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Promoting Self-Reflection of Foreign Language Teachers through Professional Development: An Action Research Dissertation

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PROMOTING SELF-REFLECTION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN ACTION RESEARCH
DISSERTATION

by

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DEDICATION

To

My Family and the Participating Teachers in the Study

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my sincerest recognition for the support, kindness and encouragement that so many bestowed upon me during the rewarding, yet challenging endeavor of obtaining this doctorate degree.

First and for-most, I would like to express my gratitude and love to my husband and my three beautiful daughters. Their support has been unwavering. In my weaknesses, they became a portion of my strength. Their consistent belief in me pushed me forward towards my dream of completion. Their celebration of my periodic achievements empowered me to continue pressing ahead. Thank you for believing in me, you are my heart.

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I would like to also extend a special thank you to my dear advisor, Dr. Linda Silvernail for her inexorable guidance and true wisdom. Due to you, I have become a stronger writer and I am forever grateful for your ideas on analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data. I could not have completed the dissertation without your encouragement and support.

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Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank supervisors and colleagues at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. I am fortunate to work alongside the world's most talented and forward-thinking faculty in the field of language education. Alongside my supervisors and colleagues, I am forever grateful to my employer for helping me further my education.

An Arabic saying states, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step". As a mother of three children, with a full-time job, this journey seemed intimidating. Yet, with my family by my side, I took the first step and continued to take steps ahead. I am thankful that my children and my husband can now see the achievement they contributed to. My late parents would be especially proud of me for this achievement. It is one that would have fulfilled many of their dreams for me. Therefore, for their lifetime of sacrifices and unconditional love, this is for you.

ABSTRACT

This explanatory mixed-method action research describes how a social constructivist professional development program impacts self-reflection of foreign language teachers at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). The problem is that traditional professional development for foreign language teachers does not improve self-reflection. Despite their individual differences and qualifications, most teachers receive traditional in-service professional development (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, & Espinoza, 2017) on a specific topic and have no time to reflect on their existing practices, newly presented concepts, or students' responses to instruction. The effectiveness of such professional development is questionable (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Penuel, Gallagher, & Moorthy, 2011; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007; Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of the study is to guide teachers to incorporate reflective teaching practices into their routines through a social constructivist professional development program. The program was adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015) and was tailored to teachers' initial self-reflection tendencies. Eleven foreign language teachers participated in the study. Teachers' self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection were measured using two parameters: (a) pretest and posttest surveys (quantitative data) and (b) teachers' responses to prompts in their final reflective journals (qualitative data). Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to describe the changes in teachers' self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection. Findings showed that the social

constructivist professional development program increased the self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection for nine of DLIFLC participating teachers. Two participating teachers showed a decline in their self-reflection tendencies. The findings guided the development of the action plan to explain the role of the teachers' supervisors and trainers as servant leaders (Liden, Panaccio, Hu, & Meuser, 2014) and builders of teachers' capacity for reflective teaching (Hall & Simeral, 2017). Suggestions for future studies are provided.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DLIFLC.....	Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center
PD	Professional Development
PT	Participating Teacher
RSAT	Reflective Self-Assessment Tool
SCT	Sociocultural Theory

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

We are who we are because of the lessons we have learned from our experiences. We learn to teach and while teaching, we learn. When we reflect upon teaching practices, learning can take place. As I ponder my experiences as a foreign language teacher and a teacher trainer, I appreciate that reflection played an integral role in my professional development (PD). Throughout my career, assuming the role of a reflective teacher extended my responsibilities. I needed to understand the curriculum and students and teachers' needs. I have behaved in an ethical, professional manner and evaluated my effectiveness while considering all aspects influencing student and teacher learning. Moreover, I have collected information about the students, the curriculum, and my teaching and scrutinized it to gauge implications for the classroom. I have learned of the need to hypothesize and analyze problems to determine further action. I have also implemented action plans. Having considered my teaching from these perspectives, I have been able to improve my teaching not only for the class, but for individual students and colleagues as well.

I also understand that the role of a reflective teacher is most effective when implemented with the support of colleagues or mentors. Julian Edge (as cited in Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001) said, "When I use the word *development*, I always mean *self-development*. But that can't be done in isolation. Self-development needs other people" (p. 12). Bailey et al. (2001) added that reflective teachers need to converse,

consult, and cooperate with other colleagues, seeking constructive criticism. As intellectuals, they should recognize the problems students face in the classroom and adjust instruction to meet students' needs.

Without a doubt, teaching involves complex choices about difficult problems that, if left unaddressed, often escalate. Therefore, a different type of thinking is needed to address such choices. As Danielson (2009) indicated, difficult choices call for teachers to engage in sophisticated reflection. Critical evaluation of teaching in relation to our role in class not only improves teaching performance, but also helps teachers become authorities in their decisions and performance (Akbari, 2007; Dewey, 1938; Schön, 1983, 1987).

In 2016, the Office of the Secretary of Defense issued a directive for an improvement in the language proficiency of basic course graduates from Listening at level 2, Reading at level 2, and Speaking at level 1+ (in accordance with the criteria of the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale), to higher levels, which are now Listening 2+, Reading 2+, and Speaking 2. To that end, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center¹ (DLIFLC) in California, has designed a plan for said implementation in the Undergraduate Education Schools. A necessary concomitant of this plan is to increase the PD of the teacher (DLIFLC, 2016).

¹ According to the DLIFLC.edu official website, the institute is an integral part of the U.S. Army and supports its international commitments and responsibilities. It does so by training and educating entry-level personnel and others in the Undergraduate Education Basic Course in a range of foreign languages, and post-basic language training via the Continuing Education Directorate. As of January 2019, DLIFLC teaches 16 foreign languages at the Presidio of Monterey. The length of the language programs varies from 36–64 weeks.

In the 2018 DLIFLC self-evaluation report, the institute provided a comprehensive assessment of educational essential tasks, constraints, and resources required to achieve higher student proficiencies in reading, listening, and speaking by 2022. One of the essential tasks is to continually develop and train faculty. The report also recognizes the necessity of having potential faculty with required skills. In response to these needs, the institute is strategically increasing investment in teacher development in terms of training time and funding. Subsequently, the institute initiated a Faculty Development Review Board in 2018 to develop a coherent system for teacher PD and career path options in support of reaching the established foreign language proficiency goals by 2022 and thereafter maintaining those goals. One of the recommendations is to develop a “reflective teacher”.

The challenge lies in providing in-service PD to foreign language teachers, who come from various foreign educational systems and with well-established frames of reference of learning and teaching. Almost all teachers are native speakers of the languages they teach. These teachers are expected to transform their own and their students’ learning. They teach the way they learned and were taught. However, the field of foreign language teaching has undergone a paradigm shift of language learning to prepare foreign language learners to meet real-world challenges with professional language proficiency, self-direction, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. According to Hall and Simeral (2015), this paradigm shift requires developing reflective teachers, who have the awareness of their instructional reality and ability to accurately assess students’ needs. Reflective teachers intentionally take actions to attend to students’ needs and have the capability to adjust their instruction appropriately.

In my role as a senior teacher trainer who has been serving the institute for over 17 years in different capacities, I assume a role in teacher preparedness in support of the mission. I believe that the most powerful, durable, and effective agents of change in any educational context are the teachers. The quality of the educational change will only be as reliable and proficient as the teachers' individual capacities for self-reflection. The assumption is that self-reflection is a determinant for teachers' professional development. In-service PD could be a means for fostering teachers' self-reflection. According to Osterman (1990), "Reflective practice is a PD method which enables individual practitioners to become more skillful and more effective" (p. 134). Additionally, developing a culture of reflective practitioners requires structured and systematic PD in academic institutions (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, & Espinoza, 2017). Accordingly, this action research sought to investigate how PD impacts teachers' self-reflection.

Problem of Practice

At DLIFLC, foreign language teachers, including those in the study, are products of foreign learning environments that differ greatly from those in the institute. Despite their individual differences and qualifications, it was observed that most teachers receive less than eight hours of in-service PD on a specific topic, with no time to reflect on their existing practices, newly presented concepts, or students' responses to instruction. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), the effectiveness of such PD approaches is questionable. One-shot PD workshops often do not change teaching practice (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Penuel, Gallagher, & Moorthy, 2011; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007; Wei, Darling-Hammond, &

Adamson, 2010). Growth, improvement, progress, and development are not incidental. They require intentional planning, conscious effort, and thought (Fosnot, 2005). Therefore, PD needs to foster teachers' self-reflection. As indicated by Hall and Simeral (2015), PD needs to raise teachers' awareness of the educational surroundings, guide them to plan instruction deliberately and to take actions intentionally, assess the impact of their decisions and actions, and adjust their course of action based on feedback received from those assessments. Empirical studies addressing the effect of teacher reflection indicated that teachers are not equipped to reflect upon their teaching without guidance (Bazanov, 2014; Bourne-Hayes, 2010; Caccavale, 2017; Tomlinson, 2004; Wyman, 2010). This is concurred by DLIFLC Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Directorate. In 2017, during the program review of one of the foreign language schools, she indicated that teachers need assistance implementing concepts presented in short-duration workshops (Briefing, March 27, 2017).

The problem of practice was then that traditional PD for foreign language teachers at DLIFLC did not improve self-reflection. Therefore, the primary aim of this action research was to develop a PD program that was tailored to teachers' self-reflection tendencies. The program is of sustained duration, where teachers self-directed their PD in order to gain awareness of the educational surrounding (students, content, and pedagogy), plan deliberately and take actions with intentionality to improve students' learning, assess the impact of their decisions and actions, adjust their course of action based on the feedback they received from those assessments, and engage in a reflective teaching cycle continuously. The program was adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015). The adaptation provided the participating teachers with resources to build knowledge

about different teaching approaches, formative assessment tools of student learning and instruction, lesson planning, and classroom management strategies. It also emphasized the role of the researcher as the facilitator of the course and a more experienced peer. Schools' instructional coaches played an essential role in mentoring teachers in becoming more reflective teachers. Teachers acquire and apply the knowledge and reflect on what they were learning in action. Understanding how in-service PD fosters foreign language teachers' self-reflection was needed to better design and facilitate PD programs that fit teachers' needs and subsequently enhance student's learning at DLIFLC.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks for this study was provided with the purpose of developing the reflective practices of teachers through a PD program. My beliefs are influenced by the social constructivist theory and the reflective teaching practices, which were selected to provide as the theoretical frameworks of the action research. This study is based on the notion that teachers participating in the reflective teaching PD program engage in learning experiences that draw on their prior experiences, communication with others, and interaction with the PD activities that are situated in their immediate teaching context. By communicating with peers, more experienced mentors, and supervisors, teachers reflect on and modify their teaching practices (Hall & Simeral, 2015). Accordingly, I believe that reflective teaching in any situation is inextricably linked to cognitive, social, cultural, and linguistic contexts, which are the major elements of the social constructivist theory.

Social constructivist theory. Hyslop-Margison and Strobel (2008) explained the social constructivist theory as an epistemology or philosophical explanation of learning

that has its roots in cognitive constructivism (Piaget, 1932, 1968, 1972) and the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). It implies that knowledge is constructed by learners, is experience-based through authentic learning tasks, and learning is a social activity (Pelech & Pieper, 2010).

Knowledge is constructed by the learner. As Dewey (1916) said, “Education is not an affair of ‘telling’ and being told, but an active and constructive process” (p. 46). Piaget (1932) maintained the same idea. He believed that knowledge is an active system of intentional mental representations derived from past learning experiences. Piaget (1968, 1972) added that learners construct ways to make sense of the learning experience, and they will maintain the use of the constructs as long as they employ it in their work. Since knowledge is constructed, learning is a process of discovery and the role of the teacher is to facilitate discovery by providing the necessary resources and guiding learners to build on and modify old knowledge. Watkins argued (as cited in Badie, 2016), “Knowledge construction is a reflective activity that enables individuals to draw upon their prior experiences, background knowledge in order to conceptualize and evaluate the present and shape future actions. Subsequently, future actions would then construct new knowledge” (p. 293).

The idea of reflective teaching is what concerns us. The fact that teachers construct their own knowledge under direct work circumstances does not mean knowledge is an individual, subjective matter without external reference. Teachers are situated in their learning environments where they can reflect on their own practices. An important element in the social constructivist theory is that knowledge is heavily influenced by experiences of life and the world and dialogue with others (Dewey, 1938;

Foucault, 1998; Piaget, 1932). A key implication of the construction of knowledge is that teachers need to have time and should be encouraged to apply the knowledge and reflect on what they are learning in action (Fosnot, 2005).

Knowledge is experience-based. Dewey (1938) stated, “All principles by themselves are abstract. They become concrete only in the consequences which result from their application...Everything depends upon the interpretation given them as they are put into practice in the school and the home” (p. 20). This implies that the knowledge imported by theories is usually abstract. It is only useful when it is used in everyday situations. This concept is supported by adult learning assumptions. Merriam and Bierema (2014) asserted that adults learn through experience. They not only reinterpret concepts and principles, but also they often develop new frames of understanding based on their world experience. They investigate the learning points and make substantial contributions to their knowledge. Therefore, when DLIFLC teachers are faced with complex teaching principles and strategies, they will probably employ new approaches to teaching, resulting in changes in the conception of teaching and learning.

Learning is a social activity. Although Piaget (1932) emphasized the social aspect of the construction of knowledge, Vygotsky (1978) in particular developed this perspective further. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (SCT) is well-established in developmental psychology (Lantolf, 2008; Vygotsky, 1998). The theory indicates that the construction of knowledge takes place in social interactions between a more and a less knowledgeable individual (Lantolf, 2008). Walqui (2006) noted the following assumptions as the core elements underlying SCT:

- Learning precedes development.

- Language is the main tool of thought.
- Mediation is central to learning.
- Social interactions are the basis of learning and development.
- The zone of proximal development is the primary space in which learning occurs (p. 160).

As noted, SCT focused on the interaction between the learner and the society, and the way the social environment facilitates the learner's development. Vygotsky (1978) stressed the importance of teacher-student interaction and the need for the teacher to activate and mediate learning through a zone appropriate with each student's level of development. Each learner has an individual range of potential for learning, which can be deepened through social interactions with others. For social constructivists, knowledge is constructed through negotiation and experience in the social context where learning is culturally embedded and supported (Vygotsky, 1978). The social context includes three levels that influence the way people think and learn: (a) immediate interactive level, which includes the relations and interactions with other people, (b) structured level, which comprises of social structures that influence people, such as work or family, and (c) cultural level, which consists of the larger societal elements such as language and sign systems (Bodrova & Leong, 2001). Within the social constructivist approach in PD, teachers are provided opportunities to interact with peers and a trainer to discuss, generate, and share knowledge (Fosnot, 2005). Differences in points of view, background knowledge, and experience contribute to the transformation of teachers as they engage in academic dialogues (Marchenkova, 2005).

Accordingly, the social constructivist framework implies a transactional-transformational learning process that views interactions between teachers, the teacher trainer, and the PD environment essential for the development of teacher's knowledge. Additionally, as described by Howe and Stubbs (1996), the application of the social constructivist perspective requires a mindful understanding of the training context, the language used as mediator of thought and action, the interpersonal relationships and differences in background knowledge, motives, values, and beliefs among the participating teachers.

Clearly, teachers' beliefs and practices might contradict the new paradigm in the field of language teaching and may be detrimental to their learning process in any PD program. For teachers to change their practices and define their work, they need to consciously and continually reflect upon their actions (Mezirow, 2000). However, reflective thinking is a complex reasoning process that means teachers need to assess behaviors via teaching theories, methodologies, and immediate teaching contexts (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

Reflective teaching. Reflective practices are rooted in a social constructivist paradigm because they share basic assumptions about knowledge and learning (Fosnot, 2005; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Richards, 2010). A way to integrate social constructivist and reflective teaching frameworks within the context of in-service PD is the focus of this research. The study is guided by the reflective teaching framework presented by Hall and Simeral (2015). It is described to provide context for interpreting the study findings and is useful in understanding the elements of reflective teaching that can be influenced by the PD program presented in this action research.

Hall and Simeral (2015) explained that teachers integrate their practical theories and beliefs in their daily actions in repeated patterns, which they call the “reflective cycle” (p. 38). The cycle starts by the teachers “developing awareness before seeking to act with intentionality, they engage in intentional practice prior to assessing the impact of one’s actions, and then they determine impact prior to enacting interventions” (pp. 38–39). While going through the reflective teaching cycle, teachers monitor the frequency of their reflection. Hall and Simeral (2015) assume that reflection is a habit that must be developed. They argued that “engaging in the reflective cycle requires practice, diligence, and focus” (p. 41). They added that reflective teachers are proactive in the reflection process; they do not need someone to remind them to reflect upon their practices, but they are constantly attentive to their teaching and student learning. Reflective teachers make decisions intentionally to adjust their instruction to students’ needs (Figure 1.1).

Reflective teachers have awareness of their instructional realities. Hall and Simeral (2015) explained that teachers with awareness have knowledge about each student in their classes. This includes students’ interests, motivation, learning profiles, and instructional needs. Such awareness guides the teachers to deeply process their understanding of the content and determine how to facilitate learning of the content in a manner that suits students’ needs in order to maximize retention. In this step of the cycle, teachers ask the question: “How aware am I of my students, content, and pedagogy?” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 39).

Reflective teachers are intentional in their actions. In this step of the reflective teaching cycle, teachers intentionally take steps to facilitate students’ learning. With such

awareness of the need to take actions, teachers select “learning goals, curricula, materials, instructional strategies, student groupings, learning activities, and management strategies to meet the needs of specific students in the classroom” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 39).

Teachers’ take actions for a certain meaningful purpose, which is supported by research-based practices. This step in the reflective teaching cycle differentiates between teachers who perform certain teaching acts and teachers who perfect their actions in a methodical manner. Here, teachers ask the question: “How intentionally do I plan and deliver all aspects of my teaching?” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 40).

Reflective teachers accurately assess their impact. In this step, teachers ask the question: “How do I know whether my actions affect student learning?” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 40). Once teachers deliver their teaching in an intentional, deliberate and visible manner, they determine whether their actions resulted in the intended outcome. While teaching, teachers assess their own teaching using different formative assessment tools such as student observation, performance assessment tools, quizzes, surveys, or any other forms that guide teachers’ assessment of student learning. Data collected inform teachers of which teaching strategy contributed to the intended student learning outcome.

Reflective teachers adjust their actions as they teach. Teachers ask the question: “How effectively do I respond to the results of ongoing assessments?” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 41). In the reflective teaching cycle, based on ongoing formative assessment, teachers modify their instruction accordingly. They provide alternative teaching methods for helping students learn. They modify their lesson objectives, add or delete an activity, or group students differently. Experienced reflective teachers understand how their swift intervention can enhance student learning.

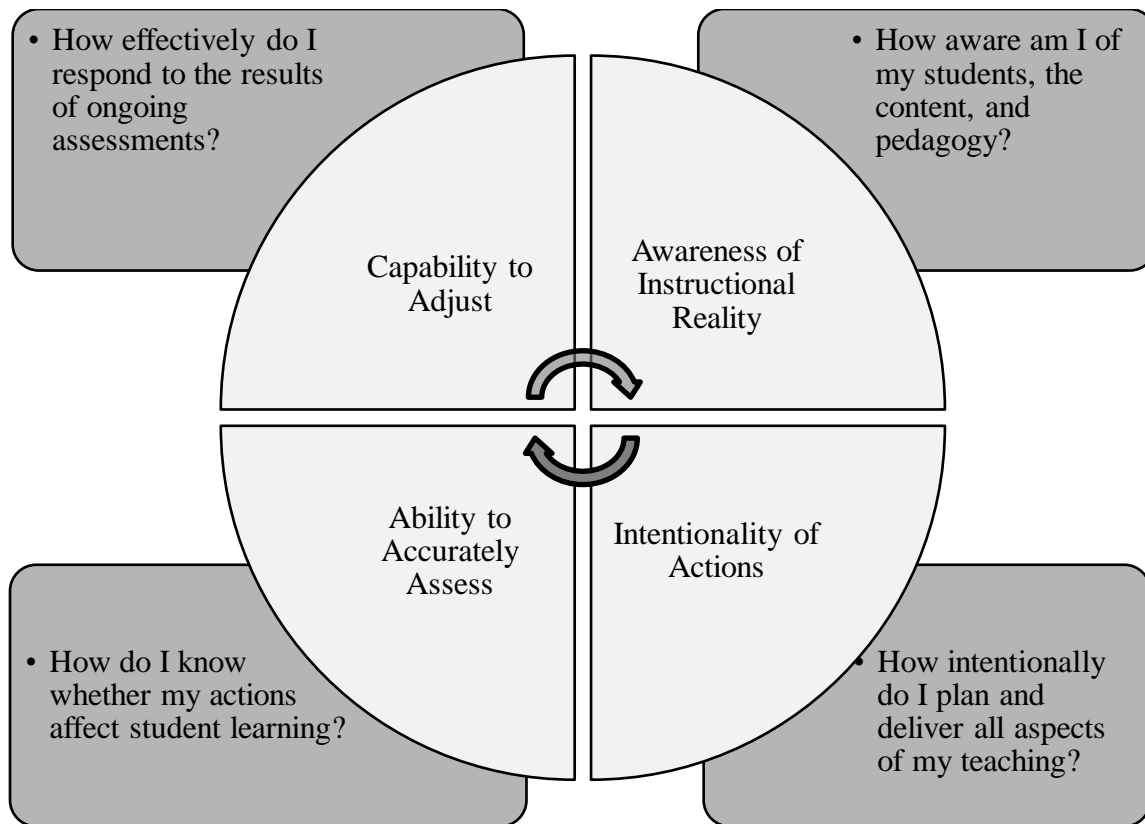


Figure 1.1 The Reflective Teaching Cycle

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Unquestionably, reflective teaching is critical in explaining how teachers construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their teaching (Mezirow, 2000). It offers an instrument by which teachers may surpass the limitation of mere learning. Mezirow (2000) explained that through reflection “Inaccurate assumptions and points of view become apparent. Once such inaccuracies are identified, they may be replaced by more accurate and critically aware frames of reference. If not identified, they will persist and continue to direct perception” (p. 105). Accordingly, effective PD programs are those that foster reflective teaching, cooperative learning, and emancipatory

understanding whereby teachers meet continually evolving obligations and possibilities with rational dialogue (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gliszinski, 2007).

Research Questions

The intervention in this action research rests on the facilitator-researcher's view of an in-service PD program in which teachers construct their learning and the learning of others through dialogues and authentic learning tasks and subsequently influence their self-reflection. The goal of this action research is to answer one core question and five sub-questions that relate to the impact of a social constructivist PD program on DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection:

1. How does a social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?
 - a. Does the PD program impact DLIFLC teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content and pedagogy)?
 - b. Does the PD program impact teachers' intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning?
 - c. Does the PD program impact teachers' ability to assess students' learning?
 - d. Does the PD program impact teachers' capability to adjust their actions while teaching?
 - e. Does the PD program impact the frequency of teachers' self-reflection?

Researcher Positionality

The action research took place at the researcher's workplace, Faculty Development Division in the DLIFLC. This setting allowed the researcher to actively participate in the research. The researcher has been working at the Faculty Development Division for over 11 years as a faculty development trainer, teacher-mentor, and academic specialist for foreign language education. As an experienced foreign language teacher and an experienced peer for the participating teachers, the researcher is an "insider-outsider" in this action research on the continuum of positionality (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 40). She is a facilitator-researcher. She works in a department other than the participating teachers, but she is fully engaged as a peer-mentor and as a facilitator of several pre- and in-service PD programs across the institute. In this action research, she acted as the developer and facilitator of the PD program and an experienced mentor to facilitate teachers' reflective practices.

Action Research Methodology

To answer the research questions, an action research with a mixed-method approach was chosen to generate understanding of teacher self-reflection and act upon it. This mixed-method strategy is what Creswell (2005) described as "...two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study" (p. 217). The "problem exists as the quantitative results are inadequate to provide explanations of outcomes and the problem can best described by using qualitative data to enrich and explain the qualitative results in the words of the participants" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 34). Therefore, the purpose of this action research is aligned with

the goal of mixed approach research to help the researcher dig deep to better understand the impact of the PD on teachers' self-reflection tendencies.

On the other hand, action research is defined as “an inquiry conducted by educators in their own settings in order to advance their practice and improve their students' learning, and therefore, an appropriate and ideal model for a practitioner-researcher” (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 2). Additionally, Mertler (2017) explained that in education, action research offers a venue for systematic inquiry carried out by teachers or stakeholders to gain insights, develop reflective practices, and improve student outcomes and the work and living experiences of those involved in the study. Herr and Anderson (2015) identified three characteristics of action researches: (1) they generate knowledge that is relevant to the research setting; (2) they provide action-oriented outcomes to benefit those involved; and (3) they use multiple perspectives of research methodology over sustained periods of inquiry.

Accordingly, in this action research process, the facilitator-researcher participated in a cyclical process that included discussion, decision, action, evaluation, and revision (Efron & Ravid, 2013; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Mertler, 2017). Going through the process of action research facilitated not only the self-reflection and construction of knowledge of the participating teachers, but also those of the facilitator-researcher herself. This type of research is grounded in the value of human experience of learning as a social activity, a principle consistent with Dewey's (1938) beliefs about the value of experience and active learning in education and Vygotsky's (1978) beliefs about learning as a culturally embedded and supported activity.

This action research was guided by the Mills (2011) dialectic spiral model. The model was selected because it emphasizes the role of teachers studying themselves to improve teaching and learning. In this case, the facilitator-researcher and the participating teachers collaborated to promote their learning. The process of the dialectic spiral action research has four steps: (1) identification of an area of focus; (2) collection of data; (3) analysis and interpretation of data; and (4) development of an action plan. The following is the explanation of each step.

Identification of an area of focus. The focus area should include a topic that involves the teaching and learning of the action researcher. Improving foreign language teachers' self-reflection through a PD program was selected as a focus area in this action research. This area of focus is in the heart of the facilitator-researcher's practice and is within the facilitator-researcher's immediate control. The next step was reconnaissance. This happened when the researcher started to collect preliminary information with which to explore theories and educational values that influenced her practice. Prior to identifying the problem of practice, the facilitator-researcher conducted an intensive review of literature on relevant topics, with emphasis on the use of a sociocultural constructivist approach in the professional development of foreign language teachers. The facilitator-researcher determined how her literature review work fitted into the context of DLIFLC. Then she identified a reflective teaching PD program used in different school districts in the United States. She tailored the program according to the needs of the participating teachers. Reconnaissance helped the facilitator-researcher define the implication of the selected topic to DLIFLC context. Related to reconnaissance, the facilitator-researcher investigated the professional literature to better

understand the research constructs. This included tailoring the reflective teaching PD program developed by Hall and Simeral (2015) to fit the needs of DLIFLC participating teachers. The investment in reconnaissance and the thorough review of the literature directed this action research. The final outcome was an action plan that was guided by the research questions, data collection and findings.

Collection of data. Mills (2011) recommended the use of multiple sources of data. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) described the integration of the two forms of data as convergent design that brings quantitative and qualitative data together to be compared or combined to allow the researcher to gain new knowledge. Since self-reflection is a personal and a unique experience for the participating teachers, this action research used: (1) the Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (RSAT), a pre-/posttest survey to identify teachers' stages of reflective teaching, and (2) teachers' responses to guided prompts in their reflective journals. The design used the participating teachers' responses to the survey before and after the reflective teaching PD program and their responses to the reflective journal prompts after the in-service PD program.

Analysis and interpretation of data. According to Mills (2011), the action research process provides the facilitator-researcher with data that can positively affect her teaching of the PD programs and the self-reflection of the participating teachers. Accordingly, the facilitator-researcher spent time during the study to assess what she was learning and determined if the research main and sub-questions were answerable and worth answering. Additionally, Mills (2011) warned action researchers against taking premature actions based on early analysis and interpretation of data. He recommended following an iterative process to analyze data. This process included the following:

reading/recording memos so that the researcher can become familiar with the data and identify key themes; describing the research setting, participants and activities; and classifying research data into categories and code data into themes.

Developing an action plan. In this step of the study, Mills (2011) reminded the researcher to ask, “Based on what I have learned from this investigation, what should I do now?” (p. 155). The facilitator-researcher reflected on assumptions and determined the next step in the research. Mills (2011) warned researchers that this step can be overwhelming. Therefore, the facilitator-researcher outlined a list that includes the following: findings; recommended actions associated with the findings; a timeline for action to occur; resources needed to carry out the action plan, and people who are responsible for the actions and their roles.

