

An Investigation into Teachers' Mediation with Junior College Students' Learning English in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the college English teachers' and students' perceptions about the different features of Feuerstein's mediated learning experience (MLE). Data for this study were drawn from different sources. The primary source of data came from a questionnaire administered to 23 Taiwan EFL teachers and 93 EFL junior college students. Individual interviews with five teachers and focus group interviews with two groups of students were also conducted as a second method of research in this study. The findings reveal significant differences between teachers' responses to the 'ideal' and the 'practice' meditation (Yang, 2002) and between teachers and students. It is suggested that people's understanding of the social role of 'teacher' is highly consistent with their home culture. Whereas some aspects of Chinese traditional culture appear to be impediments to MLE (e.g. individuality; awareness of change), it also appears to the case of other aspects of Chinese culture may actually contribute to the implement of MLE (e.g. sharing; a sense of belonging). It needs the teacher's careful judgment in order to decide which element of MLE may or should exist in which situation.

Key words: MLE, teacher as a mediator, ELT (English language teaching)



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1. INTRODUCTION

In Taiwan, college studies are the student's first serious exposure to academic and professional English. English ability is often an important factor in a long-term career success (Tsui, 1999) for a number of reasons, including the connections between Taiwan and US industry (Silicon Valley East, 1998) and the predominance of English in state-of-the-art technology, particular the Internet (Pakir, 1999). Depending on the discipline, English ability can also be an important determinant of success in school (Kuo, 1987). Recently, Taiwan lawmakers and education administrators have voiced concerns about studies, which have shown that Taiwan's higher education quality has fallen behind other Asian countries. These studies also pointed out that Taiwanese university students' international participation has declined as more and more students turn their back on the opportunity to study abroad. In addition, the level of university students' English proficiency, based on TOFEL scores, was ranked fourth from the bottom in Asia. Cheng, a Taiwanese lawmaker, cited a poll that claimed that 47 out of the 52 university presidents in Taiwan were dissatisfied with their students' English ability while 39 regarded the academic research ability of the nation's higher education as being second rate in global standards (Chang, 2003). EFL (English as Foreign Language) teachers in Taiwan are generally aware of the importance of English and continue in their attempts to enhance their students' language ability.

According to Vygotsky and other social interactionists, teachers should not merely act as disseminators of knowledge. They should also act as "mediators" or facilitators of their students' learning (e.g. Williams and Burden, 1997). By assuming the role of mediator, teachers can empower their learners by helping them acquire the needed knowledge, skills, and strategies in order to become effective and independent.

Therefore, familiarity with these mediation features is helpful for EFL teachers in hoping to help their students with their learning and equip them with the necessary abilities to cope with challenges in the future. Williams and Burden (1997) indicate that teachers' perceptions about



mediation are likely to affect how they approach teaching and help their students to become autonomous learners.

While the two relevant studies (Chin, 1991; Yang, 2002) have been conducted with primary and secondary school teachers in Taiwan, it would be of value to explore the role of college English teachers whose teaching environments and degree of freedom in making decisions differ greatly from those teachers of compulsory education. It was, therefore, the intention of this study to investigate teachers' mediation with junior college students' learning English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this following section, the writer will briefly review the literature about social interactionism, the theory of mediation, studies about Chinese conceptions of teaching and learning, and the results of related research in Taiwan.

2.1 Social Interactionism

The notion of mediation adopted in this study arises from a social interactionist approach to psychology. A social interactionist approach combines humanistic and cognitive notions but also adds to this the notion that learning is affected by social context. The basis of this approach is that learners exist in a social world, and learning takes place through interaction with other people who can help learners to make sense of their surroundings. A social interactionist view of learning effectively combines the notions of learning as a cognitive activity and learning as a result of environmental influences. From such a viewpoint, both first and second language learning involve many complex interactions between the learners and other people. There is a great deal of evidence for this (Hatch, 1983; Fontana, 1988; Lightbown and Spada, 1993). An important aspect of a social interactionist approach to learning is that mediation from adults, usually parents and teachers, but also others, plays a very important role in the learning process. It is believed that the interactions that occur in the classroom can help the learning of any subject, including second language learning.

2.2 Mediational approach to learning

Two theories that have contributed most to the development of the mediational approach to learning are the Vygotskian sociocultural theory and Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). Both theories emphasize the importance of sociocultural forces in shaping a



child's development and learning. Both point to the crucial role played by parents, teachers, peers and the community in defining the types of learning interaction occurring between children and their environments.

Kozulin (1990:151) explains "the gist of Vygotsky's argument is that a psychological process which first appears as a natural endowment of the child undergoes a radical transformation under the influence of the external, culturally determined means of mediation of these processes." However, as he died at such a young age, Vygotsky has not suggested ways of how to mediate learners' learning. For practical implications we have to turn to Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE, 1991), which is operational.

2.2.1 The theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)

The notion of mediation theory means that adults, whether they are teachers or parents, peers or other care givers can play a balancing role between learners and tasks, and between learners and social contexts, thus promoting the learning process, and teaching learners how to learn. Feuerstein (1991:7) defines MLE as a "quality of interaction between the organism and its environment." MLE is the experience provided by an adult whether a teacher or parent who understands the learner's interests, needs, and capacities and who can take an active role in creating two-way interaction. Also, Feuerstein (1980, 15-16) indicates that mediation theory is:

The way in which stimuli emitted by the environment are transferred by a 'mediating' agent, usually a parent, sibling or other caregiver. This mediating agent, guided by his intentions, culture, and emotional investment, selects and organizes the world of stimuli for the child ... Through the process of mediation, the cognitive structure of the child is affected.

Feuerstein and Louis (1990:145) point out "the mediator intervenes between the stimulus, the organism, and the response to interpret, regulate, elaborate, and reinforce the learner's experience." Feuerstein's concepts are represented in Figure 1 below, where 'S' stands for the stimulus, 'H' stands for human or the mediator, 'O' stands for learners or individuals, and 'R' stands for the response of the individuals. This contrasts with Piaget's theory of direct learning experience, which can be represented as (S-O-R) where there is no such intervention, but instead the learner is considered to act directly on the object or environment. Mediated learning experience can occur as a natural and instantaneous part of the learner's interaction with caring and responsive persons in their environment. Lack of opportunities for this interaction may lead to a culturally deprived individual.



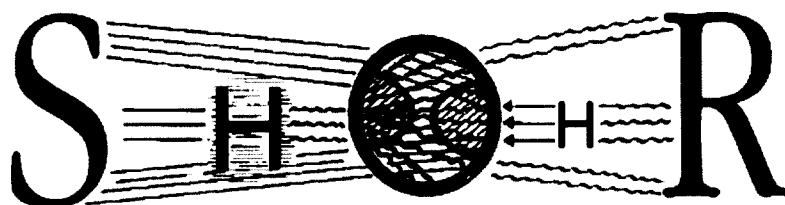


Figure 1

The Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) model: Source: Feuerstein (1991)

2.2.2 The role of the learner in the mediating process

Adults, whether they are teachers or parents, have a dominant role in Feuerstein's theory. However, although he does not deny the importance of their role as reciprocals, Feuerstein does not actually strongly emphasize the role of the learner as an active participant who can contribute in the mediating process. Indeed, Feuerstein's theory can be criticized for the insignificant role assigned to learners, particularly when teachers adopt his ways of promoting learning and teaching learners how to learn. Research studies in this area show that in adopting Feuerstein's methods, learners become more active, responsible and independent. Rhodes (1987:59) states that in reviewing Feuerstein's work he finds a "powerful potential for changing the child's experience of reality, for changing her/his world." As Sharron (1994:211) says, "Rhodes discussed his plan to adopt Feuerstein's methods so that he could help students realize that they are responsible individually for connecting, ordering, and organizing among all possibilities the knowledge they gain while learning." In addition, it is important to see the child as an active participant in the mediation process.

