception of the format of the course and the support from the instructor and colleagues. These factors led the researcher to identify the impacts that changed and influenced the participants’ attitudes and perceptions. For example, the hindrance of the transferability as learning framework called “compatibility” gave the researcher a direction to examine the participants’ struggles between their prior SRE knowledge and the applicability of the SRE in their classroom practice.

The techniques of constant comparative analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001), pattern matching (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001), and triangulation of data sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) were used to develop three portraits and a detailed cross-portrait analysis. Using the constant comparative method, the researcher collected data, looked for emerging themes and recurring events, categorized them, and reevaluated my theme categories. As I collected more data, I wrote analytic memos about my data, and reevaluated previous theories as I compared old data with new. While analyzing the data sources, the researcher triangulated the data to find the patterns within the data sources. The researcher also consulted
with the related personnel, such as the instructor and grant principal investigator, in order to find out the overall picture of participants’ process of transfer of learning. Consequently, themes and patterns appeared through which I have evidence to identify and to portray the data.

To develop each portrait, content analysis procedures (Leedy & Ormrod, 1985) were applied to all survey/questionnaires, course documents, interviews with the participants, and the participants’ writing. The purpose of the content analysis was to develop rich descriptions of the participants’ pathway of transferability, how SRE influenced their teaching context and learning attitude and perceptions regarding SRE, and how their attitudes and perceptions played out in their actions in the classrooms from the course and to answer the research questions. For example, the researcher examined the participants’ course documents and interviews to see if there was any contradiction between what they said in the interview and their action from the course documents. This analysis gave the readers a clear picture of what factors influenced the participants’ transfer of learning in this course.

Interview Data

To code the interview data, all interview tapes were transcribed in detail. After transcribing, the transcriptions were coded with colored pencils by hand. Some sections were marked with more colors to indicate the themes. For example, the researcher examined the participants’ attitudes and perceptions of this course within the transferability as learning framework. With this coding process, two main themes were identified: attitudes and perceptions.

Pre and Post SRE Knowledge & Use Questionnaire and Course Experience Survey Data

After all of the questionnaires/surveys were completed, I compared the differences between the pre- and post-SRE Knowledge & Use questionnaires to see the participants’
weaknesses and strengths of SRE knowledge application. Then I compared the teaching context that the participants mentioned in the course documents. For example, the participants mentioned in which SRE assignments they felt that they did not receive enough practice for their classroom. Then I compared it with the questionnaire (in Appendix B) to provide the accuracy of the data. According to the course experience survey, I analyzed the participant’s feedback of this course compared with the course documents and interview to see the consistency of the data. For example, if the participant mentioned in the interview that the practice of using SRE was not enough, I verified whether or not he/she also mentioned that in the survey. In this comparison of the questionnaire/survey, two main themes were found: obstacles and changes.

Course Documents and Additional Writing

To code the documents, different colored stickers were attached to each document and product, because these documents and products were used to add to the explanations of each theme. Most of the documents had several different colored stickers attached because they supported many themes. Mostly it was used for examples to support the findings from other data. Also, additional writing about participants’ confusions or successful application of the SRE during and after the course was coded for confusion about the SRE course.

The above data sources in each portrait record an analysis of each person’s current and past thinking about the SRE, their learning from the course, teaching contexts, and vignettes that describe their transferability to their classrooms. These events described in portraits are presented chronologically so that readers can see the progression of their changes over time. Finally, each portrait concludes with reflections in each teacher’s own words. The following chart explains which of the four analyses I used for each data sources and codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Constant</th>
<th>Pattern matching</th>
<th>Triangulation of</th>
<th>Content analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

29
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>comparative analysis</th>
<th>data sources</th>
<th>procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background survey</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: prior SRE training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: prior and current knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course documents</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: personality, confusion, complaints, implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course experience surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: Reaction about SRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended interviews</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: complaints, personality, confusion, support, practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ writing</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: complaints,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Methods for analyzing data sources and codes

**Trustworthiness**

Researchers often encounter situations in which it is difficult to determine the “correct” meaning of the interview and whether the interview conflicted with other interviews. Most researchers would ask on what basis we choose to believe which side (Seidman, 1998). However, what researchers often need to do is not to choose which side is the truth, but rather to invalidate other opinions. The following section discusses how the researcher used data sources to represent “more likely” data in this study.

**Credibility**

The researcher observed the research site for four months, from September through December. The researcher was charged with taking care of the participants’ class enrollment, books purchasing and login problem assessment. In this way the researcher received detailed information of how the participants felt about the course. In this study, there were two experts who were involved in the course: the grant principal investigator and the instructor of the course. They worked with the researcher, discussed how to avoid vague and unclear circumstances, and guided her to the next step.

In order to reflect on each participant’s position accurately, the researcher sent the participants the interview notes. The researcher also shared the drafts of the study with the members of the researcher dissertation committee for a member check. This study triangulated the questionnaire/survey, interviews, document review, and additional writing for consistency of evidence across sources of data. This triangulation led to a fuller understanding of the transferability of participants in the classrooms from this course.
Transferability

In qualitative research, most of the researchers assumed that human behavior is not random or idiosyncratic; therefore, they do not consider the findings of the study. In qualitative studies, the participants are the main concern, and other settings are transferable into another situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In this study, I focused on three portraits of unique transferability which provided a rich and careful time, place, context and individual culture as “thick description” (Mertens, 2005). I studied the attitudes and perceptions of how teachers transferred their knowledge from the professional development experience into the classrooms. Therefore, the teachers’ attitudes or motivations to complete the professional development would be the key factors to their teaching contexts. Consequently, this study can be applied to any teacher who chooses to participate in professional training. The significance of the study is that teachers or trainers need to bring positive attitude and motivation to the trainees when they come to attend professional development or training.

Confirmability

In general, the researchers brought their background and identity into the research; this is referred to as being subjective or biased. Therefore, the confirmability would be a tool to investigate that the data and the interpretation of the result were not figments of researchers’ imaginations (Maxwell, 1996; Mertens, 2005). In this study, the researcher is an outsider of professional development experiences because she is an international student and does not have any assumptions on professional development experiences in the United States. Therefore, she made explicit comments and used data sources judiciously to give meaning and focus to the study. She also articulated the data so that a sensible conclusion could be confirmed.

Confidentiality and Ethics
To gain approval, participants’ confidentiality must be guaranteed. Therefore, the researcher coded the data, and the names of the participants were kept separate from the data. Each participant had signed a written consent form and had agreed to participate in the study. The data will be held for one year, at which time it will be destroyed. The interview tape will be locked in the closet and will remain in the researcher’s office. No one will look at it except for the professors and researcher. The ethical issues that the researcher faces are the questions that the researcher asked such as, “How did you feel about the class that you are taking?” Questions like this might cause the participants to respond that they were not satisfied with the instructor’s instruction and they are angry towards the instructor.

The Limitations of the Study

While the current research used a qualitative research design, it is important to note the limitations inherent to the study. First, individuals have their own unique cognitive learning pace and teaching contexts. For example, some teachers need more time and practice to transfer their learning into reality because the timing of the situations is different. Therefore, the strength of transfer will be different depending on the individual. Consequently, if the period of research time could be extended, then seeing the result of the transfer would be more clear and understandable. Second, the group being investigated primarily consisted of three particular teachers. The other teachers and the instructor in this course, though mentioned on occasion in descriptions, remained outside the scope of this study. Consequently, if the other teachers and the instructor could be included then the factors influencing teachers’ transfer of learning would be more specifically and clearly stated. In addition, the teachers were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study and finish the course on time. If this study could be done with more teachers then the various transfer of learning characteristics would be apparent.
Several concerns quickly became apparent in the data gathering process. The first dealt with the validity of the questionnaire and course experience survey. Even though these two instruments were attempting to reach the baseline standard of instrument criterion, they fall short of the validity and reliability criterion. Generalizing the three teachers’ process of the transfer of learning was another concern. In this study, the three teachers presented various characteristics in the process of transfer of learning. However, the data were not necessarily directly generalizable to a broader population, in a sense that it involved only small numbers of participants. Hence, conclusions of the study were completed with caution. Therefore, if the researcher can provide more detailed description about each participant then the possibility of generalizing the data into readers’ own teaching experiences would be easier. The third limitation was the accuracy of the data that was transcribed and coded by the researchers. Because I did not participate in this course, there were some situations that I did not notice and was not aware of. For example, I might not know the goal of assignment that required and might interpret the data the wrong way. Consequently, if I were a participant-researcher, then coding and transcribing the data would be more accurate and understandable.

Summary

In conclusion, I firmly believe that any discussion about the transfer of learning in this course and the development of transferability must take into account the factors influencing each participant’s ability of transfer. The purpose of this chapter was to provide the readers with specific information regarding the research methodology and the design used in this study. The procedures of data collection and analysis were specified. They consisted of the research site, participant selection, and the data sources. In addition, the validity issues of this study were
discussed. The data sources and analysis aim to develop every aspect of the process of transferability as depicted in this chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors of impact transfer of learning from the professional development experience in order to help the teachers benefit themselves and their students. To accomplish this purpose, the process of explaining and understanding gathered data from six sources: the background survey, pre/post SRE Knowledge & Use questionnaire, course documents, course experience survey, open-ended interview and additional writing. In this chapter, through the data sources, the study focused on the background and events in this course of three classroom teachers in order to transport the reader to the course and help the reader to visualize each of them.

Description of Individuals—Wendy (Year 4)

Background: Prior Attendance in SRE

This section will introduce Wendy’s background in order to provide a context for Wendy’s perceptions, attitudes and actions linked to teaching and professional development.

According to the background survey, Wendy, an ESL teacher, has been teaching elementary and middle school (K-6) to English Language Learners (ELLs) for four years at three schools in a school district in the Northwest. She teaches ELLs who are brand new to the U.S. Her classes meet four days a week for half an hour in a different classroom for each class.

In responding to the background survey, Wendy noted that she had attended more than two Scaffolded Reading Experiences (SRE) workshops previously. By and large, Wendy indicated that she felt that previous professional development experiences on a number of topics had prepared her fairly well for teaching.
Initial Perceptions and Attitudes: Prior Participation & Experience of SRE

Wendy’s initial involvement with the Scaffolded Reading Experiences (SRE) online course began during the summer introduction week. During this week she expressed her initial attitude regarding the professional development experience, both in writing and through her actions.

When Wendy’s involvement with this SRE course began she had the Fitzgerald and Graves textbook, which she had kept from the previous SRE workshops. However, she noted that she had not had a chance to read it. This implies that, although she is interested in the topic, she has not been interested deeply enough to spend time with the material.

Wendy completed the one-week introduction unit designed to familiarize her with the online learning environment and the content of the course. During this week, Wendy finished the two required assignments. However, she did not participate in the discussion-posting forum. As with her previous professional development experiences, she only completed part of the assignments.

In her response to one of the assignments, Wendy explained her general attitude toward professional development: “I believe all teachers should have professional development in second language literacy, but more needs to be done than to suggest pursuing ‘professional development.’”

According to the pre-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, Wendy perceived that she was “knowledgeable” on all eight categories of SRE knowledge criteria. She also perceived that she “always” used these four features of SREs: (1) the major components of reading, (2) before reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (3) during reading activities appropriate for ELLs and (4) after reading activities appropriate for ELLs. Wendy perceived that she used the other four of
the eight features “sometimes” in her classrooms: 1) an assigned text’s comprehension demands, 2) an ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text, 3) strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text and 4) a literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments. It appeared that Wendy felt that she was confident and knowledgeable of the parts of the basic features of SRE knowledge, and used them when appropriate because she had prior SRE training. According to her Unit 1 LAP assignment, she believed that, “good teaching should always include pre-reading, during and after reading activities.” However, the deeper meaning of using SRE (e.g. understand the ELL’s needs in order to adjust comprehension demands and strategies) indicated that she was not quite sure how to operate in these related areas. The following developing perceptions and attitudes evidenced by her actions during her professional development experiences support this point.

**Developing Perceptions and Attitudes: Learning from SRE**

The overriding perception and attitude that Wendy developed toward SREs and professional development in general during the course seemed to be confusion, as described below.

*Perceptions*

*Confusion*

Wendy was initially confused about dates; in the beginning of the course Wendy unintentionally missed one week of the discussion postings and assignments. She thought there would be an official notice to remind her the class started, and she was surprised that she missed the start of the course. She stated in an e-mail correspondence, “I was quite surprised that I have missed a week of assignment…I think [I was] expecting some sort of official notice that
assignments are expected to be done already.” In other words, Wendy was not proactive, rather she was waiting for the instructor to do something.

Wendy said she missed the assignments because she found everything unclear (e.g., she perceived that the due dates of the discussion postings and assignments shown online did not match the syllabus). During the interview, she recalled her first impression of the course:

Every time I sat down, I would get so frustrated…It took me few tries to kind of get that [units] and then if I looked at…she had a list of assignments, like the due dates; I printed it out to make it easier, but when I went into the syllabus to find out, the due dates were different. So, it was confusing and I just felt it could have been…I don’t know…I’m not clear [about the course].

The due dates were unclear because Wendy understood the due dates shown on the course site for assignments to be related to the text chapter numbers, but they were not and so she confused the due dates that the instructor mentioned. Wendy confused the units and chapters. She thought the assignments of Unit 1 were chapter 1 and the assignments of Unit 2 were chapter 2 and so on.

She sent an internal e-mail to the instructor:

I am trying to sift through all the info and assignments and am getting frustrated…The list of assignment due dates list units-are you [the instructor] referring to chapters?

(Internal mail (WebCT) on 9/14/05)

Wendy was not familiar with the usage of the course. The instructor promptly replied to her e-mail the next day. The instructor replied that each unit has reading guide questions for assigned reading and there are text chapters for one unit and each unit has three assignments. However, she perceived that she did not get a response to her e-mail for four days because she was not
familiar with the on-line environment. Therefore, she e-mailed the instructor again by personal e-mail.

There are conflicting due dates on some of the assignments-can you [the instructor] clarify those? I have been using the assignment due date sheet as my reference-do I need to change some of those times? (E-mail correspondence on 9/18/05)

Wendy thought that she had not received any response to her due date confusion. The instructor had stated that she would check both her on-line internal mail and personal e-mail every day and reply promptly. Because Wendy was not familiar with the on-line environment, she did not go to check the on-line internal e-mail account at the beginning of the course. Therefore, when she finally checked the e-mail, she received her answers late. Thus, she claimed about the feedback, “It was okay. It took pretty…it took awhile. It wasn’t quick enough.”