Within this framework, this action research allowed the facilitator-researcher to focus on the problem of practice specific to the self-reflection of foreign language teachers at DLIFLC. Data provided a process for educators at DLIFLC to reflect on the design of teacher professional development programs in order to create opportunities for improvement. Data analysis led to an action plan to be implemented in the fall of 2020 for an improved reflective teaching PD program for DLIFLC teachers.

Convenient sampling of the participating teachers was followed. The sample consisted of 12 foreign language teachers; four teachers of Arabic, three teachers of Chinese, three teachers of Korean and two teachers of Russian. One Russian teacher dropped out during the first week of the research. Teachers are native speakers of the languages they teach and are employed in the Undergraduate Education Schools at DLIFLC. In coordination with the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate

Education, on behalf of the researcher, schools' deans sent out school-wide invitation emails to request teachers' participation in the research. The email provided information about the research, the six-week reflective teaching PD program, instruments used to collect data, anonymity, and ethical considerations.

The intervention in this action research capitalizes on teachers' skills and experience and makes teaching and learning more reflective and collegial. It is a six-week in-service PD program, titled "Reflective Teaching." The syllabus and content were posted on DLIFLC online learning management system. It consisted of two parts: (1) two four-hour face-to-face training sessions in which to gain general knowledge about reflective teaching principles and practices, identification of self-reflection goals and tasks, and options for collaborative learning; and (2) a six-week, self-taught and self-paced reflective teaching course, where teachers used the DLIFLC website to access the course content, manage their reflective teaching tasks, and coordinate reflective tasks with the facilitator-researcher, and the school's instructional coaches and supervisors. Based on the results of the pretest survey of the RSAT, each teacher was given access to his/her particular reflective teaching PD program as each course was tailored to teacher's initial reflective teaching stage.

The data collected from the pre-/posttest RSAT survey were analyzed quantitatively, using ToolPak Excel program. Qualitative data analysis of teachers' free-responses to reflective journal prompts were followed, using the process of coding data to generate patterns and themes. Findings were shared with the participating teachers and stakeholders to develop an action plan to offer the reflective teaching PD program for all foreign language teachers at DLIFLC.

Significance of the Study

Transformation within DLIFLC schools is not a simple matter. In order to prepare students adequately for 21st-century language tasks, we cannot keep doing the same things while expecting different results. With the advent of higher graduation standards and a renewed emphasis on military linguists' readiness for real-world language tasks, it is imperative that teachers understand the need for reflection upon their own practices. Jones (1975) claimed that teachers tend to teach as they were taught, rather than as they were taught to teach. Thus, teacher PD needs to begin with these traditional beliefs and subsequently challenge them through activity, reflection, and discourse (Fosnot, 1996, 2005). Teachers need experiences as learners to confront traditional views of teaching and learning in order to construct a pedagogy that stands in contrast to older, more traditionally held views (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017).

Additionally, teachers are unlikely to achieve maximum professional development if it is imposed by their supervisors. Herr and Anderson (2015) contended that action is influenced by internal convictions derived from personal understanding. Accordingly, this six-week reflective teaching PD program takes teachers' learning to the next level by encouraging them to make PD decisions for themselves in a supportive learning setting. The PD environment should help teachers build bridges between their current teaching practices and future outcomes.

Teachers seldom see what is occurring outside of their own classrooms. Argyris and Schön (1996) stated, "Each member of an organization constructs his own representation of the theory-in-use of the whole, but his picture is always incomplete" (p. 16). At DLIFLC, teachers have their own perception of what happens inside and outside

their classroom. After attending a PD program that offers the opportunity to learn and reflect upon their actions and the actions of others, teachers may find that their perception is unrealistic. This may ignite reflection and willingness to assess the implications of their own actions, identify areas that may be improved, or learn new strategies and ideas with which to deliver instruction.

Accordingly, this action research study provides a framework for guiding teachers' learning through reflection via in-service PD. The training philosophy and design is grounded in the social constructivist and reflective teaching theories. It provides an environment for adult learning, provides time to engage in action and reflection, and establishes clarity of purpose, consistency in the process, and opportunities for teachers' input and choice. Additionally, the study may inform the practices of the facilitator-researcher and those involved in teacher PD at DLIFLC. Knowledge gained will need to be modified for a different context.

Limitations of Study

Herr and Anderson (2015) described action research as a human experience with the intent of generating knowledge. Action researchers must make decisions about what to take account of and what to leave out when releasing their findings. Therefore, every researcher brings subjectivity to interpretations throughout the research. Therefore, the facilitator researcher realizes that she (or anyone else) may revisit the data and see new findings, as interpretations are bound by moments in time.

Herr and Anderson (2015) also reminded us that insider knowledge is valid as long as one is honest and reflective about the limitations of one's positionality and takes them into account. As a facilitator-researcher with an insider-outsider positionality, who

played multiple roles—as researcher, instructional coach of participants, and course developer of the reflective teaching PD program—I understood that knowledge production from each role was valid as long as I was honest and reflective about the limitations of my multiple positionalities and took them into account methodologically.

To confirm achievement of action-oriented outcomes as stated by Herr and Anderson (2015), the facilitator researcher used multiple measures to collect data. This limitation was addressed by collecting the data using the pre-/posttest RSAT survey and posttest reflective journals. To enhance the outcome validity of the findings as stated by Herr and Anderson (2015), delimitations were presented for the reader to assess the transferability to other educational contexts. The facilitator researcher understood that “without this kind of acknowledgment and grappling with the power of dynamics in the research design, it will be difficult to ultimately convince the readers that the study was trustworthy” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 61). To ensure democratic validity (Herr & Anderson, 2015), the views of the participating teachers were considered in the development of the action plan.

Herr and Anderson (2015) reminded us that bias and subjectivity are natural and acceptable in action research as long as they were critically assessed and controlled by a valid system that limited distorting effects. Limitations such as social-desirability bias are threats to process validity. This is the result of survey respondents trying to answer questions as they think they should rather than in a way that reveals what they actually feel (Creswell, 2005). It is an important limitation for this study because the participating teachers may feel they should reflect a higher tendency of self-reflection. According to Creswell (2005), self-administered surveys, assuring confidentiality and anonymity, may

reduce the social-desirability bias. In this study, surveys were self-administered, identities of survey takers were protected, and individual survey results were accessible only to the researcher. Additionally, the instructions of the RSAT survey asked the participating teachers to respond honestly.

In the pre-/posttest design, process validity may be compromised by the testing effect, which is a result of repeated testing (Creswell, 2005). The responses to the survey questions in the posttest may be influenced by the pretest responses. To overcome such limitations, there was approximately a seven-week period between the pretest and posttest survey. It is possible that the participating teachers may have guessed that the researcher sought a high tendency of reflection in the posttest. The facilitator-researcher reminded the participating teachers to respond honestly to the posttest survey items. Further, the participating teachers might have failed to pay attention to the survey items or interpret the options in a way other than intended. Before the study, the researcher piloted the survey with a number of teachers to ensure clarity and accurate interpretation of the survey items and options.

History is defined as “an event that intervenes in the course of research and makes it difficult to interpret the program effects” (Creswell, 2005, p. 123). Creswell (2005) noted that history effects are always a threat to validity for any non-laboratory study that lasts more than a few hours and, therefore, it becomes a limitation for this study. The reflective teaching PD program took place in the natural environment and lasted for six weeks. During that time, several events could have influenced responses in the posttest survey and reflective journals.

Sampling bias is another potential problem. This study used convenience sampling of intact groups of foreign language teachers at DLIFLC. Although generalization to a wider population of foreign language teachers is not intended, the additional limitation of bias in sampling is noted. Foreign language teachers who are nonnative speakers of English, and who attended the six-week reflective teaching PD program may not be those who attended a similar course in the past or will attend in the future. Consequently, results may not be transferable to another population.

Credibility of the results lies in encouraging the participating teachers to share their genuine voices (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The qualitative data was collected using the participating-teachers' responses to prompts in their reflective journals. Teachers are non-native speakers of English and may have limited writing skills to clearly express their reflective thoughts and actions. Therefore, when the participating teachers used unclear language, the facilitator-researcher consulted with the teachers prior recording the data. While analyzing the data, she shared interpretations with the participating teachers in order to receive feedback and deepen understanding of the data.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 presents the background for this action research. It includes the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the summary of the action research methodology. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical frameworks of study. This literature review guides the research in answering the research questions. Chapter 3 shares an overview of the action research methodologies. It summarizes the rationale of the research design, description of the research setting, the participants, the intervention, and the plan for data collection and analysis. The results of the data are shared in Chapter

4. Finally, the action research concludes with Chapter 5. It discusses the major points of the action plan and suggestions for future studies.

Glossary of Terms

Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC)—This is a government language school located in Monterey, California, and accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Foreign language teacher—A nonnative speaker of English, who is teaching his/her native language at the DLIFLC.

Professional Development— A structured professional learning that results in positive changes in teacher practices and subsequently improve student learning (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017)

Self-reflection—Self-reflection is when teachers have the awareness of their instructional realities (student, content, and pedagogy), are intentional in their actions, accurately assess students' learning, and adjust their actions while teaching to attend to students' needs (Hall & Simeral, 2015).

Social Constructivist—Learners actively construct their knowledge by connecting to their prior knowledge, using their personal experiences and social interactions (Gabler & Schroeder, 2003).

Reflective Teaching PD program—A six-week, in-service PD event taking place at DLIFLC, where teachers actively construct their learning and the learning of others through interactions with other teachers, their supervisors, and more experienced peers to enhance their self-reflection stages.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reflective practice is highly valued and largely used in many professions, especially those that require on-the-spot decisions and adaptation, such as teaching. Finlay (2008) maintained that reflective practices are essential and integral elements for successful language teachers. Dewey (1916) said that reflective teachers are more aware of their own professional knowledge and actions as they challenge assumptions of everyday practice by critically evaluating their own responses. Danielson (2009) and Hall and Simeral (2015) asserted that such challenges require teachers to engage in continual self-reflection.

The problem of practice is that traditional PD for foreign language teachers does not improve self-reflection. At DLIFLC, the majority of foreign language teachers are products of learning environments that differ greatly from those in the institute. Despite their individual differences and qualifications, most teachers receive less than eight hours of in-service PD on a specific topic and have no time to reflect on their existing practices, newly presented concepts, or students' responses to instruction. The effectiveness of such PD approaches is questionable. Professional development (PD) at DLIFLC needs to be tailored to teachers' tendencies to self-reflect. Therefore, the primary goal of this action research is to develop a PD program that is tailored to teachers' initial self-reflection tendencies. In the PD program, DLIFLC foreign language teachers take an active role in their PD and collaborate with peers and instructional coaches in order to

promote their self-reflection tendencies. During the PD program (adapted from Hall & Simeral, 2015), teachers gain awareness of their educational surroundings (students, content, and pedagogy), plan deliberately, and take actions with intentionality to improve students' learning, assess the impact of their decisions and actions, adjust their course of action based on the feedback they receive from those assessments, and engage in a reflective teaching cycle continuously. Understanding how in-service PD fosters foreign language teachers' self-reflection is needed to better design and facilitate PD programs that fit teachers' needs and subsequently enhance students' learning at DLIFLC. One main research question and five sub-questions drive the research:

1. How does a social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?
 - a. Does the PD program impact DLIFLC teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content and pedagogy)?
 - b. Does the PD program impact teachers' intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning?
 - c. Does the PD program impact teachers' ability to assess students' learning?
 - d. Does the PD program impact teachers' capability to adjust their actions while teaching?
 - e. Does the PD program impact the frequency of teachers' self-reflection?

This chapter includes three sections. The first section discusses the historical background of the social constructivism theory, perspectives from teacher education and

PD disciplines, and the benefits and challenges of applying the social constructivist approach in teachers' PD. The second section investigates the historical background of the reflective teaching theory, developing reflective practitioners, dimensions and attributes of reflection, benefits and challenges of reflective practices, and suggestions to overcome the challenges teachers face while engaged in reflective practices. The third section discusses characteristics of effective teacher PD and how PD impacts teacher and student performance. It is worth noting that the literature presented in this chapter selectively discusses the most relevant issues pertaining to teachers' reflection and emphasized the importance of PD that addresses teachers' self-reflection.

Social Constructivist Theory

The social constructivist philosophy of learning is not a recent perspective in epistemology. Beck and Kosnik (2006) and Hyslop-Margison and Strobel (2008) explained the social constructivist theory as an epistemology or philosophical explanation of learning that has its roots in constructivism and sociocultural theory. In the ancient world, evidence of constructivist thinking appeared in Confucius' views. Cooney, Cross, and Trunk (1993) noted that the constructivist philosophy existed in Confucius' beliefs. They quoted Section 2:11 from *Confucian Analects*: "When I have presented one corner of a subject to anyone, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson" (p. 40). Confucius' approach to teaching aligns with the constructivist learning theory of connecting to learner's prior knowledge. Stevenson and Haberman (1998) explained that Plato's philosophy affirmed that individual's knowledge is not absolute. Plato realized that knowledge is an active process that requires the observation of things,

interpretation of data from the surroundings, and application of concepts in order to classify and cognitively organize what is perceived.

Dewey (1910) believed that knowledge is created by connecting to prior knowledge. Piaget's (1932) theory was built on the premise that students learn by interpreting results of their interactions with the environment. Vygotsky (1978) addressed the social aspect in the construction of knowledge. He believed knowledge is constructed through person-to-person interactions and is dependent upon the social environment where learning happens.

Many definitions of constructivism have been proposed (Gabler & Schroeder, 2003; Henson, 2004; Richardson, 1997; Schwandt, 2003; Shapiro, 2002; von Glaserfeld, 2005), but they all agreed on the following points:

- Learners of all ages construct or make their knowledge, they do not discover it.
- Learners create knowledge by connecting it to their prior knowledge.
- Knowledge is an autonomous and subjective construction process.
- Learning is an active construction of how learners think.
- Learners use personal experience and social interaction to create knowledge.
- Cognitive growth is stimulated when people are confronted with practical, contextual, or personal problems that require them to think innovatively.

Richardson (1998) emphasized the role of the sociocultural context in the construction and appropriation of knowledge. He believed that Vygotskian constructivism reflects a theory of human development that leads to social

transformation. Pelech and Pieper (2010) added that social constructivism implies a transactional-transformational educational process that views interactions between teachers, students, and students and the environment as essential for the construction and reconstruction of knowledge.

Social constructivist approach in teacher development. While social constructivism is a theory of learning that may inform and influence practice, Richardson (1998) contended it is not a theory of teaching. However, the research shows that large- and small-scale studies were designed to investigate social constructivist frameworks in teaching. For example, using social constructivism as an educational approach for a statewide reform initiative, the University of Louisville faculty developed eleven guiding standards and indicators for social constructivist teaching (Fischetti, Dittmer, & Kyle, 1996). Ostashewski, Moisey, and Reid (2011) explored the first iteration of a teacher PD program grounded in social constructivist theory and activities. The online programs provided opportunities for teachers to engage in social networking.

In a large-scale study, driven by their beliefs that teacher educators need many examples of social constructivist teaching in action, Kosnik, Menna, Dharamshi, and Beck (2017) investigated the practice of 28 literacy English teacher educators from four different foreign countries, who adopted a social constructivist approach in their teaching. The purpose of the study was to determine (1) why literacy teacher educators find the social constructivist approach to be useful in their literacy courses and (2) how the literacy teacher educators actualize a social constructivist approach in their teacher education courses. A qualitative method was followed, and data were collected via semi-structured interviews with teacher educators. Kosnik et al. (2017) concluded that teacher

educators use a social constructivist approach in their education courses because they believe that knowledge is constructed by learners for deeper understanding and that social constructivist approach helps student teachers learn beyond the superficial learning and achieve deeper understanding. To actualize their own courses, teacher educators used student-centeredness to drive instruction. Hands-on activities and group discussions dominated classroom practices.

In the faculty development department at Mersin University in Turkey, the teacher development program was designed on a social constructivist approach to teaching and learning. The approach was adopted in response to educational reforms for encouraging innovations in education across the nation. In 2015, Uredi and Akbasli, two college professors, investigated whether teachers' perception of their self-efficacy that is related to implementing the social constructivist approach predicted teachers' attitudes toward the social constructivist approach. A total of 812 elementary school teachers participated in the study. The findings showed that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to implementing the social constructivist approach significantly predicted teachers' attitudes toward the social constructivist approach.

Social constructivist teacher trainer and training. Fosnot (2005) concisely presented the approach of social constructivism and its application to teacher development as “an interpretive, recursive, building process by active learners interacting with the physical and social world” (p. 30). In this paradigm, the focus is on the development of knowledge of the active learner with the guidance of a teacher trainer or a more competent peer (Vygotsky, 1978). Beck and Kosnik (2006) described the learning experience of the teacher in the social constructivist approach as holistic, i.e.,

cognitive, social, emotional, aesthetic, and physical. Beck and Kosnik (2006) maintained that such training allows for broad personal development and ensures the depth of understanding and need for knowledge construction. Al-Weher (2004) and Bates (2005) concurred that through discussion with others, teachers start to question and recognize their subjective understanding, resolve challenges to their knowledge, and reflect on connections across their individual and collective experiences.

At its core, social constructivist pedagogy consists of teaching methods that are focused on active participation of the learners. Fosnot (1996, 2005), Gagnon and Collay (2001), and Lambert and Pugalee (2015) explored distinctions within social constructivist pedagogy in teacher development. However, each focused primarily on the notion of active learning for students rather than instruction by the teacher. Accordingly, to achieve such a level of learning, the teacher trainer needs to carefully organize the instructional process, set inherently motivating tasks that support deep learning, and allow teachers to exercise choice and control regarding what to work on, how to work, and what products to generate. Additionally, the goal of the teacher trainer is to create a learning space that invites teachers to actively and collaboratively participate in constructing meaning and is also structured enough to provide guided discovery.

Benefits of the social constructivist approach in teacher PD. In their description of the benefits of the social constructivist approach in teacher PD, Beck and Kosnik (2006) pointed out that social constructivist-based PD programs emphasize critical analysis and structured reflection on formal course knowledge and everyday learning experience. This approach helps teachers deconstruct their own prior knowledge and attitudes, understand how their learning has evolved, explore the effects of their

actions, and consider alternative actions and behaviors that may be more usable in their learning and teaching.

At a university in Turkey, Gencil and Saracaloglu (2018) conducted a study to investigate the effects of layered curriculum (a social constructivist approach for learning) on pre-service teachers' reflective thinking levels and on self-directed learning readiness. A mixed method design was followed. After the completion of the experimental actions, qualitative data were gathered from interviews conducted with 10 participants. The findings showed that a layered curriculum affects teachers' levels of reflective thinking and self-directed learning positively; moreover, teachers' views about the layered curriculum are also positive. Additionally, the layered curriculum (as a social constructivist approach for teaching) was effective in terms of improving pre-service teachers' comprehension, reflection, critical reflection, and general reflective thinking levels.

To assess a social constructivist PD program for middle school teachers in Algeria, Benamor and Guerroudj (2018) conducted a study aimed at (a) assessing the program in order to make decision about its value and effectiveness; (b) confirming the usefulness of PD journals as effective social constructivist reflective tools for teachers' conceptual and practical development. Fourteen novice middle school teachers of English, as a foreign language, participated in the study. Data were collected using the participants' reflective journals. The findings indicated that the cognitive and affective analysis of the participants' reflections revealed signs of constructions of different English language teaching and PD-related concepts, correction of some misconceptions together with traces of satisfaction, self-confidence and willpower. Researchers

concluded that teachers constructed new concepts and corrected some misconceptions about English language teaching and conceptual constructions about themselves. They acted as reflective, self-directed, and co-learners who can learn individually from their self-assessment or collaboratively from peer-assessment of their teaching acts. Accordingly, the researchers suggested that PD journals can be used as a social constructivist evaluative tool in teacher education and PD programs.

Benamor and Guerroudj (2018) also recommended that for better use of reflective PD journals as social constructivist self-assessment tools for teachers, who are nonnative speakers of English, the mentor or the course facilitator should explain to teachers how to use reflective journals before initiating the PD program. Accordingly, in this action research, the facilitator-researcher plans to show teachers how to engage in hands-on practice for writing, categorizing, and analyzing their reflections.

Challenges and concerns. A mindful understanding of the challenges a social constructivist approach to learning may have on teachers and teacher training context is essential for successful implementation of this action research intervention. Research indicated that the predominant challenge of the social constructivist approach for teachers and teacher educators is the task of translating a learning theory into an instructional theory (Krahenbuhi, 2016; MacKinnon & Scarff-Seater, 1997). This challenge raises questions about what teachers need to know and are able to do. Richardson (1997) asserts that in order to overcome the challenges that the social constructivist approach impose, teacher educators need to balance different approaches of teaching in teacher education courses and practicum. Krahenbuhi (2016) and MacKinnon and Scarff-Seater (1997) add that the social constructivist approach in teacher education may value

understanding at the expense of correct answers. As a result, teacher's knowledge becomes idiosyncratic—several teachers may arrive at different understandings.

Overcome challenges. Hirsch (2005) stated that effective teacher development programs are those that “deepen teachers’ understanding, transform beliefs and assumptions, and create a stream of continuous actions that change habits and affect practice” (p. 39). To overcome the challenges that a social constructivist approach may present for teachers and teacher educators, Krahenbuehler (2016) and Richardson (1997) reminded teacher educators not to see social constructivist approach as the only practical theoretical framework for teaching and learning and to guide teachers to adapt to different teaching approaches. Krahenbuehler (2016) and Kaufman (1996) noted the importance of teacher educators’ adapting and modeling social constructivist approaches that engage teachers in exploration, reflection, and self-examination to better understand themselves and students.

Using a case study approach, Rodriguez (2015) described an adapted social constructivist approach in the professional transformation of an Anglo, male novice teacher by focusing on his first two years of teaching in a culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged school in the United States. The study sought to identify best practices influencing a novice teacher’s transition from student teachers to full-time professional by focusing on the narrative of engagement as an adapted social constructivist approach for learning. The framework was selected to provide teaching and learning that is more critical, inclusive, relevant, and connected to students’ everyday lives. The study showed that the adapted social constructivist approach that focused on reflexivity and dialogic conversations provided the teacher with multiple opportunities to

examine his position in relation to the predominant institutional and sociocultural challenges at his culturally diverse school. Interestingly, the teacher gained more access to power to effect change. The findings asserted that the focus on a teacher's learning rather than on the implementation of the social constructivist approach empowered the teacher to develop a sense of agency to overcome major challenges.

Accordingly, in this action research, the ultimate goal of the six-week reflective teaching PD program is teachers' learning. This action research must consider the unique context of the teaching experience and represent the natural complexities of the real teaching world through authentic learning tasks and interactions with others. Such tasks are tailored to a teacher's individual reflective teaching tendencies and the facilitator-researcher or a more experienced peer acts as mentor. In order to do this, all involved in the research must follow a continual process of reflection.

Reflective Teaching

The idea of reflective teaching emerged from the social constructivist philosophy, and reflective practices are rooted in the social constructivist paradigm because they share basic assumptions about knowledge and learning (Fosnot, 2005; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Richards & Lockhard, 2010). A way to integrate these two frameworks within the context of in-service PD is the focus of this research.

Historical theoretical background. In the early 20th century, in his landmark book, *How We Think*, Dewey (1910) differentiated between a routine action and a reflective action. He explained that individuals who do not care to reflect on their actions become slaves to their routine daily work. Dewey (1910) added that such individuals are guided by impulse, routine, and/or power. He explained that over time, these individuals

are blinded by their routines and do not realize that their reality is just an option of many possibilities. They also lose sight of the purpose of their actions and their goals. They become agents of others. Dewey (1910) defined reflective action as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads” (p. 9).

Dewey (1910) also explained that reflective action involves more than logical and rational problem-solving processes. Reflection involves intuition, emotion, and passion and is not something that can be effortlessly packaged as a set of techniques for teachers to use. Dunn (2018) and Greene (1986) argued that in reflective action (in contrast to routine action), reasons and emotions are entangled. For Dewey (1910), three preconditions are essential for reflective action: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. Farrell (2007) said that open-mindedness is a “Desire to listen to more than one side of an issue and to give attention to alternative views” (p. 2). He described reflective teachers as constantly looking for conflicting evidence and questioning their actions.

This concept of open-mindedness can be compared to Wright Mills’ conceptions of beliefs and believers. Dunn (2018) explained Mill’s argument that there are three types of believers: vulgar, sophisticated, and critical. Vulgar believers are not interested in listening to opposing points of view or in assessing their beliefs. They function according to slogans and stereotypes. Sophisticated believers are interested in opposing points of view. However, their interest is only for the purpose of disputing them. On the other hand, critical believers are sympathetic to opposing points of view because they understand that all belief systems have gaps and can be strengthened by argument with

differing beliefs. Dunn (2018) concluded that Dewey's concept of open-mindedness mirrors Mills' concept of critical believers.

Responsibility is the second precondition for reflective action. According to Dewey (1910), the stance of responsibility requires attention to the consequences to which an action leads. Dewey (1910) indicated three kinds of consequences of one's teaching: (1) personal consequences, which are the result of one's teaching on the student's self-concepts; (2) academic consequences, which are the effects of one's teaching on the student's achievement; and (3) social and political consequences, which are the predictable results of one's teaching on the life opportunities of students.

The third precondition is wholeheartedness. Dewey (1910) argued that wholeheartedness helps teachers evaluate their assumptions and beliefs and the results of their actions, and approach all situations with the attitude that something new can be learned. For Dewey (1910), possession of these three attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness defined Dewey's (1938) concept of reflection,

[Reflection] emancipates us from merely impulsive and routine activity...enables us to direct our actions with foresight and to plan according to ends in view of purposes of which we are aware. It enables us to know what we are about when we act (p. 17).

Dewey (1938) realized that teachers cannot reflect on everything all the time. Reflective teachers need to balance between their reflective and routine actions. Dewey (1938) also proclaimed that reflective teachers usually take time to think about their instruction, make sense of their actions, and learn from their professional experiences.

Almost fifty years later, Donald Schön's (1983, 1987) work renewed the interest of educational communities in reflective practices. His work focused on the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner. He saw that when a practitioner is faced with a problem, he or she identifies the particular type of problem and then applies an appropriate technique to solve the problem. Farrell (2007) explicated that the way in which teachers solve problems is affected by how they pose or frame the problem. Reflective teachers think about how they frame the issue and how to solve it.

Schön (1983, 1987) argued that reflection can be seen in two time frames. First, reflection can occur before and after the action—this is what he calls reflection-on-action. In teaching, reflection-on-action happens before a lesson when teachers plan for and think about their lessons and after instruction when they consider what occurred. Also, reflection occurs during the action. Schön called this reflection-in-action. Farrell (2007) explained that while teaching, teachers frequently encounter an unexpected student reaction or perception and attempt to adjust their instruction to take these reactions into account. Schön (1983) stressed the importance for teachers to frame and reframe the problems and to consider the information gained from the classroom setting. Schön (1983) stated, "Problem setting is a process in which, interactively, we name the things to which we will attend and frame the context in which we will attend to them" (p. 40). He expanded the understanding of reflection on-, in-, and about-action and distinguishes between what we say we want to do versus what we actually do in practice. He suggested that reflective practitioners ask themselves,

What features do I notice when I recognize this thing? What are the criteria by which I make this judgment? What procedures am I enacting when I perform this

skill? How am I framing the problem that I'm trying to solve? (Schön, 1987, p. 50)

Lee and Moon (2013) conducted an exploratory study on how the participating teachers reflect using the idea of revoicing into action; in other words, how teachers use language to interpret theoretical concepts and to explain implementation of each in the classroom. The purpose of their research was to contribute to the literature on teacher reflection by shifting the focus from theorizing about reflection to putting it into action. Another goal was to create within teacher PD, a context that supports reflection. Lee and Moon (2013) found that a deep sense of teacher reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action became possible when teachers were able to revoice their actions and therefore reappropriate others' ideas for their own practices. When ideas about teaching were constantly disrupted by others and revoiced, teachers added depth and breadth to their practices.