In spite of this criticism, Feuerstein's theory of MLE stands forth as an innovation and a potentially revolutionary contribution to the field of education (Feuerstein, 1991). The theory also has significance to teachers. Williams and Burden (1998:6) assert that MLE "seeks to provide an answer to the question faced by all those concerned with the teaching/learning process, namely: "how can I help my learners to learn more effectively?" The EFL teacher- as -mediator plays a crucial role in helping learners with their learning and cognitive development and sees them as active participants in making sense of the tasks they encounter. Therefore, Feuerstein's notion of mediation gives a very empowering role to the teacher.

2.2.3 Features of mediation theory

There are a number of different ways in which the teacher can mediate. Feuerstein identified twelve ways in which mediation can take place. The first three are considered essential elements of



all mediation encounters. As Feuerstein (1991:15) says the first three features are “considered to be responsible for what all human beings have in common: structural modifiability.” The other nine, though important, are situational in that they depend on circumstances and the specific nature of the interaction. The twelve features are explained in detail by Williams and Burden (1997) and summarized below:

- Shared intention: While presenting a task the teacher should convey very clear instructions to learners and then receive feedback from the learner that this intention is understood and reciprocated. As Sutherland (1992:3) argues, “what children can do depends ... on how the learning situation is perceived by the children and whether they are given optimal help by teachers in understanding what is expected of them.”
- Significance: Teachers should help their students to see the personal relevance and value of the learning tasks. When the learners see the value of, and sense the personal meaning of, what they are learning, they will be more capable of responding to challenge and difficulty (Sharron, 1994).
- Purpose beyond here and now: Teachers should help learners be aware of the more general value of a task. As Warren (1995:48) argues, “ This process, known as bridging, will help learners to make spontaneous generalisations of their own.”
- A sense of competence: Teachers should help learners to establish a positive self-image in order to make them believe in their own competence. Sharron (1994) warns, once a learner has a poor self-image, it cannot be changed by anything. In a broader sense, such a poor self-image could inhibit the effectiveness of their learning in the longer term, and they may finally see themselves as being incompetent in everything.
- Control of behaviour: Learners should be taught the necessary skills and strategies to control and regulate their own learning. Sharron (1994) emphasises that through interaction, in which teachers convey strategies to learners on how to regulate their own behaviour, learners are encouraged to take on the responsibility for their own actions. The ultimate goal of MLE is to produce independent learners and problem-solvers.
- Goal setting: Teachers should help learners to be able to set their own realistic goals and plan ways of achieving them. When they set the goals or the goals are completely acceptable to them, the learners will be much more strongly motivated to achieving the goals (Oxford and Shearin, 1994).
- Challenge: Since challenge is seen as a very important factor in motivating learning, teachers should consider how to best fulfil their students’ own need for challenge. Williams and



Burden (1997) also claim that learners need to be given challenging tasks; otherwise they will never become capable of dealing with difficulties and complexity.

- An awareness of change: Teachers should develop in learners an ability to recognize, monitor and assess the changes in themselves. Learners should be made aware of their development through regular self-assessment and introspection (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989).
- A belief in positive outcomes: Teachers should encourage in learners a firm belief that there is always a solution to any problem. As Williams and Burden (1997) point out, “unless we believe something is possible we cannot begin to consider how we might accomplish it”.
- Sharing: Teachers should make learners realize the value of sharing and its benefit to their own learning. If learners perceive the importance of co-operation through group activities, such awareness may well help their involvement in other social activities in the future.
- Individuality: Teachers should help learners to develop individually and encourage them to express in individuality. If they have this awareness, learners will much flexible in dealing with the opinions of others that may be vastly different.
- A sense of belonging: Teachers should involve learners in activities that create a sense of belonging in the classroom community. This situation helps the learners’ involvement in the activities and consequently promotes the effectiveness of learning as well as teaching.

While advocating applying Feuerstein’s theory of mediation to language teaching, Williams and Burden (1997) also warned that teachers should be selective in using aspects of mediation.

Though many studies in education (e.g. Burden, 1987; Savell et al., 1986) indicate the powerful and profound influence of applying Feuerstein’s theory of mediation and his Instructmental Enrichment programme (Feuerstein, 1980), few attempts have been made to investigate mediation in language classrooms.

2.3 Studies about Chinese conceptions of teaching and learning

An understanding of the styles of interaction accepted in the culture of Chinese society can help explain the behavior of teachers and students in the classroom. As Krasnick (1988:27) emphasizes “the fact that cultural and interactional forces do not call attention to themselves ... does not mean that they do not exist. It may simply mean that we do not recognize their existence.” Therefore, it is useful to examine the effect of cultural forces on teachers’ and learners’ beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. The following are a brief outline of some studies on Chinese conceptions of teaching and learning.



In Pratt's study (1992:301), the researcher interviewed 47 Chinese scholars to discover how they view learning and teaching. The findings of this study indicate that there are three qualitatively different conceptions about teaching that emerged in the context of China: teaching is conceived (1) as the delivery of content (2) as the development of character; and (3) as a particular type of relationship. The first two conceptions positioned the teacher at the center of the educational process—first with teachers as transmitters of knowledge, and second with teachers as role models demonstrating particular values. The third positioned learners as the focal point, with the teacher in a helping or guiding relationship. From Pratt's study, learning was understood as (1) the acquisition of knowledge or skill from others, (2) a fulfillment of responsibility to society, (3) a change in understanding of something external to self, and (4) a change in understanding oneself.

Through surveys, interviews, observations, and focus groups, Pratt, Kelly, and Wong (1998) investigated how cultural and social contexts determine acceptable roles for both teachers and learners among a wide range of Chinese teachers of adults. The results describe three models of teaching: (1) Teacher as master: within this model, the teachers act in place of the parents. The relationship between teacher and learner is more-or-less similar to that of parents and offspring, depending on the model, and the reciprocal role and responsibilities of teacher and learner are a reflection of the respect for hierarchy and authority in Chinese society. (2) Teacher as virtuoso: this model highlights the role of teacher as performer. What is important is how the teacher presents the material, how she or he adds a particular interpretation to the rendering of accepted knowledge. (3) Teacher as coach: effective teachers here are strict, with high expectations, but with a slightly different kind of relationship to learners. The relationship is more like that of coach and athlete, than parent and child. Inside class a teacher's manner might appear to be formal and distant, outside of class teachers are expected to be more friendly and informal.