However, when she recalled being confused regarding the due dates of assignments and chapters, Wendy replied that “I think, I just…I don’t know, I just try [tried] to do what I could.”

Regarding the above quotes excerpted from internal mail and personal mail, Wendy sent an e-mail to the instructor and the instructor replied to her on the next day. From the interview quote, Wendy did not mention that she had asked for help from the instructor. She seemed to set aside her responsibility to become familiar with the online environment. She avoided this responsibility by attempting to present the image that she was working very hard, but she still did not get any help from the instructor.

Wendy did attend the introduction week but at the very end of the week, she hurried to finish the two required assignments. However, since she was not familiar with the on-line environment, she did not know how to check for responses. Wendy hurried to finish the requirements but without any consideration and thought of actually developing professionally.
Wendy’s required unit assignments obviously showed that Wendy was trying to finish the assignment quickly without seriously thinking. She stated that “I don’t feel that SRE’s are new and cutting edge information” with similar sentences in her following assignments. However, she did not meet the requirements of assignments that requested her to express specific points she learned from the textbook and to apply the strategies or text messages in her classrooms. Consequently, the content of the assignments were very general. For example, in an excerpt from the Unit 2 LAP assignment, she stated, “In order to best meet the needs of learners we should take what the authors talk about and apply it to our teaching.”

Perspective confusion exists between the instructor and Wendy regarding the comments of the assignments that the instructor made. From one of the assignments, Wendy focused on her current grade level designed lesson. However, the instructor who gave the comments said that she could make the material or lesson to fit any reading level, and she should not depend on the material alone to design the lesson. The following quote was selected from the instructor’s comment on the Unit 2 BDAR assignment:

I like how you held a specific audience in mind as you completed this product. However, remember that an analysis of a text is intended to identify items necessary for any reader. In other words, the instructor would like Wendy to use limited materials to design SRE lessons that can be used by various reading levels. From this we can see that the instructor and Wendy’s perceptions differ. The instructor had her own picture, and Wendy had her own picture of the assignments.

Perception of being overwhelmed

In addition to confusion, while in the course, Wendy felt overwhelmed with the assignments and discussion postings. She felt that she had not had a chance to absorb the course
texts and assignments. The interview demonstrates Wendy’s perception of being overwhelmed in the course. “Once I sat down and looked at all the requirements for the course and it was too much to try to do and teach and do your job,” she recalled. She only submitted Unit 2 and 3 assignments on time. She turned in the rest of the units’ assignments in the last days of the course. For example, Wendy posted her assignments for units 1/4/5/6 BDAR and units 1/4/5/6/7 Lap one day before the course finished.

Perceptions of real teaching contexts

Wendy not only noted that she felt confused and overwhelmed during the seven week course, but Wendy also thought what the textbook mentioned did not happen in the same as with her real classrooms. For instance, Wendy thought the textbook did not talk about how to apply those strategies on the low reading level ELLs. Her students’ levels were not intermediate level as addressed in the text and she felt the SREs were not applicable to those who did not know English. In her words selected from the Unit 2 discussion forum she noted, “The SRE model would be most beneficial with kids who are at the intermediate language level.” There are a lot of assignments (Unit 2 LAP/Unit 3 Discussion/Unit 3 LAP/Unit 5 LAP) in which Wendy mentioned that the textbook did not present information about or acknowledge lower readers.

Even though Wendy had SRE training, the population that she taught complicated her ability to know how to apply it. When she took an SRE class again, she still felt that strategies related to SREs did not fit into her teaching context. She thought this was not a good time to employ SREs in her classroom because her target learners did not know English or have English speaking ability. Therefore, she felt it made it difficult for her to apply SRE lessons in her classroom. The teaching context led her to choose which strategies and instructions fit into her
classrooms. The following excerpt from the Unit 1 BDAR assignment at the beginning of the course shows her inability of using SRE,

I work with non-English speaking students. In other words, students who have just arrived in the US. In all honesty I don’t [do] too much reading which require the use of the entire SRE model. The text is simple and the pictures are a direct representation of the text.

Another case of her perception being different in the real teaching contexts occurred after Wendy read the textbook which mentioned that there are a lot of cognates that affect the ELLs reading ability. However, she did not feel that there were a lot of cognates that she could teach the ELLs in her classrooms. She described it from the Unit 3 Discussion forum,

I don’t think there are enough cognates to make a difference. I’ve learned a few words from my kids and we’ve mentioned how they sound alike but there aren’t enough cognates between Russian/English to be significant.

In Wendy’s perception of useful professional development experience, she claimed that it depends on “how applicable it is. I can play in the classroom and I can use the information.” Therefore, she would choose SRE strategies by how useful they are in her real teaching contexts. Consequently, she felt this course did not match with her perception of useful professional development experience in order to obtain more information to apply in her real teaching contexts.

**Obstacles**

During the course, Wendy perceived that strategies might apply in her classroom, but she did not give herself a chance to try it. For example, Wendy worried that SRE required a lot of prep time even though she felt that rewriting the text was interesting. Therefore, the writing
from the Unit 4 LAP assignment, “I like the strategies [rewriting the text]…but I worry that they are too time consuming.” Consequently, Wendy did not apply those SRE strategies even though she thought they were interesting.

In general during the course, Wendy continually said that there was no time to apply the strategies learned in the course. Wendy recalled the situation that she had been in the class from an interview:

I’ve taken some of the information and haven’t followed through exactly the model of SRE. I haven’t been able to implement them… The only thing was I didn’t feel there was enough time to apply what we were reading.

Even though she put her applications on the assignments, she honestly said that she did not have time to apply them and she still does not completely understand because of the absence of application. Her response to an assignment (Unit 7 LAP) explains her reluctance to use SRE:

I really didn’t have the time to apply a lot of the information and that really would’ve been the key piece for understanding the concepts in this book.

The above data shows that Wendy understood that applying SRE would be the key factor to getting to know the concept of SRE. However, the lack of application and time constraints made her understand SRE late. Wendy seemed not to put a lot of effort into her application. She concluded that she did not have time to apply those strategies. She also understood that applying those strategies would be an important process for her, but she did not perceive the importance of the process at the beginning of the course.

Learning
At the end of the course, Wendy finally acknowledged the relationship between application and understanding SRE in the last unit of the course. She clarified her SRE questions through the textbook. In her words from the Unit 5 LAP assignment,

I kept thinking that SRE were time consuming and would require quite a bit of prep work. After reading Chapter 8, I have a better understanding of what SRE are and what they consist of.

Through the textbook Wendy was gaining understanding about SRE and found it was very useful at the very end of unit. She noted it from the Unit 6 Lap assignment:

[Chapter 9] did answer quite a few of my questions that I had had on the frequency and magnitude of SREs…Overall, I found the information very useful and will refer back to it.

During the final week, Wendy also realized that the textbook gave her more understanding of the SRE. In her words from the Unit 7 Lap assignment,

Reading the book gave me a better understanding of what and why we should use SREs in the classroom. I think that every teacher should be required to read sections of this book so that they are more sensitive to the needs of all their students—not just their ELL student.

During the course, although Wendy did not turn in assignments, she still posted. She relied on others’ postings to understand SREs, not through the textbook. From the various discussion threads, Wendy often replied from the thread to answer or question its ideas by considering her teaching context and experiences, but not the textbook. Therefore, in this section, Wendy perceived that the textbook would be a useful tool in her teaching compared with her previous textbook perceptions. She also understood the goal of doing SRE and solved some of the
questions that she had; she is not insisting that the SRE can only be applied in the intermediate level of reading courses. From this we can see that Wendy was not focused and had not read the textbook carefully during the course. If she had read the textbook carefully, then she might have avoided the perception that SRE does not apply in her classroom.

At the end, Wendy felt the SRE course was an enrichment for previously held understandings and helped her to get a better grasp of them. As she notes in an interview, The information is useful and it applies to the students that I have in my classroom because we do have English Language Learners in our district…I learned from the course some of things that are mentioned, we as teachers do already, so it just kind of reminds us, we keep doing this thing…It was an enrichment, I know some of the things, but it gave more deepened meaning. I think it was a better understanding.

As the above data shows, Wendy perceived that the SRE was a useful tool for her teaching by writing and attending professional development. However, Wendy’s attitude did not branch out into her reality of professional development. She could not give any examples of SRE that she had been using because she felt she did not have enough time to apply SRE. Also, she felt that having ELLs in her classroom made the SRE useful for her. Therefore, we might conclude that Wendy’s perceptions changed once she actually applied the SRE.

Attitudes

Course format and expectations

Wendy was also confused about the format of the course and the assignments as well as how to navigate the course. She felt this could have lessened, “if the direction was a little bit more clearly [given] and assignments were explained.” Wendy felt that she was confused about the whole class. She did not understand what the instructor wanted her to do. As she recalled
during the interview, “We get the rubric after we did the assignment and so it was hard to know exactly what she was looking for.” Wendy felt that she did not get enough information regarding the rubric from the instructor. However, the rubrics were posted on-line before the course started and students like Wendy could navigate and download it. From this we can see that Wendy did not go to the website to navigate by herself; therefore she complained that she got the rubric after she got back the assignments. Wendy did not adjust and accommodate the relationship between her previous on-line experiences, expectations and attitude to the course format.

She added that in her previous professional development experiences, “We didn’t have an assignment due every single week. So, it was a little easier to navigate.” Consequently, Wendy did not like the format of the SRE course because she felt it was not easy for her to navigate. She said,

The format of the class didn’t allow for us to really plan and use it in the school…I don’t know I just I didn’t like the format of the class, how everything was due, you know we, have to read, post questions by Wednesday, post comments by Friday and doing the assignment, on, by Saturday. (Interview)

Wendy felt the interaction that the instructor ran on the discussion forum was not active because she felt that the feedback was not quick enough for her to solve the questions that she had. She described the interaction of the discussion forum in the interview:

I would post questions on the discussion or questions to the instructor…But it wasn’t quick enough…Once the thread was done then, I don’t know, I’d go back to make sure I read everything, it would be 2 weeks later before she would post anything.

Wendy also gave evidence that the instructor did not give her instant feedback of the dissemination project in the discussion forum from the excerpted interview.
I posted a question about whether it would be okay to do like the book study over a couple of months or if they want the project done before the quarter was over. I didn’t really get any feedback. (Interview)

According to the discussion forum and internal mail record, there was no posting activity interaction that happened between Wendy and the instructor except the technical questions. Therefore, the questions that Wendy wondered about were because of the lack of interaction. Regarding Wendy’s comments, the instructor explained that after she read a book, she was intentionally not to post or reply to any answers back to the students but read every discussion message because she felt that this type of interaction might interfere with and risk the students’ learning or caused them rely on the teacher. From this we can see that interaction would be a key factor influencing individual learning but depends on characteristics of learning. For Wendy’s case, without colleagues’ support but getting attention and interaction with the instructor would be a safe signal for her to make sure her status is correct since it was an online environment.

Attitude toward support

Initially, Wendy had two colleagues from her school district in the course, but one of them (Jill) dropped the course at the beginning. However, Wendy did not notice that Jill dropped the course. She thought that her two colleagues did not know the class had started and she wanted to check with them because her two colleagues had not posted anything on-line. In fact, Wendy did not talk with her colleagues at the start of the course; otherwise she would have known Jill dropped the course and Mindy had participated in the course. In the middle of the course, another colleague (Mindy) dropped the course due to family and medical issues which changed the format of the class for her. Wendy remembered that before Mindy dropped the
course that, “we would talk.” After Mindy dropped the course, she said that, “I would post questions on the discussion or questions to the instructor and e-mail a couple of classmates.”

Due to her colleagues dropping the course, she would e-mail any questions to the instructor because there was no one that she could consult with in her school district.

In discussing the assignments that she worked on, she found it was difficult for her to generate ideas and expressed confusion over the interaction between the instructor and herself. And in her case, she did not have colleagues’ support. She said it from her Unit 5 LAP assignment, “I wish that my colleagues had remained in the course—it’s much better to work in a team.” Similarly, she recalled from the interview that felt the dissemination project that she worked on was difficult to do without a colleague’s help:

I think that it’d have been helpful to have my colleagues and doing and kind of running ideas by them and seeing how they’re doing, talking [what is different] so that was difficult and with the final dissemination project and it’d have been nice to have had a team to work with, instead of doing it on your own.

During the course, Wendy did not request that the instructor come to her school for explaining the SRE course. However, after the course, Wendy suggested that the instructor could have come to her school and explained the detailed information of the course. She noted from an interview,

I think it would have been most useful if she would [have] had like a meeting for all the participants in [the name of the city], kind of gone over [all that] had to do everything with us in person and I think that would’ve helped a lot.

As a matter of the fact, the instructor had tried to visit Wendy’s school, but due to an unexpected car accident on the way, she was not able to come. The instructor sent an e-mail to request
another visit, but Wendy did not respond to it. From the action of ignoring, when not responding to the request for another visit even though she felt meeting in person is an important process, Wendy demonstrated her inconsistency in the course. The instructor tried to explain the detailed information of the course for her in another visit request but she did not act on it. One possible explanation could be that Wendy thought that it was late and not necessary for her because the course had almost ended. Therefore, she would suggest that the instructor could have come before the course started.

Without colleagues’ support for assignments, getting the instructor’s comments would be the only way to improve the next assignment in Wendy’s case. However, Wendy claimed in the interview that she did not get any comments back from the instructor.

I never got any comments on my assignments. I never got any assignments back. I don’t know what I did was ok or…Things like that, so it’s kind of like you’re working on your own. It’s hard to know going from one assignment to next, what you are doing is right.

According to the internal mail, however, the instructor did send comments back. The instructor would send the comments back within one week if the assignments were finished on time. Therefore, the comments would take longer than two weeks for the late assignments. Internal mail recorded that the instructor sent comments back to Wendy’s personal mail for her punctual and late assignments.

Also, Wendy noted in her interview that she had a hard time looking at the rubric after she got the assignments back. From this, we can see that Wendy did receive the comments back from the instructor. The contradiction appeared that Wendy’s attitude seemed to impact her performance. Her attitude seemed to try to explain that she did not perform well in the course because of the comments that the instructor did not send back.
Final Perceptions and Attitudes: Extent of Change as a Result of Attending SRE

This section will sum up Wendy’s perceptions and attitude changes regarding this course. This section will also talk about the changes through the SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire and the SRE course experience survey.