Discursive dimension of reflection. Although Schön (1983, 1987) had a great impact on the effort to develop reflective teaching throughout the world, his ideas were criticized for a lack of attention to the discursive or dialogical dimension of teacher learning (Day, 1993; Fosnot, 2005; Saric & Steth, 2017; Zichner & Liston, 2013). For Schön, reflection is depicted as an unsocial process involving a teacher and his or her situation. Schön overlooked the social interactions taking place in the learning community. Recent work on reflective teaching stresses the idea of reflection as a social practice and makes the argument that without a social forum for the exchange of ideas, teacher development is limited; ideas become real and clearer to teachers when they can discuss them (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2014).

To emphasize the discursive aspect of reflective teaching, Cruickshank and Applegate's (1981) landmark study investigated the process of reflective teaching to promote teacher reflection in groups. The study required teachers to build a collaborative relationship with peers. Participants planned a short lesson in which each group member utilized the same instructional methods for teaching a new and interesting concept. After individually teaching the lesson, teachers met again for a period of reflection. Teachers discussed the attributes and deficits of the lesson and reflected on how to improve their teaching practices. Findings showed that after the implementation of reflective teaching in some schools and districts, teachers had greater self-reflection and satisfaction in their performance when discussing their experiences and ideas in groups.

More recently, Zeichner and Listen (2013) acknowledged the introspection and discursive dimensions of reflection. They pointed out that teachers' reflection should not be supported as an end without connecting teachers' efforts to create a better learning community. Zeichner and Listen (2013) emphasized the importance of teachers asking themselves whether the results of teaching are good, and if so, for whom and in what ways within the learning context. Brookfield (2010) stressed the need for teachers to develop the ability to assess their assumptions, beliefs, and actions; to question different perspectives; and to develop alternative solutions and estimate the consequences of their actions in the learning community.

Impact of social context. Furthermore, Zeichner and Liston (2013) argued that not only are teachers' practices influenced in many different ways by their theories, beliefs, and attitudes, these practices are also clearly influenced by the contexts in which teachers work. They explained that rules, regulations, teaching schedules, and directives

outside teachers' control put severe constraints on the freedom of teachers to act according to their own pedagogical beliefs. Teachers also interpret the same reality in different ways. Farrell (2007) contended that for teachers to have a critical perspective on their own behavior, they need a disposition of open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness and a collaborative and cooperative environment—what Dewey (1910) argued about a century ago.

In studying the impact of social conditions on teachers' reflection in a Chinese college, Zhan and Wan (2016) conducted an action research with 23 Chinese student teachers during practicum courses in a Confucian heritage culture. The effect of the learning community on teachers' reflective practice and the factors that mediated the effect of the learning community were explored, using journals and post-journal interviews. The findings indicated that the majority of the teachers enrolled in the program reflected on their teaching at the technical level, and only a few of them critically reflected on their teaching. Student teachers reported that the learning community had a positive effect in terms of collective wisdom, constructive suggestions from peers, and peers' emotional support in their reflective practice. However, they believed the Confucian-based cultural factors, such as reliance on authority, giving and saving face, and maintaining social relationships limited their reflective practice, particularly when they had to make decisions or were confronted with opposing views.

Camburn (2010) investigated how teachers' reflective practice was influenced by job-embedded PD in public elementary schools in the United States. Sample schools were located in 45 school districts in 13 different states. He found that as the amount of time of embedded PD increased, teachers' reflective practice increased. Moreover, if the

PD focused on improving instructional methods and was conducted in a collegial atmosphere with peers and instructional experts, then the amount of reflective practice increased greatly. Camburn (2010) added that PD activities focused on school-wide reform initiatives did not produce similar growth in the amount of teacher reflective practice.

Similar findings were reported by Greene (2016). The study identified principals and instructional coaches in schools in 14 school districts that either did or did not participate in the Alabama Instructional Partner Pilot Program. A reflective, ethical, and moral assessment survey was used to measure the perception of reflective practices for instructional coaches and principals of schools participating in the program in comparison with the reflective practices of those not involved with the program. The findings indicated there was no significant difference in the perceptions of reflective practice among the surveyed instructional coaches or the principals of schools who participated in the program as compared to those who did not.

These aforementioned findings confirmed the need for conducting this action research. The research takes into account the impact of the educational context in affecting teachers' learning and reflection. It empowers teachers to take the lead of their reflective practices, collaborate with peers, and generate knowledge that is not the exclusive property of the educational institution. The six-week reflective teaching PD program recognizes teachers' ideas, beliefs, and theories that can contribute to the betterment of their teaching. It permits teachers to examine willingly their own decisions, values, assumptions, and their leadership role in curriculum development and PD.

Models of reflection. Approaches to reflection and ways of encouraging teachers to reflect vary. Some approaches are more systematic and analytically oriented (Hall & Simeral, 2015; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Larrivee, 2008; Zeichner & Liston, 1987), while others are holistic and intuitive (Dewey, 1910, 1938; Schön, 1987; Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981). Even though this action research primarily adopts Hall and Simeral (2015) model for reflective teaching, an extensive literature review was conducted in order to build a strong understanding of the characteristics of each model and develop a tailored reflective teaching PD program suited for DLIFLC teachers' self-reflection tendencies.

Hall and Simeral's framework (2015) for self-reflection raises teachers' awareness of their students' needs, the teaching materials, and pedagogy. According to Hall and Simeral (2015), it helps teachers plan deliberately for their lessons and take action with intentionality, adjust their course of action based on the feedback they receive from those assessments, and encourages them to engage in the reflective cycle. The framework acknowledges the fact that teachers' expertise does not come naturally and developing skills requires continuous self-reflection. Hall and Simeral (2015) claimed there is a gap between learning about a skill and being able to implement it effectively. Self-reflection fills in the gap through "deep, continuous, rigorous thought about that skill" (p. 15).

The Hall and Simeral (2015) reflective teaching cycle was presented in Chapter One of this action research. A brief reminder: Teachers demonstrate varied skills and tendencies related to five areas: (1) awareness of instructional reality, (2), intentionality of actions, (3) ability to accurately assess, (4) ability to adjust actions, and (5) frequency

of reflection. Hall and Simeral (2015) asserted that growth in self-reflection tendencies tends to follow a repetitive cycle. First, teachers need to develop the awareness before acting intentionally, then engage in intentional practice before assessing the impact of their actions and determine the impact before they enact interventions.

Hall and Simeral (2015) presented teachers' reflective tendencies along a self-reflection continuum. They explained that as teachers build their knowledge and develop their teaching skills, they move along the continuum with the end goal of reaching a refinement stage of self-reflection, which is characterized by continuous reflection. Hall and Simeral (2015) identified four stages of self-reflection: (1) unaware stage, (2) conscious stage, (3) action stage, and (4) refinement stage (Figure 2.1). Below is a description of the Hall and Simeral (2015) stages of self-reflection and what each means. Hall and Simeral (2015) asked teachers to remember that the self-reflection continuum is simply a tool to help them learn about how they think and reflect in order to become more effective decision makers and practitioners. "There is no value—no 'better than' or 'worse than'—assigned to any of the stages on the continuum; there are just terms that describe how we think about our work" (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 46).



Figure 2.1. Continuum of Self-Reflection Stages

Adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015)

1. Unaware stage. Hall and Simeral (2015) defined unaware as “having no knowledge of a situation or a fact” (p. 46). They explained that in this stage of self-reflection, teachers have shallow understanding of teaching principles and practices, have not yet learned about teaching strategies, are not attentive to finer details about their student or teaching materials, and do not reflect deeply upon their teaching responsibilities. Hall and Simeral (2015) stated that teachers in the unaware stage have a traditional teaching style and an established routine and patterns of instruction. They usually reflect after grading assignments and tests. They rely primarily on the textbook and follow prescribed materials, lessons, student activities, homework and assessment protocols in the system. Hall and Simeral (2015) added that teachers measure the effectiveness of their lessons by the amount of material covered, and whether the students were able to attend to instruction or not. Students receive feedback in the form of scores and grades on assigned test, projects, and tests.

2. Conscious stage. Hall and Simeral (2015) defined conscious as “being aware of what is around you and having knowledge with the ability to think” (p. 71). Hall and Simeral (2015) explained that teachers in the conscious stage opt to understand their students’ learning needs. They track students’ development and can describe students’ performance in general terms. Teachers in the conscious stage are aware of the need to implement new engaging instructional strategies, but cannot think about individual students’ needs. Regarding teachers’ ability to assess students’ performance while teaching, Hall and Simeral (2015) explicated that conscious stage teachers may use formative assessment techniques in their lessons, but they do not use these data to develop future lessons. Regarding teachers’ ability to intentionally plan instruction, Hall

and Simeral (2015) explained that teachers respond to students' struggle, yet their intervention does not follow thoughtful planning or anticipate mistakes in order to address them before they happen. Moreover, teachers cannot identify the true cause of why a specific activity or a lesson was a success or a failure.

3. Action stage. Hall and Simeral (2015) defined action as “the fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim” (p. 98). They also pointed out that teachers in the action stage of self-reflection “both take action when they see a lack of learning and try multiple methods to solve the problems they encounter” (p. 101). They added that teachers have solid understanding of students' needs, can describe how well each student is performing or progressing, and explain how their instruction connects to previous or future learning. Hall and Simeral (2015) depict teachers in the action stage as they have a wealth of instructional strategies. However, assessing students' performance during instruction can be a difficult task. Regarding their ability to adjust their instructional actions based on the assessment, Hall and Simeral (2015) explained that teachers in the action stage are aware of whether learning is or is not taking place in their classroom, and they want to respond accordingly. However, intervention may not solve the problem. With respect to frequency of reflection, Hall and Simeral (2015) stated that teachers reflect before and after the lessons.

4. Refinement stage. Hall and Simeral (2015) defined refinement as “improvement or clarification of something by making small changes” (p. 123). Hall and Simeral (2015) said that teachers in the refinement stage of self-reflection “strive to see students in terms of strengths, not deficits” (p. 127). They added that teachers are aware of the fact that teaching is not about knowing every research-based practice, but rather

about understanding the individual needs of every student and working with him or her to be successful. In regard to teachers' awareness of the instructional context, Hall and Simeral (2015) stated that teachers can connect the right instructional strategy to the right student to maximize learning. They have solid understanding of content to be taught and know how and when to change it, using whatever pedagogical approach is best. Hall and Simeral (2015) described the actions of teachers who are developing lesson plans as intentional; when teaching, these teachers orchestrate all their lessons and their instructional decisions. They connect their actions to instructional standards and learning objectives of their students. Every planned task is considered an assessment moment that directs instruction to the task that follows. Hall and Simeral (2015) noted that teachers in the refinement stage analyze students' behavior attentively and make smooth adjustments in the lesson to address the specific needs. Hall and Simeral (2015) indicated that teachers in the refinement stage are always self-reflecting.

The Hall and Simeral's (2015) framework for reflective teaching can greatly benefit the introduction of the concept of reflective teaching to DLIFLC teachers. Many teachers can barely understand what meaningful reflective practice is like. It is a practical look at how teachers can improve their impact by attending to the way they think about their practice. Describing self-reflection stages would also allow teacher educators to demonstrate activities during the reflective process. For instance, the multistage model is practical when providing feedback on reflection depth. Saric and Steh (2017) advised educators to take characteristics of individual reflection levels as assessment criteria.

There are other reflective teaching models that could be considered when developing the reflective teaching PD program. Handal and Lauvas (1987) offered a hierarchical, three-level model of reflection. In the Handal and Lauvas' account of reflective teaching, teachers integrate their practical theories and beliefs with their daily actions in three levels of practice. In the first and obvious level of action the "teacher walks into the classroom, gives assignments, explains, asks questions, monitors and evaluates student work" (Handal and Lauvas (1987, p. 26). This level of a teacher's actions could be compared to the unaware and the conscious stages of self-reflection of the Hall and Simeral's (2015) framework.

The second level in the Handal and Lauvas (1987) framework is the conceptual level of planning and reflection in which teachers think and wonder about how they do their actions. They look for ideas in their knowledge and experience that guide their decisions about what they do and review their actions. Handal and Lauvas (1987) explained that at the second level, teachers look for theory- and practical-based evidence to explain their actions. This level of reflective teaching could be compared to the action stage of self-reflection described by Hall and Simeral (2015). The third level is the level of ethical consideration. Hall and Lauvas (1987) elucidated that teachers consider the ethical implications of their actions in order to establish a foundation for decisions of a moral nature. Hall and Lauvas (1987) added that teachers reflect on the moral and ethical basis of their actions and raise questions about how or if their actions contribute to creating a caring classroom environment or to equity and justice. Even though the Hall and Simeral (2015) model of self-reflection did not explicitly discuss ethical considerations, such considerations are a part of the refinement stage of self-reflection.

Other scholars have also created models and structures to enhance teachers' reflection. Farrell (2007) provided an "overall framework for teachers to use when reflecting on their work—whether individually, in pairs, or in teams" (p. 36). His framework consists of reflective activities such as group discussions, classroom observations, and teaching journals. The model includes the following components: (1) Ground rules—Farrell (2007) recommended designing ground rules for group meetings, classroom observations, journal writing, and critical friendship relationships; (2) Categories of time—Farrell (2007) suggested that teachers need to allocate time for reflective activities, individual reflection, skill development, and group reflection; (3) External input—Farrell (2007) advised that external input might come from other people's observations, reflections, or theories, or from the research and literature on teaching practice; (4) Affective states—Farrell (2007) acknowledged that reflection can be an uncomfortable experience and suggested using structured protocols to lessen anxiety during reflection.

This action research is guided by the Hall and Simeral (2015) framework for reflective teaching and Farrell's (2007) model of reflection in designing and implementing the reflective teaching PD program. It is expected that the program will help teachers develop knowledge about reflective teaching and the means by which to assess their reflective practices. Teachers decide on the focus of their reflection and are provided with the space and time and the supporting conditions to effectively reflect on their actions. Teachers' perception of the impact of the PD program on their self-reflection is assessed using the Hall and Simeral (2015) multilevel four-stage self-reflection continuum, presented earlier in this chapter.

Benefits of reflective teaching. The understanding of the teacher as a reflective practitioner acknowledges the wealth of expertise that teachers have, what Schön (1983) calls knowledge-in-action. Dewey (1910) asserted that the process of understanding and improving one's own teaching must start with reflection upon one's own experience and the wisdom derived from it. He added that reflection is also a commitment by the teachers to internalize the disposition and skills to investigate their teaching and become better at teaching over time. Zeichner and Liston (2013) affirmed that reflective teachers are responsible for constructing their own knowledge. They prove that the generation of new knowledge is not the exclusive property of educational institutions. It is recognized that teachers have ideas, beliefs, and theories that also can contribute to the betterment of teaching.

Several studies have been conducted to confirm the benefits of reflection on teacher practices (Basanos, 2014; Boud, 2010; Caccavale, 2017; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2014; Lee & Moon, 2013; Messman & Mudler, 2015; Sellars, 2012; Vermunt, 2014; Wegner, Wegner, & Ohlgerger, 2014; Zhao, 2012). In a study with four high-school teachers in China, Zhao (2012) found that the more teachers participated in high-quality PD, the more they reflected on their instructional practices. Teachers who engaged in critical and practical reflection generated knowledge and became critically self-aware. Teachers who participated in PD that was externally controlled engaged in the technical reflection. They were concerned about refining their existing practices rather than evaluating the results of these practices.

Wegner, Wegner, and Ohlberger (2014) reported on the application of reflective teaching in a teacher education program at the Department of Didactics of Biology at

Bielefeld University in Germany. The university initiated the program to train student teachers to use reflection as a means of developing their teaching competence and to support student teachers' skills of self-reflection. Prior to attending the program, student teachers also learnt about teaching methodology and diagnostics to identify gifted students. The report indicated that the reflection process contributed to the overall development of the school and helped student teachers develop reflection competence and the ability to continually improve their lessons.

Sturkie (2017) examined the effect of a series of reflective practices on the level of awareness of six student teachers in a university in the southeastern of the United States of America. Teachers were enrolled in a field experience course in a teacher education program. A mixed-method approach was followed, and data were collected via pre-/posttest questionnaires, course assignments, and field observations. The findings showed that the participating teachers were able to make connections between the theory and reflective teaching, had varying viewpoints about the process of reflection, and, most importantly, recognized that there was an impact on the academic achievement of students when teachers participated in reflective practices.

Reflection affects teachers' innovative work behavior. According to Kolb (1984), reflection allowed teachers to explicate and process experiences with tasks and use this information to increase the flexibility of their work performance. In Germany, Messmann and Mulder (2015) conducted a mixed-method study with 67 high school teachers to investigate whether teachers who reflected on work tasks, the social context, and their work performance were more engaged in the exploration of opportunities for innovation as well as the generation, promotion, and realization of innovative ideas.

Qualitative and quantitative data indicated that the teachers frequently carried out reflective and innovative activities. Messmann and Mulder (2015) concluded that work-related reflection facilitated all dimensions of innovative work behavior. Reflecting on work tasks and the social context affected teachers' innovative work behavior indirectly by benefitting their performance-related reflection.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) argued that teachers' reflection brings a higher degree of understanding the complexities of teaching. Such understanding cannot be matched by external researchers, no matter what methods of study are employed. To develop knowledge about her role as a reflective practitioner, Wyman (2010) carried out action research that investigated her and two other peer teachers' perception of the effectiveness of collaborating with peers for the purposes of PD. The findings showed that peer-to-peer collaboration was found to be valuable. Teachers also reported they needed a low-stress environment conducive to risk taking.

At King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia, Ahmed, Nordin, and Shah (2018) conducted a mixed-method study to explore the perceptions of teachers of English as a foreign language from various Arab countries about peer observation as a self-reflection tool for PD. Findings showed that teachers have a strong belief in the role of self-reflection in promoting PD and that participants want to work collaboratively with peers. Findings also suggest that despite the collaborative efforts in peer observation, teachers felt concerned and cautious about their performance in their classes because of the lack of trust between teachers and the administration. In the presence of an observer, teachers often do not feel comfortable and, consequently, underachieve. Because of these pressures, teachers underperform and eventually the learning outcomes of students are

affected. Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2014) stressed the school's responsibility to recognize and account for the issues and the knowledge of teachers.

Challenges of reflective teaching. There is an overwhelming consensus that reflection improves teachers' instruction (Arredondo Rucinski, 2005; Arredondo Rucinski & Bauch, 2006; Bazanos, 2014; Carroll & O'Loughlin, 2014; Day, 2013; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Messmann & Mulder, 2015; Twyman & Redding, 2015). Nevertheless, Saric and Steh (2017) argued that "despite all the well-established role of reflection, a large gap between the professed goals and the actual reflective practice of teachers remains" (p. 67). Saric and Steh (2017) questioned teachers' readiness to adequately follow up on the reflection process or whether they are offered the supporting conditions to reflect. Such conditions may include school management system, supervisor's support, adequate time, access to mentors, etc. Saric and Steh (2017) wondered if teachers and teacher educators understand how reflection happens, the purpose for reflection, and the levels of reflection.

At Leiden University in the Netherlands, Mansvelder-Longayroux, Verloop, Beijaard, and Vermunt (2007) investigated student teachers' learning activities and self-regulation of learning through the analysis of their portfolios, which included six types of learning activities: recollection, evaluation, analysis, critical processing, diagnosis, and reflection. The findings indicated that the reflective process of recollecting and evaluating activities dominated, with 93% of the 1,778 learning activities identified in 39 teachers' portfolios. A recollecting activity included description of an event that has already happened. In their portfolios, teachers described the events that had occurred during class and evaluated them as going well, bad, wrong, etc., even before they

reflected on them from different perspectives. Teachers did not consider the cause of the issue they experienced, how their actions influenced the achievement of the students' learning goals, or how they or their students experienced the event.

Benamor and Guerroudj (2018) affirmed that teachers found it challenging to construct their reflective practices without a mentor. Researchers recommended that teachers should see how-to models and have hands-on practice in constructing, categorizing, and analyzing their reflection. Interestingly and in contrast, Valenčič Zuljan and Bizjak (2007) checked the qualifications of teacher mentors to reflect upon their own practices and to encourage reflection in their trainees. Using a qualitative analysis of diary entries categorized according to the taxonomy of reflective thinking by Handal and Lauvas (1987), Valenčič Zuljan and Bizjak reported that mentoring practice consists principally of activities at the first level of reflection. None of the entries could be classified at the third level, which includes the ethical dimension of reflection. Valenčič Zuljan and Bizjak (2007) concluded that such teacher mentors are not considered good role models in the introduction of student teachers to reflective teaching.

Personal traits have an impact on how teachers reflect. Boud (2010) noted the importance of personal characteristics, dispositions, motives, feelings, ideas, and conceptions about oneself and the world, which shape the way reflective practice happens. In Slovenia, van Eckelen, Vermunt, and Boshuizen (2006) conducted a small-scale qualitative study with 15 veteran high school teachers to measure their desire to learn. Findings identified three groups of teachers: those who did not see the need to learn, those who wondered how to learn but wanted a straightforward solution or the right answer; and, lastly, teachers who were eager to learn. Being curious and willing to

wonder with an open mind and a desire to grow have been identified as motives for reflective teaching since Dewey (1910).

Another challenge to reflective teaching is the emotional dimension. Moon (2004) explained that emotions are likely the reason that teachers engage in reflection. Emotions such as confusion, disappointment, or happiness are considered motives behind reflection after the teacher experiences an event. Moon (2004) added that while teachers are exploring the events by looking for ways to understand, they become emotionally attached to the issues. As such, the emotions that started the reflection process become entangled with other confusing learning moments that may control teachers' reflection. Subsequently, Moon (2004) concluded that reflection can become a source of an emotional experience, and emotionally charged situations may hinder teachers' reflection.

Overcoming the challenges. Zichner and Liston (2013) elucidated that while individual characteristics have an impact on teachers' reflective practice, they do not have an impact on reflective practice in isolation, but always in a certain social context. Dominant sociocultural assumptions (Zhan & Wan, 2016), the disciplinary and professional contexts (Ahmed, Nordin, & Shah, 2018), and the sub-groups learning contexts (Wyman, 2010) may challenge effective reflective teaching practices. To overcome the challenges, Korthagen (2017) emphasized the need for the educational organizations to develop a learning culture that allows and welcomes questioning one's actions, reasons, views, and looking for solutions to the issues teachers face. Korthagen (2017) called for a realistic reflective practice approach to become an important goal in teacher PD. Sharing the reflective insights with peers may enable teachers to gain a

greater understanding of their experiences (Bazanov, 2014; Boud, 2010; Farrell, 2007; Wyman, 2010).

In the United Kingdom, Vermunt (2014) conducted a study with high school teachers to measure the impact of peer coaching and collaboration in teaching teams on teachers' learning. He contended that the most direct contextual factor that influenced teachers' learning was the learning environment. "Organized learning environments [peer coaching, collaboration in teams] turned out to elicit qualitatively better learning activities and learning outcomes than informal workplace learning" (Vermunt, 2014, p. 90).

To overcome the personal and emotional challenge teachers face when reflecting, Farrell (2007) proposed the idea of language teachers entering into critical friendships as a means of reflecting on their teaching. He believed that "developing critical friendships may especially be important for teachers who have undergone self-monitoring and self-reflection" (p. 148). Farrell (2007) assured that critical friends can give voice to a teachers' thinking, while at the same time be heard in a sympathetic yet constructively critical way. The collaborative friendship setting should reduce the sense of isolation that the teacher may feel, promote collegiality, and promote shared observations and associated benefits.

Thus, as a means of encouraging reflective practice among teachers and to overcome possible challenges, the culture and system of a school should embrace and cultivate open dialogue, critical feedback, and shared experiences (Ahmed et al., 2018; Dos Santos, 2016; Hall & Simeral, 2017; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2014; Minott, 2008). Schools should be an ideal venue for reflection. As the principal of an elementary

school, Caccavale (2017) conducted an action research to investigate the impact of structured peer-observation in-service trainings on teacher's reflective practices, teacher pedagogy, and collective efficacy. The researcher conducted an action research with 19 novice, experienced, and veteran teachers. Findings indicated that the structured classroom observation models contributed to teachers' reflective practices and collective growth. However, despite the well-structured school system that supported teachers' reflection through classroom observations, teachers reported that time was an issue and asked that observations be spaced out over a longer period of time. Additionally, the veteran teachers felt anxious having peers observing their classrooms; however, the veteran teachers indicated that these emotions would likely diminish over time.

The time limitations described by Caccavale (2017) support Farrell's (2007) assertion as to why educators do not utilize reflection. Teachers find that the amount of time needed for reflection is demanding and feel that time could be used in a more productive manner. The constant reviewing and revamping of lessons through reflective practice is overwhelming for many teachers. Farrell (2007) recommended that the school system should allow time for effective teacher reflection. Also, Dewey (1938) noted that beginning teachers would require more time than veteran teachers to progress through the stages of reflection.

This action research intends to measure teachers' perception of the impact of the social constructivist learning in-service PD on their self-reflection tendencies. Peer observation, collaboration with peers, supervisors, the facilitator-researcher, and reflective journals are key components in the course. In any given learning situation, teachers are faced with challenges. Understanding the aforementioned challenges to

teachers' reflective practices and strategies to overcome such challenges beforehand is essential to the implementation of the research. The findings of the previous studies support the action research in establishing supporting conditions that will limit the negative effect of the challenges.

Reflective teaching and change. Paris (1993) stated, "Teachers have been considered to be consumers of curriculum knowledge but are not assumed to have the requisite skills to create or critique that knowledge" (p. 149). This is an issue in any school. Dewey (1916) said that the notion of reflective teaching can be seen as a reaction against the view of teachers as practitioners who barely understand the nature of the problems facing them and merely carry out what others, remote from the classroom, want them to do. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) asserted that seeing teachers as reflective practitioners is a rejection of top-down forms of educational reform that involve teachers only as channels for implementing programs and ideas formulated by others.

Sellars (2012) argued that the most powerful, durable, and effective agents of educational change are the teachers. Sellars (2012) challenged the archaic assumption that focused explicitly on the development of teachers' understanding of content and relevant pedagogy. Sellars believed that for the teachers to be effective, they need to recognize more than just subject matter content, and their students' background and learning preferences. Sellars (2012) asserted that teachers need to have the willingness and cognitive abilities to identify ethical issues and examine their own perspectives on the issues they face. Such level of agency requires regular and authentic reflection.

Freire (1970) asked educators "to learn how to read our world. Read it for what it is. Know the system for what it is and learn how to operate within it" (p. 7). So, how can

teachers, who really want to be equitable in their mindset and their practice gain critical reflection skills that embody the idea that all students can learn? Farrell (2007) stated that teacher educators must provide teachers with space and time to do just that in their teacher education programs and in PD.

It is believed that this research would offer a PD program that would engage teachers in a process of self-reflection and teaching strategies to better understand themselves and their students. The gap in teachers' awareness of issues of equity requires educators to create a supporting system for teachers to think issues through in order to better meet the needs of struggling students. To do this, all educators, not just teachers, must follow a continual process of self-reflection throughout their professional careers.

Professional Development

Foreign language teachers' PD at DLIFLC is of increasing interest as a way to support the increasing complex skills students need to learn in the 21st century. Educators and administrators continue to stress the need to enhance and build on teachers' instructional knowledge and skills as schools are facing an array of complex challenges from working with diverse student population, to integrating new technology, to meeting rigorous academic standards and goals. Therefore, effective teacher PD is needed to help teachers learn and refine the pedagogies required to teach their students. Effective PD is defined as "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. v). Rehora (2004) explained that effective PD relies on a two-part transfer of knowledge: Effective PD must impart new knowledge and skills to teachers in order to

change their behavior; those changes must subsequently result in improved student achievement.

Recent research on individual programs of PD has found positive effects on student outcomes (DeMonte, 2013; Heller, Daehler, Wong, Shinohara, & Miratrix, 2012; Polly, McGee, Wang, Martin, Lambert, & Pugalee, 2015; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). In addition, two meta-analyses of research on PD found statistically significant effects on student achievement (Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Gersten, Taylor, Keys, Rolfhus, & Newman-Gonchar, 2014). These studies found that PD has been shown to improve teachers' content knowledge and classroom pedagogy in ways that are associated with improved student learning. Other studies using hierarchical linear modeling with pre-/posttest administered to teachers showed that teachers participating in PD improved their level of content knowledge and, in some cases, outperformed comparison groups on these tests (Bell, Wilson, Higgins, & McCoach, 2010; Garet, Cronen, Eaton, Kurki, Ludwig, Jones, Uekawa, Falk, Bloom, Doolittle, Zhu, & Szejnberg, 2008; Polly, McGee, Wang, Martin, Lambert, & Pugalee, 2015).