Gao(1998) investigated the conceptions of teaching of school physical education teachers in Guangdong, China. After numerous in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and a pilot quantitative survey, Gao developed a model with five basic conceptions: knowledge delivery, exam preparation, ability development, attitude promotion, and conduct guidance. The first two of these were grouped into a higher order 'moulding' orientation which corresponds fairly well with the 'transmission' dimension identified in Kember and Gow's (1994) research. Gao grouped the remaining three lower-level conceptions into a higher order 'cultivating' orientation. This not only involved a concern with developing student understanding and higher quality learning outcomes, as in the facilitating' dimension of Kember and Gow, but broadened it to focus on affective outcomes



such as developing the students' love of science and also moral aspects such as their responsibility to their families and society as a whole.

These conceptions of teaching and learning were derived from people receiving their education in Mainland China. The participants of this study came from a different social, political, and educational context, Taiwan. However there may be similarities as this may be a manifestation of Chinese cultural heritage.

2.4 The Results of Related Research in Taiwan

In Chin's (1990) investigation of 50 primary English language teachers in Taiwan, those teachers considered shared intention, sense of competence, control of behavior, sharing, individuality, and a sense of belonging as extremely important (with average score over 9.0 on a 1-10 Likert scale); while significance, purpose beyond here and now, and awareness of change were rated "considerably less important" (Chin, 1990). Williams and Burden (1997) indicate that the way in which people view different aspects of mediation is likely to vary in different contexts. In addition, the age of the students might influence the way teacher's role as a mediator. The writer had expected that the junior college teachers' perceptions of mediation features might differ from primary English teachers because of the challenging adolescent age of the students.

In Yang's (2002) study of prospective teachers' perceptions about mediation, the findings reveal significant differences between two groups of prospective teachers and between teacher interns' responses to the 'ideal' mediation (how important they perceive different aspects of mediation) and the 'practice' mediation (how often they have carried out different aspects of mediation). Clearly, Yang's (2002) study yields many useful insights about prospective teachers' perceptions about mediation; however, it was not able to provide a detailed account of how the prospective teachers perceived themselves as mediators, in part because of the nature of the highly structured questionnaire format. The participants were unable to elaborate their understanding of the twelve mediation features and to explain why they employ certain features more frequently because of the space and time restrictions of the instrument itself.

3. METHODOLOGY

The following section is about the research purpose, the participants, research methods and limitations of the study.



3.1 Research purpose and questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate Feuerstein's theory of mediated learning experience (MLE) in teaching English as a foreign language to junior college level students in Taiwan. The research questions are:

1. To what extent do Taiwanese EFL teachers act as mediators in teaching English as a foreign language?
2. How important do these teachers think the different aspects of mediation are?
3. Do Taiwanese EFL teachers' perceptions about the importance of mediation differ from their perception of their actual practice?
4. How important do Taiwanese college students think the different aspects of MLE are?
5. What are the differences between students' and teachers' views of the importance of mediation?

3.2 Research Participants

In order to conduct the research, the writer collected data from two different sources. The primary source of data came from a questionnaire administered to 23 Taiwanese EFL teachers and 93 EFL junior college students from the school the writer taught in. The participating school was a technical college, offered courses in General English for junior college, two-year & four-year university non-English majored students, and ESP, Business English, Literature for English majored, and taught both in day-time and evening classes, so the teaching was varied and demanding.

Individual interviews with five teachers and focus group interviews with two groups of students were also conducted. Details of the participants are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Information on Participating Teachers

Teacher's age	No.	Teaching of experience (year)	No.
<25	0	<1	0
26-30	5	1-5	6
31-35	5	6-10	8
>35	13	>10	9



Table 2. Information on Participating Students

Student's sex	No.	Student's age	No.	Length of English learning	No.
M	8	17	33	6	29
F	85	18	44	7	39
		19	14	8	13
		20	2	9	10
				10	2

3.3 The questionnaires

This study used the questionnaires designed by Williams and Burden (1997). The teacher's questionnaire is entitled "Mediation Questionnaire for Language Teachers" and the one for students is entitled "Pupils' Mediation Questionnaire" (See Appendix 1 and 2). The teacher's questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is designed to seek personal information from participants, about their age, teaching experience, and gender. They were asked to provide their names if they would like to be interviewed, otherwise they were anonymous. The second part is composed of 12 statements, and each statement examines the participants' views of the importance of the twelve features of mediation. The participants were asked to rate how important they think each statement is on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Very important" to "Not important at all". The third part contains the same 12 statements but requests the participants to indicate how often they try to carry out each of these features on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Very often" to "Never".

The students' questionnaire into their perception of the importance of Feuerstein's mediation tools was similar to the teachers' questionnaire, Part 2. Students were asked to indicate what they thought about the importance of the twelve things that teachers might do when they teach them English on a five-point scale ranging from "Very important" to "Not important at all". Each of the teachers' and students' questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter that explained the research purpose and supplied the participants with brief instructions for completing the questionnaire. These instructions emphasized the importance of individuals' participation, and assured them of confidentiality.

3.4 Implementation procedure

The questionnaires were designed initially in English. The writer translated the teachers' and the students' questionnaire into Chinese. In this way she hoped to avoid different interpretations of



the English version. The writer asked two Taiwanese English teachers to review the accuracy of the translation. A few minor modifications were introduced after this review.

In order to examine the validity of the teachers' questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with 4 Taiwanese senior high school English teachers. They were asked to comment on any ambiguous concepts on wording, length and the overall clarity of content. All the questions were clearly understood except the word "task". For the students' questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with 10 Taiwanese college students. Results showed that all participants had no difficulties in understanding the questionnaire while completing it. Three teachers in three different colleges helped me to administer the teachers' questionnaire. Two of the writer's colleagues helped her to administer the students' questionnaire to their home- room class. The questionnaires were collected and the findings keyed into a data file. Descriptive analysis, independent samples t-test, and paired t-test were computed via the SPSS 10.software.

3.5 Interviews

The heavily guided form of the first research instrument (the questionnaire) made it imperative that a balance be achieved by a less constrained, more spontaneous method of elicitation. Hence the interview was chosen as the second research instrument. The questionnaire was conducted anonymously but if any participant was willing to be interviewed for the further study s/he could write her/his contact information on the questionnaire. One week after the collection of the questionnaires, the writer did follow-up individual interviews with five teachers (T1 to T5 in the quotations in the data presentation) and focus group interviews with two groups of students (S1 to S10 in the quotation in the data presentation). The interviews were conducted primarily to elicit more in-depth information beyond that gathered in the questionnaires. Three of the interviews were carried out in the teacher's offices and two were conducted in coffee shops. Teachers were asked to give explanations and to comment on their own questionnaire responses. The questions followed the same outline as the questionnaire, and they were open-ended.

In order to follow up with some of the students from the two classes who had participated in the questionnaires, the writer decided to use focus groups interviews in order to obtain deeper insights into their responses. She asked them about their perceptions of their teacher's mediation efforts in the classroom. The writer asked two of her faculty colleagues to invite students from their homeroom classes to join the focus group interviews because they were familiar with the intra-group dynamics of their students. The focus group interviews were conducted in a conference room



of the self-access learning centre at the students' college. During the interviews, the writer chaired the meeting to keep the discussions open-ended but directed the responses to the questions of the research. All interviews were done in Chinese and the writer received the interviewees' permissions to audio record the interviews.