According to the post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, Wendy perceived that she was “knowledgeable” on all eight categories of SRE knowledge same as the pre-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire. She also perceived that she “always” used two features of SREs: (1) an ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text and (2) strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text. These two features of SREs on the pre-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire were perceived “sometimes.” This implies that she changed her perception of SRE components and was trying to adjust her teaching experiences. Wendy perceived that she used the other six of the eight features of SREs “sometimes” in her classrooms: (1) the major components of reading, (2) before reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (3) during reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (4) after reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (5) an assigned text’s comprehension demands and (6) a literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments. Compared with the pre-SRE questionnaire, Wendy felt that she did not feel confident on what she had learned previously and the application for those three steps of SRE because she thought that she used them always. But, through this course she gained an understanding on what SRE learning she had and now she has a deeper meaning of knowing and using them.

Regarding the course experience survey, Wendy responded on a four-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Overall, she “agreed” on SRE benefiting her knowledge of using and explaining her strategies and her ELLs. Wendy “disagreed” on SRE
practice time being enough for her. Wendy “disagreed” that the practice of SRE made her confident on her SRE knowledge. It appeared that the survey was consistent with the pre and post questionnaire. Wendy maintained that she has knowledge of SRE, but claimed that the lack of practice time was attributed by her lack of SRE application experiences. Therefore, we can say that more of application experiences helped her solve the problems and information she questioned. Due to Wendy’s satisfaction with her SRE understanding, she did not accommodate and adjust her attitude at the beginning of the course; otherwise, the outcome of applied SRE knowledge might be different.

To sum, Wendy did change her perceptions regarding her real teaching contexts and prior SRE perception knowledge. Initially, Wendy was confident of her SRE knowledge because she had trained before. Consequently, she was not serious during her SRE course learning. However, she changed this view because she found the textbook gave her a different view of SRE. At that moment, she felt that SRE was applicable and useful for her classroom. In Wendy’s prior perception of SRE knowledge, she also changed her perception. According to comparison the pre & post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, she seemed to realize that even though she knew the basic steps of using SRE, she did not think accommodating students’ needs was useful. She also understood that application of SRE was an important process for SRE understanding because she felt that SRE processing was a time consuming tool in her prior SRE perception. Therefore, she felt she learned something and had more understanding of SRE and realized that her prior SRE knowledge was not deep enough for her to deal with ELL’s needs in her classrooms.

Description of Individuals—Rena (Year 7-10)

**Background: Prior Attendance in SRE**
This section describes Rena’s teaching background and professional development experiences in order to provide a thorough analysis of Rena’s perceptions, attitudes and actions.

According to her background survey, Rena, a mainstream teacher, had been teaching elementary and middle schoolers (1-6) for seven to ten years in the Northwest. In the beginning of her teaching career, she had not worked with ESL students; therefore, the knowledge related to ESL that she learned was from her classrooms and professional development experiences. At the time of this study, she was teaching sixth grade reading, social studies and language arts and had twenty students in her class. The component of her classroom included three special Ed students and one deaf student who has a fulltime interpreter. Also, five other students were English Language Learners (ELLs): one is Romanian and four are Russian speakers and their reading levels are from third to eighth grade.

In responding to the background survey, Rena noted she had taken Scaffolded Reading Experiences (SRE) professional development experiences or workshops approximately more than nine times. By and large, Rena felt that the previous workshops and professional development on a number of topics other than SREs had prepared her fairly well for her teaching.

**Initial Perception and Attitude: Prior Participation & Experience of SRE**

Rena’s initial involvement with this SRE online course began during the summer introduction week when she expressed her initial perception and attitude regarding the professional development experiences both in writing and through demonstrative actions.

Rena’s involvement with this SRE course began when she received monetary incentive to attend this course. Rena was working on her ESL endorsement and master’s degree and thought this was a chance to take the course because the graduate courses were too expensive for her.
Plus, this course would also bring her the resources that she could not have in her classroom and credit toward her professional development credential. Money was a draw for Rena to come and attend this course. She valued that bonus with this course and hoped it would benefit her classroom and herself. Therefore, she continued to commit to this course even though she complained about the course.

Rena attended the one-week introduction unit designed to familiarize her with the online learning environment and the content of the course. However, Rena did not feel this introduction unit helped to familiarize her with the format of the course. She felt that “She know [learned] something during the summer that the instructor talked about but…wasn’t really understanding,” because it was “overwhelming to catch up.” Consequently, this misunderstanding led her to finish one of the two required assignments late. Rena was supposed to finish two requirements and participate in the discussion-posting forum; however, she did not. As with this summer introduction unit week, she only completed part of the assignments.

In response to one of the assignments posted by the instructor, the following quote excerpted from the introduction week’s assignments explain Rena’s attitude of teaching and accommodation for her ELLs. Rena described her teaching context, she said that she is a teacher willing to adjust her teaching strategies to accommodate her students. For example, she said “these students don’t own television sets and are not allowed to watch movies [in her classroom].” However, she often used pop culture as a way to connect with her students. In the meantime, she said that, “I have to search harder for common life experiences and common connection.” From this scenario, Rena was willing to accept her students’ differences to accommodate their academic needs and also find the resources to benefit them.
Regarding Rena’s attitude of professional development experiences, she addressed it within her response to one of the assignments explaining her general attitude toward professional development. In her words,

The key to professional development is that the teacher must WANT to be “developed”. If that motivation is not there, the time and money is wasted. In my situation, I knew that I need training and was hungry for researched data in the area of program development for my students (Introduction Week’s IRA assignment).

Rena felt that teachers should have the desire to want to learn in order to benefit their students because without this motivation the course would waste teacher’s time and the function of the professional development experiences. Likewise she showed this attitude in her teaching context. She said, “I use all the resources I can in order to plan a program that will best fit the needs of my students, including our ESL teacher, colleagues and the students themselves.” She felt that the more she could learn would help the students’ needs in her classrooms. Consequently, this attitude of professional development experiences emerged during the course. She tried to get the resources that she needed not just learning the activities of the course but also the bonus related to the course helped her classrooms in gaining additional teaching materials and resources.

According to the pre-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, Rena perceived that she was “knowledgeable” on all eight categories of SRE knowledge criteria. She also perceived that the one feature of SRE she “always” used is: (1) the major components of reading. Rena perceived that she used the other seven of the eight features “sometimes” in her classrooms: (2) before reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (3) during reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (4) after reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (5) an assigned text’s comprehension demands,
(6) an ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text, (7) strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text and (8) a literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments. It appeared that Rena felt that she was confident and knowledgeable of all of the basic features of SRE knowledge, but used them occasionally even though she had had SRE training many times. This could explain that she accumulated the strategies in her mind even though she attended many SRE workshops or professional development experiences. However, these professional development experiences seemed less helpful for her to use them appropriately in her classroom, on other occasions she did not even think those strategies would help her in her classroom perhaps because she was not feeling comfortable about using them.

Developing Perception and Attitude: Learning from SRE

The overriding perception and attitude that Rena developed toward SRE and professional development in general during the course seemed to be confusion, as described below.

Perceptions

Confusion

As was earlier described, Rena did not understand what the instructor talked about during the summer introduction unit week. Even though she did the assignment, she was unsure and confused about what she did in the introduction unit week. When the course formally started, she was confused about the assignments that she was supposed to turn in. In the beginning of the course, she e-mailed the instructor addressing her confusion about the BDAR assignment. She said this from the internal mail: “I’m sorry, but I am having trouble understanding the BDAR assignment.” This type of confusing e-mail did not appear only once but many times addressing the glitches of the technical problems, questions regarding the assignments and grading. In the interview, Rena described her feelings about when the course initially started,
At first, I didn’t understand, I was having trouble getting the big picture. I saw a little part here and a little part here and a little part here, and some of them overlapped. I was afraid, the whole time, I was afraid I was missing something that I was forgetting to do something right. I was not seeing something that I was supposed to do and so that part I just had this fear, at the beginning, there must be something more I’m missing, am I getting it all?

From this quote, Rena was so unsure about her situation because she could not guarantee the work that she had done was correct or met the instructor’s expectation. Another situation that made Rena confused or unsure of her status in this class was the grading system. She said that “I never was quite sure [the point system] how I was doing,” thus it made her anxious about her grade in the course. This implies that grading was the purpose for Rena taking this course because she needed to get a good grade in order to benefit her master’s degree program. It also could imply that to get a good grade was her motivation to continue to commit to this course.

During the course, Rena desired to know what the instructor expected her to know and do for this course. In Rena’s mind to meet the instructor’s expectation is the main thing in this course but if she cannot meet the instructor’s expectation then she would miss the point of the grade. In her words from the interview,

I’ve never met the instructor and I very much like to feel people out and read them and try to figure out what they’re really needing or wanting from me and so that part was really hard. Every single time I turned in the assignment, I wasn’t sure, one hundred percent, this is what she wanted and so that part, I care a lot about, especially I’m in graduate school, I want to do a good job and so it mattered a lot to me, what she thought about my work if I was fulfilling her expectations.
Because Rena’s learning style involves interacting with people, she needed to know how to act and perform in order to satisfy her instructor. Therefore, she would be sure the work that she submitted was based on the instructor’s expectations.

Rena’s confusion did not only appear in the requirements of the assignments but also in the instructor’s comments. In each submitted assignment, the instructor would give comments about the assignment back to the students in order to improve the quality of the next assignment. However, Rena did not feel this way; she felt that she did not understand the instructor’s comments and which direction the instructor was going to lead her. She commented this to the instructor by the internal mail.

To be honest Cindy, I have had a very hard time understanding some of your comments about my work. I’m trying very hard to communicate my understanding of the text in relationship to what I think you want based on your instructions and rubric, but I’m constantly feeling as if I’m missing the mark…A lot of what you say in your feedback to me, just doesn’t make sense to me, so I can’t “monitor and adjust” like I’d like to…

In her interview, she recalled “there were times I didn’t understand the instructions and that I didn’t feel that I got the feedback that was needed.” Consequently, unclear and confusing comments made her feel that working on the assignments was like “We were all just trying to guess something, sometimes.” From Rena’s point of view the understanding of the course material was not a difficult task; however, understanding the instructor’s instruction and comments was more difficult for her. In other words, Rena felt that she did not get any help from the instructor in order to improve her performance of this course even though she got an A for the final grade.

*Perception of being overwhelmed*
In Rena’s previous professional development experiences, she had taken an online course before, but only “lasted two days” because she felt “so overwhelmed.” During these two days, she said, “it was too much, I felt like such a failure before I even started it.” In this course, Rena also felt “a little bit of fear” toward this course because of her prior online course experience.

During the course, time frame and heavy content were the main problems facing Rena when she absorbed the information and application into her classroom. Rena felt the information in the course was good but “the timing was really off” because it was the first week of her school and she needed to teach in her classroom and finish the work in the course. She felt that part of the course “was very, very stressful.” While she turned in her second unit assignment, she expressed her feelings of being overwhelmed to the instructor. She felt the course was too hurried and she did not have enough time to apply the lesson in her classroom. From the Unit 2 LAP assignment, she expressed “I have to admit the amount of information for ME to process and apply in one week was overwhelming.” She felt the limited time caused her to improve less on her teaching strategies in the classroom.

In the interview, she recalled that “I was on such a time crunch that I couldn’t really process. I wished there was more processing time.” Rena felt that if she had had more time then the application of the SRE would have been more beneficial for her and her students. Because of this feeling of being overwhelmed, she felt unhealthy during this intensive time period. She claimed that she would reconsider it if there were any types of similar classes that she needed to take because she felt this course “was one big piece of stress in an already stressful time of the year.”

Learning
When Rena became involved in this course, she felt that the textbook was an “excellent” resource for her classroom. For example, this book mentioned the issue of a “passive failure syndrome,” which means that a student has experienced so much reading failure that the students wrongly attribute to forces beyond his control. All motivation and hope for future reading success is lost. She felt this issue happened in her sixth grade level class and the author of this textbook gave her ideas to “incorporate into my classroom.”

However, this does not mean that Rena used what the textbook said in her classroom. For example, when Rena described the experiences of making bread dough in the Unit 5 LAP assignment. In her words,

One friend, Deb, included a recipe for pizza dough that for many years I was afraid to try, since I was unfamiliar with making any kind of bread dough-it was like a foreign language to me! I stuck to what was familiar and comfortable to me and wound up making the same 5-6 meals every week for my poor husband.

Conveying this thought to Rena’s learning process, she relied on her experiences to choose what she thought about the strategies. This means that she would not choose those strategies that did not work out prior but felt most comfortable with familiar strategies in her teaching experience.

In the Unit 5 discussion forum, Rena described her perception of teaching style in her classroom:

I know from experience what has worked well in the past-what has been “cost effective” in my classroom, and that motivates me to use a certain strategy again. On the flip side, I hesitate sometimes to use a new strategy that looks time-consuming without knowing how much it will add to my students’ comprehension of the text.

Rena would picture how the strategy would be work in her classroom before she used it. In other words, if the strategy failed in her classroom before then she would not use the strategy again.
Therefore, during the course, Rena remembered that she did not feel that the strategies that she used did not work in her classroom because “there were times where I would read about a certain strategy and I’d be thinking, ‘No, I’ve tried that and it hasn’t worked out that way.’” Consequently, the strategies that she used in her classroom “worked the way I hope it would in the way it said it would.” This implies that Rena has her strategy filter-experiences in choosing a strategy that she felt comfortable with when implementing SRE in her classroom.

*Obstacles*

During this course, Rena struggled with one of the steps of SRE, during reading activities. In her prior teaching experiences she “always dealt with a lot of pre-reading scaffolding.” But, after she read the textbook it mentioned that during reading activity was also an important process for the students. She realized, “the textbook had a lot of great ideas for during reading and that’s where I kind of need some more ideas and some different, just to variate.” However, she grappled with how to adjust the time limit between before and during activity in her classroom. The following Unit 3 discussion forum appeared difficult for her when combining her prior knowledge about pre-reading activities and current learning knowledge about during-reading activities in her classroom.

It seems I’m spending more and more time on pre-teaching activities to the point where it may take days to actually get to the meat of the lesson. How do I decide how much time is really necessary for pre-teaching? Is there ever an “overkill” point? I don’t want to lose the motivation and excitement I’ve worked so hard to build, by dragging out the “pre” part. And yet I want them to benefit as much as possible from the reading.

Where’s the balance?
Rena struggled with combining the knowledge between her teaching experiences about pre-reading activities and during-reading activities that she learned from the course to implement in her classrooms. She wanted her students to benefit from the reading; however, she cannot handle the balance of the pre and during activity well. In her Unit 3 LAP assignment, she addressed her concern again:

I’m still not sure how to separate some of these strategies. Building background knowledge, pre-teaching concepts and providing text-specific information have some grey areas that overlap for me.