Professional development approaches. Unsurprisingly, teacher PD continues to be a challenge. The field of teacher PD offers a vast array of programs that invest in teacher's knowledge and skills. Sawchuck (2010a) explained that PD activities include formal teacher induction, the credits or degrees teachers earn as part of certification or recertification or to receive salary boosts, and participation in subject-matter associations or informal networks. Nevertheless, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and Wei, Darling-Hammond, and Adamson (2010) question the effectiveness of certain PD programs for teachers. They proclaimed that over the years, administrators favored the workshop

approach, in which the school or the school district brings in a consultant on a teacher-development day to give teachers a one-time training seminar on a variety of pedagogic or subject-area topics. Wei et al. (2010) argue that such an approach to PD is criticized for the lack of continuity and coherence. The criticism is supported by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The act defines all PD activities as not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences.

At DLIFLC, most teachers seem to receive their PD through some form of the one-shot workshop for eight hours or less. Likely, because of the short duration of the teacher PD programs, there is a tendency to provide teachers with theories and leave them to work out the implications as they teach. Ermeling (2010) explained that the reason such PD programs are ineffective is that they do not support teachers during the implementation stage, which is the hardest. Reborá (2004) explained that research findings have the power to change PD for teachers. She explained that effective PD programs need to take place in an active and intellectual environment where teachers exchange ideas and make explicit connections to the bigger picture of the educational institute. Wei et al. (2010) added that effective PD needs to be of sustained duration, be coherent, and take place during the school day and become part of the teacher's PD responsibilities and focus on student achievement.

Effective professional development. Recent research indicates that certain characteristics of PD are related to effectiveness in changing teaching practice and improving student learning. In particular, Darling Hammond et al. (2017) examined the features of effective PD. They concluded that effective PD: (1) “is content focused; (2) incorporates active learning; (3) supports collaboration; (4) uses models of effective

practice; (5) provides coaching and expert support; (6) offers feedback and reflection; and (7) is of sustained duration” (p. v-vi). Below is an elaborate description of the characteristics of effective PD and supporting studies.

1. PD is content focused. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) explained that effective PD is situated in the teachers’ classroom where they have the chance to work with their students, experiment new ideas with their students or a specific pedagogical approach and students’ responses. Doppelt, Schunn, Silk, Mehalik, Reynolds, and Ward (2009) conducted a study to investigate the impact of content-based collaborative inquiry sessions on student achievement. Teachers used the new science curriculum as the content of their PD. Teachers engaged in the model lessons as their students would. They shared student work and spent time reflecting on the instructional activities. Findings showed that students whose teachers used the new curriculum and participated in PD had significantly greater achievement than those students whose teachers used the new curriculum without PD.

2. PD incorporates active learning. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective PD gives teachers the opportunity to engage in the same learning activities they are designing for their students. This means moving away from lectures and engaging teachers in discussions, problem solving, and critical-thinking activities. Greenleaf, Hanson, Rosen, Boscardin, Herman, and Schneider (2011), in a high school in California, conducted a study to measure the impact of a teacher PD program that incorporates active learning on student achievement in science. The program was designed to immerse teachers in the types of learning activities and environment they would create for their students. The PD was inquiry-based, subject-focused,

collaborative, and designed to attend teachers' understanding of content knowledge. Teachers analyzed student work, videorecorded classroom lessons and studied cases of student learning. The program extended over 12 months. The findings showed that this PD model of active learning resulted in student achievement equivalent to a year's reading growth compared to students of teachers assigned to a control group. Additionally, students of teachers in the treatment group performed better than the students in control group on state assessments.

3. *PD supports collaboration.* Educators have looked at how collaborative PD supports student achievement. In a study conducted in New Zealand, Meissel, Parr, and Timperley (2016) investigated how schoolwide PD programs in 195 schools spread across four groups of teachers could improve literacy of low-performing students. Each school was assigned a facilitator to provide PD for teachers of reading or writing for two years. Facilitators visited schools biweekly to conduct classroom observations, model instruction, provide coaching and feedback, and engage in other collaborative activities. The findings indicated that students attending the schools participating in the PD project outperformed achievement expectations, especially in writing. Participants indicated that working with a facilitator helped them analyze student work and develop understanding of what instructional strategies may or may not be working and for whom. Buczynski and Hansen (2010) concluded that such collaborative PD has been found effective in promoting school change beyond the classroom level.

4. *PD uses models of effective practice.* Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) asserted that "The importance of providing professional learning in conjunction with model curriculum and classroom materials should not be underestimated" (p. 12). They

also noted that effective PD uses authentic models such as videos, case studies, lesson plan models, units of curriculum, peer observation, etc. To study the effect of PD that used models of effective practice on elementary students' learning in science, Heller, Daehler, Wong, Shinohara, and Miratrix (2012) conducted a randomized experimental design of three intervention groups and one control group. The PD focused on pedagogical content knowledge of science for elementary school teachers utilizing three different interventions. Group one analyzed written case studies taken from actual classrooms and written by teachers. Group two analyzed their own students' work and had access to a bank of tasks to support students' learning. Group three utilized reflective practices as they engaged in science content activities. Findings showed that students of teachers who participated in the PD groups had significantly greater gains on science tests than students whose teachers did not participate in any PD.

5. PD provides coaching and expert support. In previously mentioned studies, teachers worked with more experienced peers, coaches, and mentors to guide them and facilitate their learning. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) assured that the role of educators and experts is critical for teacher PD. It supports the implementation of new instructional strategies. Powell, Diamond, Burchinal, and Koehler (2010) studied the effects of an early literacy PD intervention on Head Start teachers and children. The PD was designed to provide teachers with personalized feedback by instructional coaches. Teachers attended a two-day orientation program that introduced the program content and fostered relationship building with coaches. Teachers then participated in biweekly coaching sessions with university-based literacy coaches. Instructional coaches worked together with teachers on specific instructional strategies, observed their classrooms, and

provided constructive feedback. The program included 16 hours of workshops and seven coaching sessions over a semester of instruction. Findings indicated that students whose teachers participated in the coaching PD program had higher achievement on school tests than students whose teachers did not participate in the PD program.

6. PD offers feedback and reflection. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) described feedback and reflection as essential characteristics of effective PD. Both are needed to help teachers move toward the expert visions of practice. To investigate the effectiveness of comprehensive PD program for teachers of at-risk preschoolers, Landry, Anthony, Swank, and Monseque-Bailey (2009) conducted a randomized controlled study with 262 early childhood teachers in 158 schools in Florida. Teachers participated in different PD activities where they received detailed feedback on children's language and literacy progress that was linked to instructional activities and/or two-hour on-site mentoring sessions twice per month. Findings showed that students of teachers who received both mentoring and detailed feedback on children's language and literacy progress experienced greater gains than students whose teachers received non-specific PD on expressive vocabulary and print and letter knowledge.

7. PD is of sustained duration. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009; 2017) stated that effective and meaningful PD requires time; a sporadic fragmented approach to PD does not afford the time necessary for teachers' learning. Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) reviewed nine studies of PD using experimental and quasi-experimental designs and found that effective PD programs in these studies offered an average of 49 hours per year, with an associated average increase of 21 percentile points in student achievement. Researchers concluded that such models offered teachers the

opportunity to return repeatedly to the PD material over the course and apply their learning with the context of their classroom and the PD sessions.

Unsurprisingly, implementing effective PD is a challenging task. At a time when DLIFLC is moving quickly to adopt higher graduation standards and schools are challenged to accelerate student achievement, faculty development educators need to move more aggressively to provide effective PD. Providing effective PD enables teachers to work regularly to improve their practice and implement strategies to meet the needs of their students. Without intensified support for effective teacher PD, the ability of teachers and school leaders to meet the new challenges will be weakened. Research indicates a strong correlation between the quality of teaching and student success. PD is a key strategy available to schools for improving teaching quality.

Scholars agree that no one course can prepare teachers for all the challenges that they may face in their classrooms. Thus, one of the primary goals of teacher development programs is to “nurture autonomous and self-directed teachers who constantly reflect on their teaching practice, evaluate their assumptions, and base changes in their teaching on effective and meaningful decisions” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 1). Teacher trainers should guide, monitor, and facilitate teacher learning. They need to design learning activities and establish an environment that encourages metacognition, self-reflection, regulation, social cognition, social negotiation, and collaboration. Successful teacher PD programs are organized to impart the knowledge, skills, and practices they value. This is accomplished by setting training goals and objectives specific to the mission, tailored to teacher developmental needs, and achievable in a timely manner. “Teacher education is the avoidance of prescribing rules that must be

followed by the teacher. Instead, social constructivist teacher PD programs will not allow the same outcomes for each teacher” (Kaufman, 1996, p. 42). In the best possible teacher practices, each teacher brings a unique way of understanding. This action research values teacher’s uniqueness.

Chapter Summary

This chapter included three sections. The first section presented the historical theoretical background of social constructivist theory. The historical perspective shared Dewey’s belief in the role of prior knowledge and reflection, Piaget’s theory of learner’s interpretation of the environment, and Vygotsky’s belief in the social aspect in the construction of knowledge. Within the scope of these three scholars, knowledge is experience based and is constructed by learners through authentic learning tasks, and learning is a social activity. The discussion suggested a structured in-service PD framework that creates a space that invites teachers to actively participate in constructing meaning of their learning through active learning and reflection—a social constructivist pedagogy to help teachers learn beyond the superficial level and to achieve deeper understanding.

The discussion concluded with the benefits and challenges of social constructivist pedagogy in teacher development. Social constructivist pedagogy helps teachers deconstruct their prior knowledge and attitude, understand how their learning evolves, explore the effect of their actions, and consider alternative actions and behaviors that are more functional in relation to their learning and teaching. Additionally, social constructivist pedagogy improves teachers’ comprehension, reflection, and self-directedness. Some of the challenges of implementing social constructivist pedagogy in

teacher education and PD include: (a) interpreting social constructivist as a learning theory into an instructional theory, (b) balancing different instructional approaches to attend to different learning needs, (c) developing idiosyncratic knowledge by learners, and (d) arriving at different understandings of a concept by learners.

The second section of the chapter discussed reflective teaching as a theoretical framework and presented approaches to reflection that would be followed in this action research. Some approaches are more systematic and analytically oriented, while others are holistic and intuitive. The holistic approaches focus on teachers' open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness in their being reflective teachers. The systematic approaches focus on defining phases and levels of reflection and conditions for effective reflection. Special attention was given to the role of the discursive or dialogic dimension of reflection in teachers' learning. This section concluded with a discussion of the benefits and challenges of implementing reflective teaching. Research findings indicate there is an overwhelming consensus about the significance of reflective teaching. Nevertheless, teachers face challenges to effectively reflect. Questions were raised about teacher's readiness to reflect, their ability to follow up on the reflection process, and whether teachers are offered supporting conditions in which to reflect. Therefore, effective in-service PD needs to help teachers understand how reflection happens, the purpose of reflection, and the tendencies of reflection. PD also needs to provide the supporting conditions for teachers' reflection.

The last section of the chapter presented the need for implementing effective PD programs in order to help teachers learn and refine their pedagogies and subsequently enhance student achievement. The discussion focused on Darling-Hammond et al.

(2017) and their understanding of the characteristic of effective PD. As evident by the research findings, effective PD is content focused, incorporates active learning, supports collaboration, uses models of effective practice, provides coaching and expert support, offers feedback and reflection, and is of sustained duration. Within the social constructivist approach, PD is tailored to teachers' self-reflection tendencies in order to assess their assumptions and help them make meaningful decisions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) remind researchers to identify what they want to know before determining the ways of knowing and be sure that the research method addresses the meaning teachers construct as they participate in the research. With this principle in mind, the purpose of Chapter Three of the thesis is to describe the quantitative-qualitative action research methods employed to understand how a social constructivist professional development (PD) program impacts foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). For this reason, quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies were used. Data was collected via the Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (RSAT) before and after attending the PD program and via teachers' responses to reflective journal prompts at the end of the six-week PD program. Twelve teachers participated in the study. They are nonnative speakers of English and teach their native languages to adult learners at DLIFLC. Data analysis guided the development of an action plan to be implemented in the Fall of 2020 for an improved in-service PD program that promotes foreign language teachers' self-reflection.

Problem of Practice

The problem of practice is that traditional PD for foreign language teachers does not improve self-reflection. At DLIFLC, the majority of foreign language teachers are

products of learning environments that differ greatly from those in the institute. Despite their individual differences and qualifications, most teachers receive less than eight hours of in-service PD on a specific topic and have no time to reflect on their existing practices, newly presented concepts, or students' responses to instruction. The effectiveness of such PD approaches is questionable. One-shot PD workshops often do not change teaching practice (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Penuel, Gallagher, & Moorthy, 2011; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007; Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010).

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study was to guide teachers to incorporate reflective teaching practices into their routines and take charge of their PD. The six-week program provided them with a PD model tailored to their self-reflection tendencies. The goal of the PD program was to raise teachers' awareness about their instruction, intentionality of actions, and ability to access their students' needs and consequently adjust their actions accordingly. It is believed that teachers' participation in the PD program and reflective practices would have a positive impact on their instruction. A review of the literature showed that extensive research has been conducted on the reflective practices of teachers in different disciplines and different countries and on the ways PD impacts teachers' reflective teaching tendencies (Gencel & Saracaloglu, 2018; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2014; Kurlatz, 2016; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Lee & Moon, 2013; Masvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007; Messman & Muddler, 2015). Also, similar professional development programs that attend to teachers' varying stages of reflective teaching have been adopted by school districts in

the United States (Hall & Simeral, 2017). However, this study is significant because it assesses the impact of a social constructivist PD program on foreign language teachers' self-reflection at DLIFLC. The study is important for DLIFLC practitioners, especially if a connection between teacher reflection and this PD program is documented.

Research Questions

To address the problem of practice, one main research question and five sub-questions guided the study:

1. How does a social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?
 - a. Does the PD program impact DLIFLC teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content and pedagogy)?
 - b. Does the PD program impact teachers' intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning?
 - c. Does the PD program impact teachers' ability to assess students' learning?
 - d. Does the PD program impact teachers' capability to adjust their actions while teaching?
 - e. Does the PD program impact the frequency of teachers' self-reflection?

Research Design

To answer the aforementioned questions, action research with an explanatory mixed-method approach was chosen to generate understanding of teacher self-reflection and act upon it. Mertler (2017) described the design as one where "The practitioner-

researcher first collects quantitative data and then gathers additional qualitative data in order to help support, explain, or elaborate on the quantitative results” (p. 107). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) justify the use of the mixed-method strategy as follows: “A problem exists when the quantitative results are inadequate to provide explanations of outcomes and the problem can be understood by using qualitative data to enrich and explain the quantitative results in the words of the participants” (p. 34). Therefore, this action research is aligned with the goal of an explanatory mixed-method approach to help the researcher dig deep and better understand the impact of the six-week PD program on foreign language teachers’ self-reflection tendencies.

Herr and Anderson (2015) indicated that action research is an ideal model for practitioner-researchers to improve their practice. Mills (2011) defined action research as “any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers...to gather information about how they teach or how well their students learn” (p. 5). He added that the intent of action research is “to gather information with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment (and educational practices in general), and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved” (Mills, 2011, p. 5). Accordingly, action research was selected because it helps the researcher gain insights about her practice, develop reflective practices, improve her work and that of foreign language teachers, and subsequently enhance student learning at DLIFLC.

In this action research process, the facilitator-researcher participated in a cyclical process that included discussion, decision, action, evaluation, and revision (Effron & Ravid, 2013; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Mertler, 2017). Going through the process of action research facilitated not only the self-reflection and construction of knowledge of

the participating teachers, but also those of the facilitator-researcher herself. This type of research is grounded in the value of human experience of learning as a social activity, a principle consistent with Dewey's (1938) beliefs about the value of experience and active learning in education and Vygotsky's (1978) beliefs about learning as a culturally embedded and supported activity.

Setting of Study

According to Herr and Anderson (2015), the following factors facilitate the research process: speaking the same insider language, understanding the mission, values, and regulations of the academic institute and knowing the power structure, and the procedures to obtain permission to conduct the research, and carry out the intervention. Therefore, the action research study took place within the facilitator-researcher's and the participating teachers' work location, DLIFLC. According to the DLIFLC official website, the institute is an integral part of the Army Branch and supports the Army's responsibilities. It does this in part by training and educating initial entry military training personnel, along with others, in its Undergraduate Education Basic Course for a variety of foreign languages. The institute is attended by the personnel of four military branches. More than 230,000 students have graduated from the institute and its programs since its establishment in 1941. Language programs vary in length from 26 to 64 weeks of instruction, with six instructional hours per day. The institute is one of the largest foreign language institutes in the world. It is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (DLIFLC, 2018).

Academic leadership is provided by the Provost, who is a civilian employee. The institute is organized into four different Directorates: Undergraduate Education Directorate, Continuing Education Directorate, Testing Directorate, and Educational Technology and Development Directorate. The researcher is a member of the Faculty Development Division under the supervision of the Educational Technology and Development Directorate. The Faculty Development Division serves all foreign-language teachers across the institute. The department oversees the quality and implementation of faculty development functions in different language programs across DLIFLC. It administers teacher certification programs, offers innovative approaches in faculty development, and keeps records of teachers' professional development across the institute. The participating teachers are members of the Undergraduate Education Directorate (personal communication with academic associate director of Faculty Development Division, January 25, 2018). The six-week PD program took place in the participating teachers' school.

Intervention

Fosnot (2005) presented the approach of social constructivism and its application to teacher development as “an interpretive, recursive, building process by active learners interacting with the physical and social world” (p. 30). In this paradigm, the focus is on the development of knowledge of the active learner with the guidance of a teacher trainer or a more competent peer (Vygotsky, 1978). The intervention is a six-week reflective teaching PD program situated within the epistemological paradigm of the social constructivist theory (Pelech & Pieper, 2010; Piaget, 1932; Vygotsky, 1978), which embodies the characteristics of effective professional development (Darling-Hammond et

al., 2017). The goal of the intervention is to increase foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies by creating a social collaborative learning space that invites teachers to actively participate in constructing their learning, yet is structured enough to provide guided discovery. Specifically, the objectives of the intervention were for teachers to (1) gain awareness of their educational surroundings such as students' needs, the teaching materials, and their instructional pedagogy; (2) plan and deliver their teaching intentionally; (3) assess the impact of their decisions and actions; (4) adjust their course of action based on the feedback they receive from the assessment techniques; and (5) increase the frequency of their reflective teaching. Below is a description of the general characteristics of the intervention.

Instruction is mediated. Withing the social constructivist framework, the program engaged teachers in learning experiences that drew on their prior experiences, communication with others, and interaction with PD activities that fell within their immediate teaching contexts (Pelech & Pieper, 2010; Piaget, 1932; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) stressed the importance of interaction and the need to mediate learning. Bates (2005) concured that through discussion with others, teachers start to question and recognize their subjective understanding, resolve challenges to their knowledge, and reflect on connections across their individual and collective experiences. The six-week PD program was tailored to teachers' initial stage of self-reflection. Teachers experienced specific reflective tasks that promoted interaction with others. They worked collaboratively with one another, other colleagues in the department, their supervisors, and the facilitator-researcher to explore and answer

questions about reflective teaching practices. Teachers' learning was mediated through interaction with the reflective activities and instructional coaches and supervisors.

Design is teacher-centered and flexible. The social constructivist pedagogy consists of teaching methods that are focused on active participation of the learners Fosnot (1996, 2005). Beck and Kosnik (2006) explained that a social constructivist training allows for broad personal development and ensures the depth of understanding and need for knowledge construction. Dewey (1910) believed that the generation of new knowledge is an active and constructive process derived from past learning experiences. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) maintained that effective PD is teacher-centered. Therefore, within the six-week program, teachers autonomously drove their professional development. They set their learning goals and reflection points as well as their own self-reflection tasks. They developed lesson plans, used formative assessment techniques to identify students' needs and invited peers/supervisors to their classrooms to observe their lessons. Additionally, the PD program offered ample resources about principles and practices of foreign language teaching. Teachers selected the resources that interested them and identified additional resources.

Learning tasks are authentic. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) explained that effective PD is content focused and takes place in the teachers' classroom where the teachers have the chance to work with their students and try out new ideas for a specific pedagogical approach. The PD program took place in the teachers' classrooms. Teachers worked with students and collaborated with peers in the workplace. The learning tasks were to accommodate the participating teachers' interests, experiences, and knowledge while also provided organized direction to learning.

Design promotes higher-order thinking skills. Beck and Kosnik (2006) pointed out that social constructivist-based PD programs emphasize critical analysis and structured reflection on formal course knowledge and everyday learning experience. This approach helps teachers deconstruct their own prior knowledge and attitudes, understand how their learning has evolved, explore the effects of their actions, and consider alternative actions and behaviors that may be more usable in their learning and teaching. Brookfield (2010) stressed the need for teachers to develop the ability to critically assess their assumptions, beliefs, and actions, to question different perspectives, develop alternative solutions, and estimate the consequences of their actions in the learning community. Therefore, within the PD program, teachers engaged in cognitively demanding reflective tasks that required critical thinking skills. Initial tasks guided teachers to examine their instruction critically and then build on background knowledge and available resources that enhanced their self-reflection tendencies. They analyzed issues related to their learning, synthesized their understanding of the self-reflection process, and actively constructed their own learning in a practical context.

Design promotes continuous assessment and monitoring of learning.

Zeichner and Listen (2013) emphasized the importance of teachers asking themselves whether the results of teaching are good and, if so, for whom and in what ways within the learning context. Benamor and Guerroudj (2018) suggested the use of social constructivist professional development programs as an ideal vehicle for inviting teachers to demonstrate understanding through a broad-based assessment approach. Additionally, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) described self-assessment and reflection as essential characteristics of effective PD. Throughout the PD program, teachers experienced

opportunities to self-assess their instruction and students' learning. Using alternative assessment strategies such as reflective journals and peer feedback guided teachers in assessing their learning and the impact of their actions on themselves and their students.

Intervention Design. The PD program included two phases. Phase I consisted of two half-day PD workshops for all twelve participating teachers. Phase II was a six-week in-service PD program tailored to teachers' initial stage of reflective teaching as indicated by their scores on the RSAT survey. Phase II of the PD program was adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015). Originally, Hall and Simeral (2015) developed and implemented the program for American teachers in school districts in the United States. In consideration of the background of the foreign language teachers at DLIFLC, the facilitator-researcher added Phase I. In Phase II, she also included resources such as readings, videos, and podcasts about principles and practices of foreign language teaching and learning. She did not include all the reflective teaching tasks recommended by Hall and Simeral (2015). This decision was based on the applicability to DLIFLC context. The syllabus of the reflective teaching PD program is provided in Appendix A.

In Phase I, the participating teachers learned about their stages of reflective teaching as indicated by Hall and Simeral (2015). They engaged in discussions and hands-on activities to determine their learning objectives and learn about preconditions necessary for reflective teachers. They also brainstormed criteria for critical friendships and analyzed sample reflective journals. Additionally, the facilitator-researcher explained her role as a mentor and guided them in setting goals for their reflective teaching stages.

In Phase II, teachers followed their assigned PD plan. An outline of the syllabus of the PD program for teachers in the “action stage” of reflective teaching is as follows: In week 1, teachers reflect on their daily achievements and challenges. In week 2, they identify a student to work with and reflect on how that student succeeds and struggles for a week. In week 3, teachers design a lesson plan, and ask a colleague to observe their classrooms for a particular instructional strategy and keep detailed notes. In week 4, teachers invite their supervisors to visit their classes and share feedback about a particular instructional strategy or element of teaching. In week 5, teachers ask the facilitator-researcher or the school’s academic specialist to process and make a game plan, using the feedback received from the supervisor. In week 6, teachers take a thoughtful walk through their reflective journals and determine how their accomplishments and challenges throughout this week compare with the beginning of the journey. Throughout the weeks, teachers responded to reflective teaching prompts to guide their reflection.

Constructs

The action research investigated the impact of the six-week social constructivist PD program on foreign language teachers’ self-reflection tendencies. The construct of social constructivist PD is a social collaborative learning space that invites teachers to actively participate in constructing their learning yet is structured enough to provide guided discovery. The program engages teachers in learning experiences that drew on their prior experiences, communication with others, and interaction with learning activities that fell within their immediate teaching contexts (Pelech & Pieper, 2010). The construct of self-reflection was defined as when teachers have the awareness of their instructional realities (student, content, and pedagogy), are intentional in their actions,

accurately assess the impact of their instruction, and adjust their actions while teaching to attend to students' needs (Hall & Simeral, 2015). Accordingly, teachers' reflective teaching was measured using the pre-/posttest self-administered survey (RSAT) and teachers' responses to their final reflective journal prompts (Figure 3.1).

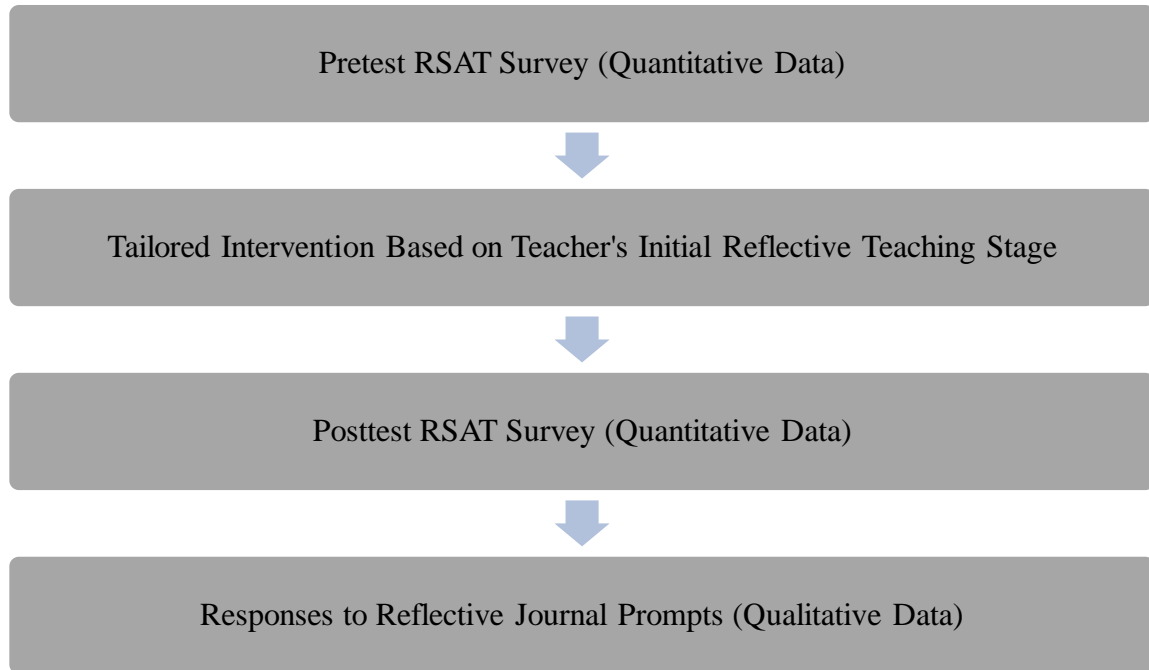


Figure 3.1. Research design, data type, and instruments used to collect data

Role of Researcher

The researcher had two roles in the study: as a facilitator of the PD program and a researcher. Therefore, she is a facilitator-researcher. She also works in a department other than that of the participating teachers, but she is fully engaged as a peer-mentor for teachers across the institute. Herr and Anderson (2015) argue that because researchers move across boundaries in their work, they often shift between being an insider and an

outsider. As an experienced foreign language teacher, a designer and facilitator of the training, and a peer of the participating teachers, the facilitator-researcher, on the continuum of positionality, is an “insider-outsider” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 40).

The facilitator-researcher has worked at the Faculty Development Division for over 11 years as a faculty development trainer, teacher-mentor, and academic specialist for foreign language education matters. Prior to that, she was an Arabic instructor, curriculum designer, test developer, and project manager of an online Swahili program. The facilitator-researcher does not have an administrative role and does not have power or authority over the participating teachers. Therefore, the facilitator-researcher cannot influence or affect the data collection or analysis. This position permitted the facilitator-researcher to be accepted easily and allowed for informal conversations with the participating teachers.