3.6 Limitations of the study

A number of limitations to the study can be identified. Firstly, the writer was aware that observing the ways in which teachers implement the aspect of the mediation in the classroom could have added additional information to her questionnaire results. However, there was a limited time available to the writer and with the limited availability of participants, she was not able to observe teachers at work. Second, it should be noted that the results are based on a very small population of junior college teachers and students in Taiwan. Thus, the generalization of the results to other populations with different educational backgrounds may be limited.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

In this section, firstly the results of questionnaires will be presented according to the research questions. Then the finding from the semi-structured interviews will be discussed.

4.1 Analyses of Teachers' and Student's Mediation Questionnaires.

Research Questions 1: To what extent do Taiwanese EFL teachers act as mediators in teaching English as a foreign language?

Research Questions 2: How important do these teachers think the different aspects of mediation are?

Table 3 presents the descriptive results, including mean and standard deviation, of each question for the teachers. For questions in Part 2, ten of the twelve mediation items have a mean score above 4, which indicates that these EFL teachers generally considered the mediation features important. The item, "A sense of competence", has the highest mean score, while "shared intention" has the second and "significance" the third. The item they considered the least important was "awareness of change", and secondly, "challenge" followed by "A belief in positive outcomes" and "A sense of belonging".

For questions in Part 3, the range of mean scores is between 3 and 4, which demonstrates that



these teachers tried to carry out each of these features to a lesser degree than their stated beliefs about the importance of these mediation features. The item “shared intention” had the highest mean score, “significance” the second and “sharing” the third. On the other hand, the item they considered they carried out least frequently was “awareness of change”, which had a mean of only 2.89, then “challenge” and “individuality”. Interestingly, the aspect of “awareness of change” was considered to be least important and carried out least frequently. This finding is consistent with the results of Chin’s (1991) study. The consistence between these two studies may be because the traditional views of learning and teaching affect their perceptions of the aspect of mediation. In traditional Chinese culture, teachers are expected to exercise authority, that is, to look after or nurture her students and take charge. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that learning takes place. It’s a rather new concept for Taiwanese teachers to encourage their students to monitor changes in their own learning process.

Table 3
Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Questions (Part 2 and Part 3) for teachers

Item	Representing Feature	Importance				Frequency			
No.	Mean	SD	Rank	Order	Mean	SD	Rank	Order	
Q1	Shared intention	4.57	.589	2		4.26	.540	1	
Q2	Significance	4.47	.665	3		4.04	.767	2	
Q3	Purpose beyond here and now	4.13	.814			3.56	.727		
Q4	A sense of competence	4.73	.449	1		3.78	.795		
Q5	Control of own behavior	4.43	.662			3.74	.751		
Q6	Goal setting	4.13	.757			3.39	.722		
Q7	Challenge	3.78	.735	-2		3.22	.851	2	
Q8	Awareness of change	3.52	.730	-1		2.87	.868	-1	
Q9	A belief of positive outcomes	4.00	.738	-3		3.65	.884		
Q10	Sharing	4.21	.671			3.95	.877	3	
Q11	Individuality	4.26	.864			3.26	1.001	-3	
Q12	A sense of belonging	4.00	1.044	-3		3.52	.947		

Note: For rank of order, “1” refers to highest mean score, and “2”, the second highest mean score; while “-1” refers to lowest mean score, and “-2”, the second lowest mean score.



Research Question 3: Do Taiwanese EFL teachers' perceptions about the importance of mediation differ from their perceptions of their actual practice?

Comparisons between teachers' responses to part 2 and part 3 of the questionnaire were calculated by paired t-tests. The results are presented in Table 4. There were significant differences between teachers' responses to part 2 and part 3 on eleven out of the twelve questions. Only Q10 (Sharing) was not significantly different at .05 level (see Table 4). Though the teachers considered all the mediation features important, when they were asked to indicate how often they have tried to carry these out, their scores for each mediation item were found to be lower than those regarding their importance. It seemed that their actual practice might not match the degree to which they believe certain concepts are important. This might due to the gap between the theoretical and the practical world. This supports the view of Argyris and Schön (1974) that teachers might have two sets of personal theories: 'an espoused theory' and a 'theory-in-use'. Indeed, as Segal (1998) points out, there is often a mismatch between a teacher's explicit beliefs about teaching and the practices in which s/he engages in the classroom. Further, Segal indicates that the classroom practices of teachers are not simply a product of their 'espoused theories' (Argyris and Schön, 1974) but they emerge out of the way in which teachers respond to classroom contingencies.

Table 4
Comparison Teachers' Responses to Part 2 and Part 3 of Mediation

Variables	Mean	SD	Paired Differences Mean	Paired Differences SD	t-value	df	2-tail Sig.
Q1 (part2)-Intention	4.57	.59	.30	.56	2.61	22	.016*
Q1 (part3)	4.25	.54					
Q2 (part2)-Significance	4.47	.67	.43	.59	3.53	22	.002**
Q2 (part3)	4.04	.77					
Q3 (part2)-Purpose	4.13	.81	.57	.95	2.87	22	.009**
Q3 (part3)	3.57	.73					
Q4 (part2)-Competence	4.74	.45	.96	.93	4.94	22	.000**
Q4 (part3)	3.78	.80					
Q5 (part2)-Control	4.43	.66	.70	.64	5.25	22	.000**
Q5 (part3)	3.74	.75					



Q6 (part2)-Goal	4.13	.76	.74	.96	3.68	22	.001**
Q6 (part3)	3.39	.72					
Q7 (part2)-Challenge	3.78	.74	.57	1.03	2.61	22	.016*
Q7 (part3)	3.22	.85					
Q8 (part2)-Change	3.52	.73	.65	.98	3.19	22	.004**
Q8 (part3)	2.87	.87					
Q9 (part2)-Outcomes	4.00	.74	.35	.78	2.15	22	.043*
Q9 (part3)	3.65	.88					
Q10(part2)-Sharing	4.22	.67	.26	.69	1.82	22	.083
Q10(part3)	3.96	.88					
Q11(part2)-Individuality	4.26	.86	1.00	.80	6.01	22	.000**
Q11(part3)	3.26	1.01					
Q12(part2)-Belonging	4.00	1.04	.48	.99	2.30	22	.031*
Q12(part3)	3.52	.95					

*p< .05

**p<.01

Question 4: How important do Taiwanese college students think the different aspects of MLE are?

Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation of each question for college students. For questions in Part 2, eleven of the twelve mediation items had a mean score above 4, which indicated that these college students generally considered the mediation features important. The item of “A sense of competence” had the highest mean score, while “Control of own behavior” had the second and “A sense of belonging” the third. On the other hand, the item they considered least important was “Individuality”, followed by “Significance” and then “Purpose beyond here and now”. From students’ responses, they pointed out they wanted teachers to help them to have confidence in their English learning, and teach them how to learn it better, and have a sense of belonging in English class. This reflects the practice in the Taiwanese college English classes. The English class is limited to about 2-4 hours per week. Such limited class time may be just enough to help students understand how the language works. The limited time and large classes might make it difficult for students to establish a good rapport with teachers and other students.



