

## LINKING TEACHER TRAINING AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Svetlana Khan

Republican Scientific-practical Innovation Center at the Uzbekistan State World Languages University

### ABSTRACT

Reforms in teaching English, started in 2012 in Uzbekistan, have been making a great impact on all parties involved: education managerial staff at all levels, teachers, learners, and parents. The reforms aim at raising the quality of teaching foreign languages at all levels of the education system in Uzbekistan. English teachers in secondary schools across the country receive a great deal of additional training in order to improve the quality of teaching, but there is no consistent system in place for helping teachers to successfully apply newly learnt techniques in order to link the training room to the classroom. Teachers' beliefs, "conscious or subconscious" (Donaghue, 2003) can be elicited and examined by awareness raising tasks in the training session, and by conducting lesson observations and self-monitoring. The evidence shows that teachers are challenged and required to change their teaching but neither sufficient time nor support is given to them. Immediate results, administration wants to see with little concern if any of what is happening in the class after the training ends, de-empower teachers and leave them with little desire to try new things out and improve their teaching. Systematic and well planned self-observation and self-monitoring system can empower teachers and trainers and help teachers to apply methods and approaches learnt in the training room.

**Keywords:** Teacher training, teacher training syllabus, teacher's beliefs, self-monitoring.

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher training is believed to be a crucial component of any educational reform (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Fred A.J. Korthagen in his article named "Linking Practice and Theory: The Pedagogy Of Realistic Teacher Education" claims that a significant weakness of traditional teacher training is misalignment between the training room and classroom reality. Additionally to this claim, there is another further opinion about the challenge of integrating the knowledge gained in the teacher training courses into the classrooms. Lamb (2003) tells his 'sobering experience' when he interviewed former participants of the teacher training course he conducted after one year. Lamb found that his trainees felt 'confused and frustrated' as a result of an 'inability to apply new ideas within the existing parameters of syllabus, examinations and other practical constrains.' This inability, he points out, depend on various practical constrains including the ones set by administration.

#### *Context*

Reforms in teaching English, started in 2012 in Uzbekistan, have been making a great impact on all parties involved: education managerial staff at all levels, teachers, learners, and parents. The reforms aim at raising the quality of teaching foreign languages at all levels of the education system in Uzbekistan. English teachers in secondary schools across the country receive a great deal of additional training in order to improve the quality of teaching, but there is no consistent system in place for helping teachers to successfully apply newly learnt techniques in order to link the training room to the classroom. Peter Cole in his research named "Linking effective professional learning with effective teaching practice" explains the situation

of poor linkage between professional learning and changing the classroom practice with teacher's having learning intentions only for too generic terms, "such as, to improve boys' learning or to become better at promoting cooperative learning. According to Richards (2005) and Thomas (2003) majority of teachers want to be effective teachers, but they should be encouraged, supported and assisted in their attempts to become effective and especially in the period of transition when they apply new approaches and techniques learnt in the training room. In this article challenges in implementing the skills and knowledge gained at the teacher training courses into the classroom, including influence of teachers' and senior management' beliefs on teaching, as well as discussion of possible ways of overcoming difficulties, are in focus.

### ***Eliciting teachers' beliefs***

It is widely recognised that teachers' beliefs play a vital role in teacher development and especially while accepting or uptaking new methods, approaches and techniques. Donaghue (2003) argues that beliefs 'guide teachers in their practice, and are derived from sources such as experience and personality.' Richards (1998) suggests that teacher's belief system with attitudes and values, teacher's expectations and assumptions is a 'primary source of teacher's classroom practices'.

Though, teacher's learning and teaching experience and personality and a fact that teacher's beliefs are 'often kept private' (Pica, 2004) make exploring and eliciting teachers' beliefs quite complicated, it is worth efforts required. Exploration of teachers' beliefs can be rather difficult as it forces teachers to examine their teaching and understanding that changes need to be done might be daunting and even threatening. Donaghue (2003) warns that

'It is also important to be aware that participants may become temporarily destabilized as their beliefs and assumptions are challenged and changed, and may need time and support to re-establish confidence.'

The evidence shows that teachers are challenged and required to change their teaching but neither sufficient time nor support is given to them. Immediate results, administration wants to see with little concern if any of what is happening in the class after the training ends, de-empower teachers and leave them with little desire to try new things out and improve their teaching.