Participants

The purpose of the action research is to measure the impact of the six-week social constructivist PD program on DLIFLC foreign language teachers’ self-reflection. Therefore, and consistent with Creswell’s (2005) strategy of convenient sampling of individuals at a particular site, the sample consisted of 12 foreign language teachers. One teacher dropped out during the first week of the research after taking the pre-test survey. Teachers are native speakers of the languages they teach and are employed in the Undergraduate Education Schools at DLIFLC. Only twelve teachers committed to participate; four teachers of Arabic languages and dialects, three teachers of Chinese language, three teachers of Korean language, and two teachers of Russian language. In the data presentation and analysis, the participating teachers will be referred to as “PT 1,

PT 2, PT 3, PT 4, etc.” The participating teacher number 7 dropped out during the first week of the PD program. Nine teachers have master’s degrees and two teachers have doctorate degrees. Teachers’ years of teaching at DLIFLC ranged between one year and 14 years. Table 3.1 presents the biographical information of the participating teachers.

Table 3.1

Biographical Information of the Participating Teachers

Participating Teachers	Foreign Language Taught	Gender	Highest Educational Degree Earned	Teaching Experience at DLIFLC	Teaching Experience Before DLIFLC
PT 1	Chinese	M	master	> 1	2
PT 2	Chinese	F	doctorate	1	3
PT 3	Chinese	F	master	> 1	7
PT 4	Korean	F	master	16	2
PT 5	Korean	F	master	12	1
PT 6	Korean	F	master	14	1
PT 8	Russian	F	doctorate	1	10
PT 9	Arabic	M	master	1	20
PT 10	Arabic	F	master	1	13
PT 11	Arabic	M	master	1	15
PT 12	Arabic	F	master	4	22

Data Collection Instruments

This mixed-method action research examined how a social constructivist PD program impacts DLIFLC foreign language teachers’ self-reflection tendencies. The research was conducted once with eleven foreign language teachers. The participating teachers attended the PD program to advance their self-reflection tendencies. To answer the research main and sub-questions, the study used a pre-/posttest survey and teachers’ responses to reflective journal prompts after completing the PD program. Table 3.2 shows the main research question, instruments, and data analysis process.

Table 3.2

Main Research Question, Instruments, and Data Analysis Process

Action Research Question	Instruments	Data Analysis Process
1. How does the six-week social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?	. Pretest/Posttest RSAT survey . Teachers' posttest reflective journals	. Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics . Qualitative analysis of data using codes and themes

Pre-/posttest survey. The quantitative data was collected via the Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (RSAT) survey developed by Hall and Simeral (2015). The survey allowed for understanding of teachers' stages of reflective practices before and after attending the six-week PD program. The survey was designed to guide teachers in understanding their stages of reflective teaching. The pretest survey consists of two parts. Part one of the survey consists of 10 scenarios that illustrate five components of reflection. The first component, *awareness of instructional reality*, is addressed by scenarios 7 and 10. The second component, *intentionality of actions*, is addressed by scenarios 1, 3, and 6. The third component, *ability to accurately assess student needs*, is addressed by scenarios 4 and 9. The fourth component, *capability to adjust actions*, is addressed by scenarios 5 and 8. Lastly, the fifth component, *frequency of reflection*, is addressed by scenario 2 (Appendix C). Each scenario is offered with four options that pertain to the four stages of self-reflection. Part two collects demographic information about the teachers. This information includes the following: country of origin, gender, foreign language taught at DLIFLC, level of education, years of teaching experience at DLIFLC, and years of teaching experience before DLIFLC. The total score (sum of the

scores from the 10 scenarios) gives an indication of the reflective tendency. The score determines the stage of self-reflection that most likely characterizes a teacher's self-reflective tendencies: 10–14 points: *Unaware Stage*; 15–24 points: *Conscious Stage*; 25–34 points: *Action Stage*; and 35–40 points: *Refinement Stage*.

Because the survey was developed primarily for K–12 teachers, before using the survey, the researcher needed to ensure the applicability of the survey scenarios to the DLIFLC teaching context and the clarity of the terms used. Therefore, the researcher critically reviewed the survey items in a process called cognitive testing. Fowler (2014) suggests that survey items should be reviewed in a systematic and critical manner by those who are knowledgeable about the content to ensure applicability to research context. Five DLIFLC teachers used a think-aloud technique. These individuals informed the researcher about the way they understood the questions and their relevance to the DLIFLC teaching context, and recommended the use of the survey. This information was beneficial to the researcher to ensure that the scenarios are soliciting the information needed.

In email exchanges with P. Hall, coauthor of the RSAT (personal communication, November 18, 2018), explained that the survey has been used by countless individual schools and small and large school districts in the United States, including Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (Houston, Texas), Miami-Dade County Schools (Miami, Florida), Point Isabel Independent School District (South Texas, Texas), Page Unified School District (Page, Arizona), and Iowa City Schools (Iowa City, Iowa). Hall stated that face validity, construct validity, and content validity have been established by teachers in these school districts and the survey has acquired validity for assessing

teachers' stages of reflective teaching. Additionally, teachers' blogs at <http://bycfs.edublogs.org/> indicated that their scores from the instrument made sense, were meaningful, and helped them draw conclusions about their stages of reflective teaching. Tracey Graham-Richards (2016) posted the following on her blog:

“Pete Hall said that its [*sic*] his hope that when we read the chapter ‘on our stage’ we will say ‘Oh this is talking about me’. I must say that I do feel that this chapter was written for me and is about me. I barely made it in the Action Stage which means I am “proficient in the science of teaching but need to connect it with the art of making necessary alterations.” Being a first-time teacher in the U.S, I am learning daily to make that connection and I believe that with effective self-reflection I might acquire some mastery in that art.”

Accordingly, and in support of Creswell (2005), the facilitator-researcher can claim that the wide use of the instrument and endorsement by many teachers prove the face, content, and construct validity of the instrument.

Reflective Journal. Throughout the course, on a weekly basis, the participating teachers used reflective journals with guided prompts to share their reflective thoughts. They submitted the journals to the PD program posted on DLIFLC-Sakai online site as assignments. The facilitator-researcher used the final week's reflective journal to validate the results collected from the posttest RSAT survey. It included 10 open-ended questions (Appendix D). Journal prompts were adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015)

and were tailored to the teacher's initial self-reflection stage as indicated by the pretest RSAT results. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 9 solicit information about *teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content, and pedagogy)*; questions 4 and 5 solicit information about *teachers' intentionality when planning their lessons*; question 6 solicits information about *teachers' ability to use formative assessment techniques while teaching*; questions 7 and 8 solicit information about *teachers' ability to adjust instruction to the results of assessment*; and question 10 solicits information about *frequency of reflection*. The questions do not lead to any specific response and allow the participating teachers to express themselves freely. Questions were reviewed by four faculty development trainers at DLIFLC. They informed the researcher about the clarity of the questions and their relevance to the reflective teaching research construct.

Research Procedures

The initial step in the research process was to obtain approval from the IRB (Institute Review Board) of the University of South Carolina, the IRB of the DLIFLC, the director of the faculty development division, and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education. After receiving the approval of the two IRBs, the facilitator-researcher met with the schools' Deans and Associate Provost of Undergraduate Education to explain the purpose of the study, the data collection procedures, and to answer any specific questions they may had. The facilitator-researcher explained the survey, its purpose, and steps taken to protect the participants' confidentiality. She sought permission to recruit teachers. On behalf of the facilitator-researcher, the schools' Deans sent school-wide invitation emails to the teachers in their respective schools (Appendix B). The invitation email provided information about the research, the six-

week reflective teaching PD program, instruments used to collect data, benefits, potential risk, anonymity, and ethical considerations. Nineteen teachers sent the facilitator-researcher emails expressing their interest to participate in the study and requested additional information. Information was provided in person and/or over phone conversations with individual teachers. The facilitator-researcher explained the research purpose, how data will be collected, how the results will be used, the workload, teachers' role in the research, the instruments they will respond to, the benefits of their participation, and any potential risk. She provided the PD program syllabus to interested teachers and their supervisors. The syllabus explained the reflective tasks that teachers will carry out over a period of six weeks.

On May 2, 2019, the first day of the PD program, and before participating in any PD activities, the participating teachers were asked to respond to a paper-and-pencil RSAT survey (Hall & Simeral, 2015) that was used to assess their stages of self-reflection and to collect demographic information. During the intervention (from May 2 to June 14, 2019), the researcher kept record of her notes about teachers' engagement in completing the six-week PD program and any issues that may impact the results of the study. The notes were used to guide her in completing the action research successfully. During the last week of the PD program, the participating teachers (in the PD location) submitted their final week's reflective journal to the PD DLIFLC Sakai site as an assignment. On the last day of the PD program, they responded to a paper-and-pencil of the posttest RSAT survey. Four weeks later on July 19, 2019, the facilitator-researcher and five participating teachers met to review the data analysis and discuss the action plan.

Data Collection Considerations

Ethical considerations should be essential in any action research study. Mertler (2017) reminds action researchers to monitor and follow ethical guidelines when carrying out research in their own practices to ensure the safety, confidentiality, and well-being of the participating teachers or those who may be affected by the study. In keeping with Mertler's (2017) guidelines, the description below explains the ethical guidelines that the facilitator-researcher followed.

Consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. The facilitator-researcher obtained permission from all stakeholders to conduct the study and collect data. The initial step in the research process was to obtain approval from the IRB, the director of the faculty development division, the Associate Provost for Educational Technology and Development, the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, the Schools' Deans and Department Chairs, and the DLIFLC Commandant in order for the facilitator-researcher and the participating teachers take part in this study. She drafted and distributed an invitation letter and consent form to all the participating teachers (see Appendix B). The letter provided an overview of the research study and includes information about the facilitator-researcher and the type and title of the study, an overview of the role of the participating teachers and how participation is voluntary, an explanation of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the potential risks, or lack of thereof, of participating in the study.

Confidentiality of data collected. The participating teachers' consent letters ensured the confidentiality of the findings and how data will always be secured on a password-protected computer. Any data presented in hard copy were kept in a three-

ringed binder, in a locked file cabinet. The participating teachers were pre-assigned a number, which appeared on the participating teachers' surveys. The coding list and notebook data were kept in the facilitator-researcher's locked file cabinet and a password-protected computer. The data collected will be destroyed approximately one year after the completion of the study.

Respect for participants. The facilitator-researcher respects the needs of DLIFLC to enhance teacher PD and, subsequently, students' proficiency. Therefore, the quality of the research depended, to a large extent, on participating-teachers' cooperation. Participating teachers were treated with respect. The facilitator-researcher shared the purpose of the study, maintained open communication, and invited teachers to provide feedback. Findings were presented truthfully, with sensitivity and with the greatest of care so as not to hurt the participating teachers' feelings or self-image. Reporting the participating teachers' thoughts and actions may threaten the participating teachers' self-image. Therefore, it was critical to gain the trust of the teachers. The facilitator-researcher understands that because of her role as a faculty development specialist, who carries out teachers' certifications as part of her duties, teachers could potentially be hesitant in disclosing their genuine thoughts regarding their reflection and/or participation in the intervention. Because she has an insider-outsider position, the facilitator-researcher was concerned about receiving inauthentic responses. Accordingly, during the first meeting with the participating teachers, the facilitator-researcher explained that her interest in the study is a genuine desire to offer a PD opportunity that respects teachers' knowledge and autonomy. The main interest of the facilitator-researcher was hearing

teachers' voices and working with them to create a framework for PD that is for teachers and guided by teachers' reflection.

Safety of the participants. The invitation letter explained the option of opting out of participation in the study at any time. The facilitator-researcher explained during the first day of the PD program that if for any reason, the collected data may cause a conflict between the research goals and the facilitator-researcher's professional responsibility as a practitioner, the primary concern will always be the welfare, well-being, and needs of the participating teachers and the institute.

Ensuring credibility and presentation of the data. In this study, credibility lies in encouraging the participating teachers to share their genuine voices. It is worth noting that teachers' English level of proficiency varies but should not be lower than level 2, based on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) descriptions of speaking skill. According to the ILR official website, the title of level 2 is "limited working proficiency," and level 2 speakers are "able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements" and "can handle routine work-related interactions that are limited in scope. In more complex and sophisticated work-related tasks, language usage generally disturbs the native speaker" (ILR, 2018). As such, teachers should be able to read and comprehend the survey and write their reflective thoughts in the reflective journals adequately. When teachers used unclear language, the facilitator-researcher consulted with the teachers prior recording the data. While collecting and analyzing the data, facilitator-researcher shared interpretations with the participating teachers in order to receive feedback and deepen understanding of the data. This is called "member-checking" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 31). It was an essential step in establishing

the validity of the research to ensure evidence of the themes generated from the analysis. This required the sharing of every part of the research process: quantitative and qualitative data, analysis, and dissertation.

Analysis of Data

The research followed a quantitative-qualitative approach in collecting data. Such an approach challenged the researcher to make sense of the substantial amounts of data and salient patterns, and then construct a framework for communicating the meaning of what the data reveals. Therefore, the facilitator-researcher adopted the recommendations of Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) for analyzing and presenting data.

1. Analyzing the data. To answer the research main question and the five sub-questions, the facilitator-researcher collected quantitative data from the pre-/posttest RSAT surveys. To analyze the scores on the RSAT, she used descriptive statistics such as percentage increase and average. The data Analysis ToolPak Excel program was used to analyze data. To analyze the qualitative data collected from the reflective journals, the facilitator-researcher coded the data, assigned labels to codes, and grouped codes into themes. She looked for meaning-capturing codes that corresponded to the self-reflection tendencies. Quantitative and qualitative data were used to understand the impact of the PD program on foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies.

Since two types of data were collected at two different phases of the research, the facilitator-researcher used Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) guidelines for analyzing sequential mixed methods data analysis for explanatory studies. The purpose of the sequential analysis of quantitative-qualitative data was to use the information from the analysis of the first pretest database (quantitative) to inform the posttest database

(quantitative/qualitative). The mixed-method analysis of data answered the following questions: “In what ways do the qualitative data help explain the quantitative results? Which cases provide the best insights into the quantitative results? What results explain the correlational model?” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 143).

2. Representing the data. The facilitator-researcher represented the analysis in summary form, using tables and figures to share the findings of the quantitative data. The qualitative data were discussed in order to share the evidence of the emerging themes. The idea was used to “build a discussion that convinces the reader that the theme or category emerges from the data” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 133). The discussion provided multiple perspectives from the participating teachers.

The facilitator-researcher understood that the study provided a vast amount of data that may affect her work. She viewed knowledge as socially constructed and realized that data exist within the social conditions of their making (Mills, 2011). As she engaged in data analysis, she shared interpretations with the participating teachers in order to receive feedback to deepen her and the teachers’ understandings. The ongoing reflection generated by data gathering, analysis, and action taken suggested the successive cycle of action research: plan, act, observe, and reflect throughout the study (Mills, 2011).

Quality Criteria

Herr and Anderson (2015) remind readers that action researchers are not interested in positivists’ validity criteria or naturalistic researchers’ trustworthiness quality criteria. They state that neither “term is adequate for action research because

neither acknowledges its action-oriented outcomes” (p. 61). Besides, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state the following:

We think a variety of criteria, some appropriate to some circumstances and some to others, will eventually be the agreed-upon norm. It is currently the case that each inquirer must search for and defend the criteria that best apply to his or her work. (p. 47)

Accordingly, the facilitator-researcher adopted the Herr and Anderson (2015) five validity criteria as stated below.

1. Democratic validity. According to Herr and Anderson (2015), democratic validity requires that the multiple perspectives of all the individuals in the study have been accurately represented. In this action research, the research quality lied in encouraging the participating teachers to share their genuine voices. Additionally, the facilitator-researcher offered the participating teachers the chance to study the research findings to ensure the accuracy of data. While collecting and analyzing the data, the facilitator-researcher shared interpretations with the participating teachers in order to receive feedback and deepen understanding of the data. This required the sharing of every part of the research process: quantitative and qualitative data, analysis, and dissertation drafts.

2. Outcome validity. The action researcher confirmed that actions emerging from the study would lead to the successful resolution of the problem (Herr & Anderson, 2015). In this action research, the facilitator-researcher reflected on findings and assumptions, and determined the action plan. She outlined the findings; recommended actions associated with the findings; a timeline for action to occur; people who are

responsible for the actions and their roles. Within this framework, this action research allowed the facilitator-researcher to focus on the problem of practice specific to the self-reflection of foreign language teachers at DLIFLC. Data would provide a process for educators at DLIFLC to reflect critically on the design of teacher development programs in order to create opportunities for improvement. Data analysis led to an action plan to be implemented in the fall of 2020 for improved professional development that capitalizes on teachers' existing knowledge and self-reflection.

3. Process validity. According to Herr and Anderson (2015), the action researcher needs to guarantee that the study is conducted in a dependable and competent manner. They also assert that process validity requires researchers to reduce the researcher bias to find support for a favorable, feasible perspective. Therefore, the facilitator-researcher did the following: (1) identified a critical friend, who helped her reflect on her own situations by listening, prompting, and recording her insights throughout the process; and (2) collected data using pre-/posttest surveys and guided prompts in the participating teachers' reflective journals to compare them with one another in order to compare and combine data. Additionally, the facilitator-researcher did not limit the involvement only to those individuals whom she believed may provide favorable data. Participation was voluntary and open to all. She honestly shared data, analysis approach, and findings. Such strategies increased the process validity of the study.

4. Catalytic validity. Catalytic validity requires that the teachers participating in the action research be involved in the study and take action. The results serve as a catalyst for action (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The facilitator-researcher used strategies to

reorient, focus, and energize the participating teachers toward knowing the reality of their self-reflection in order to enhance it. Additionally, the facilitator-researcher and the participating teachers reoriented their views of the following: the role of PD in teachers' self-reflection; the teachers' role in taking the lead in their professional development; and the need to reflect continually and increase self-reflection tendencies and frequency. Overall, the action research brought new ways of looking at the role of PD in foreign language teachers' self-reflection.

5. Dialogic validity. The action researcher ensures that the study is reviewed by peers (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Throughout the study the facilitator-researcher, her assigned academic advisor, and Cohort members at the University of South Carolina, DLIFLC colleagues engaged in critical conversations about the action research processes and practices. All involved had a chance to give their opinions of the subject.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided information about the mixed-method approach followed in the action research design and the process used to conduct it. The problem of practice is that traditional PD for foreign language teachers does not improve self-reflection. Growth, improvement, and progress require intentional planning, conscious effort, and thought. The framework of the six-week PD program promoted teachers' self-reflection tendencies and frequency. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the use of a pre-/posttest surveys and reflective journals, respectively. This chapter included information about the collection and analysis of data and a description of the research setting, its participants, and the facilitator-researcher's role. Quality criteria and ethical considerations were presented so that the reader can assess the validity of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The problem of practice in this action research is that traditional professional development (PD) for foreign language teachers does not improve self-reflection. At DLIFLC, the majority of foreign language teachers are products of learning environments that differ greatly from those in the institute. Despite their individual differences and qualifications, most teachers receive less than eight hours of in-service PD on a specific topic and have no time to reflect on their existing practices, newly presented concepts, or students' responses to instruction. The effectiveness of such PD approaches is questionable. Therefore, the purpose of this action research is to develop a PD program that guides teachers to incorporate reflective teaching into their routines and take charge of their PD. During the PD program (adapted from Hall & Simeral, 2015), teachers gain awareness of their educational surroundings (students, content, and pedagogy), plan deliberately, and take actions with intentionality to improve students' learning, assess the impact of their decisions and actions, adjust their course of action based on the feedback they receive from those assessments, and continuously engage in a reflective teaching cycle continuously.

Understanding how in-service PD fosters foreign language teachers' self-reflection is needed to better design and facilitate PD programs that fit teachers' needs and subsequently enhance students' learning at DLIFLC. Accordingly, the facilitator researcher conducted this action research with an explanatory mixed-method approach to

investigate the impact of a six-week reflective teaching PD program on DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies and act upon it. Eleven teachers participated in the study: four Arabs, three Chinese, three Koreans, and one Russian. Nine teachers have master's degrees and two have doctoral degrees. The length of their teaching experience at DLIFLC varies. The three Korean teachers have more than 10 years of experience; one teacher of Arabic teacher has four years of teaching experience; the rest of the teachers have one year or less of experience.

Research Questions

One main research question and five sub-questions guided the study:

1. How does a social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?
 - a. Does the PD program impact DLIFLC teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content and pedagogy)?
 - b. Does the PD program impact teachers' intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning?
 - c. Does the PD program impact teachers' ability to assess students' learning?
 - d. Does the PD program impact teachers' capability to adjust their actions while teaching?
 - e. Does the PD program impact the frequency of teachers' self-reflection?

The intervention PD program was adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015) and was tailored to teachers' initial self-reflection tendencies. During the six-week period of

collecting data from May 2 to June 14, 2019, the participating teachers (PTs) experienced specific reflective tasks. The program had face-to-face and online phases. The course syllabus and materials were posted on the DLIFLC online learning management system. The online course included resources on best practices in foreign language teaching. Teachers' learning was mediated through interactions with the course resources, reflective tasks, students, colleagues, instructional coaches, supervisors and the facilitator researcher. DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection were measured using paper-and-pencil pre-and posttest Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (RSAT) surveys (Hall & Simeral, 2015). The survey was used to measure PTs initial and final self-reflection tendencies and frequency of self-reflection (see Appendix C). The survey includes 10 items with four options. Each option corresponds to a particular self-reflection stage. The survey was used to collect the quantitative data. Table 4.1 shows the scoring range of the four self-reflection stages and the assigned points for each item in the RSAT survey (Hall & Simeral, 2015).

Table 4.1

Scoring Range of the Four Self-Reflection Stages and Assigned Point Per Item of RSAT

Scoring Range	Assigned Point Per RSAT Item	Self-Reflection Stage
10–14	1	Unaware Stage
15–24	2	Conscious Stage
25–34	3	Action Stage
35–40	4	Refinement Stage

Teachers' responses to their final reflective journal were also used. The journal included 10 prompts to collect information about teachers' self-reflection tendencies

(qualitative data). Journal prompts were adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015) and were tailored to teacher's initial self-reflection stage as indicated by the pretest RSAT results. Questions 1, 2, 3, and 9 solicited information about *teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content, and pedagogy)*; questions 4 and 5 solicited information about *teachers' intentionality when planning their lessons*; question 6 solicited information about *teachers' ability to use assessment techniques while teaching*; questions 7 and 8 solicited information about *teachers' ability to adjust instruction to the results of assessment*; and question 10 solicited information about *frequency of reflection*. Qualitative data were coded to find and analyze PTs insights about each self-reflection tendency. Seven themes were created and coded with different colors: awareness of students; awareness of content; awareness of pedagogy; intentionality of actions in lesson planning; assessment of students' response to instruction; adjustment of instruction; frequency of reflection; and miscellaneous.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are reported to answer the research questions and are presented to reflect the impact of the PD program on the participating teachers' self-reflection tendencies. Tendencies are (a) awareness of instructional reality (students, content, and pedagogy), (b) intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning, (c) ability to assess students, (d) capability to adjust actions while teaching, and (e) frequency of reflection. To reiterate, the impact of the PD program on PTs' self-reflection tendencies was measured using two parameters: (1) pretest and posttest RSAT surveys (quantitative data) and (2) responses to self-reflection prompts (qualitative data). Since two types of data were collected at two different phases of the research, the

facilitator-researcher used Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) guidelines for analyzing sequential mixed methods data analysis for explanatory studies. The purpose of the sequential analysis of quantitative-qualitative data was to use the information from the analysis of the first pretest database (quantitative) to inform the posttest database (quantitative and qualitative). The qualitative data provided by PTs was used to explain teachers' gain or loss in their self-reflection tendencies. The mixed-method analysis of data answered the following questions: "In what ways do the qualitative data help explain the quantitative results? Which cases provide the best insights into the quantitative results? What results explain the correlational model?" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 143).

Main Research Question. How does a social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?

The results indicate an overall percentage increase of 22.4% in PTs' self-reflection tendencies. In the pretest, all PTs scored from 27 to 34 points in the survey, which placed them within the action stage tendencies (Hall & Simeral, 2015) with an overall 76.3% of self-reflection tendencies. In the posttest survey, all PTs scored from 27 to 39 points, which placed six PTs in the action stage and five PTs in the refinement stage tendencies with an overall 84.7% of self-reflection tendencies. However, two PTs experienced a decrease in their overall self-reflection tendencies from pretest to posttest surveys. They remained in the action stage though (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

PT's Pretest and Posttest Scores, and Stages and Percentage Increase or Decrease in Self-Reflection Tendencies

PTs	Pretest Score	Pretest Stage	Posttest Score	Posttest Stage	Percentage Increase or Decrease
PT 3	28	Action	39	Refinement	+39.3%
PT 12	28	Action	37	Refinement	+32.1%
PT 4	32	Action	36	Refinement	+12.5%
PT 2	33	Action	37	Refinement	+12.1%
PT 11	34	Action	38	Refinement	+11.8%
PT 5	30	Action	33	Action	+10%
PT 8	30	Action	33	Action	+10%
PT 9	29	Action	31	Action	+6.9%
PT 1	27	Action	29	Action	+7.4%
PT 10	33	Action	31	Action	-6%
PT 6	32	Action	27	Action	-15.6%

Hall and Simeral (2015) describe teachers in the action stage as those who are experienced teachers but do not make the necessary or specific changes in their actions to respond to students' learning. They are hesitant to tweak and adjust their instruction and content to maximize every student's potential in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers in the refinement stage continuously reflect on their teaching and think critically about their instructional strategies and student learning. They are very motivated and have a wealth of knowledge with which to adjust their teaching strategies in order to improve student learning. Their differentiated instructional approach that attends to students' needs results in an improved learning experience for students.

The cases that provided the best insights into the quantitative results are PT 3 and PT 12. They had the highest overall increase in the self-reflection tendencies, 39.3% and 32.3% respectively. Their reflective journal entries were the most elaborate and were supported by concrete examples of actions that they took to make a positive change in

their students' learning experience. They were intrinsically motivated to participate in reflective teaching tasks. They always preplanned their reflective tasks ahead of time and discussed the details with the facilitator-researcher. They critically assessed their actions and the impact of their instruction on students' learning. Their behavior supports Dewey's (1910) understanding of reflection. According to Dewey (1910) the process of understanding and improving one's own teaching must start with reflection upon one's own experience. It is a commitment by the teachers.

Additionally, PT 3 and PT 12 used teaching resources that was provided on the reflective teaching program website and their prior knowledge and numerous instructional strategies to intentionally adjust instruction in order to attend to students' needs. They easily navigated through the course syllabus and activities and found all the reflective tasks beneficial. They were content to take the lead in furthering their professional development and having the resources and peers to support their learning. PT 3 and PT 12 constantly thought about making a positive change in their surrounding context. This included students, other teaching team members, supervisors, and the overall school. They recognized their role as change agents and acted responsibly and with wholeheartedness (Dewey, 1910). PT 12 wrote:

I can safely say that while I engaged my students in new learning strategies, I was engaged in self-reflective practices all the time. Through the past six weeks, I have been looking back on teaching, self-assessing the strengths and weaknesses of my teaching, evaluating the effectiveness of my teaching on students' learning and

performance, adjusting or considering new teaching strategies to enhance students' learning and maximize their progress, trying new instructional strategies, teaching, reflecting, responding, acting, implementing, and repeating this process, and doing an anonymous student survey to identify areas of my teaching where the students' learning is not happening.

Furthermore, PT 3 and PT 12 acknowledged that in order to make a change, they need the supporting community. They actively and constantly collaborated and discussed their assigned reflective tasks with peers, supervisors, and facilitator-researcher throughout the reflective teaching program. They perceived their participation in the reflective teaching program as a turning point in their teaching profession and wished that teachers in their teaching teams would have joined the program. PT 12 wondered how to encourage other teachers to participate in the reflective teaching program. She wrote: "...how would I sell the idea of reflective teaching to my teaching team? They see that their instructional techniques are okay...not necessarily perfect, and they do not want to risk this with un-guaranteed and untested new techniques."

Moreover, PT 3 and PT 12 demonstrated a strong desire to share their experiences with others through different professional venues such as writing an article for publication or presenting in a conference. Such a demeanor is a true example of a teacher in the refinement stage of self-reflection as described by Hall and Simeral (2015). They stated that teachers in the refinement stage "continue to build [their] reflective skills,

...share [their] learning with others, ... participate in leadership opportunities, and support the development of [their] colleagues and others” (p. 131).