Table 5
Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Question for College Students

Item No.	Representing Feature	Mean	SD	Rank Order
Q1	Shared intention	4.18	.81	
Q2	Significance	4.00	.79	-2
Q3	Purpose beyond here and now	4.02	.88	-3
Q4	A sense of competence	4.48	.70	1
Q5	Control of own behavior	4.40	.69	2
Q6	Goal setting	4.22	.82	
Q7	Challenge	4.19	.72	
Q8	Awareness of change	4.19	.74	
Q9	A belief in positive outcomes	4.22	.69	
Q10	Sharing	4.10	.74	
Q11	Individuality	3.82	.91	-1
Q12	A sense of belonging	4.30	.76	3

Note: For rank of order, “1” refers to highest mean score, and “2”, the second highest mean score; while “-1” refers to lowest mean score, and “-2”, the second lowest mean score.

Research Question 5: What are the differences between students’ and teachers’ views of the importance of mediation?

Comparison between teachers and students responses to the part 2 of mediation was computed by independent samples t-test. The results are presented in Table 6. It is found that teachers and students were significantly different in six mediation items at .05 level, i.e., Q1 (shared intention), Q2 (significance), Q4 (A sense of competence), Q7 (challenge), Q8 (Awareness of change), Q11 (Individuality). Table 6 indicates that Teachers viewed Q1, Q2, Q4 and Q11 more important than students did. However, it is noteworthy that students tended to consider aspects of mediation Q7 and Q8 as more important than teachers did. This is possibly because Taiwanese teachers thought their students were not capable to take difficult tasks and were afraid to challenge them. In the interviews, the writer made further exploration about this issue. This is in line with recent research that has shown that the perceptions of teachers and their students do not always match (Kumaravadivelu, 1991).



Table 6 A t-test of the Mean Differences in Questions in Part 2 between Teachers and Students

Item NO.	Representing Feature	Mean	SD	F	t-value	df	2-tail Sig.
Q1 (T)	Shared intention	4.57	.59	2.94*	2.13	114	.04*
Q1 (S)		4.18	.81				
Q2 (T)	Significance	4.48	.67	.06*	2.67	114	.01*
Q2 (S)		4.00	.79				
Q3 (T)	Purpose beyond here and now	4.13	.81	.03*	.54	114	.59
Q3 (S)		4.02	.88				
Q4 (T)	A sense of competence	4.74	.45	9.18	1.66	114	.04*
Q4 (S)		4.48	.70				
Q5 (T)	Control of own behaviour	4.43	.66	.23*	.16	114	.87
Q5 (S)		4.40	.70				
Q6 (T)	Goal setting	4.13	.76	.89*	.51	114	.61
Q6 (S)		4.23	.82				
Q7 (T)	Challenge	3.78	.74	.06*	-2.42	114	.02*
Q7 (S)		4.19	.73				
Q8 (T)	Awareness of change	3.52	.73	.89*	-3.90	114	.00*
Q8 (S)		4.19	.74				
Q9 (T)	A belief in positive outcomes	4.00	.74	.21*	-1.38	114	.17
Q9 (S)		4.22	.69				
Q10 (T)	Sharing	4.22	.67	.84*	.65	114	.52
Q10 (S)		4.10	.74				
Q11 (T)	Individuality	4.26	.86	.02*	2.05	114	.04*
Q11 (S)		3.82	.92				
Q12 (T)	A sense of belonging	4.00	1.04	1.36*	-1.57	114	.12
Q12(S)		4.30	.76				

F* means $p > 0.05$

2-tailed Sig * means $p < 0.05$

4.2 Findings from the semi-structured interviews

In this part, the interview questions related to the six mediation features that teachers and students differed significantly on. It was hoped that the findings from the interviews would give the



writer an in-depth understanding of how the students' perceptions about mediation differ from their teachers', and why.

Mediation Feature 1: Shared Intention

From the statistical results, it seems that most teachers see the importance of making their instructions clear when carrying out an activity or task. Furthermore, they considered that they put this item into practice most frequently among the twelve items. However, the writer wanted to know whether the teachers' instructions were usually fully conveyed to their students. Therefore during the interviews, she asked the teachers the following two questions.

Q: How do you give instructions to students?

Four out of five teachers explained their ways of giving instructions, including giving oral explanation and having students do demonstrations. However, T3 did not answer the question instead that he explained why he did not let students do tasks. He said:

I don't think there are any authentic situations in a large class to allow students to do tasks. I believe only when students voluntarily involve themselves in thinking then learning can possibly take place. All the tasks in the textbooks are all the author's imagination; it violates the principles of learning.

For those who told the writer how they gave instructions, she continued to ask them the following question.

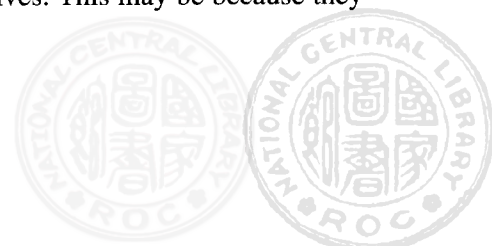
Q: Then, how do you check your students understanding of the task given to them?

Two of the teachers said they would walk around to check students' comprehension by observing how they did the task. One said that she would have students demonstrate it and the other said that she would read students' facial expressions.

An important variation occurred between the students' perception and the teachers' perception as to whether the teachers gave clear instructions (See Table 6). Therefore, during the focus group interviews, the first question the writer asked students was:

Q: Do you think it is important that teachers give very clear instructions when they give you a task to do?

Four out of ten students said this is important. However, six out of ten said it's not important for they think teachers should let students figure them out by themselves. This may be because they



want to show their maturity and independence. Student 4 explains:

Not important, I think teachers should give students some room to think. If teachers give too clear instructions, then students won't work hard to do the task.

Similarly, student 3 said:

Not necessary. Because if teachers give very clear instructions, then students may become lazy to think and to organize their thought.

Then the writer asked students the following question.

Q: What did you do when you did not understand the instructions?

Students seemed to hesitate to ask teachers questions when they don't understand teachers' instructions. As Student 2 explains:

I asked classmates sitting next to me privately, if they also didn't understand. Then we asked the teachers.

This may be because they are taught as children never to interrupt adults in conversations — they are not used to asking questions. This attitude remains with them and is carried over in their perceived role vis-à-vis the teacher. Taiwanese students see asking questions as face threatening, because it implies that the teacher has explained things poorly. Clearly, this reflects a very different view of the teacher's role from a western one.

Mediation Feature 2: Significance

In Table 3, we can see that teachers consider significance as the second most important aspect of mediation. However, in Table 4, students perceived this item as the second least important feature. In the interview, the writer asked the teachers the following question.

Q: Is it important to state explicitly the importance or value of certain tasks and activities to your students?

Based on the reply from teachers' interviews, it seemed that the students are not usually told the reasons why they are tackling these tasks. The results indicated that teachers do perceive this



mediation feature as important, but they do not perceive that they carry it out often. Some teachers only explain the reason for doing a task or the significance of it to their learners when the learners seem not interested in it (see T1), or they are noisy (see T5).

