TEACHER LEARNING IN VIETNAM

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Abstract

In order for Vietnam to seek better international integration into an increasingly globalised world, the Vietnamese government has launched educational reforms, requiring teachers to adopt 'western' constructivist pedagogies. This study focuses on pre-service teachers' learning in Vietnam, where traditional attitudes towards teachers' and learners' roles promote passivity amongst students and unquestioning respect for the authority of teachers' knowledge. The thesis describes a cycle of action research conducted in a major teacher training institution in Vietnam. Through an intervention based on constructivist theories, the researcher set out to investigate factors that enhance teacher learning, and barriers that hinder it, with the aim of contributing evidence to discussions about the most appropriate strategies to be employed to bring about a change for the better in teacher education. The research highlights the importance of Vietnamese teacher educators in promoting change in Vietnam.

The data collected comprised tutors' and student teachers' questionnaires, staff meeting discussions, student teachers' journals and the researcher's field notes. The findings reveal that student teachers were willing to accommodate and accept change and were often very enthusiastic about different patterns of teaching, which included peer evaluation and peer feedback. However, the student teachers' strongly held beliefs about relative roles of students and teachers remained firmly fixed. Other cultural factors also emerged from the findings.

The thesis argues that the most productive way of incorporating constructivist learning into Vietnamese teacher education is by gaining a better understanding of the current status quo in order to respect and honour deep seated cultural beliefs. It argues that the imposition of pedagogical change is counter-productive without better engagement of teacher educators and teachers in discussion and debate about the characteristics that Vietnam wishes to see in its teachers and education system in the future. In particular, the thesis argues that the focus for transforming teacher education should be on promoting the responsibility of tutors to create a 'transfer space' to introduce students to new ideas about the processes of teaching and learning, and to develop new qualities needed via this 'transfer space'. Evidence from the study suggests that this strategy is likely to be supportive of student teachers' development as it allows them to separate the processes of teaching from the culturally dominant beliefs about roles which are part of their established identities.

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List of abbreviations

CHC	Confucian Heritage Culture
ELT	English Language Teaching
EVS	European Values Survey
FISE	Fédération International Syndicale des Enseignants
HE	Higher Education
HNUE	Hanoi National University of Education
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
WUSC	World University Service of Canada
WVS	World Values Survey
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces my research study, which is about teacher learning in Vietnam. The research has involved an investigation of factors that both hinder and enhance teacher learning. It also looks at the most appropriate strategies to promote teacher learning in Vietnam and the role of teacher educators in redefining Vietnamese students' and teachers' identities.

This chapter will describe the background to my research, beginning with a review of Vietnam in the context of globalisation and an explication of the rationale for carrying out this study. My motivation for doing the research, which was inspired by the current context of Vietnam and my own journey to become a researcher, is also presented. At the end of the chapter, I set out the aims and objectives of the research.

1.1. Background to the study

1.1.1. The impact of globalisation on Vietnamese education

Vietnam is a developing country, which has emerged from a long historical period of wars, isolation and post-war reconstruction. The country went through around 1100 years of Chinese domination although there are periods of time during these years when Vietnam was independent after a series of wars against the Chinese dynasties. The French invasion started in 1858 resulted in Vietnam being colonised by French imperialism for nearly a century until 1945 when the August Revolution led by Ho Chi Minh was successful and the independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam was established. However, wars did not end after that. Vietnam still had to face many difficulties, including the aftermath of the war and many foreign forces threatening the country's peace. This situation led to the subsequent Geneva

Accord, which divided the country into the North being ruled by Ho Chi Minh's newly established government of Vietnam and the South being governed by the regime that was controlled by America. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north sided with China and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, while the United States backed the Republic of South Vietnam. A war between these two sides broke out in 1965, and raged until April 1975. The American troops were defeated by Ho Chi Minh's government and the North and the South became unified under the new name as Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This long period of wars severely destroyed Vietnam's economy. Vietnam experienced a sharp economic deterioration in a post-war reconstruction period and became one of the poorest countries in the world. It showed very slow growth in total output as well as in agricultural and industrial production in that period.

The Vietnamese government, therefore, has made many attempts to reconstruct the country after this long period of wars and isolation. A series of successive reforms have been launched, one of which was a political and economic renewal campaign known as Đổi Mới in the 1980s. This campaign introduced reforms to facilitate the transition from a centralised economy to a socialist-oriented market economy. I would argue that thanks to these reforms under Đổi Mới the growth in the national economy remarkably increased. For the last three decades the government has been focused on the industrialisation and modernisation of the country to bridge the gap between Vietnam and other countries in the region and in the world, to reduce isolation, and to socially and culturally connect to an international environment. Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, while chairing a symposium held in Vinh Phuc Province on 25th March 2014 to review theoretical and practical issues related to the implementation of the nation's renewal process in the past 30 years, made the remark that

> industrialisation and modernisation have helped Vietnam balance economic growth with cultural development, thus improving quality of life, reducing poverty and maintaining social order (Nhan Dan, 2014)

The process of industrialisation and modernisation of the country is especially significant when Vietnam is seeking better international integration and entering a new era, the era of globalisation. Globalisation as defined by Stewart (1996) is

> the broadening and strengthening of the world links which have taken place progressively since the Second World War, and have now reached a stage where almost no one is completely untouched by events originating outside their own country and where international constraint increasingly restricts independent national action (p.327).

This definition suggests that globalisation is Western driven with the influence of the Second World War. It also hints that the globalisation phenomenon is reducing isolation among countries. Every country now is forced to consider its actions from an international perspective. Little and Green (2009) defined globalisation as 'the accelerated movement of goods, services, capital, people and ideas across national borders' (p.166). In this definition, globalisation involves economic activities, knowledge, and culture development with speed. According to Stewart (1996), there are two aspects of significance that globalisation has brought about: the first one is the acceleration of the internationalisation of many dimensions of life, including economic relations, technology, ideology and culture. The second one is a prevalence of important links among the elements that seem to be disparate, e.g., international trade and the movement of capital and people, multinational investment and the globalisation of culture. This means an individual strand cannot be treated separately, but needs to be examined in relation with its other dimensions and links.

That education has been seen as the key factor in economic and social development, especially in the globalisation era, has been agreed in many studies (Stewart, 1996; Burnett, 1996; Rikowski, 2002; Little and Green, 2009). In this era of information and technology, the world of employment has become very competitive and demanding. Therefore, in order to get ready for

employability, one needs to be well equipped with necessary knowledge and skills, which can be realised by education. Therefore education, especially higher education (HE) becomes an important instrument in providing suitable human resources for society. T. H. T. Nguyen (2013) maintained that 'in this changing context, knowledge becomes the core of global economy' and this 'significantly influence[s] and shift[s] the purpose of HE towards an instrumental one, that of education for employability, making human capital the most important output of HE' (pp.1-2). This view was also supported by Varghese (2005) who extended it to point out that 'globalisation has contributed to an increasing demand for a larger quantity and a better quality of higher education graduates' (p.8). Thus, both quality and quantity of human resources are critical elements in determining the rate of development. The importance of human resources has been emphasised in Stewart (1996) who indicates that 'Globalisation rewards countries that have the human resources, but also penalises those that do not' (p.331). Having the human resources means having a highly qualified labour force equipped with knowledge and skills well enough to be ready for the international competition for knowledge-based goods and services. Knowledge and skills are important not only to attract more foreign investment, which is considered one of the primary engines of development in many countries, but also to ensure that technologies can be transferred to build up capacity for the country. 'Countries with skills can adjust more effectively to the challenges of globalization because enterprises are more flexible and better able to absorb new technologies' (World Bank, 2008, p.133). And it is education that contributes to this mission. Education in Vietnam is therefore especially important in supporting the government's overarching aim to modernise and industrialise the country alongside with the globalisation process:

> In Vietnam, if HE is not able to produce a highly qualified human resource and meet the learning needs of the population, the cause of industrialization-modernization and the general goal of building a rich population, prosperous

country, an equitable, democratic and civilized society is still far reaching (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2005, p.114)

Globalisation provides both opportunities and challenges for developing countries. During the process of globalisation the world has witnessed a rising proportion of investment in developing countries, and a fast growth of international trade (Stewart, 1996), which has brought about the change in the world of work and markets (T. H. T. Nguyen, 2013). The opening up of the world markets and the relative movement of capital and technology promotes dramatic growth in production, export, employment and incomes to the low-income countries, which enables them to catch up with the industrialised countries. In return, these opportunities for development for the developing countries at the same time generate challenges for them. These opportunities require labour productivity and the ability of the country to compete in the international markets and also to attract foreign investment. T. L. H. Nguyen (2005) sees the challenges for Vietnam in this way:

> ... Vietnam's socio-economic development and HE will certainly have to confront huge challenges: possibly widening gap in terms of development between Vietnam and developed countries, serious loss of grey matter to better developed countries, weak competitiveness of Vietnam's HE against the penetration and attractiveness of HE from other countries; possible violation of the rights of learners, possible erosion of national cultural identities, etc. (p.114).

The Vietnamese government takes these challenges very seriously. Having taken account of the important elements of globalisation, such as, technologies, which allow rapid transfer of ideas, knowledge and skills, which enable people to learn from other countries and negotiate ideas, understanding cultures, which plays an important role in communication among different countries, the government has placed great emphasis on the importance of education and training:

> We are developing the strategy for education and training development while the country is step by step integrating into the world. However, while the developed countries have achieved high level of development in science and technology and they are moving forward a knowledge economy and an information society, Vietnam is still a backward agricultural country with narrow land, big population and a few natural resources. Therefore, education and training strategy must be the key to narrow such a gap, push up the industrialization and modernization, make the economy grow and improve the people's living standards (Vietnamese Government, 2006).

Vietnam really needs a labour force equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to learn from developed countries and to communicate with other countries in the world. It needs people that are outwards facing and receptive to international ideas and who are capable enough to meet what a modern economy needs. These elements are becoming the requirements for Vietnam to integrate into the world market and to attract foreign investment into the country.

Taking these globalisation requirements into account and being aware of the role of education during the globalisation process, a few studies have analysed the context of Vietnam to see how far the current education meets the requirements that globalisation sets out (T. L. H. Nguyen, 2005; Hung, 2006; World Bank, 2008). These studies suggest that one of the prominent problems is the mismatch between the requirements of globalisation and current Vietnamese teaching and learning approaches. Whilst the rapidly changing world needs a citizen with independent learning strategies for lifelong learning and confidence to be autonomous learners, according to Hung (2006), education in Vietnam is problematic, 'hindering students' independence, creativity, and problem solving capacity' (p.4). This study also maintained that although ongoing efforts have been made to renovate the 'outdated modes of teaching and learning' to encourage a 'shift from teacher-centred to student-centred approach of teaching and learning', 'this process of change is very slow' (ibid., p.4).

This shift in the methods of teaching and learning that Vietnam is trying to carry out is actually a shift in the roles of teachers and students, which have been culturally and historically established. The image of the teacher as a source of all knowledge or as a 'bureaucrat' as described in Saito et al. (2008, p.98) when they examined the teaching and learning context of Vietnamese primary schools, and the 'oppression of students in classrooms' (ibid., p 98) are not easy to change. According to T. T. Nguyen (2005), students have been used to this traditional teaching method and their passive role for a long time and have accepted it without question. He maintained that this teaching and learning style is difficult to change because it has existed for thousands of years and has been approved by the whole society. Therefore, 'even when students can discover knowledge by themselves, they like to show that they still need the teacher by such behaviour as keeping silent and listening to the teachers' (Ibid., p.5). Ta (2012) studied a case of collaboration work among teacher trainers and teacher trainees at a teacher training university of Vietnam. This study revealed that teacher trainees 'still wanted to listen to the trainers because they appreciated the teachers' knowledge and experience' (p.7) and it was also found that there was a tendency from the trainer towards 'presenting her knowledge instead of giving space for her trainee partners to contribute to collaborative work' (p.7). There has been found, also, a mismatch between the requirements of the work market and the capacity of the Vietnamese graduates. The World Bank (2008) conducted a survey (the ADB-MOLISA establishment survey) in Vietnam to see what skills tertiary graduates bring to the workplace. The survey of employers, and studies of work, revealed that 'employers are most often concerned about soft skills or attitudes rather than technical knowledge. They also note the need for generic skills', such as problem solving, communications, working in teams etc. (p. 169), but soft skills and generic skills are most wanted. It was found that 'workers may come across as too theoretical to some of the employers' (p. 172).

All the above make it a necessity for Vietnam to implement basic and comprehensive educational reforms. Education has been seen as crucial to socio-economic reform. Article 35 of the current Vietnamese Constitution (issued in 1992) stipulates: 'Education is the first priority of the national policy. The Second Plenary Session of the Central Party Standing Committee VIII has issued the Resolution on the strategic orientation for the development of education and training during the period of industrialization and modernization' (Vietnamese Government, 2006). In the education sector, a series of reforms have therefore been implemented. These have included the Educational Reforms 2001-2010 and the Educational Reform 2011-2020. The guiding strategy is that 'Education and training is the first priority of the national policy, the cause of the Party, the State, and the whole nation' (Vietnamese Government, 2006). Since then reforms of curriculum, teaching methods, testing and assessment methods, and textbooks have been carried out. The focus has been on the 'comprehensive, basic and modern but simplified, appropriate, practical focused, realistic, locally relevant characteristics of the curriculum', aiming at 'students' activeness' and 'self-learning abilities'(Vietnamese Government, 2006).

Since education has such an important role, 'big investment will be placed on developing teacher training universities and schools of education in universities' (Vietnamese Government, 2012, pp.6-7) in order to develop highly qualified skilled workers. The goals for vocational and higher education include

> improving the quality of training to meet the manpower needs for economic and social development - training people of creative and independent thinking, civic responsibility, morality, professional skills, language skills, sense of disciplines, industrial manner, self-employment ability and ability to adapt to the changes of the labour market and capacity to compete in the region and the world' (ibid., p.6-7).

However, the World Bank report in 2013, remarking on the challenges in Vietnam socio-economic development, pointed out that although the

macroeconomic conditions are relatively stable, the structural reform is slow: the process has just begun but is not yet being decisively implemented (The World Bank, 2013).

With regards to the educational reforms, there have been different opinions. Some scholars hold that the Vietnamese educational reforms cover too large a scale. For example, Harman (2004) maintained that the approach 'stands out, ..., as being extremely ambitious' (p.1). Thinking that the Vietnamese government may be at risk of attempting to do too much and too quickly with too large a number of goals and objectives, Harman concluded that 'perhaps, though, a fewer number of more focused reform priorities might also have been established for the system' (ibid., p1). This concern has found consensus from other commentators: a report by Unified Solutions (2008) commented that 'Researchers and practitioners have criticised Vietnam's Draft Strategy for Education Development for 2009-2020 for being 'too ambitious' and not reflecting the realities of the education sector'. This concern was shared in Saito and Tsukui (2008), who implied in their study that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) educational projects could be too large in scope, covering various areas in the whole country without sufficient interventions and care for individual schools (p.582). Some other researchers, however, maintain that the Vietnamese reforms are far from too large scale. Duggan (2001) indicated in his study that with the Vietnamese government's tight control over social and economic strategies, 'wide scale changes to an education system are often not possible' (ibid., p.193). His evidence showed that the substantial reforms that the Vietnamese government is carrying out 'is actually a programme of cautious reform based on select targeting of particular school populations, in this case, populations in the target cities, economic priority zones and urban areas' (p.193). He argued that since the reforms need to be comprehensive and the process is necessarily complex, change or innovation cannot be contemplated unless the outcome is perceived to be popular. Therefore, Duggan's evidence suggests that the outcomes of the Vietnamese reforms are likely to be elusive.

There are also opinions about the feasibility of these educational reforms, which attract quite a lot of agreement among Vietnamese teachers, educators and scholars: these are expressions of doubts and mistrust about the reforms (Le and Barnard, 2009; Thanh, 2008; X. T. Nguyen, 2013; Vietnam News, 2009b; Vietnam News, 2009a). These scholars demonstrate that the tenets of reforms are based on many of the Western ideologies; therefore, the reforms are unlikely to be successful in such a historically and culturally embedded context like Vietnam. For example, Le and Barnard (2009) studied a case of a high school in Vietnam to scrutinise the innovative curriculum, which is imposed by MOET, and the actual version which is practised in real life classrooms. Their study found that there is a wide gap between these two versions. The study further analysed the Vietnamese educational context and stated that the top-down reforms initiated by MOET 'tend to adopt power-coercive strategies, which oblige teachers to adopt changes' (p.7). The study implied the need for those responsible for curricular innovations to take into account the local contextual factors in which the innovations are to be operationalised. Thanh (2008) examined the implementation of cooperative learning, which is one of the tenets of the reforms taken from the west, in a case study. Thanh argued that

> many principles of cooperative learning are in serious conflict with traditional perceptions of Vietnamese teachers regarding the nature of teaching and learning. Therefore, policymakers and educators need to take cautious steps when implementing such radical approaches in Vietnamese educational settings. If they want to obtain support from teachers, they cannot merely borrow the original version of the innovation (p. 3).

Another study was conducted by X. T. Nguyen (2013), which examined the construction of educational discourses in the Vietnamese educational system in the context of the country's institutional reform. Holding that the fundamental assumptions of the reforms in Vietnam were 'based on Western notions of progress and efficiency' (p.78) and that the education system remains imperialist in its outcomes, the researcher posed the question 'In

what ways can we seek to include local cultural values in the discourse of inclusion and exclusion in Vietnam?' (ibid., p.78). As these studies suggest, although the strategic plan for the period 2009-2020 was built on the outcomes of the education and training strategy for the period 2001-2010, it has been 'facing strong opposition from scientists and educators even though it has experienced fourteen adjustments' (Vietnam News, 2009b).

Any successful change in the education system must involve the teachers. The first step to make it happen, I believe, needs to be initiated from teacher education because teachers have widespread impact on generations of students. I am, therefore, motivated to look at teacher education in the hope of contributing to the development of Vietnam as it works on these new challenges.

1.1.2. My own journey from a traditional Vietnamese woman to an independent learner, teacher, and researcher

In this century, the century of globalization, the world has become a global village with the booming of information and cultural exchange. The traditional Eastern cultural values seem to be fading with the thrust of many Western democratic ideas, which are apparently attractive and tempting to young people, but also are taking away many traditional values. Living in this era, one could feel happy as she/he can witness a diversity of western and eastern cultural values, but at the same time might be uncertain about her/his own identity.

Despite the fact that nowadays people tend to adapt trans-national identities, I have always seen myself as a traditional Vietnamese woman as I was educated and grew up in a traditionally strict Vietnamese teachers' family. My parents have two children, me and my brother. Both my mother and father were university teachers. Although they obtained an education that adopted many of the elements from Russia, I think, they were still influenced a lot by their own families' tradition and the Vietnamese contemporary culture. My

father went to a university in Hanoi and spent two years in Russia for his professional training. My mother was my father's student at university. They both inspired us to take education seriously and to fire in us the passion for study and, more specifically, the love for reading books. I and my brother have our own bookcase full of books that my parents had bought for us since we were born. Our love for reading grew greater as the bookcase developed with time. I think the only valuable thing in my house at that time was the bookcase because books were not easy to buy and were expensive at that period of time, the post-war period and reconstruction of the country. It must have cost my parents a fortune. We can feel the love that my parents granted for us as well as their hopes for our future from that bookcase. Nowadays, when we both went to pursue our own dreams in different countries (my brother obtained his PhD in Switzerland and works there and I am in the UK for my PhD), we can never forget the amazing bookcase that nurtured our childhood dreams.

The model my parents adopted to educate me and my brother in the family was typical of Vietnamese tradition. Respect to teachers, elders, and parents, was the first and the basic virtue we had to learn from a very early stage. For example, we learnt how to show respect by saying correct words in an appropriate manner with appropriate voice tone. We were taught to be good, which means to obey teachers, elders, and parents. That also means that we have to obey and not to argue. In any cases, arguing with the elder is considered rude and naughty and will lead to being punished. The punishment could be to be beaten, or to be left in the dark. Everything has its own place, so we just needed to follow without questions. We have to keep everything in place and be well organised. Everything has to be done according to a timetable – getting up, having meals, studying times, leisure times, or bed times have to be scheduled; these activities do not depend on the needs, but on the scheduled times. We certainly could not do what we wanted or enjoyed things without parents' permission. In return, we were looked after very well by the elders. We were not expected to experiment for ourselves as

parents often did most things for us. They took control of our life even when we became adults and got married. We also learnt how to harmonise ourselves with people around. That means we learnt to hold our emotions, to keep ourselves in control. Even though we felt upset or angry, we needed to keep what we thought inside without confronting other people to keep peace. I still remember Mum said 'Một điều nhịn bằng chin điều lành' (hold yourself once, nine happy returns will come). Another teaching my Mum often said that has always stuck in my mind was 'ăn trông nồi, ngồi trông hướng' (when eating, you have to watch the rice bowl, when sitting down, you have to watch the direction). This saying needs some explanation. Vietnamese often gather together with all the members of the family for every meal. Rice is the main food, which is often placed in a big bowl for the whole family. In the past, rice was often not enough for everyone to eat. One was supposed not to be greedy and not to take all the rice and, therefore, had to watch how much the others are having so that he/she should have the same amount. By the same token, when sitting down together with other people, one should place himself/ herself in a position that would not block others' view. This saying teaches us to be harmonic among others, and not to be different. Modesty was also a quality that my parents expected us to have. Modesty could also help us to be better harmonised among others. Perfection was also expected in everything we did. Mistakes would show a sign of being naughty, and therefore, needed to be avoided. Whenever we did something, we had to be very careful to make sure that no mistakes would occur. If we made mistakes, depending on how serious they were, we would often be scolded or punished. This code of conduct was also practised at the schools we went to.

Those were just a few examples of what we needed to follow from childhood. Of course, my parents believed that was a good way of educating children and would help us become good people. In Vietnam we have a saying 'Yêu cho roi cho vọt, ghét cho ngọt cho bùi' (To love is to give rods, to hate is to give sweets) meaning if you love someone and want them to become good people, you will have to beat them. Giving them sweet words or pleasing them would

spoil them. However, I remember, as a small child, I felt I was oppressed. Many times I found myself in tears because I did not have a chance to express what I thought. I also often felt anxious about doing something new, being in a new place, or talking to new people. I often felt worried that I would make mistakes. I think I was a very passive, shy, and timid person. At the same time, I think I also became a well-organised person, who had the ability to plan things carefully, to get things done properly and a modest person, who can communicate with people in harmony. Probably, I had built the inner strength and the ability to harmonise with other people from that form of education.

In 1989 I went to a university for teachers of foreign languages, which my parents chose for me. Russian and then English were my majors at university. At that period of time, I heard of communicative language teaching from the lectures, but never figured out what it was because what we learnt was through traditional teaching methods. I believed that even my teachers did not really understand the nature of communicative teaching. They just talked about what they read in the textbook to transfer that knowledge to their students. We learnt a lot of grammar rules, did a lot of grammar exercises, and learnt new words by copying them down into a little book and making sentences with the new words. We learnt by heart all the texts that the teachers thought were interesting or useful for us. We did a lot of drilling exercises. We practised pair work quite often, but I remembered the pair work was for practising reading the dialogues aloud in pairs. As a result, when I graduated from university, I did not have confidence to speak in English. If I had to, I often spoke with caution for fear of making mistakes. I did not have good language skills especially for speaking and listening. I was often scared of having to discuss something in English as I often felt uncomfortable in speaking my mind. Consequently, in my teaching I adopted the same approach- the traditional grammar approach, which did not require me to use the language skills. At that time I thought that explaining grammar rules was the way to teach English.

My first experience with Western elements was in 2004 when I was offered a job as an assistant to the head teacher by WUSC (World University Service of Canada), a Canadian education company, which helps Vietnamese universities build capacity in teaching English. It was a valuable time for me to learn, not just language skills, but also learning strategies to become an active learner, which I found the most important. Needless to say, my English skills improved considerably. I had to communicate in English with Canadian colleagues, making myself understood as well as trying to understand what they said to me. I engaged in negotiating ideas, discussing and interacting with many other Canadian teachers of English in meetings, workshops, emails etc. I soon realised that learning by interacting with others, sharing ideas, and experimenting with things by myself were the key factors that helped my language skills improve. Another important thing was that I learnt to overcome the fear of making mistakes by taking risks. Importantly, the way I improved my language and work skills made me change my fundamental thinking about teaching methodology. I saw the values of learning by doing and reflecting on experience.

After that, there were two more periods of time that offered me opportunities to get to know Western learning and teaching theories and to conceptualise what I had experienced in my own learning and teaching. These periods were the courses for international teachers of English delivered in Canada in 2005 and another in the UK in 2009. These courses allowed me to experience the interactive and communicative teaching and learning approach with a lot of activities for different purposes and different types of learners. I also started to study about different theories of learning, theories of language acquisition, and theories of teaching English for speakers of other languages and found them very fascinating. I am very much interested in Socratic philosophy in comparison with Confucian teachings. Both Socrates and Confucius were great thinkers, who founded two different philosophies representing cultural values and beliefs for two vast communities – one of the West and the other of the East. Although both thinkers aimed at inculcating in

their students a love for learning and a desire for a life of virtue, their teachings were communicated from different approaches. Socratic teachings, labelled as Western, valued questioning and evaluating others' beliefs to generate and consider their own hypothesis and construct knowledge. Confucian teachings, labelled as Eastern or Asian, valued effortful learning and pragmatic acquisition of essential knowledge and behavioural reform. I often think about these two approaches of teachings, which I believe, both have great value in their own right.

After the course I went back to my university and together with my colleagues developed textbooks for students and delivered workshops and seminars to introduce the new ideas I learnt from the West and shared the experience I had from those courses in the light of the Western learning theories I learnt about. The improvement of my own skills and knowledge was very convincing evidence of the effectiveness of the Western ways of learning. This evidence also made me strongly believe that Western ideas could work very well in the Vietnamese context, where traditional values are predominant.

Consequently, I applied for a PhD in the UK to pursue my study. At the School of Education in Nottingham I had a valuable chance to observe teacher training classes. It was a very interesting experience for me to compare learning in general, and teacher training in particular, in Vietnam and in the UK. There were many differences I noticed from the observation. For example, the UK students seemed to like open-ended learning situations so that they could discuss openly with many different alternatives, whereas Vietnamese students tend to be rigid about one correct answer and are not happy with open-ended explanations. Vietnamese students tend to seek right or wrong answers from the teacher, whereas the UK students were highly tolerant of ambiguity. UK students seemed to me very outspoken and often spoke their mind. They were willing to share their ideas even though the thoughts had just come off the top of their heads. Vietnamese students seem to have difficulties in expressing their opinions and often wait until something perfect will come out. Vietnamese students tend to work very hard even

without break until they achieve their goals, whereas UK students often tend to relax in their study. In break time or at weekends they never appeared to work. Those are just a few examples I noticed from the observation. They link to my thinking with the Socratic and Confucian philosophies.

Since I have always wanted to work with teachers this experience has inspired me to look at how Western learning theories can be accommodated in the Vietnamese teacher educational context. I also wanted to explore changing Vietnamese teacher education through a practical intervention. I hope to be able to promote a shared learning environment through a process of reflecting on experience so that the teaching methods in Vietnam will move to a more dialogic approach. I also hope to help students become active learners, who can work well in the global context. This will serve as a springboard for teacher education in Vietnam to integrate to the international educational environment.

1.2. Aims of research and research questions

The context of Vietnam's contentious reforms and my personal educational experience has formed the background for this research. Thus, with my deep commitment to teaching and learning in Vietnam, and as a responsible Vietnamese teacher educator, I would like to make my small contribution towards the development of Vietnam. Therefore, the aims of my research, which synchronise with the Vietnamese government's ambitions to transform Vietnam in the context of globalisation, are as follows:

- To contribute to the cause of modernisation and industrialisation of the country

- To contribute to Vietnam being connected to the world and leaving behind the history of isolation from wars

- To contribute to paving the way to promote the globalisation process in Vietnam

- To help prepare the next generation in Vietnam for international employability

Research questions

Posed in the context of education policy changes in Vietnam in response to the globalisation agenda, my research questions are as follows:

- What factors hinder teacher learning in initial teacher education in Vietnam?

- What factors contribute towards teacher learning being effective in initial teacher education in Vietnam?

- What are the most appropriate strategies to promote initial teachers' learning in Vietnam?

- What is the role of teacher educators in redefining the teachers' and student teachers' identities?

The objectives of the research are as follows:

i) To conduct a practical intervention experimenting with using Western learning theories in the Vietnamese context.

ii) To promote a shared learning environment among beginning teachers using a more dialogic pedagogical approach

iii) To help the student teachers develop as lifelong learners

iv) To experiment, in a safe environment, with changing the culturally established roles between teachers and learners in Vietnam.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, which presents the lead-in to my research, the background to the research as well as its aims and structure. The lead-in introduces readers to the focal points of the study, including an investigation into the factors that hinder and enhance teacher learning in Vietnam, the most appropriate strategies to be applied to promote teacher learning and the role of teacher educators in shaping the Vietnamese students' and teachers' identities. The introduction chapter sets

out the context that promoted the research to be launched, including a review of the current context of Vietnam in the globalisation period and my own journey leading to this research. The aims and objectives of the research are presented at the end of this chapter.

Since the topic of the research concerns teacher learning in Vietnam, the second chapter offers a review of the representation of Vietnamese teachers via their images in Vietnamese popular culture. It analyses the cultural beliefs underpinning these images manifested in proverbs, folklore, and popular poems, songs and films. It takes a historical approach in order to see how this representation of Vietnamese teachers is demonstrated over time.

Chapter three begins with an overview of the literature on the prevalent model of learning in CHC (Confucian Heritage Culture) countries. This is to provide a comprehensive view of the two models of learning, which are driven by different ideologies from the West and the East. The chapter then continues to consider four constructivist theories of learning that are influential in the west and gaining influence in Vietnam. These are the interactive learning model, the model of teacher as a reflective practitioner, the experiential learning model and the model of visible learning and visible teaching, all of which have a particular relevance for teacher learning. This literature review chapter ends with a brief review of research in teacher learning and teaching.

Chapter four continues with a discussion of the methodology of the research. I begin the chapter with the review of action research in education. Then I discuss the rationale for using action research in my study. Other issues related to methodology are also been presented. Particularly, the analytical framework – Hofstede's cultural dimensions as well as the analytical processes are also presented and discussed at the end of the chapter.

In chapter five, I present and discuss the findings of both the pre-intervention and the intervention phases of the first (and, currently, the only) cycle of action research. In the pre-intervention phase of the study, both the student teachers' and the tutors' views are analysed in order to design the intervention. The intervention was designed for and targeted at the student teachers only; the analysis, therefore, is intended predominantly to find out the views of the student teachers.

Chapters six and seven use the findings analysed in chapter five to discuss the four research questions. Chapter six discusses the first two research questions, which are at a more micro level about factors that hinder teacher learning in Vietnam as well as factors that enhance it. The discussion of these two questions will point towards the discussion of the other two research questions, which are at a more macro level. Thus, chapter seven constructs the recommendations offering the most appropriate strategies that the Vietnamese strategic plan makers should take into consideration in order to implement the government's educational reforms. Chapter seven also discusses the role of the Vietnamese teacher educators in redefining the Vietnamese students' and the teachers' identities in the new era of globalisation.

In my study, some terminology needs clarification at the beginning to avoid confusion during the course of reading this thesis. For example, the general word for the person who learns is a 'student' and for the person who teaches is a 'teacher'. These words are used in the literature review or in the review of cultural dimensions of my study when it is about the roles of students and teachers in general. However, since my study focuses on teacher education, which means the teaching to teachers, the person who learns is a pre-service teacher and the person who teaches is the teacher of these pre-service teachers. Therefore, the term I use for the learner in my intervention is a 'student teacher' and the term for the teacher who teaches these student

teachers is a 'tutor'. Thus, a 'student teacher' actually takes the role of a student, and a 'tutor' takes the role of a teacher.

Chapter 2: Teachers in Vietnam - Popular cultural images and influences

This chapter reviews the representation of Vietnamese teachers via their images in Vietnamese proverbs, folklore, and popular poems, songs and films. It analyses the cultural beliefs underpinning these images on the assumption that, whilst popular cultural images influence everyone's views of teachers in a particular society, they will have particular relevance for trainee teachers, who arrive with certain preconceptions that are likely to influence the kinds of teacher they wish to become, and so have a direct bearing on their professional development.

In order to see how the representation of Vietnamese teachers is manifested over time, the historical approach needs to be taken into account. For nearly one thousand years, Vietnam was strongly influenced by the Chinese invasion that resulted from such a long period of Chinese domination. Vietnamese people used Chinese characters, but pronounced them in their own way. Alongside the use of these Chinese characters, Vietnamese people adapted them and invented their own scripts called 'chữ nôm' (World Bank, 2006; Dang, 2009). This development of learning showed that Chinese people could not assimilate Vietnamese people, and indicated Vietnamese awareness of national independence. Although Vietnamese people have their own script, Vietnam had a Confucian-oriented education, with its traditional values in promotion of learning and respect for teachers, for a very long time (World Bank, 2006; Dang, 2009; Le, 2013). At the end of the 19th and the first half of 20th centuries, the French forcibly colonised Vietnam and built French-Vietnamese education in order to serve the colonial apparatus. French and 'chữ quốc ngữ' (Vietnamese national language) coexisted during that time (Dang, 2009). Under the French- Vietnamese education system, 95% of Vietnamese people were illiterate (World Bank, 2006).

The 1945 revolution against French colonists is an important mark in Vietnamese history since this is when colonial Vietnam was transformed into an independent country. As soon as President Ho Chi Minh took control of the country, he started the fight against poverty, illiteracy and invaders. With the philosophy 'an illiterate nation is a powerless one', the government issued the call for 'anti-illiteracy' (World Bank, 2006; Dang, 2009). Since then, for decades Vietnam has committed to anti-illiteracy and the improvement of education for the whole nation. There have been successive education reforms, which began in 1950, 1955, and 1981 before the first major national reform for overall change was launched. The reforms aimed mainly at training people for the needs of the contemporary contexts of economic rehabilitation, building the country in the North and fighting with the American invaders in the South for the reunification of the whole country. One of the notable premises of the reforms was the abolition of the 'command education system' and beginning 'a more equitable relationship between teachers and students' (World Bank, 2006; Kieu and Chau, 2012). After these three successive reforms in education, in order to overcome the economic crisis, the government decided to conduct a major national reform commencing in 1986 called Doi Moi (Renovation) to move from the centralised subsidised system to a socialist – oriented market mechanism and to build Vietnam into a country of industrialisation and modernisation (World Bank, 2006; Kieu and Chau, 2012). This overall change, with the government mandating the 'Open- door policy,' caused the need to change the national policy in the education sector to be responsive to the new requirements. The Education sector, whilst endeavouring to 'maintain, enhance and develop the national education system', places the 'emphasis on improving the material and spiritual lives of teachers and educational managers' (World Bank, 2006).

Recently, there have been two successive reforms in education, the reform of general education curricula and the reform of higher education commencing in 2000 and 2006 respectively, in order to meet the requirements of a new

context of globalisation. The former was intended to introduce new curricula and textbooks for all grades of all school levels with the renovation of educational content and methodology. The latter aims to improve the quality and size of higher education to be ready for the socialist-oriented market mechanism. These aims are to meet the country's socio-economic development requirements and people's learning needs (World Bank, 2006). The focuses include renewal of training content and methods and significantly improving the quality of education in order to come closer to regional and international standards (Kieu and Chau, 2012). The renewal of teaching methods has centred on learner-centred approaches, cooperative and collaborative learning environments, fostering learner autonomy, and promoting independent learning skills for students (Thanh, 2010, pp.29–30).

Taking the above historical development of Vietnamese education into account, I divided the chronology into three broad periods. The first period is the pre-revolutionary that covers the feudal and colonial times, during which Vietnamese education was strongly foreign- oriented, immersed heavily in Chinese and later in French models. In this period, since only a very small population was literate, the popular culture was often reflected in proverbs and folklore, which were circulated and resonated among ordinary people. The 1945 revolution against French colonists marked the start of the second period, the post- revolutionary up to 2000. This is the time when Vietnam transformed into an independent country, building its own education system while striving to fight against invaders, and to construct and develop the country. This period ended up with 'Doi Moi', quite a successful major national reform with new policies that helped Vietnam open a new door to the world. Filled with the joy of being citizens of an independent country, and because illiteracy was gradually eradicated, Vietnamese people in this period were able to and often liked to communicate many of their ideas and thoughts through poems and songs. The third period is the modern time from 2000 up to now with new reforms in the context of globalisation. In this modern period, although poems and song are still resonating, films about

teachers have become more and more popular. Therefore, the following analysis of popular images of teachers in Vietnam is organised in relation to this broad periodisation - pre-revolutionary period, post-revolutionary period, modern period - with one typical kind of text as the representation for each period of time. Specifically, proverbs and folklore represent the pre-revolutionary period, poems and songs epitomise the post-revolutionary period, and the modern period is denoted in films.

2.1. Pre-revolutionary period

Popular cultural images of Vietnamese teachers were often depicted in proverbs and folklore in this period. Proverbs and folklore, which were rhythmic and 'catchy' verses passed on to one another through speech, were an easy method to communicate ideas among ordinary people. They provide a rich corpus of texts that permeate, infiltrate, and accumulate in the history. These 'catchy' chants and proverbs were widely considered as a source of wisdom, and they have been analysed by literary scholars as a repository of information about Vietnamese habits, customs, and traditions, demonstrating their cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs from different angles of the Vietnamese people's lives in the past (Hà, 2012; Mạnh and Hà, 2010; Đỗ, 2010). Som, (2011) commented that 'Folklore/folktales reside in the mind of a people not just as stories but almost like a set of norms to follow that sets the boundaries of concepts relevant for a culture'. Therefore, the images of Vietnamese teachers found in proverbs and folklore can offer a partial, but nevertheless illuminating representation of the popular culture of that pre-revolutionary period.

The prevailing image of teaching in these proverbs and folklore is of a noble and glorious job. Teachers are seen as the fount of all knowledge. The most prominent feature to be noted is not just the extreme importance of the teacher in society but also the authority of their knowledge and the fact that

it is considered vital to the success of individuals. The proverb 'Không thày đố mày làm nên' (Without a teacher, you will surely not be successful) offers an example of this respect for the absolute power of teachers to determine one's success. While placing the stress on the teacher's role, the proverb also suggests that students will always rely on the teacher in learning. However talented the student is, he still needs a teacher for his whole life. The proverb also suggests a moral lesson, warning the student not to be over proud of himself/herself and reminding the student to be modest. It is notable that all the proverbs that contain the word 'teacher' use 'thày', meaning 'a male teacher'.

Other proverbs emphasise the value of the knowledge the teacher provides: for example, 'Nhất tự vi sư, bán tự vi sư' (teaching one word can make a teacher, even half a word can still make a teacher). This proverb carries two main implications. One is that the knowledge from the teacher is worthy and valuable; even half a word should still be treasured. The other is advice for the student to respect the teacher, however much he teaches. The focus here is on precise knowledge from the teacher. Every single word from the teacher is expected to be valuable, and therefore, has to be correct.

Since teachers are essential and teachers' knowledge is vital to success, the image of students' expected relationship to teachers is seen as respect and dependency. Respect for teachers is probably the most frequently found moral lesson in proverbs and folklore. A large number of proverbs demonstrate respect and gratitude towards teachers, such as, 'Muốn sang thì bắc cầu kiều, muốn con hay chữ thì yêu kính thày' (If you want to come to the other shore, you have to make a beautiful bridge over the river; if you want your child to be knowledgeable, you have to respect the teacher in the first place); 'Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây' (When you eat fruit, you have to remember the one who grew the tree) or 'Uống nước nhớ nguồn' (When you drink the water, you have to value the water source) or Công cha, nghĩa mẹ, ơn thày (Mum gave birth to you, dad brought you up, teachers educated you). All of

these proverbs emphasise the need for gratitude towards the teacher, a gratitude that should be maintained throughout your life. The energy, expertise, and love that teachers devote to their work of educating children are often associated with all the hard work needed to cultivate a tree from the sapling till the tree is able to produce fruits. The emphasis is, therefore, on a lifelong project for the learner and a lifelong commitment for the teacher. The water source is compared with the teacher's source of knowledge, which is precious and unlimited. The gratitude of the students towards the teachers is considered as important as the gratitude of children towards their parents. 'Tôn sư trọng đạo' (Respect the teacher, value morality) became a very common slogan in Vietnamese schools as a reminder for all Vietnamese students, which is still seen today in many school posters.

Seniority is another aspect of the image of teachers in this period. 'Thày giáo già, con hát trẻ' (Teachers should be old, singers should be young) offers a socially accepted value of a particular job, which claims that the older the teacher is, the more respected he is. This proverb demonstrates the hierarchical relationships in Vietnamese society, and explains the way knowledge is constructed. The learning philosophy in this proverb is that knowledge is accumulated over time. This concept of knowledge construction also explains the belief that the teacher always has better knowledge than students and, therefore, should be respected without questioning.

Proverbs and folktales were commonly used in the pre-revolutionary period, when Vietnamese people relied mostly on oral speech rather than written communication. They are the mixture of wisdom and philosophy, which tell us the great truth in the most significant way and often have a great impact on our minds. Moon (2009) maintained that proverbs can be used not only as a bridge for communication, but also a means of understanding a culture. As analysed above, Vietnamese proverbs often use metaphors to convey meaning and teach lessons. Since the metaphors make them highly accessible, the proverbs were immensely influential among people of all social classes.

Often, alongside the literal meaning, the proverbs communicate moral lessons. Looking at the teachers' images described above, we can see that the traditional Vietnamese teachers have to fulfil two crucial roles that establish their identity - transferring knowledge to students and being a moral guide. The prevailing image is, therefore, of the teacher as a source of unlimited wisdom and moral guidance to students. Students in turn are expected to be grateful, admiring and respectful of their teachers – not just in school, but for life.

2.2. Post- revolutionary period to 2000

After the revolution, teachers' images were further enhanced with the establishment of Vietnamese Teachers' Day. The history of the day began with the establishment of the international organization of educators from communist countries named FISE (Federation International Syndicale des Enseignants - the united international education union) in Paris, France in 1946. The purpose of this organization was to improve the education system, protect the teacher's physical and mental rights, and give prominence to the teacher's duties and positions in society. Later in 1957, in a conference in Warsaw, Poland, FISE developed a 'Charter of Educators' and decided to take 20th November as the Day of International Charter of Educators. Vietnam was a member of the organisation from 1953 and first celebrated this day in 1958; the day was renamed as Vietnamese Teachers' Day in 1982.

This day, which can be considered as a festival for Vietnamese teachers, is vibrant with many activities to show honour and respect to teachers. On this occasion, schools often have meetings especially for teachers and talks about Teachers' Day. Good teaching activities are showcased. Schools often issue newsletters, forums full of beautiful poems and writings about teachers and teaching. There are also performances of songs about teachers and dances to entertain teachers. Students often give their beloved teachers flowers and

gifts with beautiful wishes. This is done by not only the current students of the schools but also by the school alumni. This occasion is a chance for people to gather and visit their former and present teachers. On this day the streets are often very crowded with students and parents - going to visit their old teachers, taking them bunches of flowers.

Since its inception in 1958, and particularly since its renaming in 1982, Vietnamese Teachers' Day has been important in generating modern Vietnamese poetry about teachers, which sits alongside the proverbs and folklores which are still popular. In the post-revolutionary period, alongside images of mothers and soldiers, images of teachers were particularly popular in poetry. There are many thousands of these poems, which were frequently posted in newspapers, magazines, university and schools newsletters, and now also feature on the news and websites. However, the dates when these poems were written are often unknown because they were written not to be officially published. They were written to record the emotions, attitudes, and thoughts of the students towards their teachers and their experience about the school time and also to show respect for the teachers. The poems are passed on from student to student.

In the poetry of this period, a teacher as a topiarist or a grower is one of the most common images. The teacher is someone who sows seeds of love (Thày gieo hạt mầm nhân ái) in each blank field (Trên từng mảnh đất sơ khai) (H. Đ. Nguyễn, n.d.) . The child is depicted as an empty field for the teacher to 'sow seeds of love' or as a sapling and the teacher having to work hard to shape the sapling into a bonsai. This image is found in many well- known poems written by Trần, n.d.; Lê, n.d.; Trần, n.d.; Tú, n.d.; H. Đ. Nguyễn, n.d. Here is an example written by Trần, n.d. to express nostalgia about school teaching and pride in his job as a tree grower/ a topiarist:

> Từng trên bục giảng làm thày (I used to stand by the blackboard as a teacher)
> Trò bao nhiêu lớp ngày nay trưởng thành (Teaching generations of students who have now been successful)

Làm người thợ giỏi uốn cành (Doing a job as a skilled topiarist)

Góp thêm một chút công trình quê hương (to contribute to the country)

Hôm nay trở lại mái trường (Back to the old school now)

Lòng vui phơi phới như đương làm thày (Feeling happy as if I am now a teacher)

Another image of the teacher is a ferryman who takes passengers to the other side of the river, back and forth diligently. This image is associated with a teacher who takes generations of students to the bright future. Anyone who wishes to travel to the other side of the river has to rely on a ferry and needs support and assistance from the ferryman. The river is the metaphor for the life line. The idea is that if an individual wishes to move toward a bright future or to be successful in their life, one always needs to seek assistance from teachers. The ferry is associated with a body of knowledge as a means for the teacher to guide his students to success. This poetic image seems to have originated from a proverb mentioned before, in which one who wishes to go to the other shore has to bridge the river. In this poem, the bridge is replaced by the ferry. This image is documented in a huge number of poems (Q. Đ. Nguyễn, n.d.; L. C. Nguyễn, n.d.; Lê, n.d.; Thảo, n.d.), for example:

Một dòng đời - một dòng sông (A lifeline – a river)

Mấy ai là kẻ đứng trông bến bờ (Nobody is just looking to the other side)

Muốn qua sông phải có đò (Everybody has to rely on the ferry to go to the other side)

Đường đời muôn bước phải nhờ người đưa … (There are so many walks of life)

Tháng năm dầu dãi nắng mưa (Over the difficult times and in harsh weather)

Con đò trí thức thầy đưa bao người (The teacher takes you to the shore in ferries full of knowledge) (Thảo, n.d.).

The teacher is also portrayed as a father, or a mother, which is different from the authoritarian role of the teacher in the previous period. In this image, the role of the teacher is still extremely important as demonstrated in proverbs and folklore, but more caring and loving. They help children with the very first steps of life, not only encouraging them at difficult times, but also supporting

them at every success, and always reminding them not to be over proud or careless over a success.

> Qua buồn vui, qua những thăng trầm (Going through sufferings and happiness of ups and downs)
>
> Câu trả lời sáng lên lấp lánh (Twinkling the answer to the question)
>
> Với tôi thầy ký thác (Why the teacher is not a relative, but supports me in every walk of life)
>
> Thầy gửi tôi khát vọng người cha (Because he fires up in me the ambition from a father) (Phạm, n.d.)

> Xiêu xiêu nét chữ dại khờ (Alongside my awkward writing characters)
>
> Tay cô cầm ấm đến giờ long em (Warmth from teacher's hand has emanated to my heart until now)
>
> Vở ngày thơ ấu lần xem (Looking back at notebooks from childhood)
>
> Tình cô như mẹ biết đem sánh gì (I felt teacher's love just like mum's) (V. T. Nguyễn, n.d.)

Teaching also is depicted as lullabies from mothers/ fathers, which will be soothing and encouraging the students throughout their whole lives.

> Từ trong vòm mát sân trường (From the school full of tree shadows)
>
> Xin lời ru được dẫn đường em đi (Let the lullaby guide my way) (Đoàn, n.d.).

The teachers' teaching is also associated with sweetness and nourishment, something valuable, beautiful, and vital:

> Em ngồi yên uống suối mật trong lành (I am sitting still and drinking the stream of fresh honey)
>
> Thời gian như dừng trôi không bước nữa (The time seems to stop flying)
>
> Không gian cũng nằm yên không dám cựa (The universe also stays still)
>
> Ngại ngoài kia nắng sẽ thôi vàng (Lest the sun outside will stop pouring the gold) (L. C. Nguyễn, n.d.)

Many other images of teachers, such as, an engineer of the soul, an artist, sweet fruits, sunshine, a guiding star are also found in popular poems about teachers. 'Bài Thơ Về Ngành Giáo' offers an example of these images:

> Đẹp biết mấy nghề giáo viên ta đó (How beautiful the teachers' job is)
>
> Là họa sỹ điểm tô mầm phác nụ (Being an artist portraying a bud in a painting)
>
> Là kỹ sư thiết kế vạn tâm hồn (Being an engineer to design millions of souls)
>
> (Anon, n.d.)

In these verses, the child is associated with a blank sheet and the teacher as an artist can determine what the painting will look like. These images help us envisage a process of educating a child that needs so much skill, care and attention. Another image mentioned in the verses is an engineer of souls who also makes the kind of person the child will become. The painting and the soul are something delicate and fine and, therefore, need a lot of skill to work at. As such, these images emphasise the important role of the teacher in shaping an individual's personality.

The image of students in return reflects a rather passive attitude of a baby listening to 'lullabies' or 'sitting still and drinking the stream of fresh honey'. This is often considered a good manner of a role model student. This is also associated with the idea that the students seem to accept everything from the teacher without questioning. The metaphors for a teacher and a student relationship as a topiarist- a young tree; a ferryman- a passenger; an artist- a painting; an engineer of soul- a young soul; a mother/father- a child manifest a relationship, in which the student is expected to depend on, listen to, and admire the teacher.

The image of teacher- student relationship as a mother/ father and a child seems to be the most influential association. School children in Vietnam in both primary and secondary schools usually address their teachers as 'Con' vs. 'Thày' or 'Con' vs. 'Cô'. 'Con' is a personal pronoun as 'I' which a child addresses to a mother or a father. This way of students' addressing their

teachers explicitly demonstrates a hierarchical relationship between students and teachers. This relationship also implies that teachers hold great responsibilities of educating and bringing up the children, and empowers the teacher to control what children can or cannot do or what they will become. At the same time, the children will have to respect, obey, and listen to their teachers as to their mothers or fathers. This relationship, it might be argued, nurtures a culture which promotes passitivity among school children and their dependency on teachers toward whom they are expected to show unquestioning respect. Teachers, in return, build up powerful authority over the children, and an expectation that they can control all the activities in the course of their life both academically and morally.

This poetry not only emphasises the important role of teachers, but also displays the students' respect and admiration for teachers. The poetry praises the glory of teachers' work, which educates useful people for the country, fires up young generations' dreams, and shapes young personalities. Implied in the imagery is the idea that the teachers often sacrifice their personal life for the sake of the students' lives and that the students owe their success to their teachers' devotion to providing them with valuable knowledge and guiding them in their moral lives (Lê, 2010; Huỳnh, 2011). These are one of the popular verses in the poem 'Thày':

>Sâu thẳm trời xanh (Deep in the blue skies)
>
>Thày là mây trắng (Teachers are a white cloud)
>
>Đem lại ước mơ (Bringing dreams)
>
>Tự do hạnh phúc (Freedom and happiness)
>
>Đại dương xa xăm (Far in the ocean)
>
>Thày là ngọn sóng (Teachers are waves)
>
>Nhấp nhô xào xạc (Sweeping vigorously)
>
>Xanh biếc một màu (Dying the water blue)
>
>Thày với bóng đêm (When in the dark)
>
>Lại là ngọn nến (Teachers are candles)
>
>Sưởi ấm ước mơ (Warming up dreams)
>
>Tương lai thắp sáng (Lighting up the future) (Anon, n.d.)

Teacher images are featured not only in poetry, but also in many popular songs about teachers. A very well-known song 'Bài ca người giáo viên nhân dân' (A hymn of the people's teachers) written by Hoàng Vân at the beginning of the 1970s portrays teachers as beautiful scented flowers. The song with blithe melody praises young teachers who are full of life and love for teaching. As such, seniority as a criterion to assess the quality of a teacher in the previous period does not seem to be applicable in this period. This song resonated widely both within and outside the education sector and has been sung until now:

> Trên những nẻo đường của tổ quốc xanh tươi, có những loài hoa thơm đậm đà sắc hương, có những bài ca nghe rạo rực long người. Bài ca ấy, loài hoa ấy, đẹp như em – người giáo viên nhân dân.Tâm hồn em, tươi mát xanh như tán lá bang. Trái tim em đỏ nhiệt tình như hoa phượng vĩ ... (On the roads all over the green country there are flowers imbued with fragrance and colour, there are songs that arouse people' hearts. Those flowers, those songs are as beautiful as you – a people's teacher. Your soul is as fresh as the shade of foliage. Your heart full of enthusiasm is as red as flamboyant flowers ...)

Other songs of this content include 'Cô giáo về bản' (A teacher coming to the mountainous village) written by Trương Hùng Cường in 1972 when a number of teachers were sent to many different part of Vietnam for the anti- illiteracy movement. Teaching at that period of time was a big dream of many young people full of enthusiasm and desire to contribute to the independent Vietnam. 'Ước mơ xanh' (The green dream) describes a young girl nurturing in her heart a dream to be a teacher. In her imagination children are saplings and schools are tree nurseries. And in the children's imagination a teacher is 'a fairy' or 'a beloved mother', for example in the song 'Ngày đầu tiên đi học' (First days at school) with lyrics from Viễn Phương and music from Nguyễn Ngọc Thiện.

A very well-known image that is found not only in poems but also in many popular songs about teachers is the teacher's white hair. The teacher's white hair reminds the students of all the hard work the teacher does for them that makes the teacher's hair turn white. 'Bụi phấn' (lyrics by Lê Văn Lộc and music by Vũ Hoàng) is perhaps the most classic song of the teacher that every schoolchild memorises, which conveys this image. After it was released in 1982 it quickly became one of the famous school songs in Vietnam. The audience can feel the emotions of a student, remembering the teacher, who devoted his whole life to provide valuable knowledge to students. The white chalk dust, often associated with teacher's white hair, is falling on the teacher's hair making it white. The song advises students not to forget this image; to always show gratitude and respect to the teacher:

>Em yêu phút giây này (I love this moment)
>
>Thày em tóc như bạc thêm (When my teacher's hair is looking whiter)
>
>Bạc thêm vì bụi phấn (Whiter due to the chalk dust)
>
>Cho em bài học hay (To give me interesting lessons)
>
>Mai sau lớn khôn rồi (When I grow up)
>
>Làm sao có thể nào quên (I cannot forget)
>
>Thày em người dạy dỗ (My teacher who teaches me)
>
>Khi em tuổi còn thơ (When I am a school child)

Other popular songs include 'Nhớ ơn thày cô' (Grateful to the teacher) written by Nguyễn Ngọc Thiện; 'Đi học' (Going to school) owing its lyrics from Minh Chính written in 1959 and music from Bùi Đình Thảo; 'Khi tóc thày bạc trắng' (When the teacher's hair is getting white) written in 1994 by Trần Đức; 'Những nụ cười trở lại' (The smiles coming back) written by Xuân Nghĩa in 1998; 'Con đường đến trường (The way to school) written in 1980 by Phạm Đăng Khương; and 'Mong ước kỷ niệm xưa' (Coming back to the old memories) written in 1997 by Xuân Phương. These songs, which are still sung nowadays, convey the students' positive emotions about their school memories. They also express love for their teachers and deep gratitude for the teachers' hard work and commitment to educating the students.