In contrast to PT 3 and PT 12, PT 10 and PT 6 experienced an overall decrease in their self-reflection tendencies: – 6% and –15.5%, respectively. Their reflective journal entries did not provide specific actions or concrete evidence that explained the impact of their participation in the reflective teaching program on their self-reflection tendencies. Rather, their entries reported actions that placed them within their initial action stage tendencies. It is worth noting that they both experienced hardships and challenges carrying out all the assigned reflective teaching tasks. During the six-week period of the PD program, PT 10 was assigned to teach in three different departments for five or six teaching hours a day. She taught in three different teaching teams three different groups of students in the first, second and third semesters in two different language programs. Nevertheless, she continued to participate in the reflective teaching program. She wrote, “I have been intrigued to look ahead at the reflective journal weekly questions and made sure to think about them and answer them because they open up the door for any teacher to see the highlighted main points that we need to focus on.”

PT 6’s assigned students were on a classroom-break for one week. During that time, she was assigned to another class to support with speaking practice activities. The following week, she was scheduled to attend a one-week teacher certification program while participating in the reflective teaching program. The conflict in the schedule prevented her from performing the reflective tasks in weeks 3 and 4 and combining the reflective tasks of weeks 5 and 6. Similarly to PT 10, PT 6 was assigned to teach in two different teaching teams two different groups of students in different phases in the

language programs. She had a desire to make changes and tried different instructional strategies but could not determine the effectiveness of her actions. She wrote, “I am not sure that I am making any changes effectively because classes I am assigned are not connected and that there was not enough time to check the effectiveness or results.” The fact that she questioned the effect of her instruction on students’ learning is a reflective action by itself. As Zeichner and Listen (2013) described reflective teachers as those who ask themselves whether the results of their teaching are good, and if so, for whom and in what ways within the learning context.

Research sub-question a. Does the PD program impact teachers’ awareness of their instructional reality (student, content, and pedagogy)?

The tendency of awareness of instructional reality was measured by items 7 and 10 in the RSAT survey with a total of 8 points out of 40. Hall and Simeral (2015) explained that teachers in the action stage “see the big picture and can make daily connection to it... They have several instructional approaches in their toolbelt and are proficient in their use of them” (p. 101). Teachers at the refinement stage “connect the right strategy to the right student to optimize learning..., have a solid understanding of the content that needs to be taught, what students know and don’t know, and what pedagogical approach will be help them learn.” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 128).

Results of the pre- and posttest RSAT surveys indicated that eight PTs out of eleven experienced an increase in their overall awareness of instructional reality from the beginning of the study to the end. The pretest overall average was 5.8 and the posttest overall average was 7.9. The overall percentage increase for all PTs was 22.4% from pretest to posttest surveys. This is the highest percentage increase in all the tendencies.

PT 3 and PT 11 had the highest increase in scores. PT 3 gained 4 points and PT 11 gained 3 points to reach a total of 8 points on their posttest surveys, which is the highest score. PT 2 and PT 12 had the same pre-and posttest scores, 7 and 6 respectively. PT 6 experienced a slight decrease in score. She scored one point less on the posttest survey, 5 points (Figure 4.1).

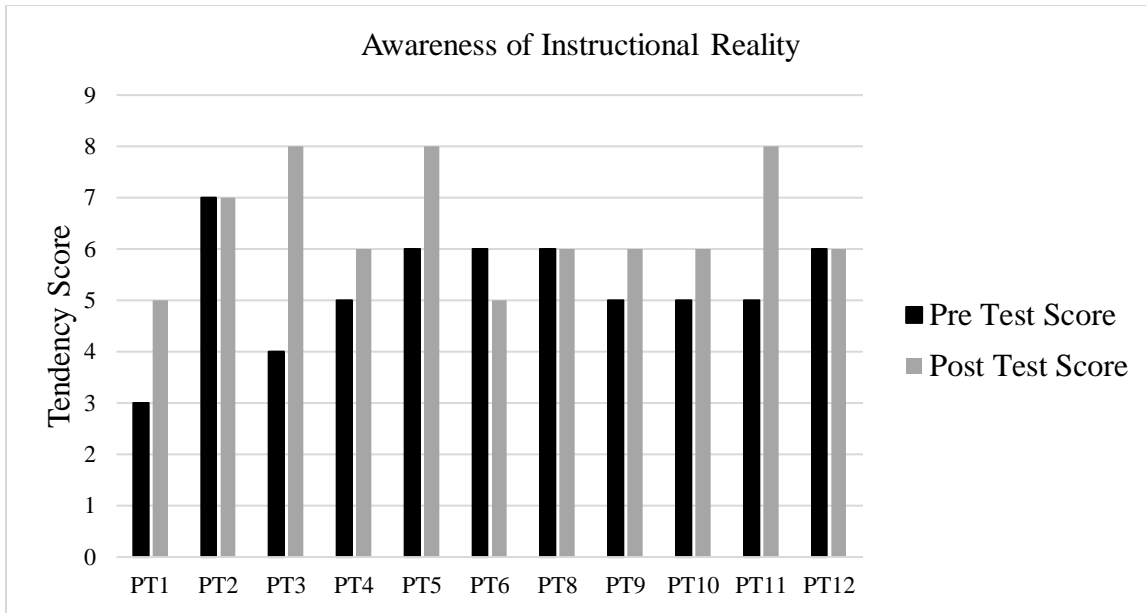


Figure 4.1. Pretest and Posttest Scores of Awareness of Instructional Reality

The cases that provided the best insights were PT3 and PT 11. Their scoring was supported by their journals’ entries. Their awareness of the interconnectedness between their students, content and teaching strategies increased. They both provided several concrete examples of how their participation in the reflective teaching program increased their awareness of the students, content and pedagogy. In regard to PT 3, she indicated, “I noticed that my awareness of my students has been increasingly growing over the course of my reflective teaching journey.” She developed new understanding of what the

students can and cannot do, how much time they needed to complete certain activities, the relationship between students' learning, their motivation and the tailored instructional activities she prepared, and the relationship between her and students. For example, PT 3 observed students' struggle during the teaching listening hour and realized the ineffective teaching strategies that she had used before. She then changed her teaching strategies by creating technology-based activities covering different learning objectives. She realized that such change allowed students to learn at their pace.

She also showed new realization of the role of content in students' learning and her instruction. For example, she changed the outdated content in the textbook to render it current and to reflect the current Chinese military. She noticed that such a change increased students' retention of vocabulary, tense, genre, pragmatic aspects, self-confidence, and motivation which resulted in an increased learning input and output during the teaching listening hour. After dreaded the listening hour, students were excited to learn. Regarding how her awareness of pedagogy has grown during the reflective teaching program, she wrote,

I used to teach to the schedule and use whatever materials I was given... Now, I understand that students are the center of the curriculum and instruction. Where students are is the starting point of our planning... Now, I feel that we, the instructor and the students, were creating a learning experience together.

Similarly, PT 11 acknowledged the impact of the reflective teaching program in raising his awareness of students' needs, content, and pedagogy. His goal was not only to teach students but to critically assess his instruction. He wrote, "From this study, I think I started building new awareness of the strong cause-and-effect relationship between teacher actions and student results.... The reflective teaching methods gave me more insights regarding the content and the use of the current curriculum." He constantly observed students' interactions with each other, his teaching and the content. He assessed students' performance and level of engagement through class activities. He made major changes in the content by replacing old reading and listening materials with updated ones and incorporated the use of technology to enhance students' learning. He adopted a student-centered approach and considered student learning styles and preferences when designing the lessons. He wrote: "I can see a good impact of my instruction on my student learning... I think it will increase our students' comprehension."

In contrast, PT 6 was the only teacher who experienced a loss of one point in the posttest survey. The fact that her students were on a one-week classroom break and that she was assigned to attend a different PD program for another week hindered her from achieving a satisfactory feeling about her awareness of students' needs. Nevertheless, she monitored students' responses to instruction, i.e., whether they were engaged, passive, or frustrated. She indicated that prior attending the reflective teaching program, she used to teach the content and activities in the textbook as assigned. Often, she felt that it was busy work for students with very limited contribution to their learning. Then, during the reflective teaching program, she decided to teach only the content that

attended to students' needs and presented current authentic reading and listening materials. She noted that she had a limited time in which to reflect. Such limitation created a great challenge for her.

Research sub-question b. Does the PD program impact teachers' intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning?

In the RSAT, intentionality to facilitate students' learning is measured by items 1, 3, and 6 with a total of 12 points out of 40. At the action stage level, teachers "work intentionally toward better engagement, more meaningful instruction, and solid management" (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 102). On the other hand, at the refinement stage level, teachers "orchestrate everything...arrange tasks, engagement activities, questioning strategies, seating charts, ...for optimal student performance...every decision is deliberate" (p. 129).

Results of the pre- and posttest RSAT surveys showed that the pretest average score was 8.7 points and the posttest average was 8.9 points, with an overall percentage increase of 2.1% from pretest to posttest surveys, which is the lowest percentage increase compared to all the other tendencies. Seven PTs out of eleven experienced an increase in their overall intentionality to facilitate students' learning from the beginning of the study to the end. However, PT 9 maintained the same score of 7 points and PT 1, PT 10, and PT 8 scored lower on the posttest survey compared with their scores on the pretest survey. PT 1 lost 5 points, PT 10 lost 4 points, and PT 8 lost one point. PT 3 had the highest gain of 5 points followed by PT 12 with 3 points (Figure 4.2).

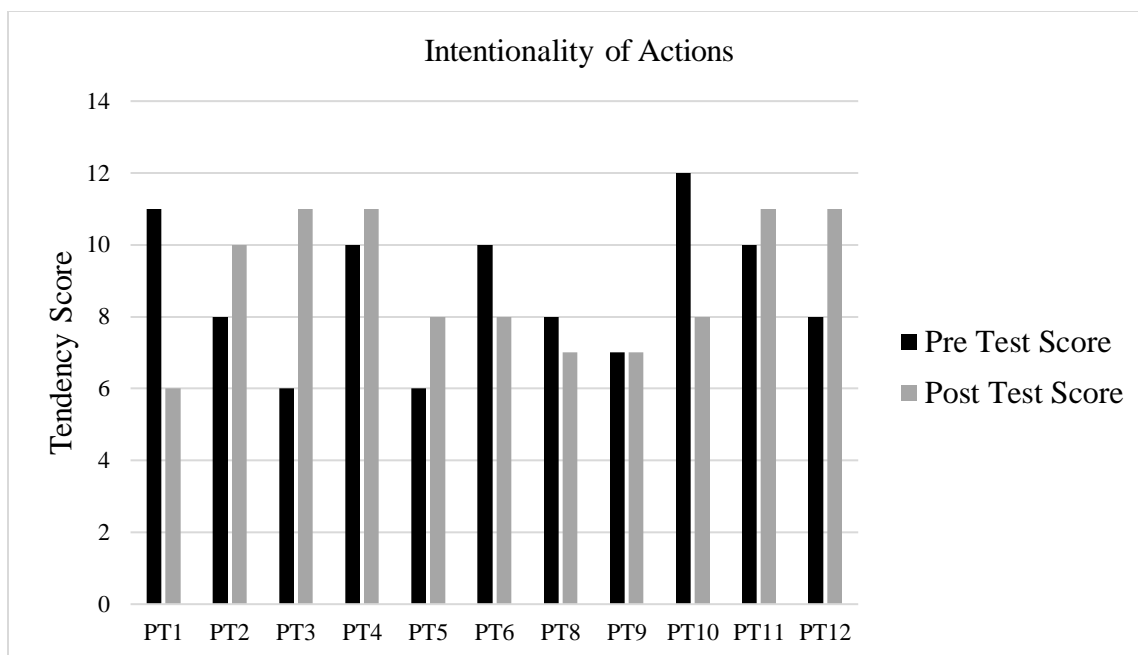


Figure 4.2. Pretest and Posttest Scores of Intentionality of Actions

The cases that provided the best insights are the experiences of PT 3 and PT 12. The journal entries of PT 3 provided concrete examples of how she orchestrated her classroom with great intentionality. She figured a strategy that worked well for her instruction and students’ learning. She examined students’ homework, their performance in class, figured out weaknesses and set the learning objectives and activities to meet students’ needs. She considered students’ learning preferences as well when designing lesson activities. She preplanned how to group students in every activity and the grouping strategies she used. She even preplanned the type of questions to ask in class and speculated about students’ responses. She wrote “Now, I start to ponder on what kind of questions my students may ask and prepare my answers in advance.” She

explained that she speculated students' responses to content and activities and preplanned the response ahead of time. She wrote,

For instance, when teaching about Chinese soldiers' life, one of their duties was to fold their blankets when they get up. Folding blankets is actually a cultural thing in China, which is quite different from the American way of arranging the sheets and making a bed. I thought about this difference before the class and found visual aids for students to gain a better understanding about how blankets can be folded. As expected, students asked me this question in class, I thus explained the difference.

Similarly, PT 12 planned her lessons with great intentionality. She indicated that during the reflective teaching program, she realized that importance of deliberately planning her lessons. She identified what students can and cannot do, how they learn and the appropriate content and strategies to guide their learning. She started with the big picture by setting the lesson goals and then worked backwards towards stating specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely objectives. She wrote, "It is very important that the goal and objectives are stated explicitly so that students would know what the lesson aims are, the purpose behind every task, and how they can do the task successfully." Based on the objectives, she then organized the content and carefully planned the teaching techniques for whole class, and for pair, group, and individual work. She wrote, "While drafting the step-by-step activities, I would consider if the lesson had sufficient various techniques to scaffold students' learning and to keep them engaged, if

all activities were sequenced logically, if each activity is timed appropriately and if the pace of the whole class is realistic.”

In contrast, PT 1 and PT 10 had the highest decrease in their posttest survey scores, 5 and 4 points, respectively. Both claimed having intentionality of actions at the refinement stage in their pretest survey. PT 1 entries in the reflective journal did not include evidence of skillfully managing all aspects of his teaching for specific purposes at any point in the reflective teaching program. On the contrary, he indicated that during the program, his lesson plans had been more intentional. He provided an example of how he used to set general lesson objectives that were not measurable. Then, during the program, he learned about how to set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely objectives. Such evidence contradicts his claim of having deliberate intentionality of actions at the refinement stage before participating in the reflective teaching program and confirms the intentionality of his actions at the action stage before and after attending the program.

In contrast, in the pretest survey, PT 10 claimed the highest level of intentionality of actions at the refinement stage, a score of 12 points. In the posttest survey, she scored 8 points, an intentionality of actions at the action stage. In her journal entries, she described herself as a teacher, who is always prepared for class and who pre-planned all aspects of her lessons. However, starting with the second week in the reflective teaching program, she was assigned to teach novice students and two other classes in different phases in the language program. She explained that, during that time period, she relied on the textbook materials, since it was her first time teaching the content to novice students. She carefully checked the textbook content before teaching and ensured

meaningful instruction and solid classroom management. She did not provide concrete evidence of how she set learning goals, curricula, materials, instructional strategies, student groupings, etc. This reflects intentionality of actions at the action stage. After discussing the contradiction with her, she explained that before participating in the reflective teaching program, she was teaching an advanced class for a long period of time. She prepared the lesson content, materials, instructional strategies, seating arrangement, grouping, and even anticipated students' responses to instruction and had preplanned interventions. Such findings explain the decrease in her intentionality of actions during the reflective teaching program. According to Hall and Simeral (2015), the most experienced teachers may experience a decrease in their reflective tendencies for many reasons. This may include teaching different students, new content, or a different physical space. In conclusion, these findings may suggest that PT 10's self-assessment of her intentionality of actions in the pretest and posttest surveys is accurate. But accuracy is not suggested in PT 1's self-assessment of his intentionality in the pretest survey.

Research Sub-question c. Does the PD program impact teachers' ability to assess students' learning?

In the RSAT, ability to assess students' learning is measured by items 4 and 9, with a total of 8 points out of 40. At the action stage level, most often teachers can explain whether an individual student can or cannot learn. However, it is difficult for them to explain the specific aspects that what this student knows or does not know and how the student can learn (Hall & Simeral, 2015). At the refinement stage, "Assessment does not signal the end of instruction. Every planned task, engagement activity...is

considered an assessment, all of which provide the teacher with continuous information that will direct his or her next steps” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 130).

Results of the pre-and posttest RSAT surveys showed that seven PTs out of eleven experienced an increase in their overall ability to assess student’s learning from the beginning of the study to the end. The pretest average score was 6.4 points and the posttest average was 7.2 points with an overall percentage increase of 12.9% from pretest to posttest surveys. Two PTs maintained the same score; PT 2 maintained a score of 8 points (highest score), and PT 4 maintained a score of 7 points. PT 6 lost two points with a total score of 4 points, and PT 11 lost one point with a total score of 7 points on the posttest survey. PT 12 had the highest increase in score. She moved from 5 points in pretest survey to 8 points in the posttest survey (Figure 4.3).

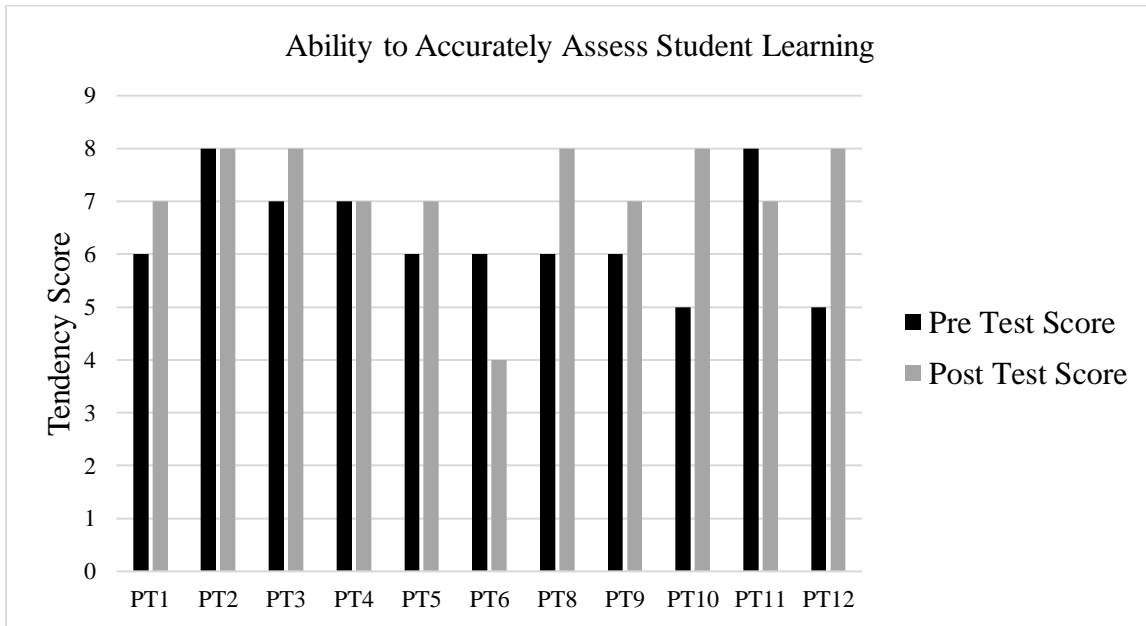


Figure 4.3. Pretest and Posttest Score of Ability to Assess Student Learning

The case that provided the best insight is the experience of PT 12. The increase in score was supported by PT 12's journal entries. She explained that the reflective teaching program emphasized the need for assessing students' linguistic and personal profiles and using such data in developing lesson plans. She was encouraged to put in action her prior knowledge of formative assessment. She wrote, "The reflective teaching program emphasizes considering students' linguistic and personal profiles constantly when planning lessons and teaching... I recognized that the more I consider their profiles, the clearer the picture I have to what and how to teach them." She provided concrete examples of using multiple formative assessment strategies and monitoring students' progress. For example, one of her students had a very strong visual learning tendency and experienced difficulty understanding details in listening passages. She used to support him with graphic organizers and cloze activities. During the reflective teaching program, she realized that such techniques (recommended for visual learners) were ineffective. So, she re-examined his profile and realized that he is an extrovert and likes to be challenged. She discussed the issue with the student to collect more information. She then tried a new approach for pre-listening tasks that she learned from the available resources in the reflective teaching program. She noticed that the student's comprehension, engagement and speaking ability increased. She wrote, "Since I started the reflective teaching program, I have been focusing on assessing students' self-awareness as learners, assessing their learning and study skills and strategies and assessing the learners' reaction to class activities and materials."

Clearly, the increased ability of PT 12 to assess students' learning is consistent with Hall and Simeral's (2015) understanding of self-reflection. They explain that there

is a gap between learning about a skill and being able to implement it effectively. Self-reflection fills in the gap through “deep, continuous, rigorous thought about that skill” (p. 15). PT12’s dedication to the reflective tasks in the reflective teaching program guided her to employ her prior knowledge of classroom assessment principles to critically examine students’ performance, what they can and cannot learn, and their preferences and adjust her instruction accordingly to enhance students’ learning. She asserted that her experience in the reflective teaching program was very rewarding for her and for her students. Her beliefs and reflective actions confirm the findings of Disu (2017). He explained that the reflective teaching practices guide teachers in “examining their teaching, assessing students’ learning, seeking new ideas, and testing theories to gain new perspectives on their classroom experiences” (p. 76).

In contrast, PT 6 had a pretest score of 6 points and posttest score of 4, which is a score for the conscious stage of self-reflection, the next stage lower than the action stage on the continuum of self-reflection. According to Hall and Simeral (2015), teachers in the conscious stage “know they need to regularly assess students and will often follow the easiest path to gather data: relying on weekly assignments and test results” (p. 77). Since during the period of the reflective teaching program, PT 6’s students were on an academic break for one week and she attended another PD program for a week, she had no chance to critically or accurately assess students’ learning. She relied on students’ overall response to instruction to gather data, which is a typical behavior of self-reflection practice in the conscious stage. She wrote, “Usually after every activity, I checked if they learned well or how much they got from the activities.”

Saric and Steh (2017) argued that “Despite all the well-established role of reflection, a large gap between the professed goals and the actual reflective practice of teachers remains” (p. 67). Saric and Steh (2017) question teachers’ readiness to adequately follow up on the reflection process or whether they are offered the supporting conditions in which to reflect. PT 6’s case is a genuine example of the challenges that teachers may face with regard to effective self-reflection.

Research Sub-question d. Does the PD program impact teachers’ capability to adjust their actions while teaching?

In the RSAT, teachers’ capability to adjust their instruction while teaching is measured by items 5 and 8 with a total score of 8 out of 40. Hall and Simeral (2015) explain that in the action stage of self-reflection, to re-engage off-task students, teachers most often use strategies that they have used before and are comfortable with that may or may not be successful. Then, they modify their instruction on the following day to attend to struggling and disengaged students. At the refinement stage, teachers “make immediate and fluid adjustments to a lesson, responding directly to student questions, struggles, thinking, and actions” (Hall & Simeral, 2015, p. 130).

Results of the pre- and posttest RSAT surveys indicated that the pretest average score for all PTs was 6.7 points and the posttest average was 7.2 points with an overall percentage increase of 6.8% from pretest to posttest surveys. Six PTs out of eleven experienced an increase in their overall capability to adjust their actions while teaching from the beginning of the study to the end. PT 3 maintained a score of 8 points, PT 6 maintained a score of 6 points, and PT 9 maintained a score of 7 points. PT 10 scored lower on the posttest survey compared with the pretest survey. Her pretest score was 7

points, and posttest score was 5 points. Again, PT 12 had the highest increase in score. She scored 8 points in the posttest survey (Figure 4.4).

The case that provides the best insight is the experience of PT 12. The entries in her reflective journal indicated that prior attending the reflective teaching program, her main goal was teaching the content as indicated on the teaching schedule. While teaching she realized that students struggled, but she did not adjust instruction to attend to their needs. During the reflective teaching program, she realized the need to teach the students, not the textbook, and to speculate on students' responses to instruction before teaching. She preplanned alternative strategies to facilitate the learning of struggling students. For her, teaching was a cyclical process of teaching, assessing on the spot students' learning, adjusting instruction as needed and assessing students' responses to adjusted instruction. She wrote, "Reflective teaching is about adjusting instruction to students' needs to help them learn more effectively and efficiently." She provided concrete examples to support her claim. She wrote, "I anticipated students' responses to the activities and content and pre-planned interventions. Nevertheless, surprises may happen." For example, she explained that during the supervisor's observation of her class, during the pre-listening prediction summary activity, students were very engaged, and their summaries were directly related to the content of the listening passage. However, their discussion took longer than the time she had estimated in her lesson plan. At that moment, she had two options: to interrupt students and move on to the next activity and stay on time or to let the students discuss the listening passage prediction summaries, which were accurate. She then decided to go with the latter option. At the end of the class, students expressed their satisfaction with the pre-listening activity.

In contrast, PT 10 had a pretest score of 8 points (refinement stage score) and posttest score of 5 points of ability to adjust instruction on the continuum of self-reflection. According to Hall and Simeral (2015), teachers in the conscious stage “tend to remain rather consistent with their teaching strategies, even when students are not learning at high rates. Interventions occur in a reactive manner; if a student is struggling right now, then the teacher may react with an immediate action” (p. 77). PT 10 reflective journal entries briefly described her response to students’ struggles in a reactive manner. Considering the fact that PT 10 was teaching different groups of students in different departments, it was difficult to adjust instruction fluidly to attend to students’ needs. As a teacher, who is supporting different departments and was asked to teach specific textbook activities, she did not have the time to appropriately adjust instruction in response to students’ struggle.

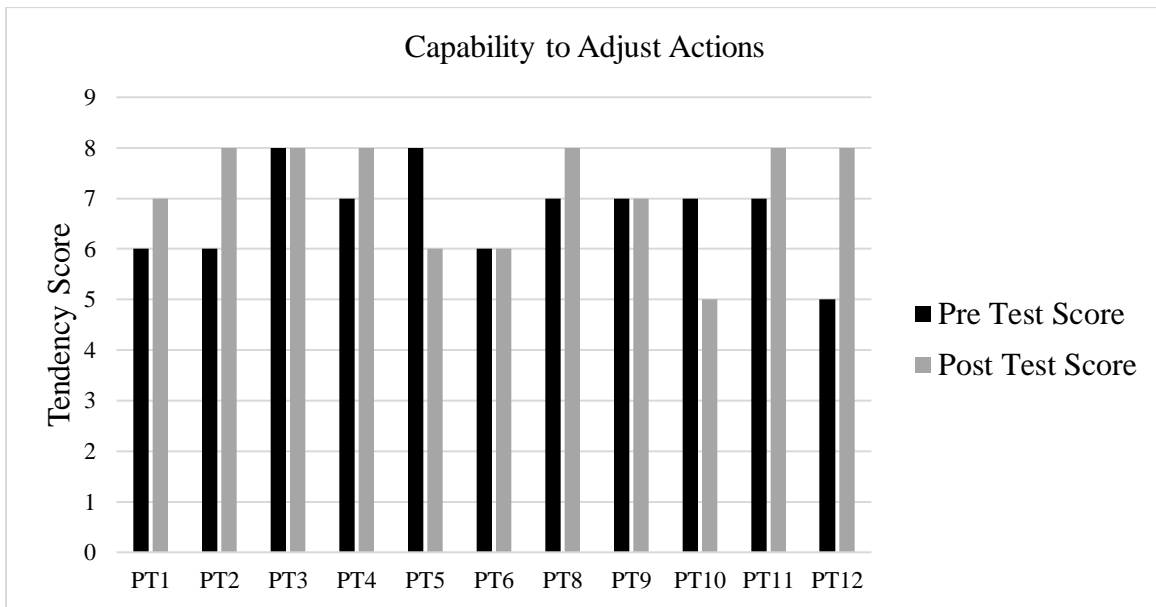


Figure 4.4. Pretest and Posttest Score of Capability to Adjust Actions

Research Sub-question e. Does the PD program impact the frequency of teachers' self-reflection?

In the RSAT survey, the frequency of self-reflection is measured by item 2, with a total score of 4 points out of 40. It is worth mentioning that in the pretest survey, PTs showed frequency of reflection of the unaware, the action and the refinement stages (Figure 4.5). According to Hall and Simeral (2015), at the unaware stage, teachers “reflect when prompted by an administrator, coach or colleague” (p. 26). At the action stage, teachers “routinely reflect after teaching a lesson and/or analyzing an assessment” (p. 27). At the refinement stage, teachers “continuously reflect, including during the lesson itself” (p. 27).