Teachers' beliefs, "conscious or subconscious" (Donaghue, 2003) can be elicited and examined by awareness raising tasks in the training session, and by conducting lesson observations and self-monitoring. Awareness raising tasks for making personal theories and beliefs conscious should be essential component of the training course materials. Lesson observations which potentially can provide rich data to understand teachers' beliefs often "fail to take into account the teacher's ideas about the teaching and learning processes, classroom experience, current classroom concerns", and very often are viewed by teachers negatively due to "traumatic, examination-like terms" (Murdoch, 1998). Self-monitoring which can be conducted via various instruments such as teacher's diary, journal writing, audio or video recordings and other tools is considered to be very powerful especially for teachers who "are genuinely interested in becoming more aware of their teaching." However, it is doubtful that this self-reflective mode will work for teachers who argue that they teach in a way "they are told to teach", and those who claim they have no time to reflect on their teaching or "investigate problems in their teaching". (Gebhard, 2004).

### ***Exploring teacher's beliefs***

Lesson observations done in various both city and village schools across the country show that quite a big number of teachers have difficulties in implementing in their classes what they learnt in the training room. The reasons of this may have various roots embedded in teachers' beliefs and their vision of what good teaching is. The teachers' beliefs discussed below are driven from discussions in the teacher training courses and in feedback sessions after lesson observations.

*1. Everything learners say or write must be controlled and checked by the teacher.*

This belief leads to many problems and among them I would like to discuss two most significant ones most of our teachers have while organising mingling and close pair activities. In both cases instead of giving opportunity to learners to mingle or work in pairs simultaneously teachers ask every individual learner or pair to say their statement or dialogue in turn so the teachers can listen and correct their learners' mistakes. This brings learner's boredom and causes waste of valuable class time.

Teachers must be aware of that learners learn by trying new things and making mistakes is a natural component of this process. Learners must be trained how to identify areas to work on by examining own and peer's mistakes. Vargas (2015) tells that this type of work will benefit both learners and teachers: learners will benefit because "By assessing their classmates, students also learn to assess themselves in their future performances" and teachers will benefit because it "reduces a teacher's workload".

*2. While working in pairs or in groups learners can learn mistakes from each other.*

This belief is closely connected with the previous one. Learners can benefit when reflection and analysis thus learning from own and other's mistakes is built in the learning process. Mok (2011) advocates learner's peer assessment, stating that it "can facilitate student's development of various learning and life skills, such as learner responsibility, meta-cognitive strategies, evaluation skills, and a deeper approach to learning".

*3. Lesson observations are useless as teachers prepare the lessons to be observed and rehearse with their learners beforehand.*

True, all teachers plan and prepare lessons to be observed despite of who is going to observe: administration, senior staff of their institution or peers. In any case mentioned teachers want to show the best they and their learners can do. From my personal experience, I believe that although some observers can be misled by rehearsed lessons, even those prepared lessons reveal a lot: they clearly show what that particular teacher believes good teaching is. One day, I had a chance to observe two primary English teachers who prepared a demo lesson for other teachers to observe and give feedback. The two teachers conducted a lesson with the same topic but the lessons were totally different from each other. The learners in the first teacher's lesson were engaged in various activities, interacting with each other joyfully and showing genuine interest and motivation. The teacher used a lot of visuals to help her learners to revise the material from the previous lesson and to learn and practise new material. The second lesson started by the teacher's statement read from the screen (the teacher used Power Point Presentation): "Today we are going to learn adverbs of frequency." The meta-language used by the teacher was far beyond her learner's level of both cognitive and language development and caused frustration and confusion. The learners (Grade 3 pupils) were very quiet at this point and later in the lesson built on learning and practising grammar mostly. We can see that the second teacher unlike the first one believes that explicit grammar teaching is the most effective approach in teaching young learners.