As such, the prevailing image of teachers in both modern poetry and songs portrays someone who has lifelong commitment to teaching, mothering students from the young age until they grow up. This teacher is, therefore, expected to be admired, respected and appreciated. The image of a teacher as a highly respected knowledge authority in the previous period gives way to a more nurturing one, sitting alongside their students as a grower, an engineer of souls, an artist, a ferryman or a father/mother. However, the prevailing image of students remains someone who is dependent on teachers and admires the teachers without question.

2.3. Modern times

The popular cultural images of Vietnamese teachers in recent years have been featured in popular films. Released in 2002, Thung lũng hoang vắng' (Desolate valley), directed by Phạm Nhuệ Giang, portrays teachers with a lot of dedication to the job of educating the children in a remote mountainous area. The film was like a poem filled up with deep humanity about the silent sacrifice of the teachers in their mission of educating children. They overcome many difficulties, struggling to hang on in a distant land, unaccompanied by relatives, throughout the year immersed in solitude. They demonstrate great love for their job and display good codes of conduct. The image of teachers in this film, therefore, places emphasis on the moral agency of a teacher, who should always have correct behaviour. The suggestion is that, if this moral image collapses, it will cause a domino effect to the whole education environment. The film revolves around the lives of two young teachers assigned to come to a very poor school to teach mountain children. They have gained a lot of love from the local children for their good manner and love for the job. However, at one point a student sees their young teacher and her boyfriend cuddling and kissing each other. This makes the image of the teacher completely collapse because this is considered a bad behaviour for a

teacher. Therefore she has to leave the school. Many other stories happen that make the school in danger of disintegration. However, with their love for teaching and for the students, the teachers come back to the school to continue their duties as devoted teachers. The film indicates the fact that teachers have to appear in front of their students as a moral model of correct behaviours. They have to devote all their heart and overcome difficulties for the sake of students. If this moral image is affected, the teacher will lose her power. Obviously, the representation of morality is the prevalent image of teachers is this film.

The image of teachers in the film 'Chiến dịch trái tim bên phải' characterises a different aspect of teachers from the above one. The teacher is no longer a single moral agent or a role model with correct behaviours. Seniority is not the criterion used to assess a teacher. More important to this view of the teacher is that she should creative and clever, to conquer a group of naughty students. The film 'Chiến dịch trái tim bên phải' (The right-side heart campaign), directed by Đào Duy Phúc, was released in 2005 on the occasion of Vietnamese Teachers' Day, 20th November. The film focuses on the story of a student teacher on her teaching practice in a new 7th grade group of students. In this class, the young teacher has to deal with a group of naughty students, who often cause a lot of troubles with their antics. Yet everything seems to completely turn around when the young teacher gets to know the class and establishes herself as their teacher. These students are no longer playful like before; they become more docile thanks to the whole-hearted and sincere advice of the new teacher. This film can be considered as a breakthrough in teachers' image-building from the long established traditional images previously seen on screen: the image of teachers as moral guides has changed to a new image of a creative innovator.

The image of teachers in the film 'Cầu vồng tình yêu' (The love rainbow), directed by Vũ Hồng Sơn in 2011 seems to be a combination of a role model as a moral guide and a knowledgeable person. The film revolves around a

story of a young lovely, gentle and very understanding teacher, who teaches history. Through lectures full of enthusiasm, plus her kind and caring manner, the teacher has captured the hearts of so many students in the school.

In contrast, the image of teachers in the film 'Rừng Chắn Cát' (Protecting forest), released at the end of 2011, places a lot of emphasis on the teacher as a hero fighting against evil forces to protect their students. This film, which attracted a lot of attention from the Vietnamese film viewers and critics, associates the image of a teacher with a forest planted in the local area to protect the area from being covered by sand. The film is about Hai Xuan, a Secondary School located on a sandy hill of a poor coastal commune, which existed under a loose management system and a domineering principal. Life at Hai Xuan school exposes many existing issues of education sector - the race for in-service education is just for a salary increase, many policies that are just for show and formality. Bình Nguyên, the hero is a dedicated young teacher, determined to fight for students and schools. As a eucalyptus forest, a typical kind of trees of the area planted on sandy arid soil, survives the soil erosion, teachers sacrifice their private lives, their dreams to save the school and build a new face for it. The film was written by teacher Nguyễn Thiên Vỹ, who worked in Loc Ha district (Ha Tinh). He was inspired by what he himself experienced. The film built up an image of a teacher as a hero in an education field, who is daring and determined to sacrifice himself fighting against evil forces for the better of the school and students. Imperfect images of teachers, which show the deterioration in morality of teachers, are also exposed in the film. These teachers are depicted as evil forces, but are defeated by the positive images of teachers. The emphasis is, therefore, placed on the morality of teachers in the modern time. The films about teachers in the modern time therefore demonstrate common characteristics with earlier texts in that the teachers are seen as moral agents, a knowledge source, an adviser and a hero, which places considerable power and great expectation on teachers.

Chapter 3: Theoretical perspectives on teacher learning

In this chapter I review the main constructivist theories of learning that are influential in the West and gaining influence in Vietnam. These theories also contribute to the development of a theoretical framework for my study. However, as this study is also related to the context of Vietnam, one of Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) countries, in which these constructivist learning theories are to be applied, I begin this chapter with an overview of the literature on the prevalent model of learning in CHC countries. This is to provide a comprehensive view of the two models of learning, which are driven by different ideologies from the West and the East. The chapter then continues to consider four constructivist theories of learning. The first theory is the interactive model of learning that places great emphasis on the important role of interaction in constructing new understandings. I then review the model of the teacher as a reflective practitioner who has the ability to reflect on their teaching, who is prepared to ask questions and self-assess their own practice to improve it. The next learning model is the experiential learning theory that highlights the role of experience in a learning process though reflective observation. I also review the model of visible learning at the end of the chapter.

3.1. The prevalent views of learning in CHC countries vs. the constructivist views of learning

With the definition that CHC countries are 'those which have historically been heavily influenced by Chinese culture' (Carless, 2011, p.155), Vietnam is regarded as a CHC country together with Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia (Nguyen et al., 2006; Le, 2013). The long period of Chinese domination has bequeathed enduring legacies, reflected in many aspects of the Vietnamese society. Therefore, in spite of the introduction of

Western ideologies with the North being colonised by French people, and then being backed by the Soviet Union, and the South being influenced by the American invaders, 'Confucian moral philosophy remains the guiding principle that regulates [Vietnamese] people's attitudes and behaviours and social relationships (Le, 2013, p.13) including ones in education. For this reason, Vietnam shares the prevalent model of teaching and learning that China and other CHC countries embrace.

Because of the widespread influence of Confucian philosophy in Asian countries, the terms used to address CHC learners are varied from 'Asian learners', 'CHC learners', or 'Chinese learners' or sometimes 'non-Western' when described by Western academics to pinpoint the differences from the Western learners. By the same token, the term 'Chinese learners' can also mean learners from a wider geographical area than just China, including East Asia, or Asia, which are influenced by Confucian legacies. The definitions and the use of these terms are discussed in detail in Ryan (2010).

Although little has been researched about a particular learning and teaching model in Vietnam, the general one in CHC countries and more specifically in China has aroused a lot of interest among both Western and Asian researchers. The scholars have shown high interest in these learners and there is a good deal of 'ongoing scholarly debate' (Li, 2001, p.111). These debates centre on three main issues: stereotyping the CHC learners, raising a paradox and its solution, and debunking the stereotyping.

3.1.1. The prevalent views of learning in CHC countries

3.1.1.1. Stereotyping the CHC learners

From many westerners' perspectives, CHC classrooms create a learning environment that is impoverished. This environment often described negatively and in terms of deficits has been recently reviewed and discussed in-depth, for example in Watkins and Biggs (2001b); Biggs (2001); Li (2001); Hu (2002); Ryan and Louie (2007); Ryan and Slethaug (2010). This work points

out the stereotyping characteristics that characterise these deficit views of CHC classrooms, for example, 'large classes', external examinations', 'cold learning climate', 'expository teaching', ' greatly under-resourced classes', 'conservative' and 'traditional' (On, 1996, p.63; Watkins and Biggs, 2001b, p.13; Cortazzi and Lixian, 2001, p.116; Mok et al., 2001, p.161). Others point out that CHC learners are essentially characterised by some westerners as 'passive learners lacking critical thinking skills' (Ryan, 2010, p.41) or 'passive and surface learners' (Ryan and Louie, 2007, p.407) or 'no more than a passive receptor' (Lingbiao and Watkins, 2001, p.29). These deficits seem to become CHC attributes and are also accepted by scholars from CHC countries. Hu (2002) for example, stated that Chinese students

> should maintain a high level of receptiveness, wholeheartedly embracing the knowledge from their teachers or books. They are expected to respect and cooperate with their teacher and not to challenge the transmitted knowledge or present their own ideas until they have mastered sufficient knowledge to make informed judgement (Hu, 2002, p.100).

In this respect, notions of knowledge discovery, construction of knowledge, or independent learning, with equivalent strategies, such as asking questions, reflecting on experiences, critical thinking, which are based on western criteria of good learning are completely opposite to this learning style. The features described above have become CHC stereotypes which are often compared and contrasted with Western ones. They are often expressed 'as binaries such as deep/ surface, adversarial/ harmonious, independent/dependent' (Ryan, 2010, p.42). Ryan (2010) summarised these dichotomies in table 1 (overleaf), based on his examination of literature of this area.

TABLE 1: WESTERN VS. CONFUCIAN ACADEMIC VALUES
(Ryan, 2010, p.43)

Western	Confucian
'Deep' learners	'Surface' learner
Independent learners	Dependence on the teacher
Critical thinking	'Follow the master'
Student-centred learning	Respect for the teacher
Adversarial stance	Harmony
Argumentative learners	Passive learners
Achievement of the individual	Achievement of the group
Constructing new knowledge	Respect for historical texts

Teaching in CHC classrooms, therefore, is often stereotyped as a process of knowledge transmission. 'Teacher-centred pedagogy and student compliance are still prevalent' (Ho, 2001, p.99) and 'knowledge is something external to the student and transferred to them by teachers' (Lingbiao and Watkins, 2001, p.30). Thus, the learning style that has been reviewed previously accords with this teaching style. The teacher is in the centre of the teaching and learning process transferring the knowledge, which he/she has accumulated before, from his/her head to the students' heads. The teacher acts as the source of all knowledge and therefore is powerful and is expected to be treated with respect.

Lingbiao and Watkins (2001) develop a conceptual model of teaching, based on their research into Chinese high school teachers of physics. Five conceptions of teaching, namely knowledge delivery (KD), exam preparation (EP), ability development (AD), attitude promotion (AP) and conduct guidance (CG) are summarised in table 2 (overleaf).

TABLE 2: CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (IN CHC COUNTRIES)
(Lingbiao and Watkins, 2001, p.29)

	Learning and learner	Nature of teaching	Role of teacher	Expect outcomes	Teaching content	Method of teaching
KD	Acquiring knowledge and skills; passive receivers	Delivering knowledge and skills	Deliver and resource	Accumulation of knowledge and skills	Follow the textbook closely	One-way lecturing plus demonstration
EP	Achieving exam requirements, achievers, competitive	Preparing for examinations; drilling students	Trainer and director	High exam achievement	Conducted by the 'baton of exams	Classroom drilling, effective for preparing exams
AD	Internal construction; explorer, capable, flexible and creative	Facilitating learning	Guide, leader and facilitator	Developing understanding and ability, knowing how to learn	Meets the needs of students and matches students' level	A variety of methods, emphasises activities and interactions
AP	Establishing good attitudes	Promoting and fostering good attitude	Model of good learner with good attitudes	Active and independent in learning	Contained implicitly in teachers' performance	Interactive and interesting; indirect manner
CG	Self-improvement	Facilitating and guiding good conduct	Role model of good conduct, friend of students	Qualified persons with good conduct	Related materials, contained implicitly in teachers' behaviours	Friendly and interactive indirect manner

All these stereotyping elements of the CHC learner portray a picture opposite to the western teaching and learning environment, having a high degree of teacher control and passive students with rote based learning strategies. From the western perspective, the approach is likely to serve as a disservice to learning and the likelihood, therefore, is the sense that there will need to be a change towards the western style.

3.1.1.2. The paradox and debate over the CHC learners

Despite this stereotypical picture of the CHC learner, other research in this area has found that, in fact, CHC learners outperform Western students, at least in science and mathematics and have deeper meaning-oriented, approaches to learning (Watkins and Biggs, 2001b, p.3; Mok et al., 2001, p.162). Consequently, a body of research started to look into this paradox as well as its solution and suggested an alternative view.

Biggs (1998) set out several ways to resolve this paradox. He maintained that 'the prospect of external examinations clarifies the mind, while drill, rote learning, expository teaching, and a no-nonsense authoritarian classroom climate burnish it to a mirror-like finish' (p.725). His other explanations for the better performance over western students include regarding CHC students as being more intelligent and that 'western perceptions about the impoverished teaching environments are wrong' (p.725). Biggs (1998) further explained two common western misperceptions about the role of repetition in learning and the role of the teacher in CHC classrooms. In his view, repetition does not imply a surface learning approach as westerners often think, but can be seen as 'the route to understanding' and the teachers are actually 'dedicated to student-centred teaching and meaningful learning' (p.727). These claims are also discussed in (Biggs, 2001) and inform further arguments about the Chinese learner in (Watkins and Biggs, 2001a).

Mok et al. (2001) consider that learning depends on

> what the learners discern and this in turn depends on the variation they are responding to. As a result, the pattern of variation inherent in the learning environment is critical to what can possibly be learnt (Mok et al., 2001, p.176).

From that point of view, they studied a Chinese lesson in detail and uncovered fascinating insights into how the Chinese teacher is able to create a positive learning environment while maintaining the dominating role. It was found

that the teacher managed to create different dimensions of variations pertinent to the understanding of the lesson. Thus, the teacher was able to create a learning space for his student. Their conclusion was that the claim that teacher-centred whole class teaching means the transmission of knowledge and little student involvement can be rebutted.

Littlewood (2001) studied East Asian students' attitudes towards the English learning classrooms from eight countries and found that these students 'wish to participate actively in exploring knowledge and have positive attitudes towards working purposefully, in groups, towards common goals' (p.3). This finding challenges the claim that CHC learners are passive and do not have strategic learning style.

3.1.1.3. Debunking the stereotyping

Another body of research (Li, 2001; Ryan and Louie, 2007; Ryan and Slethaug, 2010), conversely, regards the stereotyping, either the western learners or the CHC learners, as a ' threat' that can lead to 'disidentification' and 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Ryan and Slethaug, 2010, p.45). According to Li (2001), 'cultural meaning systems are too far too complex to be reducible to a single label' (p.133), a discussion of Chinese beliefs about learning cannot just rely on one or two isolated ideas, but must be based on essential ideas of the whole cultural system. Li (2001) argues that dichotomous conceptualisations of learning are not useful. Similarly, Ryan and Louie (2007) remind educationists to 'be aware of the differences and complexities within cultures before they examine and compare between cultures' (p.404). They analyse the two polar opposites of discussion on CHC learners. One pole claims that CHC learners are passive and surface learners and generalises this as cultural 'deficits', which causes negative influence on CHC learning practice in the international context. The other pole while trying to refute this claim falls into the same trap of 'surplus' interpretation or over-generalisation. For example, the idea that repetition could lead to deep understanding or that practice makes perfect would just be appreciated by anyone who plays sport or refers

simply to physical perfection. Thus, this surplus interpretation actually ends up with just a reversed form of stereotyping. Ryan and Louie (2007) also analyse some stereotypical western features to show that the stereotyping of either the western or the CHC learners is often less than helpful. They emphasise that teachers should avoid both 'deficit' and 'surplus' interpretation of their teaching and learning practice. Rather, teachers should recognise complexities and foster mutual understanding to enrich learning 'to meet the learning needs of all students, regardless of their cultural background' (p.416).

3.1.2. The constructivist views of learning

Although constructivism is not a unified theory containing different viewpoints and various emphases, the common belief holds that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner and learning is the process of construction (Bodner, 1986; Cunningham and Duffy, 1996; Tynjälä, 1999; Karin, 2009). They reject the idea that knowledge is passively received. According to Karin (2009), research on learning in different situations and different cultural settings suggests that 'knowledge is not an independent phenomenon, but situated in the activity, context and culture in which it is developed' (p.57).

As such, according to constructivism, learning is not a passive reception of information, but an active process of constructing and reconstructing the knowledge done by the learners. This is the process of interpreting, understanding to internalise knowledge rather than memorizing and reproducing information. The internalisation takes place via interactions, ideas negotiation, and cooperative work in the learners' learning context. The learners interpret new information from their own views that are based on their schemata – the existing knowledge, preconceptions, and beliefs. Therefore, constructivism is grounded on the learners' previous experiences and understanding about what is to be learnt.

In the teaching and learning environment, therefore, according to Tynjälä (1999), 'teaching is not transmitting of knowledge but helping students to actively construct knowledge by assigning them tasks that enhance this process. This does not mean that lectures should be entirely removed from constructivist learning environments. Rather it means that lectures should be accompanied by assignments in which learners must reflect on and use the information given them in the lectures' (p.365). This comment suggests that learning by doing and learning by reflecting on the learning experience is considered important in this knowledge construction from constructivist point of view.

The following are some key constructivist learning theories that have had a strong influence on the latest Western instructional design, which facilitates learning processes and the development of expertise. These theories also inform the design of this study, which will be explicated in the next chapter.

3.2. Interactive model of learning and the role of social interaction in teacher education

3.2.1. Vygotsky's interactive model of learning

Vygotsky is one of the most influential constructivists. According to Vygotsky (1978), interaction plays a central role in the learning process. Investigating mental development, Vygotsky proposed that learning is guided by the interaction of the learner with others. This is how knowledge is constructed. Internalization is the process by which the learner constructs meaning from interaction with his or her community. In Vygotsky's theory, therefore, internalization is a source of the cognitive development rather than a result of it (Kozulin, 2004).

Vygotsky (1978) argues that internalization can occur in basically two main phases of mastering a skill. The first phase can be understood as 'knowing how' when the learner knows how to do an action that other people in the society often do. That happens on the social level between people. Then the further phase called appropriation can be seen when the learner does it in his or her own unique way rather than exactly the same as others have done previously. The process of learning is, therefore, social/interpersonal before it is individual/intrapersonal. Charting children's cultural learning, Vygotsky argues that

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological).This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, andto the formation of concepts (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57).

This process of internalization, which occurs through interaction with others in an environment, demonstrates the importance of the cultural and social context of the learner. In the classroom, this culture seems almost invisible because it is absorbed through students' everyday perception, and memory of classroom activities (Kozulin, 2004). Nevertheless, this cultural context affects how students think and perceive knowledge (Samaras and Gismondi, 1998). Drawing on Vygotskian foundations, other scholars have developed more detailed concepts to interpret cultural and social learning, for example, 'situated learning' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Anderson et al., 1996; Stein, 1998; Samaras and Gismondi, 1998), 'socially shared cognition' (Samaras and Gismondi, 1998; Kozulin, 2002; Huizen et al., 2005), and 'joint activity' (Samaras and Gismondi, 1998; Huizen et al., 2005; Cartaut and Bertone, 2009) in knowledge construction.

The roles of the 'more knowledgeable other' and the 'zone of proximal development' in the process of mental development are also important in Vygotsky's theories. The more knowledgeable other refers to anyone who is

more skilled, at a higher level or has better understanding than the learner in doing a particular task. It is usually a teacher, a coach or an older adult, but it could also be a peer, or even a computer. Thus, teacher learning can be promoted by interaction with the tutor and with other student teachers. One of the aspects that these relationships should establish to facilitate teacher training is, according to Samaras and Gismondi, 'structured, content-specific, and contingent feedback and reflective assessments, or bringing attention to the ongoing action during instruction' (Samaras and Gismondi, 1998, p.717).

The zone of proximal development is used by Vygotsky (1978) to indicate the distance between the point at which the learner has to perform certain actions with the guidance of more able others and the point where the learner can complete the actions independently without guidance. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs in this zone.

> It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

The concept of the zone of proximal development is often associated with the notion of 'scaffolding'. Wood et al. (1976) explain the scaffolding process in problem solving, which is analogous with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, in which the more knowledgeable other assists the learner to achieve the task that is initially beyond the learner's capacity, but within his range of competence. In relation to children's learning, Wood describes scaffolding in the following manner:

> This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult 'controlling' those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence. The task thus proceeds to a successful conclusion. We assume, however, that the process can potentially achieve much more for the learner than an assisted completion of the task. It may result,

eventually, in development of task competence by the learner at a pace that would far outstrip his unassisted efforts (Wood et al., 1976, p.90).

Vygotsky's theories of zone of proximal development are analogous to Krashen's input hypothesis although Krashen's hypotheses are related to second language acquisition. Both thinkers see the distance between the existing knowledge or the knowledge that the learner already has and the potential knowledge that the learner will be able to acquire. What Vygotsky calls *the zone of proximal development,* Krashen names as *i+1*, in which i is the learner's current level or the knowledge that the learner has already had, i+1 is the input that the teacher needs to provide the learner and that is a bit more difficult than the learner's current level.

> To state the hypothesis a bit more formally, an acquirer can 'move' from a stage i (where i is the acquirer's level of competence) to a stage i + 1 (where i + 1 is the stage immediately following i along some natural order) by understanding language containing i + 1 (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p.32).

Krashen and Terrell (1983) propose that if the input is i+2 or more, it will not be comprehensible and accessible to the learner as it is too much higher than the learner's current level of competence. In that case the teacher needs to feed forward scaffolding to make the process of acquiring new knowledge accessible. Conversely, the input of level i-1 or less will not be challenging enough and does not help the learner in making progress.

Vygotsky's developmental theory, which emphasizes social interaction as a means for mental development to take place, underpins the current approach of collaborative learning with regards to child learning, Vygotsky himself maintained that:

> An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peer. Once these

processes are internalized, they become part of the child independent developmental achievement (Vygotsky, 1978, p.90).

3.2.2. The role of social interaction in teacher education

The insights of Vygotsky's theory have been popularized in many fields beyond child learning. These fields include teacher education (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1995; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Samaras and Gismondi, 1998; Lee and Smagorinsky, 2000; Samaras, 2002; Moll, 2004; Kozulin, 2004; Huizen et al., 2005; Cartaut and Bertone, 2009; Venne and Coleman, 2010). For example, a study of pre-service teachers in teacher training programme designed from Vygotskian tenets of learning noted the importance of socially shared learning through cooperation and negotiation with each other in professional learning:

> Even in a non-ideal practicum placement, learning through reflection, nevertheless, could take place. Providing multiple and various field placements with peer and cooperating teacher support, may offer pre-service teachers opportunities for negotiation, deeper reflection, and validation of their beliefs about teaching (Samaras and Gismondi, 1998, p.730).

Huizen et al. (2005), examining the basic principles of a Vygotskian paradigm for teacher education, contend that:

> The Vygotskian perspective on learning and development in a socio-cultural context holds promise for teacher education by offering the possibility for integrating approaches that emphasize development towards a standard of competence, development of a personal orientation toward teaching, and reflective enquiry (p.285).

The three approaches identified by Huizen et al (2005) - the 'standard of competency', 'personal orientation toward teaching', and 'reflective enquiry' have achieved recognition and a degree of influence on the field of teacher development (Huizen et al., 2005). Huizen et al (2005) argue that each

approach, taken in isolation or over-emphasized, shows its limitation. A Vygotskian perspective, however, allow the possibility of integrating these three paradigms.

This integrated approach has been elaborated upon by Randall and Thornton (2001, p.54) through a figure showing the relationship between personal and social factors in teacher learning. Student teachers when immersed in teaching and learning environments, have opportunities to observe their teachers' or peers' teaching and discuss the experience with their peers. They are exposed to the culturally accepted norms of ways of teaching and relate them to their observation of teaching to make sense of how to teach. At this beginning stage, the university tutor, who acts as the more knowledgeable other, works with the student teacher for the mediation process to take place, so the student teacher starts to practise teaching as s/he has observed and as the tutor guides. The student teacher then will need to discuss his/her own teaching experience again with the tutor, who is more knowledgeable and who should identify the student teacher's zone of proximal development to provide the right scaffolding in the supervisory feedback. According to this model of process, the tutor plays a very important role in supporting the appropriation to take place effectively so that the student teacher will be able to move toward teaching independently. This appropriation process is about how the student teacher acquires teaching skills and develops his/her own values and beliefs about teaching. The whole process from mediation of making sense of how to teach to appropriation of their own teaching style with the tutor's scaffolding is internalization.

Vygotsky's theory has pointed out a number of implications, one of which is about the role of the tutor. It is the tutor who needs to support the learner with the right scaffolding within the zone of proximal development so that 'i+1' will be achieved and so that the level of independent performance will be accessible. She also needs good supervisory skills to challenge the learner by

providing suitable tasks or questions that are a bit more difficult than the learner's current level of knowledge in order to assist the learning effectively.

3.3. Reflection theory and teacher as reflective practitioner

3.3.1. Schön's notion of a reflective practitioner

The notion of 'reflective practitioner' was born as a complete reversal to the traditional approach, in which the teacher transmits knowledge and the learner is a passive knowledge receiver. A reflective practitioner, conversely, is an individual, who during the process of learning uses their critical thinking to reflect creatively on what they are doing and what they have done to acquire the expertise and become a professional. The teacher, in this model is also a learner, who is the centre of the learning process and takes the responsibility for their learning. The concepts 'reflection' and 'reflective practitioner' help us understand how professionals develop their thinking.

How professionals develop their thinking has been discussed over a long history, but it is Donald A. Schön who has particularly popularised the theory. John Dewey (1859 – 1952) an important early proponent of reflective practice, serves as a seminal influence on scholars who write on this area. Dewey's theory of reflective thinking was then built on and extended by others, for example, Bode (1940); Rugg (1947); Borrowman(1956); Hullfish and Smith(1961); Van Manen (1977); Feiman (1979); Zeichner (1987); Tom(1984); Cruickshank (1985). However, since Schön (1983, 1987) built on and developed the theory of 'reflective practitioner', it has gained much popularity in education with reflection as an important factor for professional development (Calderhead, 1989; Copeland et al., 1993). Schön's contribution was to bring reflection to the centre of an understanding of what

professionals do and relates it to the field of teacher education through the concept 'Reflection-in-action' (Calderhead, 1989). In his work, he describes how professionals, including teachers, reflect on their practice while engaged in the action in order to adapt their practice creatively to new situations, resulting in building and modifying their repertoire of knowledge and professional skills.

Reflection-in-action is the reflection during the process of doing something while actively engaged in it in order to modify existing knowledge and build new knowledge. Reflection-in-action is described as 'thinking on our feet' (Schön, 1983). In everyday life, when we do an action we often connect our thinking with the experiences, feelings and theories in use to deal with the action. All these things are tacit knowledge that we sometimes cannot describe, but they will build a new understanding to inform the next step. That tacit knowledge is called 'knowing-in-action'.

> Usually reflection on knowing-in-action goes together with reflection on the stuff at hand. There is some puzzling, or troubling, or interesting phenomenon with which the individual is trying to deal. As he tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understanding which have been implicit in his action, understanding with his surfaces, criticizes, restructures, and embodies in further action (Schön, 1983, p.50).

This is the thinking-in-action process that helps in the situations, in which one may feel uncertain, or vague. Because the situation is puzzling to us, it will cause us to ask questions about why and how that happened. Then the reflection-in-action will help us find solutions and reshape the situation. Usually we find that it happened because the knowledge we bring to this situation does not fit in the new situation and needs to be changed. As such it entails a building of new understanding and knowledge.

Schön (1983) argues that one can also reflect on action after the action has been done in order to analyse what worked well or what did not work well

and what can be used in the future differently using the repertoire of experiences.

> Practitioners do reflect on their knowing-in-practice. Sometimes, in the relative tranquillity of a post-mortem, they think back on a project they have undertaken, a situation they have lived through, and they explore the understandings they have brought to their handling of the cases (Schön, 1983, p.61).

A practitioner also reflects after a series of actions or patterns have been done before so that we have a feel for what was right and that feeling allows one to repeat that something right again. Schön (1983) gives the example of how musicians cast the tune of music to improvise together. They listen to one another and to themselves and feel the music to adjust the music they are playing accordingly to get into the right tune (Schön, 1983). They can do it because each of them has a repertoire of musical figures within a schema that directs them to the right improvised performance. Schön (1983) wrote:

> Improvisation consists in varying, combining, and recombining a set of figures within the schema which bounds and gives coherence to the performance. As the musicians feel the direction of the music that is developing out of their interwoven contributions, they make new sense of it and adjust their performance to the new sense they have made (Schön, 1983, p.55).

The example above presents the way in which new knowledge and skills are built in relation to the prior experience one has already had before. From this we can see the importance of the existing experiences that serve as schemata contributing to the building of new knowledge on the previous base. Thus, the process of reflection actually links what the student has already known with what they will learn by challenging themselves to create new knowledge for a new situation.

Schön's reflection theory explains the way in which new knowledge and skills are constructed using schemata, which stress the importance of the background knowledge. As we have seen in the example above, previous

experiences or the existing knowledge are important in creating schemata, which help the practitioner retrieve, encode, and evaluate the information in a certain context. As such, there is a close link between the schemata and the context that the learner is dealing with. Therefore the schemata should be matching with the nature of the context so that the learner will be able to use them in order to process the information. If the schemata are different from what one needs for the current context, there would be a mismatch, resulting in a different interpretation of the information because

> schemata are used to select and pare down the information being processed. They may even be a biasing feature of interpersonal cognitive activity in that perceivers may process observed behaviour according to their schematic category structure, at the expense of processing the behaviour actually observed (Borman, 1987, p.309).

There are other phrases used to address schemata, such as, 'background knowledge'; 'prior knowledge'; 'existing knowledge'; 'prior experiences'. Those phrases indicate all the beliefs, perceptions, or commitments that the learner has already had in their mind and will be drawn upon when the learner engages in processes of comparison, evaluation, and self-direction for their learning. At this point, in order to promote learning and help the process of knowledge construction there will need to be a mediator, who can facilitate the activation of the right schemata, casting them into the right tune for the learner to shape their thinking in order to construct the knowledge accordingly. The facilitator will scaffold the learner's reflection. This enables the learner 'to achieve a level of reflection beyond their current ability level' (Harford and MacRuairc, 2008, p.1885). This fits well with Vygotsky's theory that will be discussed in the next section.

These understandings of how professionals think in action have been applied in many fields including teacher training programmes, in which teachers need to reflect on their teaching, evaluate it by themselves and acquire new

knowledge and skills and build up their teaching ethos. The application of reflection-in-action in teaching will be discussed below.

3.3.2. *Reflective teaching and implications for teacher education*

Schön's theory of reflection has proved attractive to many educational researchers, some of whom have applied this theory to the practice of teaching. There is a large body of research on the topic of reflective teaching, conceptualizing the term 'reflective teaching', identifying its characteristics and suggesting strategies to facilitate the process (Zeichner, 1987; Calderhead, 1989; Bartlett, 1990; Copeland et al., 1993; Calderhead and Gates, 1993; Loughran, 1995; Walkington, 2005; Fandiño Parra, 2011).

The definitions from different researchers appear to be similar on the surface. It is said that reflective teaching is based on an 'inquiry-oriented approach to teacher education' (Zeichner, 1987, p.566), or reflective teaching has been 'associated with notions of growth through critical inquiry, analysis, and self-directed evaluation' (Calderhead, 1989, p.43) or is 'manifested as a stance toward inquiry (Copeland et al., 1993, p.349). Reflective teaching has also been viewed as a form of self-determination, a 'process of becoming aware of one's context, of the influence of societal and ideological constraints on previously taken-for-granted practices, and gaining control over the direction of these influences' (Calderhead, 1989, p.44). Another view is that reflective teaching involves a process of solving problems and reconstructing meaning during an ongoing teaching process (Copeland et al., 1993).

However, there seems to have been little consensus on defining what reflective teaching really 'looks like' or what the attributes of reflective teaching are, or how to differentiate a reflective teacher from an unreflective one (Calderhead, 1989; Copeland et al., 1993; Sarah, 1997; Cornford, 2002). Therefore, not surprisingly, the different interpretations of the nature of

reflection and reflective teaching give rise to varied teacher education practices based on different models of teacher learning. In addition to that, the fact that whether or not a particular model of teacher learning has an impact has not been assessed (Calderhead, 1989; Sarah, 1997; Hargreaves, 2004).

The opinions around this debate seem to form two contrasting main streams. Some researchers state that the empirical evidence that shows the link between reflective teaching and teacher learning seems to be weak (Hatton and Smith, 1995; Cornford, 2002). Nonetheless, (Cornford, 2002) has to admit that 'numerous qualitative or case studies on reflective practices have been widely disseminated through publication. Many of these have reported the enthusiasm of trainee teachers and lecturers using reflective approaches, and/or have explored methods or possess to encourage reflection in student teachers' (p.221).

However, other commentators claim the benefits of reflective teaching in teacher professional development (Kuit et al., 2001; Ferman, 2002; Montgomery, 2002; Kane et al., 2004; Kahn et al., 2008; Bell et al., 2010). It is agreed among these researchers that:

> systematic reflection allows the teacher to be self-directed; it facilitates the growth from novice to expert. It enables the teacher to view teaching from a more interpretative and critical perspective (Montgomery, 2002, p.146);

> reflection leads to self-knowledge and this is fundamental to the development of our professional practice [the practice of teaching] (Kuit et al., 2001, p.139);

> effective self-reflection is a key component of excellent teaching (Bell et al., 2010, p.57).

The findings of the research conducted by Kahn et al. (2008) about the role and effectiveness of reflective practices in programmes for new academic staff have come to the conclusion that:

> it is reasonable to claim that specific reflective processes applied to practice on programmes for new academic staff can yield changes in capacity for practice or for the ability to engage in specific categories of reflection on practice, to the extent that these can be claimed as learning outcomes for the programme (Kahn et al., 2008, p.5).

All things considered, although there are opinions expressing doubts about the impact on reflective practice on teacher education, the majority of western commentators hold that Schön's reflection theory is key influence guidance in teacher professional development.

3.4. Experiential learning and the role of dialogue in learning to teach

3.4.1. Kolb's experiential learning cycle

Another related theory that explains the process of learning from experience is Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Kolb's experiential learning model draws on the work of prominent 20th century scholars, such as, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, William James, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers and others (Kolb, 1984a) and gained much popularity among researchers. The model was developed in his popular work 'Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development', in which he defines learning as

> the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience (Kolb, 1984a, p.41).

This model is particularly applicable to adult learning and is constituted by 4 stages: Concrete experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract

conceptualisation, and Active experimentation. Learning can take place at any stage, but usually follows the sequence in figure 1.

Kolb (1984a) claims that experience is important for learning to take place. He proposes that the learning process is the resolution of the conflicts of the four adaptive learning modes in figure 1.

> To begin with, notice that the abstract/concrete dialectic is one of *prehension*, representing two different and opposed processes of grasping or taking hold of experience in the world-either through reliance on conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation, a process I will call *comprehension*, or through reliance on the tangible, felt qualities of immediate experience, what I will call *apprehension*. The active/ reflective dialectic, on the other hand, is one of transformation, representing two opposed ways of transforming the grasp or 'figurative representation' of experience – either through internal reflection, a process I will call *intention*, or active external manipulation of the external world, here called *extension* (Kolb, 1984a, p.41).

FIGURE 1: STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS UNDERLINING THE PROCESS OF EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING AND THE RESULTING BASIC KNOWLEDGE FORMS

(Kolb, 1984a, p.42)
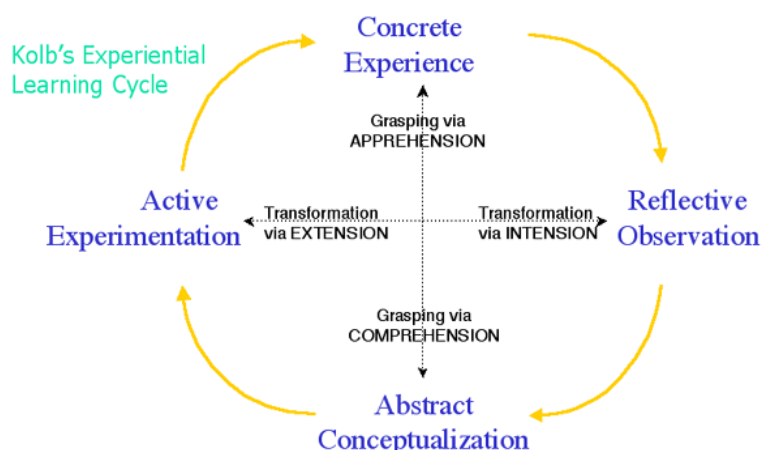
According to Kolb's model, when the learner is immersed in a 'concrete experience', they have a chance to observe it, and have a feel for it. The learner then reviews and reflects on the experience they are going to have or have gone through, analysing the observed experience with the feel of it. From that 'reflective observation', the student will be able to work out the 'abstract concepts' by generalising principles from the experience. This generalisation in its turn will be the foundation for another experiment, known as 'Active experimentation', in which they will try out what they have learnt. The plan to experiment with new concepts that have been derived from the cycle will make another cycle, making the continuous learning process a spiral, in which the learning act will repeat the same steps but at a higher level.

The role of schemata and reflection again are implied in this model. The feel for the 'concrete experience' is what Kolb (1984a) calls 'reliance on the tangible, felt qualities'. These tangible and felt qualities are obtained through the learner's schemata that have been clarified in the last section. With the process of reflection, the grasp of experience will be transformed. When the transformation has taken place, the learner will have new schemata, e.g. new concepts, beliefs, commitments at a higher level. The learning cycle is then repeated. It can be seen that Kolb's learning cycle and Schön's reflection theory are interrelated.

The experiential learning model explains the learning to teach process, which is often called a process of learning on the job or learning from the teaching practice. Many people often do not actually know explicitly what 'learning on the job' really means. Does it happen only in classroom during the lessons or it also involves anything else that is beyond the classroom? This question has been answered using the experiential learning model that provides a description of the process of learning on the job. It is clarified from the model that when the student teacher experience teaching practice, they will reflect on that teaching experience. From the reflection, they will draw out

theoretical concepts of teaching from the teaching experience. Those acquired concepts will serve as a useful framework for the teaching practice supervisory discussion. Then they will continue a new implementation cycle with new teaching experience, which is based on the prior experience of the previous cycle. The importance of the experience in learning distinguishes itself from the traditional learning, which emphasises theoretical concepts more and less the value of practical experience. In fact, many people acquire professional knowledge and skills from hands-on experience without learning theories. Also, there are many people, who are experts in theories, but are not able to perform a concrete task.

There have been quite a few studies investigating experiential learning in professional education (Nunan, 1992; Cleminson and Bradford, 1996; Kolb and Kolb, 2005; Marlow and McLain, 2009; Clark et al., 2010). Cleminson and Bradford (1996) when studying the relationship between academic and experiential learning claim that learning through experience will be limited if the student teachers' learning is 'osmotic' without such factors as interests or curiosity of an aspiring professional who is eager to challenge and interpret the knowledge he observes from practice. The researchers also argue that learning through experience itself is often a slow process, taking time for trial and learning from errors. Thus, the role of the tutor/trainer, who knows how to challenge the student teachers with the right level of new concepts, knowledge, and skills, is important to inspire, promote, enhance, and make this process faster.

> Learning through and from experience works best when the trainee has been provided with concepts, knowledge and skills that can be challenged and transformed in the workplace. It is not sufficient to allow learning through practice alone (Cleminson and Bradford, 1996, p.257).

Other research about the potential of experiential learning models and practices in career and technical teacher education, which scrutinizes the great potential of experiential learning on teacher education, suggests that

Teacher educators should also be made aware that experiential learning is a process and not just simply providing learners with the opportunity to take part in an activity. There must be, at a minimum according to the literature, reflection, and opportunity for the student to transfer the learning (application) (Clark et al., 2010).

That again indicates the important role of the tutor in providing the student teachers with opportunities to grasp the experience, reflect on it, and transfer it into new knowledge.

3.4.2. The role of dialogue in learning to teach

Randall and Thornton (2001) relate the modes of learning in Kolb's model with its emphasis on experiential learning to the teaching practice cycle in the figure below. This figure describes the role of the advisor in different stages of the teaching practice cycle. The figure shows the role of the tutor, functioning more as an intellectual growth facilitator than a technique trainer. The tutor facilitates the student teacher's thinking, stimulates their reflection on the teaching experience. Through the discussion between the tutor and the student teacher, the tutor will help them through a series of teaching actions, reflect on them, and derive the principles out of them. Through the post-lesson discussion, the tutor also guides the student teacher in building an agenda for themselves drawn up from the previous teaching experience and takes an action plan to try out new teaching ideas. Having acknowledged the importance of the concrete experience of teaching practice in learning to teach, we then need to discuss the role of the tutor in helping the student teacher in developing their expertise.

Figure 2 (overleaf), which outlines a teacher training process in the form of Kolb's experiential learning model, serves as an important reference framework for the dialogue between the student teacher and the tutor during the post-lesson discussion feedback. It can be concluded from this model that the student teacher as reflective practitioner needs to be proactive in their

role, exploring new teaching ideas through the experiential learning cycle, developing by reflecting on their professional experience. The role of the tutor is to provide guidance for the teacher, critically analyse and draw out new principles from the teaching experience and then use those principles in the next lesson through drawing up a plan of action. To make these two roles happen effectively, the dialogue between the student teacher and the tutor plays a crucial role.

FIGURE 2: TEACHER TRAINING PROCESS IN THE FORM OF KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

(Randall and Thornton, 2001, p.47)

Learning cycle	Practice cycle	Advisor's 'pedagogic' functions
Concrete Experience	THE LESSON	Observation to bring evidence to the feedback session on: 1. the way that the T has met the pre-agreed targets for the lesson 2. aspects of the lesson which exemplify new areas of technique/understanding which need to be addressed
Reflective Observation	POST_LESSON FEEDBACK SESSION/ DEBRIEFING	Guide the T to reflect on the process using the evidence produced by observation to engage in debate concerning; 1. classroom skills and behaviours which need to be improved 2. classroom happenings which leads to the establishment of new ways of thinking
Abstract Conceptualisation		Encourage discussion on the "deep structure" of teaching to: 1. establish theoretical principles which underpin the observed behaviours 2. relate observed lesson to "received" knowledge about teaching/ learning 3. develop the T's personal theoretical models and underlying structures of thought about classrooms and learning
Active Experimentation	PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE	Discuss the use of the principles derived from the lesson to decide: 1. how such principles may be applied to another situation. 2. what targets are to be set for the next lesson 3. what evidence the T would like the advisor to bring to the next lesson

Note: T = teacher

3.5. Visible learning

3.5.1. Visible learning and visible teaching

The discussion of learning theories would be insufficient if we did not include Hattie's model of teaching and learning, which is developed based on the notion of visible learning and visible teaching. This is the result of a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses of over 50, 000 studies relating to the influences on school achievement.

Based on the evidence Hattie claims that success at school is achieved when teaching and learning are visible. It is critical that teaching is visible to the student and learning is visible to the teacher. It occurs when 'teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers' (Hattie, 2009, p.22). This sentence should be elaborated for more detailed understanding of what visible teaching and learning is. To ensure achievement at school, both of these aspects need to occur at the same time.

> Visible teaching and learning occurs when learning is the explicit goal, when it is appropriately challenging, when the teacher and student both seek to ascertain whether and to what degree the challenging goal is attained, when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, and when there are active, passionate and engaging people participating in the act of learning (ibid., p.22).

The visible learning, which is the title of the book and also the key word of the main message of Hattie's work, addresses not only students' learning but also teachers' learning during their teaching. According to Hattie, students learn when they are aware of, understand, and commit to the shared learning goals and success criteria. The students learn when they have opportunities to experiment and reflect on their experience. They learn from errors and feedback given by the teacher or peers by making connections across ideas. Teachers learn by constructing their teaching approaches by providing

students with different learning opportunities through deliberate interventions and altering the teaching acts to meet the students' learning strategies. The teaching acts have to be done through deliberate interventions to make cognitive change happen in students. Teachers have to see whether the learning occurs or does not occur to alter the direction of learning in order to achieve the specific and challenging goals that have been set out between teachers and students. In Hattie's view, teachers (and students) learn when they are open to experience, learn from errors, seek and learn from feedback from students and colleagues (or from teachers and peers); and foster effort, clarity, and engagement in learning. In that way, the learning journey of both teachers and students is visible.

In many ways, then, the learning journey that has been described above is looking the same as the constructivist learning principles since it takes place via experimenting with different strategies to inform what comes next for better outcomes. However, Hattie's model of learning is not exactly the same. The learning theories that have been mentioned in the previous sections apply student-centred approaches, in which the students have to be active and responsible for their learning, constantly reflect on their experience and share their reflections with others to construct new knowledge. These theories focus on students' learning and imply the need for a teacher's role that promotes student-centred learning. Thus the teacher acts as a facilitator and, often, his/her role should be minimised to make just the students and their learning visible. Differently, Hattie's model of visible learning combines, rather than contrasts, teacher-centred teaching and student-centred learning. Not only the learning should be visible, but the teaching should be as well. Hattie supports the power of directed teaching and the power of deliberative practice, focusing on what happens next through feedback and monitoring.

According to Hattie, this deliberative practice, which has to be well-prepared and is informed by students' learning intentions and their learning strategies

in order to ensure that there is a cognitive change in the student, needs to be carried out by dedicated and passionate teachers:

> the teacher must know when learning is correct or incorrect; learn when to experiment and learn from the experience; learn to monitor, seek and give feedback; and know to try alternative learning strategies when others do not work (Hattie, 2009, p.25).

Unlike constructivist teaching that views teachers as facilitators, teachers in Hattie's teaching model act 'as activators, as deliberate change agents, and as directors of learning. Thus the teacher is active and involved to make classroom activities visible so that the learning is 'intense, buzzing, and risky'. The role of the teacher in Hattie's model is directive and corrective. On the current trend worldwide, directive teaching has often beencriticised and constructivist teaching is often more favourable. Yet, Hattie claims that directive teaching is powerful in the successful recipe for teaching and learning. The common phrases in constructivist approaches such as 'student centred inquiry learning', problem-based learning, or task-based learning, knowledge construction through students' own activities or through discussion' arguably would be counter to Hattie's model of teaching in the sense that Hattie's ideas about what makes a good teacher and what effective teaching is obviously go against constructivist teaching that sees the teacher's role as more of a facilitator or, at most, minimal corrective intervention.

There have been quite a lot of studies using Hattie's model of learning and teaching or analysing this framework (Snook et al., 2009; Terhart, 2011; Lloyd and Trangmar, 2012; Luke, 2013; Hogan et al., 2013; Kyriakides et al., 2013). One of the central points discussed in these studies is the controversy about Hattie's conception of teachers and teaching. For example, Terhart (2011), in his extended review of Hattie's book, accused Hattie of 'propagating a teacher-centred, highly directive form of classroom teaching, which is characterised essentially by constant performance assessments directed to students and to teachers' and argued that this 'leads Hattie to a

modernisedand refined conception of authoritative, teacher-centred teaching' (p.434). In another article, Luke (2013) analysed particularly the directive teaching point in Hattie's work and came to a conclusion that 'while explicit instruction in its various forms is a necessary part of an effective school-level response – direct instruction is not and by definition cannot be seen as a universal or total curriculum solution' (p.6). However, Lloyd and Trangmar (2012) in their case study within the context of an HE teacher training programme investigated the implications of Hattie's model of visible teaching and learning, and suggested that 'Hattie's work makes an important contribution to understanding the practice of successful teaching' (Lloyd and Trangmar, 2012, p.73). Most recently, Kyriakides et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis similarly aiming at understanding the impact of teaching factors on student learning achievement. The main findings were interesting, justifying the controversy over Hattie's conception of directive teaching or constructivist teaching. The findings indicated that the influential factors on student learning outcomes were not related only to either directive and active teaching approaches or more constructivist approaches. Both of these kinds of approaches contributed to student learning outcomes. Kyriakides et al. (2013) argued that

> From a theoretical standpoint, this finding suggests that when it comes to teaching and the factors contributing to it, imposing unnecessary dichotomies between different teaching approaches might be counterproductive. Instead, by being agnostic to the teaching approach pursued in instruction and by considering what exactly the teacher and the student do during the lesson and how they interact- regardless of whether their actions and interactions resonate more with the one or the other approach- might be more productive (Kyriakides et al., 2013, p.149).

According to this scholar, researchers should not tend to focus merely on new ideas and underestimate other theories or approaches that have been proven to work in the past. Kyriakides also maintained that the focus should be on

particular teaching factors that benefit students in classroom, and these factors could be from either approaches:

> Good teaching is not necessarily associated with a particular teaching approach; instead, its quality resides in making judicious choices and uses of different component from different approaches in ways that benefit and reinforce student learning (Kyriakides et al., 2013, p.150).

3.5.2. Signposts towards excellence in education in Hattie's theory

Having evaluated and discussed the findings of more than 100 practices with the associated effect size, Hattie brought them all together and built up six signposts towards excellence in education. They are:

1. Teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning.

2. Teachers need to be directive, influential, caring, and actively engaged in the passion of teaching and learning.

3. Teachers need to be aware of what each and every student is thinking and knowing to construct meaning and meaningful experiences in light of this knowledge, and have proficient knowledge and understanding of their content to provide meaningful and appropriate feedback such that each student moves progressively through the curriculum levels.

4. Teachers need to know the learning intentions and success criteria of the lesson, know how well they are attaining these criteria for all students, and know when to go next in the light of the gap between students' current knowledge and understanding and the success criteria of: 'Where are you going?', 'How are you going?', and 'Where to next?'.

5. Teachers need to move from the single idea to multiple ideas, and then to relate and then extend these ideas such that learners construct and reconstruct knowledge and ideas. It is not the knowledge or ideas, but the learner's construction of this knowledge and these ideas that is critical.

6. School leaders and teachers need to create schools, staffroom, and classroom environment where error is welcome as a learning opportunity, where discarding incorrect knowledge and understanding is welcome, and where participants can feel safe to learn, re-learn, and explore knowledge and understanding (Hattie, 2009, pp.238–239).

According to Hattie, every one of these signposts address what teachers need to do for excellence in education. The word 'teachers' as the main subject in all these signposts go accordingly with the main message of Hattie's theory-teaching needs to be deliberate. This demonstrates the importance of the role of teachers that make a difference in students' learning processes. It is teachers who are passionate, who care for their students' cognitive engagement with the subject being taught, and who focus their skills in developing students' thinking and students' ways of constructing new knowledge and skills that have power. Hattie's work, therefore, is about how teachers monitor, assess, and evaluate students' processes of constructing this knowledge and skills, which then leads to the power of feedback.

3.5.3. Feedback in Hattie's visible learning

In order to view Hattie's conception of feedback, we need to look at the development of feedback and the use of feedback in teacher education. Feedback originated from the act of teachers' marking students' work to show students how they performed. This is the notion of corrective feedback originally. It sticks to the external provision of information about a student's performance. In the 1970s, feedback was viewed as a one way process of transferring information from the tutor to the student teacher. It is the provision of feedback or information about the results of the trainee's actions which enables the learner to modify his behaviours in terms of goal (Perrott, 1977, p.3). It was like the teacher telling her students what to do to improve themselves without being involved in the feedback process. This assumption is that if the students followed what they were told in the teacher's feedback,

they could improve their performance. This kind of feedback required micro skills of the teacher in presenting the feedback.

This assumption was gradually overtaken by a notion of feedback that places the students in a position as self-regulated learners seeking to inform their judgments from different sources of information through communication with others. The learner now occupies the key role in driving their learning, and thus generating their own feedback (Butler and Winne, 1995; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Boud and Molloy, 2013). This kind of feedback focuses on students' learning rather than on the feedback skills of teachers. Over recent years, a vast number of research studies have focused on the process of educating initial teachers (Zeichner, 1987; Al-Zadjali, 2004; Tang and Chow, 2007; Capizzi et al., 2010; Ferguson, 2011; Van den Hurk et al., 2013). How feedback is viewed has been changing not only in the way it is carried out, but also in its disciplines and designs. Feedback is no longer merely information about the student teacher's teaching performance. People have regarded it as 'post-lesson discussion', 'supervisory conferences', or 'post-observation conferences' meaning two way communications (Zeichner, 1987; Al-Zadjali, 2004; Tang and Chow, 2007). Thus, feedback involves not only one way information, but the participation of both the tutor and the student teachers.

Hattie holds that feedback is among the most powerful influences on achievement (Hattie, 2009, p.173). The feedback could be from the teachers or from peers to students, and from students to teachers. Feedback from teachers to students requires the involvement of information and understanding about what students already understand, misunderstand and how to construct new knowledge from a task. And feedback from students to teachers involves information and understanding about what teachers already understand, misunderstand and construct about the learning of his or her students. From Hattie's observation, many teachers understood that feedback was something teachers provided to students and they claimed that they engaged in providing feedback all the time. In Hattie's view this was not

actually the case. Also, most of the feedback teachers gave was social and behavioural, rather than oriented towards improving learning. Hattie also argues that feedback is not only from teachers to students. It is most powerful when teachers seek or at least are open to feedback from students to understand what they think, where they make errors, when they are going in the wrong direction.

In an edited book specifically written about feedback, Hattie stated in his section on feedback in schools that

> Feedback is information provided by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer, book, parent, self/experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding that reduces the discrepancy between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood (Hattie, 2012, p.266).