Results of the pre- and posttest RSAT surveys indicated that the pretest average score was 3.4 points and the posttest average was 3.9 points with an overall percentage increase of 13.2% from pretest to posttest surveys, which placed all PTs, except PT1, in the refinement stage of frequency of self-reflection. PT 3, PT 4, and PT 8 experienced an increase of point in their frequency of reflection from the beginning of the study to the end. The rest of the PTs maintained the same scores of 4 points (highest score) on the pre-and posttest surveys. PT 1 had the highest increase in score (see Figure 4.6). His pretest survey score was 1 point (frequency of reflection in unaware stage); his posttest survey score was 3 points (action stage). The cases that provided the best insights and supported the quantitative results are the cases of PT 3, PT 4, and PT 8. Their journal entries justified their score on the posttest survey. They provided concrete evidence of reflecting continuously before, during, and after teaching. For example, PT 3 explained that before participating in the self-reflection program, she occasionally reflected and

never thought of thinking about teaching outside the schoolhouse. However, during the six-week period of the training, she realized that she was thinking and talking about her students, teaching materials, and activities all times; while carpooling with colleagues, shopping at Walmart, checking her Facebook looking for teaching materials, and dining in restaurants. She wrote, “I enjoy living a life of meaningful self-reflection.” PT 4 explained that before participating in the program she used to reflect only after teaching a particular lesson. Then, while participating in the reflective teaching program, she continuously reflected. She wrote, “Now, I do reflection systematically at the lesson planning stage, during the class (this is quite new to me!) and after class.” Similarly, PT 8 wrote, “It was often in my mind during most of my classes. This program has been a good reminder.”

In contrast, PT 1 claimed in the pretest survey a frequency of the unaware stage of self-reflection and in the posttest survey a frequency of the action stage. He explained in the journal entries that during the reflective teaching program, he engaged in self-reflection at the end of every teaching day. He wrote, “I like to reflect at the end of my day, asking myself what part went well and what part didn’t go well. How can I do better tomorrow in terms of my teaching approaches, instruction, and material preparations?” He also indicated that his busy schedule did not allow him to reflect during the day. As a novice teacher, PT 1 felt the need for additional time to reflect. This need is supported by Dewey (1910). He noted that beginning teachers would require more time than veteran teachers to progress through the stages of reflection. According to Hall and Simeral (2015), such frequency of self-reflection as described in the qualitative data places PT 1 in the conscious stage of frequency of self-reflection, not in the action stage of self-

reflection as he reported in the posttest survey. This finding indicates PT 1's inaccuracy in reporting the frequency of his self-reflection in the RSAT survey.

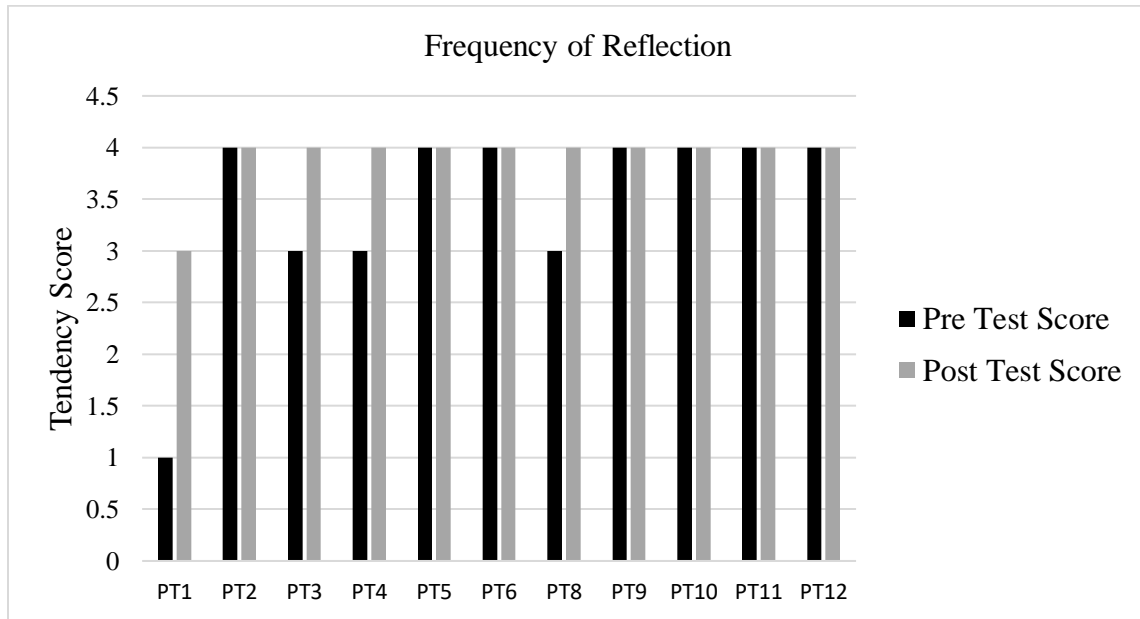


Figure 4.5. Pretest and Posttest Score of Frequency of Reflection

Interpretation of Results of the Study

The six-week reflective teaching program adopted a social constructivist approach to mediate DLIFLC foreign language teachers' construction of knowledge and self-reflection tendencies by creating a social and collaborative learning space. The participating teachers were invited to actively participate in constructing their learning, yet the program was structured enough to provide guided discovery. The program engaged teachers in learning experiences that drew on their prior knowledge and experiences, communication with others, and interaction with PD activities within their immediate teaching contexts.

The purpose of the PD program was to increase PTs' self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection. This included: (1) gaining awareness of their educational surroundings such as students' needs, the teaching materials, and pedagogy; (2) planning and delivering their teaching intentionally; (3) assessing the impact of their instructional decisions on students' learning; (4) adjusting their instruction based on the assessment; and (5) increasing the frequency of self-reflection.

The PD program adopted Hall and Simeral's (2015) reflective teaching cycle. Hall and Simeral (2015) assert that growth in self-reflection tendencies tends to follow a repetitive cycle. First, teachers need to develop the awareness before acting intentionally, then engage in intentional practice before assessing the impact of their actions and determine the impact before they enact interventions. Hall and Simeral (2015) presented teachers' reflective tendencies along a self-reflection continuum. They explained that as teachers build their knowledge and develop their teaching skills, they move along the continuum with the end goal of reaching a refinement stage of self-reflection, which is characterized by continuous reflection. Hall and Simeral (2015) identified four stages of self-reflection: (1) unaware stage, (2) conscious stage, (3) action stage, and (4) refinement stage.

The findings showed that PTs experienced an increase in their overall self-reflection tendencies after participating in the six-week reflective teaching program. PTs' awareness of instructional realities increased the most. The next highest increase was PTs' frequency of self-reflection. This was followed by an increase in PTs' ability to assess students' needs and capability to adjust their instruction. The smallest increase was in PTs' tendency of intentionality of actions. The increase varied from one teacher

to another. All PTs experienced an increase in their overall self-reflection tendencies except, two PTs. Five PTs moved to the next higher self-reflection stage, the refinement stage, and four PTs moved to a higher band in the action stage. The two PTs, who experienced decrease in their self-reflection tendencies remained in the action stage of self-reflection. The qualitative data in the reflective journal entries made by PTs explained or questioned the quantitative increase and decrease in the self-reflection tendencies.

Three PTs provided the best insights and highest percentage increase in all self-reflection tendencies. Their journal entries explicitly justified the quantitative data. They described concrete evidence of performing at the refinement stage of self-reflection tendencies. They provided proof of their awareness of their instructional reality, intentionality of actions, ability to assess their instruction, capability to adjust instruction on the spot, and frequency of reflection. They were motivated to participate in reflective tasks and greatly invested in their learning and their students' learning. Dewey (1910) elucidated that being curious and willing to wonder with an open mind and a desire to grow is a motive for reflective teaching. These PTs also realized that reflection is not merely thinking about teaching but taking concrete steps to learn. The findings may suggest that the participating teachers realized that teaching is about critically examining self, student, content, and pedagogy and making the necessary change to improve the reality. This change is an illustration of a reflective action as indicated by Dewey (1910). Dewey differentiated between routine and reflective actions and described the latter as "active persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge

in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads”
(Dewey 1910, p. 9).

Hall and Simeral (2015) explained that the reflective teaching cycle starts with teachers’ awareness of their instructional reality. The findings indicated that PTs experienced an increase in their awareness of instructional reality (students, content, and pedagogy) compared to all other self-reflection tendencies. PTs monitored students’ performance and identified their linguistic and non-linguistic needs. They consciously assessed the prescribed textbook teaching materials and made changes in content to improve students’ learning. They critically assessed their existing beliefs, knowledge, and skills and used their background knowledge and all the available resources to frame the problems they faced while teaching. Miller (1990) explained that teachers’ learning happens when they focus and consciously start inquiring to understand their teaching, their students’ learning, and their surrounding and take into consideration their role in the educational process.

The next essential step in the reflective teaching cycle is teachers’ intentionality of actions (Hall & Simeral, 2015). The findings indicated that PT’s intentionality of action increased the least compared to all other self-reflection tendencies. All PTs, except two PTs, experienced increase in their intentionality of actions. These participating teachers, who experienced an increase in their intentionality of action, took deliberate and intentional steps to plan their instruction and students’ learning. They questioned whether the results of their teaching are good and if so for whom and in which learning context. They explored all the available resources and used their existing knowledge and skills about teaching to set specific teaching and learning objectives.

Bartlett (1990) explained that “Modification of our behavior ... requires deliberation and analysis of our ideas about teaching as a form of action based on our changed understanding” (p. 203). Hall and Simeral (2015) argue that “There is a gap between learning about a skill and being able to implement it effectively. Self-reflection fills in the gap through deep, continuous, rigorous thought about that skill” (p. 15).

The next step in the reflective teaching cycle is teachers’ ability to assess their instruction and students’ responses (Hall & Simeral, 2015). The findings showed that teachers’ ability to assess their instruction increased after attending the PD program. Their reflective journal entries indicated the use of several formative assessment techniques to assess their instruction and students’ learning. They assessed students’ comprehension, engagement, motivation, personality types and learning preferences. They identified issues and sought interventions to enhance students’ learning. This conduct conforms with Zeichner and Liston (2013) understanding of reflective teaching—teachers critically assess the effectiveness of their teaching and student learning within the learning context. Brookfield (2010) indicated that reflective teachers need to develop the ability to assess their actions; to question different perspectives; and to develop alternative solutions with the goal of enhancing student learning.

The following step in the reflective teaching cycle is teachers’ ability to adjust instruction. The findings showed that PTs experienced an increase in their ability to adjust their instruction after attending the PD program. The reflective journal entries of PTs shared anecdotes from their classrooms, where they intervened to solve issues, responded to students’ inquiries and attended to struggling students on the spot using effective strategies instructional. Farrell (2007) explained the reflective teachers’ ability

to adjust their instruction. He noted that while teaching, teachers frequently encounter an unexpected student reaction or perception and attempt to adjust their instruction to take these reactions into account. This behavior conforms with Schön's (1983) concept of reflective practitioners. In the teaching context, reflective teachers frame and reframe the problems and consider the information gained from the setting to adjust their actions.

Hall and Simeral (2015) indicated that the increase in teachers' self-reflection tendencies results in an increase in their frequency of self-reflection. The findings showed that the PD program increased teachers' frequency of self-reflection. Before participating in the PD program, PTs reflected after a lesson or after analyzing an assessment. After participating in the PD program, they indicated that they continuously reflected before, during, and after the lesson. This conforms with Schön's (1983, 1987) frames of reflection. He claimed that reflection occurs before, during and after the action. Reflection-on-action happens before a lesson when teachers plan for and think about their lessons and after instruction when they consider what occurred. Reflection-in-action happens during the lesson when teachers encounter problems and adjust instruction accordingly.

All PTs indicated that their frequency of self-reflection increased during the six-week PD program. However, the participating teacher with the least teaching experience expressed a difficulty to reflect during the busy workdays and needed additional time to reflect. This need is supported by Dewey (1910). Dewey explicated that beginning teachers would require more time than veteran teachers to progress through reflection.

Additionally, the participating teachers realized that they cannot make a change on their own. Accordingly, they actively collaborated with the facilitator-researcher,

supervisors, and peers. Farrell (2007) assured that collaboration with others can give voice to a teachers' thinking. The collaborative setting should reduce the sense of isolation that the teacher may feel, promote collegiality, and promote shared observations and associated benefits. The participating teachers also developed a strong desire to share what they have learned in the program with others and plan to share their experiences (in professional venues) with other teachers to encourage them to be reflective. As Zeichner and Liston (2013) concluded, teachers' reflection should not be supported as an end without connecting teachers' efforts to create a better learning community.

On the other side, those PTs, who experienced decrease in their overall self-reflection tendencies, their journal entries explained the quantitative results. Those PTs experienced out-of-control challenges such as teaching multiple groups of students in different teaching teams for five or six hours a day or attending a 40-hour mandatory training while participating in the reflective teaching program. For them, it was almost impossible to develop a new awareness about constantly changing instructional reality or assess the needs of a large number of students that varied from one instructional hour to another. Additionally, it was difficult for these teachers to anticipate students' responses to instruction or to adjust instruction on the spot. With such challenges, these PTs' mainly followed the prescribed activities in the textbook. This conforms with Korthagen's (2017) argument that there is a need for organizations to develop supportive conditions in which teachers can reflect. Zeichner and Liston (2013) argued that not only are teachers' practices influenced in many different ways by their theories, beliefs, and attitudes, these practices are also clearly influenced by the contexts in which teachers

work. Zeichner and Liston (2013) explained that rules, regulations, teaching schedules, and directives outside teachers' control put severe constraints on the freedom of teachers to act according to their own pedagogical beliefs. Lastly, Farrell (2007) recommended that the school system must provide teachers with space and time for effective teacher reflection.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that the social constructivist PD program increased DLIFLC self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection. Such findings confirm Beck and Kosnik's (2006) argument that social constructivist-based PD programs help teachers deconstruct their own prior knowledge, understand how their learning has evolved, explore the effects of their actions, and consider alternative actions and behaviors that may be more usable in their learning and teaching. The participating teachers, who engaged in critical and practical reflection generated knowledge and became self-aware of their instructional reality. They made the connection between the content, their teaching and students' learning. They realized that reflection is a responsibility that requires great investment. For them, reflection was about taking concrete steps to make a positive change in their students' learning. This required deliberate planning and great intentionality in every aspect of their teaching. They consciously used different assessment techniques to identify what students can and cannot do, how they learn and adjusted their instruction accordingly. Actively participating in the PD program increased PTs frequency of self-reflection. They continuously reflected before, during and after the lesson. For two PTs, reflection became a life-style.

Additionally, the PD program provided a chance for PTs to collaborate with supervisors, peers and the facilitator-researcher who acted as their instructional coach. They realized that making a difference in themselves and in others required collaboration. They learned from observing their peers' classrooms, from the supervisors' classroom observation feedback, and when discussing different reflective tasks with the facilitator researcher. Nevertheless, for teachers to develop self-reflection tendencies, they needed the supporting conditions such as a manageable teaching schedule, time, and a fixed group of students to teach.

Accordingly, the findings support the inclusion of the six-week reflective teaching program in the institute's faculty development plan for FY2020. Schools are facing an array of complex challenges that ranges from working with a diverse student population, to integrating new technology, to meeting rigorous academic standards. Reflective teaching should help teachers build their instructional knowledge and skills in order to meet the challenges. The action plan in Chapter 5 offers a proposal to implement the reflective teaching program in the DLIFLC schools. It will define the role of teacher trainers and supervisors when offering the future iterations of the reflective teaching program.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN

This chapter summarizes the findings and proposes an action plan to implement the six-week social constructivist professional development program at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) in appraisal year of 2020. The institute is an integral part of the Army Branch. Its mission is to educate initial-entry military training personnel, along with others, in its Undergraduate Education Basic Course for a variety of foreign languages. Teachers are native speakers of the languages they teach. The researcher is a member of the Faculty Development Division under the supervision of the Educational Technology and Development Directorate. The Faculty Development Division serves all foreign language teachers across the institute. Eleven foreign language teachers from six foreign language schools participated in the study over a six-week period to increase their self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection. Findings were discussed in Chapter 4. This chapter starts with a brief overview of the action research and a summary of the findings, segues into the details of the action plan, and concludes with recommendations for future studies.

Overview of the Action Research

The problem of practice discussed in this action research is that traditional professional development (PD) for foreign language teachers does not improve self-reflection. At DLIFLC, the majority of foreign language teachers are products of

learning environments that differ greatly from those in the institute. Despite their individual differences and qualifications, most teachers receive less than eight hours of in-service PD on a specific topic and do not have adequate time to reflect on their existing practices, newly presented concepts, or students' responses to instruction. The effectiveness of such PD approaches is questionable. Therefore, the purpose of this action research was to develop a PD program that promotes teachers' self-reflection tendencies. During the PD program (adapted from Hall & Simeral, 2015), teachers gain awareness of their educational surroundings (students, content, and pedagogy), plan deliberately, and take actions with intentionality to improve students' learning, assess the impact of their decisions and actions, adjust their course of action based on the feedback they receive from those assessments, and continuously engage in a reflective teaching cycle.

Understanding how in-service PD fosters foreign language teachers' self-reflection was needed to better design and facilitate PD programs that fit teachers' needs and subsequently enhance students' learning at DLIFLC. Accordingly, the facilitator-researcher conducted this action research with an explanatory mixed-method approach to investigate the impact of a six-week social constructivist PD program on DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies and act upon it. Eleven DLIFLC foreign language teachers participated in the study.

One main research question and five sub-questions guided the study:

1. How does a social constructivist PD program impact DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies?

- a. Does the PD program impact DLIFLC teachers' awareness of their instructional reality (student, content, and pedagogy)?
- f. Does the PD program impact teachers' intentionality in taking steps to facilitate students' learning?
- g. Does the PD program impact teachers' ability to assess students' learning?
- h. Does the PD program impact teachers' capability to adjust their actions while teaching?
- i. Does the PD program impact the frequency of teachers' self-reflection?

The intervention PD program was adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015) and was tailored to teachers' initial self-reflection tendencies. It was held from May 2 through June 14, 2019. The course syllabus and materials were posted on the DLIFLC online learning management system. The resources included best practices in foreign language teaching, such as teaching listening and reading, differentiating instruction, formative assessment, classroom management, and reflective teaching. Teachers' learning was mediated through interactions with the course resources, reflective tasks, students, colleagues, instructional coaches, supervisors, and the facilitator-researcher. DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection were measured using pre- and posttest Reflective Self-Assessment Tool surveys (quantitative data) (Hall & Simeral, 2015) and reflective journal entries (qualitative data). The facilitator-researcher used Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) guidelines for analyzing sequential mixed methods data analysis for explanatory studies. The purpose of the

sequential analysis of quantitative-qualitative data was to use the information from the analysis of the first pretest database (quantitative) to inform the posttest database (quantitative and qualitative). The qualitative data provided by the participating teachers (PTs) was used to explain teachers' gain or loss in their self-reflection tendencies.

Summary of the Findings

Research indicates that teacher educators use social constructivist approaches in their education courses because they believe that knowledge is constructed by learners for deeper understanding and that social constructivist approaches help student teachers learn beyond a superficial learning level and achieve deeper understanding (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2017; Uredi & Akbasli, 2015). To measure the impact of the PD program on DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies, the facilitator-researcher adopted a social constructivist framework in the design and implementation of the reflective teaching program. She carefully organized the instructional process, set inherently motivating tasks that supported PTs' deep learning, and allowed teachers to exercise choice and control regarding what to work on, how to work, and what products to generate. The goal of the facilitator-researcher was to create a learning space that invited PTs to actively and collaboratively participate in constructing meaning and was also structured enough to provide guided discovery.

The findings suggested that the social constructivist reflective teaching PD program increased the overall self-reflection tendencies and frequency of reflection of nine PTs out of eleven. The PD program mediated PTs' self-reflection tendencies by building on PTs' existing knowledge, creating a social and collaborative learning space and hands-on activities that directly related to teachers' classrooms (Badie, 2016; Farrell,

2007; Hall & Simeral, 2015, 2017). In this action research paradigm, the focus was on the development of knowledge of PTs, as active learners, with the guidance of the facilitator-researcher and more competent peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Over the six-week period of the PD program, PTs were constantly engaged in recursive learning processes in order to drive and deepen their learning. Fosnot (2005) concisely described the approach of social constructivism and its application to teacher development as “an interpretive, recursive, building process by active learners interacting with the physical and social world” (p. 30).

The findings of this action research showed that the self-reflection tendency of PTs that increased the most was *awareness of instructional realities*. Dewey (1938) and Fosnot (2005) proclaimed that reflective teachers think about their instruction and make sense of their actions. Zeichner and Listen (2013) emphasized the importance of teachers asking themselves whether the results of teaching are good, and if so, for whom and in what ways within the learning context. The result is an increase in teachers’ understanding of their realities. The findings of this action research conform with the literature.

The next-highest increase was in PTs’ *frequency of self-reflection*. This was followed by an increase in PTs’ *ability to assess students’ needs* and then by *capability to adjust their instruction*. Schön (1983) presented reflection in different time frames. First, reflection can occur *before* and *after* the action—this is what he called reflection-on-action. In teaching, reflection-on-action happens before a lesson when teachers plan for and think about their lessons and after instruction when they consider what occurred. Also, reflection occurs *during* the action. Schön calls this reflection-in-action. Farrell

(2007) explained that while teaching, teachers assess students' reaction or perception and attempt to adjust instruction to take these reactions into account. In this action research, noticeably, being involved in a formal, recursive, reflective teaching process required teachers to reflect continuously. PTs assessed their assumptions and practices, identified issues in their instruction and students' learning, developed alternative solutions, assessed students' responses to intervention, estimated the consequences, and adjusted their interventions. As such, PTs' frequency of reflection, ability to assess students' needs, and capability to adjust instruction increased over the six-week period of the PD program.

The smallest increase was in PTs' tendency of intentionality of actions. Zeichner and Liston (2013) argued that not only are teachers' practices influenced in many different ways by their theories, beliefs, and attitudes, these practices are also clearly influenced by the contexts in which teachers work. Zeichner and Liston (2013) explained that rules, regulations, teaching schedules, and directives outside teachers' control put severe constraints on the freedom of teachers to act according to their own pedagogical beliefs. Farrell (2007) recommended that the school system should allow time for effective teacher reflection. Caccavale's (2017) suggested that teachers found that the amount of time needed for reflection is demanding and felt that time could be used in a more productive manner. The constant reviewing and revamping of lessons through reflective practice is overwhelming for many teachers. In this action research and as indicated in PTs' journal entries, teachers were obliged to follow teaching schedules and textbooks that set the content, the time, and the pedagogy in the classroom. All PTs taught four, five, or six hours per day, with limited time dedicated for preparation. Such challenges could explain the small increase in teachers' intentionality of actions.

Additionally, the findings of this action research showed that the increase in PTs' self-reflection tendencies varied from one teacher to another. Such findings were consistent with the observation of Krahenbuhi (2016) and MacKinnon and Scarff-Seater (1997). They explained that teachers in the social constructivist PD programs may arrive at different understandings. In this action research, the social learning context for each PT was unique and each PT had a different background. Each PT served in a different teaching team, in different schools, and taught different students. Such variables may have contributed to the variation in PTs' self-reflection tendencies.

It is worth noting that all PTs experienced an increase in their overall self-reflection tendencies except two PTs. Those PTs experienced out-of-control challenges such as teaching multiple groups of students in different teaching teams for five or six hours a day or attending a mandatory training while participating in the reflective teaching program. For effective reflective teaching, Farrell (2007) stressed the need for providing teachers with the space and time and the supporting conditions to effectively reflect on their actions. Saric and Steh (2017) questioned whether teachers are offered the supporting conditions in which to reflect. Such conditions may include the school's management system, supervisor's support, and adequate preparation time and would explain the decline in PTs' self-reflection tendencies.

In sum, the PD program provided a chance for PTs to collaborate with supervisors and the facilitator-researcher, who acted as their instructional coach. PTs realized that making a difference in themselves and in others required collaboration. They learned from observing their peers' classrooms, the supervisors' classroom observation feedback, and discussing different reflective tasks with the facilitator-researcher. Nevertheless, for

teachers to develop self-reflection tendencies, they needed the supporting conditions such as a manageable teaching schedule, adequate preparation time, and a fixed group of students to teach. Such concerns were the main obstacles for the two PTs who showed a decline in their self-reflection tendencies. Accordingly, to improve teachers' self-reflection tendencies while participating in future iterations of the PD program, the role of the supervisor and the facilitator of the course is instrumental and needs to be defined before institutionalizing the reflective teaching program. Such roles were indicated by the five PTs who attended the action plan discussion meeting on July 19, 2019.

Action Plan and Recommendations for Practice

Reflection explains how individuals construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their actions (Mezirow, 2000), and the action research is an integral element of the reflection process. It is grounded in human experience and the generation of knowledge (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Action research “brings action and reflection, theory and practice in pursuit of practical solutions” (Mertler, 2017, p. 15). For the facilitator-researcher in this action research study, reflection was a continuous process in the form of planning, acting, developing, and reflecting. The process facilitated a mutual learning experience for the facilitator-researcher and the participating teachers. Findings were shared with the participating teachers and guided the development of the action plan. Both the facilitator-researcher and the PTs agreed that the role of the teacher's supervisor and the teacher trainer, who will facilitate future iterations of the reflective teaching program, is instrumental for achieving an increase in teachers' self-reflection tendencies. Below is the description of what the teacher trainer and the teachers'

supervisors can do to enhance foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies while participating in future reflective teaching PD programs at DLIFLC.

While facilitating the PD training, the facilitator-researcher observed and monitored PTs' engagement in the reflective tasks; followed up and followed through with the eleven PTs to communicate expectations; provided in-time support; and maintained focus and momentum on the goals. Much of what teachers needed to know to succeed would not have been visible to a lay teacher trainer. Additionally, it was also observed that most of the teachers' supervisors did not show curiosity to learn about the objectives of the reflective teaching program or the weekly reflective tasks that teachers carried out. However, in the reflective teaching PD program, the role of the teacher trainer and supervisor is essential.

For future practices, the teacher trainer and supervisor need to have extensive knowledge in principles and practices and benefits and challenges of reflective teaching. They need to integrate reflective dialogues in every aspect in teachers' daily functions and dedicate time to discuss successes and when things go wrong (Simeral & Hall, 2017). They need to take a leadership role in identifying teachers' individual developmental needs and in motivating and facilitating self-reflection, self-learning, self-assessment, and collaboration. They must guide and empower teachers to reflect upon teaching practices in order to bring about desired outcomes. They should act as leaders and exhibit the necessary behavior and consider the antecedent conditions of the DLIFLC learning context in order to achieve the desired teacher-development results. Cooperatively, they would create training environments in which accomplished teaching tends to flourish

(Darling-Hammond, 2006). As such, servant leadership is the framework best suited to the role of the teacher trainer and supervisor in the reflective teaching PD program.

According to Northouse (2015), “Servant leadership emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of their followers, empathize with them, and nurture them. Servant leaders put followers *first*, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities” (p. 225). But what does it mean to be servant teacher trainers and supervisors? We could all agree that servant teacher trainers and supervisors can have a wide-reaching impact on the effectiveness of the teachers. True servant trainers and supervisors begin with the feeling that they want to serve first and then lead as servants. The idea of serving, helping, and effecting should permeate the servant teacher trainer and supervisor’s psyche (Greenleaf, 1970). The servant trainer and supervisor engage and develop teachers by emphasizing the importance of listening to, appreciating, valuing, and empowering them (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

For this action plan, I shall adopt the servant leadership conceptual model of Liden, Panaccio, Hu and Meuser (2014) and Hall and Simeral’s (2017) fundamentals of building teachers’ capacity for reflection. The two frameworks will direct the future impact of the reflective teaching PD program on teachers’ self-reflection and frequency of reflection. The two models provided evidence for the soundness of viewing servant leadership as a multidimensional process and developing a culture of reflective teaching among teachers and supervisors that serves the purpose of the action plan. The servant leadership model has three components: antecedent conditions, servant leader behaviors, and outcome. In this action plan, the antecedent conditions reside within the teacher’s existing inner curriculum leadership (Brubaker, 2004). The second component of the

servant leadership model is the behavior of the teacher trainer and supervisor as leaders, which is the model's central focus. The third is the desired outcome, as reflected in the increase of teachers' perception of self-reflection and frequency of reflection. Within each component, Hall and Simeral's (2017) fundamentals build the teacher trainer's and supervisor's capacity to achieve the desired outcome.