T1: It depends on the task or the situation. Sometimes some task itself didn't seem very interesting to students, or students might puzzle why this task was part of this section of my lecture, then I would explain to them when I made the connection, ...

T5 ...If they were very noisy, thought it not that interesting, I would tell them why they had to do the task. Otherwise, I usually explain it after they have finished the task. ...

Some teachers tend to explain it at the end of the task, while some assume the textbook explains everything clearly (see T4).

T4: Yes. But sometimes if the task itself already explicitly shows its importance, then I will skip it. It depends on the organization/structure of the textbook, when the sequence of the content is well organized, then the students usually can understand why I have them do that task. But if that is not the case, I will add some explanations to help them understand it.

To some extents, teachers here seemed to subscribe the didactic/reproductive belief of teaching (Kember, 2001:215), in that knowledge is understood to be external to the learner and stable in its movement from teacher to learner. The teacher's responsibility is to deliver content; the learner's responsibility is to absorb it-teachers give and learners receive.

The views on the significance differed greatly between teachers and students. The mean scores of this aspect for students were found to be lower than that for the teachers. Therefore, in the students' interviews, the writer asked the following question.

Q: Do you think it is important that teachers tell you why you are to do a particular activity?

Four out of ten students said, "Yes" and indicated that this will help them to understand the purpose of the task and arouse their awareness. Six of the ten said, "Not very important" and pointed out that the students might feel bored or impatient if the teachers explain too much (see S1).



S1: I think teachers only mention it a bit, because too many explanations may cause the opposite effect, we lost patience and got confused.

This is in line with Politzer's claim that 'a teaching technique can stop being useful if used beyond the optimal range of frequency' (1970: 31). So it seems that teachers and students agree on this.

Mediation Feature 4: A Sense of Competence

From Table 3 and 5, we can see both teachers and students considered 'a sense of competence' very important, for this aspect received the highest scores for both groups.

Q: The questionnaire results indicate that this aspect of mediation is very important. I would like to know your comment on that.

From the following teacher interviews, teacher 1 indicates that she does recognize the importance of this mediation feature and explains her own way of practicing it.

Yes, I agree it's very important too. But as for how to do it, I don't think it can be done by single instruction or event. I won't explicitly just tell the student: "You need to have confidence on yourself." Instead, I would build the classroom atmosphere, which made most of the students feel fear-free to speak English and not worry that I might laugh at him/her.

Growing up under an education system with lots of frustrating experiences from 'teachers' scolding and difficult examinations in Taiwan, teacher 4 indicates that she realizes the importance of establishing the sense of competence.

I think it is important. In traditional Taiwan education, parents and teachers usually tend to require their children/ students to be perfect. That gives students a lot of stress. And students often lack confidence. Being perfect for parents and teachers means you have to get 100% in the exams. Such a narrow definition misleads students into not being able to realize that learning was not just what they did in the exams.

Teacher 3 indicates that it is the basic premise and if students did not have confidence in learning, then no learning would take place.



This is the basic premise. Most Taiwanese students experienced failure in English learning because they used wrong methods. Actually if students concentrate on learning, they usually can learn. But if you didn't let him/her have confidence in learning, then no learning would take place. Because his wrong methods would maintain the experience of failure, then he would just give up. He would feel that he would never learn.

Teachers here seemed to accord with traditional views mentioned in Pratt et al. (1998) “successful learning is largely attributed to effort, rather than skill, ability, or individual difference”. In Chinese society everyone is assumed to be capable of learning and achieving as long as they put in time and effort. Individual differences are not considered as relevant as effort in determining what a person achieves. In Chinese societies, family values and puts greater emphasis on academic success. Chinese children are under pressure to achieve educationally. Teachers empathized with this situation and wanted to cultivate their learners’ self-esteem. That is parallel to ‘teaching as the development of character’ mentioned in Pratt’s (1992) study.

The students’ responses to the questionnaire express their need to have a feeling of competence in order to progress in their learning. During the focus group interviews, the writer asked students the following questions:

Q: Do you believe you can learn English well?

Seven out of the ten students were of the opinion that they can learn English well. For example, Student 5 said:

Yes, I believe that as far as I study hard and practice more, I can learn English well.

This could be interpreted that these students had a feeling of confidence in their ability to learn English well. Since teachers realized the importance of self-confidence to learning we can assume that the teachers had a high rate of success in mediating students in this aspect.

Mediation Feature 7: Challenge

From Table 6, we can see the mean scores of this item for teachers are lower than that for students. Interestingly, it seemed that teachers did not perceive this feature as important as students do.

Q: How often do you provide your students with complex tasks to encourage their intellectual



curiosity and creativity?

In the interviews, teachers indicated that they are careful about setting challenges or giving complex tasks to their students because they do not want to discourage or demoralize their students. As teacher 1 said:

Seldom. Because most of my students have jobs during the daytime, they do not have much time for schoolwork; I tend to give them non-complex tasks to help them get the sense of the lesson without taking too much time. When they thought it was a difficult task, they tended to give up. I think complex tasks discourage and demoralize them. Of course I did encourage advanced students to challenge themselves by suggesting they do some extra activities, however, due to the mixed-level class, I was not able to check whether they did or did not. Somehow I felt I did not give advanced students adequate challenge no matter in materials or exams.

Some teachers made the point that their tasks focus on building up students' confidence. For example, teacher 2 said:

It depends on the level of the class. Most of the time my tasks focus on building up their confidence. Therefore, I won't give students too complex. However, now in school we do the placement test to arrange students according to their level. For the advanced level class, I do give them some challenges.

However, teacher 4 believes that providing a challenge is a good way to help students realize that they are more capable than they thought they are.

Sometimes. For example, when I give my students listening tasks, they always felt it was difficult. But I always push them to try harder, at the end, when they completed the task, I would say: "See, it is not that difficult as you thought, and you just did it, right?" Of course, when most of them got stuck somewhere, I would give them some hints to help them move on. I think it is a good way to help them realize they have more potential than they thought they have.



In students' focus group interviews, the writer wanted to know how students feel about having complex or difficult tasks in learning. Therefore, the writer asked the following questions.

Q: Do you like having difficult things to do in your lesson?

From their replies, it was clear that almost every student liked to have difficult or complex tasks.

S1: I think it's good to have some difficulty in homework but not in our exams.

S10: Of course I would like to learn something I don't know before. But not too difficult, otherwise I won't want to understand.

S6: I felt difficult things make learning interesting. Otherwise learning the same things all the time would bore you.

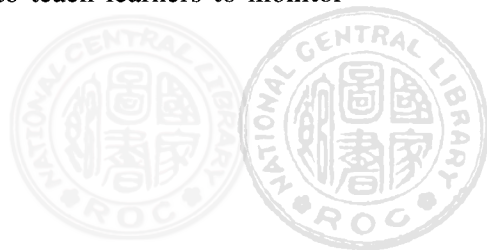
S8: I felt there should be some difficult things in lessons; otherwise I thought I was pretty good. I think difficult things can challenge me and let me find out how my proficiency is.

S9: After overcoming those challenges, I would feel a sense of accomplishment. And it would encourage me to move on.