### ***Analysis of the teacher training syllabus***

The teacher training which is in place at the moment: all English teachers in the secondary school sector have to go through regular teacher training courses organized in cluster schools

at the district level across the country is very impressive and has a lot of benefits. Not many countries in the world can offer such massive obligatory and free of charge trainings for teachers. Starting from winter 2015, English teachers went through 216 hour course delivered by local trainers with training materials developed centrally in the capital. Every Friday teachers go to the nearest cluster school and have training consisting of three sessions. Although the trainees are reported to be quite satisfied with the courses there is still a lot to think about taking into consideration results of monitoring of teaching English done in the fall 2015. Lesson observations conducted as a part of the monitoring identified a number of problematic issues related to methodology and pedagogy, as for example it was reported that many teachers lack understanding of the principles behind activities they conduct. For example, the observers were rather concerned that teachers have a strong tendency to control everything happening in the class: they try to check every single pupil or pair and correct all mistakes they find in their learners' answers.

In order to address these issues and others alike the teacher training scheme should be revisited and professional and teaching skills development modules should be expanded, thoroughly thought through and incorporated into the training syllabus. Further, these modules should be supported by ongoing system for evaluating and supporting teachers which is 'essential co-requisite' (Wilson, 2000) of sustainable improvement. More than that, according to Harmer (2012) teacher training programs to be effective must have "hands-on practical component" with "planning-for-teaching, teaching, and reflecting-on-teaching". The training scheme can be strengthened by incorporating a practical component with tasks teachers will carry out in between the training sessions. Time sufficient for teachers to reflect on their teaching experience should be allocated for each training day.

Lopez (2004) asserts that "The importance of psychology and sociology, as well as more extensive training in pedagogy, is being recognized." Analysis of the course materials indicate that 89% of the course is devoted to language skills development (teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary) and only 11% to pedagogy. We can see that the amount of hours allocated to pedagogy suggests that little attention is given to teacher development which should employ also psychological and sociological elements as 'classrooms are complicated social communities' (Pica, 2004).

### ***Linking the training room with the classroom***

Raising teachers' language proficiency might improve teaching but with limited short term results. Assessment done on a regular basis to check teachers' language proficiency might identify how much language proficiency has improved but it gives only a very limited account on the impact the teacher training courses make on teaching. The main goals and nature of teacher training courses should go beyond raising the language level of trainees but rather to how effective their teaching becomes after the training. For improving teaching skills which are longer term aims much more needs to be done. The existing teacher training courses should be revised in order to raise the impact on teaching. Changes in the syllabus should be entered at the ministry level as the syllabus development is under strict regulations of the Ministry.

In order to see changes in teaching happen the teacher training course concept should be moved from 'product' to 'process' oriented one. This shift can be done by reconstructing the existing teacher training scheme discussed above. A revised scheme which will give teachers a chance to trial in their classes new ideas learnt in the training room is suggested. First, instead of chaotic choice of topics (each training day consisting of three different unrelated topics), training days with one focused topic will be planned. Each training day can be devoted to exploring one topic with various tasks to explore pedagogy and methodology and implicitly

related to the language skills development, including listening, reading, speaking and writing tasks. The main focus of the tasks should be awareness raising questions to explore teachers' beliefs, psychology and characteristic features of target learners and other important issues. Tenjon-Okwen (2003) acknowledges that by increasing teacher's awareness we can encourage teachers 'to generate change'. Teachers should examine their teaching principles, look deep at their beliefs, discuss possibilities and constrains they have when they go to their learners with new ideas to try. Reading, listening and discussing case studies with different views, opinions and attitudes should be offered to help trainees to foresee problems and challenges they might have.

Second, teachers should be given a task to be carried out during a week after the training and come to the next training ready to discuss results with success stories and problems they faced. Third, lesson observations with feedback on teaching experience should be incorporated into the training. In ideal world trainers should observe trainees and provide a constructive and detailed feedback along with organizing trainee's peer observations. In reality trainers and trainee teachers are overburdened with own lessons, families, extra-curricular work and other tasks they have to perform which altogether make regular lesson observations quite challenging and unrealistic. More than that, it is recognized that most teachers find lesson observations 'stressful' (Burke, 1997) and often causing 'negative reaction' (Tennant, 2006).

### ***Moving towards self-monitoring***

Systematic and well planned self-observation and self-monitoring system can empower teachers and trainers and help teachers to apply methods and approaches learnt in the training room. This distinctive feature will help to bridge the training room with the classroom reality. Moreover, the system will enable the administrators to set clear and achievable goals in order to "shift the focus onto what the trainee teacher will be able to do in the short, medium and long term" (White, 1998).