1. Curriculum Leadership. Servant leadership will not occur in a vacuum, but within DLIFLC as the organizational context, and it is contingent upon the teacher's initial experience. This is supported by the concept of "inner curriculum," defined by Brubaker (2004) as "what each person experiences as learning settings are cooperatively created" (Brubaker, 2004, p. 21). The learning settings occur "when two or more people come together in new and sustained relationships to achieve a common goal" (Sarason, 1972, as cited in Brubaker, 2004, p. 83). As part of the reflective teaching program, teachers must collaborate with peers, supervisors, and trainers to establish the meaning of, and purpose for, their learning experiences. They plan instruction, reflect upon instructional practices, exchange resources, and devise solutions to achieve goals. Doing so positively affects teachers' self-confidence and lessens the control of external authority. The reflective teaching program will be instrumental in providing successful training for foreign language teachers at DLIFLC. It will provide a servant leadership training context that is undertaken within a social constructivist learning setting where knowledge is consciously constructed through negotiation and exchange of experiences (Dewey, 1910; Vygotsky, 1978). Within the social constructivist approach, teachers are provided with opportunities to lead their learning. They interact with peers, supervisors, and trainers to discuss, generate, and share knowledge (Fosnot, 1996). They "work

diligently toward their individual goals and strategic action steps in order to continuously grow as reflective practitioners” (Hall & Simeral, 2017, p. 55).

Another contextual element in the servant leadership model is the teacher’s receptivity to the teacher trainer and supervisor as servants who will guide them during training. Meuser, Liden, Wayne, and Henderson (2011) found a positive impact on individuals’ performances and their desire to be members in the servant leadership learning context. Therefore, at the beginning of training, the trainer and supervisor should explain their roles in the training. Supervisors may nominate teachers to attend the PD program, but only interested teachers should participate. Voluntary participation will ensure teachers’ positive response and receptivity.

2. Teacher Trainer and Supervisor as Leaders. Northouse (2016) asserts that the leader’s behavior is the central role in servant leadership. Liden, Wayne, and Henderson (2011) proposed seven servant leader behaviors that constitute the core of the servant teacher trainer and supervisor: contextualizing, emotional healing, putting teachers first, helping teachers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering teachers, and creating value for the organization.

Contextualizing is the servant trainer’s and supervisor’s understanding of the organization’s educational/instructional mission, vision, and values (Northouse, 2016). Successful servant teacher trainers will organize the reflective teaching PD program in order to impart the knowledge, skills, and practices they value in accordance with the DLIFLC mission. This can be accomplished by setting training goals and objectives that are specific to the mission, tailored to teachers’ initial self-reflection tendencies, and that can be achieved within the six-week time frame. The servant teacher trainers set the right

expectations for teachers in their unaware, conscious, action, or refinement stages of self-reflection (Hall & Simeral, 2017). Servant supervisors would connect the reflective teaching tasks to teachers' individual development plans in order to achieve the DLIFLC teacher annual performance objectives satisfactorily. They will meet with teachers before the start of the PD program to set SMART goals for students and personal SMART goals to grow as reflective practitioners (Hall & Simeral, 2017).

Moon (2004) explained that emotions are likely the reason that teachers engage in reflection and concluded that reflection can become a source of an emotional experience, and emotionally charged situations may hinder teachers' reflection. Therefore, *teachers' emotional healing* can be demonstrated via sensitive interactions, by trainer and supervisor, with teachers considering their individual emotional needs and taking the time to discuss any issue that may arise during the training. Hall and Simeral (2017) stress the need for supervisors and trainers of teachers who are participating in a PD program to celebrate teachers' successes in order to generate additional enthusiasm. Supervisors and trainers should also set aside time in which to discuss and calibrate understanding of reflective teaching and its original and emerging goals.

Putting teachers first is the defining characteristic of a servant teacher trainer and supervisor. The trainer and supervisor take action and make decisions that demonstrate to teachers that their concerns and needs, while participating in training, are priorities. The trainer may change the training content, schedule, and/or activities to assist the teacher. The trainers coordinate with teachers' supervisors the teachers' teaching schedules and workload to allow for effective participation in the reflective teaching tasks. Supervisors ensure that teachers are granted adequate time in which to carry out

weekly reflective tasks effectively. Hall and Simeral (2017) describe effective supervisors and trainers as givers and service-oriented individuals. “They give to others their time, and their knowledge, their support, their love, their resources, their energy, and their hope” (p. 75).

Helping teachers grow and succeed is the trainer’s and supervisor’s salient contribution in the servant leadership model. Teacher career development is a priority, including mentoring and providing support via constructive feedback without being judgmental (Liden et al., 2014). Hall & Simeral (2017) highlight the power of feedback in augmenting teachers’ professional development, teaching skills, and reflective abilities. In the PD program, feedback could have a transformational effect if supervisors and trainers provide regular feedback to build teachers’ capacity for reflective tendencies and strengthen teaching skills. Feedback is matched to a teacher’s initial stage of self-reflection and is precise and goal-oriented (Hall & Simeral, 2017).

The fifth characteristic of a servant supervisor and trainer is *behaving ethically* to assure teachers that training accords with high ethical standards and acceptable moral conduct (Liden et al., 2014). This is crucial for those who aspire to being fully capable servant trainers and supervisors in the PD program. During the meeting with PTs to discuss the action plan of the research, PTs indicated that having a trusting relationship with the trainer and supervisor is essential in order for teachers to feel confident and unthreatened and able to share information about things that went awry. Hall & Simeral (2017) explain that supervisors and trainers should strive to build rapport and trustworthy relationships with teachers to create a healthy environment in which teachers can grow and succeed. This is made manifest when supervisors and trainers act collegially and

cooperatively with teachers and show trust and mutual respect. Supervisors should recognize the impact of their role as assessors of teachers' performance and their effect on teachers' anxiety. On the other hand, the trainer's position is always non-evaluative, but still fully supportive of teachers' development. Such roles should be communicated clearly between supervisors and trainers before the start of the PD program in order to help teachers feel safe enough to share their successes and failures without being judged.

The sixth characteristic in the servant leadership model is having the servant teacher trainer and supervisor *empower* teachers and allow them to make independent decisions and take control of their learning in order to generate a sense of commitment, rather than compliance. The trainer and supervisor fortify teachers' confidence to think and act on their own to confront situations in ways they think best (Liden et al., 2014). The servant trainer and supervisor need to give teachers the opportunities to share what is working in classrooms and share knowledge gleaned with peers. It is worth noting that five PTs showed interest in sharing their experience within and outside DLIFLC in academic conferences. The facilitator researcher has already supported three of them in submitting proposals to local conferences. Proposals were accepted.

Accordingly, the servant teacher trainer and supervisor help in *creating value for DLIFLC* to attract, retain, and support the continued learning of well-prepared and committed teachers (Liden et al., 2014). Hall and Simeral (2017) explain the value of building an institution's capacity for developing a culture of reflective practice. When the participating teachers acquire the desired experience that allows them to be successful with students, they will be an even greater resource for DLIFLC.

3. Desired Outcome. The third element in the servant leadership model in this action plan is the identification of the desired outcome of the reflective teaching program. The desired outcome in this action plan is teacher performance and growth, and, consequently, organizational performance (Liden et al., 2014). Teachers will realize their full capabilities when the servant trainer and supervisor and the reflective teaching training context help them achieve their development by making the most of their self-reflection. For the trainer and supervisor, the desired outcome is to establish a training/research context that will help provide DLIFLC with valid insights as to how teachers can benefit from the implementation of training in reflective teaching. However, no one PD program can prepare teachers for all the challenges that they may face in their classrooms. Thus, the desired outcome of the reflective teaching program is to “nurture autonomous and self-directed teachers who constantly reflect on their teaching practice, evaluate their assumptions, and base changes in their teaching on effective and meaningful decisions” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 1). This desired outcome is, ultimately, self-actualization for teachers, trainers, and supervisors.

Recommendations for Future Research

Herr and Anderson (2015) describe action research as a human experience with the intent of generating knowledge and say that action researchers must make decisions about what to take account of and what to leave out when releasing their findings. Every researcher brings subjectivity to interpretations made throughout research. Accordingly, the facilitator-researcher of this action research realizes that she (or anyone else) may revisit the data and see new findings, as interpretations are bound by moments in time.

The limitations of this study are provided as suggestions for future researches and are based on the findings.

1. This action research followed a convenience sampling of 11 foreign language teachers at DLIFLC during a six-week period from May to June, 2019. Creswell and Clark Plano (2007) explain that participants may modify their behavior as a result of participating in research. No control group was included in the design. Therefore, it is recommended that future research may use a control group as a baseline to compare groups' responses to intervention. A quasi-experimental design can be used to assess teachers' self-reflection tendencies during a six-week period. Such design will better explain the correlation between the impact of the reflective teaching program and teachers' self-reflection tendencies.
2. Only 11 foreign language teachers participated in the study. Even so, it was difficult for the facilitator-researcher to carry out the research and support teachers' reflective tasks for six weeks. Despite the large and diverse population of DLIFLC foreign language teachers, the sample size was limited. Therefore, it is recommended that the number of course trainers be increased to a ratio of one facilitator for every four participating teachers and to increase the total number of participants. A larger sample size would make it possible to assess distinctions between the impact of variables—the national origin, foreign language taught, age, gender, years of teaching experience within and outside DLIFLC, and education level—on teachers' self-reflection tendencies. Although the generalization of the findings is not an objective of the action

research (Herr & Anderson, 2015), such findings would provide insight into how administrative and PD support for teachers in different language programs at DLIFLC can be improved.

3. All the 11 participating teachers in the pretest survey reported self-reflection tendencies of the action stage (Hall & Simeral, 2015). This is a higher degree of self-reflection compared to the unaware stage and the conscious stage tendencies. Therefore, the reflective tasks that teachers carried out were limited to the action stage tasks, as indicated by Hall and Simeral (2015). For future studies, it is recommended that supervisors nominate foreign language teachers, within their departments, who demonstrate tendencies of the unaware and conscious stages. Those individuals would be then invited by researchers to participate in the reflective teaching program and in future studies at their discretion. Such an approach will validate the impact of the PD program on teachers with different self-reflection profiles.
4. The action research collected evidence of the impact of the PD program on teachers' self-reflection tendencies during a six-week period. Two PTs reported that reflective teaching became a life-style after participating in the program. To determine if self-reflection is sustainable, it is recommended that future research collect evidence of teachers' self-reflection tendencies after 3, 6, or 12 months.
5. To confirm achievement of action-oriented outcomes as stated by Herr and Anderson (2015), the explanatory mixed-method design used multiple measures to collect data. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected

using the pre- and posttest survey and posttest reflective journals.

Nevertheless, the facilitator-researcher did multiple member-checking with the participating teachers when analyzing the qualitative data in order to understand and clarify their entries in the reflective journals. Therefore, it is recommended that in future research, follow-up interviews with selected participants be used to provide deeper insights about teachers' self-reflection tendencies.

6. Herr and Anderson (2015) also argue that insider knowledge is valid as long as one is honest and reflective about the limitations of one's positionality and takes these limitations into account. As a facilitator-researcher with an insider-outsider's positionality who played multiple roles—as researcher, instructional coach of participants, and course developer of the reflective teaching PD program—I understood that knowledge production derived from each role was valid as long as I was honest and reflective about these limitations. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers with similar multiple positionalities need to carefully take into account their roles methodologically.

Conclusion

In the reflection phase of action research, the researcher reflects on the entire research process (Mills, 2011). Such reflection may generate new knowledge with which to initiate a new cycle of continuing action research to improve self- and teacher-reflection and collaboration with peers (Mertler, 2017). This action research revealed the impact of the six-week social constructivist reflective teaching professional development

program on DLIFLC foreign language teachers' self-reflection tendencies. Eleven teachers participated in the study. The findings indicated that nine teachers experienced increase in their awareness of their instructional reality, intentionality of actions, assessment of students, adjustment in instruction, and frequency of reflection. Two teachers experienced a decrease in their overall self-reflection tendencies. The findings led to informed decision making about the implementation of the reflective teaching program at the institute, as presented earlier in this chapter. The action plan could be further developed to deepen and clarify understanding about building foreign language teacher capacity to self-reflect and the role of professional development and collaboration with others. Such efforts would foster a sense of solidarity and achievement among teachers.

Without doubt, conducting this action research was a unique opportunity. It offered the facilitator-researcher a venue in which to collaborate with the University of South Carolina instructors and students and DLIFLC administrators and colleagues and, most importantly, with DLIFLC teachers. Seeing teachers grow professionally and become more reflective while attending the PD program was a fulfilling and immensely satisfying experience. The findings shaped the action plan, which in turn will ensure the successful implementation of the future reflective teaching program at DLIFLC in 2020. To further clarify the importance of establishing an effective program in reflective teaching, the role of the supervisors and trainers as servant leaders (Northouse, 2016) and builders of teachers' capacity for reflection (Hall & Simeral, 2017) has been defined. Additionally, the action plan will extend the collegial and collaborative relationships of the facilitator-researcher and DLIFLC supervisors and other teacher trainers. The

facilitator-researcher plans to share the results and the proposed action plan with the DLIFLC administration.

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APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS

Reflective Teaching Course

Six-Week PD Program

I. Descriptive Information

- A. **Course Title:** Reflective Teaching for Foreign Language Teachers
- B. **Catalog Description:** This is a two-phase professional development program for foreign language teachers to critically evaluate their belief systems and engage in strategies designed to increase their self-reflection tendencies. Teachers take action, try new instructional strategies, or step out of their comfort zone. They work collaboratively with colleagues in their schools, faculty development specialists, and their supervisors.
- C. **Course Length:** Six weeks
- D. **Prerequisites:** None
- E. **Intended Audience:** Foreign language teachers at DLIFLC
- F. **Facilitator:** Hanan Khaled
- G. **Others involved:** Peers, faculty development specialists, and supervisors

II. Required Text

Hall, P., & Simeral, A. (2015). *Teach, reflect, learn: Building your capacity for success in the classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Online readings, media, and articles will be used throughout this course.

III. Required Software

This is a hybrid course, face-to-face and online. You will need the following software:

- DLIFLC-Sakai
- Microsoft Word

IV. Course Goals & Objectives

A. Goals

All teachers will demonstrate, to varying degrees, skills and tendencies related to: awareness of instructional reality, intentionality of actions, ability to accurately assess students' needs, capability to adjust actions, and frequency of reflection. They will be in charge of their professional development. They will build experience and strengthen expertise through development of deeper reflective habits. They will practice detailed-oriented observation and analysis of what they observe. They will build new confidence around new strategies and insights into their students in order to maximize results in their classroom. They will build awareness of the strong cause-and-effect relationship between teacher actions and student results. They will build capacity for greater self-reflection.

B. Objectives

Teachers will:

1. Differentiate between routine and reflective action.
2. Describe preconditions for self-reflection.
3. Set communication norms with peers.
4. Assess self-reflection tendencies.
5. Respond to reflective journal prompts indicating their first week's successes and challenges and lessons learned.
6. Analyze and design lesson plans for specific objectives.
7. Use formative assessment techniques to identify students' specific needs.
8. Explain students' needs.
9. Reflect on how the student succeeds and struggles for a week.
10. Observe a colleague's classroom to learn about a particular instructional strategy.
11. Use the observation to respond to reflective journal prompts.
12. Be observed by a supervisor and take notes of feedback.
13. Use feedback to respond to reflective journal prompts.
14. Discuss supervisor's feedback with the school's faculty development specialist.
15. Compare their initial notes in the first reflective journal with their final reflective journal.

V. Academic Course Requirements

Professional Participation

Your active participation in this program is essential for building reflective teaching tendencies. Responsibility for participation includes collaborating with peers, faculty development specialists in your school, the course facilitator, and your supervisor. You are also responsible of navigating through the course Sakai site to identify supporting resources for teaching, assessment, lesson planning, etc. You are expected to fully participate in all scheduled discussions and reflective tasks.

Writing Standards

The reflective teaching program recognizes and expects exemplary writing to be the norm for course work. Careful attention should be given to spelling and punctuation.

VI. Administrative Course Requirements

Course materials will be available on our course website within the DLIFLC Sakai. Teachers will undertake all work **independently**. Teachers enrolled in this course must have access to a computer with internet connectivity and an email account for regular communication with the instructor. All reflective journals will be submitted electronically to DLIFLC Sakai site.

VII. Major Topics

- A. Self-reflection tendencies
- B. Stances of reflective teachers
- C. Setting goals
- D. Reflective teaching tasks
- E. Strategies to raise awareness of instruction and student learning
- F. Strategies to plan instruction intentionally
- G. Strategies to assess students while teaching
- H. Strategies to adjust instruction based on results of assessment
- I. Strategies to increase frequency of reflection

VIII. Schedule

Adapted from Hall and Simeral (2015)

APPENDIX B

INVITATION LETTER

Date: _____

Dear [Teacher]:

My name is Hanan Khaled and I am an Academic Specialist in Faculty Development Division and a doctoral candidate in the program of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of South Carolina. I would like to invite you to participate in an action research that I am conducting in partial fulfillment of the requirements of my doctoral program. The title of the study is *Promoting Self-Reflection of Foreign Language Teachers Through Professional Development: An Action Research Dissertation*

You will be asked to participate in a six-week professional development program with the goal of promoting reflective practices in your daily instruction. It is anticipated that you may spend 2 to 3 hours weekly in reflective tasks relevant to your daily instruction. You will also collaborate with other colleagues, your supervisor, and the researcher for the six-week period. The syllabus of the program will be shared upon request.

Instruments

You will be asked to respond to a survey before and after the program. It is a multiple-choice survey with 10 questions. Also, you will respond to 10 free-response questions as part of the reflective tasks in the program. Such activities will take approximately one hour in addition to the time you will invest in the six-week professional development program.

Voluntary

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also withdraw from being in the study at any time. Participation, nonparticipation, or withdrawal will not affect you in any way.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

All your responses to the instruments' questions will be anonymous and confidential. No names will be recorded or attached to the questionnaires or to the interview transcripts.

Responses will be seen only by myself and members of my dissertation committee. I will analyze your responses and will use pseudonyms when writing about my findings to protect your anonymity and confidentiality.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks of physical harm to you for participating in the questionnaires or the reflective journals. You will not have to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable responding. You will receive a summary of the findings; you will be invited to contribute to the research action plan and share the findings in professional venues. You also have the right to request a copy of the published study.

Benefits

The purpose of the study is mainly to promote teachers' self-reflection tendencies through professional development activities that are tailored to teachers' needs. Carrying out this study will likely facilitate your instruction and student learning. You will have the chance to reflect upon your instruction and student learning. You will also be invited to participate in an action plan to share your experience, if you wish. The data generated may help you, me, and other stakeholders make decisions about our professional development at DLIFLC. Findings will inform an action plan for the school, aimed at improving teachers' learning through reflective practices. If interested, the researcher would guide you on how to share your experience in academic professional venues inside and outside DLIFLC.

Additional Information

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. Please feel free to contact me at 831-747-4473 or hkhaledusc2017@gmail.com, or my faculty advisor, Dr. Linda Silvernail, at silvernail@mailbox.sc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. Please sign the attached consent form and enclose it in the envelope provided. Please do not write your name or any other information on the outside of the envelope.

With kind regards,

Hanan Khaled

Hkhaledusc20172017@gmail.com

Consent Form

I have read and understood the letter of invitation from Hanan Khaled describing the study titled *Promoting Self-Reflection of Foreign Language Teachers Through Professional Development: An Action Research Dissertation*

I have read and understood the details of the study and the following ethical considerations:

- There are no risks associated with participation in the study.
- Participation in the study is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw at any time.
- I can refuse to participate in any part of the study.
- All data will be coded to ensure confidentiality (using pseudonyms).
- Data will be accessible to the researcher and her committee only.
- Data will be stored securely by Hanan Khaled via password protection.
- The findings from this study will be disseminated to the academic community through publication as a doctoral dissertation, publication in refereed academic journals, and presentations at conferences.
- I can request a summary of the findings by emailing Hanan Khaled.
- Participation in the study will not have any effect on me.

_____ I consent to participate in the above study.

_____ I consent to participate in the six-week professional development program.

_____ I consent to participate in two surveys.

_____ I consent to respond to the reflective journal prompts.

_____ I do NOT wish to participate in the above study.

Printed Name

Signature

Date:

APPENDIX C

REFLECTIVE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Reprint from Hall and Simeral (2015, p. 26–31)

Before you get started, it's important to emphasize this advice: Be honest. Choose the statement that resonates with you first. There are no right or wrong answers, nor good or bad scores, only choices that match your patterns of thinking and information that informs your next-steps. You could probably read the scenarios and pretty easily choose the option that indicates stronger reflective tendencies, but if that's not an honest appraisal of your thinking, you'll get erroneous feedback that will send you down the wrong path. This tool is for your use, so again: Be honest.

Read each of the following 10 scenarios and circle the letter next to the response that is MOST ACCURATE, MOST LIKELY, or MOST OFTEN the approach you would take in that situation. You will likely find that some of the scenarios have more than one option that matches how you operate. In that case, go with your gut – what would you typically do? After the final scenario, you'll record your responses on a scoring-chart and follow the next set of directions to analyze the results.

1. When planning for today's (or tomorrow's) lesson, MOST OFTEN I...

- a. Begin with the content and activities that we will be covering, and occasionally prepare specific teaching strategies.
- b. Utilize recent student assessment data to determine what I'm going to teach and how I'm going to teach it.
- c. Spend most of my time deciding which instructional methods I'll use to meet specific needs of my students, relying on unit plans to determine the content.
- d. Consult the teacher's edition and follow the lessons as provided

- 2. When considering the frequency that I reflect on my teaching, MOST OFTEN I...**
 - a. Reflect usually after teaching a particular lesson and/or analyzing an assessment.
 - b. Reflect after grading student work or when prompted by an administrator, coach, or colleague.
 - c. Occasionally reflect on my own, usually after grading assignments or quizzes.
 - d. Continuously reflect, including during the lesson itself.

- 3. When planning to address student misconceptions, MOST OFTEN I...**
 - a. Address them when they occur, because it is difficult to tell where students will struggle.
 - b. Follow the plan for the lesson from beginning to end.
 - c. Analyze student work to determine what struggles they're having, then plan to address them.
 - d. Plan for check-ins through the lesson, so I can provide support as necessary.

- 4. When I encounter students that struggle in a lesson, MOST OFTEN I...**
 - a. Analyze each student's specific struggles to determine a course of action to address them.
 - b. Can't always tell why they struggle, because there are so many variables.
 - c. Realize I have little control over how some students perform, so I continue to encourage them.
 - d. Look at my teaching strategies to see if changing strategies might have a better effect.

- 5. When attempting to re-engage students who are off-task, MOST OFTEN I...**
 - a. Stop the lesson, regroup the students, and resume the lesson when I'm ready.
 - b. Address the situation with a variety of pre-planned engagement strategies.
 - c. Employ a strategy that I am most comfortable with and have used before with success.
 - d. Use ideas from the lesson plan I'm following and/or power through in hopes that the students will reengage.

6. When I ask questions in class, MOST OFTEN I...

- a. Ask questions that I have prepared in advance.
- b. Ask questions from a collection I have prepared, varying my asking/answering strategies.
- c. Ask questions that come to me while I'm teaching that will continue to move the lesson forward.
- d. Ask the questions as written in the lesson plan.

7. When describing the students whom I teach each day, MOST OFTEN I...

- a. Can identify those who are most/least successful, who struggle with assignments, and who are the first to finish.
- b. Share the students' academic profiles and can cite the latest assessment data.
- c. Focus on personality, behavioral, and overarching descriptive traits.
- d. Can explain the latest assessment data, including anecdotal information, and describe how students are grouped for instruction.

8. When students are struggling in a lesson, MOST OFTEN I...

- a. Stick with the lesson plans to make sure we cover the required material.
- b. Attempt to address the learning gaps by modifying the following day's lesson.
- c. Adjust my instructional approaches immediately.
- d. Will go back and re-teach the problems they got wrong.

9. When determining the level of success of a particular unit, MOST OFTEN I...

- a. Monitor the progress of individual students through continuous formative and summative assessment strategies.
- b. Monitor class performance on lesson assignments and/or quizzes to see if they are "getting it."
- c. Monitor performance by administering an end-of-unit test and noting student scores.
- d. Monitor class progress through formative and summative assessment strategies.

10. When reflecting on the levels of performance my students demonstrated on a recent assessment, MOST OFTEN I...

- a. Check the grade book to see how the students fared.
- b. Can describe individual students and the specific concepts they have mastered.
- c. Explain with solid details about how groups of students performed.
- d. Provide information about how the class did as a whole.

Now, list some information about yourself.

1. Country of origin:
2. Gender:
3. Foreign Language taught at DLIFLC:
4. Indicate your highest level of education. Circle the option that applies.
 - a. Two-year college degree
 - b. Four-year college degree
 - c. Four-year college
 - d. Master's degree in education or a relevant field
 - e. Doctoral degree in education or a relevant field
 - f. Other: -----
5. Indicate how many years you have been teaching at DLIFLC: _____
6. Indicate years of teaching experience before DLIFLC: _____

APPENDIX D
REFLECTIVE JOURNAL PROMPTS

1. How has your awareness of your students grown? Provide details.
2. How has your awareness of the teaching content grown? Provide details.
3. How has your awareness of pedagogy grown? Provide details.
4. To what degree were your lesson plans more intentional? Provide details.
5. Did you add/adjust any strategies you used before to determine whether students learned the intended objectives? Provide details.
6. How often did you assess student learning compared to the period before participating in this program?
7. What actions did you take when you first noticed students struggling?
8. How did you plan for these on-the-spot interventions?
9. Now that you have participated in six weeks of professional development, how do you see the impact of your instruction on student learning?
10. How frequently were you engaged in self-reflective actions during the past six weeks? Explain.

APPENDIX E

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11/29/2018

Gmail - RE: Permission to use Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (Thread:1902484)



Hanan Khaled <hkhaledusc2017@gmail.com>

RE: Permission to use Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (Thread:1902484)

2 messages

Katy Wogec <permissions@ascd.org>
To: Hanan Khaled <hkhaledusc2017@gmail.com>
Cc: hkhaled@mail.sc.edu

Tue, Nov 27, 2018 at 7:27 PM

Dear Hanan:

In response to your request below, please consider this permission to use the excerpt(s) from the referenced publication for your personal research purposes. Should you include excerpts or cite content in a paper or some other report form, please credit the source accordingly. If your research results in use of our content in a product or publication for commercial release, please contact me again to secure further rights to do so.

Thank you for your interest in ASCD and good luck with your dissertation.

Sincerely yours,

KATY WOGEC • Permissions Consultant for ASCD

1703 N. Beauregard Street • Alexandria, VA 22311-1714

P 240-478-4788

 LEARN. TEACH. LEAD.

Join us:  

From: Hanan Khaled <hkhaledusc2017@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2018 2:02 PM
To: permissions@ascd.org
Cc: Hanan Khaled <hkhaledusc2017@gmail.com>; hkhaled@mail.sc.edu
Subject: Permission to use Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (Thread:1902484)

Dear Publisher,

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the School of Education in the University of South Carolina, United States. The thesis title is: The Impact of Constructivist Approach to Professional Development on Foreign Language Teachers' Reflection. I would like your permission to reprint in my thesis excerpts from the book: Teach, Reflect, Learn: *Building Your Capacity for Success in the Classroom (2015)* by Pete Hall and Alisa Simeral. Specifically the following parts:

11/29/2018

Gmail - RE: Permission to use Reflective Self-Assessment Tool (Thread:1902484)

The Reflective Self-Assessment Tool on pages 26-31. The survey will be used with approximately 10 teachers in my workplace, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, as part of my dissertation research.

I also would like to reprint Figure 4.2, The Reflective Cycle on page 39 as part of my literature review of the dissertation.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions of my dissertation, to the public circulation of my dissertation by the University of South Carolina Library.

I have already contact Drs. Pete Hall and Alisa Simera and received their permission via email. After defending my dissertation, I will share a copy of the paper with the authors.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, kindly respond to this email.

Very respectfully,

Hanan Khaled