Rena still did not understand the balance between the pre and during reading activities. Consequently, when she implemented this type of concept in her classroom she felt it was “a little bit of a challenge” for her “convincing the kids that reading something once is not necessarily enough and to go back to read it again in a different way or to read it with a partner” because she did not have a clear concept of implementing pre and during reading activities which made it difficult for her.

Another challenging obstacle for her was using the SRE to assess students’ ability because the textbook mentioned that assessment is not even emphasized or important for lower readers. However, Rena felt confused about how she is going to present and express the letter grade to the other teachers and parents even if she scaffolded for them to achieve the standard point system. She addressed her question in the Unit 6 discussion forum, she said, “How do I communicate to the “grade readers” that a B for one student may be different than a B for another student because of the levels of scaffolding?” This implies that Rena still was unsure about the SRE, she felt that the SRE was not a tool for everyone but for ELLs and lower readers even though she claimed that the SRE is a tool for everyone in this course.
The last obstacle that confused Rena was the application of the course activities. During the course, Rena felt using material from the course was not applicable in her classroom because she felt that some of the main assignments were not realistic to her sixth grade level. However, she did not send this message to the instructor, rather she sent it to the principle investigator by e-mail correspondence because Rena had met with the principle investigator personally for this course related information. As Rena described:

> If I could adapt it to be more applicable to my teaching it might be different. But last week’s main assignment was how I would teach an adult Ethiopian Woman who is a third grade reader-in Ethiopia! That’s not even close to a situation I have in real life and it felt like such a waste of my time.

Actually, this e-mail correspondence occurred because Rena thought that she did not get the good grade she felt she deserve on the discussion forum. Thus, she sent an e-mail to the principle investigator, complaining the course material was not applicable. However, in this course, Rena did not address how the information present was not applicable in her classroom to the instructor. Conversely, Rena followed the instruction of the assignments and discussed with her colleagues about the readings. She tried to meet the expectations of the instructor and the rubrics needed. This implies that Rena was just doing her work—she finished the course in order to get the good grade from the course and validate professional development hours. But, Rena did not understand the purpose of the assignments in this course and did not think she could adapt the course to her classroom even though she tried to do it. In the course, the instructor would like to use various situations to present how SRE could be adapted in variety reading level, but Rena did not catch the intentions of the course materials.

*Change*
While at the very end of the unit course, Rena found herself “seeing the big picture better-moving through the lesson with a clear picture of where [she] was going and how the SREs connected things and threaded through the whole chapter.” Rena changed her perceptions regarding the format of the course because she realized that “the more work I took, work through it, the more I understood the layout, and the process of it.” She said this about the Unit 7 LAP assignment:

The more I learn and apply, the more likely I will continue to explore ways to bring my students more understanding through SREs. And if I can be patient with myself during this challenge, I will continue to see results that encourage and motivate me to continue finding more and more ways to help my students.

This quote expressed Rena’s willingness to change and believe SRE would help her students. However, this quote also implies that even if Rena had the willingness to do it in reality she could not because the challenge of using SRE in her classroom could bog her down.

**Attitude**

**Course expectation**

In this course, Rena’s expectation about the course led her to post questions and comments depending on what person on the receiving end would like to hear. In the beginning of the course, Rena did not understand fully the SRE even though she had had many SRE professional development experiences. She perceived that SRE is a helpful tool for ELL equivalents with the native speakers and wasted the native speakers’ time. From the Unit 1 discussion form, she confused:

I can’t seem to get past the idea that by scaffolding, I am giving them too much help, too many chances, and not enough “real-life” assessment or real opportunities to show
mastery in the same way as the rest of my class. I mean, I can make accommodations for my ELL students, giving them the chance as my benchmark student to achieve success on an assignment or in a subject, but it seems that their “B” in relation to the benchmark students’ “B” isn’t comparable.

In this quote, Rena is confused about how the SRE could really help her ELLs achieve the same ability as the native speakers. However, in the meantime she contradicted herself about SRE. She felt that she should persuade other colleagues in the school district to believe that SRE is a tool designed to help the students and curriculum up. In her words from the Unit 1 discussion form,

So many teachers I talk to see scaffolding as only for the “low” students and not valuable for the rest of the class. They don’t think the benefits for the ELL kids justifies “dumbing it down” for the rest of the class. We need to figure out a way to make them understand that scaffolding isn’t meant to bring the curriculum DOWN to the level of the lowest reader, but bring the reader UP to the standards, making them accessible and achievable to everyone.

From these two quotes Rena was contradicting herself regarding SRE. She felt that the SRE was a tool to help ELLs, but not for the whole class in her first posting. In the second posting, however, she felt that SRE is a tool that benefits everyone. These two quotes imply that Rena tried to meet everyone’s expectation. For example, the first posting revealed her true understanding of the SRE. In the second posting was threaded by another and the question was “How can we convince and include the doubter in the profession (regarding SRE)?” She perceived that this person would like to receive this type of approval answer, thus she matched
up with the other line of the participants’ expectation. But, she seemed unchanged in her mind that SRE was a useful tool for her classroom.

Reasonable to suppose Rena would like to receive the approval from the colleague was because Rena had some expectations toward this course. She expected she would get more interaction similar to the face-to-face classroom. However, she felt that the interaction that occurred in this course was not often. From the interview, she described her personality as “social” and liked to see the image of the people present.

I really do miss the interaction, the students face to face, with the teacher and feeling like really do understand what everybody’s thinking because I can see their body language, I can hear the tone of their voice and I really struggled with that part of it.

Therefore, Rena recalled the situation from the interview while she posted her questions and comments in the discussion forum. She felt that she was trying to “make up stuff” and meet the expectation for the instructor and the colleagues to make the posting comments “sound interesting” but, she felt the postings were not “authentic.” However, she could not see people’s images from an online class, so she needed to match everyone’s favor to interact with people in order to gain the approval from her colleagues and the instructor.

In addition to the interaction with the colleagues, Rena expected to get from this course the interaction with the instructor. However, she felt that this part was weak and not enough information in the course. In her words from an interview,

Sometimes, we are required to do the postings and ask questions and sometimes I wish she had been involved there because I had real questions and real concerns that never ever got answered because everybody just kind of voiced their own opinions rather than hearing directly from her, what the direction I was supposed to go and how I was
supposed to resolve this thing, so that part was pretty disappointing that I didn’t have, because the instructor, I mean anybody can read a book and create a lesson but, to me I think the instructor’s there to actually, help me focus on this, or help me resolve that and I just didn’t feel like…

Rena expected this class “would be more like a classroom setting,” which means that she had more interaction with the instructor. However, she felt that the interaction that she got was not helping her in this course. She compared this class with a different project online that she was participating. She felt that online interaction “is a real interaction and we are really helping each other and supporting each other and solving problems” not just postings to meet the rubric of the course. In Rena’s interaction perceptive, she thought the class should have the instructor involvement because that was the purpose of why she took the course. As the instructor claimed that she was purposed not to intervene and become involved with the colleagues’ discussion unless there was some special occasions. However, the instructor commented that she would not use it again because she felt that this was not helping the students for understanding the SRE. In this course, Rena’s expectation led her to see what she thought would be; however, it did not happen in the way that she expected such as the interaction with the instructor and the expectation that the course should be.

*Attitude toward support*

While taking this course, Rena’s colleague, June, was a big support for her because they discussed the assignments, reading and emotional reflection regarding this course. Rena remembered that while she had not decided whether to take the course, June “promised she would help me so just kind of figuring that out really helped” because June had taken online course before. She recalled from the interview,
June and I would get together a couple afternoons a week, we would work on the LAP and BDAR. And worked on that together sometimes or at least talk it through, do the readings. We talked through the readings together so that was a big help to process that…

Therefore, June’s help was a big support for Rena and she had someone to solve her problems and help her go through the course. She said, “I think it would’ve been frustrating for me if I was on my own and didn’t have someone else to problem solve that part of it with.” In other words, if she did not get help from her colleagues in this course, then she would drop the course as same as her previous online class.

**Final Perception and Attitude: Extent of Change as a Result of Attending SRE**

This section will sum up Rena’s perceptions and attitude toward changes regarding this course. This section will also talk about the changes through the SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire and the SRE course experience survey.

*Perception*

*Changes*

After the class was done, Rena changed her perception that the SRE would only help the ELLs. In the interview she described that the SRE would not only help her ELLs but also mainstreaming other students as well.

The scaffolding that I picked up out the book it really is not necessary beneath the mainstream kids, it’s gonna help them as well but it just going to help the other kids a little bit more and so I don’t feel like I’m wasting the time on my mainstream kids by using those.
Because Rena saw the results of using the SRE she changed her perception about the SRE only benefiting ELLs. When she used the SRE she could see successful application in her classroom because the SRE “made it understandable and it made sense to them.” In addition, Rena described the students being more connected with the text because of the SRE accompaniment. She said, “I think a lot of it has to do with they’re understanding it, they’re making connection with it, they’re learning to apply it and how does this affect my life.” Consequently, the good outcome of using SRE forced and pushed Rena concluded that “it was good to really focus on the different strategies.” This implies that if the strategy benefited her classroom then she would continue to use it.

Another of Rena’s perceptions that changed was the course expectation Rena admitted that she brought her expectation to the course and hoped the course would meet what she thought about the course. She said, “I think my expectations…might now be a little bit different of what I would get out the class.” This implies that Rena realized that different classes had their own format and she felt that she could not put her expectation on the course that she thought it would be.

*Attitude*

*Changes*

As described earlier in Rena’s attitude of professional development experiences, she argued that she is a teacher willing to learn and want to develop herself in the classroom. However, Rena’s attitude towards professional development experiences have changed and tend to be like that she would like to see the results immediately and not take her a lot of time to create or prepare to let it happen in her classroom. She defined the useful professional development experiences for her classroom from the interview:
It’s useful, it’s appropriate to what I’m teaching, it’s something that I can see myself doing in my classroom and that is not going to take a lot of time to make it happen because I don’t have time to create.

Rena knew that preparing a lesson for her students took a lot of time and she understood that she did not have a lot of time to create a lesson. Therefore, she would need that kind of professional development experiences that helped her to see the result immediately. Even though she “had had some success in using these scaffolds, but I see now that they were sometimes random and chosen out of convenience rather than specific purpose.” In her perception, she felt that SRE is a good tool but the elements of time-consuming activities still bother her in the classroom because she needs to take a lot of time for preparing the lesson. Compared to prior and current definitions of the professional development experiences Rena is good at expressing her desire of learning professional development experiences to benefit her classroom on the required assignments. However, in her mind to create a fast lesson and see the result immediately was her true feeling of the useful professional development experiences.

According to the post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, Rena perceived that she was “knowledgeable” on two categories out of all eight categories of SRE knowledge: (1) the major components of reading and (2) before reading activities appropriate for ELLs. She perceived that she was “acquainted” on six features of SREs: (1) during reading activities appropriate for ELLs, (2) after reading activities appropriate for ELL’s, (3) an assigned text’s comprehension demands (4) an ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text, (5) strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text, and (6) a literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments. She also perceived that she “always” used the six features of SREs: (1) the major components of reading, (2) before reading activities appropriate for
ELL’s, (3) after reading activities appropriate for ELL’s, (4) an ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text, (5) strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text, and (6) a literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments. Rena perceived that she used two of the eight features of SREs “sometimes” in her classrooms: (1) during reading activities appropriate for ELLs and (2) an assigned text’s comprehension demands.

Compared with the pre-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, Rena felt that she did not feel confident on what she had learned previously and the application for those three steps of SRE. For example, in the pre-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, she felt that she was knowledgeable during reading activities; however, after she was done with the course she felt that she was acquainted with the activities and it coincided with the course documents that she felt that she was having a hard time implementing “during activities.” In addition, this questionnaire also discovered the range of using SRE was dependent on how much knowledge that Rena perceived therefore how much that she used. For example, she felt that she was acquainted about “during activities” therefore she used it sometimes. If she was knowledgeable on the certain SRE knowledge then she always used it. However, some of the features of the SRE, such as “strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of assigned text” she felt was acquainted but she used it always. This implies that Rena relied on her teaching context or what she felt comfortable to use than what she learned from the course even the strategy that she felt acquainted.

Regarding the course experience survey, Rena responded on a four-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Overall, she “strongly agreed” on SRE benefiting her students and the results of using the SRE were successful. Rena “agreed” on SRE practice time being enough for her and also agreed that she had competent SRE knowledge. In addition,
she felt that she was able to explain SRE knowledge to her colleagues in the school district. Overall, this survey indicated the course benefits her in her classroom well and she felt that she received enough from the SRE. In this survey, Rena did not express the feeling that she had in the beginning of the course such as, the lack of time to process the strategies. This could explain that Rena’s expectation toward the course had changed because she perceived that the course that she took was an online class could not compare with the face-to-face classroom. Therefore, she felt the course provided is fairly well and enough for her or she just wanted to finish her work but not express her true feeling such as, she did not express to the instructor about the inability of using SRE knowledge in her classroom.

In conclusion, during this course, the major change was the perception of SRE knowledge for Rena. According to Rena’s previous SRE professional development experiences, she had many SRE professional development experiences; however, those experiences did not impact her perception of teaching SRE in her classroom. In the past, Rena felt that SRE was only helping ELLs to improve. However, after she was done with the course, she found that SRE is not only helpful with ELLs but also helpful for her mainstream students’ motivation to read and benefit their reading level.

During this course, Rena considered professional development experiences as the way that she could collect the strategy in her mind but not using them purposely rather randomly used such as, whenever she felt comfortable of using them in her classroom. Initially, she thought this course was like the other classes that she had taken. Consequently, the course confused her, such as the instructor’s instruction, comments, lack of interaction and the format of the course because the course did not meet her expectation. Luckily, Rena’s colleague helped her to understand the course; for example, they discussed the readings and the assignments about the course in the
school district. Therefore, Rena felt that colleague’s support was the big factor influencing her knowledge of the big picture of the SRE course.

In a sense, Rena brought her own perception to view the course; however, she did not realize that she needed to change and be aware of her perception toward this course. Therefore, during the course, she judged the course and the instructor did not help her for involvement in the course. Finally, she understood the course and changed the expectation that she brought in to the course because the more work and time that she spent made her understand the format of the course.

Description of Individuals—John (Year 10)

Background: Prior Attendance in SRE

In this section, I will introduce John’s background in order to provide a context for John’s perceptions, attitudes and actions linked to teaching and professional development.