This definition of feedback reflects Hattie's tenets of visible learning and teaching, which combine teacher-centred teaching and student-centred learning. The phrase 'provided by an agent' demonstrates a deliberative and directive practice, which Hattie places much emphasis on. At the same time, Vygotskian perspectives can also be noted from this notion of feedback. The more knowledgeable other (MKO) in Vygotsky's theory can be seen on the part of the agent that provides information during the feedback on the task, and the aim of the feedback at reducing the gap between present performance and aspirations manifests the conception of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Hattie also noted that it is important for feedback to be discussed, evaluated, and planned in the light of feedback evidence. He stated that 'this is not critical reflection, but critical reflection in light of evidence about teaching' (Hattie, 2009, p.239). Evidence about teaching must be obtained from the observation of experience. At this point, Schön's reflection theory and Kolb's experiential learning are also implicated in his model of feedback (see figure 3 overleaf).

FIGURE 3: HATTIE'S MODEL OF FEEDBACK

(Hattie, 2009, p.176)
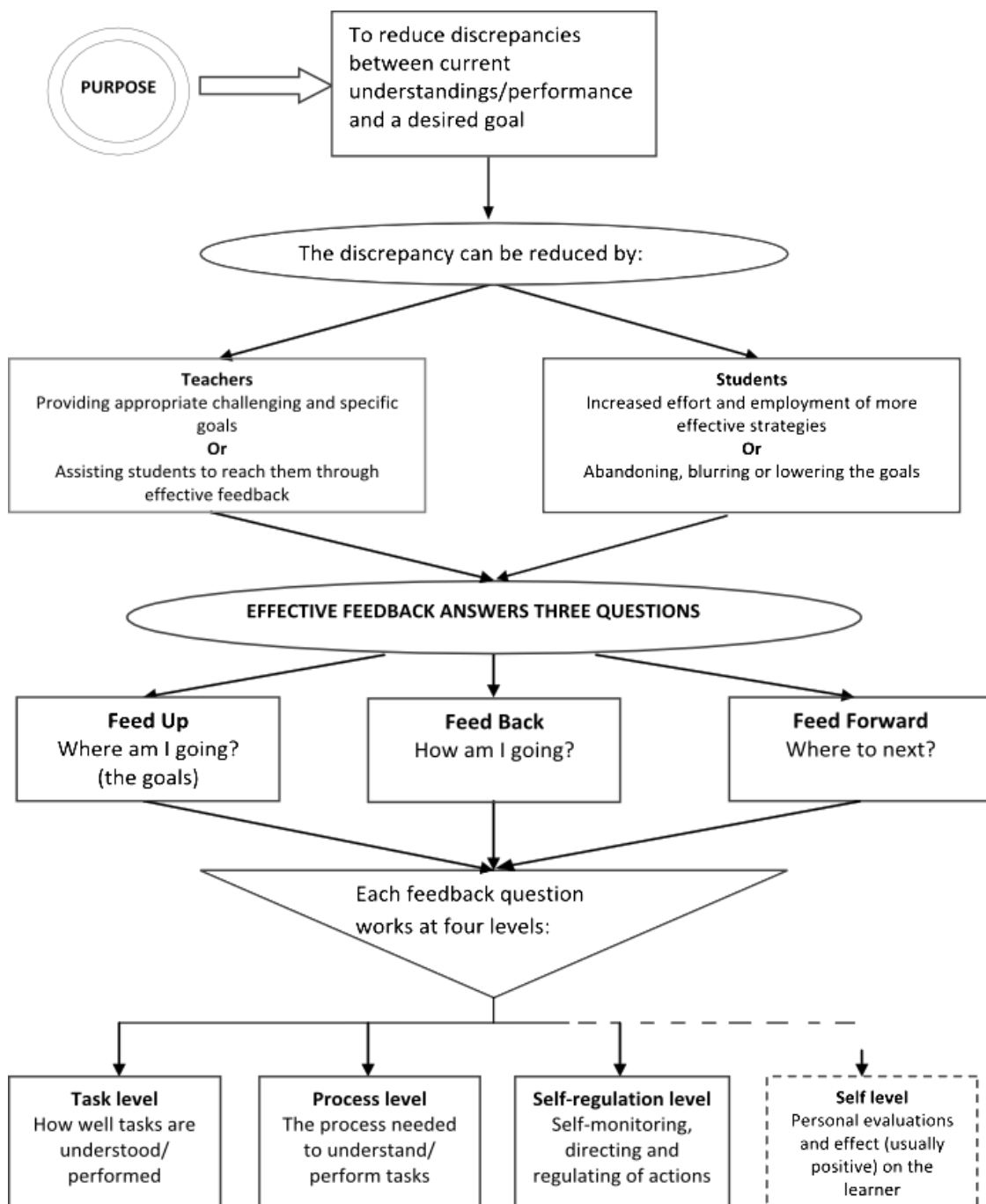
As such, the role of feedback in Hattie's model of visible learning and teaching reflects a comprehensive view of both traditional and present feedback approaches – provision of information by the tutor regarding the student teacher's performance as a directive act and a two way communication between tutors and student teachers, both to ascertain the answers to the three questions at the four levels mentioned above. Schön's reflection theory (Schön, 1983), Kolb's experiential learning (Kolb, 1984a), and Vygotsky's tenets of interactive learning model (Vygotsky, 1978) are all relevant to the goal that the students should move towards the position of being self-regulated learners.

3.6 Review of research in teacher learning and teaching

A central element of teacher preparation – and one that crosses national and ideological boundaries - is the practice of teaching. This element of a teacher's training is considered to be crucial for new teachers to build capacity, acquire teaching skills and develop their career ethos (Deanne, 1986; Richardson, 1990; Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Anthony, 1995; Tang and Chow, 2007; Mutton et al., 2008). During the practice of teaching, student teachers will develop themselves into professionals who need to be proactive in their role, exploring new teaching ideas in a shared learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978), through experiential learning cycles (Kolb, 1984), and developing by reflecting on their professional experience (Schön, 1983; Wallace, 1991). During the process of learning to teach student teachers need to observe and analyse their own teaching activities in the light of the theories they have learnt from university, whilst reflecting on the experience or/and on the post-lesson discussion they might have with the tutor or with other peers and develop their teaching skills (Randall and Thornton, 2001). With effective learning, student teachers can sharpen their expertise. They will be able to acquire not only teaching skills, but also independent thinking ability and critical thinking skills. This is the model of the teacher as a practitioner who

should be more than programmed automata delivering pre-selected materials; they should be actively engaged in critically examining what they do in classroom (Randall and Thornton, 2001, p.2).

As discussed in the previous section, teacher training in Vietnam has been brought to the fore nationwide recently to accomplish the government's educational development strategies. Despite the emphasis on teacher education in Vietnam, there is a lack of research in this important field and scant attention has been paid to the field of teacher learning through practice of teaching. A review of research from thirteen Asian Pacific countries, undertaken in the last five years indicated that 'the lack of suitably qualified and prepared teachers, poor and/or limited teacher education, somewhat negative attitudes, and an ad hoc approach to preparing or up-skilling teachers was evident in almost every country in the region' (Sharma et al., 2013, p.13). There are a few empirical studies on Vietnam teacher education conducted by foreign scholars to evaluate Vietnam education development after having implemented teacher training projects offered by foreign partnerships (Saito and Tsukui, 2008; Saito et al., 2008; Saito et al., 2012; Hamano, 2008); there are also some studies in the related field conducted by local researchers, but mainly focused on English teacher education (Pham, 2001; Le, 2002; Pham, 2005; Hoang, 2009; Le, 2010). This body of research has revealed problems that teacher education in Vietnam encounters. These problems include lack of dialogue among teachers and strategies about how to learn (Saito et al., 2008), difficulty in changing teachers' belief in change, lack of trust among teachers (Saito and Tsukui, 2008).

A few studies looked at teacher training in specific areas. For example, Ta (2012) studied the collaboration work in Vietnamese initial teacher learning and Vo and Nguyen (2010) looked into the same type of work among initial teachers taking Critical Friend Group as a tool for professional teacher development. However, these studies seem to contradict each other. Whilst Ta, (2012) found that 'interactions with trainers might be more beneficial to

trainees' learning than interactions with peers' (p.5), Vo and Nguyen (2010) indicated that the Critical Friend Group, composed of 'peers where there is no hierarchy of expertise' helped the student teachers' 'teaching performance a great deal' and they were confident that within their research, the benefits of Critical friend Group such as supporting a democratic, reflective, and collaborative community of learners 'have been confirmed in a Vietnamese context' (p.212). Other research, looking at initial teacher mentoring in Vietnam, revealed that 'there is a lack of awareness about mentoring, especially formal mentoring at tertiary level in Vietnam' (Hoa, 2008, p.126). It emphasised the importance of 'providing beginning EFL teachers with opportunities to learn how to learn through the process of trial and error, feedback and reflection' (p.127).

From this review of previous research in the area, it seems to me that the recent research tends to be focused on incorporating Western ideas of learning into Vietnamese education and trying to make them work. My view is that that more research needs to be conducted about initial teacher training. It is worth having an insight into how to create an environment for the Vietnamese initial teachers 'to learn how to learn' to be active learners via a more dialogic approach as indicated by the above mentioned researchers. This also accords with the education strategic plan initiated by the Vietnamese MOET, which aims to put 'learners as the centre of the 2009 – 2020 Vietnam educational development strategy' (Vietnam News, 2009a).

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter, I review the main characteristics of action research and its use in teaching and learning. I then discuss the rationale for choosing action research for my study. Issues related to methodology, such as, research context and research participants, research design, reflexivity and ethics, and the method of analysis are also presented. I particularly describe Hofstede's cultural dimensions and discuss its relevance to be used as the analytical framework for my study. The analytical processes are also presented at the end of this chapter.

4.1. Action research

4.1.1. Action research in education

Action research according to McNiff (2013) is 'a powerful form of educational research' (p.24). Action research started in both the US and Europe in the 1940s. Kurt Lewin regarded as the founder of action research, introduced action research perspectives to the US and made it a central interest among social scientists (Wellington, 2000; Brydon-Miller et al., 2003; Norton, 2009). His approach can be summarised as a series of steps including planning, action and then fact finding about the result of the action taken.

Many scholars have made attempts to define action research. Scott and Morrison (2006) state that 'Fundamentally, action research is the research strategies which set out to change the situation being researched' (p.4). Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) offer a more comprehensive definition, which is also one of the most popular definitions:

> Action research is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of the own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out ... The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is

important to realise that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members (cited in Wellington, 2000, pp.20–21; Cohen et al., 2011, pp.345–346).

The 'participants' that undertake this 'collective self-reflective inquiry' could be teachers, students, or principals, in the field of education, for example. The social situations include educational ones. Thus, action research in education may involve a teacher investigating or taking action into his/her own teaching practice or context to improve this practice or context. Therefore, according to Wellington (2000), action research is linked to practitioner research, which is often conducted by a practitioner/professional in any field into their own practice. Wellington distinguishes practitioner research from action research in maintaining that the key point that makes action research different from practitioner research is that action research aims at bringing about 'critical awareness, improvement and change in practice, setting or system' (Wellington, 2000, pp.20–21). However, Cohen et al. (2011) do not seem to separate these two kinds of research. Rather, they view these as alternative terms holding that action research is sometimes 'called practitioner based research' (p.344). However varied the opinions are, 'what unites different conceptions of action research is the desire for improvement to practice, based on a rigorous evidential trail of data and research' (ibid., p. 334). Action research is also linked to participatory research. It is regarded as a powerful form of participatory research, which concerns 'doing research with people and communities rather than doing research to or for people or communities' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.37). Participatory research arose in 1970s as a reaction to those who adopted a top down approach to working with local communities without looking into the local factors (ibid.).

Wellington (2000) offers a more simple definition of action research, stating that 'action research involves intervening in a situation and later evaluating that intervention' (Wellington, 2000, p.21). Thus, a cycle of action research would include the following steps mapped out in figure 4 (overleaf).

FIGURE 4: A CYCLE OF ACTION RESEARCH

Adapted from Wellington (2000, p.22)
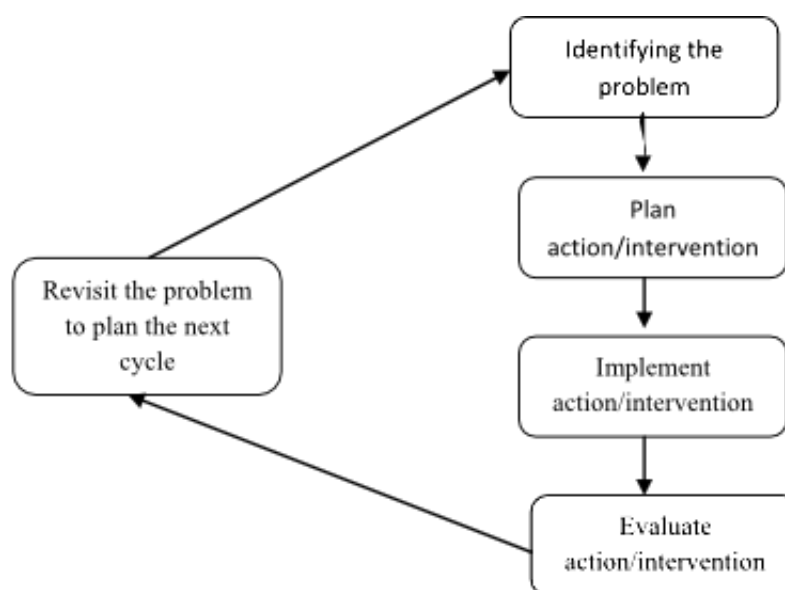
As discussed above, action research takes the philosophical stance of reflective practice, which is embedded in the whole process of action research and underpins it (Gore and Zeichner, 1991, p.119; Wellington, 2000, p.21; Newby, 2010, p.624). The notion of reflective practice has been found in 'the reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1983) and has become a very important guiding principle in education development. The general key aims of action research are to have a better understanding of a practice, improve the practice, and change the practice being researched. The key elements that come into play in action research, therefore, are reflection, planning, and action. They are involved in these core procedures (i) learning by doing and (ii) reflection as the key to unlocking all learning (Newby, 2010, p.624).

The approach to action research could be to use both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (ibid., p.624). However, since it is underpinned by the notion of reflection, and goes through a spiral of cycles of actions and research for further understanding and improvement, action research takes more of an interpretive stance and constructivist philosophy. New understanding and knowledge of the current research

context or practice is constructed through the reflection on different cycles of intervention.

Action research, with its nature as a process of learning by doing and reflecting on experience, with its purpose to understand why something is working the way it is and to improve it, is a very popular research strategy amongst teachers. Scholars point out that action research brings a number of benefits to the professional development of teachers (Gore and Zeichner, 1991; Norton, 2009; Cohen et al., 2011; McNiff, 2013). For example, it brings about changes in their professional skills and roles, in their values and beliefs as well as their level of reflection. It increases the teachers' awareness of their classroom issues, builds more confidence and bridges the gap between theories and practices. Nonetheless, people sometimes get confused between action research and everyday actions of teachers. To get out of the confusion, we need to look at the intention of the action. Action research is not just problem-solving. It does start from a problem and solve the problem, but it looks beyond the problem itself in a quest to improve and change the situation or context, e.g., a teaching and learning approach, a curriculum, the views of teachers and learners etc. It is not just everyday thinking of teachers, but it is more systematic and collaborative in searching out evidence for rigorous reflection in order to set out a better plan for action.

4.1.2. Epistemology and ontology

My own research began by looking at the learning theories that are influential in the West, which underpin constructivism. According to these theories knowledge is constructed through experience (learning by doing) and the experience needs to be reflected upon critically throughout the learning process (reflection) and this reflective practice is to be shared and negotiated with others (interactive learning). Since, in my view, 'reality is human construct' and my research aims to explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insights' into the teaching and learning situation of my

university and Vietnam, I position myself as an interpretive researcher (Wellington, 2000, p.16). The theory of knowledge I hold affirms my belief in my role as a constructivist in this research. For these reason, interpretivism and constructivism were adopted as the guiding methodology approach for my research.

Ontology, which refers to the belief the researcher has about the nature of the reality that the researcher wishes to describe (Scott and Morrison, 2006), goes hand in hand with epistemology because the belief about the nature of the reality influences the way they can know it. Therefore, ontologically, I embrace the belief that the reality can be improved and revised constantly. My research, as stated above, taking the theory of reflection, experiential learning, and interactive learning model as the reference framework, is based on the perception that there is always movement between the learning cycles so that the knowledge constructed often moves from one level to another new improved level. In other words, the researcher believes that there is always change happening during the learning process. This change, in my view, goes in accordance with the law of nature and the natural selection as Darwin maintains 'It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change'(Charles Darwin cited in Gu, 2007, p.1). Teachers change for various reasons, one of which is to adapt themselves and to lead new generations of students to this rapidly changing world.

Taking a constructivist-interpretative stance as my epistemology and ontology, there are two points that guide my research approach: the first one is the belief that knowledge is human constructed and constantly revised, the second one is the belief that reality needs to change to be adaptable to new circumstances. Action research, which investigates an existing situation by carrying out intervention via many cycles to revise the new knowledge aiming at changing the existing situation for the better, is a powerful tool for my research. What is important to note is the core procedures of action research

are underpinned by constructivist theories of learning as the theoretical perspective in this research, and vice versa, the tenets of the theoretical perspective of my research are clearly well embedded in action research. For the above reasons, action research was chosen as methodology for my research.

4.2. Research context and participants

4.2.1. Research context

The research was conducted at the Faculty of English in the principal university for training teachers of Vietnam, which specialises in training teachers of different subject areas, forming generations of school teachers in Vietnam who will, in turn, influence the lives of a very large number of school children. As one of the national key universities, it is one of the major centres for teacher training and scientific research, and has trained many talented people, including many of the country's outstanding scientists. Apart from training teachers, lecturers and educational managers, it also plays a key role in educational innovations, through a team of respected authors who have created curriculum, textbooks, and guide books for teachers of different grades and levels, and through leading consultants in the development of education policy. At the time of the 2011-2012 academic years, the university has 23 training faculties and two departments, two affiliated schools, and two research institutes.

The Faculty of English of the university was chosen as a field for the research for two reasons. The first reason was related to one of the principles of action research being that action research needs to be collaborative and democratic with other people involved, not just the researcher herself. This principle 'might be problematic in some organisations' because 'schools might be hierarchical, formal, and bureaucratic whilst action research is collegial, informal, open, collaborative and crosses formal boundaries' (Cohen et al.,

2011, p.359). This suggests that there is a need to have a good collegial environment for action research to be successful. For this reason, and for easier access, I chose my workplace as the field for my research. In this environment, I could have full collaboration from my colleagues and my students.

The Faculty of English offers a four year full- time teacher training programme for a bachelor degree. The four year programme covering 123 credits (each credit is equivalent to 15 periods of 50 minutes) is divided into two parts: general educational knowledge (34 credits) and professional educational knowledge (71-81 credits) including compulsory and selective subjects. Of all 71-81 credits for professional educational knowledge training, the English Language Teaching (ELT) Methodology programme was allotted 23 credits, including university lecture training (16 credits) and school teaching practice (7 credits). The largest amount of time, 36 credits, was distributed to English Language Skill Development. The English Linguistics accounted for 19 credits. And 12 credits were allotted to British and American studies (Khoa Sư Phạm Tiếng Anh, 2012).

Being one of the three courses that constitute the ELT methodology programme, Teaching English Language Component and Language Skills was chosen for the intervention of the action research to take place. This course, which was allocated 30 lecture periods covering 15 weeks, focused on building teaching skills for the student teachers in the four English language skills- listening, speaking, reading, writing; and the three language components – grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This amount of time, which was imposed by the centralised curriculum, was intended for university lectures in class and did not allow time for student teachers to practise teaching. However, within the curriculum framework, the teacher educators at the faculty of English were trying to incorporate a micro-teaching element into the syllabus in order to maximise the practice of teaching for the student teachers and to make this course more skill-focused. This was intended to be

a compensation for the limited time for the practice of teaching since the time allotment for teaching practice was limited. Although micro-teaching was not 'real' teaching, thus, the student teachers had to teach in artificial settings with students who were actually their classmates it was believed to provide useful experience that familiarized the student teachers with some of the key issues. In this course, therefore, a group of about 6-7 student teachers were asked to prepare a short lesson (usually 15-20 minutes). These student teachers played the role of students for one of them in the group assigned to be the teacher. This micro lesson would then be reviewed by the class and by the teacher trainer (class tutor) who would provide feedback.

At the time of the research, there were three groups of about 30 student teachers sharing the same syllabus, the same condition of learning, and the same class time. This number of student teachers enrolled fluctuates between 90 to 100 student teachers every year.

4.2.2. Research participants

4.2.2.1. Student teachers

This research included participants for two phases: the pre-intervention and the intervention. The participants needed for the pre-intervention served the purpose of identifying the issues of the current training context. The participants needed for the intervention functioned as the main participants for the action/intervention to work on and they were the target participants of the research.

Pre-intervention participants were all the student teachers in the 2010-2014 cohort, who had just finished the course of Teaching English Components and Language Skills. Questionnaires were delivered to all three groups of student teachers (92 student teachers from three classes), who were required to

respond anonymously to questions about their learning to become teachers on the course.

Intervention participants were chosen from the student teachers who enrolled a year later than the pre-intervention participants, and who were going to take part in the course of Teaching English Language Components and Language Skills. This was one class of 30 student teachers from the academic year 2011-2014. This group became the participants of my research because I was assigned by the faculty to teach this group of student teachers. They all consented to participate in a designated course of Teaching English Language Components and Language Skills delivered by the researcher. This course, which ran from 16 August to 03 December 2012, was the intervention of my action research. The students participated in activities designed as the intervention throughout the course. The same participants were also asked to fill in a post-intervention questionnaire, which were also anonymous.

The participants all expressed their enthusiasm and willingness in participating in the research. Some of them felt privileged to be chosen for the research. In fact, it was noted that ten student teachers from another group also asked to join the research, but were refused as the sample needed to be kept manageable for the feasibility of the research.

4.2.2.2. Tutors

The four tutors selected to participate in the pre-intervention questionnaires, focus group discussion, and post-intervention emails were permanent staff of the English Language Teaching Methodology Division. These tutors were in charge of teaching the English Language Teaching Methodology courses that were offered by the Faculty of English. Their jobs included university lecture training in class, giving feedback for student teachers' micro-teaching to build teaching skills for the student teachers, and supervising them in some class

observation at Nguyen Tat Thanh demonstration high school, which was one of the two schools affiliated to the university.

The tutors were all female, with an age ranged from 30 to 38. All of them had MA degrees in ELT Methodology in Vietnam. One of them obtained her second MA degree in a Western country. One tutor had attended a teacher professional development training course in Singapore. The tutors had teaching experience as English teachers and teacher trainers, ranging from 17 years and 8 years to 6 years and two years respectively. The tutors' profiles are summarised in table 3. For purpose of anonymity, pseudonyms are used.

TABLE 3: TUTORS' PROFILES

Tutors	Age	Title	Education	Teaching experience
Mai	38	Head of Division	- MA in ELT Methodology obtained in Vietnam - Short training in Singapore	17 years as teacher of English, 8 years as teacher trainer
Hoa	36	Lecturer	- MA in ELT Methodology obtained in Vietnam	15 years as teacher of English, 6 years as teacher trainer
Nga	35	Lecturer	- MA in ELT Methodology obtained in Vietnam, - MA in Applied Linguistics obtained in Holland	8 years as teacher of English, 4 years as teacher trainer
Minh	30	Lecturer	- BA in ELT Methodology obtained in Vietnam	6 years as teacher of English, 2 years as teacher trainer

4.3. Research design

The research consists of four stages, identifying the problem – Plan the intervention – Implement the intervention - Evaluate the intervention, which constitutes one cycle of the action research spiral. I mapped my stages on to figure 5 (overleaf).

FIGURE 5: THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Adapted from (Wellington, 2000, p.22)
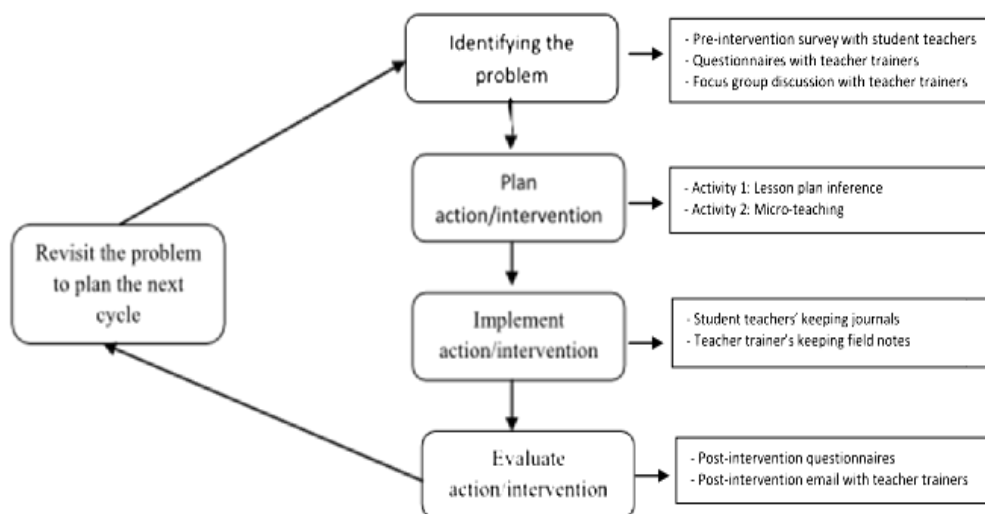
4.3.1. Identifying the problem

A pre-intervention survey with student teachers, which aimed at identifying the problems or issues of the current practice of learning and teaching in the course of Teaching English Language Components and Language Skills at the Faculty of English, HNUE, was conducted with 92 student teachers of K59. These students had just finished the course of Teaching English Language Components and Language Skills, so their responses to the course were fresh in their minds.

Cohen et al. (2011) stated that the questionnaire is an appropriate instrument when the number of informants is quite big as it was in this case (92 informants); also, it had the advantage of being able 'to be administered without the presence of the researcher' (p.377). This feature of questionnaires helped me conduct the pre-intervention survey in Vietnam while I was in the UK. The data collected in this way is comparatively easy and straightforward to code up and analyse. This questionnaire is divided into two parts: closed/ structured questions and open/ unstructured questions. If the closed questions are directly to the point and intentionally more focused than open-ended questions, the open-ended questions would enable the

researcher to capture the personal ideas or information that are failed to reach in the closed questions (Cohen et al., 2011, p.382). Thus, the two types supplement each other very well.

The questions' themes centre on the four research questions and are based on the tenets of the theoretical perspectives on teacher learning. The whole questionnaire would take around 10 minutes to complete.

A questionnaire survey with four tutors was also conducted at this stage with teacher trainers of the ELT Methodology division. The purpose was to capture their responses to the course. The questionnaires were allocated in advance of the focus group discussion. The aim was to have the teacher trainers' individual responses unmediated by the focus group discussion. Their answers were used not only to identify issues in their teaching context, but also to double-check with the student teachers' opinion as another source of information for the triangulation process.

A tutor focus group discussion was conducted with the same four university tutors, who completed the questionnaires. Four tutors constitute the ELT division. The topic under discussion was very focused on their opinions about my intervention plan. This focus group discussion has the following purposes:

a) Gathering feedback for finalizing the intervention plan. It would help me consider all the aspects of the intervention that I myself could not foresee.

b) Offering clarification about any issues that arose from the pre-intervention survey

c) Community learning - last but not least, because this is the influential philosophy of my own ontology. Since 'focus groups are much more interactive than surveys'(Luker, 2008, p.183), I could involve the teachers in my research and seek support from them. This went in line with the principles of action research, which emphasise the need to be 'collaborative', 'dialogical', 'celebrate discourse', and 'seek to understand the processes of change within social system' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.346). At the same time,

this was a chance to clarify things I found interesting or unclear from their questionnaire answers. Again, this also served purposes of triangulation.

4.3.2. Planning the action/intervention

The intervention was fundamentally about encouraging new less teacher centred models of learning, particularly peer and diagnostic assessment, strategies for offering feedback and finding pedagogies that encouraged new forms of student engagement. These priorities arose from the surveys and the tutor focus group discussion as well as the background knowledge from the literature review. In order to apply these priorities to the context, two activities were incorporated into the syllabus. These activities were designed to apply the principles of interactive learning, experiential learning and reflection learning theories.

- Activity 1: Lesson plan inference

Making inferences about a lesson plan involves using personal teaching experience or theoretical background knowledge/ schema about teaching, along with the content from the video clip lesson, to make assumptions about the lesson plan. As inferential thinking is often referred to as reading between and beyond the lines, the student teachers needed to activate all the skills and knowledge they had to make the best of their inference. Therefore, this activity was useful in checking and enhancing what the student teachers had learnt from in-class lecture training. It also served as a spring board for the student teachers' next micro-teaching activity. What is also important to emphasise is that this activity provided opportunities for the student teachers to work together in an informal, supportive, and discursive environment and helped bridge theory and practice at a simple level.

The procedure was as follows: the whole class of participants was divided into 10 groups of three. The three student teachers in a group had to search resources and made a decision together to choose a clip of a lesson about the

assigned topic, which was taken from the syllabus. The student teachers worked together to identify, through inference, the lesson plan from a clip they agreed on. They discussed, negotiated ideas, and together inferred ultimately a lesson plan that they thought the lesson in the clip was based on. The explicit inferred plan needed to be about the ideas and information in the lesson, and about the lesson's structure, so it includes main objectives, target skills/ knowledge of the lesson, chronological steps and activities. The inferred lesson plan, together with the clip, was then sent to tutor (me) for feedback and discussion. This step had to be done online as the time was limited. The three students worked together again to reflect on and discuss the feedback and then to make a presentation about the clip in class, sharing with class about what worked, which aspects fell short, and what needed to be done to enhance the teaching. This stimulated whole class discussion about the video clip and the group analysis the lesson planning process.

- Activity 2: Videotaped micro-teaching

Although micro-teaching is not a new technique, it has proved to be 'an efficient technique for learning effective teaching' (Remesh, 2013, p.158). It is actually a mini practice of teaching. The goal of this activity in this intervention was to build the student teachers' confidence, support, and peer feedback by providing space for them try out among friends and colleagues a short slice of what they would have to do with their students in the future. Beside its advantages, there was also criticism about this kind of training technique holding that it is a form of play acting in unnatural surroundings and it is feared that the acquired skills may not be internalised (Ananthakrishnan, 1993, p.142). However, due to the time limit of the curriculum and the training condition constraints of the university, this training technique was approved as a means of bridging the gap between theory and practice for the student teachers at the faculty.

The procedure for carrying out this activity was as follows. The same three student teachers, who worked before on lesson planning activity inference, worked together again to build a lesson plan of 45 minutes for an assigned lesson that they would have to teach. When the plan was complete, it had to be sent to the tutor (me) for feedback and discussion. They then revised the plan in the light of the feedback and prepared for the teaching. They selected one member to be a teacher for the group by drawing lots. The teaching of that lesson was video recorded and the video together with the lesson plan was sent to both the tutor and to a peer group to review for feedback and discussion together with the lesson plan.

The use of *video capture* has proved beneficial in quite a few empirical studies of teacher training (Sherin, 2003; Rosenstein, 2008; Harford and MacRuairc, 2008; Youens et al., 2014). One of the benefits is that 'video capture is used to generate a collaborative space for teacher preparation; a space in which traditional hierarchies and boundaries between actors (student teacher, school mentor and university tutor) and knowledges (academic, professional and practical) are disrupted'(Youens et al., 2014, p.101). For this reason, micro-teaching activity integrated with the use of video capture was used as a useful tool in my research design. The intervention design was summarised in figure 6 (overleaf).

4.3.3. Implementing the action/ intervention

After discussion with my colleagues to have a careful plan for the intervention to take place, I started the intervention in accordance with the timetable scheduled by the Faculty of English, which ran from 16 August to 03 December 2012 covering 15 weeks.

The intervention (see figure 6 overleaf) was implemented smoothly as planned. During the intervention both the participants and the researcher kept reflective journals. I chose not to interview participants and instead

focused on written data because Vietnamese learners or CHC learners tend to be 'thinkers' in contrast to Western learners, who tend to be 'speakers' (Guest, 2002; Stapleton, 2002; Smith & Chang, 1998). Learners who are reflective thinkers benefit from having the opportunity to provide their thoughts in writing as this gives them more confidence.

FIGURE 6: THE INTERVENTION DESIGN
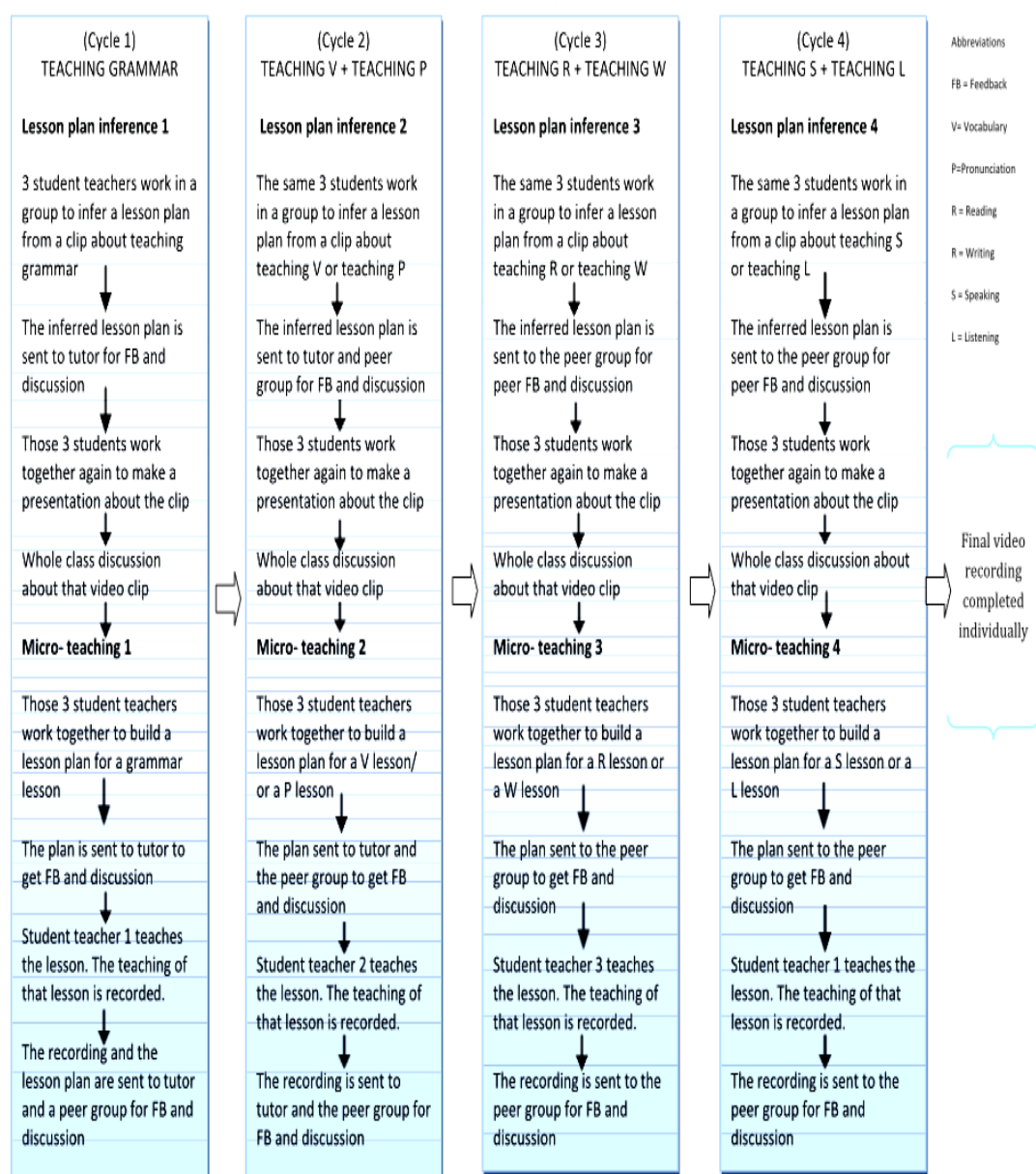
The benefits of reflective journal writing in education, and in teacher education in particular, have been documented in many empirical studies (Howell-Richardson and Parkinson, 1988; Jarvis, 1992; Hoover, 1994; Borg, 2001; Shin, 2003; Epp, 2008). However, there are quite a few different versions of using reflective writing with different purposes, with different benefits and shortcomings. One example of using reflective writing that offers an opportunity for student teachers to provide self-feedback on their own teaching and also serves as a basis for the tutor to give 'feedback on the feedback' is that done by Jarvis (1992). She used reflective writing in an intensive teacher training course. Every learner in her course had to write a reflection on their teaching in the light of what they were learning. The different point in her use of reflective writing was that this was no longer a personal writing, like usual journal writing, but it became an official requirement of the course and the experience was reflected publicly. Jarvis' role was to give feedback on what the teachers had written with the aim of facilitating their deeper thinking. What Jarvis observed from the teachers who used reflective writing was quite positive: the impression she gets from the teachers' participation in the seminars and from the reports on them from in-country personnel was that 'there is some relation between those who were able to use the record for reflection, and positively changed practice' (Jarvis, 1992, p.142). I found her idea of using this tool for student teachers fascinating. The discussion with my colleagues at the staff meeting suggested to me that the learner autonomy of the student teachers in my own institution was still low. Therefore, if we wanted them to try new learning strategies, we needed to find a way to encourage them deliberately.

For this reason, I actively encouraged the participants to keep their reflective journals during the course and I regularly reminded them about doing so. Although it was announced as an optional component in my course (so that no pressure was put on the student teachers), I politely kept asking them for journal writing every week. I myself also regularly wrote a journal as part of the field notes and found it very helpful.

The journals were then collected on the last day of the course. They were photographed to be kept in electronic files.

The language used in journals was either English or Vietnamese, whatever the student teachers felt comfortable with. The Vietnamese versions were then translated into English for the purpose of data analysis.

4.3.4. Evaluating the action/ intervention

Post-intervention questionnaires (for students) were used at the end of the intervention to evaluate its outcomes. The questionnaire was based on the theoretical principles that informed the teacher learning models and the four research questions.

Emails were also used to communicate with the four tutors to clarify and discuss some points emerging from the intervention.

The findings from the questionnaires, emails with tutors, participants' and researcher's journals writing from the participants as well as the researcher's field notes were analysed to present as findings and to inform the discussion and the arguments about the research problems. In addition, careful consideration was given to revisiting the problems for the next cycle of the research.

4.4. Reflexivity and ethics

4.4.1. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is 'a self-conscious awareness of the effects that the participants-as-practitioners-and-researchers are having on the research process, how

their values, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, actions, feelings etc. are feeding into the situation being studied' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.359). That means, the researcher needs to have a thorough understanding of her position and how that position might affect her analysis and writing of the research with her own biased assumptions so that the reader of the research to take an objective view. There is a need for the researcher to reflect on the self of him/her because for Wellington (2000), 'in social and educational research the researcher himself, or herself, is the key instrument (p.41). That statement emphasises the role and responsibility of the researcher as well as his/her reflexivity about that role and responsibility.

This research was conducted in my own country, where I live and work. This gives me good understanding of the Vietnamese educational context, but at the same time I need to be very careful not to bring my biased assumptions of the context into my analysis and writing. I am aware of the need not to take the precedence over the views of participants or not to 'colour' or 'polish' the research for any other purposes than the pure academic mission. In the same token, I need to 'make the familiar strange' (ibid., p.44) by looking into the context I am researching with objective judgement.

Relating to the above issue, the issue of being an insider was also taken into consideration. Doing action research, 'the researchers are also participants and practitioners in the action research – they are part of the social world that they are studying' (Harmmersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.14 cited in (Cohen et al., 2011, p.359). This is the case of my research, in which I shared 'an identity, language and experience based with the study participants' (Asselin, 2003 cited in (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p.58). This shared status can be beneficial. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) pointed out a benefit that 'participants are typically more open with researchers so that there may be a greater depth to the data gathered' (p.58). However, being an insider can also lead to the fact that 'the researcher's perception might be clouded by his/her personal experience and that as a member of the group he/she will have difficulty separating it from that of the participants' (ibid., p.58). This issue caused a particular difficulty in

changing my usual role as a dominant tutor to a new role as a tutor-researcher, using a new less teacher-centred approach. For example, during the course, whenever the student teachers did not perform as well as I expected or made mistakes while practising teaching or lesson plan designing, I tended to scold them and to tell them what to do as I previously did. Another example was that when I received the email from the whole class, which expressed their difficulty in learning in the new mode, I wanted to go back to the previous teaching method to please the student teachers. However, I was aware of these issues being an insider, and overcame these difficulties.

Another issue that was always taken into my careful consideration was the high respect towards teachers, which is long rooted in our culture. Vietnamese students are supposed to have unquestioning respect towards their teachers. As I played a dual role as the teacher of the group of the participants, and the conductor of this research, it might have affected the responses of the participants. Due to this unquestioning respect to teachers the students might have thought that everything I (as their teacher) had done should have been perfect. And therefore, they might not have wished to be critical when asked their views, or there might have been another possibility that they might have answered the questions in the way that they thought I wanted to hear. This cultural trait might, to some extent, deprive the participants of the impartiality and objectivity in their responses and so might have affected the findings.

In order to minimize this danger I designed both qualitative and quantitative approaches with different methods of data collection to give different independent sources. This triangulation process helped the research gain reliability and validity (Newby, 2010, p.128). Furthermore, when designing questionnaires for participants, I tried to avoid leading questions (Cohen et al., 2011, p.396), or questions that were worded in such a way as to suggest to respondents that there was one desirable answer to please the researcher. Also, I used several items to measure a specific attribute to have more possibility of the true answer (Cohen et al., 2011, p.403). Furthermore, during

the intervention itself, on the course, I always tried to appear myself as a friendly and helpful teacher, trying to set up an equal relationship with my students and to disrupt in so far as this way possible the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students. The fact that I would not assess them in the final examination was often mentioned to them, so that no pressure of having to please me was put on them. Nonetheless, the world knowledge that we are researching is unlimited and full of uncertainties and abstractions. As Cohen et al. (2011)maintained that 'there is no single picture of the world. Rather, there are many worlds and many ways of investigating them' (p.219). This suggests, therefore, that we can never reach an absolute truth, but just provisional truth.

4.4.2. Access and ethical considerations

According to Cohen et al. (2011), gaining access and acceptance is very important at the initial stage of the research project. That is the 'access to the institution or organisation where the research is to be conducted, and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task' (p.81). Thus, in my case, I would need to gain official permission from the Head of the Faculty to undertake my research. At a later point, the Head of the ELT methodology division, who was responsible for all the decisions that were related to teacher development, and the coordinators of the faculty, who were responsible for coordinating between teachers and students of the Faculty and the staff at university level, would need to be contacted.

In fact, the first people I contacted were the coordinators of the faculty. They were the key contacts for all the information related to timing, students' contacts, or locations for all the training programmes, which seemed to be trivial and were often left aside, but indeed played a very important part to keep things on the right track making the research go smoothly. I contacted them at the very early stage just after I had finalised the research questions

and research design with my supervisors so that I could be able to deliver the pre-intervention survey at the right time.

Gaining the official permission from the Head of the Faculty was indispensable. I sometimes keep in touch via email to keep him informed about my research, as well as the impact that the research could yield to the university and to Vietnamese education. Before I went back to Vietnam for the field work, I sent him the cover letter and the information sheet that provided thorough details about my research. Then, the first thing I did when I arrived in Vietnam was to meet with the Head of the Faculty to talk about the research in person and officially asked for the permission. In Vietnam, I think, it is important to meet in person as it gives a sense of commitment to the person you need to talk to. He was very supportive of the research as I expected because it was him who offered me the permission to pursue my PhD and more importantly, he could see the contribution of the research to Vietnamese education.

After my research was officially approved, I contacted the Head of the ELT methodology division to have her approval of the intervention to be implemented. Thanks to her support and assistance, all the procedures for the research to take place went relatively very smoothly.

The last but not least people I needed to gain access and acceptance were the participants of the research. Without them the research would not have been possible. According to Cohen et al. (2011), informed consent is an important principle that 'will form the basis of an implicit contractual relationship between the researcher and the researched and will serve as the foundation on which subsequent ethical considerations can be structured' (p.81). I was well aware of this importance of building trust and mutual understanding between me and the participants. An information sheet with a consent form were sent to both tutors and student teachers ahead of the questionnaires so that they would have time to know why they had been selected and how they would be involved as well as to consider if they wanted to take part. Trust and

mutual understanding was particularly important in my case because one of the aims of the intervention was to change the attitudes towards the traditional hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, and to promote collegial working relationship towards a more dialogic approach. I was always conscious of this core ethical principle and this ultimate aim of my research. As to the four tutors, there might be a possibility that their identities could be traced. One reason is that the small number of the tutors, who teach ELT methodology, makes it traceable. Another reason is that while I need to acknowledge this university as a central teacher training institution to claim the generalisability of the research, the traceability is likely to be higher. Therefore although I tried to minimise this possibility, there might still be a threat of it. However, positively, all the participants, including the four tutors, gave their consent to take part in the research. In fact, the student teachers appeared eager to be the research participants. The tutors were very supportive and understanding. Although they were aware of the potential traceability issues, they all gave their consent.

Another ethical issue that was worthy of concern was related to the possibility of withdrawal by some of the group. I had considered it and would have invited more participants from other groups if it had happened. It would have been feasible because at the time of the research we had three groups of student teachers, who shared the same syllabus, the same timetable, and the same training condition. However, I did not have to use that back-up plan as all the student teachers I invited to take part gave the consent.

4.5. Analysis

4.5.1. Analytical framework

Cultural differences between nations or groups of people and how to manage them have been widely discussed in a large body of research (Hofstede, 1986; Harris et al., 1991; Hofstede et al., 1991; Shenkar, 2001; House et al., 2004; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Nisbett and Miyamoto, 2005; Fuhrman and

Boroditsky, 2010; Vasalou et al., 2010; Varnum et al., 2010; Hofstede et al., 2010; Koester and Lustig, 2012; Matsumoto and Juang, 2013). The recognition of the influence of culture on learning and on people's thinking has also been indicated in many studies. Nisbett and Miyamoto (2005), for example, found that perceptual processes are influenced by culture. After analysing the mechanisms of these processes, they suggested that there is a dynamic relationship between the cultural context and perceptual processes, such that perception can no longer be regarded as consisting of processes that are universal across all people at all times. This research indicates that a cultural context can lead to a lifelong 'chronic perception', but a shift in cultural context can also change a default pattern.

Other work examines the relationship between cultural contexts and thinking styles. Lun et al. (2010), for example, agree that cultural thinking styles have an important influence on certain psychological and behavioural differences between Asian people and Western. As such, this relationship between culture and human mind is reciprocally influenced. This understanding of the relationship between culture and mind is central to the work of Hofstede and Hofstede (2005). In his later book (2010) Hofstede uses the analogy 'software of the mind' to exemplify how he sees this working relationship.

These insights into the relationship between culture and people's thinking and behaviour have led to the development of cultural frameworks for research analysis. Quite a few researchers have attempted to conceptualise the cultural values of different countries. For example, Black and Mendenhall (1990) created a cultural framework based on social learning theory in order to understand past research and to guide future research. This framework adopts the assumption that variables operate differently in international versus domestic areas. Tweed and Lehman (2002) proposed Confucian and Socratic approaches to analyse culture's influence on academic learning among Western and Eastern students. Bedford and Hwang (2003) have formulated a cross-cultural framework for understanding specific mentalities

of people in a given culture, based on a conceptualisation of identity and morality in Western and Confucian cultures. Hofstede's cultural framework views cultural differences among nations along six dimensions, namely 'Power distance', 'Collectivism vs. Individualism', 'Femininity vs. Masculinity', 'Uncertainty avoidance', 'long - term vs. short-term orientation' and 'Indulgence vs. Restraint' (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Since being launched, Hofstede's cultural model has provoked a lot of debate with both negative critiques and positive commentary. The critiques (e.g. McSweeney, 2002; Williamson, 2002; Taras et al., 2010; Chiang, 2005; Blodgett et al., 2008) have centred on the methods of the research, the number of dimensions in the model, whether the study of subsidiaries of one company can reflect the entire national culture, and whether the IBM data used in the research are obsolete . The controversy was also marked in quite a few articles by a heated debate over the comparison with the GLOBE (the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) model developed by House et al. (2004); Javidan et al. (2006); Smith (2006); Shi and Wang (2011). Hofstede et al. have been active and enthusiastic in answering questions and discussing the critiques in many of their articles (Hofstede, 2002; Hofstede, 2003; Hofstede, 2011; G. Hofstede, 2010). Probably, the most common debate has been caused by practitioners' 'predicting individual cultural preferences by inference from Hofstede's country scores' (Soares et al., 2007, p.81). For example, Yeh (1988) maintained that 'the Japanese and Chinese (people in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) may either have different interpretations of the same value scale, or have other value dimensions not tapped by Hofstede's values framework. It is necessary to modify this value framework to include other value dimensions' (p.158). However, Hofstede indicated that culture 'is always a collective phenomenon, but it can be connected to different collectives. Within each collective there is a variety of individuals. If characteristics of individuals are imagined as varying according to some bell curve; the variation between cultures is the shift of the

bell curve when one moves from one society to the other' (Hofstede, 2011, p.3).

Another example was in Signorini et al. (2009). These scholars examined the masculinity versus femininity dimension of Hofstede's framework in education setting and argued that in relation to this dimension Hofstede 'fails to recognise differences between a range of learning settings – pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary education are all very different from each other – not because of cultural differences, but because of age and maturity differences in learning settings and curricula as well as human and physical resources' (p.256). As an answer to these critiques of his work, Hofstede stressed that 'dimensions depend on the level of aggregation'; he warned against 'confusion with value differences at the individual level' (Hofstede, 2011, p.2). According to Hofstede, 'one of the weaknesses of much cross-cultural research is not recognizing the difference between analysis at the societal level and at the individual level' (ibid., p.6). He stressed that there was a significant difference in analysing and interpreting data between country level and individual level. Failure in recognising this would lead to 'numerous errors of interpretation and application' (ibid., p.6) of his work. This point was reiterated by Kirkman et al. (2006) when they reviewed 180 Hofstede – inspired studies between 1980 and 2002. After all, Bing commented, when evaluating Hofstede's work and its influence, that 'debates within the field are an expected part of the process of theory building' (Bing, 2004, p.81).

Despite much heated debate and criticism, Smith et al. (1996) considered that Hofstede's framework proves to be 'the most comprehensive and robust in terms of the number of national culture samples' (cited in Soares et al., 2007, p.280). Hofstede's cultural dimensions have 'generated enormous numbers of replications, citations and discussions' (Fang, 2003, p.350) and has been considered to be 'the most widely used national cultural framework in psychology, sociology, marketing or management studies'(Søndergaard, 1994; Steenkamp, 2001 cited in Soares et al., 2007, p.280). Bing (2004) stated that

Hofstede is the most cited Dutch author and the ninth-most cited European in the 2001 Social Science Citation Index. Over time Hofstede's influence has become so pervasive, and his work has developed so many offshoots that even those who do not agree with his theory or conclusions must at least acknowledge his work (p.81).

Hofstede's dimensions, indeed, have gained much popularity and there have been a number of studies that support and apply Hofstede's model in different fields including education (Tavakoli et al., 2003; Naumov and Puffer, 2000; Everdingen and Waarts, 2003; Vitell et al., 1993; Pagell et al., 2005; Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Le, 2013). Soares et al. (2007), who compared Hofstede's dimensions and other models and found that his comparison table showed a high level of convergence across approaches, supports the theoretical relevance of Hofstede's framework and justifies further use of his dimensions (p.280). What has made his work so popular, probably, is its practical applications and its visible dimensions (Bing, 2004). Hofstede created six dimensions, with indexes scored along each to all 93 countries; these dimensions are linked by the dimensions to specific areas in the society, such as, workplace, family, religions, social community, health care, or education. This feature of Hofstede's framework has, according to Soares been 'unmatched by other frameworks' especially with regard to its usefulness 'in formulating hypotheses for comparative cross-cultural studies' (Soares et al., 2007, p.280). In the case of my own study, I was particularly drawn to the fact that the cultural traits of Vietnam and its Confucianism influences can be exposed comfortably along different dimensions (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Le, 2013). Therefore, I find Hofstede's framework useful as an analytical framework for my research.

4.5.2. Discussion of Hofstede's model

Hofstede's cultural model is based on his study of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. He analysed a large database of employee value scores collected within IBM between 1967 and 1973. The

data covered more than 70 countries, from which Hofstede first used the 40 countries with the largest groups of respondents and afterwards extended the analysis to 50 countries and 3 regions. Subsequent studies validating the earlier results include such respondent groups as commercial airline pilots and students in 23 countries, civil service managers in 14 counties, 'up-market' consumers in 15 countries and 'elites' in 19 countries. In the 3rd edition of the book '*Cultures and Organizations Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*' the scores covered 76 countries along the first four dimensions and 93 countries along the last two dimensions.

The values distinguishing countries from each other were first grouped into four dimensions at the time between 1967 and 1973; these became the Hofstede dimensions of national culture. These dimensions were 'Power distance', 'Collectivism vs. Individualism', 'Femininity vs. Masculinity', 'Uncertainty avoidance'. A fifth dimension was added in 1991 based on research conducted by Michael Bond with an instrument developed by Chinese scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan called the Chinese Values Survey. This research instrument, which was based on basic values of the teachings of Confucius, was designed to help fix the Western bias problem of the IBM survey. This research led to the first expansion of Hofstede's model, and the new expanded dimension is called the 'long - term vs. short-term orientation'. Then, in 2010, a sixth dimension was added to the model, namely 'Indulgence vs. Restraint', based on Michael Minkov's analysis of the World Values Survey (WVS) data. This was the second expansion of Hofstede's model making it more comprehensive. The WVS was built from the European Values Survey, which was born in order for departments of divinity at six European universities to use as a method to jointly survey the values of their countries' populations through public opinions. The focus of the European Values Survey (EVS) was then changed and it grew into a periodic World Values Survey, whose data collection rounds took place in ten year intervals. The survey covers more than one hundred countries worldwide, looking at the

areas of ecology, economy, education, emotions, family, gender and sexuality, government and politics, happiness, health, leisure and friends, morality, religion, society and nation, and work.

Hofstede's six dimensions are described as follows with regard specifically to education. The values index scores for Vietnam assigned along each dimension are also listed in table 4 with reference to some selected countries from the East and the West. Discussion of each dimension follows table 4.