Only one student said no, saying, "the lesson was designed according to which year I was." They indicated that they become more active and stimulated when they sense they are able to do things. Indeed, Feuerstain et al. stated that an optimal of novelty, complexity and challenge in a problem is required to feel competent (Feuerstain, Rand, and Rynders, 1988). It appeared that learners exhibited a need for challenge and they wanted to be active and independent. It was interesting to note that students' views contrast with teachers' views regarding the aspect of challenge. This problem seemed to occur because teachers undermine their students' ability and hesitate to give them difficult tasks.

Mediation Feature 8: Awareness of Change.

From Table 6, we can see the mean scores of this aspect for teachers are lower than those for students. It seems that many teachers do not think it is important to teach learners to monitor



changes in themselves. It is a rather new concept for Taiwanese teachers to encourage their students to monitor changes in their own learning process. Therefore, in the interview, the writer asked the teachers the following question:

Q: Would you give students opportunities to assess themselves and monitor their progress in learning language?

In the interviews, some teachers were concerned about their students' insufficient understanding about themselves and think students might not be able to self-assess their own learning. As teacher 2 said:

Well, not really. Because at this stage, my students are too young to know themselves well, if I ask them to assess themselves, they might exaggerate or interpret things differently.

Teacher 4, however, recognizes the importance of this mediation tool and thinks learners need some training to do so.

Yes. And I found out that if you want them to report their results, some of the students tend to under-evaluate or over-evaluate themselves. Again, I think they need a lot of practice to know how to assess and monitor their own learning.

T5: Yes. I believe they can do it but they need some guidelines and training to do. And you need to communicate with students to let them understand the purpose and value of self-assessment.

Teacher 3 believes that it is also a challenge for teachers in large and mixed-level classes to implement this mediation feature.

No. I found it difficult to integrate this kind of learner training into my teaching because the large size and mix-level classes.

During the focus group interviews, the writer asked students the following questions:

Q: Can you tell when you are getting better in English?

Q: Do you think your teacher helps you to know when your English is getting better?

Nine out of the ten students could tell when they were getting better in their English. Only two



out of the ten students considered that their teachers helped them to realize that they were getting better. One student pointed out that the large class made the teacher unable to give everyone attention. This reinforced teacher 3's concern.

S7: I think it is very difficult for a teacher to pay attention to every student in such large class. For adult students like us, I think it's our responsibilities to be aware of our own learning progress.

Then the students were asked the following question.

Q: Do you think it is important that teachers teach you how to check your own progress?

Eight out of the ten students said "Yes" and indicated that it is important for them to realize where they are in their learning process and know which area they need to improve (see S 3).

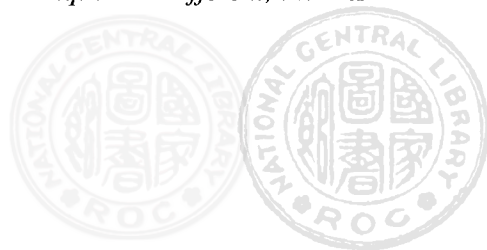
S3: Yes. Then we can become aware of our improvements and know what area we need to work harder to enhance our English ability.

Students' responses make the point that more attention to the learning process itself from themselves can enhance their eagerness to improve their approach to learning.

Mediation Feature 11: Individuality.

Encouraging individuality tends to be neglected in conventional Chinese education. Steven and Lee (1990) pointed out that, in the American culture, the individual is responsible for his or her accomplishments and difficulties; in others, such as the Chinese culture, members of the family, teachers, or a large group are expected to hold some responsibility. However, in the interviews, teachers all perceived this aspect of mediation as important. This may be related to teachers' varying amounts of exposure to western models of teaching, for example, during graduate school. This has resulted in different degrees of enculturation in, and familiarity with, western ways of thinking. Teacher 4 revealed her concern derived from the cultural influence.

Well, traditional Taiwanese culture discourages people to be different among a group or in an organization, if you happened to be the 'different' one, you might confront a lot of stress. This concept affects us. But I tried to tell my students that everyone is unique and different, there is



only one 'him/her' on the earth. No one can replace him/her. So they have to be responsible for their own life.

Teacher 5 pointed out that the limited time with students and large classes might make it difficult for teachers to establish good rapport with students and to implement this principle in teaching.

It is important but hard to do. If you only have few hours a week with them in a large class, you do not have much time to earn their trust. And I think once they trust you, they will listen to what you said about this. It takes time to build up that kind of relationship. And I think every teacher needs to let their students know they have to be responsible for themselves.

Then the writer continued to ask the following question in focus group interview with students.
Q: Do you think it important that your teacher helps you to develop as an individual?

Four out of the ten students said “Yes”. Student 8 gave the following example to explain why students did not perceive this aspect of mediation as important as their teachers did. Those students who said no to the question seemed to perceive individuality as something that cannot simply be picked up from teachers; rather, it has to be developed by students themselves during the process of learning.

S8: “Well, not really. I think it isn’t easy for a teacher to take care of 50 students and help them to develop as an individual. I don’t think it’s something teacher can teach. It’s the process that we need to learn as we grow up.”

4.3 Implications

Here the writer attempts to draw some implications from analyses of the teachers’ and students’ responses to the questionnaires, and the interviews with teachers and students.

First of all, students’ motivation is at issue. In this study, it seemed that the college English teachers did not feel it essential to discuss the purpose of learning English beyond here and now, nor did they consider it very important to teach students to set their goals in learning. However, some writers argue that these two features — i.e., “purpose beyond here and now” and “goal setting” — are essential to create motivation in language learning (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994, Oxford and Shearin,



1994). To activate students' motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, teachers need to help their students understand the more general value of any learning tasks they use in the class. Teachers can include student-centred learning tasks in the classroom. To cultivate students' initiative and independence in learning, teachers can encourage them to take an active role in the learning process and avail themselves of learning opportunities rather than simply receiving what is taught in class. In addition, teachers need to help students to be able to set their own learning goals and to plan ways to achieve them. Consequently, students will get higher self-esteem, have greater chances for self-actualisation, and be better prepared for life-long learning (Brown, 2000).

Second, explicit learning strategies instruction will be helpful for Taiwanese students. In this way, student may be guided to take charge of their learning by setting their goals, making their plans, finding their own way, monitoring their progress, and evaluating their performance (Oxford, 1990; Rubin and Thompson, 1994). In this study, from the results of questionnaires, it seemed that the college teachers did feel it important to teach students necessary strategies in order to taking control of their own learning. However, in the interviews, they explained that they had difficulties in teaching strategies because of certain constraints (e.g. fixed syllabus, the size of class). Language teachers indeed have a role in such explicit strategy instruction, as indicated by a variety of research studies (e.g. Chamot et al., 1993; O'Malley et al., 1985).

Third, the results of the questionnaire indicated that Taiwan college teachers pay insufficient attention to the learning process itself. It seemed that teachers are convinced that they must 'teach' their students. In the interviews, few teachers indicated that they believed that students were capable of learning on their own. These point to an orientation based on what can be characterized as 'hierarchical educational dependence' (Rausch, 2000), with the teachers looking toward the school-based curriculum, and purely-objective testing regimen to organize their teaching, and the students looking toward the teachers to organize their learning. Teachers in Taiwan could well move towards more learner-centredness with appropriate training and awareness rising.