According to his background survey, John, an ESL teacher, has been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to middle and high schoolers (7-12) for ten years in his school district in the Northwest. John is bilingual and has been teaching a Washington History and a Pacific Northwest History class in Spanish, as well. Many of his English Language Learners (ELLs) were first and second year speakers and readers of English.

In responding to the background survey, John notes he had never taken Scaffolded Reading Experiences (SRE) professional development or workshops. Thus this was his first time participating in an online SRE course. Even though scaffolding was mentioned during his work in a limited fashion, the rationale on SRE was never fully explained. By and large, John felt that the previous workshops and professional development on a number of topics other than SREs had prepared him fairly well for his teaching.
John’s initial involvement with this SRE online course began during the summer introduction week when he expressed his initial perception and attitude regarding the professional development experiences both in writing and through demonstrative actions.

John’s involvement with this SRE course began when his supervisor, Jane, received an invitation from a university’s grant in the Northwest; therefore, John received an e-mail from Jane inviting him to participate in the grant opportunity and this course. He did not know any detailed information about the course, but wanted to follow Jane’s instructions. He stated that he was glad that he did not know anything about it, because had he, he might have given up the opportunity due to its significant time commitment. Once he realized this, he committed to the course because he liked its design. Seemingly, John took a challenge and adopted an enthusiastic attitude toward new things that piqued his interest.

Based on John’s previous teaching experience prior to the course, he thought “reading [was not] an option for my ELL’s,” because he believed that any reading activities were not necessary or would not improve his beginning speakers. In his words from the Unit 7 LAP assignment, “The range of abilities and emergent speaker abilities seemed to preclude the possibility of any reading activities.” He recalled his previous attitude on ELLs’ reading from an interview, “I always viewed reading with my kids as impossible. ‘How do you do it and why would you want to do it?’ I mean they can’t even speak and I had tried a few times.” In John’s initial attitude and perception, he felt that he was not able to help his ELL beginners with his limited knowledge of teaching. However, John experienced tremendous change at the end of the course.
Before the course started, John completed an introduction week designed to familiarize him with the online learning environment. During this week, John finished the two required assignments and the discussion postings. In response to one of the assignments posted by the instructor, the following quote excerpted from the introduction week’s assignments explain John’s attitude of teaching and enthusiasm for his ELLs:

Our limited English students (and their parents)…have enormous proficiency in their life experience…All that experience is transferable, just like cowboys playing polo. We have to make those connections easier for them to see and some content instruction in their own language is indispensable. (Introduction Week’s IRA assignment)

John was more concerned with understanding his ELLs obstacle of learning a second language. His attitude of teaching and enthusiasm were to meet the ELLs’ needs of attention and understanding. John willingly improves himself for teaching through professional development experiences to meet ELLs needs.

Because John did not have a chance to complete the first part of the beginning SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, his prior level of SRE knowledge and use were not represented. However, through the interview, John mentioned that “Vygotsky and all those guys used to coin that word [scaffolded reading or scaffolded] and use it excessively, but it was never fully explained or the rationale.” He also recalled that he was not familiar with the SRE activities. He said, “[For] a lot of those activities [in this course], I was like WOW.” From this excerpted interview, John had knowledge of SRE from his work, but had never been told the rationale of using it; thus he might have used some of SRE in his classroom, but not used it appropriately or he might have used it and not have known he was.

**Developing Perception and Attitude: Learning from SRE**
The overriding perception and attitude that John developed toward SRE and professional development in general during the course seemed to come from his personality, as described below.

*Attitude*

*Personality*

In the beginning of the course, John felt that he had some difficulty dealing with the online environment. Initially, John felt that this course was demanding. The course came suddenly into his life without any preparation or notification. He recalled his early struggles with the course in the interview:

> There would always be the demands of the personal life…I remember the minute the class started everything else in my life came to the front burner, as we say. Everything else had to be done. I had all summer and nothing else was happening in my life, and all of a sudden, this [SRE course] started, school started, my mom is 85…

Even though John felt that “all of a sudden” the course came about, he chose to face it and was willing to challenge this intensive seven-week course because he felt that if he wanted to meet the course’s expectation then he needed to weigh “that against the reality of the impossibility.” In other words, John felt that when he was in the course he needed to take care of the disturbing situations in his life in any case. While John was taking this SRE course, his personality played an important role in his attitude toward the course. As he described his personality, he made references to those things that he liked and thus pursued. The following interview addressed that as John was involved with issues, he would deal with them even if he encountered problems. He said, “Once I was into it [SRE course], it was a kind of part of code of honor, [once] you started, you committed.”
Learning new things was also attractive to John’s personality, and he was more likely to absorb new information to benefit his teaching and increase his ELLs’ ability. For example, John had a conversation with an online colleague which discussed the whisper phones made from PVC pipes that students can hear from their reading. John wanted to give the phone a try to motivate his ELLs’ learning attitude. As he stated on the Unit 4 discussion forum, “I’d love to know about the whisper phones…I’ll give it a try. Do you know any information on them?” During another discussion, John wanted to know about the ELLs’ learning situation on learning English, because he hoped he could provide better teaching of background knowledge for better learning on ELLs. As he requested more information on the learning situation of bilingual students excerpted from the Unit 5 discussion forum, he asked, “Could you point me to the source of ‘comprehensible input’ comparable or equal to that of native speakers?” John was willing to receive as much information as he could in order to benefit his ELLs. Another obvious piece of evidence showed that he went on to search the cognates which are words similar in two languages after the certain unit was done. He used internal mail sent to his online colleagues to spread the cognates that he found. In it he stated, “As a follow up to the cognate discussion we’ve been having, I just found a PDF list of alphabetically organized cognates—many, many cognates.” By and large, John is willing to absorb new information and is eager to learn knowledge in order to benefit his ELLs and himself.

*Attitude of professional development*

Regarding professional development, John believed the teachers should keep learning and emphasized internal growth. As he said in the Unit 6 discussion forum:
Engineers, chemists, biologists and others are constantly renewing their knowledge to stay employable. If they didn’t keep up they would be unemployed. We are in direct competition with everywhere else.

This implies that John feels that everyone should keep on moving in their professional field and there are no excuses, such as lack of time, to attend professional development experiences. The following excerpt interview explains more of John’s concentration and serious concerns on current professional development:

I know all teachers are strapped for time…and sadly the teachers, I see it so much, the teachers do not keep up with the professional development…you’ve got your half of the knowledge, [but] it’s diminishing and diminishing and diminishing …so if you want to keep your half [of the knowledge] very current you’ve got to keep learning all the time.

John felt that teachers should not be satisfied with their current knowledge because everything is changing and they should keep moving forward and learning. Based on this attitude, he believed the course was a benefit for his profession; therefore, he treated the professional development as important.

*Attitude toward support*

Through colleagues’ support John had a clearer understanding of the assignments’ requirements and SRE operation. While taking this course, John and his school district’s colleagues got together a lot. Therefore, the discussions with his colleagues in the school district gave him a lot of interactions regarding SRE knowledge and its implementations in the classroom. For example, John had just learned the cognates strategy and shared the result with his colleague. As he wrote on the Unit 3 LAP assignment:
Jerry [the colleague in his school district] and I feel it [cognates strategy] is effective and easily reiterated across the curriculum. We plan to do a staff meeting presentation and go school wide.

John’s good learning attitude toward the assignments was a key factor while John became confused about the course work. John remembered that while he was taking this course there were some clarifications of the questions’ intent that needed to be made. He felt that “a lot of the activities were kind of open ended;” therefore, he would need to find a specific direction to take through the general question. In his words from an interview:

I ponder what is needed here [the assignments] exactly, what is needed [in the general question] and so let me reread a lot of the selections and highlight a lot of the selections until I can form the direction, out of very general question I can form really quite specific response, but I had to mull it over. I had to reread, re-digest before I even started writing, and that was probably part of the intention, framing a very general question against quite a large bit of reading. You had going some focus and some intention to come out of with pretty good product in the end.

From the above interview quote, John had his learning attitude to pursue what he did not understand while he was doing the assignments. During the course, he researched from the textbook to find out the source of his confusion and consulted with his peers because they spent a lot of time discussing this course. Consequently, part of John’s successful accommodation about misunderstanding and broad questions regarding the assignments combined his learning attitude and the help of his peers.

Course expectations
As mentioned previously, John’s initial involvement with this course was because he wanted to please his supervisor. During the course, John tried to meet the expectations that the instructor required as well. For example, he wanted to meet the course expectations so he decided to do his best on every assignment that he submitted. As stated by the interview:

[I] have to tune up my thinking to present myself well…when I realized I am not writing up to the caliber of academic quality. It made me tune up and get more precise, very much more precise. I would spend a lot more time formulating my answers. It all of a sudden became very important to earn the approval of that peer [colleague]…

John was serious about the comments that he got from the instructor. Because of the serious attitude, he realized that he “had become over the years cliché, I didn’t think through or explain a lot of my thoughts. I didn’t extend my responses very well.” From this, we can see that John is not satisfied with what he had thought had been enough under his current knowledge. Consequently, his unsatisfied attitude toward his teaching knowledge made him want to do well at every single point of the course.

The attitude of course expectations influenced him to not only make an effort on the assignment, but also on the discussion postings with class colleagues online. He recalled from an interview that he was trying to make an impression on his online colleagues during the course:

I [was] trying to frame my responses in agreement or disagreement. If I have a disagreement, then I had to frame that response diplomatically, and I had to look into the book and point to sections in the book to bolster my argument and at the same time with a little bit of emphasis, try to persuade the person on the other end of the line that I wasn’t in agreement with that previous statement.
From the quote, John treated the discussion postings as important and useful information to learn from the course; therefore, he responded to the questions seriously and with caution in accordance with the textbook and the related material. John did not feel that answering the discussion postings was the unimportant thing; instead his attitude pushed him to try to do the best in the course.

*Empathy*

During this course, John showed empathy toward his ELLs by protecting them and not allowing them to get frustrated. For example, he agreed with the textbook that ELLs have too many constraints and burdens placed on them for learning second language content. As he stated in the Unit 1 discussion forum, “I like what it said in the book about the constraints on an ELL. They are learning a language AND content—that is twice as much as a native speaker.” John was not only empathic to ELLs’ learning situation but also to their life situation. In the interview, John explained what the ELLs that he faced in his classroom:

> Some of the kids arrived late at the night from a clandestine boarder crossing, you know that was very dangerous, and they arrived in our valley late at night. They don’t know anything to the east or to the west. All they know is our very narrow little valley…”

From the quote, John understood ELLs’ difficulties in their lives, and was compassionate and understanding toward their personal learning and academics.

In John’s class, the abilities of ELLs were enormously different, and he would like to consider whether his teaching exceeded some of the ELLs’ learning ability. As expressed in the Unit 6 LAP assignment, “Even the ability range in my small classes is enormous and I must be careful not to exceed the high frustration levels.” He also showed empathy toward ELLs and
seemed to try to help those ELLs with a lower ability level to have better learning experiences.

As quoted from the Unit 6 discussion forum:

It is depth of knowledge, time in the trenches and all the extended learning that mainstream kids have benefited from over the years…that our immigrant kids don’t have in their tool kit. Their world is inverted…So many of our kids are bailing out of economic disaster in their homelands. Things were tough before they left…these people bailed out of untenable circumstances…

He also understood his ELLs’ learning should be gradually accumulated because there were many obstacles the ELLs needed to overcome. As he claimed on the Unit 3 discussion forum, “Knowing a concept is not an on/off matter. Students develop rough understandings of the concept and then gradually refine and extend their knowledge.” The above data implies that John was sympathetic to the learning situation that the ELLs have because the ELLs learning situation had happened in his classroom and he could feel it.

Perception

Obstacles

John had empathy toward his ELLs’ learning obstacles and would like to find suitable ways for improving their learning. However, sometimes he felt that he did not know how to act confidently when encountering ELLs’ independence in the reality of his classrooms, even though the textbook mentioned the need to let the ELLs face learning independently. As he asked on the Unit 2 discussion forum, “Does anyone else feel torn between our ELL’s need for independence and the ‘deer in the headlight’ look when faced with a new assignment?” He was also concerned that he could not combine serious and interesting instruction for his ELLs. As quoted from the Unit 2 LAP assignment:
I always get a little nervous in these projects [vignettes of our students’ life]…and I feel like I am neglecting “serious” instruction. But this kind of “interestingness” is hard to duplicate when the ELL face vocabulary study and sentence study.

He also felt that his teaching context was “so high of a need and so little time,” but he did not feel hopeless over his ability for teaching. He said, “What ever you can do helps.” He tried to do his best and help his ELLs to receive better learning experiences. This implies that John tried to help and survive with his ELLs by using any strategies that he learned without becoming overwhelmed by hopelessness.

**Impetus and change**

During this course, the instructor (Cindy) went to visit John’s school district on September, 21st 2005, which was the third week of the course. The goal of this visit was to explain the purposes of the SRE and the benefits of using SRE with ELLs. This visit gave John the impetus that he needed to teach reading, even though his ELLs did not know English. As he said in the interview:

[Cindy’s visit] gave me the impetus to realize I’ve got to teach reading. Even though my kids are emergent speakers and emergent readers, I have to prepare them to read and it gave me the rationale that this reading experience will actually boost their language capability to reading and their speaking capability. It will just accelerate their uptake of the English language…

This visit was a key factor in changing John's teaching style, because it gave John more confidence on how SRE functions and how it can help ELLs. John did not know how to teach those ELLs who did not know any or little English or reading prior to and during the initial week of the course. Consequently, the visit and the following course definitely changed his attitude
toward teaching reading. He wrote this by e-mail correspondence after the class was done, “That
class [SRE course] really changed my ideas of what is possible.” While John changed his
teaching and implemented SRE course strategy, he recalled that his ELLs had tremendous
feedback about the reading content. In his words from an interview:

[ELLs] were eager to read, you know. In fact, they pushed me “Hey, we want to read this
alone, we want to do this, let’s read one at a time” and that was their [ELLs] idea. They
pushed me into that.

Therefore, a well-articulated explanation regarding the course totally changed John’s previous
perception of teaching ELLs. He thought that ELL beginners were not teachable because they
have limited English. However, this visit turned around his view of perceiving his ELLs.