TABLE 4: VALUES INDEX SCORES FOR VIETNAM AND SELECTED COUNTRIES ALONG HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

(Hofstede et al., 2010)

	Power Distance (Index/ranking out of 76 countries)	Individualism (Index/ranking out of 76 countries)	Masculinity (Index/ranking out of 76 countries)	Uncertainty Avoidance (Index/ranking out of 76 countries)	Long-term Orientation (Index/ranking out of 93 countries)	Indulgence (Index/ranking out of 93 countries)
Vietnam	70/ 22-25	20/ 58-63	40/ 59	30/ 70-71	57/ 36	35/ 58-59
China	80/ 12-14	20/ 58-63	66/ 11-13	30/ 70-71	87/ 4	24/ 75
Hong Kong	68/ 29-29	25/ 55-56	57/ 25-27	29/ 72-73	61/ 28-32	17/ 83-84
Taiwan	58/ 45-46	17/ 66	45/ 43-45	69/ 39	93/ 2	49/ 37-38
Singapore	74/ 19	20/ 58-63	48/ 38	8/ 76	72/ 16	46/ 41-43
Japan	54/ 49-50	46/ 35-37	95/ 2	92/ 11-13	88/ 3	42/ 49-51
UK	35/ 65-67	89/ 3	66/ 11-13	35/ 68-69	51/ 40-41	69/ 14
USA	40/ 59-60	91/ 1	62/ 19	46/ 64	26/ 69-71	68/ 15-17
France	68/ 27-29	71/ 13-14	43/ 47-50	86/ 17-22	63/ 25	48/ 39-40
Russia	93/ 6	39/ 39-40	37/ 63	95/ 7	81/ 10-11	20/ 77-80

Power distance

Power distance is defined in Hofstede's framework as 'the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.61). This dimension deals with the fact that there is inequality among the

members of a society and sees how the society handles this inequality. In large power distance countries people tend accept a hierarchical order, in which everyone is assigned a position without the need of further justification. In societies exhibiting small power distance, people strive for equality and unequal distribution of power needs to be justified. This unequal distribution of power is manifested in general norms, family, workplace and school. For example, in countries exhibiting a large degree of power, obedience of young people towards old people is sought, teachers are treated with respect or even fear, whereas equality is sought in a small power distance country and students tend to be independent from teachers.

In school environments of large-power- distance cultures, the inequality between teacher – student is manifested by high respect for teachers and the dependence of students on them. This inequality is well established in students' minds. The education process is teacher-centred, which means the teacher leads all the communication in class and is the fount of all knowledge. The students need to follow the intellectual paths that the teacher outlines for them. The students do not often speak up until singled out by the teacher. In such a system, the quality of students' learning depends heavily on the teaching of the teachers. Conversely, in a small power distance country, teachers and students tend to be treated as equals. Education process in class is student-centred, which means students take initiative and are independent from teachers and from teachers' knowledge. They are supposed to find intellectual paths for their own. They are active in class, asking questions or arguing with teachers if they disagree with them. They do not necessarily have any particular respect for teacher outside school. The quality of students' learning is highly determined by the excellence of students (Hofstede et al., 2010).

However, literature shows that the conceptualisation of power differs between Asian countries (which tend towards large power distance cultures) and Western countries (often tending towards small power distance cultures).

According to Spencer-Oatey (1997), 'in the West, power is often associated negatively with domination or authoritarianism, whereas in Asia it is typically associated positively with benevolence, kindness, nurturance and supportiveness' (p. 2).

The extent of inequalities acceptance or, in other words, the level of power distance is measured by a score index, which is assigned for each nation along the dimension. Most Asian countries, including Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, China and Singapore, scored high in the scale of Power Distance Index Values (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp.57–59), making them large power distance countries. The USA, Great Britain and the white parts of its former empire were assigned low values for this dimension and are ranked as small power distance cultures. At a score of 70, Vietnam sits in the higher ranking scale (at 22nd-25th among 76 countries) which suggests that Vietnam is a large-power- distance country. This also implies that Vietnamese people generally think that hierarchy, centralisation, and inherent inequalities are acceptable, and that subordinates are expected to obey and do what to be told. The characteristics of the education context of a large-power-distance country presented above are to be found in the literature about Vietnamese education teaching and learning as discussed in chapter 1 (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Thanh, 2010; Nguyen, 2012; Le, 2013).

Individualism vs. Collectivism

This dimension of Hofstede's framework addresses the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of 'I' or 'We'. The definition is as follows: 'Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him – or herself and his or her immediate family'. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in

exchange for unquestioning loyalty' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.92). These differences between collectivist and individualist societies are measured in general norm, family, language, personality, behaviour, school and workplace.

In school environments, according to this theory, the relationship between the individual and the group is visible in classroom behaviour. In a collectivist classroom, when the teacher puts a question to the class, students often do not speak up until being addressed by the teacher as he/she considers him/herself in a group, therefore will speak up on behalf of the group if he/she is invited personally. Also, a collectivist student would often be hesitant to speak up in larger groups, or in groups of 'relative strangers - out-group members'. This unwillingness will lessen when the large group is divided into smaller ones. Students of the same family or ethnic background in one class tend to stick together in subgroups. Furthermore, maintaining harmony in the group and face saving are crucial. Therefore, confrontations or conflicts should be avoided or formulated in a way not to hurt anybody. The purpose of education is also different between collectivists and individualists. Learning to participate in a community would be the aim of collectivist students and often be 'onetime process', which happens only when they are young.

Conversely, an individualist student in school environments is expected to speak up individually in class. Students of this type expect to be treated as individuals. Formation of groups is on an ad hoc basis according to the tasks in class or friendship preferences. Learning in order to prepare oneself to cope with 'new, unknown, and unforeseen circumstances' with new people is aimed at by these type of students, so something new would be treated as positive. Learning is keen as life-long and will never end.

Despite Hofstede's indication of the differences between individualism and collectivism, there are opinions holding that there is a core similarity in human beings. For example, Littlewood (2001) investigated the perceptions and

preferences in classroom English learning of students from both Asia (often representing collectivism) and Europe (often representing individualism). The evidence showed that the deep structure of the students' perceptions and preferences may be similar or even universal across-culture although there may be significant differences in how this deep structure is realised through specific reactions and behaviours in the surface structure. Specifically, both individualists and collectivists in his study liked to work towards common goals, but collectivists aimed at relationship-related goals, whilst individualists aimed at outcome-related goals. Similarly, both groups like to keep harmony but they have different views of how to make groups work. Another example was the study by Kolstad and Horpestad (2009), who adopted a similar view maintaining that within any given culture there exist both individualistic and collectivistic aspects. They believed that 'the blend of the components that make up a human being is different from culture to culture, but the elements are the same' (p.280).

According to the Individual Index Values in Hofstede et al. (2010, p.96), Vietnam with a score of 20 sits at the bottom end of the ranking scale of 76 countries. Together with other Asian countries, such as, China, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam is regarded as a highly collectivistic society. On the other pole to compare are the USA, Australia, Great Britain, and Canada. This suggests that Vietnamese people act in the interest of the group; harmony should be maintained; offence often leads to shame or loss of face, so should be avoided. This collectivist representation which is used to describe Vietnam in Hofstede's framework agrees with a large body of research on Vietnamese culture and Vietnamese education as discussed in chapter 1 (e.g. Tomlinson and Dat, 2004; Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Thanh, 2010; Le, 2013).

Masculinity vs. Femininity

Hofstede's framework's definition of a masculine and a feminine society is as follows: 'A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focus on material

success, whereas women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.140). The fundamental issue of this dimension is related to question about the dominant values in the society: to compete to be the best (masculine) or to enjoy what you do for the quality of life (feminine). The assertive and competitive pole has been called 'masculine', and the caring and modest pole has been called 'feminine'. A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society is driven by the preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. A low score (feminine) stands for the preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak. In this society, quality of life is the sign of success and standing out of the crowd is not approved.

In education environments in feminine cultures, according to Hofstede et al. (2010) teachers do not often praise good students openly and the students do not expect compliments from the teachers for their modesty. 'Awards for excellence – whether for students or for teachers – are not popular; in fact, excellence is a masculine term' (p.159). Hofstede et al. concluded that 'in more feminine cultures the average student is considered the norm while in more masculine countries the best students are the norm' (ibid., p.162). In masculine cultures, students are often competitive and try to make themselves visible in class, whereas in feminine cultures, such behaviour is discouraged or ridiculed. In a masculine school, the teacher's brilliance and academic reputation and students' academic performance are valued, whereas in a feminine school social skills and friendliness are esteemed.

According to the Masculinity Index Values in Hofstede et al. (2010), Vietnam was ranked the 55th-58th among 76 countries at 40 and is considered a feminine society (p.143). The most feminine-scoring societies from Asia are Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam and Iran. China sits on the other end of the

continuum together with Japan from Asia and other Western countries including Great Britain and the USA. Thus, this dimension ranking sees countries with Confucian cultural values scattered on both sides of the scale, whereas, on Power Distance and Individualism-Collectivism dimensions, they are clustered consistently on the same side. The score index of Vietnam hints that Vietnamese people often seek agreement, value solidarity and cooperation. Phuong-Mai et al. (2005), Thanh (2010) and Le (2013) agree that in the Vietnamese school environment students tend to harmonise themselves in solidarity or to reach consensus and will ridicule any students that has a different idea or want to compete or appear to make them visible from the group. For example, Thanh (2010) reported that 'Vietnamese students are not so supportive of practices such as answering questions in front of the class or participation in debates in person' (p.27). However, Le (2013) argued that Vietnam has some features of masculine culture as well. For example, 'praise for excellent students', 'competition in class, trying to excel' and 'failing in school is a disaster' related to the competitive learning were also found in the imperial exams in the past (p.17). This view was supported by Phuong-Mai et al. (2005) arguing that Confucian values found in Vietnamese culture are manifested in both masculinity and femininity of Hofstede's dimension. Thus, literature shows that Vietnam is placed on both poles of the continuum of this dimension.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is defined in Hofstede's framework as 'the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.191). Hofstede maintains that ambiguity is often associated with anxiety. For example, the anxiety about the future when people do not know what will happen next in their life. Some people are not anxious about that unknown situation and easily cope with it, having low anxiety. Others are uncertain and unwilling to live with it, having high anxiety. Countries with low anxiety levels often have weak uncertainty avoidance.

People from these countries tend to be unemotional, quiet, and controlled. Conversely, people from strong uncertainty avoidance countries tend to be expressive, noisy, and aggressive with high anxiety levels.

Students from strong uncertainty avoidance countries expect their teachers to be experts and can answer all the questions. They do not tolerate the answer 'I don't know' from teachers. Also, it is considered personally disloyal if the students disagree with their teachers because the belief that the teacher is always correct has been well established in their mind. The teacher is supposed to show their high level of knowledge and often use 'cryptic academic language' (ibid., p.205), which is respected. Conversely, students from weak uncertainty avoidance countries do not expect their teachers to know everything, and so have high tolerance of teachers not being a source of all knowledge. Teachers' use of simple language to explain difficult issues is respected. The act of intellectual disagreement in academic matter with teachers is considered positive to stimulate learning. Representatives of a stronger uncertainty avoidance country, German students, were found to like 'structured learning situation with precise objectives, detailed assignments, and strict timetables'. Most British students, typical for weak uncertainty avoidance, conversely, proved to despise structured learning. They liked 'open-ended learning situation with vague objectives, broad assignments, and no timetables at all' and disliked the situation that suggests only one correct answer (ibid., p.205).

According to the Uncertainty Avoidance Index Values in Hofstede et al. (2010), Vietnam scores 30 (at the same score as China) on this dimension, sitting at the bottom of the ranking scale on the same pole with some Asian countries, including China, Hong Kong, Singapore and also with the USA and Great Britain (p.194). Vietnam with this score is considered as a weak uncertainty avoidance country. This suggests that in all the same situations there may be different alternative channels and schedules are flexible in this Vietnam. This also suggests that in education environment students have high tolerance for

mistakes and do not expect the teacher to be perfect. However, literature about teaching and learning in Vietnam does not match very well with the description of Vietnam as a weak uncertainty avoidance culture. Phuong-Mai et al. (2005); Le (2013); Ta (2012) all hold that the Vietnamese students are often concerned with the right answer and have low tolerance for mistakes or ambiguous situations. They expect teachers to be experts and have all the correct answers. Vietnamese students do not accept if a teacher says 'I don't know' (see chapter 1). They would ridicule the teacher if the teacher made mistakes in his/her teaching and, on his/her side, the teacher would feel ashamed at the mistakes because the belief that the teacher is an expert has well established not only in students' but also in the teachers' minds. This is revealed in an experience in Phuong-Mai et al. (2005) at a Vietnamese school as follows:

> This happened in a Vietnamese school. Whilst giving his lesson, a teacher somehow made a mistake and gave the wrong translation of the word 'redneck'. A student spotted the mistake. Instead of accepting that this was a mistake, the teacher felt offended and said: 'If you think you know more than me, come up here and replace me as the teacher'! (p.406)

Le (2013) in his research also found that 'both students and teachers concur that teachers are mainly responsible for making decisions concerning learning inside class' (p.338). Similarly, Ta (2012) concluded from her case study that 'one trainer was still keen on knowledge presenting and ... most trainees (five out of six) still wanted to listen to the trainers because they appreciated the trainers' knowledge and experience' (p.6). Thus, literature shows that Vietnam as well as China lies on the other pole of strong uncertainty avoidance countries, which appears to contradict the finding from the research of Hofstede et al. (2010)

Long - term vs. short-term orientation

This dimension of Hofstede's, which was developed on the basic values of the teachings of Confucius, was defined as follows: 'long term orientation stands

for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future reward – in particular, perseverance and thrift' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.239). Its opposite pole, short term orientation, stands for the fostering virtues related to the past and present – in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of 'face' and fulfilling social obligations' (ibid., p.239). In long term orientation cultures people value 'perseverance, thrift, ordering relationships by status, and having a sense of shame'; in short term orientation cultures, 'reciprocating social obligations, respect for tradition, protecting one's 'face', and personal steadiness and stability' are valued (Hofstede, 2011, p.15). For example, family life in a long term orientation culture is treated as 'pragmatic arrangement' with 'affection' and 'attention paid to small children as roots. Children learn not to aim at 'immediate gratification of their desires', but 'their goals and humility' (ibid., p.15). With regards to education, short term orientation students tend to attribute success or failure to luck, whereas those from long term orientation cultures think it is efforts that make success. However, this dimension seems to attract less attention from research in literature compared to the previous dimensions so far.

South and Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, are found in the top half of the table having long-term orientation. Vietnam scores 57, ranked the 36th among 93 countries (Hofstede et al., 2010). This suggests that it shares the common belief of long term orientation countries about education that success or failure is the results of presence or lack of efforts. Phuong-Mai et al. (2005) and Le (2013) studying the Confucian values using Hofstede's framework also maintained that if a Vietnamese student fails in study, it is believed by Vietnamese people that he/she has not tried hard enough. Also, the whole society and families often place great expectations on students because their successful performance brings glory to the whole family. Le (2013) found the will power and perseverance in Vietnamese students, one of the crucial virtues towards future rewards in a long term orientation culture, in the fact that 'stories of students who succeed academically despite their

harsh living-condition and lack of supplementary resources and extra-curriculum evening classes are often told in the news' (p.20) in Vietnam.

Indulgence versus Restraint

This dimension was defined by Hofstede et al. as follows: 'indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.281). So basically, this refers to the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses. Relatively weak control is referred as 'indulgence' and relatively strong control as 'restraint'. Cultures can, therefore, be described as indulgent or restrained. Thus, indulgence culture is related to natural human drives that allow people to enjoy life and have fun, whereas restraint culture is seen suppressing the natural human drives, using strict social norms to regulate them. This dimension is somewhat similar to loose and tight societies. Loose societies accept rules with alternative channels and tolerate deviant behaviour. Tight societies, in contrast, retain permanence, formality, and solidarity. Indulgence is found to prevail in South and North America, in Western Europe and in parts of Sub-Sahara Africa, whereas restraint operates in Eastern Europe, in Asia and in the Muslim world. Mediterranean Europe takes a middle position on this dimension. However, Hofstede et al. (2010) extended that this is a newly developed dimension and little research has been done on it so far and 'it deserves more study' (ibid.).

A low score of 35 on this dimension, ranked 58th-59th among 93 countries indicates that the culture of Vietnam is characterised as restrained (Hofstede et al., 2010). Societies with a low score in this dimension tend to control the gratification of their desires and do not put much emphasis on leisure time (pp.282-285). This gives clues that Vietnamese people have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging

themselves is somewhat wrong. Vietnamese education environment retains quite strict rules with both teachers and students. Saito et al., studying a case at a Vietnamese primary school, maintained that 'In Vietnam, ..., teachers have learnt to follow the rules established by the ministry and organise their behaviour accordingly' (Bjork, 2005, p.164 cited in Saito et al., 2008) and that 'there are many ways in which students can be placed under their teachers' rule' (Saito et al., 2008).

Vietnam score ranking in relation to other countries along Hofstede's cultural dimensions is presented in figure 7 (overleaf).

4.5.3. Analytical processes

I use Hofstede's cultural framework as the analytical framework for my research, as discussed in the preceding section. Based on these cultural dimensions, the analysis of my research aims to scrutinise the two sets of data in relation to the constructivist learning theories discussed in chapter three, the popular culture discussed in chapter two, the background context of the research, as well as my own experience during the journey to become a researcher presented in chapter one.

The key concepts of each dimension in Hofstede's cultural framework were highlighted. Then the data findings presented in chapter five were systematically scanned for these key concepts from each of the dimensions. This scanning aimed to find out what key concepts emerged from the data to see what kind of cultural dimensions can be applied in that specific research context. This enabled me to analyse any changes that may occur during the intervention. The outcomes of this analysis are then discussed in chapter six to find out what factors that may hinder the learning as well as what factors that may enhance it.

FIGURE 7: VIETNAM'S SCORE RANKING IN RELATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES ALONG HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Summary of Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Power distance

1   22-25   76

Vietnam

Large power distance: acceptance of hierarchy

Small power distance: No acceptance of hierarchy

Individualism

1   58-63   76

Vietnam

Individualism: appreciation of individual development

Collectivism: maintenance of harmony in a group

Masculinity

1   59   76

Vietnam

Masculinity: competitive to be the best

Femininity: caring and modesty

Uncertainty avoidance

1   70-71   76

Vietnam

Strong uncertainty avoidance: low tolerance of ambiguity

Low uncertainty avoidance: acceptance of ambiguity

Long term orientation

1   36   93

Vietnam

Long term orientation: not aiming at immediate desires, but goals and humility

Short term orientation: personal steadiness and stability, attribute success or failure to luck

Indulgence

1   58-59   93

Vietnam

Indulgence: allow free gratification of natural desires, accept flexibility, and tolerate deviant behaviours

Restraint: strict social norms, large extent of controlling desires

Table 5 summarises the key concepts of Hofstede's dimensions that were used during the analytical processes.

TABLE 5: KEY CONCEPTS OF HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Dimensions	Key words	
Power distance	**Large power distance**: Hierarchy acceptance, obedience towards older people, high respect for teachers, dependence on teachers, teacher-centred class, teacher outline the intellectual path	**Small power distance:** Equality is sought, students' independence from teachers, find intellectual path for their own, student-centred class
Individualism	**Individualism:** ties between individuals are loose, speak up individually, prepare oneself to cope with new or unknown circumstances or people, life-long learning is keen	**Collectivism:** Integration into groups, hesitance to speak up among strangers, speak up on behalf of the group, learning is 'one time process', harmony and face saving, avoid confrontation
Masculinity	**Masculinity:** gender roles are clearly distinct, compete to be the best, preference for achievement, assertiveness and material reward for success, best students are the norm, students compete and make themselves visible, excellence is valued	**Femininity:** gender roles overlap, preference for cooperation, care and modesty, being visible is ridiculed, friendliness and social skills are esteemed, quality of life is the sign for success, average student is the norm, no open praise from teachers, students don't expect praise for modesty
Uncertainty avoidance	**Strong uncertainty avoidance**: high anxiety, noisy and expressive, teachers have to be experts, low tolerance of teachers not knowing the answer, students do not disagree with teachers, students like structured learning, detailed assignments and strict timetables.	**Low uncertainty avoidance**: Ambiguity acceptance, low anxiety, being controlled and quiet, high tolerance of teacher not knowing everything, teacher's use of simple language to explain difficult issues, disagreement with teachers is positive, students like open-ended learning situations, dislike the situation that suggests only one correct answer
Long term orientation	**Long term orientation**: Belief that efforts make success, ordering relationship by status, sense of shame, attention paid	**Short term orientation:** Perseverance of face, respect for tradition, personal steadiness and stability,

	to small children as roots, children learn not to aim at their immediate gratification of desires, but their goals and humility	attribute success or failure to luck
Indulgence	**Indulgence:** Allow free gratification of natural desires related to enjoying life and having fun, weak control of desires and impulses, accept rules with alternative channels, tolerate deviant behaviours	**Restraint**: Large extent of controlling desires and impulses, strict social norms, retain permanence, formality and solidarity

Chapter 5: Data analysis and findings – cycle 1

In this chapter I present and discuss the results of both the pre-intervention and the intervention phases of the first cycle of action research. In the pre-intervention phase, both the student teachers' and the tutors' views are analysed. The student teachers' views are demonstrated in the questionnaires. The tutors' views are manifested in a set of data including questionnaires, records of staff meeting discussions, and post-intervention emails. The analysis and discussion of the findings follow and serve as the foundation for the design of the intervention. In the intervention phase, only student teachers' views are analysed because the intervention was designed for and targeted at the student teachers only. The data for the analysis of this phase were collected from questionnaires, student teachers' journals, and the researcher's journal. The analysis of these findings serves as the groundwork for the discussion and conclusion chapters.

5.1. Pre-intervention

5.1.1. Student teachers' views

5.1.1.1. Questionnaire: Closed questions

91 questionnaires were allocated to three groups of student teachers, who had finished the course 'Teaching Language Components and Language Skills'. 100% of those were completed. The results are presented in table 6 (overleaf).

TABLE 6: STUDENT TEACHERS' PRE-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

Questionnaire statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Feedback on micro teaching is important in the process of learning to teach.	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
2. Before the microteaching session your tutor discusses the lesson plan with you.	11%	69%	10%	10%	0%
3. You are provided with criteria before doing microteaching so that you know how to assess your teaching.	45%	42%	8%	5%	0%
4. In the feedback session your tutor often tells you what to do to improve your teaching.	56%	38%	6%	0%	0%
5. During the feedback session you spend most of the time listening to your tutor and/or peers.	23%	53%	12%	10%	2%
6. You often have a chance to explain why you do certain activities during your micro teaching in the feedback session.	15%	50%	21%	12%	2%
7. During the feedback session you are given a chance to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement.	27%	50%	16%	7%	0%
8. You are given not only oral feedback, but also written feedback from your tutor.	18%	32%	20%	29%	1%
9. You want your tutor to tell you explicitly whether what you have done is right or wrong so that you will improve your teaching.	51%	46%	1%	2%	0%
10. You feel more confident when you perform your teaching without the tutor.	25%	35%	17%	22%	1%
11. You want to see yourself teaching because you can judge your own teaching and improve your own performance.	42%	40%	7%	9%	2%
12. After the micro teaching session, you often look back at what you have done in your teaching.	34%	56%	7%	3%	0%
13. You keep journal/diary during microteaching process.	13%	36%	24%	22%	5%
14. You want to see the tutor modelling herself as an example for you to see.	67%	28%	2%	2%	1%

It can be seen from the table that the proportions of the informants checking on 'strongly disagree' column are conspicuously low. Their disagreement extended to the 'Disagree' column at the furthest if they had to express a negative view. This feature is demonstrated in statements 8, 10, 13. Also, with the statements to which the expected responses should be clear between the two extremes, quite a few informants checked on 'don't know' option, or

chose either 'Agree' or Disagree' without any further extension to 'Strongly agree/disagree'. That is the case with statements 2, 3, 8, 13. It could be suggested that the informants tended to avoid a strongly negative opinion that showed outright disagreement or that they tended to be neutral. This is a noteworthy factor that will need to inform the design of the research intervention.

Responses to statement 1 show that 100% of the student teachers either strongly agree or agree that feedback on micro-teaching is important to them in the process of learning to teach. This would indicate that the student teachers had very positive attitudes toward their learning from feedback, which would possibly make this intervention to be of practical interest to these student teachers.

Another important feature that could be claimed from the responses to statements 2 and 3 is that the tutors seemed to have created some suitable conditions for the student teachers' reflection on their practice of teaching to take place by relating the micro-teaching to the students' schemata. In response to statement 2, which is about whether or not the tutor discusses the lesson plan before micro teaching, 80% of the informants stated that their tutor did that, although only 11% of those strongly agreed with that. As noted above, this response could probably be the tendency of being neutral and the avoidance of expressing strong opinions. Regarding statement 3, related to criteria given before micro-teaching, 87% of the respondents asserted that they were provided with criteria before teaching. By discussing the lesson plan and giving criteria for assessment prior to their teaching, the students will have chances to link what they have practised with what they have prepared and what they have expected in their micro-teaching. Seemingly, the conditions for reflection on teaching practice process were provided during the course.

However, arguably, this reflection process did not seem to work when as many as 94% of the informants contended that their tutor often told them

what to do to improve their teaching and up to 76% of the informants spent most of their time listening to their tutor and their peers. This idea must be very well noted because although with most of the questions the informants tended not to show their extreme ideas, with question 4 there are 51 out of 86 of the respondents who stated that they strongly agreed with the statement. And there are not any informants who disagreed with this statement.

Another feature worthy of comment is that, although the student teachers asserted that their tutor told them what to do (as in statement 4) and that they took the passive role listening during most of the feedback time (as in statement 5), the majority (65%) of the student teachers thought that they often had a chance to explain certain activities and 77% of the informants claimed they could explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement during feedback sessions. Apparently, these student teachers seem to be quite happy with their role as passive learners and the directive supervision style. However, 35% of the informants either did not know, or disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that they had a chance to explain the activities they apply in their teaching. A considerable number (23%) of the respondents were not sure about or disagreed with the fact that they had a chance to explore the alternatives of improvement for their micro-teaching.

In addition to the strategies being used for feedback, half of the informants when responding to statement 8 thought that apart from oral feedback, their tutor gave them written feedback, while the other half did not think so. The same number of respondents claimed to be keeping a journal whereas the other half did not know, disagreed, or strongly disagrees with it. Probably the tutors had different supervisory strategies, which might raise a question of equity in learning experience for the student teachers. This will need to be verified through discussions with their tutors.

Another notable feature from the responses to statement 9 is that a large majority of up to 97% of the informants wanted their tutor to be explicit in

the feedback, indicating whether they do things right or wrong. Given that they expected the tutor to indicate explicitly if their teaching was right or wrong, they would not want to independently assess their own teaching, and therefore, the room for reflection seemed to be limited. Unexpectedly, this preference seems in some ways to be contrasting with the responses to statement 12, where 90% of the informants claimed that they often reflected on their teaching. This figure discloses a positive attitude towards teaching practice from the student teachers. They appear to be committed and taking responsibility for their learning, looking back at what they have done to check if they have got things right or wrong. This anticipation can also be seen in question 11, where 82% of the student teachers expressed their preference towards seeing themselves teaching to be reflective. However, with the traditional learning habit of waiting to be told by the tutor, which is said to be rooted in a long history, it would not be easy to make the process of reflective learning effective if no more facilitation was offered.

As can be seen from the responses to statement 10, the majority of student teachers, making up 60% of the informants, felt more confident if they did their teaching without the tutor. 17% of the informants are not sure about, and 23% disagree, with this. On the one hand, this could suggest that confidence, one of the important qualities that make a good teacher, needs to be built up. On the other hand, it shows that the student teachers felt insecure with the presence of their tutor.

As to statement 14 with regard to tutor modelling, most of the student teachers (95%) want to see their tutor as an example. This could show the attitude of respect towards the tutor's knowledge. The student teachers seemed to look up to the tutor and wanted to see her as a role model. This could be a good suggestion for the research intervention design.

5.1.1.2. Questionnaire: Open-ended questions

Question 1

This question is intended to find out the student teachers' opinions about the importance of feedback in their learning to become a teacher. The responses from the questionnaires showed the students' views about the role of feedback in preparing them to become a teacher. The informants contributed a lot of ideas, which are set out in the following table, with the number of student teachers writing about the same idea ranking from the highest number downwards:

TABLE 7: STUDENT TEACHERS' VIEWS ABOUT THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK –
PRE-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

1. Please state your opinion about the role of feedback on microteaching in preparing the student teacher to teaching practice.	Results
Feedback is important	91
Feedback helps correct mistakes in student teachers' teaching so that they will not repeat them in the future and to gain more experience after being corrected.	46
Feedback improves teaching practice	38
Feedback makes students teachers aware of their strengths and weaknesses	27
Feedback helps student teachers gain confidence	9
Feedback improves teaching skills	9
Feedback helps student teachers know whether their teaching is right or wrong	5
Feedback gives solutions to student teachers' problems	5
Feedback helps student teachers understand what methods are the best	5
Feedback gives more teaching ideas and makes future lessons more interesting	4
Feedback is a chance where tutor gives advice and suggestions	3
Feedback is a chance where tutor instructs how to teach	2
Feedback lets student teachers know what an effective lesson is	2
Feedback is a chance for tutor to judge, evaluate, review student teachers performance	2
Feedback orients, navigates student teachers' teaching	2
Feedback helps absorb knowledge more quickly	2
Feedback encourages student teachers to improve	2
Feedback is a chance to share	1
Feedback sets learning goals for student teachers	1
Feedback is a chance for student teachers to listen to tutor's comments	1
Feedback helps because the student teachers cannot discover their weaknesses by him/herself	1
Feedback helps avoid mistakes in teaching like teaching posture, blackboard writing, lack of fluency in speaking, not conforming to the lesson plan	1

The first conspicuous feature that can be seen from the table is that all the student teachers were aware of the importance of feedback to him/herself, which is shown in 100% of the informants asserting the fact and giving reasons to clarify their thoughts.

Another comment that attracted a great deal of consensus among the student teachers is that feedback helped correct mistakes in micro-teaching practice so that student teachers would not repeat them in the future and would gain more experience after being corrected. This comment comes second, with 46 checks. This perception among the student teachers could point out that the student teachers were highly self- critical. At the same time, they took it for granted that the tutor was supposed to know everything and to be the one who provided the correct answers. This would go in agreement with some other ideas, which attains 5 responses each, indicating that feedback helped the student teachers be aware of whether their teaching was right or wrong; understand what methods were the best; or this was a chance when the tutor gave solutions to their problems. Other responses that would probably go in the same category are the beliefs that feedback session was the chance when the tutor instructed how to teach, navigated the student teachers' teaching and let them know what an effective lesson looked like. This was also a chance, according to these respondents, for the tutor to judge, evaluate, and review the student teachers' performance. Others perceived that feedback from tutors helped them absorb knowledge more quickly. They also think that they themselves could not discover their weaknesses without the feedback from their tutor. One respondent mentioned mistakes at a superficial level, such as teaching posture, blackboard writing, lack of fluency in speaking, not conforming to the lesson plan.

One more stream of ideas that also gains much agreement among the respondents is that feedback was viewed more as a chance for the student teachers to improve practice for themselves rather than to receive this knowledge and skills from the tutor (38 out of 91 student teachers). However, this mention appeared quite general. Other comments are about their beliefs

that feedback helped them be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, gain confidence, and improve teaching skills. They also mention the attainment of teaching ideas to make the future lessons more interesting. Some of them think that feedback was a chance when the tutor gave advice and suggestions to student teachers, and encouraged them to improve. This was also a chance for them to share and set learning goals.

Question 2

This question is an attempt to understand how a typical feedback session worked. The table below shows that the ideas are possibly quite focused compared with the variety in question 1, which is reasonable enough since the informants just described exactly a feedback session as it usually was.

TABLE 8: STUDENT TEACHERS' DESCRIPTIONS OF A FEEDBACK SESSION – PRE-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

2. Please describe how a feedback session often goes.	Results
Tutor tells, students listen and/or take notes	65
Tutor comments on strengths/weaknesses; good/bad; right/wrong	27
Tutor gives suggestions, advice, alternatives for the lesson	13
Tutor comments on weaknesses and mistakes	12
Comments from both tutor and peers	12
Tutor comments on lesson procedure	9
Tutor comments on lesson content	8
Tutor encourages students	4
Tutor gives general comments	4
Tutor judges student teachers' teaching	3
Tutor gives only oral comments	2
Tutor gives written comments	1
Tutor comments on blackboard writing	1
Tutor answers questions from student teachers	1

As can be seen from the table, a typical feedback session appeared to be teacher-centred with the tutors giving feedback and the student teachers' listening and/or taking notes. The proportion of this description ticks is notably very high with as many as 65 responses. The next most common idea, with 27 respondents, stated that tutors often commented on strengths and weaknesses, good and bad points, wrong and right behaviours or teaching techniques. Up to 13 respondents affirmed that the tutor often gave

suggestions, advice, and alternatives to improve the teaching. The same number of informants thought their tutor often commented on weaknesses or mistakes that they committed during the teaching. There would appear to be no room for reflection on the lesson plan discussed before and on the criteria given prior to the teaching because the tutor seemed to take the lead most of the time.

It is also unlikely that the tutor provided any opportunities to scaffold the learners or gave them a chance to construct knowledge by interacting with other student teachers. Apart from the above teacher-centred approach feedback, other descriptions include the tutor's comments on lesson procedure and content. Some mentioned that the tutor's comments were very general or the tutor often delivered judgements of the teaching. One informant described feedback as written comments, whereas two others indicated that the tutor often gave only oral feedback; answered the questions from the student teachers; commented on blackboard writing.

Question 3

This question is designed to provide an overview of the student teachers' expectations about effective feedback. The responses noted in the table below are varied and specific implying that the student teachers were thoughtful about their learning. The findings are as follows:

TABLE 9: STUDENT TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS A GOOD FEEDBACK SESSION – PRE-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

3. What do you wish your tutor to do in the feedback session? / What do you think could be done to improve the quality of feedback session?	Results
Give explicit feedback	45
Indicate wrong teaching/mistakes/ weaknesses and explain	25
Indicate strengths/weaknesses; good/bad; right/wrong; do/don't	24
Give advice/ suggestions for improvement	24
Model the part that was done wrong	18
Give written feedback	10
Share experience	5
Show real comment, not hide student teachers' weaknesses	5
Listen to/observe the lesson carefully	5
Discuss lesson plans prior teaching	5
Videotape the lesson and then comment on the video	5
Give more examples on the feedback	4

Spend more time on feedback	3
Give criteria	3
Be fair, unbiased	3
Warm and create good relationship with student teachers	3
Be tolerant with mistakes, create safe environment	3
Understand student teachers' characteristics and their problems in teaching, give weak student teachers more explanation and supervision	3
Help student teachers gain confidence	2
Give reasons for choosing the right methods	2
Encourage and compliment student teachers	2
Ask if student teachers understand the feedback	1
Support from peer without comments from tutor	1
Have eliciting techniques	1
Make feedback as a discussion	1
Cover all aspects of teaching	1
Shape the teaching as a frame to follow	1
Give modelling from different role models	1
Help student teachers to judge/ assess him/herself	1
Be experienced and knowledgeable	1

As indicated in the table, the most common comment affirmed by up to 45 informants is that the feedback needed to be explicit. Again, it discloses the fact that reflection was highly unlikely to take place and the students tended to receive knowledge from the tutor rather than construct knowledge by themselves. The student teachers most wished to understand every single bit of the feedback. There is no doubt about this when 25 of the informants expected the tutor to indicate their wrong teaching techniques, mistakes, or weak strategies and explain to them. 24 of the respondents wished their tutor to elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses; good and bad points; right and wrong activities; dos and don'ts during the feedback. The same number would appreciate the tutor's advice and suggestions for their improvement. Some also mentioned that tutors should not hide students' weaknesses or wished the tutor to explain the reasons why a certain method should be chosen. A student even thought that the tutor needed to ask if the students understood the feedback or believed that teaching was like a frame that the tutor needed to shape for them to follow. 18 of the respondents wish their tutor would model the teaching part that may be done wrong and one mentioned the modelling from different role models for them to see. Those numbers help us look into the rooted teaching and learning habit of 'telling and listening' and 'demonstrating and imitating'.

Other informants suggested some feedback strategies, such as, written feedback, sharing experience, discussing lesson plans prior to teaching, videotaping, giving assessment criteria, creating warm and good relationships with student teachers, being tolerant with mistakes, helping student teachers gain confidence, encouraging and complimenting the student teachers. Those comments would make us doubt that the tutor delivered these strategies during feedback sessions.

There is a group of ideas that would seem to be reasonable and quite positive about the student teachers' learning attitudes. They insisted on tutors spending more time on feedback, giving unbiased comments, delivering feedback as a discussion, helping student teachers evaluate themselves while being experienced and knowledgeable. One informant also suggested that they needed support from peers without the comments from tutor. These responses help us understand some of the students' perceptions towards their autonomy in their learning process and that they are willing and ready to break free from the traditional learning style.

Question 4

This question was aimed at attracting more ideas from the student teachers so that the data from this questionnaire would not miss any necessary information from the informants and would be as comprehensive as possible.

TABLE 10: STUDENT TEACHERS' FURTHER COMMENTS –PRE–INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

4. Any other comments or more explanation on any of the issues above would be very much appreciated:	Results
Time allotment for micro-teaching practice should be increased	10
Feedback is very important	7
A micro-teaching session needs to be conducted carefully	2
Complaint that tutors do not pay enough attention to feedback	2
Theory should be lessened	2
Expressing thanks to this research as it is important	2
Complaint that tutors give too general feedback	2
Feedback should be checked at the university level as it is important to student teachers	1
Feedback on the feedback should be good to evaluate the feedback quality	1
Suggestion of using videotaping	1
A 15 minute micro-teaching is too short	1

As can be seen from the table, quite a few students contributed their ideas although this is the extra question. The responses collected in this section indicate that the students were interested in and looked forward to the contribution of this research. As many as 7 informants emphasized that feedback was very important to them. Two of them even expressed their thanks to the researcher as they thought this research was an important contribution. Others stressed the importance of feedback by proposing that feedback should be checked at the university level or there needs to be feedback on the feedback to assess the feedback quality. This opinion could also imply that this informant looked forwards to the tutor being perfect, providing correct answers, and being a role model.

The most common comment held that the time allotment for micro-teaching sessions needed to be increased and two informants thought that theory content of the course should be lessened. There are also opinions that tutors did not pay enough attention to feedback or often gave too general feedback and that micro-teaching sessions needed to be conducted carefully. Again, this respondent implied his/her wish for detailed and explicit feedback from the tutor. One informant was concerned that a 15 minute micro-teaching session is too short. One informant insisted on applying videotaping technique as a strategy for micro-teaching and feedback.

5.1.2. Tutors' views

The findings are derived from three sets of data: pre-intervention questionnaires, a focus group discussion, and post-intervention emails.

5.1.2.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were allocated to four tutors. All the four tutors completed the questionnaires. The summary of the responses is as follows:

Closed questions:

TABLE 11: TUTORS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS– CLOSED QUESTIONS

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Feedback on micro teaching is important in the process of learning to teach.	Mai,Hoa, Nga,Minh	0	0	0	0
2. Before the microteaching session you discuss the lesson plan with your students.	Hoa	Mai, Nga	Minh	0	0
3. You provide your students with criteria before doing microteaching.	Mai, Hoa, Nga,Minh	0	0	0	0
4. In the feedback session you often tell your students what to do to improve their teaching.	Mai, Nga Minh	Hoa	0	0	0
5. During the feedback session your students spend most of the time listening to you and/or their peers.	0	Nga	Hoa	Mai,Minh	0
6. You often let your students have a chance to explain why they do certain activities during their micro teaching in the feedback session.	Mai, Hoa	Nga,Minh	0	0	0
7. During the feedback session you give the students a chance to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement.	Hoa	Mai, Nga, Minh	0	0	0
8. You give not only oral feedback, but also written feedback to your students.	Minh	Hoa	0	Mai, Nga	0
9. You tend to tell your students explicitly whether what they have done is right or wrong so that they will improve their teaching.	Minh	Mai, Hoa, Nga	0	0	0
10. You think the student feel more confident when they perform their teaching without you.	Minh	Mai	Nga	Hoa	0
11. You think videotaping your students' teaching is a good instrument for feedback session.	Mai	Hoa, Nga, Minh	0	0	0
12. After the micro teaching session, you think the students often look back at the teaching that they have done.	Minh	0	Mai, Hoa	Nga	0
13. You think your students keep journal/diary during microteaching process.	Minh	0	Mai, Hoa	Nga	0
14. You think teachers' modelling is good for student teachers to learn how to teach.	Minh	Mai, Nga	0	Hoa	0

As can be seen from the table, none of the tutors ticked the 'strongly disagree' column. If they expressed a negative opinion, they extended the

scale to the 'disagree' column at most. Like the student teachers in their pre-intervention questionnaires, the tutors also avoided strong outright disagreement. This was the evidence of the cultural point discussed in Hofstede's collectivism- individualism dimension, which encouraged everybody to harmonize themselves in the community to give security and peace to people. This cultural manner causes people to avoid disagreement or being seen to disagree because the disagreement could lead to arguments, which are supposed to break the harmony of the community. This appreciation of harmony might generate a problem that although people tended to avoid disagreement, there could still be questions and criticism in their mind that are not spoken. If the questions remained disguised in people's minds, how can further knowledge be constructed?

There are two points in the questionnaire that elicited a firm agreement from all tutors. One is that all the tutors strongly agreed that feedback was very important. Although how feedback was viewed and why it was important were elaborated in detail in the tutors' responses to the open-ended questions later; at this stage, the tutors' perceptions about the importance of feedback would appear to be a positive factor and a prior condition for any feedback to be effective. The other point was that all the tutors clearly thought that it was important that they provided criteria before student teachers did their micro-teaching. It is worth noting, however, that these responses could be a result of the seminar I delivered the year before I went to the UK for the staff of the ELT Methodology Division. In this seminar, I shared with my colleagues the classroom observation criteria that I adapted from Ur, 1999, which my colleagues applied or adapted for use in their classes. In fact, using criteria for assessing micro-teaching was not imposed by the university or the school level. Seemingly, although it was not the requirement for the tutors to use micro-teaching criteria, they were probably aware of the necessity of using them in micro-teaching feedback. Additionally, there was space for the tutors to choose the criteria they wanted for their classrooms. The responses from the tutors about the micro-teaching criteria

also matched with the findings from the pre-intervention questionnaires from the student teachers. On the one hand, this can be seen as a positive factor about the relative autonomy of the tutors if they wished to make changes. On the other hand, the lack of a commonly agreed set of micro-teaching criteria as guidance for both student teachers and tutors, as well as teachers' standards, raises questions about the equity of the experience and assessment for all trainees.

One important feature worthy of comment is that all the tutors seemed to perceive their role as someone who could direct the student teachers' learning. In question 4, they all either agreed or strongly agreed with the point that they often told student teachers what to do to improve their teaching. Question 9 aims at double checking this view of the tutors by asking if the tutor tended to give the student teacher explicit feedback on the correct and incorrect aspects of their micro-teaching. The answers were consistent with the answers to question 4, which points towards the idea that the tutor saw their role as a controller over the student teachers and their learning process.

Despite the fact that the tutors appeared to direct their students' learning, all the tutors indicated that they often gave their student teachers opportunities to explain their teaching or to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement as all the tutors either agreed or strongly agreed with statements 6 and 7. These responses went in accordance with the ones from student teachers' pre-intervention questionnaires. Interestingly enough, the tutors, while acknowledging their dominant role, did not feel that they deprived the student teachers opportunities to learn. Similarly, the student teachers did not feel they were oppressed by their tutors. This raises the question as to whether the tutors should continue to shape the student teachers in the way they want when they do not see any problems with it, or whether the student teachers should change their seemingly passive role as knowledge receivers to a more independent role when they feel content with the current training method.

The points described above, according to the table, clearly reach quite a common agreement. However, the responses to the rest of the questions (2; 5; 8; 10; 12; 13; 14) seem to spread across a wider scale. For example, question 2, which investigated if the tutors discussed lesson plans with their student teachers before the student teachers did their micro-teaching, received the answers from 'strongly agree', 'agree', to 'don't know'. Hoa strongly agreed that she discussed lesson plans with her student teachers, whereas Minh, the youngest tutor, did not know if she did that and she attached a question 'What might be the content of the discussion?' as a clarifying question. Minh's view appeared to be that a tutor did not need to work with her student teachers from the very first step of making a lesson plan; she seemed to assume that the tutor's job was involved at the final product of the lesson.

Question 5, which aims at finding out if the student teachers just listened passively or there was discussion during the feedback session, received the answers ranged from 'agree', 'don't know', to 'disagree'. Nga agreed with the fact that her student teachers spent most of their time listening to the tutor and/or their peers, while Mai and Minh expressed their disagreement. Hoa was not sure if her student teachers just listened or there was discussion during the feedback session. These responses might imply that Mai and Minh often carried out group work for discussion, but Nga did not. Hoa might have her own way of delivering feedback or she might not have enough time for feedback as the session was used for all the presentations. Thus, she might have written feedback sent to her student teachers due to the time constraint.

Question 8 scrutinises whether or not the tutors gave both oral and written feedback to their student teachers. Hoa's response could lend support to the above assumption that she often did not have time for oral feedback in class, and, consequently, gave her students written feedback. Minh strongly agreed

that both oral and written feedback was carried out. However, Mai and Nga disagreed with this. It was possibly that they only provided oral feedback to their students.

When asked about how the tutors assess their student teachers' confidence, they had very different views, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' as can be seen from question 10. It would appear that the tutors did not have a common sense of their students' confidence. Nga did not know if her students felt more confident when teaching without her. It should be noted that 60% of the student teachers thought that they would feel more confident when teaching without their tutors. Similarly, wide ranged views can also be seen in questions 12, 13, and 14. Specifically, Nga and Minh, seemed to be emphatic about their answers, but their answers were opposite. Minh strongly agreed that her students reflected on the teaching experience and wrote journals, whereas Nga disagreed. Both Mai and Hoa, the more senior tutors, did not know if their student teachers reflected on the lessons. This leads to the assumption that these tutors did not intentionally care about creating the opportunities for the student teachers' reflection. They were also not sure if their students kept journal writing during the course. Furthermore, Hoa did not think that the tutor modelling activity could be effective for learning teaching. This view contrasted with the 95% of the student teachers who said it would be effective. These findings therefore raise questions about the effectiveness of the communication between the tutors and the student teachers. They also clarify the fact that there was no common method of working across the tutor team with regard to the micro-teaching.

Open-ended questions:

The first open-ended question is intended to determine the tutors' views on the role of feedback and the reason why they think feedback is important. The summary of the responses are as follows:

TABLE 12: TUTORS' VIEWS ABOUT THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK

1. In your opinion, what is the role of feedback on microteaching in preparing the student teacher to teaching practice? Can you explain your reasons for this?	Tutors
For student teachers to know what is good or bad about their teaching, their strengths and weaknesses	Mai, Hoa, Nga
For the student teachers to know factors contributing to their success and failure	Mai
To help student teachers know what they need to do to improve their teaching	Mai, Hoa, Minh
To change their teaching behaviour and perspectives	Nga

In the closed question about the importance of feedback, all the tutors strongly agreed that micro-teaching feedback was important in student teachers' learning process. However, all the reasons given were related to the tutor's role in making judgements about the students' progress and behaviour.

> With feedback given, students know what they have done is good or bad' (Mai) *or* 'it helps student teachers recognize their strengths and weaknesses to adjust themselves and improve their later teaching quality (Hoa).

None of the tutors regarded micro-teaching feedback as offering an opportunity or a space for student teachers to explore new ideas or to think about their new experience from their own perspectives, or arrive at their own judgement and evaluation. In fact, the student questionnaires revealed that this accorded with what most of the student teachers explicit judgements about good or bad, right or wrong, with the tutor as absolute authority. This raises the question of how much autonomy the student teachers actually had for their own discovery learning.

The second question investigated how tutors delivered feedback on their student teachers' micro-teaching. The responses suggest that the tutors encouraged group work discussion or/and peer feedback. For example, Mai, the most senior tutor, asked her student teachers

> Firstly, the observers (classmates) are asked to work in groups to discuss the good points, bad points, then think about the improvements if they have to

teach the same lesson. Secondly, whole class discussion is conducted with the teacher's facilitation. Lastly, final comments are made by the teacher.

However, Hoa, the second senior tutor, did not mention group work or peer feedback in her response. What she described the session was:

> I often offer feedback based on the following criteria: lesson plan, lesson content, students' involvement, and teacher's use of English.

Nga carried out the session in another way. She wrote

> I give general criteria for giving feedback, take notes during microteaching and ask other student teachers to observe, take notes and be ready to give peer feedback and listen to teacher's feedback. Also, I give marks for microteaching performance if asked.

Minh described her session as follows

> First, I give groups of students time to think about their peers' performance and give written comments (either positive or negative). I always remember to take my own notes. After that, each group hands in the comments so that I can select helpful comments and read them aloud to the whole class. I myself shared my own comments if they are different from groups.

From Mai's account of her sessions, it could be claimed that she organized group work discussion. Mai's responses provided from the closed questions (5and6) also suggested that her students were not just passively listening during the session and that Mai gave oral but not written feedback. However, it is evident from the comments that Mai was the person who directed every step of the discussion and made the final decisions. Conversely, Hoa did not seem to conduct group work discussion. The feedback seemed to be uni-directional and was based on some criteria she provided for student teachers. It was evident from closed question 5 that she did not know if her students listened to her all the time or not. Nga apparently appreciated students' peer feedback, but she did not organize group work to discuss the feedback. So, it seems reasonable to assume that what Nga meant by peer feedback was actually whole class feedback, in which all of the class comment on the work of the class member who is presenting. Minh claimed that she asked her students to work in groups, but to 'think about their peers' performance and

give written comments', so to write in groups rather than to discuss the points together. Her description suggests that Minh's definition of group work as a group included individuals writing alongside one another without necessarily sharing what they were working.

The third question looks at the role of the tutor in making the process of giving feedback effective. The ideas were various as summarised in the following table:

TABLE 13: TUTORS' VIEWS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE TUTOR

3. What do you think a tutor should do to make feedback effective?	Tutors
Give students the chance to think critically about their teaching	Mai
Let students themselves recognize their strengths and weaknesses and think about the changes they could make for the same lesson	Mai
Focus on specific criteria	Mai, Hoa, Nga
Indicate strengths and weaknesses to student teachers	Hoa
Encourage peer feedback before giving tutors' own feedback	Nga, Minh
Give feedback immediately after the micro-teaching	Minh
Make comments written and anonymous	Minh
Feedback should be followed by suggestions for improvement	Minh

The table indicates that the most preferred suggestions for making feedback effective were to focus on specific criteria, which relates to the issue of training already discussed. The second preferred suggestion was to encourage peer feedback before giving the tutor's own feedback. This suggestion was made by Nga and Minh. However, as seen before, Nga apparently understood the term 'peer feedback' as uni-directional feedback from classmates to the presenter as a whole class, and Minh asked her students to do peer feedback in written form without discussion. Both Nga and Minh thought the tutor should make the final comments and have the final words. In addition to those common suggestions, there were a few more ideas from other tutors. For instance, Mai seemed to be well aware of the importance of giving students a space to 'give students a chance to have critical thinking about microteaching sessions', whereas Hoa was keen on explicit feedback as

evident in her previous responses that 'Tutors need to indicate strong points and weak points that student teachers have to overcome'. The above information matched the tutors' responses in the closed questions 5 and 9, in which the tutors often told their students what to do and offered explicit feedback to improve their teaching. Minh agreed with the idea of using written feedback and suggested it needed to be anonymous. Again, this view might be linked to the cultural factor that encouraged people to harmonise themselves to avoid arguments and keep security and peace for the community.

Question 4 is intended to determine what the tutors thought the role of student teachers should be to make their learning effective. The tutors' ideas are set out in the following table.

TABLE 14: TUTORS' VIEWS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT TEACHER

4. What do you think the student teacher should do during the feedback session?	Tutors
Reflect upon and self-evaluate their teaching	Mai, Nga
Have an open talk with the tutor to give further explanation or clarify things	Mai, Hoa
Present their lesson aims clearly	Hoa
Listen to the feedback from the tutor and take notes	Hoa, Nga
Listen to peer feedback and take notes	Nga, Minh
Let feedback giver finish their job before explaining the teaching points	Nga
Think of the solution themselves to improve their own performance	Minh
Keep written journals	Minh

These responses again demonstrate that the tutors regard the student teacher as needing to adopt a passive role, which included listening to peer feedback and taking notes (Nga, Minh); listening to tutor's feedback and taking notes (Hoa, Nga). Tutors Mai and Hoa mentioned a seemingly more active role when they thought student teachers should 'have an open talk with the tutor to give further explanation of his/ her teaching' (Mai) or 'ask the tutor to clarify details during her feedback'(Hoa). However, the fact that the issue of having an open talk with tutors needed to be raised at all, suggests that the student teachers currently did not have that open atmosphere or that they were not confident enough to talk to tutors openly.

The tutors who suggested the most active role for students were Mai and Nga. However, this 'active' role consisted of reflection and self- evaluation, which might be considered relatively quiet and perhaps passive. It could also be said that the other suggestions demonstrated the same thing. These are all the verbs scanned from the suggestions: 'reflect', 'self-evaluate', 'talk', 'explain', 'listen' (x2), 'present', 'think', 'clarify', 'keep'. Most of the verbs showed one-way communication, there was only one verb 'clarify' that seemed to express two-way communication. The verbs like 'discuss', 'cooperate', 'explore' or 'negotiate' that show a more active role and involvement were not evident. This again lent more support to the assumption about the perceived hierarchical relationship between the tutor and the student teachers and their roles that was mentioned previously in the findings from the closed questions.

Question 5 was to investigate the tutors' views about factors that might hinder feedback delivery. The responses centred on the following: unclear criteria (Mai), class size (Mai), time limitation (Mai, Hoa), tutor's personality, which means the tutor does not want to make student teachers lose face if their teaching is bad (Mai), cultural acts of saving face and loosing face (Nga), uninterested student teachers (Minh).

Question 6 is to have further understanding of the tutors' view on feedback by looking at their suggestions for feedback improvement. Their ideas included in the following table.