Richards (1990) suggests four main reasons to advocate and justify self-monitoring:

- ✓ Taking teacher training course as a marking the beginning of professional growth, self-monitoring with own feedback on their teaching can become a 'key ingredient in a teacher's continuing growth and development as a professional'.
- ✓ Self-monitoring can help teachers to reflect critically on what they do in the classroom. It can trigger the movement from a level where they are relying mostly on their 'impulse, intuition or routine' to a level where their decisions are guided by 'reflection and critical thinking'.
- ✓ It might narrow the gap between a training room and reality of a classroom and help teachers to understand better their own teaching.
- ✓ Self-monitoring can shift responsibility for own professional growth from outsider like a supervisor to teachers themselves. It might enable teachers to make justified and principled decisions in their classrooms.

To help teacher trainees to employ self-observation and self-monitoring appropriate tasks should be developed to help teachers to understand better their teaching strengths and weaknesses and find possible solutions to any problems they face in their attempts to try new things.

Keeping a diary or a journal, which might 'be both a factual record' and 'a means of reminding yourself of the highs and lows of the job' (Head & Taylor 1997: 144) is one of some possible ways to reflect and learn from this activity.

The tasks might consist of a list of questions to reflect after the lesson or a simple table suggested below.

**Self-evaluation task**

Complete the table.

What I did	What my pupils did	How it went	Possible explanations

The table can be adjusted depending on the focus of the training day and the task set afterwards. If, for example, time management is to be investigated additional column with time to record time allocated for each activity or steps in it will give essential data to analyze and identify possible reasons of problems.

Perhaps not many teachers would be able to complete the last column in the proposed self-observation task where they are supposed to give possible explanations of what happened in the class especially if something went not as it was planned. Even if trainees cannot find clear answers to their worries and concerns the discussion and reflection will give insights, shape thinking and might trigger further exploration.

Self-evaluation of teaching practice which is used for teaching practice in CELTA courses (Thornbury & Watkins 2007: 173) can be used by teachers for self-monitoring. If a teacher is stuck and cannot find solutions feedback from peers and supervisors can help and notes from Self-evaluation of teaching practice notes can provide rich and useful data for discussions.

**Self-evaluation of teaching practice**

After each teaching practice session you should take some time to consider your lesson and complete this form. If you wish to write more for any section, continue over the page.

Name .....

Date lesson was taught ..... Main aim of lesson .....

To what extent do you think you achieved this aim?

Put a cross on the line: 0% -----100%

What did you like about the lesson?

What would you change about the lesson?

Are there any questions you would like to ask your tutor?

Teacher self-observation checklist, developed by Christison, M.A., & Bassano, S. (1984: 17-19) can become “cost effective and efficient” tool for gathering data for self-reporting. The

checklist consists of three blocks giving opportunity to investigate learning environment, classroom, students and analyze approaches towards professional development, activities and language (Appendix I). Teachers can use the checklist for looking at some parts of teaching depending on the problems or concerns they face in own teaching.

The scheme with build in self-monitoring will make a shift of the teacher training from ‘product’ to ‘process’ possible with changes and improvements not only in teachers’ language performance but in teaching practice. Teacher trainees will become aware of why they do what they do and how to make their teaching better, efficient and effective.

## CONCLUSION

Joint thinking of all stakeholders including decision makers, administration of all levels, trainers, teachers and parents is needed in order to shift the teacher training courses from “product” to “process” oriented one.

- ✓ The teacher training approach should be revisited and more attention to pedagogy and methodology which can help teachers to challenge and explore pedagogical principles and their teaching beliefs should be given.
- ✓ Well thought and planned self-monitoring component can link the training room with the classroom where teachers will be able to experiment, examine and explore new methods, approaches and techniques.
- ✓ Trainers’, supervisors’, peers’, as well as own feedback might bring positive changes and help teachers to become effective teachers who can make principled decisions based on the knowledge and skills they obtained in the training room.