Learning

During the time John was taking the course, he felt that the textbook reminded him that
he needed to understand the ELLs’ language learning ability and encouraged him to create a
literate environment. As he stated on the Unit 1 LAP assignments, “The book reminded me that
I want to create a literate environment where every day is adding to the ‘gradual accumulation’
of understanding.” While John read the textbook, he looked back over his teaching and found
that his teaching strategies were not helping the ELLs to move up to the advanced level. For
example, he often used “recall” strategy and, believed this was enough for his ELLs, would not
advance them up another level. After reading the textbook, he realized that many activities,
though time consuming, would provide the “chunks of time” that would benefit ELLs’ learning.
As quoted from the Unit 4 LAP assignment:

Too often with ELLs we are happy just to arrive at recall. But the goals after recall are
the skills that will ensure that they can do something with what they have recalled. It is
true that these activities demand chunks of time. Anything beyond recall will demand a chunk of time. Any of the activities move far and above this level.

The course textbook not only gave John more understanding on his previous teaching but John also felt that he received a lot of information from the textbook which gave him a new direction of reading. As he said in the Unit 5 discussion forum, “I am grateful for the book titles and annotated notes that we are getting from this book. It has put me in touch with a new vein of literature.” Through the textbook and materials, John felt that he needed to adjust his teaching and present reading content to his ELLs in a different way. He said it from the Unit 6 LAP assignment:

Through this reading and watching Cathy Mary’s video clip, I need to adjust my curriculum to teach more reading…I have always concentrated on speaking, verb forms…that it turns into a spoon fed “repeat after me” dilemma.

During the course, John would not only benefit from the textbook, but he also felt that the activities in the online course really helped him to develop their practical use in the reality of the classroom. He said it from the Unit 7 LAP assignment:

The incredible collection of activities tied to specific stories is a very valuable resource and put feet under the proximal development idea. Following these I can extend the zone of proximal development from theory to practice.

John felt that the activities in the course helped him to tie together the learning of the course and application in his classroom.

**Implementations**

During the course, John really felt that he was influenced enormously by SRE. Since he applied SRE, it let him know that teaching ELLs can be different and applicable even for
emergent readers and speakers. While in this course, John used SRE knowledge and implemented it immediately in his classrooms. For example, when he learned that there were thousands of English and Spanish cognates to help ELLs learn English during the SRE course, he afterwards implemented those cognate strategies in his classroom. In the Unit 3 discussion forum, John discovered the cognate’s applicability in his teaching context:

One of my strategies this year is to have the kids look for cognates first. This gives them a pretty good idea of what the reading selection is about…I’m moving toward plate tectonics as part of understanding…some of the cognates and near cognates we used here are…

Through the Unit 3 LAP assignment, he explained how the cognates helped the ELLs vocabulary understanding in English and ELLs’ first language. In his words, “One of the 8 cartoons I presented offered numerous opportunities for cognates. In the end I had found 12 cognates to help explain the cartoon.”

The result of the cognate’s implementation gave John more confidence on what he learned. For example, the following quote excerpted from the Unit 3 LAP assignment explained ELLs concept of new vocabulary both on English and Spanish, “My students have learned a new utility word, cognate, and we can extend this strategy throughout the year by invoking this [these] words often and loud.” Another example was how he paired his native English and Spanish speakers for learning both languages, and the kids were excited to try it. He described it in the Unit 4 discussion forum. “I just took my ESL class into the Spanish class this week. It worked out great with the Anglo kids speaking to Spanish speakers. They want to do it again.”

After implementation of SRE, John found that his ELLs would have “100% participation in the experience of reading,” and the students would be more concentrated on the content. He
said, “It has a high degree of scaffolded independence.” He also realized that the previous method that he used were not efficient and not helpful for the ELLs learning English. In his words by the Unit 6 BDAR assignment:

I finally have a method where I don’t have to contrive synthetic situations to try to provoke the kids into speaking. These contrived exercises always seemed to fall short and in the end yielded marginal contact time with English… By scaffolding the reading process, the students are extremely motivated to read…Reading is possible even with these emerging speakers…I am totally happy with the design. It is such a radical departure from my previous methods that I am still in shakedown mode. Everything seems to have worked so far.

During the course, John found out amazing uses of SRE and how they benefited his ELLs greatly. Because of this, he also realized that his previous teaching was not fitting into students’ levels and not authentic for students’ learning. Therefore, this implies that John would change his previous attitude and perception once he saw the tremendous feedback of SRE application.

Changes

During the course, John changed not only in his teaching context, but also in his school district’s environment. In John’s school district, the concept of ELLs was not defined clearly. Most teachers did not understand ELLs very clearly. Therefore, the middle school teachers categorized ELLs as not only those learning second language, but also as some below the poverty level. Some teachers in the high school would just use what they have to facilitate their ELLs even if they encountered problems. They would not prevent the problems advance instead of patching the problems. As he said on the Unit 6 LAP assignment,
Our middle school teachers are realizing that children of poverty could be considered ELL also…The attitudes in the high school are a little more entrenched and a little more like the Rajas.

Therefore, John tried to get the point across among staff and administrators in his school district on ELLs, but it was limited by the structures of the school district. As he said from the Unit 6 discussion forum, “Our staff meetings are structured to minimize sharing of concerns.” This suggests that he wanted to do something to make some clarification for the ELLs, but due to the environment in the school district, this was difficult to do. While John indicated that he was limited in such an environment, he realized that his position had to be changed during the course. Regarding the Unit 7 LAP assignment, however, John pointed out that “my perception of my role among my fellow staff has changed.” This implies that he felt that he needed to make some adjustments of his perception among his fellow staff because he is an ESL teacher and absolutely would know the difficulty of learning a second language. However, his teaching peers do not have the opportunity to have that type of multicultural understanding; thus, his perception has changed.

The following interview provides more evidence for the above depiction. Because this SRE course gave him more confidence and reviewed what he learned in his ESL classes, he was willing to share the SRE knowledge in his school district to possibly bring a better understanding of ELLs:

We can introduce this word and this concept back to our faculty, and at least they’ve been given a heads up on a new discipline and a new method of instruction, and we are starting to build that common vocabulary, that operable vocabulary in our faculty, we are using it a lot more.
John believed that SRE knowledge would alleviate the confusion and misunderstanding among his staff when encountered with an unfamiliar language and population in the school district.

**Final Perception and Attitude: Extent of Change as a Result of Attending SRE**

This section will sum up John’s perceptions and attitude changes regarding this course. This section will also talk about the changes through the SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire and the SRE course experience survey.

**Perception**

*Review from the course to teaching contexts*

John felt that overall the course was well organized and beneficial. Through this course, he reviewed what he had learned from his ESL classes and the SRE course gave him more knowledge and understanding of his ELLs. The following interview excerpts addressed John’s positive feelings about the SRE effect on ELLs:

It reiterated a lot of what I have learned in my ESL classes…it allowed me to revisit a lot of those themes after I have been in the trenches working day to day to day. It gave me time to review and refresh and extend my thinking on a lot of those things that I had read and studied 8 years to 10 years previously that I might not have been in a really receptive mode back then. But now having taught all these years I was just grateful for the chance to revisit, reread and remind myself of what I’m doing…Reminding myself, my purpose, my goals, reminding myself how disadvantaged kids are and what I need to fill for their needs and to help make them successful.

John not only felt that he gained a review about his teaching context from the course in his mind, but also implemented that SRE knowledge in his classroom through demonstrative actions. After he took this SRE course, John felt that the techniques of SRE were practically
applicable in his classroom but other methods he learned from the other classes were not. For example, he described the teaching contexts that he had used, “‘Basically, all we do is…plan, ‘Ok, here it is, right here, you copy it right here.’” He said it from an interview,

The disservice we do in the other classes where they don’t scaffold. They never really, other than bits and phrases and just the very minimum contact with written word and all the other classes.

John believes very confidently that SRE would benefit ELLs. From the interview, he stated that SRE would facilitate ELLs learning. As quoted from an interview excerpt:

This is one place [John’s class] where they have sustained contact with speaking, listening and reading and so I mean this class [SRE course] got me to do that, it got me off of my inertia and encouraged me to “we’re gonna do this and we’re gonna do it well and, we’re gonna benefit from it.” So I really credit this class [SRE course] with helping me do that ‘cause I just would’ve floundered around and never really got around to it. Therefore, John felt that SRE knowledge should be approved because he felt that if ELLs wanted to accelerate their English ability, they need to adapt to SRE. For example, he said from the interview there are not many classes that have SRE embedded in them but John’s class only,

There’s no reading for meaning, there is no interpretation of the text, there is no sustained contact with the text beginning in any class. And so, “Where are they gonna get it?” It’s got to be in my class, so they get that sustained contact with the print from the reading. From the above data, we can see that John is very confident in his SRE knowledge and believes that SRE would definitely benefit his ELLs.

According to the post-SRE Knowledge and Use questionnaire, John perceived that he was “knowledgeable” on all eight categories of SRE knowledge. He also perceived that he
“always” used the six features of SREs: (1) the major components of reading, (2) before reading activities appropriate for ELL’s, (3) during reading activities appropriate for ELL’s, (4) an assigned text’s comprehension demands, (5) an ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text, and (6) strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text. John perceived that he used two of the eight features of SREs “sometimes” in his classrooms: (1) after reading activities appropriate for ELLs and (2) a literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments. John was not familiar with the SRE prior to this course. However through this course he perceived that he is now knowledgeable with the SRE since he was able to review the content of his previous ESL classes’. John’s use of SRE knowledge with the after SRE reading activities was consistent with what he demonstrated in his assignments. He felt that he had difficulty in applying what he had learnt from after SRE reading activities, but he tried to adjust his teaching. Same as he tried to create a literate environment for his ELLs but due to the inability of the current literate environment he was unable to do so. He knows that the textbook has reminded him to do it, but it seems that he needs more time to make the adjustment.

Regarding the course experience survey, John responded on a four-point scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Overall, he “strongly agreed” on SRE benefiting his knowledge of using and explaining his strategies to his ELLs. John “agreed” on SRE practice time being enough for him and also agreed that he has competent SRE knowledge. This survey implies that John still felt that if he would have had more time to practice SRE then the result would be better. Overall, the course benefits him very well and he felt that he received a more in-depth look at the SRE.

In conclusion, John did change his perception of ELLs as emergent readers. Initially, he was not able to provide appropriate teaching for his ELLs and he believed SRE could not help
those emergent readers. However, the instructor’s visit gave him the impetus to change because the visit gave him a detailed explanation of how SRE operates. Additionally, while he read the textbook, and reviewed his teaching context, this cooperation made him realize that SRE is an important tool for ELLs to scale up in their English ability and also that the outcome of using the SRE was successful. During the course, John’s colleagues’ support was another factor influencing his understanding and implementation of SRE. Through various explanation, implementation and cooperation methods, John was getting a picture of SRE and a better understanding of how to improve his teaching and assist his ELLs. During the course, even though there was a disturbing thing e.g. an intensive course, it was not able to stop John’s eagerness to learn and to know about the SRE. Consequently, John’s positive personality was a major factor influencing his success and absorbing SRE information and implementing what he learned from the course.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Introduction

A discussion can now be initiated based on the analysis of the data collected during this study regarding how these three teachers learned in this course and how they appeared to be affected in their learning transferability. In this final chapter, first, the summary of the major findings are discussed. For ease of reporting, in this chapter the major findings are organized according to the research questions. These research questions create an organizational framework for discussing the results. Then, each research question is accompanied by comparisons with the literature. Finally, the chapter concludes with implications for future research concerning how professional development experiences can support future teachers in order to facilitate a continuation of their developing understanding of what they learned through their professional development experiences, and an ultimate transference of that knowledge into their classrooms.

Major Findings and Discussion

As discussed in Chapter Two, many scholars (e.g. Taylor, 2000; Perkins & Salomon, 1988; Baldwin & Ford, 1988) claim that teachers’ learning transfer from professional development experiences is often influenced by the material of the content, support from the instructor and peers, rewards and feedback. Furthermore, individual differences are also another factor that affects teachers’ learning transfer; personality, and prior knowledge; a past period of teaching experiences could also affect how the teachers view their professional development. In this regard, researchers believe that the process of transfer from professional development experiences should be examined and expanded in detail to reflect this demand. In this study, I
used Bruner’s model of transferability of learning to explore the process of the teachers’ transfer of learning. To discuss the teachers’ process of transfer, a framework of transferability that includes six features (attitude, compatibility, activation, practice, self-loop and information flow) was used to explore the process of the transfer through the professional development experience.

**Question 1: How do teachers perceive the process of the transfer?**

**Factor 1. Attitude**

In this course, the three teachers’ attitudes brought to this course showed obvious differences in the teachers’ learning and application. For example, initially Wendy reported that SRE was not a useful tool for her classroom because it was not applicable for her lower readers. In other words, her attitude toward the SRE seems to show that she did not think this knowledge would help her students. She was slow and behind schedule in learning from the SRE until she read the textbook. Early on, she chose not to read the textbook and instead read the posting to understand the SRE. Similarly, the attitude that Rena brought in also seems to have made her confused about the course. Initially, she said that the SRE was a useful tool only for ELLs, and not for mainstream students. It looks like Rena had some misunderstandings and confusion about the SRE in the course, and thus her learning and application of the SRE were slow. Finally, she changed her mind and said that the SRE could be useful for both types of students after she implemented the SRE in her classroom.

John, however, did not have any preformed thoughts about the SRE because he had not had any previous SRE professional development experiences. Therefore, the attitude that he brought in was that he liked to learn this new knowledge in order to benefit his students. Even though he had some struggles with how to teach ELLs, he was willing to learn in this course. It is reasonable to suppose that he believed the knowledge that he learned would go beyond his
classroom. This type of attitude helped him to understand the SRE and resolved the problems that happened both in the course and in his classroom.

In summary, these teachers’ initial attitudes affected their consequent learning in this course. For example, Wendy and Rena were distracted by their prior SRE knowledge in this course. They did not believe this course would benefit their classroom because they had many previous SREs. They assumed this course would be the same as the previous professional development experiences. It seems that they were confused about the course and the instructor’s instruction. However, John did not have any problem learning from the SRE and understanding the instructions from the instructor. He felt this was the most useful course that he ever took. From the distinction between them, we can see how the teachers’ initial attitudes probably resulted in very different learning transfers in this course.

*Factor 2. Compatibility*

In this course, since Wendy and Rena had prior SRE training, they assumed that SREs were time-consuming activities. On the face of it, they were having a hard time making a comparison between prior and current learning SRE knowledge in order to capture the picture of the SRE. For example, Wendy described rewriting the text to be an interesting activity, but she worried that this activity would be too time-consuming for her classroom. Therefore, she did not try it even though she thought that was an interesting activity. Consequently, she thought the SRE was too time-consuming and her lack of time resulted in her not applying a single SRE strategy in her classroom. Finally, at the end of the course, she confessed that the lack of application of the SRE caused her to not have a complete understanding about the SRE. In this course, it seems that Wendy did not have a clear concept of the SRE; her only understanding was that SRE was a time-consuming activity, and she argued that she did not have enough time to
apply those strategies in her classroom. As the end result, she understood and realized the SRE can be a useful tool for her students.