TABLE 15: TUTORS' SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OF FEEDBACK

6. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of giving and receiving feedback on microteaching for the future? Please specify.	Tutors
Tutor should offer specific and precise comments.	Hoa
To overcome the problem of time constraint, instead of giving feedback to an individual, the tutor should group student teachers that share the same weaknesses and show them the ways to improve those weaknesses.	Hoa
Student teachers should individually come and talk to the tutor in person after class to receive more feedback and ways to improve themselves.	Hoa
Peer feedback should be encouraged, but should be anonymous.	Nga
The tutor needs to be an experienced teacher or an educational expert.	Minh

These responses could reveal that the tutors thought feedback and advice should come mostly from the tutors. Hoa offered an overt comment that it was the tutor who needed to give 'specific and precise comments' and 'to show them (student teachers) the ways to improve the weaknesses'. And again, this confirmed the assumption discussed before about the explicit feedback offered by the tutors. Hoa's second suggestion that 'Student teachers should individually come and talk to the tutor in person after class to receive more feedback and ways to improve themselves ' further portrayed the role of the tutor as a knowledge giver and the role of the student teacher as knowledge receiver. Additionally, it could imply the hierarchy between them. The responses of the tutors also pointed out another cultural feature that affected the way the tutors should give feedback. For example, Nga claimed that 'Peer feedback should be encouraged but should be kept anonymous.' This idea was also supported by Minh in her earlier responses. Thus, Nga and Minh might perceive peer feedback, like in the earlier discussion, as an activity without speaking and involving writing from many different classmates. Minh's suggestion seemed to disclose the act of worshipping teachers and teachers' knowledge that originated from Vietnamese tradition. She insisted that the tutor should be someone who had a solid theoretical background to the issue involved 'so that they can give thoughtful and meaningful comments'. Therefore, she recommended that 'there should be an experienced teacher or even an educational expert beside the student teacher.'

5.1.2.2. Staff meeting discussion

As discussed in the Methodology session, I began my field work by organizing a staff meeting to present the outline of my research to my colleagues before implementing the intervention. In this meeting, I aimed to achieve the following purposes: a) To seek the tutors' support for the intervention to take

place; b) To share with and learn from my colleagues ideas related to the research.

The meeting took place at the time when the Faculty was hectic with paperwork and the MOET 2020 project. At that time, the four tutors were temporarily absent for workshops and were then going to Australia for a short course resulting in a lack of faculty members. Therefore, the tutors had to cover each other's work. After many attempts, the meeting finally was arranged.

The tutors were even more supportive of my research than I had expected. In the first place, they understood that it was not easy for a female colleague with all Vietnamese cultural ties to leave her family to study abroad. But more importantly, they all welcomed innovations that are believed to be in line with what the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam is encouraging universities in Vietnam to do. They were also aware of the significance of the research, which is closely related to their work. One of the outcomes of the meeting was that I was provided with a specialised room designated for micro-teaching and a camera for videotaping activities.

My initial feeling at the meeting was that there seemed some tension probably because the tutors were aware of the fact that the discussion was being recorded. It might also be caused by the hierarchical atmosphere that could be seen in important meetings. Therefore, the meeting was not like a discussion, but turned into an interview.

It was evident at the meeting that the tutors tended to speak according to seniority and status. I did not realize it until later when I analysed the whole process of the meeting. As I was a presenter, I spoke first. It should be noted that I was also the most senior person in the meeting and used to be the Head of the Division. After I spent approximately 10 minutes talking about the outlines of my research, the tutor who spoke next was the Head of Division,

Mai. She was also the second senior at the meeting. The third speaker was Hoa who was the third senior. The other two tutors seemed to agree with these two tutors as they attentively listened and nodded their heads at times and did not put forward any of their own ideas.

Thus, a hierarchical relationship was again documented, not only between the tutors and the student teachers, but also among the tutors themselves. Actually, when the tutors considered seniority and status in a meeting, it was an act of respecting senior and higher status people that could be viewed as common practice in Vietnam. This same respect was evident in the relationship between the tutors and the student teachers because of the status ranking. Because of this ranking, there was a bit of confusion about the terms used during the meeting; it was evident that Hoa was a bit struggling when trying to understand the term 'student teacher' at one time. She was more familiar with addressing the student teachers as 'students', or 'trainees'. The introduction of the word 'teacher', which signifies a higher status, seemed to discomfort her.

What the tutors shared with me centred on the difficulties they often encountered when doing micro-teaching. However, via the difficulties presented, some themes related to the previous assumptions also emerged.

The biggest problems when offering feedback as evident from the meeting was time constraint. Mai maintained:

> The time is too limited for the tutor to give detailed feedback or to cover all the criteria needed in a lesson taught by teacher trainees. That is the biggest limitation.

This time issue was also enhanced further by Hoa in her response:

> The time is too limited for students to practise their teaching and to cover all those requirements for a whole lesson they need to conform to.

From these responses, it was evident again that the feedback that these tutors offered was explicitly 'detailed' 'to cover all the criteria needed in a

lesson' and therefore, was time consuming. Given Mai found it difficult to manage her time for her 'detailed' feedback that needed to cover all the criteria needed, the group work and the space she provided for student teachers to discuss their lesson could be only scant effort. As she said 'For one microteaching session, the whole class with around 30 students divided into 6-7 group presentations', so these 6-7 micro-teaching presentations plus 6-7 group discussions for these presentations had to fit 2 hours. This time issue could be the reason why Hoa suggested her student teachers should come to her in person individually after the session to receive more feedback, and why she used written feedback as indicated in her response to closed question 8.

Hoa's response again suggested that she viewed the student teacher role as passive. This was someone who needed to 'conform' to all the requirements provided by the tutors. Since, according to this view, the student teacher had to follow and obey, and the tutors as indicated the questionnaires often told them what to do to improve their performance, the opportunities for the student teachers to have chances to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement were limited. Similarly, their space for their own reflective observation and active experiment was reduced.

The second problem the tutors considered important was how to include student teachers' comments in the feedback session. Mai shared her desire to do it but she had not been able to.

> Secondly, apart from the feedback from the teacher, I myself want to include in the session the comments and feedback from other students in the class. However, I'm still thinking about how to resolve it.

Mai was concerned about how to carry out student group discussion in class effectively. She appreciated group work discussion and expressed her awareness about the importance of a having a chance for student teachers to think critically about their teaching as reported in her questionnaire response. However, this seemed still to remain her desire, which had not come true yet

when she said 'I'm still thinking about how to resolve it'. This information from Mai also confirmed the assumption discussed previously that the feedback actually came mostly from the tutor. And the student teachers actually were not provided a space for their own discoveries.

The third problem that the tutors pointed out in the discussion was related to cultural features that hindered the feedback. Hoa expressed her concern that she found it hard to deal with when offering feedback. She said:

> I don't know about other countries, but this is a cultural thing in Vietnam. Sometimes, giving a negative feedback would make them feel hurt. So what should the feedback be like so that it would be constructive and would not make students feel hurt?

The students here are characterised as vulnerable and this leads the tutors to avoid risking hurting their feelings. This raises questions about what some might refer to as infantilisation of the students and where challenge and critique should feature in their education.

Another point that emerged from the discussion was related to teacher's autonomy. The tutors stated that they have freedom in deciding the assessment forms. Mai said that

> The school doesn't impose any kind of assessment. The way we assess students is via micro-teaching throughout the course and in the final assessment. … We do have that autonomy in deciding whether the students have to take a test or do an assignment.

This seemed to be a positive factor if one wished to make a change. There was a space for the tutors to try their new teaching ideas if they did not have to be confined in a conventional method.

5.1.2.3. Follow-up emails

After implementing the intervention, some interesting questions occurred to me which I had not had the opportunities to discuss before. Therefore, I

decided to email the tutors to investigate more about their views on these themes. These were my questions:

-   What do you think about the learner autonomy of the student teachers when participating in Teaching Language Components and Language Skills course? Do you think the ELT Division needs to take actions to promote autonomy in learning teaching? Is it in line with the Faculty's policy for other courses as well?

-   What do you think about group work and collaborative learning among the student teachers in the process of learning teaching? Do you think Vietnamese students can collaborate effectively?

-   Do you think Vietnamese students are confident when giving feedback to their peers? In return, do they appreciate their peers' feedback and believe that they can learn from peers?

The responses to the first question about learner autonomy of the student teachers seemed to be split into two main opinions: the first opinion from Mai could be deemed as a positive view about the student teachers' autonomous learning. The second opinion was shared by the rest of the tutors who thought that the student teachers' autonomy in learning proved to be lower than expected.

Mai wrote in her email that the student teachers' autonomy in learning was demonstrated through their

> completing tasks assigned by the tutor before and after class, active participation in class discussions, asking questions about the lessons, proposing class activities to the tutor, searching out sources of materials, creatively applying knowledge gained in class in micro teaching.

The above student teachers' activities are actually what the tutors often expect the students to. However, whether or not the student teachers were able to do it was controversial. At Vietnamese schools and even at universities, model demonstration lessons are organized. These lessons often aim to achieve ideal learning and teaching practices, in which the teachers show that they are able to apply new teaching method using group work,

communicative activities, and modern technology to teach. The teachers of these lessons need to get their students involved in the lessons so that they become active and participatory learners. If the lessons show less than those standards, they will be marked down by the Board of Pedagogues. What Mai wrote demonstrated that she could do what was expected of her by the system. However, if we refer to the problem of time limitation that Mai raised at the meeting, we could assume that Mai was able to promote learner autonomy in her class, but it was limited. There could also be another assumption that Mai had to show that her lessons were to the pedagogical standards since she was the Head of the Methodology Division.

At the same time, the rest of the tutors expressed their concern about their students' ability to work independently. Hoa asserted that 'the students were not active and independent enough'. To make it clearer, she also indicated the reasons for this:

> The textbook is not written in a way that provides a space for students to explore things nor does it have clear guidelines for students to exploit its content.

This idea supports the assumption that both the tutors and the student teachers tended to depend on textbooks as the source of knowledge. This concern about the student teachers' independent learning ability was expressed even more strongly by Nga and Minh. Nga added that

> The students could set the learning goals or plan their study only under the teacher's authority when the teacher guides them, and at the same time forces them and checks on them regularly for the whole learning process.

Minh also disclosed the fact that

> the newly launched credit-based curriculum requires that the student teachers spend a great amount time on independent study. The class time should basically be spent on solving problems and the tutor's giving guidance. However, a majority of students seem to be struggling in this new system since they have just transferred from the passive learning habit acquired at high school. Even now they have gone through several academic

terms they do not seem to be able to adapt themselves to the new learning style at university.

The 'passive learning habit acquired at high school' that Minh mentioned still exists in many schools and universities in Vietnam. What Minh referred to was the students' habit of passive learning, in which the students needed to be told by the teacher what to do. The students often listened to the teacher attentively and took notes. They could speak only when the teacher asked questions. They were supposed to be quiet in class and followed all the instructions from the teacher. In other words, they took a role of knowledge receivers. And the knowledge transmitter was supposed to be the teacher, who was the fount of all knowledge. Given the student teachers were already used to that learning habit, the move to autonomous learning would definitely be a challenge for them.

However, even though the tutors seemed to hold different views towards learner autonomy of their students, they reached a general consensus that it is very necessary to promote independent learning skills so that the student teachers will become autonomous learners. Mai, the Head of the Division, maintained that

> Promoting the students' autonomous learning in general and in the methodology course of learning teaching in particular is necessary because the class time allotment of the current credit-based curriculum is quite limited, which requires the students to be proactive and spend more time on self-study.

Regarding group work and collaboration, Mai was consistent in her view. She reported that she often asked her student teachers to work in pairs and groups to do presentations and peer feedback. She seemed to be very positive about the quality of the students' assignments and claimed that their group work and collaboration was effective.

Mai's view was apparently shared by the other three tutors, but the tutors held slightly different views, with regards to the students' autonomous

learning. Hoa, on the one hand, asserted that 'Vietnamese students can surely work and collaborate in groups effectively', on the other hand, she added

> However, the role of the tutor is very important. That means the tutor needs to assign suitable tasks with clear guidelines. She also needs to set out responsibilities among the group members.

Nga also shared the same opinion as she wrote

> Vietnamese students can collaborate well if the teacher supervises them closely, regularly checks on their work'. However, she added, 'this is very difficult for us in terms of human resource and finance.

It could be inferred from the above three tutors' responses that Vietnamese students were able to cooperate well in groups only when the teacher supervised them. However, this model of learning and teaching could fit in Hattie's visible learning and visible teaching, in which not only the students have to be active in their learning, but also the teacher has to make her/his teaching visible. This could also work with 'teacher-guided/learner-decided approach' (Sinclair, 2000 cited in Le, 2013).

The reasons why they were not that independent were set out by Minh as follows:

> The biggest problem when students work in groups is that the group members often tend to rely too much on the group leader. Therefore, it is important that there is a good leader, and this group leader needs to be capable of leading the other members so that every member will contribute. At first it can be obligatory, and then hopefully, it will gradually become autonomous.

This comment supports Nga's idea about the 'supervised autonomy'. It also suggests that the student teachers tended to depend on others, such as, on the stronger or higher status people.

The responses concerning the student teachers' confidence could be divided into two different views. The first view held by Mai was that Vietnamese students felt confident when giving feedback to their peers and they also

trusted their peer feedback and thought they could learn from their peers. Thus, Mai's answer to the question was 'yes, if they are provided with clear criteria'. The rest of the tutors held the opposite view. Hoa disclosed in her email:

> Actually, Vietnamese student teachers are not confident when giving feedback to their peers and the one who receives the feedback does not appreciate constructive feedback from his/her classmates. Probably, our students have not changed the perception that only the teacher can offer the right feedback

This opinion was echoed by Nga when she scrutinised the reasons for this lack of confidence and intolerance with classmates' feedback:

> Vietnamese students are weak at practical skills as they do not have opportunities to get practical experiences so they do not feel confident to give feedback on their classmates' teaching skills and do not trust their peers as well. The students that receive feedback do not often appreciate their peers' feedback unless the feedback giver is someone with high reputation in study. Above all, the student teachers often prefer their tutors' feedback.

These comments imply the feeling of being inferior towards the 'Vietnamese' identity, which contributes to lowering their own agency.

Minh again commented consistently with her previous note about anonymous feedback:

> … They (the Vietnamese student teachers) will feel confident if the feedback is anonymous…

So by this view the students would become autonomous in learning, collaborate well in groups, and feel confident in learning given the right circumstances. These right circumstances involved the supervision of the teacher or group leader to check this 'independent learning'. This creates something of a paradox, which deserves closer analysis.

5.2. Intervention

In this section I describe the findings from the research intervention that was implemented at a central university of Vietnam. The data are organised according to two sources: the findings from the student teacher cohort, and the researcher's observations.

5.2.1. Student teachers' views

5.2.1.1. Questionnaires

The post-intervention questionnaire was administered in the final session of the course on 5th December, 2012. There were 30 participants, but one participant was absent on the day of questionnaire delivery. The class monitor reported that this student teacher was absent due to some personal problem. Therefore, only 29 questionnaires were distributed and 29 were completed.

Closed questions

TABLE 16: OVERALL VIEWS OF NEW FEEDBACK METHODS — POST-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

Question	a	b	c	d	e	g
In what ways, if any, did you find the new feedback methods helpful? (You can choose more than one option)	Improve teaching skills	Improve self-reflection skills	Improve team work skills	Improve communication skills	Self-study ability	Other
(100%)	(62%)	(69%)	(59%)	(40%)	(48%)	(0%)

The table above summarised responses to question 3, which investigated the overall thoughts of the participants about whether or not the new feedback method adopted during the module was helpful and in what way it was helpful. All the participants ticked on the question, thus, indicating that 100% of the participants found it helpful. The most three helpful aspects that gained about the same ticks coming from most to less respectively were that the new

feedback method helped the student teachers improve self- reflection skills, teaching skills, and team work skills.

TABLE 17: ATTITUDINAL VARIABLES—POST–INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

Questions	a	b	C	d
1. What is your attitude towards changes?	Like to try out new things (65%)	Feel anxious about new things (14%)	Do not want to change (7%)	Other (14%)
2. Why did you take this module? (You can choose more than one option)	To become a good teacher (90%)	This module is compulsory (27%)	Other (10%)	
4. Do you feel comfortable with using technology in downloading video clips from the internet and videotaping your group's teaching?	Comfortable (69%)	Not comfortable (14%)	Other (17%)	
5. In general, do you feel comfortable with working with peers in general?	Comfortable (65%)	Not comfortable (7%)	Other (28%)	

The four questions 1; 2; 4; 5 as reflected in the above table were intended to look at the attitudinal variables that could influence the effectiveness of feedback. It could be said that most of the participants were open to changes. Only 14% felt anxious about new things and 7% did not want to change. This finding suggests a positive feature that most of the student teachers seemed to be ready for discovery learning.

In terms of motivation, as many as 90% of the participants in response to question 2, which allowed participants to take more than one choice, took this module because they wanted to become good teachers and 27% felt that they took this module because it was compulsory. 10% of the participants ticked on 'other' citing nice reasons, such as, 'I would like to become a well-trained teacher'; 'this module helps me not only in teaching, but also in communication skills'; or 'it helps student teachers become good teachers'. This suggests that the intrinsic motivation of the cohort is particularly high. This seems to contradict Hoa's view of the student teachers' motivation noted

above. In contrast to Hoa's opinion, most of the group appeared to be keen to become teachers.

In terms of the comfort when working with technology and with peers, it could be noted that a large number of participants felt quite comfortable with the technology used in the module and the way of working with peers (69% and 65% respectively). Only 14% of the participants did not feel comfortable with the technology and 7% did not feel comfortable with working with peers.

TABLE 18: FACTORS THAT MAY HINDER LEARNING – POST-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

Questions	a	b	c
6. Do you think you can learn from your self-reflection on the teaching experience even without the tutor's feedback?	I can (38%)	I can't (34%)	Other (28%)
7. Do you think you can learn from your peers through their feedback even without that from the tutor?	I can (66%)	I can't (20%)	Other (14%)
8. Do you think that when giving feedback it is necessary for the tutor to	Be a good organizer and facilitator (90%)	Explicitly explain (3%)	Other (7%)
9. Do you feel confident when giving feedback to your classmates in front of the whole class?	Confident (73%)	Not confident (17%)	Other (10%)
10. Do you feel more confident when you work in a small group?	More confident (83)	No more confident (7%)	Other (10%)
11. Did your classmates make you feel bad, criticizing you when giving you feedback?	Yes (24%)	No (62%)	Other (14%)
12. Did you give frank feedback to your peers without worrying of making them lose face?	Yes (59%)	No (34%)	Other (17%)
13. At the beginning of the module did you feel that you couldn't learn and couldn't do the teaching practice without the tutor's lecturing about the theory of teaching?	I had that feeling (83%)	I didn't have that feeling (14%)	Other (3%)
14. Have you changed that feeling throughout the module?	Yes (93%)	No (7%)	
15. You have been asked to work in groups and cross-groups all the time to do the assignments. Have you ever done the tasks individually because of some reason?	Yes (59%)	No (41%)	

These next 10 questions as summarised in the above table investigated the factors that might affect the effectiveness of the feedback. The responses to questions 6 and 7 are interesting. Two thirds of the participants thought that they could learn from their peers without tutors' feedback which left one third of the students who either actually considered that they could not learn from peers in this way (20%), or were unsure about the possibility (14%). On the whole, therefore, the student teachers were willing to trust the judgment of their peers, although some still needed to be convinced. On the one hand, only 38% felt confident enough to learn from self-reflection and about the same number (34%) thought they couldn't learn properly in this way. These responses suggest that fundamentally the students lacked confidence in their own judgment and reflection; but that they were well disposed towards hearing the views of their classmates. A small number of participants ticked on 'other' and noted interesting comments and explanations. Those explanations suggested that they still shared a total belief in the teachers' knowledge. For example, comments included 'because the teacher (tutor) has lots of experience and so she can give me correction of what we should and shouldn't do' or 'sometimes I feel confused of what is right and what is wrong without the tutor's feedback'. Some participants expressed their mistrust of their peers with such comments as 'they can help me realize my mistakes, but they can't help me fix them' or 'I don't believe them so much'. Hence, although a positive attitude toward learner autonomy was evident, some of the learners tended to seek support from outside for their learning.

The next four questions 9-12 investigated how confident the participants were after the intervention. A majority of the participants (73%) felt confident when giving feedback in front of the whole class, and this number increased to 83% when they gave feedback in a small group. Only 17% did not feel confident when they spoke in front of the whole class and a smaller number (7%) had the same feeling in a small group. The other participants included such comments as 'I'm afraid of making my friends sad when I give straightforward feedback', meaning that she is confident, but just avoided the

risk of hurting her classmates. Another student commented that 'sometimes I don't want to give my partners ideas because some of them just ignore these ideas', which suggests that she felt more vulnerable to their criticism.

When asked about the role of the tutor in question 8, up to 90% of the respondents thought the tutor needed to be a good facilitator so that everyone had a chance to discuss ideas with peers and there was no need to give explicit feedback in this post-intervention survey, in contrast to the pre-intervention findings. Only one student needed explicit feedback from the tutor. This student teacher mentioned that the tutor needed to be frank to the ones that do not work hard. This finding lent support to the assumption that the student teachers, who wanted more space for their discoveries and more challenges over their learning in this module, tended to be more independent after the intervention.

When asked if the participants ever had their self-esteem affected by the feedback from peers, 62% of them indicated that they did not have that feeling, while 24%, admitted that they did feel bad, and 14% explained in a way that showed that they felt bad, but they would not complain, thinking that 'their comments help me improve'; or 'I guess it's due to some misunderstanding'; or 'I don't think it's a bad thing, they just want to make me become better.'

The 62% percentage of the participants whose self-esteem was not affected by frank negative feedback was about the same number of participants who said they often gave frank feedback without worrying about making their peers lose face (59%). Quite a few participants (34%) said they did not dare to give frank feedback. The other participants (17%) revealed some important reasons why they did not give frank feedback, e.g. 'Sometimes I was worried that I would make them lose face'; or 'I considered my peers' attitude'; or 'I can do that in writing, not speaking'. This finding from the student teachers as well as the finding of the same topic from the tutors reflects the cultural

values of face saving and the appreciation of harmony in the community that has been discussed before in the literature review.

One important feature worthy of comment emerging from the responses to questions 13-15 was that the new feedback method could be claimed as a positive impact on the participants' learning process. As many as 83% of the informants admitted that at the beginning of this module, they felt overwhelmed at the new way of working that focused mainly on practical experience without the tutor's telling what to do directly. One explained further by sharing his/her thought: '... at the beginning, this module is quite new, also it is a new method for us. At first teacher plays a role of a controller, then a facilitator. And now we can do it on our own under the teacher's guidance'. Another commented: 'before learning this module, I acquired teaching skills from my old teachers and from the time I taught my sister and brother. But with tutor's lecturing I would learn more new things and teaching experience'. This belief in the tutor's theoretical knowledge and the perception about how 'teaching experience' is gained via tutor's lecturing needs to be further analysed. However, more importantly, the students' thoughts were changing throughout the module from 'worried – amazed – interested – confident' when up to 93% of the participants maintained that they felt 'confident and independent in lesson planning and teaching on my own'. Only two student teachers ticked on the answer 'no' and explained that at the beginning of the module they already thought that they could learn that way. This is quite typical of what the majority reported:

> Unconsciously, we've learnt how to work "without" the tutor (in fact she stills helps us a lot). Now we can work in peer-shape effectively;
> Because I see that I can learn through classmates. I can learn teaching through video clips from the internet and those done by classmates;
> I realise that my classmates have more ideas than I thought and they help me to realise new things, new ideas for my lessons;
> I'm becoming more confident day by day.

Although the above responses could be seen as positive, question 15 could suggest that many participants were not quite comfortable when having to work collaboratively. Although the majority (55%) of the participants asserted that they had been working in groups all the time, 45% of the participants admitted that they sometimes worked individually as long as the work was shared among the group members. The common reason was 'we couldn't manage the time, and also the work can be shared to individual so that's fine'; 'Sometimes it takes me a lot of time to do the task in groups'. One student wrote: 'we feel working in groups is not effective because we often spend time chatting with each other and opposite ideas between members is also a big problem'. This discloses the fact that while the tutor thought her students work in groups effectively because they did the tasks assigned by the tutor (as indicated in the tutors' view), in fact they had problems. The problem that was literally pointed out in their answers is the lack of time. Also, it was clear that for some student teachers, the definition of group work extended to include electronic links. One of the student teachers, for example, explained about having to work individually sometimes was 'because we had troubles with computer network'.

TABLE 19: PREFERENCES OVER THE NEW ACTIVITIES FOR MICRO-TEACHING – POST-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

	Questions	Rates
	16. Do you like video inference activity?	
a	Yes	93%
b	No	7%
c	Other (please explain your answer)	0%
	17. What you like about the video inference activity is that it can (you can choose more than one option).	
a	Give you opportunities to work with other student teachers and discuss teaching ideas	72%
b	serve as a spring board for the micro-teaching practice	24%
c	help understand theory of teaching before doing the micro-teaching practice	52%
d	help you get started with writing a lesson plan	52%
e	learn teaching from other teachers from Vietnam and many different parts of the world	62%
f	make it easier to give feedback on a stranger's teaching as you would not make him/her feel de-motivated at your frank or negative feedback	31%
g	give opportunities to learn how to give feedback though the process of commenting on clips	55%

h	make you work harder	21%
i	Other (please explain your answer)	0%
18. What you don't like about this activity is (you can choose more than one option).		
a	good clips on the internet are limited	14%
b	the clips are often not full lessons	7%
c	the clips are not role models for teaching	3%
d.	it makes you work too hard	0%
e	it takes too much time	7%
f	Other (please explain your answer)	0%
19. Do you like videotaping activity?		
a	Yes	97%
b	No	0%
c	Other (please explain your answer)	3%
20. What you like about this activity is (you can choose more than one option)		
a	you can see and assess yourself teaching.	69%
b	you have opportunities to practise teaching and improve yourself.	
c	you have opportunities to work with and learn from other student teachers	97%
d	it saves time in class	69%
e	it makes you work harder	3%
f	Other (please explain your answer)	3%
21. What you don't like about this activity is (you can choose more than one option)		
a	there are not real students	14%
b	you have difficulties in using technologies	7%
c	it makes you work too hard	3%
d	it takes too much time	10%
e	other (please explain your answer)	0%
22. In order to give and receive effective feedback you think that the tutor needs to		
a	Be a good organizer and facilitator	90%
b	Explicitly explain	3%
c	Other	7%

The responses to questions 16-21, which investigated the participants' views about the video activities used though out the module, proved to be positive. The informants expressed their strong support for both the video inference activity of their own teaching. While as many as 93% of the participants liked video inference activity and only 7% did not like it, up to 97% of those liked videotaping activity and nobody said no to it. However, one student, who chose 'other', revealed that she liked it, but 'dare not do it by herself, especially for presentation' as she did not believe in herself. Thus, she actually liked it, but she was not confident enough to make a recording of herself teaching. The most preferred aspects of the first activity are the opportunities to work with other student teachers and discuss teaching ideas (72%);

learning teaching from other teachers from Vietnam and many different parts of the world (62%); opportunities to learn giving feedback through the process of commenting on clips (55%). Many participants liked it because it helped them understand theories of teaching before doing micro teaching (55%) and it helped them get started with writing a lesson plan (55%). A few participants did not like the video inference activity, mainly because good clips online were limited.

The most preferred aspects of the second activity were opportunities to practise teaching and improve themselves (97%); seeing and assessing one selves teaching (69%); opportunities to work with and learn from other student teachers (69%). Although they all liked the videotaping one, a few student teachers expressed their discontent over the inauthentic situation in which they had to teach with fellow students taking the role of pupils.

The data from question 22 offers an optimistic point when as many as 90% of the respondents thought the tutor needed to be a good facilitator so that everyone had a chance to discuss ideas with peers and she did not need to give explicit feedback, giving ready-made answers. Only one student needed explicit feedback from the tutor to decide if her teaching was right or wrong. Another mentioned that the tutor needed to be frank to the ones that did not work hard.

TABLE 20: ROLE OF FEEDBACK — POST-INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FIGURES

Questions	Yes	No	Other
23. Do you think the feedback methods can change the trainer's and trainee's roles?	73%	20%	7%
24. Do you think the new feedback methods can give you opportunities to discover new knowledge and develop teaching skills by yourself?	86%	0%	14%
25. Do you think by learning from peer feedback and self-reflection with the tutor's guidance you have changed a bit of your learning habit?	93%	0%	7%

Questions 23-25 investigated the participants' views about the role of feedback and how they thought feedback method could make an impact to the role of the tutor and the role of the student teacher. 73% of the informants held that the feedback method could change these reciprocal roles, while 20% maintained that it could not change these roles. Up to 86% of those claimed that the new feedback method could give them opportunities to discover new knowledge and develop teaching skills by themselves. Nobody held the opposite view, but a few expressed their hesitation about that by the responses, such as, 'maybe'; 'it depends on certain type of students'; or 'a little'

Open-ended questions

The first question was intended to view the student teachers' opinion about whether or not the feedback method in this module was different from the participants' previous experience. Almost everyone thought it was different from their previous experience. The common responses were as follows:

> Yes, it was. In the past I only receive feedback from my teacher, but when I leant this module I receive feedback from both teacher and friends. And towards the end of this module, I only receive feedback from friends;

> To tell the truth, the feedback approach in this module was different to my previous experience. In the past, when I was at high school, even at university, the teacher is the person who plays the most important role. They gave feedback and told us explicitly what was right or wrong about our studying.

The student teachers shared almost the same view, such as

> With this feedback approach, there are more ideas we can see and apply for my lessons and my experiences. Besides that, we can look at other student teachers' mistakes or reference to work by myself.

Only one student teacher did not quite agree with this view. She said 'no' and explained: 'I had many activities like this, but in the past the teacher still gave us feedback and advised after peer feedback and self-reflection'. The

difference that could be interpreted from her response was that even though this student teacher had already been familiar with this kind of group working in the past, in the activities she described showed that the teacher was still the decision maker and the person who wrapped up the feedback process.

The next two questions were intended to seek more ideas from the student teachers about how feedback could be improved and to elicit further comments from them. The responses could be divided into two main groups. One group suggested that the method of giving feedback used in the intervention was useful for them and needed to be enhanced and encouraged. This group maintained that with this method they learned a lot from friends and from the experience and claimed that they needed more time so that they could have more discussion together.

> It helps me to understand deeply what I've learnt. I think feedback from friends will be useful and support my work;

> This feedback method should be encouraged so that students will teach themselves, assess and correct themselves and also learn from others.

The other group suggested ideas for improvement. Quite a few participants posted some shortcomings they detected from the module. They thought the feedback sometimes was 'not helpful' because 'it was not correct' or 'personal' (they probably meant biased), which caused a lot of strong arguments among the cohort. The suggestions included:

> Clear instruction of how to give feedback is needed. Unify form of feedback (criteria, format). Students should be aware that they are learning to give feedback without teacher, so they should pay more attention;

> When giving feedback, we should hide our names so that our friends don't know who gave feedback to them. By doing this way I think we could give frank feedback to my friends;

> We need clearer explanation before we are trained to give feedback without the tutor. I think that our feedback should be taken into consideration and evaluated;

> Yes, it was new for me. Actually, I don't know ... Maybe I do it for the teacher, not for me.

Seemingly, those student teachers, who sometimes felt frustrated about their peers' 'biased' and 'incorrect' feedback, did not allow a space for themselves. They might have a feeling that they would definitely have to take the feedback and did not give themselves the right to choose what to take and what not. They did not seem to regard their peer feedback as food for thoughts and reflection. By doing so, they seemed to confine themselves with the thinking that feedback needed to be either correct or incorrect, and therefore, insisted that 'feedback should be taken into consideration and evaluated'. Additionally, this attitude would prevent their peers from sharing their mind. They might not want to risk making their classmates upset by their frank feedback and wanted to hide their names.

5.2.1.2. Journals

The journals were analysed for specific information related to the four research questions including the factors that enhance peer learning, factors that hinder it, strategies to be utilised and the role of peer learning in shaping the tutors' and the student teachers' identities. The following themes emerged from the journal entries:

1. Motivation: this concerned the student teachers expression of their desire to attain good marks, their dreams of becoming a good teacher, or their negative attitudes toward learning teaching.

2. Emotional variables: This related to the range of feelings the student teachers experienced during the course such as whether they felt anxious, lacking in confidence, disappointed about or pleased with the learning teaching they tackled.

3. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses: These entries concerned their self- assessment of their teaching, often identifying strong and weak aspects of their teaching or the mistakes they thought they had made during their own teaching which required correction.

4. View of the role of the tutor: the comments on this theme centred on what the student teacher thought the role of the tutor should be/ what they thought the tutor should have done to be effective.

5. Reflection on own teaching: this theme brought together the student teachers' general thoughts on their teaching, not confined to strengths and weaknesses. Rather, the comments reflected their considerations of their own teaching behavioursthroughout the performance of lessons.

6. Perception of what teaching is: this theme focused on any thoughts related to teaching, which demonstrated the student teachers' understanding of what teaching is.

7. View of the role of student: comments under this theme related to the student teachers' thoughts about the ideal approach adopted by the student during the learning process to achieve the best outcomes from their studies.

8. Gratitude toward tutor: Since this attitude was expressed in most of the journals, usually at the end of the course, it was included as one of the themes.

9. Impression of the tutor: the student teachers wrote about particular traits of the tutor that impressed them and made them feel positive about the course.

10. Experience of group work: This theme centred on how student teachers felt about their group work experience.

11. View of own progress: the student teachers regularly reviewed what they had done and assessed their own progress. They considered their progress in different aspects of teaching.

12. Expectations: the comments of this theme showed what student teachers expected of the tutor, the course, and more often about themselves.

Since common features exist among the themes, they were categorised into groups as follows:

1. Group one consists of Motivation, Emotional variables, Experience of group work, Expectations and preferences, Gratitude towards the tutor, Impression of the tutor. These themes were commonly about the student teachers' ***feelings*** towards the new teaching and learning model.

2. Groups two consists of Reflection on own teaching, Analysis of strengths and weaknesses, View of own progress. These themes all addressed ***learning***.

3. Group three consists of View of the role of the tutor, Perceptions of what teaching is, View of the role of the student and the role of the teacher. Here the focus is on the student teachers' ***beliefs***.

TABLE 21: STUDENT TEACHERS' JOURNAL CODING THEMES

Group 1- Feelings	Group 2- Learning	Group 3- Beliefs
- Expectations - Motivation - Emotional variables - Experience of group work - Gratitude towards the tutor - Impression of the tutor	- Reflection on own teaching, - Analysis of strengths and weaknesses - View of own progress	- View of the role of the tutor - Perceptions of what teaching is - View of the role of the student and the role of the teacher

Feelings

Expectations:

Many of the student teachers' expectations were recorded in their journals at the beginning of the course. Interestingly, the expectations were not about the course, but almost exclusively about themselves. 8 out of 22 of their comments illustrated the desire of the student teachers to be confident, which in itself revealed that they were feeling less than confident.

> I hope I will be able to do it [teaching]. Hopefully this subject will bring me a lot of experience, and be a turning point to gain confidence in me (Student 4).

Whilst some student teachers just mentioned their hopes of becoming more confident in general, quite a few identified a particular kind of confidence that they wanted to build, for example, the self-assurance to speak in front of other people:

> I hope that after this course, I will become more confident and more active. I will be able to stand confidently in front of a lot of people (Student 3).

Confidence to manage a class, which is related to having confidence speaking in front of many people, was also mentioned as one of their expectations:

> I hope I will have a lot of experience in my teaching language and language skills and be confident in handling an English class (Student 16).

Apart from confidence, many comments (14 out of 22) showed that the students wanted to have experience in teaching, in which they expressed their welcome of learning through practice and expected more practical elements in the syllabus. That gave us a feeling that they had had experienced a strong emphasis on theory of the current syllabi:

> I like learning through practice than theories (Student 15)
>
> Shortening the theory and more practice (Student 11)
>
> I really hope that you can help us with practical teaching, not just theory (Student 1)

However, among the student teachers who expressed their desire to gain teaching experience, a few of them (3 out of 22) did think that they wished to have that experience via the tutor's telling them or sharing with them her own experience, for example:

> In addition [to my expectations], the tutor should give her experience in teaching to the students (Student 17)

They assumed that their tutor had admirable level of knowledge and skills

> Could you [the tutor] tell us some tips about your way to succeed as a teacher like you (student 14).

9 out of 22 also indicated their hope to build up teaching skills in the course. However, again 3 of them believed that the teaching knowledge and skills could be passed on them by the tutor. They regarded teaching skills as something to show to students (Student 10), or something that the student

teachers can be aware of (Student 5), or something that the tutor has to provide (Student 16).

Some student teachers were keen on seeing teaching method as something that can be labelled as either the right or the wrong:

> After this course I hope to find the right way to teach and be more confident when standing before class (Student 19).

That 'right way to teach' needed to be provided by the tutor and by way of correction of mistakes, which they assumed had always made:

> I hope that tutor, Mrs Huong will give me helpful feedback so that I can correct my mistakes and realise how professional I am (Student 13).

Generally speaking, at the initial stage of the course, the student teachers' biggest expectation was that their confidence would be built over the course enabling them to present, to speak English or to deliver their teaching in front of a group of people. They also expected to learn teaching skills through practice without mention of any of need to work on theory. Building a good relationship with the tutor was also one of their expectations along with understanding 'the right way' to teach English.' It was documented, however, that the student teachers thought 'the right way to teach English' would come from the tutor and the student teachers shared their admiration for the tutor's knowledge and skills.

Motivation:

In terms of motivation, the student teachers appeared to obtain strong intrinsic motivation for learning teaching. Contrary to Hoa's opinion about the student teachers' low motivation for the course, which could be related to the fact that some student teachers enrolled the course just to please their parents' wishes, or simply because they thought it would help them to find job easier, these student teachers actually showed their strong desire to become good teachers, their love of teaching and their curiosity about the new learning method in the course in most of their comments. This

motivation for learning teaching was exhibited in eleven comments, but it was observable that it seemed to be strengthened as the course progressed. At the beginning of the course, there were only two journal entries explaining why they were taking part in the course. These include the student's desire to become a good teacher and to receive good marks for the course. However, after the first phase of peer learning, the student teachers seemed to be more motivated, expressing greater interest in the course. They did not simply like the job as it had been a prior ambition for a long time because they had to achieve good marks, but they felt enthusiastic about taking part in the practice of teaching:

> Generally speaking, I love the practice of teaching very much. This is very useful for us (Student 3).

And since they felt interested in it, they wanted to find out more about it:

> I think teaching is very interesting and I love it very much, so I have to learn more about the way of teaching effectively (Student 6).

As the course progressed, the motivation seemed to increase. The students appreciated the encouragement and compliments from the tutor which helped them feel more motivated. Obviously, in a culture that exalts the teacher and a learning environment that often emphasises correction of mistakes, the encouragement and compliments from the tutor would be considered valuable.

> We always receive your [the tutor's] encouragement and compliments. That has motivated us to try more to improve ourselves (Student 7).

At the end of the course there were more comments (5 out of 10) stating that the student teachers felt more motivated by the tutor's use of the new teaching method, which made them greatly enjoy learning this subject and to try to improve themselves. Evidence of the admiration for the tutor was also found in these entries:

> I felt happy when I was instructed by you [the tutor] in this interesting subject (Student 16).

> You made us like learning this subject. I always feel happy when I go to school on Wednesday (Student 18).

There was, however, one comment that expressed low motivation for teacher learning right at the beginning of the course, but her motivation rose as she joined in the practice of teaching:

> It is a fact that I dislike to be a teacher a lot. However, when I am working on the lessons by myself, I have started to feel like it a little more (Student 22).

As the practice of teaching progressed, there were comments that showed that some students were less than enthusiastic. One felt dissatisfied because of the first performance that she herself evaluated as unsuccessful:

> Today I finished the recording of teaching grammar. So sad cos I couldn't do it well (Student 4)

Nevertheless, this student then acknowledged that 'this practice was interesting and brought me [the student teacher] many interesting experiences'. It is important to note that, the failure of the first practice seemed to lower her motivation, but as a paradox, the experience lifted her motivation. Evidently, the joy of gaining experience surpassed the feeling of failure. Another important point to note is that the language she is using, which is 'so sad cos', is informal. The colloquial word 'cos' shows she is feeling close and comfortable with the tutor. Her sharing feeling reveals not only her feeling close to the tutor, but also her confidence too.

Similarly, another student felt disappointed by her own poor speaking skills after her first practice and seemed to resigned to failure at the time of writing:

> My speaking skill is still bad. I tried, but it doesn't seem to change. I'm so sad. I can't become a teacher (Student 22).

However, later on after some practice, her motivation for the course changed for the better, but she did not mention whether her speaking skills had improved or not.

> Recording a clip is not a challenge with me anymore. I'm so happy about that (Student 22)

What she mentioned as a difficulty turned out to be the recording of her teaching. Thus, her main concern had been the pressure of being recorded teaching in front of others, making her feel inferior and worried about other

points that seemed to make her teaching weak. Face does not seem to be a pressure for her now and she shows more confidence in gaining skills. Additionally, concerns about speaking skills would have contributed to the pressure of recording the teaching.

On the whole, it could be said that the student teachers were highly motivated to learn teaching and became more motivated as the course progressed. They appreciated the new learning mode that gave them opportunities for practical experience, and encouragement and compliments from the tutor. It was also documented that the pressure of recording lessons could make students feel less motivated and anxiety about speaking abilities appeared to contribute to this. Furthermore, the idealisation of the tutor and her motivational role was evident in these entries.

Emotions:

However, in terms of emotions, it was evident at the beginning of the course that the student teacher felt negative emotions including anxiety, lack of confidence and low self-esteem. That was why they wished to build more confidence when writing about their expectations. The practice of teaching and peer work seemed to make them feel somewhat worried at first. They seemed to have low agency since they did not believe in their capacity:

> Actually I'm really anxious about what we will have to do in the course because I'm reserved and unconfident myself. In fact my grade in speaking and listening skills subject was very low (Student 3).

Again, the perceived poor speaking skill was mentioned as a factor that affected the student teachers' confidence. However, these emotions seemed alter positively throughout the course although this was a gradual process. Student 1 still found it hard and stressful when she did the practice of teaching in the middle of the course:

> This is the first time we have to do a lot of practice work on our own, so we feel rather stressful and nervous.

However, at the end of the course she wrote 'I find myself more confident than I was before (Student 1). Similarly, student 3, who declared that she was 'really anxious' about what she would have to do in the course, still felt anxious at the mid-point of the course, but that limitation seemed to lessen when she realised that it was inevitable. She wrote:

> Because we first practised teaching, we still feel anxious and make mistakes, which is inevitable ... Importantly, when we do practising of teaching, we feel more confident (Student 3).

Student 4 at first thought that Teaching Language Components and Language Skills was a very difficult course. Although later she still did not still feel positive about the work, she realised that this kind of learning was useful:

> I feel disappointed because I did badly. However, this practice of teaching was interesting that gave me experience.

It seemed that the student teachers' anxiety mostly arose from feelings of inferiority or discomfort about being in unsupportive atmosphere:

> The students there are friends. I can't imagine what will happen if I come in front of a class with ten strange faces (Student 2)

Another student teacher seemed to be under the impression that being a teacher meant she would have to make everyone happy. This thought is associated with the Vietnamese traditional role of the teacher, who should be a role model and never show him/herself to be less than perfect because it would shatter the teacher's image. Seemingly, the need to appear as a perfect image in front of others taking precedence over the need for honest and open discussion and opinions represented a fairly significant stressor for a teacher.

> Sometimes I have a feeling that I'll be a bad teacher because of my own opinion and ego. Being a teacher is very difficult because we can't satisfy everybody (Student 11).

During the course the student teachers' emotions were varied, but basically seemed to become more positive. Student 22, who wrote that she was shocked at the beginning of the course when the tutor asked the students to make video recordings of their own teaching because she was 'easy to get

nervous' and that she was 'not confident when a camera or someone looks at me [her]', evaluated her own teaching during the course as follows: 'I recorded a clip last week and it's not so bad as I imagined, hehe [happy]'. At the end of the course she remarked: 'Recording teaching is not a challenge for me anymore' (Student 22). Actually, this was quite commonly mentioned by the student teachers in the last phase of the course. They appreciated the environment that the new learning method created, for example.

> I am very interested in each lesson because we work comfortably together without stressfulness (Student 10).

So, where did this stress come from and, conversely, where did the subsequent more relaxed feeling come from? It seemed that her interest liked to the ease in her comment. Actually, at first, the student teachers were not used to peer learning or independent learning since they had been accustomed to dependency on the tutor; so that, they might feel confused by and unfamiliar with the new learning environment, which encouraged team work and independence from the tutor. However, after a period of immersion they started to appreciate the peer learning experience. They appeared to discover that the open interactive learning environment actually helped them to build confidence:

> We also have a lot of fun in videoing within our group and with other groups too. We laughed a lot, chatted with each other a lot. And this helped me build confidence (Student 1).

However, group work did not only build confidence. One student actually lost confidence when she felt that watching that her peers' performance was better than her own.

> When I watched my friends teaching I think they are more confident than me. I'm sure I can't do like them (Student 17).

Yet, that was, in my opinion, the experience she needed to be exposed more to an open and frank learning environment, rather than being infantilised in the traditional environment. That environment fosters the students' dependence on the teacher and, for many, on other stronger students during

exams. In addition, students may seek to save face by not taking part in group work; thereby it may give the students a false impression of the knowledge and skills they actually have. If the above student did not have a chance to watch her peers performing the task, she would not have realised what she still needed to be equipped to teach well.

Unlike the student 17, student 18 seemed to be more open to new learning methods showing her approval of this way of learning. She thought group work was the appropriate place to practise teaching together for the development of skills and reciprocal communications of ideas:

> I like the way friends shared comments together (Student 9).

With this attitude, the peer work helped the student 'learn teaching styles of other students, such as, their voice, word choice, instructions, warm-up activities (Student 6). Importantly, the student teachers found the environment to be supportive, with the result that they felt comfortable and so could share ideas without worrying about being criticised or losing face.

> I have found a friendly and open atmosphere. All of us are free to speak out our opinions and have opportunities to practise (Student 11).

It was evident that the student teachers were keen on errors correction, and they were happy with the way peers corrected each other. This may be characteristic of the attitude of the Vietnamese society towards face and perfection. To have this perfection and to keep face, people often try to avoid mistakes, which are an imperfection and attract reprimand or are something to be ridiculed and in need of correction. Helping each other to recognise their errors in a safe environment allowed the student teachers to feel closer to perfection and so less open to loss of face.

> I'm so happy when preparing lessons for teaching. We had a good time together. We corrected mistakes together. I think these weeks recently are unforgettable time in my life (Student 2).

On the whole, the student teachers eagerly accommodated the new method of learning and really appreciated the experience they gained through it:

> We work together every week to make a recording of our teaching. This helps us get on better with each other. We have figured out the way to teach a good lesson, which is useful for our later career (Student 9).
>
> I like your [the tutor's] method when you let us practise together and comment to each other. It's useful and it made me enjoy this learning method (Student 15).

Probably, these student teachers gradually recognised that peer learning brought benefits to them through listening for each other's ideas, rather than listening for mistakes, and through building skills together in confidence and trust.

Learning

Analysing how learning took place during the course, the following themes are taken into consideration: Reflection on own teaching, Analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and View of own progress.

The student teachers often reflected on what they had done, both their own teaching and that of their peers'. It seemed that they began to change their perspectives firstly by considering the result of the traditional teaching method:

> After practising of teaching, I see it is not easy to impart knowledge for students ... I have knowledge, but I don't know how to get the students involved in my lesson (Student 19).

Thus, student 19 had realised that the traditional method of imparting knowledge to students did not seem to work. This recognition was an important starting point provoking her thinking towards new ways of getting the students involved in class.

Another student had given thought to other aspects, which, on the face of it, seemed to be straightforward, but, in the event, were not actually as simple

as she thought. She needed to seek ways to resolve problems and came to the conclusion:

> When we practise, we realised that it's difficult to teach. We usually forget something that we wanted to say … I really think that it is very useful for us if we practise frequently (Student 21)

That simple realisation appeared to be a starting point for discoveries of the teaching methods they needed to employ to be confident to speak in front of a class without forgetting words or omitting to encourage students' involvement in their lesson:

> When watching videos we can learn some useful techniques and teaching steps to apply them in my own teaching (Student 3).

They had also realised that when working in groups they needed to adjust their own way of working, something that would never have happened if they had worked by themselves:

> I noticed that when we worked in groups of three, I had to find out a lot of materials related to lessons we taught (Student 2)

However, it was evident that they tended to dwell on their perceived inabilities, which showed themselves as less than competent. This evidence was closely related to the low agency and self-esteem previously analysed:

> This is the first time that we have to do a lot of practical work on our own, so we feel rather stressful and nervous … I find it difficult to express my ideas clearly … I don't know how to communicate with students naturally … I find it hard to manage the time in practice stage. Sometimes we are quite confused about how many exercises we should have, how long should it last, or if we should explain the instructions in English or Vietnamese (Student 1).

Consequently, the student teachers, when reflecting on their own teaching, often emphasised mistakes rather than drew out positive points. It could be part of the low self-esteem mentioned above, and part of a culture that encourages modesty:

> I found that we weren't able to control some steps we have planned. There are some mistakes that we couldn't avoid and repeat them (Student 2).

This focus on errors was echoed in the student teachers' analysis of strengths and weaknesses. From six contributions, there were only two comments that

noted both strengths and weaknesses, but it seemed that those were related to their peers' teaching. The other four comments focused only on weaknesses.

However, when writing about strengths, they did not examine them as thoroughly as the weak points. They mentioned briefly and generally:

> I've learnt many things and had many experiences … We watched it [the video of a peer's teaching] and realised not only strong points, but also weak points of my friends, so we can improve our skills (Student 18).

Yet, the analysis of weak points seemed to be more detailed although not in-depth. The following point was very commonly mentioned:

> After working with peers, I have the following comments: the most popular weaknesses are: lack of confidence, wrong pronunciation, grammar mistakes, activities are not participatory, low voice, instructions are not clear (Student 7).

It can be seen from the student teachers' analysis of the weak points that they were often actually about the professionalism and language skills that they needed to build over time or that ought to have been in place before the course, such as, confidence, pronunciation and grammar knowledge, speaking skills, rather than about the teaching methods. Although this analysis would certainly help them think about the elements that needed to be improved or adjusted, ideally, they should have carried out a deeper analysis of teaching methodology, not just superficial reflection. Indeed, some of the student teachers tended to focus on aspects of outward appearance. Probably, the Vietnamese culture, in which people are urged to look good, has influenced the consideration of all the aspects covered including teaching. For example, the needs to have good handwriting, neat black board work, formal appearance of the teacher etc. were often commented on:

> There are some problems with me: 1. my handwriting is so bad. My handwriting in notebooks is nice, but it's different on the board. 2. I smiled too much. A teacher should be formal, right? But I'm like a child, not a teacher. Should I change it, shouldn't I? 3. I teach in both English and Vietnamese (Student 22).

On the whole, the student teachers, in their journal entries, showed that they started to change their thinking from a simple reflection on teaching method in general to a more detailed analysis of teaching techniques and then the consideration of their strengths and weaknesses. Although it was documented that the student teachers often focused on weak points rather than their strong points, and the analyses were often somewhat superficial, it could be claimed that this reflection was important and helpful for their learning.

Whilst the entries of their general reflection and analysis of strengths and weaknesses often came midway through of the course, the comments on their view of their own progress were often put forward at the end of the course when they had seen how much they had changed. Generally speaking, the student teachers, when viewing their own progress, all felt very happy about their improvement. On the one hand, this showed that they were able to assess their own learning, on the other hand, demonstrated positive attitudes of the student teachers towards the new teaching and learning methods. Their progress could relate to teaching in general:

> When looking back at my own recordings at the beginning to compare with the clip I have submitted recently I can see that I have learnt and have progressed a lot (Student 1).

Or it could be about the affective factors, such as the confidence they gained during the course:

> Now I can see clearly the difference between before and now. I can stand in front of a lot of people and speak quite fluently without stumbling like before. I have achieved the goals I set at the beginning (Student 5).

Therefore, the student teachers were able to link their reflection on the progress they had made with the goals and expectations they had set out at the beginning of the course. This can be seen in another entry:

> It can be said that I have achieved all the expectations successfully (Student 12).

Thus, after the course they noted that they had learnt a lot and felt satisfaction with their achievements when recognising the progress for themselves.

Beliefs

One of the beliefs of the student teachers was apparent from their view of the role of a tutor/ teacher. First of all, according to the journals entries made at the beginning of the course, tutors were believed to have been assigned an important mission by society:

> I think the tutor is very important. Tutors will train useful people for the society. During the learning process, the tutor helps the student teachers improve, provide knowledge for students so that student teachers understand and love the job they chose (Student 8).

> The role of the tutor is to guide and provide learners with teaching skills (Student 14).

Thus, to accept this crucial mission, tutors became the source of all knowledge. Consequently, the tutor was regarded as an expert, who knew what was right and what was wrong and was able to assess the validity and appropriateness of every activity in class:

> The tutor gives comments and evaluates every student, indicates what students have done well and what they have not. The tutor is the person who organises and controls all the activities in class (Student 8).

> I think the role of the tutor is very important. The tutor guides and helps us find the right way for our teaching (Student 15).

Although the above notes seemed to show the more dependent side of the student teachers in their relationship with the tutor, there were some comments showing that they expected a more open relationship between the tutor and the student teacher. Although they still fully believed in the dominant role of the tutor, they wanted the tutor to provide them a space to express their own opinions:

> I wish tutor would give me comments on my good points and shortcomings frankly, provide me opportunities to speak out what I think even though it is correct or incorrect. The tutor will orientate my thinking so that I can think in a positive way (Student 7).

Therefore whilst the student teachers appeared to behave like knowledge receivers rather than active learners because that was expected of them in

Vietnamese culture, the reality was that they were thinking critically and wanted more opportunities to practise and be corrected than they were receiving. Also, the desire to have frank comments from the tutor suggested that, on the one hand, the student teachers were ready for objective criticism and wanted perfection, on the other hand, the tutor traditionally might often avoid the risk of making their students upset or causing them to lose face.

Nonetheless, the above comments were only found in the very first entries when the student teachers had just started the course. After that, they did not mention the same perception of the role of the tutor. However, since the tutor was to be looked up to in the students' view, even when the new peer learning mode was being applied in the course, the students still put their total trust in the tutor. As a result, some student teachers, during the course, did not trust their peers' comments and insisted that they needed the tutor's comments. Even at the end of the course this approach from the student teachers, as indicated in their questionnaires findings mentioned previously, did not seem to alter significantly:

> We are students, so we always believe in experts than any others. If you give us comments, I think we will do it better (Student 10).

All the above journals entries about the role of the tutor could also suggest what the student teachers thought about the role of a teacher. That could also have been their concept of what they were building for the future.