## REFERENCES

1. ADB, Evaluation Study Independent Evaluation Department Reference Number: SAP: UZB 2010-29 Sector Assistance Program Evaluation: 26194 September 2010 Uzbekistan.
2. Burke, H. (1997). Using The In-service Feedback Session To Actively Promote Teacher Self-Development. *The Teacher Trainer*, 11 (1) 8-11).
3. Christison, M.A., & Bassano, S. (1984). Teacher self-observation. *TESOL Newsletter* 18(4), 17-19.
4. Cole, P. (2012). Linking effective professional learning with effective teaching practice. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.
5. Donaghue, H. (2003). An instrument to elicit teacher’s beliefs and assumptions. *ELT Journal* 57, 344-350.
6. Gebhard, J. G. (2004). Awareness of Teaching: Approaches, Benefits, Tasks.
7. Harmer, J. (2012). Essential Teacher Knowledge. Pearson Education.
8. Head, K. & Taylor, P. (1997). *Readings in Teacher Development*. Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.
9. Korthagen, F. (2001). Linking practice and theory: the pedagogy of realistic teacher education. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.
10. Kontra, E.H. (1997). Reflections on the purpose of methodology training. *ELT Journal*, 51 (3).
11. Lamb, M. (1993) The consequences of INSET. *ELT Journal* 49, 72-80.
12. Lopez, Ch. L. (2004). The role of teachers in today’s language classroom. In T. Kral (ed) *Teacher Development Making the Right Moves*.

13. Mok, J. (2011). A case study of student's perceptions of peer assessment in Hong Kong. *ELT Journal*, 65, 230-237.
14. Murdoch, G. (1998). A Progressive Teacher Evaluation System. *English Teaching Forum*, 36 (3), 2-5.
15. Pica, T. (2004). Language-Learning Research and Classroom Concerns. In T. Kral (ed) *Teacher Development Making the Right Moves*.
16. Previdi, P. (1999). Interactive Teacher Training. *English Teaching Forum*, 37(3), 32-33.
17. Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond Training*. CUP.
18. Richards, J. C. (2005). *The Language Teaching Matrix*. CUP.
19. Tenjon-Okwen, T. (2003). Lesson Observation The key to Teacher Development. *English Teaching Forum*, 41(4), 30-33.
20. Tennant, A. (2006). Key issues in classroom observation. *IATEFL voices*, 191, 8.
21. Thomas, H. (2003). The arguments for and the meaning of quality. *ELT Journal*, 57, 234-240.
22. Thornbury, S. & Watkins, P. (2007). *The CELTA Course Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults*. Cambridge University Press, p. 173.
23. Vargas, J. (2015). Listening Cloze Meets Info-Gap: A Hybrid Activity to exploit Listening Materials. *English Teaching Forum*, 53 (4), 24-25.
24. Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: an international review of the literature*. International Institute for Educational Planning.
25. White, R. (1998). What is quality in English language teacher education? *ELT Journal*, 52, 133-139.
26. Wilson, J.D. (2000). Training Bangladeshi professors to be teacher trainers. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 28 (1), 39-51.

## Appendix I

### Teacher self-observation checklist

Thoughtfully consider each statement. Rate yourself in the following way.

**3 Excellent    2 Good    1 Needs improvement    0 Not applicable**

Write your rating in the blanks provided. When you have finished, give overall consideration to the various areas.

#### I. Learning Environment

##### A. Relationship to pupils

\_\_\_ 1. I establish good eye contact with my class. I do not talk over their heads, to the blackboard or to just one individual.

\_\_\_ 2. If I tend to teach predominantly to one area of the classroom, I am aware of this. I make a conscious effort at all times to pay attention to all students equally.

\_\_\_ 3. I divide my students into small groups in an organized and principled manner. I recognize that these groups should differ in size and composition, varying with the objective of the group activity.

##### B. The classroom

\_\_\_ 1. I arrange the seating in my class to suit the class activity.

\_\_\_ 2. I consider the physical comfort of the room such as heat and light.

\_\_\_ 3. When I need special materials or equipment, I have them set up before the class begins.