In Rena’s situation of learning the SRE, she faced difficulties between her prior knowledge about pre-reading activities and what she currently learned during the reading activities. Arguably, she did not know how to balance these two reading activities. Consequently, she was challenged by this unclear concept of dividing and balancing reading activities. Another compatibility problem was that Rena had a hard time finding a connection between the SRE and the assessment with lower readers. For example, the textbook for this course mentioned that assessment is not important for lower readers. However, Rena reported that how she was going to present the grade to one student would be different than another student. In this issue, Rena did not find there to be a connection between what she learned in the course and the classroom that she dealt with.

In John’s description of compatibility problems of learning from the SRE, he struggled with balancing academic subjects while making them interesting through instruction for his ELLs. However, he concluded that he would continue to provide help even if he could not fully engage his students. In his mind, he tried to do his best to support his ELLs by using different strategies from the SRE. He understood that there is a need for help and disconnection in his instruction; however, he did not give up, and he thought the course was worthwhile for his ELLs.

In summary, the main problem of compatibility for Wendy and Rena was the disconnection between the SRE and the real classroom setting. The reason seems to be that they did not have a clear concept about the SRE at the beginning of the course. Therefore, they were afraid of trying the strategies in their classroom because they did not know what would happen. Consequently, they were simply not using them because they thought it would be too difficult
and time-consuming. In contrast, John understood there would be a disconnection, but he was willing to try to find out the problem in order to provide himself and his students with better teaching.

**Factor 3. Activation**

Before the course started, the activations regarding this course that these three teachers brought in were different. Baldwin and Ford (1988) assert that learners who have the highest need for employment achievement and desire to learn are more likely to transfer the knowledge into the job setting. For example, John’s supervisor recommended that he attend this course. He was trying to do a good job to impress his supervisor. This type of desire to make a good impression on his supervisor made him want to learn from the SRE. Consequently, he learned the applicable SRE strategies for his classroom needs. Similarly, Rena came to this course because it was a free course for her, and she felt that she could get free resources and credit for her professional development experiences and masters’ degree. Therefore, this type of monetary activation did help her understand and apply the SRE eagerly because she wanted to show the instructor that she was trying hard in this course in order to get the money bonus. Consequently, she was motivated to complete the assignments in the course and actively apply SRE strategies in her classroom.

Conversely, Wendy came for individual needs. She decided to enroll in the course because of a book that she got from previous professional development. When she found out that this was a course related to her book, she thought this would be a chance to better understand the SRE. However, this attitude did not help her to understand the SRE fully. She did not have a need to do a good job for anyone. Presumably, her desire of learning in this course was weak and incomplete.
In summary, these three teachers brought their activation when they attended this course. Thus, the activation held influenced their learning and application of the SRE in the course. From the above descriptions of three teachers’ activations, the push from the supervisor and the monetary reward are influencing factors that made a difference in Rena and John’s processes of transfer of learning. Wendy had her own purposes and goals in attending this course. However, it appears it was not enough for her because she did not have the additional drive to achieve maximum transferability.

Factor 4. Practice

In this course, these three teachers’ practice was dependent on how they felt the SRE could benefit their classroom. For example, initially Wendy felt that the SRE was a tool for intermediate readers only, not for her lower readers. Therefore, she determined not to practice it in her classroom because she felt that it was not useful and beneficial for her students, and also she lacked time to practice. Contrary to Wendy, Rena practiced part of the SRE strategies because she felt there were some strategies that were not applicable in her classroom. Furthermore, she felt that there was not enough time for her to practice the SRE strategies in her classroom. As for John, he was satisfied with the practice that he made for this course because he felt that he learned one efficiently applicable strategy for each week and applied it for the next week. Therefore, he did not doubt that the SRE would benefit his classroom.

In summary, the effective practice was always based on how much advantage the SRE could provide the teachers for use in their classroom; otherwise they would not use it. Wendy and Rena felt that they did not get chances to apply those strategies because there was a lack of time in the course, and the situation that they faced was not applicable for them to use the SRE. Apparently, their understanding of the SRE was incomplete and slow in coming because they did
not implement the SRE in their classroom. However, when John applied those strategies in his class he found that his previous teaching was not efficient for his students. He was pleased with the result of using the SRE because it worked so well in his classroom. From this we can see that the teachers’ practices are still based on how their prior SRE knowledge influenced how they selected and applied the SRE in their classroom.

Factor 5. Self-Loop

In this course, support from colleagues was an important element for the teachers in learning and implementing the SRE. For instance, Rena would discuss with her colleague about the course assignments and the required readings in order to pass the course. But even though Rena received support from her colleague, she did not have a complete understanding about the SRE. They complained that this course was not applicable and too time-constrained for them to do the SRE implementation. Inevitably, she still used her prior knowledge to select only particular SRE strategies, and she questioned the SRE in some way. The support from the colleague did not help her have a concrete idea about the SRE, but instead simply caused her to focus on finishing the course requirements.

Similarly, John also received support from colleagues as Rena did. However, he was more likely to discuss how the strategy could be implemented in his classroom, and he reflected on how he felt about this implementation with his colleague. The communication between John and the colleague was more likely to foster a positive reflection about each other’s implementation. Through this shared communication, John had a concrete understanding of the SRE and got the picture of using the SRE in his classroom appropriately. Wendy, on the other hand, did not have a colleague to support and talk with her in this course. She felt that she was working entirely alone.
In summary, communication with the colleagues is an affecting factor which impacted the teachers and how they perceived and understood this course. However, the positive rather than negative communication with the colleagues possibly would enhance the teachers’ willingness and motivation to apply their learned knowledge into the classroom. Both Rena and John received support from their colleagues, but the end result of application of the SRE turned out differently for both parties. Rena still used her previous teaching to select only certain strategies, but John was totally accepting of all strategies and used the SRE in his classroom. On the face of it, good communication and support is needed, but positive communication with the colleagues is important in order to transfer the concrete knowledge into the classroom.

Factor 6. Information Flow

When the teachers are able to organize what they learned from the course, then they are able to digest it and fix it into the reality of the classroom. However, it seems that Wendy and Rena had difficulty digesting the information presented in this course to apply it in their classroom. For example, initially when Wendy read the textbook she felt that what it dealt with was not a match with her teaching context because she could not transfer the information into her classroom. She commented that the SRE was not applicable for her students. Rena had a similar problem as Wendy. Rena would think about the strategy before she used it, and then she would decide whether this strategy fit into her classroom or not. In other words, if the strategy was presented in a different group in the text, then Rena would not use it because it was not a situation that she faced in her classroom. Apparently, Wendy and Rena could not digest some of the SRE knowledge presented in this course if the SRE knowledge did not directly apply to their specific situation.
As for John, he admired the textbook because it reminded him to think about his teaching context, and he did. In this course, he did what the textbook mentioned and followed the requirements of this course. He commented that he was happy with the information that was presented in this course and with the result of using the SRE in his classroom. From this it seems that John learned what he needed to know without rejecting or being selective; he knew how to digest the information he learned from the course and apply it into his classroom. In other words, he did not have any burden about what he needed to know and what did not need to know. He accepted everything in this course and fixed it into his teaching context.

In summary, that teachers are able to collect the strategies in the professional development is not enough; they also must be able to digest the information presented in the course and apply it to specific situations. This is a key step of transfer of learning. In this course, Wendy and Rena were having a hard time identifying the SRE strategy and whether or not it could be implemented into their classroom. However, they chose to believe their teaching experience and context could not be supported by the SRE. It appears that the learning and implementing of the SRE were begun and completed late. John, on the other hand, was not selective of the material in the SRE; he accepted it all. Then he implemented it successfully and realized his previous teaching experiences were not adequate for his students. In other words, the implementation of the SRE without selection and rejection by prior knowledge helped the teachers to understand if their previous teaching experiences were appropriate in some way.

Discussion

I noted that these three teachers were confused about issues of this course at the beginning, issues such as how this course could be useful and implemented in their individual classrooms. However, John slightly differed from the other two teachers, Wendy and Rena,
because he felt benefited by the SRE and was able to implement it very well in the classroom. In the description of process of transfer of learning in this course, there was a turning point for John in his attitude toward this course. According to Bruner’s model of *transferability as learning*, the attitude matters in how a teacher learns from the SRE and effectively uses it in her/his classroom. For example, in John’s attitude toward professional development experiences, he felt that teachers need to upgrade their ability of teaching because the world is changing, and so he should keep moving forward in his profession. Consequently, this attitude led him to be persistent in this course even though he encountered problems and obstacles. He did not stop or change his attitude toward the professional development experiences.

However, in Wendy and Rena’s cases, they felt that professional development experiences should provide them with applicable strategies in which they do not need to digest or change the strategies to apply them to their classrooms. Perry (2004) commented that some teachers are tired and frustrated that professional development experiences force them into the type of real learning that they needed to determine how to use the strategy specifically in their classrooms (Ashdown, 2002). According to Bruner (1971), if the learner is able to fix and digest the information into the specific situation, then the transferability is achieved. However, Wendy and Rena were not aware that the knowledge they learned should be adjusted and transformed. For example, Rena mentioned that she did not have a lot of time to create a lesson for her students. Therefore, the useful professional development experience that she desired would be fast and would evidence the result immediately. Similarly, Wendy would like to see the result fast and would not like to take a lot of time to see it happen in the classroom. Therefore, Wendy and Rena’s attitudes toward professional development experiences resulted in their incomplete understanding of the concept of SRE knowledge because they felt the SRE activities were too
time-consuming for their classroom. Consequently, they remained confused and complained that the information was not detailed enough and that the instructor’s instruction and comments were unclear. Perry (2004) reminds us that this is primarily because of teacher “ignorance”; they do not think that they are missing something in their professional field.

In addition, John’s commitment to his students and his understanding of the situation that ELLs encounter, caused him to want to find a better solution for their English learning. According to Husu (2002), teachers’ commitments are not only to the students but also to care about their efforts to reach the academic standard and improvement in their schoolwork. Often this commitment requires that teachers maintain “personally relevant and optimistic beliefs” about their students and teaching contexts. Throughout this study, John desired not only to teach the subject for his students, but he was also concerned about his students’ lives and the school’s learning situations. He is full of empathy toward his ELLs’ learning obstacles, and he is willing to support them in order to achieve the standards of the school. Based on his commitment to the students, he knew how to use SRE to benefit those students in the classroom. The data represented that when something is not working in his teaching, when a student is not learning or behaving as expected, or when his interactions with students are not productive, he believed that he was the one who needed to make a change and provide help. He did not blame the strategy or the students. After all, he was the professional and needed to find a way to solve the problem rather than pull it out or set them aside.

Wendy and Rena reported the amount and quality of thought and energy they put into their work, even though they cared about their students’ learning and lives. In the data interpretation, however, they did not take time to commit the SRE in their classrooms. Consequently, this type of non-commitment caused Wendy and Rena to perceive that the SRE
was a good tool but that they could not guarantee they would apply it in their classroom if they faced challenges while using it. In addition, the disconnection between this course and the reality of the classroom that Wendy and Rena encountered made it difficult to implement the SRE into their specific classroom settings. Perkins and Salomon (1988, 1992) stated that the broad concept of the transfer of learning was more difficult to capture than the specific concept and the specific situation. Therefore, if the instructor gave explicit instruction from the abstract knowledge about the SRE, then Wendy and Rena might narrow the disconnection between this course and the reality of the classroom.

In summary, the difference between John, Wendy and Rena was that John seemed to understand his ELLs’ learning obstacles and know that using SRE would cover and accelerate his ELLs’ flaws in learning reading, while Wendy and Rena did not. They did not catch their students’ needs and learning difficulties completely; they were unsure the SRE would help their students and their teaching contexts. Overall, the deep understanding about students and commitment to students’ life and schoolwork often enables the teacher to apply knowledge in the classroom that has been learned from the professional development experiences. In addition, the attitudes toward the professional development experience were different. For example, while Wendy and Rena felt that professional development experiences were time-consuming, frustrating, and isolating, John did not feel this way. In his mind, he felt that he needed to keep moving because he believed there was something that he did not know. From the above data interpretation, when a teacher has a positive attitude toward the professional development experiences, then the process of transfer of learning more readily occurs and is impacted differently in the classroom.
Question 2: What changes in knowledge do teachers experience as a result of their professional development experiences?

During this course, teachers’ changes were influenced by whether or not they had prior SRE knowledge and their previous attitude toward the course. Basically, Wendy and Rena had prior SRE training and both of them believed themselves to be confident about SRE knowledge. Before this course started, Wendy had more than two experiences of SRE training; she felt that she was familiar with the SRE knowledge in this course. In addition, she felt that SRE was not applicable to her classroom because the course did not specifically talk about her ELLs’ reading levels. It looks like she was not serious about the course material until she read the textbook carefully and realized that the SRE is useful and applicable in her classroom. In the course assignments, Wendy seemed a little bit regretful that she did not spend time to apply the SRE strategies. She concluded that to understand the SRE one has to apply the strategies in the classroom. Therefore, she also changed her attitude finally and felt that the SRE is not a time-consuming activity for her classroom.

Rena also had prior SRE training. Rena had more than nine instances of SRE training before. Since she is a mainstream teacher, she felt that SRE was a good tool only for ELLs and not for the rest of the students in her classroom. However, she changed her prior perspective that SRE is applicable only with ELLs. She decided that SRE can also help the mainstream students be motivated to read. Another change that Rena made was in her attitude toward professional development. Initially she expressed that she would like to learn and develop herself in the classroom. However, as the course ended, she tended to choose the fast and comfortable ways of SRE to implement in her classroom. In the interview, Rena admitted that she did not have enough time to wait for the results. It appears from this that Rena seemed likely to make a good-
sounding statement about her attitude toward professional development experiences in front of people that could affect her career. However, in the long term she wanted fast and applicable strategy with immediate results.