Often, in the Vietnamese culture, with the image as powerful experts, the teachers will naturally need to live up to this image of perfection. It seems to be an unbreakable cycle: students, who have been steeped in the tradition that tells them that their teachers must be perfect, will be trained to have a very low tolerance for mistakes, and would, in return, ridicule and criticise the teachers if mistakes were spotted. Therefore, face of the teacher is very important as this will serve as a mirror for the students to follow. The student teachers in this course appeared to copy this model of maintaining the

'perfect image' of a teacher, which put them under pressure to appear in control and never to falter:

> I know when the teacher stepping in front of class all her problems in life have to be put aside or be oppressed to deal with them later. She mustn't wear a grumpy and angry face in front of her students (Student 16).

As a result, outward appearance seemed to be given more value than the degree of the achievement of the learning outcomes. This led the student teacher to pay a lot of attention to appearance, as indicated also in the previous entries, such as the appearance of handwriting, how orderly the class was, or how neat board work was, the level of confidence in public, or whether words were pronounced correctly. Additionally, the amount of smiling in class seemed more important than how well students acquired the teaching content:

> I smiled too much. A teacher should be formal, right? But I'm like a child, not a teacher (Student 22).

Fewer comments were made about the student teachers' view of their role. On the whole, these comments seemed to collate with the initial view of the tutor's role. While the tutor was regarded as a knowledge provider at the outset, the student teachers considered themselves as knowledge receivers:

> The student is a person who perceives knowledge, receives knowledge from teacher (Student 8).

Even when they thought that the student teachers should have been more pro-active, they could not entirely escape from the constraint of being dependent on the tutor:

> Students are not passive. They are active in group work. If there is anything they don't know, they can ask the tutor (Student 8).

They probably perceived their active role as being someone who quickly and 'actively' absorbed as much as possible of the knowledge the teacher/tutor offered.

> Student teachers should take part in lessons actively, understand and be aware of principles and techniques, which tutor provides (Student 16).

Perhaps, some of the student teachers believed that the tutor was like a performer and the student teacher was an audience, watching and supporting the tutor's performance.

> Students should be active and participatory to motivate the tutor (Student 18).

This view leads us to a teacher-centred classroom, where the teacher appears as an actor, giving her perfect performance in the classroom, and the students are the audience watching and supporting the teacher's performance. Consequently, the classroom becomes a stage for the teacher to act from, not a place for students to practise and develop skills.

There was one student teacher, who viewed her role as a participant, rather than an audience member. Although it seemed that the teacher initially took the lead and the students followed, it appeared to move to a more a student-centred experience.

> I think student teachers' role is important in deciding the success of tutor's plan and ideas. Teacher is a person who makes a teaching plan and student is a person who implements the ideas of the teacher (Student 7).

However, it should be noted that the above comments were written at the beginning of the course. During and at the end of the course, they did not express any similar ideas about the role of student teachers. The statements in the questionnaires showed that at the end, their views changed considerably.

Since the students in Vietnam traditionally believe that teachers have a mission to provide them with knowledge, they often show a lot of respect and gratitude to teachers. In the student teachers' journal entries, a huge number of comments, written during and at the end of the course, expressed their gratitude towards the tutor. Showing gratitude to teachers in fact is a Vietnamese tradition, but the students, in many cases, take it as a formality. The attitudes the student teachers expressed in this course, therefore,

probably originated partly from this tradition, but mostly, from their genuine fondness. Some of the student teachers mentioned that they were grateful for the relevance and content of lessons or just for everything the tutor had done for them in general:

> Thank you a lot for your meaningful lessons, your caring attitude and your encouragement (Student 1).

> I'd like to express my deep gratitude to you. Thank you for the time we had together. It's amazing (Student 5).

Besides the general grateful comments, many entries demonstrated their appreciation of the tutor's friendly manner and the supportive atmosphere she created in class. This comment was very typical:

> I thank you very much. You have helped me as well as my classmates enjoy this subject. Especially, you are very friendly, understanding, smiling to us, which creates a relaxing atmosphere. I like it very much (Student 19).

These attitudes from the tutor/teacher seemed to make the students, who had been steeped in a culture of hierarchical relationship between the teachers and students, surprised and delighted. It was this attitude that made them feel more motivated and try their best to learn. It seemed to make them feel more open to new ideas and more confident in their learning:

> Your encouragement always motivates us to improve and try our best. Thank you for that. Thank you for everything you have done for us, from the knowledge you provided to your belief in us (Student 7).

Seemingly, their agency was not enough to acknowledge that they were able to internalise the knowledge and skills via interacting with peers while continuing to think that all the knowledge they gained was 'provided' by the tutor. Nonetheless, they had felt something different in the classroom environment that drove them to try their best to learn; one of these was the tutor's trust in them, which had probably increased their agency in what they were doing, and which they identified as motivation 'to improve and try our best'. The above comment was very popular among the student teachers and often made in the middle of the course and at the end of the course (14 out of 22 journals entries), which suggested that the tutor's encouragement, friendly

attitude, and trust are very important during their move to a self-learning process.

Another subject related to the role of the tutor was the impressions of the tutor. What seemed to impress them most was the friendly and relaxing atmosphere that the tutor was able to build in class with the new teaching method. Apparently, the student teachers did not usually have this kind of open atmosphere and stress free environment. Therefore, they commented that the course brought a new style of teaching and learning that fostered the student teachers' motivation in their learning:

> You have brought us a lot of fun and motivation in study. Whenever I think of you, I always see your bright smiling face (Student 16).

Although the student teachers appeared to deem the tutor as someone at a higher position and someone to be admired, they showed that they found the lessons more enjoyable when there was a closer working relationship:

> You have made every lesson enjoyable and interesting, shortened the distance between the tutor and students (Student 8)

In this respect, the classroom was no longer a place for the tutor's teaching or dictating the knowledge, but a place for the student teachers' development of skills, negotiating and communicating and sharing teaching ideas with peers to internalise their own knowledge. In their later journals entries, they did not mention the 'mission' of the tutor to provide knowledge as they had done in the first entries. Instead, they expressed their appreciation of the relaxing and safe environment that made them really want to study without worrying about being ridiculed or reprimanded.

> I like your lessons because I don't feel stressed or worried, conversely, we feel very joyful. The most memorable is your smile (Student 1).

What needs to be emphasised is that the deep seated cultural beliefs about the roles of the tutor and student teachers did not seem to change. They still paid the unquestioning respect for the teacher's knowledge authority and offered their great admiration of the tutor/teacher's work.

To summarise, the journals findings reveal that student teachers were willing to accommodate and accept change and were often very enthusiastic about different patterns of teaching, which included peer evaluation and peer feedback. However, the student teachers' strongly held beliefs about relative roles of students and teachers remained firmly fixed.

5.2.2 Researcher's field notes

Alongside the student teachers' journal writing, I kept my own journal. As the 'insider' in the research process, keeping my own field notes helped me enhance reflectivity as well as reflexivity. My journal was written from the very beginning of the course until the end. The emerging themes can be described as follows: tutor's image and the appreciation of teacher's knowledge, saving face and attitudes toward mistakes, learners' autonomy.

5.2.2.1. Change in the tutor's image and the appreciation of teacher's knowledge

Knowing that careful planning and introduction play an important part in determining the success of any plans, I prepared my part carefully before the course actually started. I had a mixed feeling of excitement, worries, and happiness. I was happy because finally, I could work out a plan to implement the research in my own work place, where I had nurtured a lot of hopes and dreams. I was happy because I was coming back to teaching, which I missed so much during the first year of research in the UK. I was happy also because I was going to see my Vietnamese students. I was excited and a little bit worried because I was not sure how my students would receive this pattern of learning and teaching. Would they be resistant? Would they cooperate with me? Would the new teaching and learning method be helpful for them? Would they accept the change in roles of teacher and students?

The first important change I had to prepare was the change to my role in the classroom. I had to change from the status of a powerful teacher, who often led all the learning activities and made all the decisions in class to a status of a moderator, whose role was to facilitate class activities and let the students decide what was good for them. I would have to minimise my role in class, so that my student teachers could see their role more clearly, and develop their power and agency in their learning. In order to do that, I had to express myself as a very friendly and relaxed teacher. I had to take off my formal appearance in class so that my students would not feel scared of my presence and would feel free to express their ideas, to discuss their issues of concern and to think critically without the worries of being reprimanded or criticised. I would also appear personally more smiling, academically more encouraging and supportive so that my students could feel secure.

The change in the tutor's image that I created in preparation for the course seemed to have immediate effect. On the first day, I noted in my journal that 'the students appeared to be eager about the new course that I was going to lead'. At the end of the first lesson, all the 30 students signed the consent forms and showed their enthusiasm for the research. It was even more encouraging when around ten students from other classes moved to my class on the next lesson and requested to be a part of the research. It was certainly a great vote of confidence from the student teachers to me. However, for the quality of the research, I had to guard the size of my research class and had to apologise for not being able to accommodate them into the class. This showed not only the confidence from the student teachers, but also demonstrated their openness to changes and their curiosity for learning. This change in the tutor's image was appreciated very much by the student teachers in their journals as well as in their informal talks to me because my friendly and supportive attitudes made them feel more confident and encouraged.

The change in the tutor's role, however, was not so easy for me even though I was very clear about the reasons for the change. I sometimes wanted to tell them what they should have done instead of asking eliciting questions to open a space for them to look into the issues. I had to hold myself from scolding them for repeating the same mistakes that they had already noticed before. I also wanted to present all the teaching theories that I know before allowing them to try out new teaching experiences.

This change was more difficult at the beginning, especially when the student teachers let me know about their hard experience of being independent in their learning. It happened after the third week of the course. I got an email from the common inbox of the class that I was teaching. Bao Trang (a pseudonym) wrote to me on behalf of the whole class to send me a request. First, she expressed their appreciation of the new teaching method:

> I'm writing to thank you for your interesting lessons. The lessons in these days help us a lot with our teaching skills. You are such a devoted teacher and we really appreciate your teaching method (Email from class X sent on 12th September 2012).

Then, she let me know that the whole class were having a problem. They thought they were 'unable to keep pace with the syllabus' and asked me to present the theories of the lesson before they do the practice:

> I myself can do nothing without a good theoretical background. So, would you mind spending a little time in the beginning of the lesson introducing the new items of the lessons? (Email from class X sent on 12th September 2012).

This email, on the one hand helped me understand that they were having a problem, whilst on the other hand, it suggested that they trusted me and were open to share with me their thoughts, which I really wanted to build on. This email also revealed that it was hard to familiarise the student teachers with the new tutor's role, who was supposed to present to them all the theory of what and how to do teaching. They had been more familiar with the deductive approach – moving from theory presented by the tutor first, then to

practice. Therefore, when having to immerse themselves in practice first to get the experience so that they would be able to conceptualise theory by themselves, they were really struggling. The tutor's role was minimised, which made them feel insecure and, therefore, they wanted the tutor to be back there for them although they were intellectually aware that 'The lessons in these days help us a lot with our teaching skills.' Additionally, the appreciation of tutor's knowledge, which is a part of the Vietnamese culture, was another contributor to this reaction. The belief that the knowledge has to come from the tutor is not easy to change. A note from my own journal that could be a reason for this reaction was that 'my feedback to their first lesson plan was too detailed' (notes taken on 12 September). That could lower the student teachers' confidence. Probably, in the first phase, more encouragement is needed to build up their confidence in working dependently.

With the pull from the student teachers, I also wanted to go back to the previous teaching approach – deductive approach – to spend more time telling the student teacher explicitly about how to teach. However, that thought only appeared in my mind at times. Instead of doing so, I tried to be very patient and decided to write them an email, persuading my students to maximise their role in reflecting on the experience they had while referring to the textbook to draw out the teaching principles by themselves. I introduced them to the inductive approach, indicating that they needed to go from experience, and then use reflective observation of the experience to work out the theory for themselves, and continue another active experimentation. At the same time, I often sent them a reminder of every week's tasks to help them on the right track, especially for the first weeks as I believed my student teachers needed more scaffolding from the tutor in the first phase. No more scaffolding would be needed when my student teachers were able to get on the right track and work independently.

With that approach – scaffolding at the first phase, gradually introducing the new learning pattern, and more encouragement, I was able to incorporate the

inductive approach and play a role as a facilitator and promote my student teachers' role in their peer learning process. I could see the student teachers making progress through their class discussions and group tasks and assignments. The student teachers had no more reaction like the email I received and shared with me their satisfaction with their own progress.

> The student teachers seemed to be happy with the sequence approach: general theory from the tutor – teaching experience done by student teachers – generalised theory by themselves. After the 5th week I administered a mini-test to check if the student teachers understood the teaching principles and they did the test quite well (notes taken on 19th September)

5.2.2.2. Saving face and attitudes toward mistakes

As indicated in the literature review, saving face and self-respect are extremely important in Vietnamese culture. However, this cultural trait could hold back learning since it makes people avoid the risk of making mistakes, which would damage their face. Therefore, people tend to be intolerant with mistakes and often avoid them. The fear of making mistakes leads to the fact that they are afraid of taking risks and trying new things, and consequently avoid practical activities.

Being aware of this cultural trait, and also seeing that the student teachers' peer feedback focuses mostly on mistakes, I opened and facilitated a discussion about mistakes and shared with them my own attitudes toward mistakes. They were very interested in the discussion and agreed with me that mistakes are part of the learning process, and therefore it was fine to make mistakes when you learnt. The fact was that the only way to avoid mistakes is doing nothing, and therefore, losing opportunities to learn. I wanted to stop their worries about making mistakes and encouraged them to get involved in practical experience as much as possible and learn from mistakes. I ended the discussion with a sentence 'So, make a lot of mistakes!'

and asked if they agreed with me. The student teachers responded with loud applause and bust into a happy laughter. They understood what I meant. It seemed that no tutors had ever said that to them before. It was the opposite of their expectations of how to be a good teacher when they had already been steeped in the culture that encouraged perfection (Notes taken on 17 October).

From my observation, since the discussion, the student teachers seemed to be more confident to take part in class and group activities. However, they were still concerned with mistakes. They were worried of repeating the same mistakes and particularly concerned how they would perform in the teaching videos that would be marked. 'What if we make mistakes in the exams or final video recordings' (notes taken on 24 October)?'- They were really concerned about their grades.

5.2.2.3. From tutor's encouragement to learner autonomy

The notion of learner autonomy is a complete opposition to the notion of a student as a knowledge receiver and teacher as knowledge provider. This intervention actually aimed at changing these two roles to a more dialogic approach and increasing the learners' autonomy.

In the beginning, the student teachers appeared quite reserved and quiet and often agreed with what the teacher provided. For example, on the second week of the course, the student teachers discussed the criteria of a good lesson. In order to make it easier for them to discuss, I gave them a set of criteria as a framework for them to work on. The discussion was not very participatory as the student teachers agreed with all the criteria and did not offer any comments. This could have resulted from their lack of confidence, or their habit of listening to teachers, thinking that any knowledge from the teacher must be perfect, or there could have been a lack of ideas about the

issue to be discussed. When I tried to raise more eliciting questions and encouraged them to speak, one student started to make a contribution. She thought that the criteria on teacher's style and teacher's use of language should have been considered. Bao Trang seemed to have made the starting point, and then more students started to raise their voice into arguments (notes taken on 27 August).

During the course I always tried to find the student teachers' strengths to encourage them. For example, I showed my appreciation in their technology skills in making video clips, often telling them that they were much better than me in building videos. After that the student teachers were apparently more willing to contribute ideas and suggestions for better working sessions. The role of the student teachers appeared to be more active with the tutor's encouragement. From this observation, it could be concluded that if the teacher knows how to provide opportunities, shy and reserved students will still be able to change and to share their independent thinking.

Nonetheless, the students did not seem to be autonomous in their learning. Despite a lot of efforts to encourage them to work independently and autonomously not all the lesson plans were sent to me by the deadline. The two (out of ten) groups, who did not submit their lesson plans on time, explained that they just simply did not notice the dates of the deadline (notes taken on 2nd September). That meant without the tutor's supervision, the student teachers could not keep pace with their work showing their low autonomy in learning. This was also demonstrated in the tutors' emails as to the issue of leaner autonomy.

From that day I decided to send them reminders regularly during this first phase. I hoped that, I would remind them less frequently in the second phase until they were accustomed to working independently without the tutor's supervision in the third phase.

After I replied to the whole class' email about the inductive approach and peer learning that I was trying to incorporate into the course, as well as my reminders sent prior the tasks, I could recognise how enthusiastic they were about their group work. They often emailed me to consult about their peer work and peer feedback. They took responsibility for their work and seemed very devoted. For example, four (out of 10) groups wrote two lesson plans and wanted to consult with me to choose the better one (notes taken 21st September). No more late submission was evident.

My supervision was lessened toward the last phase. The student teachers seemed to get used to working with peer feedback for building lessons together. My role in guiding was becoming smaller so that the student teachers had more opportunities to be active in their practice of teaching and more visible in their learning. There was almost no tutor's supervision. Instead I provided facilitation for their work. In this phase I observed that the student teachers appeared to be enjoying their work a lot and to work autonomously. They also wrote in their journals that they had seen the progress they made for themselves. My role was smaller, but it did not mean I gave up the job. I still had to observe them carefully to adjust my teaching accordingly to make sure that their learning was effective. According to my observations, therefore, the learner autonomy increased by the end of the course.

Chapter 6: Discussion

My last two chapters will discuss the conclusions I have reached about the research questions posed in the first chapter of the thesis. Since my first two research questions concern a micro level of the research and the last two questions are related to a more macro level, this chapter discusses the first two of my research questions: 1) What factors hinder teacher learning in initial teacher education in Vietnam? 2) What factors contribute towards teacher learning being effective in initial teacher education in Vietnam? This discussion of these two research questions will then point towards the recommendations in the next chapter on the last two questions: 3) What are the most appropriate strategies to promote teachers' learning in Vietnam? 4) What is the role of teacher educators in redefining the teachers' and student teachers' identities?

Because I am interested in drawing out the nuances of cultural attitudes and behaviours that can be interpreted in different ways I have tried to analyse the data closely, reading and interpreting the same comments in relation to these different but overlapping ideas. I hope, with this close analysis, to draw out nuances of cultural difference, which is necessary to understand the underpinning values of participants in the study. In my view, in order to develop and change it is important to build from where people are at so that we will be able to develop the most appropriate strategies to take action. Therefore, these micro nuances drawn out from different but overlapping ideas are important and serve as foundation to determine bigger ideas at a more macro level.

In my set of data there are two groups of teachers – initial teacher training students (student teachers) and a cohort of experienced teachers (tutors). However, the main focus of this study is on the student teachers, who experienced the intervention to examine changes, if any, to this particular

group of student teachers. The experienced tutors, who are the teachers of these student teachers, were approached for the pre-intervention data, but did not experience the intervention. Therefore, I expected that more change was likely to happen in the group of student teachers. The tutors could, however, be impacted though some communication via the staff meeting discussion, but they were not scrutinised for changes. The data relating to these two groups are considered in reference to the literature review of constructivist teacher learning theories, the popular culture of Vietnam and my own learning journal, which I kept during the intervention, as well as the personal experience in my own journey of becoming a researcher.

I use Hofstede's cultural framework (2010) as the analytical framework in this chapter to scrutinise the two sets of data in relation to the above references because I am fundamentally interested in how and whether the Western learning theories can work in the East. As discussed before in chapter four, the deepest area of learning takes place in the learner's emotions, values, and beliefs; this cultural framework enables me to see how the Vietnamese student teachers adapted their learning to an environment in which Western theories were embedded and to track what changes (if any) were taking place during the intervention. This cultural framework offers a way to think about the appropriate strategies for change and to anticipate what problems there would be if actions for change are taken. Among the six cultural dimensions of Hofstede, some dimensions have more explanatory power and are more salient for my data than the others. Therefore, I have applied these dimensions in my discussion of the data unevenly, guided by issues of salience and explanatory power. I begin the discussion with my consideration of Hofstede's Power Distance dimension, which has particular resonance for my data. I continue my discussion with the next dimensions, which are Individual vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, and Uncertainty Avoidance, which are closely related to the Power Distance dimension and to each other. I will not use the last two dimensions – Long term Orientation and Constraint vs. Indulgence – in my discussion because they are not pertinent to my data.

6.1. Discussion of factors hindering and contributing to effective teacher learning in initial teacher education in Vietnam

According to Hofstede et al. (2010), Vietnam is ranked at 22nd -25th for power distance index among 76 countries, sitting in the higher ranking scale. This ranking suggests that Vietnam is a large power distance country. My study has supported this view. A hierarchical relationship between teachers and those they taught was clearly evident, especially at the pre-intervention period. However, there were signs showing that this hierarchy became blurred as the intervention progressed.

It was found from the pre-intervention data that both tutors and student teachers seemed to unthinkingly accept a hierarchical relationship. They both viewed the tutor as being in a dominant role. The student teachers said that in their teacher training course the tutors were dominant; the classes were teacher-centred; the student teachers relied upon their teachers to tell them how to improve their teaching. The overwhelming majority of the student teachers maintained that their tutor often told them what to do to improve their teaching. And the teacher's dominant role as a knowledge source was also expected by the student teachers. In the student teachers' views, they expected the tutors to give them explicit feedback (45 out of 91 informants) or to indicate their wrong teaching techniques, mistakes and explain to them (25 out of 91 informants) or to elaborate on their strengths and weaknesses (24 out of 91 informants). The student teachers' view of the role of their tutors was confirmed by all the tutors' responses to their questionnaires. They all said that it was true that they often told the student teachers what to do to improve their teaching. In the tutors' perceptions they considered their role as someone who directed the student teachers' learning and therefore 'with

feedback given, students know what they have done is good or bad' (Mai) or someone who was to give 'specific and precise comments' and 'to show them [student teachers] the ways to improve the weaknesses' (Hoa). Thus, they corrected their student teachers, identified weaknesses, indicated mistakes, made immediate judgement, criticised their performance. This is how Hofstede et al. (2010) describe a large power distance culture, where 'the educational process is teacher-centred; teachers outline intellectual paths to be followed. In the classroom there is supposed to be a strict order, with the teacher initiating all communication' (p.69).

As regards student teachers' role, therefore, both sets of respondents agreed in viewing student teachers as passive receivers who needed to depend on the tutor. In fact, the findings from the pre-intervention questionnaires showed that 76% of the student teachers considered that they 'spend most of their time listening to their tutors and peers'. This view was also accorded with the tutors' responses. When asked about the reasons why micro-teaching feedback was important, no tutors regarded feedback as offering opportunities or space for student teachers to explore new ideas and discover new areas of learning. Conversely, they viewed student teachers as needing to embrace a passive role, for example, 'listening to peers' feedback and taking notes' (Nga, Minh); listening to the tutors' feedback and taking notes (Hoa, Nga). Almost all the verbs scanned from the tutors' suggestions about the role of student teachers during feedback sessions showed a passive role; the verbs that show a more active role and more involvement from the part of student teachers, such as 'negotiate', 'discuss', or 'explore' were not evident in the tutors' responses. Hoa's comment, when expressing her concern about the time constraint for the practice of teaching, revealed that she thought that the student teachers needed to 'cover all those requirements for a whole lesson they need to conform to'. Her use of the verb 'conform' suggests a strong sense of hierarchy in mind and she insists on the need for student teachers to depend on, or at least, be seen to accord with the tutor's views.

Furthermore, an interesting note from the findings was that both tutors and the student teachers felt contented with these hierarchical roles. 77% of the student teachers thought that they were given a chance to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement although they admitted that they spent most of the time listening during the feedback session. This implies that the student teachers either felt contented with this passive way of learning or they were given a chance to explore the knowledge by themselves but they did not use it. They did not appear to feel oppressed as commented upon by Saito et al. (2008, p.98) in the literature. This demonstrated what Hofstede et al. (2010) indicated that in a large power distance culture 'the need for dependence is well established in the student's mind' (p.69). And the tutors, in their responses, also thought that they gave their students this chance of learning. This suggests that the extent to which both the student teachers and the tutors 'expect and accept' the power of the tutors is large.

Nonetheless, the tutors' and student teachers' expression of the hierarchical relationship was not the practice that they necessarily wished to have in the current educational context. In fact, with the implementation of MOET educational reforms, these hierarchical roles were likely to have been regarded by both student teachers and tutors as something backward, related to the traditional teaching approach and needing to be eradicated. There had been conferences, workshops, seminars, and staff meetings both at national and university levels which emphasised the importance of learner-centred approaches, active learning, cooperative learning, peer work or group work. The student teachers had been taught that they needed to be active learners. The tutors were the ones that conducted these lessons, so they had been introduced to and often spoke about all those terms related to learner-centred teaching, cooperative learning, peer learning, group work etc., where they needed to facilitate the student teachers' learning and encourage them to work in groups in order to move away from the traditional teaching. In that context, when asked directly about the roles of the student teachers and the tutors, it would be likely that they would say what had been introduced to

them. The question is whether or not the tutors as well as the student teachers understand what they say or actually do as they say. For example, in the pre-intervention questionnaires, when asked about the student teachers' roles, some student teachers did state that their role was to be active. However, being active for them meant being active in asking for the tutor's clarification: 'Students are not passive. They are active in group work. If there is anything that they don't know they can ask the tutor' (student 8). Another student thought that being active meant taking part in and understanding what the tutor told them: 'Student teachers should take part in lessons actively, understand and be aware of principles and techniques, which tutor provides' (student 16). Thus, the role of these students remained dependent on the tutor. They aimed at a two way communication between the tutor and the student, but they had not been able to grow out of the unequal relationship in which they continued to consider the tutor as a source of all knowledge. The concept of group work, according to a respondent to post-intervention question 15, was extended to include individual members of the group working alone and then connecting by using electronic links. That means, the members of the group just needed to work individually and then sent his/her work over email to compose the whole work for the group. So it was actually individual work as there was no discussion to construct the work together.

According to Michael (2006), the fundamental tenet of constructivism is that 'learning involves the active construction of meaning by the learner' (p.160). The active role of the learner is manifested by his/her relating the old information that the learner has already had to the new one and reflecting on this to internalise the new information into his/her own knowledge. Therefore, to be active learners, the students need to have 'intentional learning' (Grabinger and Dunlap, 1995, p.15), to possess self-questioning and self-reflection skills, to be able to regulate their own learning and acquire the knowledge for themselves. How student 8 and student 16 described their role is far from the role of an active learner in this sense. It actually suggests that

they try to be independent but still cannot wean themselves off the dependence on the tutor, or at least the contextual factors are not present to allow this process to happen. The role of the student teachers in the kind of group work without discussion or sharing ideas as mentioned by student teacher 15 above does not show active learning. All of these three student teachers demonstrated that their learning lacked interaction using language to mediate the meaning among the group members (Vygotsky, 1978), lacked reflection on the work they did (Schön, 1983), and lacked the regulation of learning through experience (Kolb, 1984b).Furthermore, this did not show visible learning (Hattie, 2009) on the part of the student teachers. As such, although they used the word 'active' to address their role, there is evidence for a lack of deep understanding of the notions of active learning, group work, or learner-centred approaches. There seemed to be a strong cultural pull that prevented the student teachers from being independent from the tutors. This issue partly relates to the role of the tutors and the learning environment they are immersed in.

The mismatch between what was said and what was actually done was also found in the tutors' responses. For example, the tutors stated in the questionnaires and in the staff discussion that they provided the student teachers with opportunities to be active in 'peer feedback' and 'group work'. Nga and Minh, for example, suggested peer feedback as one of the effective feedback methods. However, evidence from their other responses reveals that Nga understood the term 'peer feedback' as uni-directional feedback from classmates to the presenter, and Minh asked her students to do peer feedback in written form without discussion. Mai seemed to be well aware of the importance for the students to work in groups and to give them a space for critical thinking and reflection. However, in her other responses, it was evident that Mai was keen on giving 'detailed feedback' and did not have enough time for it. Hoa found it difficult to 'cover all the requirements they [student teachers] need to conform to for a whole lesson. It should be noted that the terms 'peer learning', 'collaborative learning', 'group work' are not

unfamiliar to the tutors. In fact these terms have become 'fashionable' in the context of the MOET educational reforms, which place a great emphasis on constructivist learning and learner-centeredness. However, how much these terms are understood and how much they have been put into practice remains a question. I will take up this question further about policies planning related to the appropriate strategies and the role of Vietnamese teacher educators in the next chapter.

Peer learning, collaborative learning, and group work, whose tenets are based on Vygotsky's social learning theory, are important to promote a meaningful student learning environment and develop the social, cultural, and intellectual capability for students. According to Boud et al. (2001), peer learning is 'a two-way, reciprocal learning activity. Peer learning should be mutually beneficial and involve the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between the participants' (p.3). Keppell et al. (2006) also maintains that peer learning 'involves students teaching and learning from each other' (p.453). The unidirectional feedback from classmates without sharing or discussion among the peers, which Minh and Nga conducted in their classes, cannot be called peer feedback in this sense. In my view, that way of working in class, conversely, does a disservice to students, giving them a false understanding of the nature of their roles in peer learning and collaborative work. Also, Mai's 'detailed feedback' and Hoa's asking the student teachers to 'conform' to the criteria of a lesson, on the one hand, takes them time, on the other hand, deprives the students of the opportunities for 'teaching and learning from each other' and reveals the dominant role towards teacher-centeredness. As such, the tutors and the student teachers alike have been introduced to and are trying to move towards a student-centred approach, but it can only be seen on the surface level. The deep structure of the context is not compatible with its surface. I would argue that the change towards a student-centred approach that MOET is trying to put into effect via its educational reforms is taking place, but the core structure of the context has not caught up with the change on the face of it. Without a deeper understanding the move towards

adopting constructivist pedagogies makes no real sense, especially if the implementation of these approaches has not been from a constructivist pedagogical stance.

6.1.1. Respect as a positive factor for learning

The effect of large power distance in Vietnam – hierarchical relationships between teachers and students - is marked. According to Hofstede et al. (2010) in the culture that expects and accepts hierarchy, the teacher is a 'guru', a term meaning 'weighty' or 'honourable' and therefore, is 'treated with respect or even with fear (and older teachers even more so than young ones)' (p.69). As such, this hierarchy causes two levels of the attitude from the 'less powerful members' towards the more powerful ones: respect and fear.

Respect from the student teachers towards the tutor was found in student teachers' journals. A huge number of comments from the journals offered their gratitude towards the tutor simply for teaching them: 'Thank you for choosing our class to teach' (student 16); 'thank you for the time we had together' (student 5). These attitudes obviously express their respect to the tutor. The respect can also be demonstrated in the student teachers' admiration of the tutor's knowledge. The student teachers looked up to the tutor as 'an image of a model teacher' (student 16). When expressing their expectations of the course, a student shared her admiration for the tutor's experience: 'Could you [the tutor] tell us some tips about your way to succeed as a teacher like you?' (Student 14). According to Phan and Le (2013) this respect is gained through two roles that Vietnamese teachers are supposed to take – a knowledge guide and a moral guide:

> The philosophy in Vietnamese teaching is imbued with moral codes that developed nearly three thousand years. ... Teachers are given highest status because they are expected to be role models and knowledge guides (p.244).

This respect from student teachers towards their tutor was seen to have brought positive consequences, such as fostering the student teachers' motivation in their learning, nurturing their dreams to become a good teacher as noted in these journal comments:

> We always receive your [the tutor's] encouragement and compliments. That has motivated us to improve ourselves. (Student 7)

> I love what you did and I would like to become a qualified teacher like you in the future. (Student 5)

This desire of becoming a teacher in their dreams would nurture belief in themselves that they would be able do it in the future and would strive for it. This belief could pave the way to develop the expectancy component of motivation including self-efficacy (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000), which was defined by Thoonen et al. (2011) as ' a future oriented belief about the level of competence that a person expects he or she will display in a given situation' (p.504). Thoonen et al. (2011) examined the role of teacher motivation, organizational factors, and leadership practices and claimed that 'Teachers' sense of self efficacy appears to be the most important motivational factor for explaining teacher learning and teaching practices' (Thoonen et al., 2011, p.517). Therefore, respect and regard for the teacher as a role model or even an idol to aim at, which can build up a high expectation of oneself, could contribute to the development of self-efficacy.

The respect for the teacher also generated passion for learning. The comments such as 'I felt happy when I was instructed by you [the tutor] in this interesting subject' (student 16); 'you made us like learning this subject. I always feel happy when I go to school on Wednesday' (student 18); 'your encouragement always motivates us to improve and try our best. Thank you for that' (student 7) were popular among the participants. These comments suggest that the student teachers' respect for the tutor motivated them to get involved into the subject area with passion. Hattie (2009) wrote about passion in education that 'the key components of passion for the teacher and for the learner appear to be the sheer thrill of being a learner or teacher, the

absorption that accompanies the process of teaching and learning, the sensations in being involved in the activity of teaching and learning, and the willingness to be involved in deliberate practice to attain understanding' (p.23) and asserted that 'it is among the most prized outcomes of schooling'. As such, respect for the teacher is a positive factor that promotes 'visible learning'.

Another noticeable positive side of respect is that it contributes to a harmonious learning environment. Kolb and Kolb (2005) maintained that respect for the members of the learning community is one of the main principles to build a good environment for experiential learning to grow fruitfully. That is the environment, where the 'learners feel that they are members of a learning community who are known and respected by faculty and colleagues and whose experience is taken seriously'. In my study, it was noted from the staff meeting discussion, in which the tutors took turns to speak according to seniority and status, so that the older and the ones who have higher status spoke first. In this situation, a particular respect for status and seniority is clearly demonstrated, resulted in a harmonious working environment with no conflicts or arguments. However, it does not show other elements of respect, such as, respect for differing opinions or respect for diversity. The respect for other junior members, for example, when a junior member of the meeting challenged a point, was not evident. This feature of seniority consideration accords with how Hofstede describes a large power culture (p.69). It is also pertinent to what was noted in my discussion of Vietnamese popular culture (chapter two).

Another side revealed in this staff meeting is that younger people often automatically regarded themselves as of lower status. They felt inferior and therefore dare not speak their own ideas. My discussion with staff therefore became an interview with me asking and each of my colleagues taking turns to answer my questions. I think this point was coming over to the other side of the same notion- the attitude of fear. The feeling of fear was also found in

the findings of the pre-intervention questionnaires with the student teachers since 60% of the informants felt more confident if they did their teaching without the tutor. It suggests that the presence of the tutor affected their emotions because of the fear towards the tutor. The passive role of student teachers also implied this hidden fear.

6.1.2. Fear as a negative factor for learning

Fear is the feeling that affects well-being. This affective variable is associated with Krashen's 'affective filter hypothesis' (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) in his second language acquisition theory study. According to these scholars, acquirers with optimal attitudes often do better than the opposites. They are hypothesised to have a lower affective filter that allows the input to reach the acquirers. If the acquirers have negative attitudes, for example, not feeling good about themselves, or having high anxiety, the affective filter will be higher and block the input. Therefore, classrooms that encourage low filters will help students acquire the input better. Thus, according to this theory, fear that is associated with high anxiety will be a negative factor for the acquisition of language skills. Thus, fear often makes people feel anxious. People with high anxiety are considered to be less open, defensive and therefore often feel reluctant to take risks or try out new things.

As such, the feeling of fear prevents one from trying out new experience, which in the light of constructivism hinders learning. According to Kolb's experiential learning theory, learning is defined as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984b, p.41). Thus, experience is the prerequisite component for learning to occur. This is a process of learning and relearning, constructing and reconstructing knowledge that was 'examined, tested, and integrated with new more refined ideas' (Kolb and Kolb, 2005, p.194). Kolb and Kolb (2005) set out a concept of 'learning space' in order to enhance learning experience. This refers to not

only the experience related to the subject matter under study, but also to the whole personal life of the learner. 'This includes the learner's physical and social environment and quality of relationships' (p.207). Kolb and Kolb (2005) contended that learning in the environment where 'learners feel alienated, alone, unrecognized, and devalued ... can be difficult if not impossible' (p.207). Therefore, according to this constructivist theory, the feeling of fear will lead to a sterile learning environment.

Students' attitude of fear towards teachers also hinders the development of social skills, ability to discuss and negotiate ideas, peer learning etc., which are components of Vygotsky's interactive learning model. Since Vietnamese students have to conform to their cultural norms that require them to respect teachers, 'they often perform as expected at schools, although they may not be satisfied with the given knowledge' (Phan, 2001, p.298). This passive style prevents them from being outspoken to express their opinions. Therefore, discussing ideas, asking questions, contradicting teachers are far from usual. This is agreed in Hofstede et al. (2010) that 'students in class speak up only when invited to; teachers are never publicly contradicted or criticised and are treated with deference even outside school' (p.60). According to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is constructed by the learners' interacting with each other to negotiate and discuss ideas. By doing so, they can reflect on the experience they have and internalise it into their own knowledge. Vygotsky believed that isolated learning cannot lead to cognitive development. He insisted on interaction and collaboration work as the key to construct knowledge within the learner's 'zone of proximal development'. Michael (2006) reviewed research in learning sciences, cognitive science, and educational psychology to find evidence that active learning works and found that individuals are likely to learn more with others than they learn alone. He maintained that there is solid evidence to support cooperative learning. In the light of this theory, Vietnamese students seem to have limited space for construction of knowledge due to their passive style. The feeling of fear plays a great part in the cause of this passive learning style, which leads to this limitation.

6.1.3. Over- reliance as a negative factor for learning

Unquestioning respect towards the tutor can generate not only fear, but also the over reliance of the student teachers on the tutor. The student teachers in my study thought that the tutors were so good that they invested their total trust in them. In the pre-intervention questionnaires, 95% of the informants stated that they wanted to see the tutor modelling as an example to learn teaching. In the open ended questions, quite a few student teachers thought that the feedback session is a chance when 'the tutor gives solutions to the student teachers' problems' or 'instructs how to teach' or 'orients, navigates the student teachers' teaching'. Some considered that this is 'a chance for tutor to judge, evaluate, review student teachers' performance', show them what an effective lesson looks like, or for the student teachers to listen to the tutor's comments. Even at the beginning of the intervention, some of the student teachers shared their total belief in the teacher's knowledge and experience stating that 'because the teacher [the tutor] has lots of experience and so she can give me correction of what we should and shouldn't do' or 'sometimes I feel confused of what is right and what is wrong without the tutor's feedback'. Although there were a few student teachers (before the intervention) who showed that they wanted a discovery way of learning for themselves, considering feedback sessions are opportunities to share ideas to improve practice, the general impression is that the student teachers were over reliant on the tutor. This finding supports Ta (2012), who studied the roles in the collaboration of teacher trainers and teacher trainees and found that 'the respect towards trainers' knowledge even turned some trainees into passive listeners who solely listened and did not make contributions to the collaborative task'. Thus, the student teachers relied too much on the tutor. This finding, consequently, seems to show a divergence from the study by Littlewood (2000), who claimed that Asian students, including Vietnamese students, do not really want to listen to their teachers. Littlewood, however, maintained that 'if Asian students do indeed adopt the passive classroom attitudes that are often claimed, this is more likely to be a consequence of the

educational contexts that have been or are now provided for them, than of any inherent dispositions of the students themselves' (p.33).

The hierarchical relationship between students and teachers as found in the pre-intervention data has been culturally established for many years. From my own personal experience (chapter one), I grew up with the strict teachings from my parents that required every child to respect the elders, parents, and teachers without questions. Those teachings have been acquired in the mind set, which controls every aspect of my life, determines my behaviours and thoughts. This practice was also documented in literature. For example, Phan (2001) maintained that this tradition of respect 'is warmly welcomed by Vietnamese people who, since the very beginning of their personality formation, are injected with respect for father's moral instructions, mother's love and sacrifice, and teacher's knowledge, education and training' (p.298). The fact that the teacher takes a dominant role and the student takes a passive role and is dependent on the teacher has also been documented in other publications (T. T. Nguyen, 2005; Saito et al., 2008; Thanh, 2010; Barnard and Viet, 2010; Le, 2013). It was also well documented in popular culture, which demonstrates that the tradition of respecting teachers has long historical roots, which 'are sets of social practices constructed by the long-standing tradition of respect for teachers and the teaching profession proudly practised by Vietnamese people' (Phan, 2001, p.297). 'Không thày đố mày làm nên' (Without the teacher, you surely cannot be successful), a very famous proverb, is still passed on today.

As such, can these long rooted cultural features be changed and should they be changed? Hofstede also posed a question about the future of these power distance traits. Will large power distance become smaller? Will Vietnamese younger generations of students change their view of the two culturally established hierarchical roles of teachers and students? Will they keep the belief that 'không thày đố mày làm nên' (without teachers, you surely cannot be successful)? Will the later generations still find the images of teachers as a

ferryman or a gardener or a father, or the image of a teacher with silver hair, poetic and offer unquestioning respect for teachers? It was in order to see if these long rooted cultural features can change or should change, and in turn bring about elements of change of the current educational context, that I conducted the intervention.

The post-intervention questionnaires show evidence of a small power distance culture, which means the large power distance of Vietnamese culture discussed before became smaller. First, it was found that the student teachers appeared to be more independent in their learning. In the post-intervention questionnaires, although only 38% of the respondents thought they could learn from self-reflection without feedback from the tutor, up to 66% believed that they could learn from peers without the need to listen to the tutor. A further 90% of the informants approved the role of the tutor as a facilitator for their discussion without the need to give explicit feedback. However, a smaller number of the respondents still shared a total belief in the teacher's knowledge or expressed their mistrust of their peers. This evidence suggests that although the student teachers did not show great confidence in their ability to find the 'intellectual path' for themselves, the dependence of the student teachers on the tutor was documented to be less. That this independence was increased gradually as the course progressed was asserted by 83% of the informants. One student teacher explained her answer further (in response to question 13) by sharing the thought that '... at the beginning, this module is quite new, also it is a new method for us. At first teacher plays a role of a controller, then a facilitator. And now we can do it on our own under the teacher's guidance'. 93% of the student teachers felt more confident and more independent in lesson planning and teaching on their own at the end of the intervention (in response to question 14). While 34% of the student teachers, in response to question 6, still stated that they could not learn without the tutor, in response to question 16, the student teachers most appreciated 'the opportunities to work with other students and discuss ideas' (72%) and the opportunities 'to work with and learn from others' (97%).

Thus, the student teachers showed a larger degree of independence. They demonstrated their activeness in learning for themselves by interacting with each other to discuss and sharing ideas.

However, in the first phase of the course, the student teachers were really struggling and felt that they did not learn without the tutor's lecturing. They felt so strongly about this new approach of teaching that they decided to write an email to me as the whole class. The email expressed their discomfort at having no conventional tutor and said they wished to have more lecturing on theories of teaching. They thought they were 'unable to keep pace with the syllabus' and asked me to present the theories of the lesson before they did the practice: 'I, myself, can do nothing without a good theoretical background. So, would you mind spending a little time in the beginning of the lesson introducing the new items of the lessons?' (Email from K60A sent on 12th September, 2012). The student teachers thought that without my lectures they would not be able to have good theoretical background. However, with my patience in explaining and familiarising them to the new approach, they gradually were convinced by the way of working with peers and with the tutor just taking the role of a facilitator. This email, at the same time, enables us to see the student teachers' activeness and responsibility for their own learning. They took action to find a way to improve their learning.

The above findings disclose two things: there was change in the student teachers' view about the role of the tutor and they believed that the tutor did not have to be with them all the time to 'spoon-feed' them. They were intellectually convinced about the learning mode, which encourages more independent and active learning and puts the learner in the centre of the learning process. Nonetheless, the student teachers found it hard culturally to bring themselves to the new learning mode because there was always a cultural pull about the role of the tutor, which made them need to take time to be convinced. According to Hofstede's framework, this indication shows small power distance features, where 'the educational process is student-

centred, with a premium on student initiative; students are expected to find their own intellectual paths' and 'the entire system is based on the students' well-developed need for independence' (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.70). According to constructivist theories of learning, these findings also suggest that the space for the student teachers to become reflective practitioners increased as there were signs of independent learning, interactive learning and experiential learning. This allows a teacher as a learner to be the centre of the learning process and be responsible for his/ her own learning (Randall and Thornton, 2001) (also discussed in chapter 3).

Another change that was found after the intervention is that there was a more equal relationship between the student teachers and the tutor. At the beginning of the intervention, I deliberately expressed myself as equal to the student teachers. I hoped this attitude would create the effect of changing the attitude of the student teachers too so that a more equal relationship would be practised in the classroom. I hoped they would have more agency in their learning and when working with me. The first evidence was the email, which has been mentioned before, from the student teachers to me, a class tutor. It should be noted that it is not a common practice for students in Vietnam to write to a teacher to ask for a change in the teacher's teaching methods. They can email the teacher to ask about classes although that is also not a common communication. Therefore, it was daring of them to raise the issue of the teaching method directly to the tutor. In order to raise this issue, the student teachers nominated the most confident student teacher to write to me on their behalf. Although they did not dare to write to me as individuals, this email shows that they have got their voice and found their position in the learning journey. And although the email was to ask for a more dominant tutor's role, they knew what they wanted for their own learning. This made them become more independent and responsible for their study. The hierarchy, therefore, was disrupted to allow two way communications between the tutor and the student teachers.

This equality was also found in the student teachers' journals. Some linguistic elements in a journal entry show a more equal relationship: 'Today I finished the recording of teaching grammar. So sad cos I couldn't do it well' (student 4). She knew the tutor would read her comment. Using a colloquial language 'cos' to communicate to the tutor shows a close relationship and a feeling of confidence in the communication. In another journal entry, the student teacher felt close enough with the tutor to share her feeling and her own issue: 'My speaking skill is still bad. I tried, but it doesn't seem to change. I'm so sad, I can't become a teacher' (student 22). In another entry, she wrote 'I smiled too much. A teacher should be formal, right? But I'm like a child, not a teacher' (Student 22). This sharing of emotions from the student teachers indicated their passion for learning, which, according to Hattie (2009, p.23), 'reflects the thrills as well as the frustrations of learning – it can be infectious, it can be taught, it can be modelled, and it can be learnt'. And this passion attributes the 'visible learning'. Furthermore, these examples have revealed some extent of equality in the tutor – student teachers relationship. It was evident that this equal relationship created a positive environment for teacher learning. It created a safe space for the student teachers to confidently speak their mind, to share their ideas and ask questions. Student 1 said 'I like your lessons because I don't feel stressed or worried. Conversely, we feel very joyful. The most memorable is your smile'. This comment was further confirmed by student 8: 'You have made every lesson enjoyable and interesting, shortened the distance between the tutor and the student'. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), this safe environment contributes to increasing the learners' motivation and lowering the 'affective filter' and facilitates the process of acquiring the input. It also created a 'learning space' for learning to take place (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

Through working in this learning space the concepts of peer learning and group work, which were misunderstood by some of the student teachers, were clearer. In the previous courses, the student teachers gave anonymous written comments to individual members in the group and it was called 'peer

feedback' (as mentioned earlier). In this intervention, they immersed themselves in class activities that required a lot of peer work and group work with a lot of discussion. Most of the participants enjoyed this group work experience (72%). In a journal entry, one student teacher commented about the group work activity: 'We also have a lot of fun in videoing within our group and with other groups too. We laughed a lot, chatted with each other a lot. And this helped me build confidence' (student 1). However, working in groups this way did not always bring good feeling. It did the opposite too: 'I feel more confident when working in some small groups. Sometimes I work with some partners and I don't want to give many ideas to them because some of them ignore these ideas' (a student teacher's explanation for her answer to question 10); 'Sometimes when I give feedback, others don't feel happy with my judgement. Some partners are peevish' (a student teacher's explanation for her answer to question 11). The point here is not so much about what kind of feelings the group work produces, but the fact that they did discuss together and express their own opinions. That is the reason why it led to conflicts. Although a few of them admitted that sometimes they worked individually because they did not have enough time to meet, the terms 'group work'; 'peer work'; 'individual work' make the right sense to these student teachers.

Furthermore, in the learning space mentioned earlier, in which the hierarchy was disrupted, we did not see the tutor's lecturing knowledge or see her transferring teaching ideas to the student teachers. The tutor actually created this learning space for the student teachers, where they discussed and shared teaching ideas while reflecting on their teaching. This space was for the student teachers to communicate with each other to comment from each other and together construct teaching skills. The student teachers had the opportunities to experiment with lesson planning and implement their own teaching plans. They learnt from errors and feedback from tutors and peers by reflecting on the experience to make connections across ideas. This is how 'visible learning' takes place (Hattie, 2009, p.25). According to Hofstede et al.

(2010), in a small power distance society, at school, 'teachers are supposed to treat the students as basic equals and expect to be treated as equals by the students' (p.69) and this equal relationship contributes to effective learning because 'effective learning in such a system depends very much on whether the supposed two-way communication between students and teacher is, indeed, established' (ibid., p.70). Thus, with the intervention, the cultural learning and teaching moved from a large power distance to a small power distance.

This dynamic has also been evident in the Vietnamese popular culture. The traditional hierarchy in education as well as the images of Vietnamese teachers have also been changing over time. The traditional view of teacher was as someone in a distance for his important position in 'Muốn sang phải bắc cầu kiều, muốn con hay chữ thì yêu lấy thày' (If you want to come to the other shore, you have to make a beautiful bridge over the river; if you want your child to be knowledgeable, you have to respect the teacher in the first place). This image was documented in the post-revolutionary period to have changed into a more caring icon as a topiarist or a grower who sows seeds of love (Thày gieo hạt mầm nhân ái) in each blank field (Trên từng mảnh đất sơ khai) (H. Đ. Nguyễn, n.d.). The image of the student also changed accordingly and was depicted as an empty field for the teacher to 'sow seeds of love' or as a sapling for the teacher to shape it into a bonsai. The teacher at this period of time as suggested in this verse was supposed to be a moral role model and was in charge of shaping a child's character. This image of a correct moral example, however, does not seem to be the focus in the modern time. Also, seniority does not seem to be the criterion for assessing a teacher. The young teacher in the film 'Chiến dịch trái tim bên phải' (The right-side heart campaign), directed by Đào Duy Phúc, released in 2005, alternatively is loved and respected for her creativity and devotion to her students. And the students in this film were depicted as a reverse to the traditional passive obedient images, as clever but naughty and stubborn kids who need to be curbed.

Another dimension that is used to discuss the findings of my study is the 'individual vs. collectivist' dimension. It was found from Hofstede's study that Vietnam is regarded as a highly collectivistic society. My data, especially the data from the pre-intervention survey, support this finding. Hofstede et al. (2010) indicated one of the key features of collectivist society that 'harmony should always be maintained and direct confrontations avoided' (p.113). Both student teachers and tutors in my study showed their cautiousness when having to express their disagreement in the pre-intervention questionnaires. They both tended to be neutral and avoided strong overt disagreement. Therefore, the attitudes of being neutral and not wanting to spoil the harmony from both the young student teachers and experienced tutors suggested a collectivist culture.

This cultural trait prevails in many other learning and teaching activities of both the tutors and student teachers. For example, in the staff meeting, the tutors took turns to speak, which was discussed in the power distance dimension as showing respect, it can also be interpreted as harmony being maintained. In this staff meeting, everybody knew their own place and acted in a well-organised order and with a polite manner to avoid conflicts. And indeed, the meeting went smoothly without conflicts. Another example is how tutors Nga and Minh conducted what they called 'peer feedback'. Their approach to peer feedback revealed that the student teachers did not speak up and discuss teaching ideas openly. They, in fact, gave written comments in groups in Minh's class, probably for the fear that 'direct appraisal of subordinates spoils harmony' (ibid., p.124). That is the reason why Minh suggested anonymous feedback for the improvement of feedback delivery. Another example was in Nga's class, where the student teachers actually spoke up to comment on the teaching on behalf of the group, which turned the peer feedback activity into a whole class activity and therefore the benefits of peer feedback were lost. It also did a disservice to the student teachers' understanding of peer feedback.

The fear of spoiling harmony causes the suppression of feelings, which causes a hesitancy and lack of confidence in speaking up. For this reason, the student teachers dared not speak their mind or discuss with other student teachers, let alone with the tutor. This was revealed in Mai's and Hoa's suggestions about the student teachers' role for effective feedback. The suggestions that the student teacher should 'have an open talk with the tutor to give further explanation of his/her teaching' (Mai) or 'ask the tutor to clarify details during her feedback' (Hoa) imply hesitation and lack of confidence on the student teachers' side.

All this evidence agrees with Hofstede's description of the collectivist classroom, where every member of the group tends to identify himself or herself as a part of a 'we' group and hesitate to speak up individually. The students do not speak up until they are singled out by the teacher or when an individual is chosen by the group to speak on behalf of the group. Hofstede et al. (2010) explained that it is because 'in the collectivist classroom, the virtues of harmony and maintaining face reign supreme. Confrontations and conflicts should be avoided or at least should be formulated so as not to hurt anyone; students should not lose face if this can be avoided' (p.118).

In these ways, 'harmony' becomes crucial to collectivist cultures. The ideal of harmony comes from Confucian philosophy, which has widespread influence on Confucian Heritage countries, including Vietnam. Harmony is a highly appreciated factor that is believed to contribute to one's success in social affairs and to the maintenance of social order. According to Li (2006), there are three important things in human affairs that contribute to success – good timing, being advantageously situated and having harmonious people. Of all these three factors, harmony is the most important in order to achieve a major goal in social affairs: 'Good timing is not as good as being advantageously situated, and being advantageously situated is not as good as having harmonious people' (p.587). Thus, in order to achieve success it is

most important is to have people who work in harmony with one another. However, harmony according to Confucius is different from sameness. A good person 'harmonises, but does not seek sameness whereas the petty person seeks sameness, but does not harmonise' (p.586). Therefore, harmony needs to be understood as the harmonisation of different opinions, different viewpoints from different kinds of people and different sources of information to make consensus. 'For Confucius, a sensible person should be able to respect different opinions and be able to work with different people in a harmonious way (ibid., p.586-587).

From this understanding of harmony, it might be anticipated that students from a collectivist culture, who possess the virtue of harmony, would have a good foundation for cooperative learning, one of the important tenets in constructivist learning theories. However, research on this topic suggests that this is not the case. According to Phuong-Mai et al. (2005), 'the implementation of constructivism and one of its applications –cooperative learning- has ended up in failures, suspicion or resistance' in the Confucius Heritage Countries (CHC), including Vietnam (p.403). These scholars argued that 'CHC learners' main goal is to maintain group harmony, and this affects the nature of group interaction' because the fear of losing face and the efforts of trying to maintain harmony prevent CHC learners from engaging in the fundamental characteristics of face to face interactive learning for cooperative learning: i.e. - they should 'challenge each other, advocate each other, influence each other, strive for each other and arouse each other' (ibid., p.410).