5. CONCLUSION

How teachers teach is constructed socially (Crookes, 1997). People's understanding of the social role of 'teacher' is highly consistent with their home culture. Whereas some aspects of Chinese traditional culture appear to be impediments to MLE (e.g. individuality; awareness of change), it also appears to the case of other aspects of Chinese culture may actually contribute to the



implement of MLE (e.g. sharing; a sense of belonging). It is obviously not the role of language teachers simply to reproduce the status quo by transmitting the knowledge and worldview of their culture in an unquestioning manner. It is also not their role zealously to undermine everything in their society by criticising every aspect of their culture. The writer wants to suggest language teachers as critical mediators, it is mindful of the inadequacies of the bald transmission of knowledge and of the merely passive facilitation of learning, seeking a balance in their teaching between the opposite poles of teaching for reproduction and teaching for subversion. It needs the teacher's careful judgment in order to decide which element may or should exist in which situation.

REFLECTION

After the writer finished her M.A. degree and started to teach in Taiwan, she found there was a gap between what she learned while abroad and what she faced in her teaching back home. She found herself less than adequately prepared. However, through the research process of this study, the writer seemed to gradually discover the differences in teaching between the Western and her home country. Being a language teacher, the writer thinks we need to develop 'appropriate pedagogies' for our home environment, rather than assuming that Western ideas must be right for every context.



APPENDIX 1

Mediation Questionnaire for English Teachers

In this questionnaire you will find a list of some of the things that teachers might do when they give their students activities to do in English lessons. The aim of this questionnaire is to find out your views about these functions that teachers might perform in the classroom.

The questionnaire is in three parts.

Part 1. Personal Information.

Part 2. ask you to say HOW IMPORTANT you think it is for English teachers to perform the function.

Part 3. ask you to say HOW OFTEN you try to carry out each of them when you yourself teach English.

Part 1: Personal Information

1. ☐ Male ☐ Female .
2. What is the name of the school where you teach?
☐ University ☐ Institute of Technology or Junior College
3. Age :
☐ 25 years or less ☐ 26-30 years ☐ 31-35 years ☐ More than 35 years
4. How long have you been working as a language teacher?
☐ 1 year or less ☐ 2-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ More than 10 years
5. Highest degree held : ☐ M.A. ☐ Doctorate

Part 2.

For each of the questions please circle the score that best represents your own view of how important that item is. For this part, the following five responses are prepared.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| • Very Important | 5 |
| • Quite Important | 4 |
| • Neutral | 3 |
| • Not very Important | 2 |
| • Not Important at all | 1 |

When you teach English, how important do you think it is to:



1. Make your instructions clear when you give a task to your learners.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Tell your learners why they are to do a particular activity.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Explain to your learners how carrying out a learning activity will help them in the future.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Help learners to develop a feeling of confidence in their ability to learn.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Teach learners the strategies they need to learn effectively.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Teach learners how to set their own goals in learning.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Help your learners to set challenges for themselves and to develop strategies to meet those challenges.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Help your learners to monitor changes in themselves.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Help your learners to see that if they keen on trying to solve a problem, they will find a solution.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Teach your students to work co-operatively.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Help your learners to develop as individuals.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Foster in your learners a sense of belonging to a classroom community.	5	4	3	2	1

Part 3.

For each of the questions, please choose the score that you think best represents how often you yourself try to carry out this particular activity. For this part, the following five responses are prepared.



- Very Often 5
- Quite Often 4
- Sometimes 3
- Hardly Ever 2
- Never 1

How often do you try to:

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Make your instructions clear when you give a task to your learners. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Tell your learners why they are to do a particular activity. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Explain to your learners how carrying out a learning activity will help them in the future. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Help learners to develop a feeling of confidence in their ability to learn. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Teach learners the strategies they need to learn effectively. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. Teach learners how to set their own goals in learning. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Help your learners to set challenges for themselves and to develop strategies to meet those challenges. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. Help your learners to monitor changes in themselves. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. Help your learners to see that if they keen on trying to solve a problem, they will find a solution. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. Teach your students to work co-operatively | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. Help your learners to develop as individuals. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. Foster in your learners a sense of belonging to a classroom community. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |



APPENDIX 2

My English Lessons

Below are 12 things that teachers might do when they teach you English. Decide whether you think they are important or not important.

For each of the questions please circle the score that best represents your own view of how important that item is. For this part, the following five responses are prepared.

- Very Important 5
- Quite Important 4
- Neutral 3
- Not very Important 2
- Not Important at all 1

1. Give very clear instructions when they give you a task to do.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Tell you why you are to do a particular activity	1	2	3	4	5
3. Explain to you how carrying out a learning activity will help you in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Help you to feel that you are good at learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teach you how you can learn English better.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teach you how to set your own goals in learning.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Help you to set challenges for yourself and to develop strategies to meet those challenges.	1	4	3	4	5
8. Teach you how to check your own progress.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Help you to see that there is always a solution to a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teach you to work together with other students.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Help you to develop as an individual.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Make you feel that you belong to the class.	1	2	3	4	5



APPEDIX 3: Interview Schedule

Teachers' Interview Questions

1. How do you give instructions to students?
2. Then, how do you check your students understanding of the task given to them?
3. Is it important to state explicitly the importance or value of certain tasks and activities to your students?
4. The questionnaire results indicate that 'a sense of competence' is very important. I would like to know your comment on that.
5. How often do you provide your students with complex tasks to encourage their intellectual curiosity and creativity?
6. Would you give students opportunities to assess themselves and monitor their progress in learning language?
7. Do you think it is important to respect the students' right to be different, independent, and responsible for their behavior?

Students' Interview Questions

1. Do you think it is important that teachers tell you why you are to do a particular activity?
2. Do you think it is important that teachers give very clear instructions when they give you a task to do?
3. What did you do when you did not understand the instructions?
4. Do you believe you can learn English well?
5. Can you tell when you are getting better in English?
6. Do you think your teacher helps you to know when your English is getting better?
7. Do you think it is important that teachers teach you know how to check your own progress?
8. Do you like having difficult things to do in your lesson?
9. Do you think it is important that your teacher helps you to develop as an individual?



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台灣教師對專科生英文學習之中介作用之調查研究

張瓊文

摘 要

本研究旨在調查台灣大專英語教師與學生對於 Feuerstein 之中介學習經驗的覺知。參與研究者是二十三位技術學院英文教師及九十三位專科學生，資料的蒐集係採問卷調查、半結構個別訪談及焦點團體訪談等方法。本研究發現教師及學生對中介學習經驗有顯著不同的覺知，教師對「理想」及「實際」中介學習經驗的反應亦有顯著差異。根據發現，本研究認為，一般人對教師社會角色的了解與其所屬文化一致。部分中國傳統文化特質似乎是中介學習經驗的阻礙，如：個人化、對改變的理解；然而也有部分有助於中介學習經驗的進行，如：分享、歸屬感。因此，教師需要謹慎的判斷，以便決定在什麼情況下可應用何種中介學習經驗。

關鍵詞：中介學習經驗，教師為中介者，英文教學