As for John, the change that occurred in his attitude was not concerning prior SRE knowledge because he did not have any previous SRE training. The biggest change was that he knew how to teach his emergent ELLs after he finished this course. Initially, he did not think that any reading activities would help his emergent ELLs because they did not know English. However, during the course he found out that SRE can be a useful tool for him to benefit his ELLs, and that there was a way for helping ELLs through English. The change was not only in his perception about emergent readers but also about his staff. Initially, he thought his staff did not have complete understanding about the ELLs. However, he changed his perception about his staff because he is an ESL teacher and definitely knows the ELL’s difficulty. But his staff does not have this type of multicultural understanding. Therefore, he realized that he needed to change his role as an ESL teacher among his staff.

Discussion

In this course, prior knowledge and attitude toward the course impacted these three teachers knowledge of the SRE. First, prior professional development experiences impacted these three teachers’ understandings and applications of the SRE. As I discussed in Chapter Two, once the trainees found out the material was not new for them, then they lacked motivation to learn and apply the knowledge in their job setting (Downe et al, 2004). Similarly, Wendy and Rena had the SRE training before taking this course. They used their prior SRE professional development experiences and assumed that they were familiar with the knowledge. Therefore, they used their prior SRE training perception to critique and choose certain strategy.
Conceivably, their SRE knowledge of applying and understanding were slow in this course. At the end of the course, Wendy commented that if she applied SRE in her classroom regardless of her previous perception about being time constrained and the time-consuming nature of SRE, then she would benefit from applying the SRE knowledge in her classroom. John, however, did not have any SRE professional development experiences, thus he was not distracted by prior professional development experiences. Clearly, he changed his perception about using appropriate strategies for emergent ELLs. In this exploration, I sought a clear illustration of the teachers’ prior knowledge behind this course that influenced or impelled the teachers’ transfer of learning. This evidence illustrates what Prawat (1989) concluded, that often learning and applying something in the real classroom can accompany the prior knowledge. In other words, if the prior knowledge about the SRE was perceived as clear before the course started, then the process of understating the SRE would be fast and clear for Wendy and Rena.

Lastly, during the course, teachers’ attitudes and perceptions toward professional development and the environment of the school district were other factors that changed teachers’ SRE knowledge. Perry (2004) reminds us that teachers need to re-examine their attitude, learning style, personality and communication preferences before they are able to understand their own learning and teaching contexts. As the data showed, even though Rena did express that she wanted to develop herself in the professional development experiences, in the reality of the classroom she tended to choose the familiar and comfortable strategy that fit for her teaching. From this view, even Rena felt that SRE is a good tool for use in her classroom. But, if she is not willing to examine and adjust her attitude in her classroom, then the good tool will not be often used or transferred to her classroom. In comparison, John knew that his school district environment lacked understanding of ELLs. He examined his perception first and then
understood there was a gap between the staff and himself and his role as ESL teacher. He chose to change his perception in order to provide a better link for his staff to understand how the SRE could help ELLs to learn English.

In summary, prior attitudes and perceptions of SREs have interacted over time to influence the development of teacher understanding of this course, of teaching, and of the process that leads to learning transfer. For all three teachers, prior knowledge reflecting on their practice, conversing with colleagues about their students and their teaching methods, and continuing professional development experiences have changed their knowledge in order to transfer their professional development experiences into the classrooms.

*Question 3: How do their methods of instruction change?*

In this course, the changes in teachers’ methods of instruction was not shown completely because the teachers commented that they did not have enough time to implement new strategies into their classrooms, especially Wendy and Rena. During the course, Wendy did not implement the SRE in her classroom because she felt there was a lack of time. Therefore, there was no way to measure a change in her method of instruction. Rena, however, did implement some SRE strategies in her classroom. However, she chose them purposely based on her teaching experiences and on her belief that they would be applicable in her classroom. Clearly, change was not obvious in this course because the rule of using the SRE was based on her past teaching experiences, not on her current knowledge and understanding from the course.

As for John, he reviewed his many teaching experiences and compared them with the SRE. He realized that the previous instruction that he provided was very inappropriate for his ELLs. For example, when the textbook mentioned that the teachers need to create a literate environment for the ELLs, he looked back to examine his teaching and subsequently changed his
instruction to better his ELLs. In another example, thanks to the various strategies that were presented in the course, he reviewed and re-examined his teaching experiences to make sure that he employed efficient and useful strategies for his students. Therefore, because of his attitude of review and re-examination, his instruction changed. Consequently, he started to implement the SRE in his classroom, which worked very well.

In summary, the change in teachers’ methods of instruction was based on how they viewed the SRE in this course. In general, Wendy and Rena did not show much change, while John did. They felt that the SRE would not be very useful in their classroom. Consequently, the instruction change did not occur frequently in their classrooms during this course. However, John changed noticeably in his instruction. In other words, he seemed more likely to see how to present and facilitate comprehensive instruction for his students. Overall, teachers’ instruction change was influenced by their willingness to accept or reject the SRE at the beginning of this course.

Discussion

Again, teachers’ prior SRE knowledge and attitude toward this course affected how their instruction change occurred. Fantini (1971) stated that the first step to changing teachers’ instruction methods is to change their “self-interest” toward the professional development. He pointed out that teachers are not willing to change instruction methods because some strategies did not work well or were contradicted in their classroom. In this course, Wendy and Rena were the typical example of that mentioned above. When they came for this course, they brought their needs and attitudes of doubt, and questioned whether the SRE would work in their classroom. In addition, Rena selected the SRE that would not contradict with her classroom. Furthermore, Wendy simply did not use the SRE in her classroom because she felt it contradicted with her
classroom level, and she assumed it would not work out. Consequently, instruction change did not occur for them in this course because their prior SRE knowledge and attitudes toward this course distracted their action of implementation.

John, on the other hand, did not have prior SRE knowledge, nor did he think that the SRE would conflict in his classroom. He accepted what the course instructed him to do and followed the required assignments to apply the strategies that he learned from the course. Arguably, his instruction change was based on his willingness to understand the SRE in order to help his students, and not only for his needs to credit the professional development.

In summary, in this course, the goal of the professional development experience is to help teachers to strive to improve the school in which they serve. However, the teachers’ attitudes and prior knowledge which they brought with them affected their outcome of instruction. In this course, these three teachers provide obvious examples of such differences. Fantini (1971) described how teachers’ “frame of reference” causes some teachers to be bound by the influence of their own understanding of an object as they currently learn about the object. They rely on their prior teaching experiences and SRE knowledge to critique the course as not useful. However, they were not aware of how their attitudes toward this course influenced their time frame of understanding the SRE. From this we can see that teachers’ instruction change was dependent on how much they were distracted by information from previous professional development experiences.

Implications

These findings evidenced that professional development can not only provide strategy which teachers simply come to accumulate and credit to their professional development. Professional development can also and should provide a concrete idea for preparing a useful and
understandable connection between the course and reality of the classroom. Although the result shows many advantages for the process of teachers’ transfer of learning and factors that influence their implementation in the classrooms. However, there were some losses found from this study. Based on the major findings from the data of this study, I present below the implications for research, professional development and teacher educator.

Research

Although the findings of this study suggest the factors that influencing teachers’ transfer of learning, more future scholars can use the data from this study to generate quantitative studies. Since this study has survey and questionnaire instrument, if future scholars can find more participants then the factors and process of transferability can be understood more completely. Second, since this study was based on seven weeks of online courses. If the research can be done with face-to-face classroom and with a longer period of time within Bruner’s framework then the result will be different. Future research can be done via longitudinal study for face-to-face classroom that records the teachers’ learning from the professional development experience, and then could observe the application in the classrooms.

Professional Development

The data in this study provide several important implications for professional development experiences. Based on the findings, there were attitude and perception differences among these three teachers. The attitude and perception differences seemed to be caused by the teachers’ lack of a concrete SRE background, and how their attitude toward this course reflected a misunderstanding of the prior knowledge. Also, the teachers might not understand how to adjust between their prior knowledge and current SRE learning knowledge, and then how to apply to their classroom practice, because there was not enough time and attitude adjusting to
enable what they learned to eventually go beyond their classroom. Therefore, the suggestion for professional development needs to provide teachers with opportunity to voice their prior attitude and perception toward workshops and courses in order to discover the misconceptions among them. In the meantime, the instructor needs to give the teachers a clear goal of this course and give them explicit instruction and assignment that will benefit their class. This type of attitude and perception interaction will clear the teachers’ misunderstanding and confusion about the course.

Therefore, the role that the instructor plays is an important factor in the professional development experience. Based on the findings, there were some miscommunication and misunderstanding between the teachers and the instructor. Therefore, if the instructor can provide more opportunity for the learners to walk through and understand their concerns when they feel time constraints about the course; attitude adjusting can be facilitated by the instructor; then the teachers can overcome their difficulties on understanding the course material. However, most importantly, the program needs to provide training for instructors to understand the characteristics of online courses, and the differences between online and face to face courses. For example, the instructors should be trained to facilitate the students getting support in the online course.

Teacher Educators

Throughout the study, I as a researcher have experienced, observed, and learned a lot of things. This section reflects on and highlights my personalized implication for teacher educators. It begins with my motive and rationale for conducting this study and concludes with my suggestion for future teacher educators with respect to the factors that influence teachers’ transfer of learning. I remember when I taught elementary students in cram school; I wanted my
students to learn what I taught them and hoped they could apply that knowledge into their daily life experiences. However, I did not think too much about the students’ attitudes and perceptions regarding how they viewed the class. I did not interact with them and try to understand their misconceptions about the material. The only thing I did was provide any information that I could. However, after the research was done, I realized that I needed to understand the students’ attitudes and perceptions. Whether the students learned well or not, as well as their attitudes and perceptions are the key points for them to apply knowledge into their daily life experience. I believe I will take this type of awareness into my future teaching profession.
References


Peery, A. B. (2004). *Deep change: Professional development from the inside out*. Maryland:


Appendix A

September 5, 2005

Dear Colleague,

As a classroom teacher in the public school, you undoubtedly have ways in which you enhance your practice. Teacher preparation classes must be aware of the strategies that are most useful to you and other professionals in order to help promote professional development, competency, and commitment to the field. Your response to this questionnaire/survey can greatly enhance our understanding.

I am conducting this research to explore how professionals apply their learning into their teaching. I want to measure how professionals view their own skills and knowledge transferring.

Your participation in this research is, of course, voluntary. Your confidentiality and anonymity are assured. Return of the survey to me is your consent for your responses to be compiled with others. Although the survey is coded to allow for follow-up with non-respondents, you will not be individually identified with your survey or responses. Please understand that use of this data will be limited to this research, as authorized by the Washington State University at Pullman, although results may ultimately (and hopefully!) be presented in formats other than the dissertation, such as journal articles or conference presentations. You also have the right to express concerns to me at the number below.

I greatly appreciate your participation in this research. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please return the questionnaire/survey within two weeks (by September) in the enclosed, self-addressed stamp envelope. This will save a follow-up mailing to you.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study. I genuinely appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Ching-Yi (Judy) Tseng
Graduate Student
Department of Teaching and Learning
Washington State University
509 335-8575; ctseng1@wsu.edu
Name: ___________________________

Background

Instructions: Please check one answer for each question.

PERSONAL INFORMATION
1. Please check: ____ Mainstream Teacher ____ ESL Teacher ____ Administrator
   ____ Other (explain)

2. Please check one: ____ Male  ____ Female

3. Please list your age: ____ 20-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+

4. Please identify your race and/or ethnicity ____ White ____ African American
   ____ Native American ____ Latino ____ Asian ____ Pacific Islander
   ____ Other-please describe.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
5. Full and part time
   ____ 1-2 years  ____ 3-6 years  ____ 7-10 years  ____ more than 10 years

6. At the elementary school level
   ____ 1-2 years  ____ 3-6 years  ____ 7-10 years  ____ more than 10 years
   ____ Does not apply

7. At the middle school level
   ____ 1-2 years  ____ 3-6 years  ____ 7-10 years  ____ more than 10 years
   ____ Does not apply

8. At the high school level
   ____ 1-2 years  ____ 3-6 years  ____ 7-10 years  ____ more than 10 years
   ____ Does not apply

9. In reading/writing/language arts/English courses
   ____ 1-2 years  ____ 3-6 years  ____ 7-10 years  ____ more than 10 years

10. Grade level(s) you are presently teaching:
    ____ K  ____ 1st  ____ 2nd  ____ 3rd  ____ 4th  ____ 5th  ____ 6th
    ____ 7th  ____ 8th  ____ 9th  ____ 10th  ____ 11th  ____ 12th

11. Indicate the approximate number of days of professional/staff development your school has
devoted to Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs)
    ____ None  ____ 1-4 days  ____ 5-8 days  ____ 9 or more days

123
12. Indicate the approximate number of workshops on Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) you have attended.

   _____ One _____ 1-4 times _____ 5-8 times _____ 9 or more times

13. To what extent do you feel your learning such as from workshops, on-line courses or other professional development prepares you for your teaching?

   _____ a. Not at all _____ b. A little bit _____ c. Fairly well _____ d. Very well
## Appendix B

**Name:** __________________________

**Knowledge & Use Questionnaire: Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs)**

**Instructions:** Please check the answer in the “Knowledge” column that best characterizes your level of understanding of each topic. Then, check the answer in the “Use” column that best characterizes your level of understanding of each topic. Please be sure to address each topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The major components of reading</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>BEFORE</strong> reading activities appropriate for ELLs</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>DURING</strong> reading activities appropriate for ELLs</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>AFTER</strong> reading activities appropriate for ELLs</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An assigned text’s comprehension demands</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An ELL’s needs for understanding an assigned text</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Strategies that promote an ELL’s comprehension of an assigned text</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A literate environment that supports ELL’s reading attainments</td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquainted</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Name: _______________________

Course Experience Survey

Instructions: The following statements ask you to respond on a scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) to a series of statements. For each statement, please clearly mark the number that best describes your opinion (for example, you might underline, delete the other answers, highlight, or bold your answers).

1. The information from this course benefits me as a teacher.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The information from this course will benefit my students.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What I learned in this course fits with what I know about teaching.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I can integrate this knowledge into my current instruction.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I feel like I am competent in my knowledge about Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs).
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I feel like I can successfully use Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) with my students.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I have had enough practice using Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) to apply them in my classroom.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. The practice I have had with Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) makes me feel confident in my knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I can explain Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) to my colleagues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. During the course, the discussions helped me to internalize my understandings about Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. If I have problems using Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) in my instruction I have information to help me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. I can use Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) with different students and classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND CANDID RESPONSES.
Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. What makes a professional development experience useful for you? Be specific.

2. How does what you learned in the Scaffolding Reading Experiences (SREs) course apply to your classroom? Please give a specific example.

3. Have you or will you use what you learned in the course? Why? Why not?

4. If so, how have you used it (the specific example)?

5. What prompted you to take this course?