6.1.4. Harmony as a positive factor for learning

It seems to be a paradox when learners from a collectivist culture, who are supposed to have qualities for group accommodating, do badly in cooperative learning. The idea of 'harmony', which is central to Vietnamese culture, merits

further consideration. It is true that harmony aims at peace and agreement. However, as Li (2006) points out 'Confucian harmony is not mere agreement without difference; it is not meant to preserve peace at any cost. Harmony is harmonization; real harmony is a dynamic process. It does not rule out strife, but uses strife in order to achieve greater harmony. Harmony comes from, and is maintained through, harmonization; it requires action' (ibid., p.592). Thus, there is a distinction between harmony as a state and harmony as a process of harmonisation. In the process of harmonisation, actions of discussion, negotiation, and compromise need to be taken to resolve strife in order to gain harmony. In this respect, harmonisation is a positive quality for cooperative learning, one of the main principles of constructivist learning. However, harmony as a state is often referred to as mere agreement and preservation of peace without considering differences. This kind of agreement and peace is often the result of suppression and oppression in order for individuals to compromise themselves for the sake of a harmonious relationship. The term 'harmony' is often misinterpreted as this kind of harmony as a state, rather than as a process of harmonisation. This state of harmony actually precludes harmony and does a disservice to cooperative learning and constructivist learning. According to Li (2006), in the light of Confucian philosophy, harmony and peace are interrelated, but 'temporary peace through oppression and suppression is not real peace, and it does not last' (p.600). Therefore, suppression and oppression, which can often be the result of maintaining harmony, are negative factors that can hinder learning.

It could be argued, then, that within collectivism there are two sides to the notion of harmony with harmonisation as a process at one side and suppression/ oppression on the other side. Harmony as a process of harmonisation in the light of Confucian ideal, as discussed above, which is gained through finding compromise between differences and the resolution of conflicts from different angles, is a positive factor that promotes constructivist learning since constructivist learning emphasises the importance of being cooperative for discussion and negotiation, while sharing

ideas and constructing knowledge from different perspectives with different people. According to Kolb and Kolb (2005) 'Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Conflict, differences, and disagreement are what drive the learning process' (p.194). Thus, the process of harmonisation in the Confucian ideal contributes to the requirements for this constructivist learning process to take place.

6.1.5. Suppression and oppression as negative factors for learning

However, the effort to maintain harmony veers often over to the other side - suppression and oppression. This is a negative factor that not only rules out harmony according to the Confucian ideal (Li, 2006), but also, according to constructivist theories, hinders learning. When being oppressed and trying to suppress the inner self, one will lose the chance to speak up and share ideas with others. In such an environment where everyone keeps their ideas unspoken, there will be no interaction, no reflection, no experience sharing, no visible learning, which limits the learning that can take place (Vygotsky, 1978; Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984b; Kolb and Kolb, 2005; Hattie, 2009). The hesitancy and lack of confidence in speaking up are caused by this negative side – suppression and oppression for the state of harmony.

Vietnamese learners' hesitancy and their lack of confidence are caused not only by this commitment to collectivism, but also by social and cultural hierarchies, the 'large power distance' practices as discussed before. Hofstede et al. (2010) stated that 'in cultures in which people are dependent on in-groups, these people are usually also dependent on power figures. ... In cultures in which people are relatively dependent from in-groups, they are usually also less dependent on powerful others' (pp.103-104). Thus, these two dimensions are interrelated and influential on each other.

Despite strong supporting evidence of collectivism in the pre-intervention survey, the data from the post-intervention phase suggested that that there was change in the student teachers from collectivism towards individualism. The need to save face did not affect their learning so dramatically. The student teachers were more ready to challenge themselves and others with frank negative feedback. 62% of them asserted that their self-esteem was not affected by frank negative feedback and about the same number of participants said they often gave frank feedback without worrying about making their peers lose face. This suggests that the discussion with peers and sharing ideas in groups was probably more important to them than saving face. The joy of discovering something new and the desire to share what they experienced, as well as to find out what others thought, made the act of saving face to maintain harmony become blurred. The desire to be in a harmonious community was surpassed by the individual need for learning. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), an individualistic classroom is one where 'confrontations and open discussion of conflicts are often considered salutary, and face-consciousness is weak or non-existent' (p.118). The journal entry of student 22 serves as an example of change over time in face-consciousness. In the first phase of the course, this student seemed resigned to failure; she felt insecure about herself and pressured to keep face when making a video of her teaching. However, this negative feeling improved later: 'Recording a clip is not a challenge with me anymore. I'm so happy about that'. Thus, one element of her face-consciousness became eliminated.

Nonetheless, quite a few participants (34%) said they did not dare to give frank feedback. The most common reason revealed was that 'sometimes I was worried that I would make them [peers] lose face'; 'I considered my peer's attitude'; or 'I can do that in writing, not speaking'. Thus, the cultural influence in maintaining peace and agreement for a harmonious relationship was still very strong. The student teachers could not speak their mind directly without considering the partner's attitude for the fear of breaking the peace in the relationship. The preference for giving feedback in writing rather than

in speaking, which was also seen before in tutor Minh's feedback sessions, suggests that the collectivist cultural feature was strong. This strong influence of collectivist culture made it hard for many of the participants to feel comfortable in group learning. This can be seen in the responses to question 15, which suggest that many participants were not quite comfortable with collaborative learning. Although the majority (65%) said that they felt comfortable with working with peers and (55%) of the participants asserted that they had been working in groups all the time, 45% of the participants admitted that they sometimes worked individually as long as the work was shared among the group members. One of the participants shared her group work experience: 'we feel working in the group is not effective because we often spend time chatting with each other and opposite ideas between members is also a big problem'. This implies that these student teachers did not consider these 'confrontations and open discussion of conflicts' 'salutary', but problematic. Obviously, it was not easy for the student teachers, who were from a collectivist culture to utilise the learning style that is often applicable in an individualist culture.

Apart from the change in the need for saving face, there was as well a change in confidence in the student teachers. It was found in the pre-intervention survey that there was a lot of hesitation about speaking up and a lack of confidence when speaking in front of a crowd, and perhaps more seriously, a lack of confidence in independent learning. In their journals, at the beginning of the course, the student teachers experienced negative emotions including anxiety, lack of confidence and low self-esteem. That is the reason why the most common expectations noted from the student teachers' journals were about building confidence to present or to deliver their teaching in front of a group of people. After the course, it was noted that most of the student teachers felt good about themselves as their confidence was improved considerably. This comment was typical: 'Now I can see clearly the difference between before and now. I can stand in front of a lot of people and speak quite fluently without stumbling like before. I have achieved the goal I set at

the beginning' (student 5). The student teachers were becoming more autonomous learners too, as discussed in the previous section about power distance. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), one of the key features of an individualist society is that 'autonomy is the ideal' (p.130). This learner autonomy promotes 'intentional learning' (Grabinger and Dunlap, 1995, p.15), which creates rich environments for active learning and 'deliberative practice' for 'visible learning' (Hattie, 2009, p.24).

Another feature evident during the intervention that can be regarded as individualist is that the student teachers were open to change and often felt enthusiastic and showed curiosity about the new learning approach. In the post-intervention survey, 65% of the student teachers maintained that they liked to try out new things; only 14% felt anxious about new things and only 7% did not want to change. Most of the student teachers showed their approval of the new feedback methods in the open-ended questions and in their journals. The most common view was: 'with this feedback approach, there are more ideas we can see and apply for my lessons and my experiences. Besides that, we can look at other student teachers' mistakes or reference to work by myself'. Journal entries also suggested the same view, showing approval of the new feedback approach and group learning: 'I like the way friends shared comments together' (student 9). Many others expressed their appreciation of the new feedback method and expressed their gratitude to the tutor for introducing this new method. This openness to change and readiness to learn new things are signs of individualist style, according to Hofstede et al. (2010), and an education aimed at 'preparing the individual for a place in the society of other individuals. This means learning to cope with new, unknown, unforeseen situations. There is a basically positive attitude towards what is new' (p.118). The student teachers in my research demonstrated this increasingly positive attitude as the intervention progressed. According to Hattie (2009), this 'willingness to be involved in deliberate practice' enhances 'visible learning' (p.23).

The next dimension that is used to analyse in the discussion of my data is 'femininity and masculinity dimension'. This dimension is related to both men and women, but the participants in my study are entirely female except for one male. By acknowledging this, I understand and support the view that gender is socially and culturally constructed. The views from the participants in my study have the potential to reflect the common views that has been deeply rooted and constructed by the Vietnamese society and culture. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), Vietnam is considered a feminine society, which means the society appreciate care and modesty and being visible is often ridiculed. However, literature shows that both feminine and masculine features are found in Vietnamese culture because the Vietnamese students have also been seen to strive hard for achievement and exams are often very competitive (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Le, 2013) , which characterises a masculine culture in Hofstede's terms.

In my study, more feminine elements were found, especially at the first phase of the study. These feminine features were manifested in both tutors' and student teachers' data. In the tutors' staff meeting discussion, the way the tutors took turns to speak according to seniority, which was analysed in the previous two dimensions as showing respect for status and seniority and harmony can as well be seen as showing the virtue of modesty. The younger tutors appeared to have been humbled themselves and tried not to be visible. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), maintaining harmony and being modest are the characteristics of a feminine society. 'A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with quality of life' (p.140).

This modesty was also found in the student teachers' data. In the first phase of the intervention, quite a few of the student teachers (8 out of 29) thought that they were not competent enough and wished to be improved during the course. They tried to show themselves as modest by talking about their

desires to build up what they lack. For example, this entry is very common among these student teachers:

> I hope I will be able to do it [teaching]. Hopefully, this subject will bring me a lot of experience, and be a turning point to gain confidence in me (student 4).

This student teacher expressed her expectations towards the course. And her expression does not sound assertive in saying what she wants. Instead, the word 'hopefully' demonstrates the sense of being tentative and the phrase 'a turning point to gain confidence' implies her criticism of herself for a lack of confidence and therefore showing her humble attitude when talking about herself. The whole entry expressed the virtue of modesty.

In their self-reflection journals during the practice of micro-teaching, the student teachers also tended to lower themselves by criticising themselves for being less than competent, rather than pointing out their improvements:

> My speaking skill is still bad. I tried, but it doesn't seem to change (student 22).

> After working with peers, I have the following comments: the most popular weaknesses are: lack of confidence, wrong pronunciation, grammar mistakes, activities are not participatory, low voice, instructions are not clear (student 7).

According to Hofstede et al. (2010), in a feminine culture, teachers do not praise good students. Instead, 'teachers will rather praise weaker students, in order to encourage them, than openly praise good students. Awards for excellence – whether for students or for teachers – are not popular; in fact, excellence is a masculine term' (p.159). The above student teachers must have shared the same belief so they tried to avoid the 'excellence' words about themselves. They in fact did the opposite, trying to state the negative side of their own performance.

6.1.6. Caring and modesty as positive factors for learning

This virtue of modesty showed both positive and negative sides. The positive side manifested in my study was the caring attitude they gave to each other, which creates and holds a hospitable space for learning. They listened to each other's comments and tried not to make each other feel hurt. This is very important to produce a welcoming and hospitable environment, where everyone feels confident to express themselves. According to Kolb and Kolb (2005), 'to learn requires facing and embracing differences; whether they be differences between skilled expert performance and one's novice status, differences between deeply held ideas and beliefs and new ideas, or experiences in life experience and values of others that can lead to understanding them' (p.207). These differences can be challenging and threatening. Therefore, there should be a psychological safety for the learners to overcome these challenges to express the differences. In a response to the question of the post intervention questionnaire to investigate the student teachers' confidence when giving feedback, some of the participants shared their cautiousness and consideration of their classmates' emotions, such as:

> I'm afraid of making my friends sad when giving straightforward feedback
>
> Sometimes I was worried that I would make them [her peers] lose face.

or

> I considered my peers' attitudes.

If there was not such a care, the student teachers might have felt threatened or shy and did not want to share their ideas, or to discuss their peers' experience. This caring attitude can create a mutual trust and understanding, which is very necessary for a safe learning environment. On the side of the feedback receivers, some student teachers (14%) showed their sacrifice of their personal needs in favour of the group. They explained in their replies to the question in the questionnaire in the way that showed they felt bad receiving the straightforward feedback, but they would not complain: 'their comments help me improve'; or 'I guess it's due to some misunderstanding'; or 'I don't think it's a bad thing, they just want me to become better'. This

care for others' emotions and the sacrifice of their self needs demonstrated a 'feminine' culture and contributed to a harmonious and effective communication, in which everybody got on well and together built up lesson plans for common goals and learnt together, as stated in these journal entries:

> I have found a friendly and open atmosphere. All of us are free to speak out our opinions and have opportunities to practise (Student 11);
>
> I'm so happy when preparing lessons for teaching. We had a good time together. We corrected mistakes together. I think these weeks recently are unforgettable time in my life (Student 2);
>
> We work together every week to make a recording of our teaching. This helps us get on better with each other. We have figured out the way to teach a good lesson, which is useful for our later career (Student 9).

Kurman and Sriram (2002) set out the notions of horizontal and vertical collectivism-individualism and investigate its relationship with modesty and self-enhancement. Horizontal collectivism refers to strong identification with and strong caring for the in-group and vertical collectivism is characterised by the need to sacrifice individual needs in favour of group needs. Horizontal individualism emphasises the development of unique self-identity and vertical individualism stresses the competition. Kurman and Sriram contend that '... modesty was positively related to vertical collectivism, which emphasizes group over self-needs' (Kurman and Sriram, 2002, p.71). In this way, the virtue of modesty positively promoted the student teachers' sacrifice of their self needs for the whole group and vice versa and this sacrifice produced a harmonious working environment with care and respect among the group members. The feeling of happily working together was created in such an environment. It was also created through a process of harmonising different opinions with care and modesty. This process of harmonisation requires sacrifice of self needs for the sake of the whole group to maintain a harmony. This harmony is not a state, but a process, which, according to Feng and Fan (2012) 'is not a mere formality but a relationship that must be entered into willingly, with understanding and in the right spirit'(p.345).

6.1.7. Vulnerability and ego-effacement as negative factors for learning

Modesty also has a negative side. A person's unique self-identity development, which is closely related to self-confidence and self-esteem, can enable the individual to cope with confrontations and open discussion of conflicts. According to constructivist theories this promotes learning. A person's unique self-identity enables her to take the responsibility for what she does, including learning. Constructivist learning theories encourage learners to take control and responsibility for their own learning. Kolb and Kolb (2005) suggested a space for learners to take charge of their own learning as one of the principles for experiential learning to take place. Yet, modesty can hold back this learning space to happen. According to Kurman and Sriram (2002), 'modesty was negatively related to horizontal individualism, which emphasizes development of a unique self-identity' (p.71). In this sense, modesty negatively affects self-identity. It can cause a lack of confidence and low self-esteem or makes a person vulnerable. In other words, vulnerability, a lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem can be the consequences of a large extent of modesty. The data in my study support this statement. Although a majority of 62% of the student teachers stated in the post-intervention questionnaire that their self-esteem was not affected by peer feedback, 24% admitted that they did feel bad and 14% said they felt bad but would not complain because they understand their peers wanted them to improve. Some typical comments include:

> Sometimes I don't want to give my partners ideas because some of them just ignore these ideas (a student teacher's answer to an open-ended question in the post-intervention questionnaire).

or

> When I watched my friends teaching I think they are more confident than me. I'm sure I can't do like them (student 17).

The former student teacher must not have been used to discussions of different opinions or conflicts and so felt vulnerable to criticism. She must

have been used to a caring environment, where everyone is tender and modest and did not often speak up their opinions. Now in the new learning pattern, she felt overwhelmed with different opinions and criticism. The latter student teacher felt inferior and also had a very low self-esteem and confidence. Both of these student teachers seemed to have been infantilised, and did not show their self-identity. Also, there was possibly a lack of communication skills among the group. A lack of confidence was commonly documented in many other journal entries written at the beginning of the course, in which the student teachers expressed their expectations to gain more confidence. They often feel inferior while showing their virtue of modesty:

> Actually I'm really anxious about what we will have to do in the course because I'm reserved and unconfident myself. In fact, my grade in speaking and listening skills subjects was very low' (student 3)
>
> I feel disappointed because I did badly. However, this practice of teaching was interesting that gave me experience (student 4)
>
> or
>
> The students there are friends. I can't imagine what will happen if I come in front of a class with ten strange faces (student 2).

This self-critical attitude was also documented in a tutor's comment on her student teachers: 'Vietnamese students are weak at practical skills as they do not have opportunities to get practical experiences so they do not feel confident to give feedback on their classmates' teaching skills and do not trust their peers as well...' (Nga). Hofstede et al. (2010) called this attitude ego-effacement. They stated that in a feminine culture 'students underrate their own performance: ego-effacement' (p.165).

This ego-effacement and lack of confidence and self-esteem, however, appeared to change as the course progressed. This made the group of Vietnamese student teachers who committed to a feminine culture seemed to start taking in more of masculine elements. Assertiveness, which according to Hofstede et al. (2010) is one of the masculine characteristics, was developed

as the course progressed. One example, which has been mentioned before, was that the student teachers discussed together and decided to write an email to me asking for a change in my teaching methods. It is considered unusual since Vietnamese students often keep quiet and do not make themselves visible to be safe. It is also not usual for students to make a complaint to the teacher. Usually, they keep things to themselves or they might gossip around but do not often reveal their names officially. However, in this situation, a student was brave enough to write in her name (although on behalf of the whole class) making herself visible and showing certain degree of assertiveness – asking the teacher to do what they wanted. Hofstede et al. (2010) contended that 'in masculine cultures, students try to make themselves visible in class and compete openly with each other. ... In feminine countries, assertive behaviour and attempts at excelling are easily ridiculed. Excellence is something one keeps to oneself' (p.160). In this sense, this student teacher (and her classmates) has stepped out of the feminine culture and absorbed elements of a masculine culture.

The ego-effacement, which was mentioned above, was documented in the first phase of the intervention. Later at the end of the intervention, the student teachers did not talk about their performance in such an underrated way. Many journal entries showed that they conversely felt confident and proud at the progress they had made:

> When looking back at my own recordings at the beginning to compare with the clip I have submitted recently I can see that I have learnt and have progressed a lot (student 1)
>
> Now I can see clearly the difference between before and now. I can stand in front of a lot of people and speak quite fluently without stumbling like before. I have achieved the goals I set at the beginning (student 5).

Even the students who showed very low self-confidence and self-esteem and seemed to get lost, mentioned above (students 2 and 3), also found their own path of learning and felt contented with what they have performed:

> When watching videos we can learn some useful techniques and teaching steps to apply them in my own teaching (student 3).
>
> I'm so happy when preparing lessons for teaching. We had a good time together. We corrected mistakes together. I think these weeks recently are unforgettable time in my life (student 2).

Hofstede et al. (2010) called these attitudes 'ego-boosting' (p.165) and claimed that it characterises a masculine culture.

Self-confidence and self-esteem according to the figures in the post-intervention questionnaire was also positive. At the end of the course, 66% of the student teachers believed that they could learn teaching from each other without the tutor's feedback and 73% of the student teachers thought that they were confident when giving feedback in front of the whole class although this number increased to 83% when they gave feedback in small groups. These figures prove that the ego-effacement from a feminine culture, which was analysed before, became blurry at the end of the intervention and was replaced by some of a masculine culture.

The ego-effacement, which was evident at the first phase of the intervention, is closely related to the 'uncertainty avoidance dimension'. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), Vietnam sits at the bottom of the ranking scale (at the same position as China) and is considered as a weak uncertainty avoidance country. This suggests that there is a high degree of flexibility in all the same situations. In education, students have high tolerance for mistakes, do not like the situations that have only one correct answer and do not expect that the teacher has to be an expert. However, literature in teaching and learning in Vietnam claims the opposite, which proves Vietnam to be a strong uncertainty avoidance country (Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Le, 2013; Ta, 2012).

The data of my study strongly support the claim by these Vietnamese scholars. Firstly, it was found especially in the pre-intervention phase that both the tutors and the student teachers pay a lot of their attention to

mistake correction during the practice of teaching and tend to have low tolerance for mistakes. It harmoniously related to the previous cultural dimension, in which the feminine stakeholders tend to underrate their own performance for modesty. In this dimension, strong uncertainty avoidance stakeholders tend to seek mistakes for correction because they have low tolerance for mistakes. In the pre-intervention phase of my study, this feature was clearly evident. In the questionnaire for student teachers, it was found that 97% of the informants, responding to question 9, wanted their tutor to be explicit in indicating whether their did things right or wrong in the feedback sessions. When replying to an open-ended question about the role of feedback, 46 out of 91 student teachers shared the comment that they thought feedback helped correct mistakes in their practice of teaching so that they would not repeat them in the future and would gain more experience after being corrected. Five other students indicated that feedback helped student teachers be aware of whether their teaching was right or wrong; understand what methods were the best. This concern about right or wrong answers and mistake correction was also found in journal entries at the beginning of the intervention. Such a comment, which focused on weaknesses, was quite common:

> After working with peers, I have the following comments: the most popular weaknesses are: lack of confidence, wrong pronunciation, grammar mistakes, activities are not participatory, low voice, instructions are not clear (student7).

The student teachers obviously were highly concerned about their making mistakes or about something new that they did not know clearly. They experimented with their teaching and felt unsure if their teaching methods were correct or incorrect until they were told clearly by the tutor. Those data also indicated that they sought detailed and structured learning and did not favour in open-ended situations. This emphasis on mistakes and weaknesses was also supported by tutors as demonstrated in tutor Hoa's response to the pre-intervention questionnaire. Hoa offered a suggestion that the tutor needed to give 'specific and precise comments' and 'to show them [the

student teachers] the way to improve the weaknesses'. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), this learning habit exemplifies a strong uncertainty avoidance culture because in this particular context the extent to which the members of the group felt 'threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations' is high; 'favoured structured learning situations with precise objectives'; 'liked situations in which there was one correct answer that they could find'; 'expected to be rewarded for accuracy' (p.191).

Secondly, it was evident that both the tutors and the student teachers hold that the teacher (tutor) has to be an expert. This belief is related to the first dimension – power distance – in the way that both of the dimensions exalt the position of the teacher. Hofstede et al. (2010) contended that 'students from strong uncertainty avoidance countries expect their teachers to be the experts who have all the answers (p.205). Sharing this belief, a majority of the student teachers in the pre-intervention survey thought that the tutor should give solutions to their problems, make judgement to indicate right or wrong teaching, navigate the student teachers' teaching, and let the student teachers know what an effective lesson looks like. As a result, some of the student teachers did not trust their peers' feedback and insisted that they feel safer with the tutor's comments:

> We are students, so we always believe in experts than any others. If you give us comments, I think we will do it better (student 10);
>
> Because the teacher [tutor] has a lot of teaching experience and so she can give me correction of what we should and shouldn't do (a response to question 6);
>
> Sometimes I feel confused about what is right and what is wrong without teacher's feedback (a response to question 6).

Again, these student teachers showed the dependent role on the tutor and did not see themselves as active agents in their own learning. Fixing their thinking on what is right and what is wrong can limit their reflection on experience and hold back their learning.

In a similar way to the student teachers' expectation that their tutor knows everything, the tutors themselves also thought that a tutor should be an expert. Tutor Minh stated: 'I recommend that there should be an experienced teacher or even an educational expert beside the students and teacher'.

6.1.8. Desire for improvements as a positive factor for learning

Mistake seeking tendency discussed previously can be positive and fosters the desire for improvement or it can be negative and hinders learning. The student teachers sought identification of mistakes and wished to be corrected because they wanted improvements as stated in a response to the question about how feedback should be improved:

> This feedback method should be encouraged so that students will teach themselves, assess and correct themselves and also learn from others (A student teacher's answer to an open-ended question)

If mistake seeking occurs in a safe learning environment, where people are willing to learn from mistakes or errors, it will enhance learning. Hattie (2009) stated that

> a safe environment for the learner (and for the teacher) is an environment where error is welcomed and fostered – because we learn so much from errors and from the feedback that then accrues from going in the wrong direction or not going sufficiently fluently in the right direction (p.23).

Therefore, errors are part of a learning process. People can learn from experimenting with going different directions, including right or wrong to have experience. Mistakes or errors are an inevitable part of a learning process. They occur when learners try out new things, experimenting with new ideas. If the learners do not have trials, they will not make mistakes or errors, but they will not learn either because they will not get experience. Kolb's experiential learning theory defines learning as

> the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience (Kolb, 1984b, p.41).

In this respect, mistakes or errors can be seen as a positive part of a learning process. Learning occurs when the learners are willing to try out new things and take risks of making errors, reflect on the errors they might make and learn from those experiences.

Mistakes seeking can also be the 'food' for developing critical thinking skills and therefore increase learning. Critical thinking can imply an emphasis on the ability to deconstruct (Lundquist, 1999; Price, 2004), which is very important for learning. With this belief, Lundquist conducted a research on a statistics course and encouraged the students to take advantage of mistakes to learn from them. He found that learning opportunities increased when the students had imperfect solutions or errors to reflect on. He regarded 'good mistakes' as better than perfect results. It can be argued that, mistakes seeking can create a space for reflection and critical thinking to work out. However, that space should be a safe environment for learning, meaning that the learners can be critical, but constructive at the same time.

6.1.9. Fear of mistakes and judgmental attitude as negative factors for learning

Mistakes seeking will also hinder learning if the learners hold a negative attitude towards mistakes or errors, or have low tolerance for them, thinking that mistakes are bad and have to be corrected. This attitude can generate fear of making mistakes. This fear will prevent the learners from taking risks, trying out new things, or learning from experience for fear of making mistakes. It will lead to ego-effacement, which reduces the learners' self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Thus, it will affect the can-do attitude, which needs to be developed in the graduates for their future employability. In this respect, the expressions of strong uncertainty avoidance

in this study are very much related to the feminine features discussed previously. In fact, this negative factor was evident in the data of my study. For example, some student teachers were very self-critical and felt disappointed about themselves for the fact that they performed badly in her micro-teaching practice or had a thought that they could not become a teacher (as quoted previously in student 22's entry).

Whether these student teachers performed badly or not is not the point. What we are concerned with is that they did not have a can-do attitude, which is very important in promoting experiential learning and developing the learners' self-efficacy.

Furthermore, mistakes seeking can also lead to an evaluative attitude, not just towards oneself but also towards others. Since people of this type tend to seek mistakes they will incline to judge, rather than reflect and discuss. In a feedback session, for example, this judgemental attitude from the feedback giver can easily result in a self-defensive attitude from the feedback receiver. With these attitudes in mind from both feedback givers and feedback receivers, peer feedback fails to be constructive. It can break the communication between peers and deprive the main purpose of peer feedback – sharing to learn from each other with trust and respect. My data showed evidence of how this evaluative attitude damaged the communication in peer feedback. For instance, when asked if the student teachers felt comfortable with working with peers, there were quite a few informants (8) did not tick the answer 'yes' or 'no'. They ticked on 'other' and explained their choice:

> Sometimes I feel comfortable, but I often get hot tempered when we have a lot of opposite ideas.

These 'opposite ideas' appeared to be the precise or imprecise judgement from peers. There could have been both evaluative and self-defensive attitudes and arguments over whether the feedback is right or wrong. The

feedback receiver could not have admitted the mistakes and criticised the feedback giver for not working hard enough to understand:

> Sometimes I'm not happy with the feedback from peers as I feel they don't work hard to give us precise comments.

Obviously, the communication was broken. Harmony was ruined. Some of them experienced the feeling of being hurt and lost confidence. These feelings were a big barrier for the discussion to be effective:

> Sometimes they have good ideas, but sometimes they aren't patient and make me less confident and nervous

This judgmental attitude and the insistence that feedback be precise were also documented in one of the tutors' comments. Tutor Hoa offered a suggestion for feedback improvement in the questionnaire that 'tutor should offer specific and precise comments'. Literature also documents this judgemental attitude. In an investigation into five primary schools of Vietnam in a jointly conducted project between Vietnam and Japan, one of the problems detected in the study was that Vietnamese teachers tend to have evaluative attitudes towards their colleagues and students'. The researchers maintained that there was a

> teachers' tendency to express their subjective judgments on students and teachers rather than analyse the contexts of the actions by students and teachers during the lessons ... The observers were inclined to evaluate the observed teachers rather than learn from the observed lessons (Saito et al., 2008, p.96).

These scholars argued that this evaluative attitude towards other teachers will cause strong self-defensive attitudes among the teachers who are not willing to admit their weaknesses or mistakes. One of the tenets in constructivist learning is learning from sharing reflective experience (Vygotsky, 1978; Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984b). In order to promote experience sharing there should be a safe learning environment where mistakes or errors are welcome (Hattie, 2009) and 'a hospitable space for learning' (Kolb and Kolb, 2005, p.207). The

fear of mistakes and judgemental attitudes fail to build these learning environments and need to be eliminated.

The characteristics of a strong uncertainty avoidance culture appeared to change towards a weaker uncertainty avoidance culture during the intervention. As one of the main focuses of my intervention is to foster experiential learning I tried to provide an environment that welcomed mistakes. I know that this will help the student teachers feel more confident to engage in experimenting teaching ideas as described in my field notes. 'Make a lot of mistakes' is what I said to my student teachers as a joke on the first day of the course which made them laugh and applaud, but I know they understood my message. As observed in my field notes, their confidence was improved. They were not fearful of making mistakes as before. Although they were still attentive to mistakes, but they knew that experience is important and so felt more confident:

> Because we first practised teaching, we still feel anxious and make mistakes, which is inevitable ... importantly, when we do practising of teaching we feel more confident (student 3).

In the post-intervention questionnaire, up to 90% student teachers thought that the tutor just needed to facilitate feedback activities so that they could reflect on the experience without the need to explicitly indicate what is right or wrong. Although there were still quite a few comments that expressed that they wanted mistake correction, many student teachers showed that they were not so worried about mistakes or concerned about right and wrong teaching. It seemed more important for them to get experience and to have opportunities to learn:

> It [peer work] enables me to hear comments from others and get experience for myself;

Or

> Because it [peer work] helps me have opportunities to work harder.

Along with the improvement of the confidence and decrease in the fear of mistakes, I again noticed a mismatch between the surface and the deep

structure changes in this dimension as noted as well in the analysis on the power distance dimension. Although the student teacher were aware of the importance of taking risks and trying out new things without having to worry about right or wrong answers, they did not fully understand why they needed to do so or what their role was in learning. For example, student 11 commented:

> I wish my tutor would give me comments on my good points and shortcomings frankly, provide me opportunities to speak out what I think even though it is correct or incorrect (student 11);

> The tutor will orientate my thinking so that I can think in a positive way (student 7).

This student did not so much focus on weak points when she included both strong points and shortcomings (she did avoid the negative phrase 'weak points' by using 'shortcomings') and appeared not to fear 'incorrect' teaching. In other words, she knows that as a learner she needs to take an active role in learning, accepting mistakes and learning from them. However, she still held that her thinking would be 'oriented' by the tutor. She had not understood the real sense of the role of an 'active learner' who herself transform the knowledge from her own experiences. According to the constructivist learning theories, it should have been her, not the tutor, who 'oriented' or, in other words, self-regulated the learning. Her point showed that although there was some change in her understanding of experiential learning, it remained at the surface level.

6.2. Summary of the discussion

Understanding factors that hinder as well as enhance initial teacher learning is very important to promote this learning process. It is necessary for teacher educators to limit or eliminate these negative factors and respect or promote positive factors towards teacher learning. By understanding these factors both student teachers and tutors will be able to produce a productive learning

environment. The discussion has come to the following conclusions in response to the first two of my research questions:

What factors hinder teacher learning in initial teacher education in Vietnam?

Fear of teachers/tutors or higher status people

The feeling of fear, which was analysed from my research data, is generated from too much respect for the teacher/tutor or higher status people. The feeling of fear generally affects well-being. A learner if feeling fear can experience a high 'affective filter' which blocks the input to be acquired and, therefore, hinders learning (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). The feeling of fear cannot provide a safe 'learning space' (Kolb and Kolb, 2005) for the learners to try out new ideas to have new experience and, therefore, leads to a sterile learning environment. In addition to that, students' attitude of fear towards the teacher in the classroom hinders the development of social skills, the ability to discuss and negotiate ideas, which are components of Vygotsky's (1978) interactive learning model. According to Michael (2006) individuals learn more with others than they learn alone. In this sense, the feeling of fear, which causes passitivity in the classroom, limits knowledge construction in general and teacher learning in particular.

Over-reliance on the teacher/tutor and belief that the teacher should be the source of all knowledge

That the student teachers rely too much on the tutor is also generated from the unquestioning respect for the tutor. It was found in the research that the student teachers invested their total trust in the tutor's knowledge and experience. This attitude turns them into passive listeners and prevents them from contributing ideas to discussions or collaborative tasks. Obviously, these student teachers are not active learners who take responsibility for their

learning or not autonomous learners who independently construct knowledge for themselves. Waiting for the tutor to provide good answers, these student teachers fail in reflective learning (Schön, 1983), have low engagement in experiential learning (Kolb, 1984b), poorly perform in social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, visible learning (Hattie, 2009) is impossible to take place given that this factor prevails in the classroom.

Oppression by fellow student teachers and suppression of disagreement and dissent by the tutor/teacher

These factors are created by the efforts to keep harmony. Oppression is caused by fellow student teachers who expected a collectivist and would ridicule differences or any attempts to be visible. Suppression is caused by a collectivist tutor who expects that student teachers should conform to their ideas and disagreement and dissent should be avoided. These factors lead to hesitancy and lack of confidence in speaking up in student teachers. Ideas left unspoken and lack of discussion or sharing, according to constructivist learning theories, hinder learning. These factors also affect the development of many important skills needed for the employability, such as, communication skills, negotiation skills, being resilient in order to response to stress and burn out in later teaching career, being confident in teaching and handling classes etc.

Vulnerability of student teachers to criticism and embarrassment and a tendency towards self-effacement

Vulnerability to criticism and embarrassment is caused by too much care and self-effacement is caused by too much modesty in a feminine environment. Being in such an environment student teachers do not have opportunities to challenge themselves to become resilient towards different opinions and criticism. They consequently feel vulnerable to criticism and embarrassment. These student teachers often experience a low self-esteem and feel inferior. This also leads to self-effacement which generates a lack of confidence and

negatively influences on the can-do attitude. Moreover, these attitudes block a safe 'learning space', where the student teachers can take charge of their own learning, and therefore, hold back their learning.

Fear of making mistakes, judgmental and defensive attitudes

Low tolerance for mistakes prevents student teachers from taking risks, trying out new teaching ideas, or learning from the teaching experience. The student teachers do not dare to do practical tasks because they are worried that they will make mistakes, which prevent them from learning by doing and hinder experiential learning. With this fear of making mistakes, they develop the tendency to seek identification of mistakes. Consequently, the student teachers tend to have a judgmental attitude towards oneself and others alike. They incline to judge rather than reflect on the experience or discuss the ideas to learn from them. In return, the student teachers of this type can be very defensive towards different opinions or feedback on their teaching and affect the effectiveness of peer feedback or collaborative learning. This makes an unbreakable circle among the fear of making mistakes, judgmental and defensive attitudes, which affects reflective observation, damages interactive communication, and hinders learning processes.

What factors contribute towards teacher learning being effective in initial teacher education in Vietnam?

Beside the factors that hinder teacher learning in Vietnam, there are also positive factors that enhance teacher learning. It is important for the teacher educators to be aware of and respect these factors and honour these cultural values in order to build a fruitful learning environment from the good values that Vietnam embraces. These factors may form the basis of a culturally appropriate way forward, which is uniquely Vietnamese, for developing teacher learning. I therefore would like to suggest that these factors

contribute to the debate and discussion about the characteristics that Vietnam would wish to see in its teachers.

Respect for teachers/tutors, education, and wisdom

This is the strongest and the most influential factor found in my research. Respect for education is a deep rooted tradition of the Vietnamese culture. It comes along with the respect for teachers and teachers' wisdom. It was evident in my research that this factor fosters the student teachers' motivation in learning, and nurtures their dreams to become good teachers. It was also found that respect and regard for the tutor as a role model also builds up a high expectancy of oneself and contributes to the development of self-efficacy. Respect for the tutor/teacher leads to passion for learning and the appreciation of education and wisdom, which is a very important component to promote 'visible learning'(Hattie, 2009). Respect for the teacher/tutor and respect for status and seniority can also contribute to a harmonious learning environment. However, if this respect is paid not only for status and seniority, but also to learners of equal or junior status, it will make a good environment for experiential learning to grow fruitfully (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

Desire to promote harmony

The desire to promote harmony is one of the key virtues in Confucian teachings, which have strong influence on the Vietnamese culture. This factor was found in my research and proved to be a positive factor for teacher learning as it promotes the process of harmonization. In this dynamic process, actions of discussions, negotiation, and compromise need to be taken to resolve strife in order to achieve harmony. In this respect, this factor enhances constructivist learning because it encourages interaction, cooperation, and discussions. It is necessary to distinguish the difference

between harmonization as a process, which promotes learning and harmony as a state, which is the result of suppression and oppression and might hinder learning. In fact, the desire to promote harmony does not rule out strife (Li, 2006), but promotes the resolution between different opinions from different people, and therefore, is an important quality for cooperative learning.

A culture of caring for one another

Caring is one of the characteristics of a feminine society, which was also found in my study. The student teachers listened to each other with care and make sure that they did not hurt their peers' feeling. According to Kolb and Kolb (2005), learning requires facing and embracing differences between many types of people, in different situations, or from different perspectives. These differences can be threatening. Therefore, a caring attitude is necessary to create a welcoming and hospitable learning environment, which encourages the culture of sharing and learning from one another. This caring environment will create mutual trust and understanding, which is very important in cooperative learning, interactive learning, peer feedback, or discussions etc. during the process of teacher learning.

Modesty

The virtue of modesty found in my study positively promotes the student teachers' sacrifice of their self needs for the whole group and vice versa. This sacrifice will produce a harmonious working environment, where everyone listens to each other and respects each other's ideas with modesty. Harmony will be achieved in this environment, but not by oppression or suppression, but by everyone's being willing to sacrifice their self needs to maintain harmony. This harmonious working environment is not a mere formality but a relationship that everyone willingly enters with mutual understanding (Feng and Fan, 2012). Thus, modesty was demonstrated in a willingness to learn

from others and to listen to others. Modesty was also demonstrated in an act of decentring in order to look at other perspectives, which potentially allow learning from diversity. This virtue of modesty is likely to enhance learning in general and teacher learning in particular.

6.2.2.5. Desire for self-improvement

Seeking identification of mistakes is one of the features of a strong uncertainty avoidance culture. This feature was strongly manifested in my study. The positive side of it is that it promotes the desire for self-improvement. The student teachers tend to seek mistakes in their own teaching performance and wish to be corrected. If identification of mistakes occurs in a safe learning environment, where mistakes are welcome and people are willing to learn from mistakes, it will enhance learning (Hattie, 2009). According to constructivist theories, mistakes are part of a learning process and should be taken as experiences to learn from. They occur when learners try out new things or experiment with new ideas, which generate new knowledge. Mistakes can also be the 'food' for developing critical thinking skills, which is very important for learning. It can be argued that seeking identification of mistakes can create a space for reflection and critical thinking. However, it should be noted that it must occur in a safe learning environment, where the learners can be critical, but also constructive at the same time. In this respect, the desire for self-improvement will contribute towards teacher learning being effective.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

This chapter discusses the last two questions of my research, taking the discussion of the previous chapter into consideration. Thus, the discussion of the factors that hinder as well as enhance teacher learning in Vietnam serves to inform and underpin the discussion of the following questions, which are pitched at a more macro level: 3) What are the most appropriate strategies to promote teachers' learning in Vietnam? 4) What is the role of teacher educators in redefining the teachers' and student teachers' identities?

7.1. Recommendations

7.1.1. What are the most appropriate strategies to promote initial teachers' learning in Vietnam?

7.1.1.1. Considering the status quo

Over the past 40 years different strategies have been used to implement educational reforms. Basically, the strategies for teacher change or for educational reforms have been centred on the following three types of strategy: power-coercive strategies, rational-empirical strategies, and normative-re-educative strategies, which were originated from Chin and Benne in 1970, and other two types of strategies, specifically top-down and bottom-up. These strategies have attracted scholars' attention since 70s up to now (Chin and Benne, 1970; Kennedy, 1987; Fullan, 1994; Cummings et al., 2005).

The general conclusion is that 'neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies for educational reform work' (Fullan, 1994; Cummings et al., 2005). Fullan attempts to explicate the reasons for these problems in his work: he considers

top-down strategies too complex to control because 'the forces of educational change are so multifaceted that they are inherently unpredictable' (Fullan, 1994, p.11). He considers bottom-up strategies fraught because change might be too slow, development might be in an uncontrolled direction and it is hard for organisations to stay innovative. Fullan considers that with bottom-up strategies these organisations 'in general are not likely to initiate change in the absence of external stimuli' (ibid., p.11). However, each of the strategies has its own allure. The top-down approach holds a promise of generating rapid change towards the desired direction. Similarly, the other approach, the bottom-up, can solve the problems of top management direction by allowing grassroots' participation.

In the face of dissatisfaction with failed implementation of both top-down and bottom-up approaches, scholars came up with another approach that combines and mediates the two approaches. Fullan (1994) suggests coordinating the top-down and bottom-up strategies, recognising that centralised and decentralised strategies are both essential. Cummings et al.(2005) proposes a 'middle-out' approach, which 'provides more targeted support, focused on solving specific, university-wide problem' (Cummings et al., 2005, p.13).

Kennedy (1987) outlines three types of strategies that were initiated from Chin and Benne (1970). The first type is power-coercive strategies, which as the name suggests, are the ones that force people to change or act in a certain way, so they are by nature top-down strategies. The second type of strategy is rational-empirical, which considers people as rational beings, and assumes, therefore, that change can be produced when there is evidence to show that it will benefit the stakeholders. This type of strategy is often presented in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences to disseminate the evidence and persuade people about the change. The third type is normative-re-educative strategy. This type is based on the belief that change

is a complex phenomenon and that cultural beliefs and attitudes are important to be taken into consideration.

> Underlying this strategy is the idea that people act according to the values and attitudes prevalent in a given society or culture, and that accepting change may require changes to deep-seated beliefs and behaviour (Kennedy, 1987, p.164).

This type of strategy takes cultural values into account. It is similar to a bottom-up approach in the way that it targets individuals, but it is more than just initiative innovations from grassroots at a superficial level. It particularly considers carefully the deep-rooted culture of those whom it affects. In sum, the first two types imply a unidirectional change. One is to change people by forcing them from the top, whereas the other is to give people information and persuade them to change towards a designated direction. The third type demonstrates the need to carry out problem solving and take a collaborative approach with all the people involved in some way so that they can also make their own decisions. I find this type of strategy, the normative-re-educative, pertinent to my research.

Vietnam has a centralised education system because it is grounded in Confucian tradition philosophy of respect for social order. The whole system is highly centralised and standardised with the prevalence of teacher-centred instructional approach. It can be seen that the government has applied power-coercive strategies in the educational reforms in Vietnam. These educational reforms often come along with the introduction of new textbooks and curricula by the Vietnamese MOET. Officially sanctioned workshops are organised to train teachers for the new textbooks and curricula. The textbooks are written with little or no consultation with school teachers and students, who are the eventual users. Yet it is clear that the application of the new approach, the student-centred approach, underpinning these textbooks and curricula is problematic in Vietnamese schools since it does not match with the cultural beliefs and values that have already been long seated in the stakeholders' habits of teaching and learning. This situation often leads to

conflicts, and even worse, to the extent that the new textbook is misused and a hidden curriculum develops. This was evident in Le and Barnard's (2009) case study, which was intended to find out how the implementation of the new curricula and textbook was working. They claimed that 'a wide gap exists between what is intended by teaching innovation designers and what is actually implemented by classroom teachers' (Le and Barnard, 2009, p.6). The official training workshops to introduce the new teaching approach focus merely on the 'what' rather than how to implement the innovations. And again, this is a unidirectional approach with very little or no discussion or consultation with the ultimate textbook users, the school teachers and students. Therefore, the new ideas seem to be reluctantly received and happen merely at surface level. The evidence of the fact that the change happens just at the surface level is clear in the tutors' and the student teachers' data of my study (as discussed in the previous chapter). The tutors were under pressure to use peer work and stated that they used peer work in their teaching. However, the peer work that they conducted in the class turned out to be the exchanging of individual written work without discussion, or unidirectional feedback from an individual to the presenter. The term 'group work' was preferred among the student teachers, but it was evident that 'group work' was understood as dividing the work among the group members to do it individually. It was also found that although the student teachers kept saying that they needed to be active in their learning and accept mistakes to learn from experience, they did not understand why this should be the case. Despite repeating what they thought they should say, they were not aware that they were the ones who had to take charge of their own learning, thinking that 'the tutor will orient my thinking' (student 7). All these examples show that the new ideas that the MOET are trying to disseminate in order to make change happen seem to be operating merely at a surface level.

The superficiality of this change results, at least in part, from an underestimation of the strength of cultural values and beliefs that underlie the preconceptions of what constitutes good teaching and good learning. My

discussion in the previous chapter has shown the cultural complexities underpinning the teaching and learning context in Vietnam. Therefore, I would argue that, in order to implement innovations, the first imperative is to understand the status quo, exploring the cultural values that will affect the change. Change can only be implemented effectively with this understanding. Taking the status quo into consideration enables the government to coordinate both the top-down and bottom-up strategies, as suggested by Fullan (1994) or to take the normative re-educative strategies as analysed in Kennedy (1987).

There is a need to explore the differences between the social and cultural norms in Vietnam and the new ideas that are promoted for change. It is important to observe and analyse the positive factors that can support and accelerate this change as well as the negative factors that might hinder the change for the better. It is important to respect the Vietnamese culture and the ideologies that are embraced and to work gradually to influence these deep seated cultural attitudes and behaviours at a level that can allow people to feel part of the change.

Considering the status quo needs to occur not just at the national level, but also at the institutional level and the personal level. At the national level, it is necessary for the government to decide what qualities the Vietnamese education needs to preserve and embrace and how it needs to adapt to the future and to the demands of globalisation. It is important for an individual teacher to decide for herself what change and at what level of change she can take. This is important as 'like everything else it must come from within' (Underhill, 1989, p.259). However, it is not easy to manage the change in values and attitudes and how that change is demonstrated in teaching and learning behaviours. That is why the implementation of innovations necessitates a problem-solving and collaborative approach to make the change convincing from within an individual, an institution and ultimately for the whole nation. With the thrust of new ideas, new values and beliefs

coming along with globalisation, problem-solving and collaborative approaches towards strategic change will enable Vietnam to redefine its identity, to think about and have in-depth discussion about the new image that Vietnam wishes to take.

7.1.1.2. Focusing on process rather than on a state

Having said so, I would argue that, another appropriate strategy to take into the educational reforms in Vietnam is focusing on process rather than on a state. Often, from my observation of the reforms in Vietnam, more attention is paid to the state of change. That is people appear to support the surface activities, talk about the innovative terms, or evaluate the final products rather than look into the deep structure of the process of the innovations. This phenomenon seems to be the case not just in Vietnam. Underhill (1989) analysed the problems that can hold back change. He contended that 'Even where there is support, it often appears to be support for innovative techniques rather than innovative process' (p.259). I think, there is nothing wrong with the support for innovative techniques, because the experiment with techniques can change people's attitudes towards change. Also, nothing is wrong with talking about the innovative terms because it is the terms that help people communicate the innovative ideas. Or nothing is wrong with the appreciation of the final products because this is the visible part of the change. However, that is not enough. It is necessary to do all those things through an innovation process. The innovative state or change needs to be achieved through a process of reflection, experiential observation, and interactive discussion. This is a process of internalisation of what has been experimented with, reflected on and discussed, to achieve a new level of knowledge. This process can occur within the zone of proximal development, which is the zone between the current level of knowledge with the existing cultural norms and its potential level of knowledge with the acceptable cultural hybridity. This potential level cannot be too far out of the zone of

proximal development. This level should be accessible, feasible, and achievable. The process of change cannot be successful if it is pushed out of this zone of proximal development. This is the reason why we need to understand the status quo to decide what can be acceptable and what not. According to Underhill(1989), 'without commensurate understanding of the attitudes, awarenesses, and vision,' changes might promote 'yet another kind of authoritarianism' (p259). The terms 'student-centred', 'cooperative learning', 'active learning', 'peer learning', 'group work' etc. were used positively by both the tutors and the students in my sample but there was not 'commensurate understanding' of these terms which weakened the process of change and ensured that it occurred only at the surface level. There is, in my view, obviously a mismatch between what people say about the change and what actually happens in the process of change. The Vietnamese government is currently trying to put into effect reforms that are beyond the zone of proximal development of the key players. It could be the new knowledge, new skills, or, from my data analysis, it is more likely to be some of the cultural elements that might go beyond the limit.

The need to focus on process rather than on a state accords with Confucian ideal of harmony, which is prevalent in Vietnamese culture. As discussed in the previous chapter, this notion of harmony is often misunderstood as agreement or sameness if it is referred to as a state. However, according to Li (2006), 'while harmony does not preclude sameness, sameness itself is not harmony. Harmony is different from stagnant concordance in that harmony is sustained by energy generated through the interaction of different elements in creative tension' (p.589). Thus, the state of harmony is achieved through the process of harmonisation of different elements. These elements can be different or in conflict, but will be resolved in a harmonious way to achieve a higher level of harmony. Although sameness, at an appropriate level, is an ingredient of harmony, over-presence of sameness can cause disharmony. According to (Li, 2006), this ideal can be applicable both metaphysically and ethically 'It describes how the world at large operates and how human beings

ought to act' (p.589). Therefore, if people regard innovation as a state, seeking only the surface change or merely conducting innovative activities without looking at the deep structure, the deep seated cultural values that underpin the whole teaching and learning process, the success of the innovation could be hard to achieve.

7.1.1.3. Debating the characteristics that Vietnam wants in its teachers

Based on the discussion in the preceding section, the next strategy that Vietnam needs to promote, I would suggest, is to debate the characteristics that Vietnamese teachers will need for this new era, an era of globalisation and integration. Globalisation comes with a storm of new information with different ideologies, huge potential for the trading of goods with different countries, opportunities to exchange ideas worldwide, but also with the danger of identity confusion. There is, therefore, in my view, a need to redefine the identity of Vietnam in this critical period of time. In the first place, the government needs to think about what the modern image of Vietnam should be and hold a debate about this topic. This debate should be set up at ground level to ensure that Vietnamese teachers, who are important agents of the change, are included. The teachers should be provided room to engage in the dialogue to contribute their ideas as well as to learn about the supposed benefits of reform. They need to be empowered with decision-making about which traditional values should be kept and which values need to be added to create a new image of the Vietnamese teacher in the reform. As I discussed in the previous chapter, there are positive traditional values, such as respect for teachers and wisdom, desire to promote harmony, a culture of caring for one another, modesty or desire for self-improvement, which in my view are well worth keeping. Teachers can also assess values that have become out of date and should be eliminated via many different kinds of communication, such as learning communities, staff meetings, workshop, seminars, and conferences. The negative factors and barriers to learning that I

have discussed in this study could provide the teachers with pointers for exploring this topic. Besides that, Vietnamese teachers may want to add to their range of professional attributes through focussing on qualities such as, being critical, autonomous, or adaptable to diversity. They may want to build up knowledge of the wider modern world through international comparative approaches. Change, in my view, should be based on the understanding that good cultural values should be respected, but also that culture is dynamic and that change and development should be encouraged and fostered.

Furthermore, taking the normative re-educative approach, the people affected by change, in this case mainly teachers and administrators need to bring about change through a collaborative, problem solving approach. Outsiders, with different views about and approaches to teaching should be involved but finally, it is the local teachers who have to decide, perhaps individually, to what extent they are ready to implement change. Teachers need training on how to use new methodologies; however, the development of individual attitudes and beliefs about teaching need to be fostered through participation and exchange of ideas and experiences, if methodological innovations are to come into effect in the classroom.

7.1.2. What is the role of teacher educators in redefining the teachers' and student teachers' identities?

7.1.2.1. Creating a 'transfer space'

The notions of a 'third space', a 'learning space', and a 'dialogic space' are discussed in number of studies. Bhabha (1990) introduced the term 'third space' to talk about a discrete space for cultural translation and hybridity. Kolb and Kolb (2005) proposed the concept of a 'learning space' to elaborate the nature of learning style and its formation through the transactions between the learner and the environment. Youens et al. (2014) set out the

notion of a 'dialogic space' to analyse the potential of video capture in teacher preparation. I find these ideas really pertinent to my study.

From the discussion about the change in the learners' independence and equality in my preceding chapter, I would like to discuss the factors that might make this change possible. In the conventional courses, the student teachers practised their teaching in front of the whole class. After the teaching, everyone reflected on the synchronous review of the teaching to give feedback. Therefore the interaction space between the actors (the student teacher (who teaches), her peers, and the tutor) was via the recalled memories. There was often no time for all the stakeholders to reflect upon what had occurred. In addition, there was no specific evidence, or something to be referred to visually to analyse and discuss, other than the recalled memories. Hence, the space for reflection and interaction was limited and did not enable in-depth discussions. In the intervention course, I designed the activities – video inference, video capture, and journal writing- to increase the space for reflection and interaction. When being assigned the responsibility for doing joint tasks (working together to infer a lesson plan from a clip, working together to build in a plan, helping each other to teach that lesson, then to analyse and discuss the clip of peers' lessons), the student teachers were provided with a multi-level space that promoted both dialogic learning and reflective experience. The student teachers had to overcome emotional, cultural or hierarchical barriers to be immersed in this space. This learning space revisited the theory of knowledge creation proposed by Japanese scholars Nonaka and Konno (1998), which introduces a concept of Ba, 'a context that harbours meaning'. They claimed that 'Knowledge embedded in Ba is tacit and can only be made explicit through sharing of feelings, thoughts, and experiences of persons in the space' (cited in Kolb and Kolb, 2005, p.200). By generating opportunities for the student teachers to reflect and share experience among each other and also with the tutor, this learning space disrupted the perceived hierarchical boundaries between the student teacher and her peers and the tutor (Youens et al., 2014), and promoted sharing and

community learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). One more thing to note is that this space is not merely provided by the activities in the class, but also by the social relationship, for example, the relationship with peers or with the tutor (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

It was in this space that change occurred. The student teachers were able to move from a large power distance culture to a smaller power distance culture. This space, therefore, became a place for transferring the learner from one way of learning to another, from one way of thinking to another, and more generally from one culture to another. This space enabled different ideas, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs to be accommodated harmoniously in a place of transformation into a new hybrid. I would regard this space as a 'transfer space', especially used for Vietnam in the transition period of time.

I therefore would argue that the role of the teacher educators is to create this 'transfer space' for the student teachers, so that these student teachers will then create a 'transfer space' for their students. This will hopefully generate a great impact for Vietnamese younger generations to transform the country into a new modern Vietnam.