##### C. Presentation



- \_\_\_ 1. My handwriting on the blackboard and charts is visible from all locations in the classroom. It is large enough to accommodate students with vision impairments.
- \_\_\_ 2. I speak loudly enough to be heard in all parts of the classroom.
- \_\_\_ 3. I vary the exercises in class, alternating rapid and slow paced activities to keep up maximum interest level in the class.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am prepared to give a variety of explanations, models or descriptions, understanding that one explanation may not be sufficient for all students.
- \_\_\_ 5. I help the students from working principles and generalizations.
- \_\_\_ 6. Students use new skills or concepts long enough so that they are retained and thus future application is possible.
- \_\_\_ 7. I plan for 'thinking time' for my students so they can organize their thoughts and plan what they are going to say or do.

#### *D. Culture and Adjustment*

- \_\_\_ 1. I am aware that cultural differences affect the learning situation.
- \_\_\_ 2. I keep the cultural backgrounds of my students in mind when planning daily activities and I am aware of culture misunderstanding which might arise from the activities I choose.
- \_\_\_ 3. I work for an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect.

## **II. The Individuals**

### *A. Physical Health*

- \_\_\_ 1. I know which students have visual or aural impairments, and have seated them as close to my visual teaching position as possible.
- \_\_\_ 2. I am aware that a student's attention span varies from day to day depending on mental and physical health and outside distractions. I pace my class activities to accommodate the strengths. I don't continue with an activity which may exhaust or bore them.
- \_\_\_ 3. I begin my class with a simple activity to wake the students up and get them work together.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am sensitive to individual students who have bad days. I don't press a student who is incapable of performing at the usual level.
- \_\_\_ 5. I try to challenge students who are at their best.
- \_\_\_ 6. If I am having a bad day and feel it might affect my normal teaching style, I let my students know so there is no misunderstanding about my feelings for them.

### *B. Self-concepts*

- \_\_\_ 1. I treat my students with the same respect that I expect them to show me.
- \_\_\_ 2. I plan "one-centred" activities which give all students an opportunity at some point to feel important and accepted.
- \_\_\_ 3. I like to teach and have a good time teaching – on most days.

### *C. Aptitude and Perception*

- \_\_\_ 1. I am aware that my students learn differently. Some students are visual-receptive, some are motor-receptive, and others are audio-receptive.
- \_\_\_ 2. My exercises are varied, some are visual, aural, oral and kinaesthetic. I provide models, examples, and experiences to maximize learning in each of these areas.
- \_\_\_ 3. I know basic concepts in the memory process. When applicable, I make use of techniques such as backward buildup and association to aid students in rapid skill acquisition.

### *D. Reinforcement*

1. I tell students when they have done well, but I don't let praise become mechanical.

- \_\_\_ 2. I finish my class in a way which will review the new concepts presented during the class period. My students can immediately evaluate their understanding of those concepts.
- \_\_\_ 3. My tests are well-planned and produced.
- \_\_\_ 4. I make my system of grading clear to my students so that there no misunderstanding of expectations.

#### *E. Development*

- \_\_\_ 1. I keep up to date on new technologies in the ESL profession by attending conferences and seminars and by reading profession articles and books.
- \_\_\_ 2. I realise that there is no one right way to present any lesson. I try new ideas where and when they seem appropriate.
- \_\_\_ 3. I observe other ESL teachers so that I can get other ideas and compare them to my own teaching style. I want to have several ideas for teaching any one concept.

### **III. The Activity**

#### *A. Interaction*

- \_\_\_ 1. I minimize my role in conducting the activities and maximize student role.
- \_\_\_ 2. I organize the activities so they are suitable for real interaction among the pupils.
- \_\_\_ 3. The activities maximize student involvement.
- \_\_\_ 4. The activities promote spontaneity or experimentation on the part of the learner.
- \_\_\_ 5. The activities generally transfer attention away from “self” and outward toward a “task”.
- \_\_\_ 6. The activities are organized to insure a high success rate, leaving enough room for error correction. I concentrate on what my pupils are saying (content).

#### *B. Language*

- \_\_\_ 1. The activity is focused.
- \_\_\_ 2. The content or the skill presented will be easily transferrable for use outside the class.
- \_\_\_ 3. The activity is geared to the proficiency level of my class or slightly beyond.
- \_\_\_ 4. The content of the activity is not too sophisticated for my pupils.
- \_\_\_ 5. I make the content of the activity relevant and meaningful to my students’ world.

*Adapted from Christison & Bassano (1984)*