7.1.2.2. Qualities to promote in the 'transfer space'

Based on the discussion in the preceding chapter on the factors that might hinder teacher learning, I would like to suggest the focal qualities that the teacher educators need to promote in the 'transfer space'. These qualities should mitigate the hindrance caused by those negative factors. I think of these in terms of prompts.

The first of these prompts would be towards autonomy. Building learner autonomy, in my view, is an important quality that can wean the Vietnamese student teachers off the state of over-reliance on the tutor and the fear of

her/him. Ideally, student teachers would retain their current level of respect for the tutor alongside developing autonomy in learning. The 'transfer space' is useful in this case so that the tutor can prompt this autonomy for her students. In order to create this 'transfer space', the tutor needs both technical and emotional approaches. She might need to design class activities to build this autonomy and keeping a safe learning environment. Hattie's (2009) visible learning and teaching is most applicable in this situation. Not only do the student teachers need to actively build up the autonomy in their learning, but also the tutor has to be deliberately involved in the process to make sure that her autonomy prompting gets into the right tune. Although this is a guiding, not dictating, process the tutor has an important role in making sure that the actions of the tutor come together with the actions of the student teachers in a harmonious way. If the tutor is too strict, moving towards dictating acts, it will rule out the learner autonomy. However, if the tutor keeps a low control over the autonomy building process, the student teacher might also go off the track. A case study conducted by Ta (2012) found that a teacher trainer intentionally reduced her control, based on her belief in the need to develop learner autonomy. However, while her low control was appropriate with one student teacher, it was inappropriate with another. The researcher concluded that 'If the degree of control is balanced with the degree of participation encouragement, trainees' (Ta, 2012, p.7) exposure to productive interactions could be enhanced'. Therefore, I would say, the role of the teacher trainer is of great importance in prompting autonomy in a harmonious 'transfer space'.

The second prompt is towards building resilience. My discussion of the oppression of student teachers by their peers, the suppression of disagreement and dissent by the tutor and the vulnerability of student teachers in the face of criticism and embarrassment, combined with a tendency towards self-effacement, makes clear the need to build resilience amongst Vietnamese student teachers. This is very important not just during their learning process at university, but also for their later career. Howard and

Johnson(2004), who were concerned about the incidence of teacher stress and burnout and conducted a study to work out the protective factors to cope with it, found that the main stressors were threats to teachers' self- esteem and well-being. They concluded, therefore, that there is a need to build resilience in teachers. This claim is also supported by Le Cornu (2009), who placed the focus on building resilience for pre-service teachers.

The negative factors discussed in this study threaten Vietnamese teachers' sense of self- esteem and their general well-being. Building resilience for student teachers is necessary in general, but particularly important for Vietnamese teachers, who are affected by a culture that could lead them to become vulnerable, with low self-esteem and lacking confidence, especially now these student teachers are faced with a new globalised period of time and carry a mission to train generations of Vietnamese young people to cope with this new context.

The issue of building resilience for teachers in general and beginning teachers in particular have attracted a lot of attention from scholars (Howard and Johnson, 2004; Gu and Day, 2007; Le Cornu, 2009; Castro et al., 2010). Resilience is basically defined as 'ability to adjust to varied situations and increase one's competence in the face of adverse conditions' (Bobek, 2002, p. 202 cited in Castro et al., 2010). Gu and Day (2007) investigated the necessary condition for the effectiveness of teacher resilience in order to develop professional assets for teachers. Castro et al.(2010) studied resilience strategies to support beginning teachers. I find the strategies for building resilience for pre-service teachers proposed by Le Cornu(2009) the most useful and relevant for the Vietnamese teacher education context. This scholar applies Jordan's (2006) model of relational resilience to set out a model of professional experience - learning communities – that can contribute to resilience building in pre-service teachers. This model of learning communities supports the development of resilience in student teachers 'through a focus on relationships and in particular by attending to

the complex and dynamic interactions between individuals and their student teaching contexts' (Le Cornu, 2009, p.721). This model has the following features: providing opportunities for peer support; explicit teaching of particular skills and attitudes; and adoption of particular roles by pre-service teacher, mentor teacher and university mentor. These three features can be fitted nicely in the context of micro-teaching practice when the student teachers practise explicit teaching of a particular skill not just during the time at the university but also in the school practicum. This is where the teacher educators can maximise the possibility to create the 'transfer space', in which learning communities can be strengthened. The role of the teacher educator is to facilitate peer support amongst students, encourage student teachers' interactions in micro-teaching, and help them to inhabit the role of a teacher to the best of their abilities. As Le Cornu puts it, teacher educators can help their student teachers build resilience at the very first phase of their teaching career at the university 'by providing opportunities for them to participate in a wide variety of collegial relationships, including reciprocal learning relationships with peers' (ibid., p.722).

With a focus on these prompts to build autonomy and resilience, I believe that other important qualities needed to promote a modern Vietnamese identity can also be developed: qualities such as creativity; a sense of self, voice and pride; being alert to a globalised world. Vietnamese teacher educators have to think critically about what the Vietnamese identity is and choose the elements that Vietnam needs for the future. With a hybrid, modern, but distinctively Vietnamese identity, Vietnam will be able to adapt to the rapidly changing world and live happily together with other nations of the world. Teachers, as Hargreaves points out, are essential to the development and the maintenance of this national identity:

> Teaching is the core profession, the key agent of change in today's knowledge society. Teachers are midwives of the knowledge society. Without teachers, their confidence and competence, the future will be malformed and stillborn (Hargreaves, 2003, p.215).

Teacher educators, who prepare the nation's teachers, have an essential role to play in developing this workforce for Vietnam's future.

7.2. Contributions and limitations of the thesis

My research is an original empirical project that uses Hofstede's cultural framework to look into constructivist learning theories, which were initiated in the west, being applied into an eastern context. This study specifically focuses on teacher learning in the Vietnamese context in order to give suggestions to Vietnamese policy makers. Thus, it contributes to the body of empirical research in constructivist learning and in teaching in general and learning in Vietnam in particular. It also makes a significant contribution to the field of Vietnamese teacher education and to the implementation process of the educational reforms in Vietnam.

This study makes the contributions in a number of ways. First, it has conceptualised what other studies in the area have mentioned elsewhere, but has not yet been articulated. For example, the factors that enhance and factors that hinder learning might have been mentioned in other studies (T. T. Nguyen, 2005; Phuong-Mai et al., 2005; Thanh, 2010; Le, 2013), but in an individual, sporadic and unsystematic way. My study offers a comprehensive analysis of the whole picture using a cultural framework. Therefore, it hopefully can provide a clearer insight into a prolonged debate about whether constructivist learning theories can be applied successfully in Vietnam (Le, 2002; Phan, 2004; Hiep, 2005; Barnard and Viet, 2010), and can help to justify some confusion in defining Vietnamese teachers' identity, which also has attracted a lot of attention (Phan, 2004; Phan and Le, 2013). This confusion seems to be, in my view, inevitable when Vietnam is entering a critical period of integration into the globalised world. My study, therefore, offers some food for thoughts in redefining the Vietnamese students' and teachers' identities in this critical period of time. In addition to that, it contributes to

policy planning by providing a clearer insight into the process of educational reforms implementation.

This study also contributes to the growing number of research studies on teaching and learning in CHC countries. Coming from an eastern perspective, but conducted in a western context, the study aims to throw some light on debates and confusion over CHC learners, and to contribute to the worldwide discussion on cultural differences. The study makes a contribution to the field by problematising the simplistic issue of transferring ideas across cultures, as well as suggesting an approach which avoids dichotomies of 'Eastern' and 'Western' ideologies in line with my suggestion to take the status quo as the basis for development of a uniquely Vietnamese approach (See pp.239-242).

In order to put these contributions into practice, I have planned to disseminate my research at my best by publishing articles in the future and participating in conferences, which I have already done. I also hope to deliver workshops or seminars for Vietnamese teachers, teacher educators, and even education administrators in order not only to disseminate my research, but also to discuss and debate with them about the factors that enhance or hinder learning, the best strategies they want to apply to make the reforms happen effectively, and their roles in this mission. This will help the government consider taking the normative re-educative approach, which I have discussed previously, in order to implement the reforms successfully. I have also planned to conduct the next cycles of this action research when I am back in Vietnam and will try to generate its impact for Vietnamese teacher education.

Although I have made my best efforts for the study to be an ultimate outcome, it cannot avoid some limitations. Having scrupulous considerations, I think, the research has some limitations as follows.

First of all, although the research was conducted at the principal teacher training institution, which is deemed to be the cradle for producing teachers for the whole country in a centralised training system of Vietnam, a small population of 29 participants could hardly represent all the teachers in Vietnam. Nonetheless, as this teacher training institution is the biggest pedagogical university in Vietnam, which has quite a big impact on teacher training throughout the country with many training branches based in many different provinces in both the North and the South, the sample for the study can be argued to have the potential to reflect the overall characteristics of the Vietnamese teachers' values, attitudes, perceptions, opinions etc. I believe that the research may have uncovered general features of Vietnamese teacher training situation. However, the research, unfortunately, could not reveal specific local teacher training cultures or regional student teachers' beliefs and perceptions in particular areas of the country. Bearing this awareness in mind I do hope in the future I will be able to disseminate this research in a wider scale with other teacher trainers from other pedagogical universities and colleges involved. It fits well with one of the key principles of action research as summarised in Cohen et al., (2011):

> Action research starts with small groups of collaborators, but widens the community of participating action researchers so that it gradually includes more and more of those involved and affected by the practices in questions (Cohen et al., 2011, p.347).

The second limitation is related to the traceability issue that I discussed in the section of Access and Ethical Considerations in the Methodology chapter. There might be a possibility for the tutors' identities of being traced. However, they were aware of this particular issue and supportively consented.

Another limitation comes from being an insider in action research that I have discussed in the Reflexivity section of the Methodology chapter. As action research involves a qualitative approach and as I positioned myself as an

interpretative researcher, this status might more or less influence the research conduct and research finding interpretation. However, I was fully aware of this issue and tried my best to minimise and acknowledge this limitation.

Time constraint within this PhD project is another limitation. Action research is a cyclical process, thus, the actions are often incremental sequences and not wholesale changes (Wellington, 2000; Newby, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011). Therefore, a visible change needs time to take place through many cycles. Within PhD research, the time limit did not allow the researcher to observe evident change through the whole series of cycles. For this reason, this research could only complete the first cycle and built the records of the first signs of improvements or changes. However, this can serve as the foundation for the next cycles of the spiral to take place. What I have taken as important is to note that the action researcher should 'concentrate on learning, not on the outcomes of the action' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.356).

The third limitation is related to cultural validity. According to Joy (2003), cultural validity is 'the degree to which a study is appropriate to the cultural setting where research is to be carried out'(p.1 cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p.194). It 'could include: understanding possibly different target culture attitudes to research (Morgan, 2005, p.1 cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p.194). Thus, cultural validity requires the consideration of the participants' attitudes in terms of culture. In my study, students' respect for teachers as one of the principal cultural traits might affect the impartiality and subjectivity of the participants' responses. However, I have always been aware of this potential influence on the findings and tried to minimise it. I have discussed this in section 4.4.1 about reflexivity.

The last limitation I have identified relates to the analytical framework-Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Clearly, by its very nature, the framework of cultural dimensions is simplistic. However, my aim always has been to use this

framework as a starting point for discussion, pulling out key ideas about Vietnamese culture, to provide a springboard for a useful insight into the Vietnamese teaching and learning culture.

7.3. Suggestions for further study

Due to the time constraint for a PhD project, this research can only fulfil the first cycle of action research. Therefore, carrying on the next cycles of this action research should be the next target. In addition, this research is limited to a class of student teachers of English, at a central teacher training university in Hanoi. It would be useful if this study could be expanded in a larger scale in terms of the number of participants of a larger range of subjects and geographical areas so that it could obtain a more far-reaching generalisability.

Another direction of research emerging from this study worthy of exploring is the cultural adaptation or cultural hybridity for teaching and learning from both Western and Eastern perspectives. The area of Eastern learning philosophies and their impact on learning and on teachers' identities could be interesting to investigate in a more careful and comprehensive scale, especially when they are integrating into a globalised world.

The issue of identities of different nations is also worthy of further study as there seems to be a big confusion in the world about whether a nation should stand alone or should integrate into the common globalised world. Consequently, the question of how much of their own identity should be kept and how much of it should be changed to adapt to the common world could be posed and would need scholars to explore in-depth.

7.4. Personal reflections at the end of the action research cycle

The first cycle of this action research has been completed. This is the beginning, not an ending as it has generated a new cycle of the research. To start a new cycle, it is useful to reflect on the experience. This reflection accords with the fundamental tenets of Kolb's experiential learning cycle and Schön's reflection theory, which underpin my research. My reflection centres on what I have learnt during my PhD under three main areas - knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

It would be limiting if I try to summarise all the knowledge I have gained throughout my three year PhD because I have now learnt that knowledge is continuously constructed and constantly generated. My view of teachers has evolved during my learning process. When I started my PhD, I looked at teacher learning in a narrow area of feedback on micro-teaching practice. However, the more I read, the more I found myself interested in a broader area of approaches to teacher learning. I expanded my area of interest to different aspects of teacher learning. For example, one of the research questions I posed at the beginning - What are the most appropriate strategies to promote the effectiveness of feedback on micro-teaching?- was intended to focus on specific teaching techniques. The question was then shifted to the strategies to promote teacher learning. At the end, when I was writing the discussion chapter, it was such a delight to find the answer to this question at a higher level of thinking with the notion of a 'transfer space'. It is not about specific techniques, it is a more generalised idea as a guiding principle for a uniquely Vietnamese approach towards teacher learning.

The skills I have acquired during this three year process cannot be precisely assessed. Obviously, all the skills that I have developed in doing my research, such as, looking for resources, intensive and extensive reading, and reviewing, academic writing etc. skills are definitely valuable for my career. While conducting the research, attending and presenting at conferences, and writing journal articles have also been useful additions to my academic experience. Last but not least, I valued the supervisory skills that I learnt from my supervisors. I will surely need these to supervise generations of student teachers to help them form their own identities as Vietnamese teachers.

With the vast amount of knowledge that I have been fortunate to gain and the many useful skills that I have acquired, I have altered attitudes towards both academic and personal life. The most prominent attitude is that I tend to be more tolerant towards circumstances and people. I used to have a very strong judgmental attitude with a tendency to identify mistakes in everything I viewed. This approach has been changed considerably. I now see all experiences not as something to evaluate as good or bad, but something to learn from as I acknowledge that reality can be viewed and explained from different perspectives. Above all, I find joy in learning from all these experiences. I am writing this section as the final addition to the thesis following my viva voce examination. I really enjoyed the experience of the viva. It was a space for reflection at the end of the first cycle. I feel grateful to my supervisors, Professor Christine Hall and Associate Professor Joanna McIntyre, who have accompanied me the whole way providing me opportunities to learn and share. I also feel grateful to the examiners, Professor Terry Lamb and Professor Bernadette Nancy Youens. They were great facilitators, who successfully provided me with a 'learning space' for reflection on the whole process of my research.

After completion of my PhD, I am planning to go back to my country and visit my parents and the bookcase that my parents developed for me and my

brother from the time we were born, which was described in the first chapter. That book case, which nurtured in my brother and me alike a dream to see the world, was the starting point for my academic progress. By the time I visit this bookcase, I think it will have already had an impact on many other academic lives because I have written an article for a ten year anniversary journal within the Faculty of English, where I work, about this special bookcase. I received a lot of comments from my colleagues and students expressing their plans to build their own bookcases for their children and also their dreams to see the world and learn. My wish is that their plans would not stop at just going to see the world, but that they will learn from the world and come back to Vietnam to build together a country of Vietnam, which is outward facing, but at the same time, rich in its own culture. To achieve this, I believe, the impact of teacher educators is vital.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Pre-intervention questionnaire for student teachers

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is an attempt to find out your views about the micro teaching sessions of the ELT Methodology course conducted at the Faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education as well as your views about the giving and receiving feedback on this microteaching. I would very much appreciate your cooperation in filling in the following questionnaire. Your responses will help us design a more detailed research study, which will hopefully contribute to the improvement of this aspect of teacher training within the Faculty. Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible. All questionnaires are anonymous and strictly confidential.

Part 1: Closed questions (Please put a tick where appropriate)

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Feedback on micro teaching is important in the process of learning to teach.	✓				
2. Before the microteaching session your supervisor discusses the lesson plan with you.		✓			
3. You are provided with criteria before doing microteaching so that you know how to assess your teaching.	✓				
4. In the feedback session your supervisor often tells you what to do to improve your teaching.		✓			
5. During the feedback session you spend most of the time listening to your supervisor and/or peers.		✓			
6. You often have a chance to explain why you do certain activities during your micro teaching in the feedback session.		✓			
7. During the feedback session you are given a chance to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement.	✓				
8. You are given not only oral feedback, but also written feedback from your supervisor.		✓			
9. You want your supervisor to tell you explicitly whether what you have done is right or wrong so that you will improve your teaching.		✓			
10. You feel more confident when you perform your teaching without the supervisor.		✓			
11. You want to see yourself teaching because you can judge your own teaching and improve your own performance.		✓			
12. After the micro teaching session, you often look back at what you have done in your teaching.		✓	✓		
13. You keep journal/diary during microteaching process.			✓		
14. You want to see the supervisor modelling herself as an example for you to see.	✓				

Part 2: Open ended questions

1. In your opinion, what is the role of feedback on microteaching in preparing the student teacher to teaching practice? Can you explain your reasons for this?

In my opinion, the role of feedback on microteaching is very important for student. It After feedbacking, students have experiment in teaching process and improve their mistake.

2. Please describe how a feedback session often goes.

- After microteaching, teacher comment: teaching style, content, voice..., and then shares experiments when they are wrong.

3. What do you wish your supervisor to do in the feedback session? What do you think could be done to improve the quality of feedback session?

- I wish that your supervisor feedback rightly about microteaching. Teacher should conduct, analize problems of students
- To improve the quality of feedback, Teacher have experiment and jumfy knowledges.

4. Any other comments or more explanation on any of the issues above would be very much appreciated:

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Appendix 2: Pre-intervention questionnaire for university tutors

QUESTIONNAIRE (for university tutors)

This questionnaire is an attempt to find out your views about the micro teaching sessions of the ELT Methodology course conducted at the Faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education as well as your views about the giving and receiving feedback on this microteaching. I would very much appreciate your cooperation in filling in the following questionnaire. Your responses will help us design a more detailed research study, which will hopefully contribute to the improvement of this aspect of teacher training within the Faculty. Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible. All questionnaires are anonymous and strictly confidential.

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Feedback on micro teaching is important in the process of learning to teach.	x				
2. Before the microteaching session you discuss the lesson plan with your students. (What might be the content of the discussion?^^)			x		
3. You provide your students with criteria before doing microteaching.	x				
4. In the feedback session you often tell your students what to do to improve their teaching.	x				
5. During the feedback session your students spend most of the time listening to you and/or their peers.				x	
6. You often let your students have a chance to explain why they do certain activities during their micro teaching in the feedback session.		x			
7. During the feedback session you give the students a chance to explore possible ways of working on the areas for improvement.		x			
8. You give not only oral feedback, but also written feedback to your students.	x				
9. You tend to tell your students explicitly whether what they have done is right or wrong so that they will improve their	x				

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
teaching.					
10. You think the student feel more confident when they perform their teaching without you.	x				
11. You think videotaping your students' teaching is a good instrument for feedback session.		x			
12. After the micro teaching session, you think the students often look back at the teaching that they have done.	x				
13. You think your students keep journal/diary during microteaching process.	x				
14. You think teachers' modelling is good for student teachers to learn how to teach.	x				

Open ended questions

1. In your opinion, what is the role of feedback on microteaching in preparing the student teacher to teaching practice? Can you explain your reasons for this?

As for me, feedback is indispensable. Students may be able to do what they plan to, but they cannot be sure if everything in practice is the same as planned. After each feedback session, students have a chance to look back at what they have done and will make changes for better performance.

2. Can you please describe how you often deliver feedback on microteaching sessions?

I deliver feedback after each microteaching session. First, I give groups of student time to think about their friends' performance and give written comments (either good or bad). I always remember to take my own notes. After that, each group hand in the comments so that I can sort out and read aloud to the whole class. I myself share my own comments if they are different from groups'. Suggestions for improvement are encouraged.

3. What do you think a supervisor should do to make feedback effective?

- Feedback should be given right after each micro-teaching.

- The supervisor should step back and give way to peer-feedback first.

- Peers should be grouped and supposed to give written comments.

- Comments should be written and anonymous.

- Feedback should be followed by suggestions for improvement.

4. What do you think the student teacher should do during the feedback session?

He/ She should take notes on feedback and think of solution themselves to improve their own performance. An on-going journal can be a good choice for both teachers and students.

5. What do you think could be the factors that hinder feedback delivery?

- Peers are not interested in the feedback session.

- Student teacher is not willing to get feedback.

- Comments are not taken seriously and no improvement is followed.

- Feedback session can be too short or too long.

6. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of giving and receiving feedback on microteaching for the future? Please specify.

*Sometimes the teacher herself and the students need further theoretical background to the issue involved so that they can give thoughtful and meaningful comments. Therefore, I recommend that there should be **an experienced teacher** or even **an educational expert** beside the students and teacher.*

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Appendix 3: A follow-up email – an example

Mon, 21 Jan, 2013 at 2:08PM

1. Chị nghĩ thế nào về sự tự chủ trong học tập của giáo sinh (student teacher/ teacher trainee) khi học môn PP2? Chị có nghĩ tổ phương pháp cần có động thái để tăng cường việc tự chủ của giáo sinh trong học môn PP2 không?

Điều này có khớp với chủ trương của khoa đối với cả các môn học khác không?

[What do you think about the learner autonomy of the student teachers when participating in Teaching Language Components and Language Skills course? Do you think the ELT Division needs to take actions to promote autonomy in learning teaching? Is it in line with the Faculty's policy for other courses?]

Theo tôi, sự tự chủ của giáo sinh khi học môn PP2 chưa được như giáo viên mong đợi.Cụ thể, hệ thống tín chỉ yêu cầu sinh viên phải giành thời lượng tự học rất lớn, thời gian học trên lớp chỉ mang tính chất giáo viên giải đáp thắc mắc và hướng dẫn. Tuy nhiên, trên thực tế, đa số sinh viên khi chuyển từ phương thức học tương đối bị động ở phổ thông đến phương thức học chủ động bậc đại học đều cảm thấy bối rối, và bản thân chưa thích nghi được ngay cả khi đã trải qua vài học phần.

Theo tôi, việc tăng cường tính tự chủ của sinh viên trong môn học này là rất cần thiết.Điều này hoàn toàn khớp với chủ trương của khoa với tất cả các môn học khác.

[In my view, learner autonomy of the student teachers in the course of Teaching English Language Components and Language Skills is under the tutor's expectations. That is, the newly launched credit-based curriculum requires that the student teachers spend a great amount time on independent study. The class time should basically be spent on solving problems and the tutor's giving guidance. However, a majority of students

seem to be struggling in this new system since they have just transferred from the passive learning habit acquired at high school. Even now they have gone through several academic terms they do not seem to be able to adapt themselves to the new learning style at university.

I think, it is absolutely necessary to promote learner autonomy in this course. It absolutely goes in line with the Faculty's policy for other courses as well]

2. Chị nghĩ thế nào về việc làm việc nhóm và sự hợp tác với nhau trong nhóm của giáo sinh khi học môn PP2? Chị có nghĩ rằng sinh viên Việt Nam có thể làm việc nhóm và hợp tác với nhau một cách hiệu quả không?

[What do you think about group work and collaborative learning among the student teachers in the process of learning to teach? Do you think Vietnamese students can collaborate effectively?]

Việc làm việc nhóm và hợp tác với nhau giữa các sinh viên về bản chất vốn rất hữu ích cho việc phát huy tính tự chủ của sinh viên trong bộ môn PP2 cũng như tất cả các bộ môn. Với sinh viên Việt Nam, việc làm việc nhóm và hợp tác với nhau sẽ thực sự hiệu quả nếu có sự giám sát chặt chẽ của giáo viên. Vấn đề lớn nhất khi làm việc nhóm là các thành viên thường có thái độ cậy nhờ quá nhiều vào trưởng nhóm. Vì vậy, điều quan trọng trước tiên là phải có 1 trưởng nhóm tốt, và trưởng nhóm phải có khả năng dẫn dắt các thành viên trong nhóm để từng thành viên phải có ý thức tham gia, trước hết là bắt buộc, sau đó tăng dần tính tự chủ, để cùng hoàn thành một công việc chung.

[Group work and cooperative learning by nature are actually useful for developing learner autonomy for the student teachers in this course and other courses alike. In the Vietnamese context group work and collaborative learning would be more effective if there was given strict supervision by the tutor. The biggest issue when working in groups is that the members of the group tend to have over-reliance on the group leader. Therefore, the first and foremost is to have a good group leader, who is able to encourage each

member to willingly participate. At first, it could be mandatory, and then it gets more autonomous for all the members to fulfil a common task]

3. Theo chị nghĩ sinh viên Việt Nam có tự tin khi nhận xét cho bạn mình không? Ngược lại giáo sinh được nhận xét có tin rằng bạn mình nhận xét tốt và có thể học từ bạn mình?

[Do you think Vietnamese students are confident when giving feedback to their peers? In return, do they appreciate their peers' feedback and believe that they can learn from peers?]

Nhìn chung, sinh viên VN không tự tin khi phải công khai ý kiến của mình. Do vậy, việc nhận xét này hiệu quả hơn nếu những nhận xét của sinh viên tới người bạn của mình không được tiết lộ cho cả lớp biết.

Ngược lại, giáo sinh được nhận xét có xu hướng tiếp thu và học hỏi từ những nhận xét của bạn mình, nhưng thường thì vẫn thích được nghe chính giáo viên nhận xét hơn!

[Generally speaking, Vietnamese students are not confident when they have to speak up. Therefore, feedback would be more effective if the student teachers' comments to their peers are kept anonymous.

In return, feedback receivers tend to receive and welcome comments from their peers and learn from them, but still want to hear from the tutor.]

Appendix 4: Teaching plan

Tutor to prepare for class discussion:

- Criteria of an effective lesson to send student teachers before class
- Lesson plan format

Student teachers' core work

- Video inference
- Videotaping of lessons

Week	Teaching points	Activities in class	Students' homework	Tutor's homework
1 (22/8)	- Course induction - Shape of a language lesson - Teaching grammar - Planning a lesson	- Poster presentation - Video watching and discussion from students with teacher's guidance - Students' group work on Tieng Anh 11 with teacher's tutorial to write a language lesson plan	- Group of 3: download a video clip of a grammar/ vocabulary/pronunciation lesson - Read hand-outs on teaching vocabulary and pronunciation - Infer the lesson plan for the chosen video clip in a written form and prepare for an oral presentation	Coordinate the video inference task
2 (29/8)	- Teaching vocabulary and pronunciation - Eliciting techniques	- Video watching and discussion from students with teacher's guidance	- Submit the video clip of a grammar/ vocabulary/pronunciation lesson + its lesson plan for the chosen video clip to tutor by Sunday 2/8	- Watch the clips and give feedback on the video inferences
3 (5/9)	Video inference (Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation)	- Oral explanation on the inferred lesson plan for video clip	- Groups of 3: Prepare a grammar lesson plan + a vocabulary/pronunciation lesson plan - Submit both lesson plans	- Give feedback on the lesson plans

Week	Teaching points	Activities in class	Students' homework	Tutor's homework
		chosen - Class discussion	to tutor by Sunday 9/9	
4 (12/9)	Video inference task (Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation)	- Oral explanation on the inferred lesson plan for video clip chosen - Class discussion	- Groups of 3: teaching a grammar lesson (all members take turns to teach) - Submit the videotaping of the lesson to the tutor by 16/9 - Write a report giving comments on each of the members' teaching. The comments should cover at least 1 positive point and one weak point to be improved.	- Watch the video recordings of lessons and give feedback
5 (19/9)	Practice of teaching (Grammar)	- 10 minutes for each group presentation + 5 minutes for class comments - Tutor's comments - Written comments to be sent to each group: teacher's and peers'	- Groups of 3: teaching a vocabulary/pronunciation lesson (all members take turns to teach) - Submit the videotaping of the lesson to the tutor by Sunday 23/9 - Write a report giving comments on each of the members' teaching. The comments should cover at least 1 positive point and one weak point to be improved.	- Watch the video recordings of the lessons and give feedback

Week	Teaching points	Activities in class	Students' homework	Tutor's homework
6 (26/9)	Practice of teaching (Vocabulary and pronunciation)	- 15 minutes for each group presentation + 5 minutes for class comments - Tutor's comments - Written comments to be sent to each group: teacher's and peers'	- Write reflective journal on their teaching individually - Read hand-out on the shape of a skill lesson	- Feedback on students' journals
7 (3/10)	Shape of a skill lesson	- Poster presentation - Video watching and discussion from students with teacher's guidance - Students' group work on Tieng Anh 11 with teacher's tutorial to write a skill lesson plan	- Group of 3: download a video clip of a reading/writing lesson - Read hand-outs on teaching reading and teaching writing - Infer the lesson plan for the chosen video clip in a written form and prepare for an oral presentation	Coordinate the video inference task
8 (10/10)	Teaching reading and teaching writing	- Video watching and discussion from students with teacher's guidance	- Submit the video clip of a reading/writing lesson + its lesson plan for the chosen video clip to tutor by Sunday 14/10	- Watch the clips and give feedback on the video inferences

Week	Teaching points	Activities in class	Students' homework	Tutor's homework
9 (17/10)	Teaching speaking and teaching listening	Video watching and discussion from students with teacher's guidance	- Each group to download a video clip of a listening/speaking lesson	Coordinate the video inference task
10 (24/10)	Video inference activity (a reading/writing lesson)	- Oral explanation on the inferred lesson plan for the video clip chosen - Class discussion	- Groups of 3: Prepare a reading/writing lesson plan + a speaking/listening lesson plan - Submit both lesson plans to tutor by Sunday 28/10	Feedback on the lesson plans
11 (31/10)	Video inference activity (a reading/writing lesson)	- Oral explanation on the inferred lesson plan for the video clip chosen - Class discussion	- Groups of 3: teaching a reading/writing lesson (all members take turns to teach) - Submit the video taping of the lesson to the tutor by Sunday 4/11 - Write a report giving comments on each of the members' teaching. The comments should cover at least 1 positive point and one weak point to be improved.	- Watch the video recordings of lessons and give feedback
12 (7/11)	Practice of teaching (reading and writing)	- 10 minutes for each group comments and class comments - Tutor's comments - Written comments to be sent to each group: teacher's and	- Groups of 3: teaching a listening/speaking lesson (all members take turns to teach) - Submit the videotaping of the lesson to the tutor by Sunday 11/11 - Write a report giving comments on each of the members' teaching. The comments should cover at least 1 positive point and	- Watch the video recordings of lessons and give feedback

Week	Teaching points	Activities in class	Students' homework	Tutor's homework
		peers'	one weak point to be improved.	
13 (14/11)	Practice of teaching (listening and speaking)	- Demo video lesson from groups - Teacher gives feedback as the whole class	- Write reflective journal on their teaching individually - Infer the video clip of a listening/speaking lesson - Submit the video clip of a listening/speaking lesson + its lesson plan for the chosen video clip to tutor by 18/11	- Feedback on students' journals - Watch the clips and give feedback on the video inferences
14 (28/11)	Video inference activity (listening and speaking)	- Oral explanation on the video clip chosen - Class discussion	Communicate the tutors about journaling	Prepare a wrap up: questionnaires and research related issues
15 (5/12)	Video inference activity (listening and speaking)	- Oral explanation on the video clip chosen - Class discussion		

Note: 19/11 – 24/11 Tuan le ren luyen nghiep vu su pham (pedagogical training week)

Appendix 5: A staff discussion transcript excerpt

Researcher: ... I would appreciate all your ideas about this research.
Do you have any ideas about my research?
... [silence]

Researcher: During the process of training initial teachers, especially the micro teaching feedback session, what difficulties you often encounter that you haven't been able to sort out?

Mai: My opinion is as follows. First, it is time constraint. The whole course of Teaching English Components and Language Skills covers 15 weeksincluding 2 components- theory and practice. The practice component is microteaching periods. For one microteaching session, the whole class with around 30 students divided into 6-7 group presentations, the time for teacher's feedback is too limited for the tutor to give detailed feedback or to cover all the criteria needed in a lesson done by teacher trainees. That is the biggest limitation.

Second, apart from the feedback from the teacher, I myself want to include in the session the comments and feedback from other students in the class. However, I'm still thinking about how to sort it out. Those are the difficulties I have now.

[Silence]

Hoa: This is my opinion. When doing micro teaching, a group of students is in charge of teaching only one component or one skill. So how can the teacher do so that the students can be aware of all general requirements the student teacher needs to conform via just one or two sessions? That also relates to the time problem that Trang has just mentioned. The time is too limited for students' practicing their teaching so that they cover all those requirements they need to conform for a whole lesson.

Second, I don't know about other countries, but this is cultural thing in Vietnam. Sometimes, giving a negative feedback would make them feel hurt. So what the feedback should be like so that it would be constructive and would not make students feel hurt

[Silence]

Researcher: Thank you very much. I really appreciate these ideas as I am trying to address all these issues in the research. I have another question for you related to the textbook you are using. I would like to get to know more about the textbook and syllabus used currently. Do all classes have the same textbook and syllabuses? Do you have any change for textbook? Are teachers allowed to use their own textbook or they have to follow the official materials?

Mai: Can you make it clearer, what textbook are you talking about?

Researcher: The textbook used for the course Teaching language component and language skills. Do you have to be centralised in line with the school's professional development trend?

Mai: Up to now we have always been using the materials compiled by the division. The class teacher can use their own supplementary materials. But in the near future, we are going to unify all the materials so that we have a new textbook for official use.

Researcher: So that means the school impose that all the classes have to use one same textbook?

Mai: Actually, there is no official document saying that. But we have been following that discipline ever since

Researcher: So every class has to follow one same core book?

Mai: Yes, that's right. And in the future we will have the same supplementary materials for all classes

Researcher: Another issue I would like to get to know about is assessment. Does the school or the division have any orientation towards assessment of initial teachers, especially the micro teaching for student teachers?

Hoa: Student teachers ... meaning ...

Huong: meaning students ... trainees [laugh]

Mai: The school doesn't impose any kind of assessment. The way we assess students is via micro teaching throughout the course and final assessment

Researcher: so we teachers have autonomy in deciding the way teachers will assess their students?

Mai: Yes, we do have that autonomy in deciding whether the students have to sit for a test or do an assignment

Researcher: Any other ideas?

[Silence]

Appendix 6: An email from the group of research participants

(Written at the first phase of the course)

We're having problem :((2)

K60A - FOE - HNUE
To
Me
12 Sep 2012

Dear teacher,

I'm writing to thank you for your interesting lessons. The lessons in these days help us a lot with our teaching skills. You are such a devoted teacher and we really appreciate your teaching method. However, there is a little problem making us unable to keep pace with the syllabus. The thing is that our knowledge is limited and we find it difficult to do the exercises in the course book. I, myself, can do nothing without a good theoretical background. So, would you mind spending a little time in the beginning of the lesson introducing the new items of the lessons?

I am looking forward to your reply!

Have a nice day!
Best regards,

Bao Ngoc (on behalf of class X)

Reply, Reply all or Forward | More
Me

Appendix 7: Post-intervention questionnaire

POST INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire aims to find out your views about the feedback methods that the trainer has recently adopted during the teaching practice of the module "Teaching Language Components and Language Skills" conducted at the Faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education. I would very much appreciate your cooperation in filling in the following questionnaire. Your responses will help us investigate factors that enhance teaching practice feedback, barriers that hinder it, as well as the most appropriate strategies to be employed. The study will hopefully contribute to the improvement of teaching practice feedback in particular and in teacher training in general.

Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible. All your responses will neither affect your module result nor cause any negative consequences. All questionnaires are anonymous and strictly confidential.

Part 1: Closed questions (Please circle the letters a, b, c, or d where appropriate)

1. What is your attitude towards changes?
a. I often like to try out new things.
b. I often feel anxious about new things.
d. I do not want to change.
c. Other (please explain your answer)
.....Sometimes...I feel like trying new things and sometimes
I feel anxious about it......

2. Why did you take this module? (You can choose more than one option)
(a) Because I would like to become a good teacher.
b. Because this module is compulsory.
c. Other (please explain your answer)
....
....

3. In what ways, if any, did you find the new feedback methods helpful? (You can choose more than one option)
a. It helps improve my teaching skills
(b) It helps improve my self-reflection skills
c. It helps improve my team work skills
d. It helps improve my communication skills
(e) It has increased my self-study ability
f. Other (please explain your answer)
....
....

4. Do you feel comfortable with using technology in downloading video clips from the internet and video taping your group's teaching?

(a) Yes   b. No   c. Other (please explain your answer) .

....

....

5. In general, do you feel comfortable with working with peers in general?

a. Yes (Please explain your answer) ....

....

....

b. No (please explain your answer) ....

....

(c) Other (please explain your answer) ....

....

....

6. Do you think you can learn from your self-reflection on the teaching experience even without the tutor's feedback?

a. Yes   b. No   (c) Other (please explain your answer)

Sometimes, I feel confused about what is right or what is wrong without tutor's feedback

7. Do you think you can learn from your peers through their feedback even without that from the tutor?

a. Yes   b. No   (c) Other (please explain your answer)

Sometime yes, sometimes no. Because there is time that I don't agree with my peers

8. Do you think that when giving feedback it is necessary for the tutor to

a. Indicate explicitly what is right or wrong?

(b) Facilitate feedback activities so that you can think about the experience without the need to explicitly indicate what is right or wrong?

c. Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

9. Do you feel confident when giving feedback to your classmates in front of the whole class?

a. Yes   b. No   (c) Other (please explain your answer)

I'm afraid of making my friends sad when I give straight feedback in front of the whole class

10. Do you feel more confident when you work in small group?

(a) Yes   b. No   c. Other (please explain your answer) .

....

....

11. Did your classmates make you feel bad, criticizing you when giving you feedback?

a. Yes   (b.) No   c. Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

12. Did you give frank feedback to your peers without worrying of making them lose face?

a. Yes   b. No   (c.) Other (please explain your answer)

Sometimes I worry that I would make them lose face if I give frank feedback to my peers.

13. At the beginning of the module did you feel that you couldn't learn and couldn't do the teaching practice without the tutor's lecturing about the theory of teaching?

(a.) Yes   b. No   c. Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

14. Have you changed that feeling through out the module?

(a.) Yes. (Please explain your answer)

Now I feel more confidant to make lesson plan and do the teaching practice by myself

b. No. (Please explain your answer)

....

....

....

15. You have been asked to work in groups and cross-groups all the time to do the assignments. Have you ever done the tasks individually because of some reason?

a. No. I have been working in groups all the time

(b.) Yes. Please give the reason(s) for not working in groups ....

I've done the tasks individually because sometimes I am to busy to meet my group members in person

16. Do you like video inference activity?

(a.) Yes (Please go to question 17)

b. No (Please go to question 18)

(c.) Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

17. What you like about the video inference activity is that it can (you can choose more than one option).

a. Give you opportunities to work with other student teachers and discuss teaching ideas.

b. serve as a spring board for teaching practice

c. help understand theory of teaching before doing the teaching practice.

d. help you get started with writing a lesson plan.

e. learn teaching from other teachers from Vietnam and many different parts of the world.

f. make it easier to give feedback on a stranger's teaching as you would not make him/her feel de-motivated at your frank or negative feedback.

g. give opportunities to learn how to give feedback though the process of commenting on clips.

h. make you work harder.

i. other (please explain your answer)

....
....

18. What you don't like about this activity is (you can choose more than one option).

a. good clips on the internet are limited.

b. the clips are often not full lessons.

c. the clips are not role models for teaching.

d. it makes you work too hard.

e. it takes too much time.

f. other (please explain your answer)

....
....

19. Do you like video taping activity?

a. Yes (Please go to question 20)

b. No (Please go to question 21)

c. Other (please explain your answer)

....
....

20. What you like about this activity is (you can choose more than one option)

a. you can see and assess yourself teaching.

b. you have opportunities to practise teaching and improve yourself.

b. you have opportunities to work with and learn from other student teachers.

c. it saves time in class.

d. it makes you work harder.

e. other (please explain your answer)

....

....

21. What you don't like about this activity is (you can choose more than one option)

a. there are not real students.

b. you have difficulties in using technologies.

c. it makes you work too hard.

d. it takes too much time.

d. other (please explain your answer)

....

....

22. In order to give and receive effective feedback you think that the tutor needs to

a. be a good organizer and facilitator so that everyone has a chance to do teaching practice and to discuss teaching ideas with their peers (the tutor does not need to tell what is right and what is wrong about your teaching).

b. tell you explicitly what is right and wrong about your teaching.

c. other (please explain your answer)

....

....

23. Do you think the feedback methods can change the trainer's and trainee's roles?

a. Yes   b. No   c. Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

24. Do you think the new feedback methods can give you opportunities to discover new knowledge and develop teaching skills by yourself?

a. Yes   b. No   c. Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

25. Do you think by learning from peer feedback and self reflection with the tutor's guidance you have changed a bit of your learning habit?

a. Yes   b. No   c. Other (please explain your answer)

....

....

Part 2: Open ended questions

1. Was the feedback approach in this module was different to your previous experience? Please explain your answer.

In the past, I only recieved feedback from my teacher, but when I learn this module I recieve both feedback from both teacher and friends. And toward the end of this module, I only recieve feedback from my friends.

2. Do you have any other comments about the teaching practice feedback (you could recall the whole process of the module from the beginning to the end)?
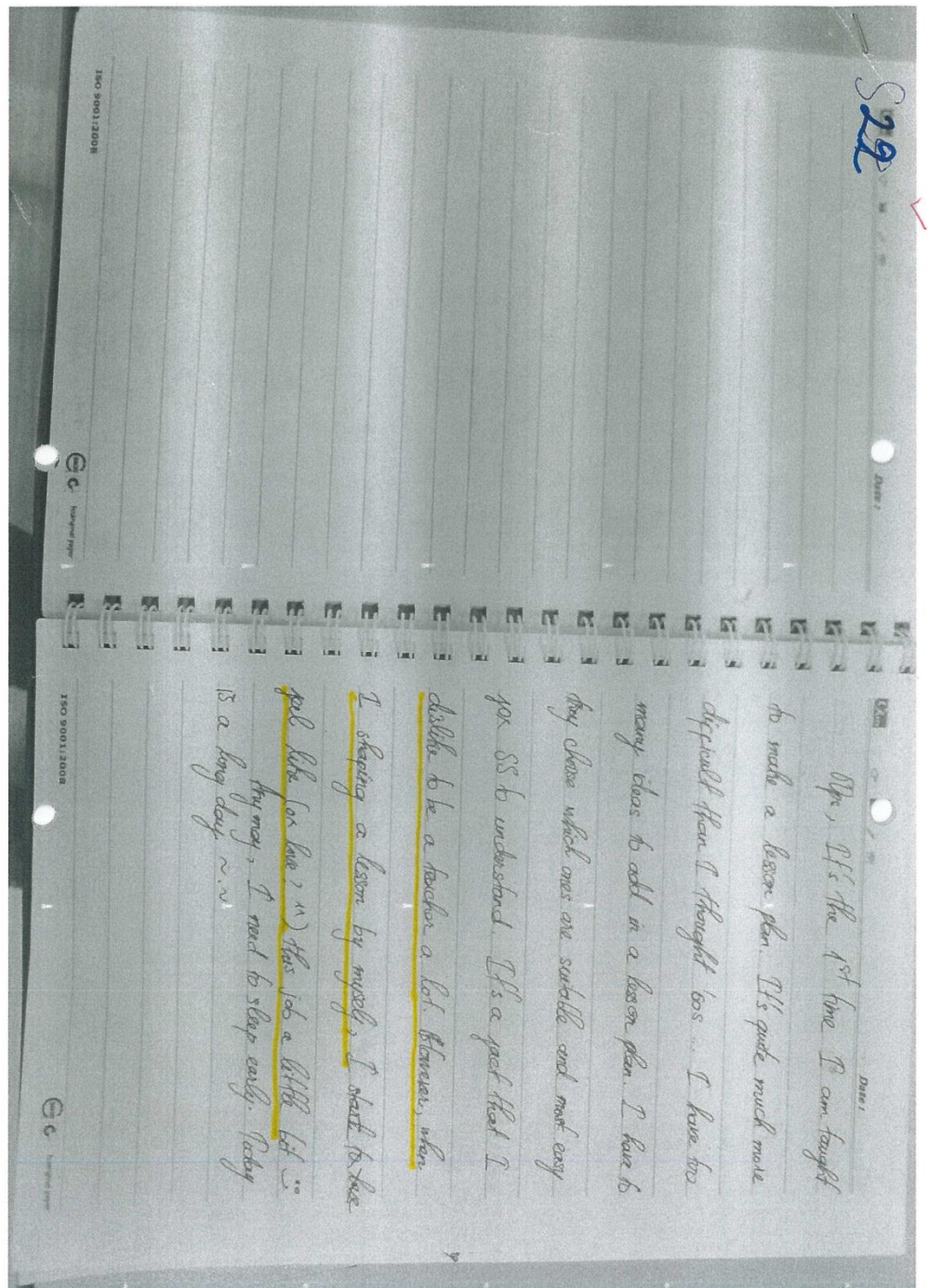
I think we should have more time to sit together and discuss, about feedback between the
  or explain
groups because we have very little time in class

3. In your opinion, what should be done to improve teaching practice feedback?

When giving feed back, the peer could hide your name sothat your friend don't know who gave feeback for them. By doing this way I think we could give Frank feedback to my friends

_ The end _

Appendix 8: A student teacher's journal entry

Ops, It's the 1st time I am taught to make a lesson plan. It's quite much more difficult than I thought 'cos ... I have too many ideas to add in a lesson plan. I have to choose which ones are suitable and most easy for SS to understand. It's a fact that I dislike to be a teacher a lot. However, when I starting a lesson by myself, I start to like not like (or love? ^^) this job a little bit ^^ they may). I need to sleep early. Today is a long day ~.~

Um, I asked me to record a video
& lot in hard on the lesson plan we made
both. OK, ... when I'm back it's so
especially for you because I'm easy to be good memory
fun and excited. When a camera or
some one looks at me, I'll feel ashame,
my friend help me practice and faster. And
I don't read it happens like that :(((

I think that I should think about
a name for you. Um ... Venue, it's OK?
It's my facebook username ^^

I recorded a clip last week and
it's not so bad as I imaged. *hihi*

There are some problems with me.
① my handwriting. It is so & so bad. My handwriting
on both is nice but it's depreson the
board I.T
② I smile. TOO much. :D
A teacher should be normal, right?
but I'm like a child, not a teacher...
I should change it, shouldn't I?
③ I teach by both English and Vietnamese
"qui gui".

Hi Home ..

How r u today? The weather is so nice.

I really really like it ♥♥♥

My speaking skill is still bad. I tried

but it does not too much change. I'm so sad.

I can't become a teacher. Teacher anyone with

this voice. I can't talk loudersssss !!!!

Learning a slip is not a challenge with me

anymore. I'm so happy about that, thank you !

I wish

Maybe, it's will be the last time I meet

you because tomorrow we'll end this course.

I'm sad !!!

Time flies so fast. It finishes

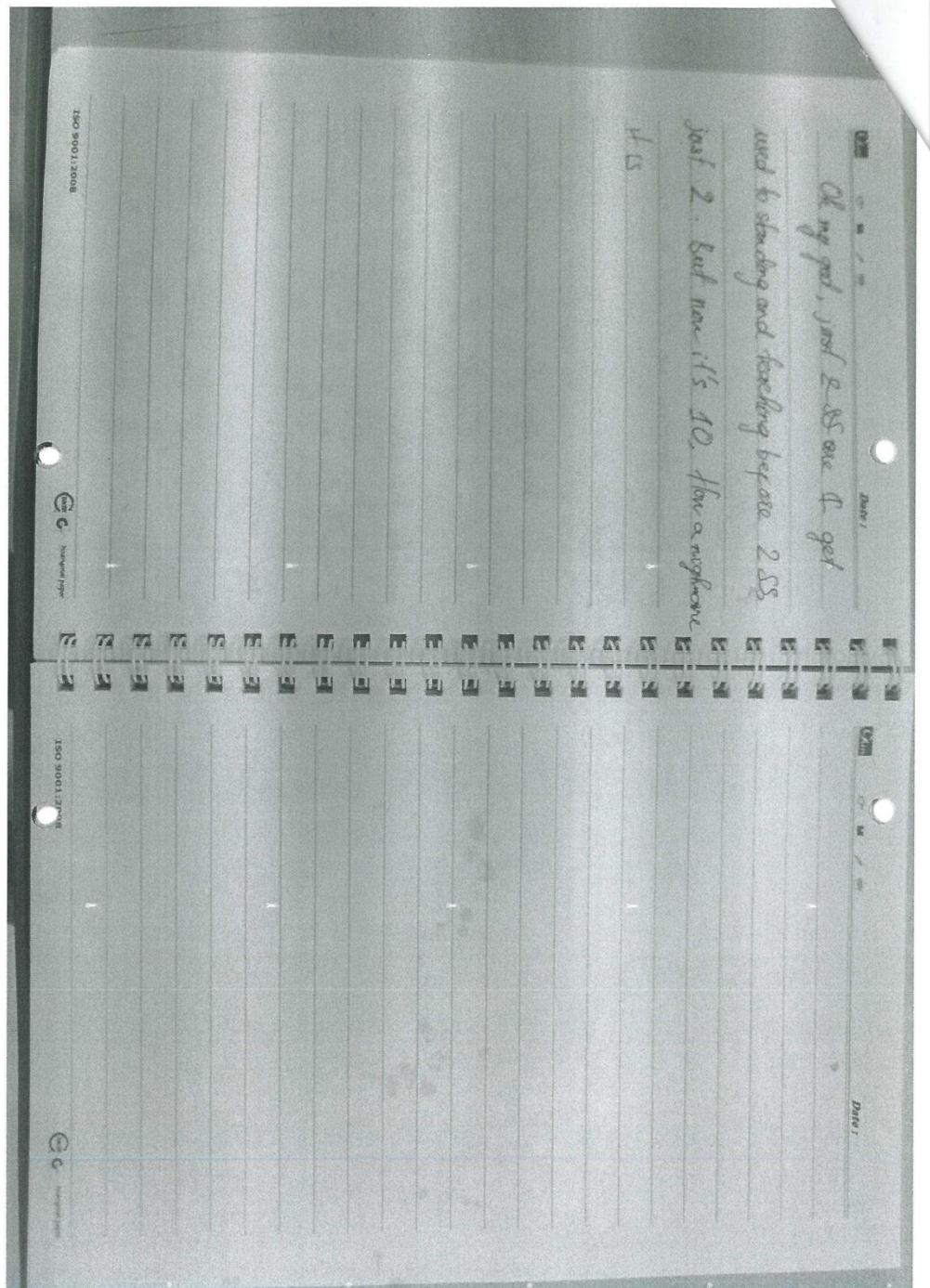faster than I thought. I still have many

mistakes to be changed and corrected. Moreover,

I really love my teacher. She is so friendly

and easy talk.

I got an email from teacher and

she asked a clip recorded with 10 students !

— 27/12/2012 —

Ok my girl, just 2.85 one & get
used to standing and teaching before 2.85
just 2. But now it's 10, Have a megaphone

4:03

Appendix 9: A participant consent form (for student teachers)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM *(For student teachers)*

Project title: Using Video to Promote Feedback in Initial Teacher Education

Researcher's name: *Nguyen Thi Mai Huong*

Supervisor's names: *Prof. Christine Hall*
Dr. Joanna McIntyre

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

- I understand that all transcribed data and video data will be kept in electronic form on a password protected computer. Any paper copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. No-one other than the researcher, the supervisors or examiners can have access to the computer or filing cabinet.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Eduction, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed .... (research participant)

Date ....15/8/2012...

Contact details

Researcher: *Nguyen Thi Mai Huong*- Email: *ttxtmn@nottingham.ac.uk*

Supervisor 1: *Prof. Christine Hall*- Email: *christine.hall@nottingham.ac.uk*
Supervisor 2: *Dr. Joanna McIntyre*- Email: *Joanna.Mcintyre@nottingham.ac.uk*

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

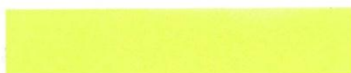## Appendix 10: The use of video during the intervention

THE USE OF VIDEO DURING THE MICROTEACHING SESSIONS

During the designated course of Learning to Teach English as the intervention of the research there is considerable use of video. It serves as a means to discuss the teaching performance during the feedback sessions and takes place every week during the course. The student teachers will have to do videotaping of their own microteaching that is assigned by the tutor prior to each class. This is considered to be a good strategy to promote reflection during the development of student teachers' profession. However, there are clearly important ethical considerations involved in the capture and use of such video. In signing this form we are asking you, as a student teacher, to confirm your understanding of these ethical issues.

Thus I confirm that:

- I understand that the use of any video produced will have been agreed in advance, through discussions with my tutor and/or other student teachers involved in sessions at university;
- I understand that the primary use of the video is to support my own development, the secondary use of the video might serve as data for the research and that access to the video would include only my tutor and other student teachers involved in sessions at the university.;
- I understand that the video will only be kept beyond the end of the course should I give my written permission for it to be used;
- I understand that in saving any video as digital files on a computer or else where, I will safeguard access through passwords and delete the files when they are no longer needed;
- I understand that my tutor will take similar steps to ensure the safe-keeping of any videos and files I give them as part of course expectations;
- I will not share video taken in classrooms on social networks or in other web-based environments. Any breach of this rule would constitute gross professional misconduct.

Name of Participant:

Participant signature:

Name of Tutor:

Appendix 11: A participant consent form (for tutors)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM *(For tutors)*

Project title: The Use of Feedback to Improve Teacher Training in Vietnam

Researcher's name: *Nguyen Thi Mai Huong*

Supervisor's names: *Prof. Christine Hall*
Dr. Joanna McIntyre

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

- I understand that all transcribed data and video data will be kept in electronic form on a password protected computer. Any paper copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. No-one other than the researcher, the supervisors or examiners can have access to the computer or filing cabinet.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Eduction, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed .... (research participant)

Date ......04 / 09 / 2012............

Contact details
Researcher: *Nguyen Thi Mai Huong- Email: ttxtmn@nottingham.ac.uk*

Supervisor 1: *Prof. Christine Hall- Email: christine.hall@nottingham.ac.uk*
Supervisor 2: Dr. *Joanna McIntyre- Email: Joanna.Mcintyre@nottingham.ac.uk*

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk