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UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF TEAM TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOLS THROUGH EXPLORATORY PRACTICE (EP)

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Japan has long been employing a team-teaching scheme involving local Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and foreign assistant language teachers (ALTs) in English lessons through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme. I set out this study to examine team teachers’ and students’ perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and team-teaching practices. I also attempted to investigate how a teacher research experience in the form of Exploratory Practice (EP) (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) affects team teachers’ and students’ perceptions and practices. To these ends, I chose a qualitative case study approach situated primarily within a constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Participants were two pairs of team teachers (each pair consisting of a JTE and an ALT) and 76 second-year high school students from two different Japanese public high schools. I collected data over a period of four months through an array of qualitative methods such as narrative interviews, classroom observations, pair discussions, and focus group discussions. I analysed the data through a constructing grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). Established thematic codes, derived from the analysis, were then compared within and across cases in order to bring forth the participants’ particularities and commonalities.

Findings suggest that overall the participants perceived JTEs to be language models, learners, and bridges between ALTs and students. JTEs are also viewed to be fully-fledged teachers who are professionally respected. The participants regarded ALTs as authorities and providers of the target language and/or cultures. At the same time, ALTs were seen as mere foreign language assistants who are marginalised in their work places. The participants considered team-teaching practices to be unique, open-ended, and secondary. It is noteworthy that the participants had these perceptions with varying degrees and with various, sometimes opposing, attitudes. It was also found that the EP project in this study, which included multiple activities such as classroom observations, reflective classes, and various kinds of discussions affected the participants’ perceptions. They experienced three different developmental processes: replacement, synthesis, and reconfirmation. At the same time, the EP project affected the participants’ practices in that they gained agency and realised EP principles in their teaching or learning. There was, however, a range of effects of the EP experienced by the participants, including a minimal effect. The varied effects of the EP seem to have been related to the participants’ individual characteristics, discrepancies between each participating pair, contextual factors, and research-related matters.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

December 6, 2011: I was back in Japan from New Zealand after a short absence of eight months. I was wide awake in a pitch-dark room before the alarm hit 5 am. It was the first day to visit my research site. Quickly, I climbed down a ladder from the attic. Both bare feet touched a cold, wooden floor. There was no sound except for my footsteps echoing in the small room. Hurriedly, I vanished into a shower room where I embraced the warm steam and a short meditation. Excitement and uncertainty emerged and evaporated several times in the foggy room. “How did I get here?” I heard myself say: “Will they care what I am about to do? Of course they will. Does it make a difference anyway? Of course it does”. I closed my eyes. I could no longer hear the sounds of water hitting my head. My thoughts began to drift back to past times: “Hey Mr. Hiratsuka! What were you doing in the class back there? You cannot make a noise like that when you are teaching English! You have to keep those students quiet all the time!” In the year 2001, I was a newly hired English teacher at a high school in Japan. A senior teacher of English constantly reminded me what to do as well as what not to do every day. “Alright, if you say so, sir”. Despite my obedience to him, I had no idea why I had to follow what I was told to do.

Around the time when I started teaching, the government made several changes with regard to English language teaching. For example, the Course of Study (the national curriculum guidelines) was revised in 2002, making foreign languages (almost always English) a required subject in public junior high schools. As a result, most students in Japanese public junior high schools and high schools began to have four to six foreign language classes a week. A strategic announcement was also made by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2002 to foster ‘Japanese people with English abilities’. This came after the recognition that a large percentage of the population in Japan has unsatisfactory English-speaking abilities, a factor that restricts Japanese people from exchanging ideas and opinions appropriately with foreigners (MEXT, 2002). English teaching and learning quickly became buzz words in an unprecedented way. We English teachers were busy, and I could literally feel the high expectations that people in the community had towards me and my English classes.

Another scene came to mind in the shower room. I remembered when I was chatting with a foreign assistant language teacher in a social setting. She cheerfully told me: “Hey
Taka, I love earning lots of money, doing nothing!” What? What was she thinking? Am I supposed to say: “I am glad to hear that”? Where did that come from? What made her say so? In the midst of the English language fever and changes made by Japan’s policy makers in the last couple of decades, one of the most salient characteristics of English as a foreign language (EFL) education in Japan is the continuous development of the “largest and best documented team teaching program” (Medgyes, 2001, p. 439), called the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme. The programme invites participants from all over the world to work in one of the following positions: Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), who provide language instruction; Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs), who are engaged in international matters in prefectoral or municipal offices; and Sport Exchange Advisors (SEAs), who are in charge of sports-related activities. Although there are a few ALTs (about 9%) who teach foreign languages other than English in public schools, such as Chinese, French, German, and Korean (The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations [CLAIR], 2012), all of my co-workers and friends were those placed in elementary/junior high/high schools or local boards of education to teach English. While ALT applicants who have teaching experience or qualifications are highly evaluated, the only qualification required to be an ALT is a Bachelor’s degree (in any field) (CLAIR, 2012). The duties of ALTs as stated in the CLAIR documents are: ‘team teaching’ or assisting with classes taught by JTEs; assisting in the preparation of teaching materials; and participating in extra-curricular activities with students.

According to CLAIR (2012), the JET programme has been highly acclaimed since its beginning, encouraging team teaching between local Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and foreign assistant language teachers (ALTs). It is intended to cultivate foreign language education in Japan in that both JTEs and ALTs are placed in the same classroom to team teach English, although team teaching itself has not been a common practice even among JTEs. I was a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) (defined in this study as an English teacher who learned Japanese as a first language and speaks Japanese as a primary language) and learned English as a foreign language through schooling in Japan – hence my status as a non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST). In contrast, ALTs (defined in this study as those who learned English as a first/primary dominant language at home or through schooling) are proficient in English and used it on a daily basis in their home country – hence the status of native English speaking teachers (NESTs). Although JTEs and ALTs do not usually socialise outside school, I had the luxury of being friends with a number of ALTs (more than 30 a year). The majority of my co-workers and friends made similar comments regarding making
money for little work, as the female ALT who was introduced earlier. Some made the comments happily, and others did angrily. This caused me to think how the rhetoric of the programme did not reflect the actual situations of the team-teaching scheme.

The third scene came out of nowhere. Suddenly, I was again an English teacher in a teachers’ room. My colleague confessed to me that he had never thought the classes had to be team taught with an ALT. He did not look confused or guilty when he said this. I became quiet. I did not have anything to say to him. Officially, JTEs and ALTs are expected to work together in public schools in order to promote grassroots internationalisation at the local level through enhancing foreign language education and developing international communication (CLAIR, 2012). Continuously expanding since the initial year when 848 participants from 4 countries came to Japan in 1987, the JET programme welcomed 4,360 participants from 40 countries in 2012 (CLAIR, 2012). ALTs teach English with JTEs throughout the country now – 47 prefectures as well as 18 designated cities. Three ministries – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and MEXT – are equally responsible for implementing and maintaining the programme. CLAIR stands at the centre of JET programme administration, being simultaneously responsible for negotiating with ministries, local governments, and thousands of JET participants (McConnell, 2000). All ALTs receive approximately 3.6 million yen (equivalent to about NZ$ 57,000) a year which is enough to cover living expenses (e.g., rent, electricity, and water) and still have enough to eat well (CLAIR, 2012). On the other hand, JTEs in the prefecture where this study was based receive per annum from about 3 million yen to 5 million yen (equivalent to about NZ$ 38,000 to NZ$ 76,000), depending on their age, along with a bonus (worth about four months’ salary). ALTs work Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 16:15; one hour less a day than regular working hours for JTEs. Interestingly, the programme was introduced as a top-down governmental policy without input from local teachers (McConnell, 2000). Since JTEs neither initially suggested the idea of teaching with a foreign assistant nor had a concrete image of how to team teach, it was common for JTEs, including myself, to become indifferent, struggle with, or even reject team teaching. For many years, I wondered whether there were ways to make the best of the programme and take advantage of our team-teaching opportunities, within the given framework and constraints.

Slowly, I opened my eyes and got out of the shower. I felt fresh and energised. I put on my best suit and left my room at 6:15 am. The sun was nowhere to be seen. Another harsh winter day had begun. A short walk took me to a corner where there was an avalanche. The
snow continued falling. Turning the corner, I came across a narrow street protected by two snow walls, the height of which equalled my own. After making my way through the snow corridor, I saw two male high school students chatting by the station. They were talking about how the questions on an English test from a prestigious national university tricked them the day before. I remember those days when my students and I collected all the past entrance exams available and memorised the tips and rules to gain high scores for the exams they would have to take. I frequently pondered at that time if I was merely becoming a test specialist who worked only for increasing the number of successful test takers. It seemed to me that it would take a long time before the English language would be learned meaningfully as a communicative tool. Recently, though, the Course of Study presented by MEXT (2008) was fully implemented in 2011 for elementary schools, in 2012 for junior high schools, and in 2013 for high schools. The consequences of this initiative include: (a) compulsory English classes (called English Activities) were introduced to grade five and six in all elementary schools; (b) the numbers of required foreign language classes in junior high schools increased by approximately 10%; and (c) high school English teachers, in principle, conduct their classes entirely in English. Furthermore, textbooks have been edited, and the names of the subjects have been changed to reflect the shift in English language education in Japan towards English for daily communication (Yoshida, 2011). Mostly due to the entrenched examination-oriented school culture, however, heated debate about whether or not these policies in the new Course of Study are adequate still continues throughout the country. In the area I visited, English language teaching and learning appeared not yet to have fundamentally changed in the minds of teachers or students.

As the sun gradually rose, I waited for a bus to come. As far as I could observe, there were only Japanese high school students walking around the station and bus terminal at that time of the day. I wondered how far they had to travel each day to go to their schools. When I was at high school, it took about one hour for me to get to my school from my parents’ house. It did not seem to be a long trip at all when I conversed with my friends about everything and nothing. High school days are magical. Although not compulsory, most students in Japan enter high schools (98.3% in 2012) (MEXT, 2013). They study and enjoy time with their friends until they graduate. A snow-covered bus arrived on time as expected; not a minute early or a minute late, but always on time. Everything I saw from the bus looked exactly the same, yet completely different. I guess experiences in other parts of the world can change a person; at the same time, nothing in the world can make a person completely different. I was
wearing a new pair of lenses, so to speak, but I could also easily take off those lenses and view the scenes as they were. A one-hour trip took me to familiar territory. I walked about 20 minutes, taking numerous pictures and inhaling abundant fresh air. All I could see was Japanese signs and traditional Japanese houses. In the middle of the deserted road, elderly people were speaking a type of Japanese dialect with a thick local accent. Although Japan is one country where English has started to change people’s lives to varying degrees, English is not used on a daily basis or given any special administrative status (Crystal, 2003); hence the status of EFL was clearly the case with the research sites I visited.

It was 8:25 am when I reached the doorstep, and I was ushered into an office. As I waited there for a couple of minutes for further guidance, I watched with curiosity how the Japanese office workers at school worked. They seemed quite efficient and busy. They did not make any eye contact with me and either kept looking at a computer screen or sorting papers as if I did not exist. Out of the blue, one of my former colleagues rushed in, greeted me, and filled me in on the latest responsibilities and duties of a third-grade homeroom teacher. While talking, he continued copying some documents. As soon as he finished, he left the room in a hurry. Soon after, a JTE showed up with her ALT. They both greeted me in Japanese. I greeted them back in Japanese, and we awkwardly shook hands as we all smiled and laughed. On the way to the principal’s office, the JTE started talking. She told me how exhilarated she was when she completed her Master’s degree in English language teaching at a local university. The ALT joined the conversation and expressed his interest in enrolling in the same programme to learn more about English language teaching. As exemplified by the teachers who were interested in learning English language teaching in higher education, English and the teaching of the language started to change the terrain not only at the secondary level but also at the tertiary level in Japan. In 2008, for instance, Japan formulated a ‘300,000 International Students Plan’ with the aim of receiving and educating 300,000 international students by 2020 for the purpose of internationalisation (or Kokusaika) (see Kubota, 2002). In order to achieve that goal, 13 universities were chosen in 2009 to function as core schools to lead the plan (MEXT, 2009). Along a similar line, there are currently English-medium universities, in which all courses across its four-year curriculum are conducted in English, attracting growing numbers of highly qualified students from across the country and around the world (Lehner, 2009). Such universities are also changing the traditional face of university education in Japan. In the academic world, there has been a recent call for presentations in English from a well-known national applied linguistics
organisation (JACET) as an answer to the tide of globalisation, although most of the participants at its conferences are, in fact, Japanese educators (Hino, 2009).

In the business world, two successful companies in Japan, Fast Retailing and Rakuten, announced a drastic, controversial decision: making English the official language of their company in order to ensure future prosperity (Botting, 2010). From this emerging evidence alone, it appears that people in Japan – from early childhood to professional careerists – cannot escape any longer the new initiatives which promote the teaching and learning of the English language. After Kubota and McKay (2009) immersed themselves in a study of globalisation and language learning in a rural area in Japan, they commented: “English is not an international lingua franca in many multilingual contexts yet it exerts invisible symbolic power” (p. 616). This applies to a great part, if not all parts, of Japan. English has certainly permeated the lives of many Japanese individuals. The two teachers, along with other participants of this study, were no exception. On that day, I could immediately feel their enthusiasm for learning more about English language teaching and learning. We began our exploration.

**Aims of the Research**

Japan has employed team teaching involving JTEs and ALTs in daily English lessons through the government-sponsored JET programme since 1987. Over the years, the benefits and pitfalls of the programme have been widely addressed (e.g., Brumby & Wada, 1990; McConnell, 2000; Wada, 1996; Wada & Cominos, 1994). The issue of teachers’ and students’ perceptions of their participation in team-taught classes through the programme has also attracted research attention, quantitatively (e.g., Gorsuch, 2002; Mahoney, 2004) as well as qualitatively (e.g., Hiramatsu, 2005; Miyazato, 2006).

However, how a teacher research experience in the form of collaborative Exploratory Practice (EP) (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) affects their perceptions and actual practices in team-teaching contexts over time has not been documented. Here, I conceptualise the term teacher research to mean teacher-initiated investigation of teaching practice (Richards & Lockhart, 1996) and the term Exploratory Practice (EP) as one type of teacher research that is a sustainable way to understand teaching and learning in the language classroom (Allwright, 2005). EP is a fully inclusive practitioner research which aims not to treat
participating teachers and students as research subjects, sources of data, or even cooperative
generators of data. It instead views both teachers and learners as full participants in the
research process and outcome (Allwright, 2009). In the world of EP, all the participants,
drawing on their particular knowledge and experience, explore their ‘puzzles’ in the
classroom (Hanks, 2009).

My research aims were threefold. Firstly, since teachers’ and students’ perceptions are
an integral aspect of teaching and learning (Borg, 2003, 2006a), I explored their perceptions
of team teachers and teaching practices. In particular, I was interested in their perceptions of
JTEs, ALTs, and language teaching inside and outside the classroom. The understanding of
their perceptions enabled the participants and me to clarify the impact of team teaching in
their contexts. Secondly, I was interested in the effects over time of an Exploratory Practice
Thirdly, I also attempted to explore the effects over time of an EP experience on language
teachers’ and students’ practices. The effects of EP on their perceptions and practices provide
a rich source of data that contributes to a very small pool of research (if any) documenting in-
service teachers’ and their students’ development in team-teaching contexts in Japan.

**Significance of the Research**

I intend to make contributions to the field of second language teacher education
(SLTE) by providing information for individual English teachers and learners, school
administrators, English language teacher educators, and language policy makers regarding the
perceptions and practices of current language team teaching and the efficacy of an EP
intervention within particular contexts in Japan. Seen through the sociocultural lens, my study
is of value to three interconnected and overlapping areas of SLTE: non-native/native English
speaking teachers (N/NESTs), team teaching, and teacher research.

First, there has been a growing interest in inquiring into the perceptions and
experiences of non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) and native English speaking
teachers (NESTs) (e.g., Braine, 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005; Mahboob, 2010).
Until recently, studies of the perceptions and experiences of NNESTs were virtually non-
existent. However, various reports of teachers’ experiences and their characteristics –
including the advantages and shortcomings of teachers as N/NESTs – can now be found. By
enhancing the understanding of the particularities of NNESTs and NESTs, teachers can come to better understand, linguistically and culturally, their professional lives and grow as experts in the field of SLTE. Since the participating teachers for my research are both JTEs (NNESTs) and ALTs (NESTs), this study adds valuable insights to the already well-explored issue of inquiry: What are the perceptions teachers and students have of N/NESTs and their practices? The contribution comes from not only adding particular perceptions to studies which have investigated similar participants or contexts but also from the methodological approaches used in the study. One aspect is the use of narrative interviews which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been employed for this type of inquiry regarding JTEs, ALTs, and their students.

Another significant aspect of my research is its focus on team-teaching practices. In this study, language team-teaching practices of the participants in Japan are fully examined in parallel with relevant literature. The importance of an intra-/inter-disciplinary team-teaching approach has long been recognised in language teaching as well as in general education (e.g., Stewart & Perry, 2005; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). Sometimes placed under the descriptive umbrella of collaborative teaching or co-teaching, a team-teaching approach is said to facilitate teaching efficiency and learning effectiveness by encouraging the strengths and complementing the weaknesses of each teacher (Villa et al., 2008). Moreover, the benefits of team teaching specifically in language classrooms are believed to include: (a) an increase in the quality and quantity of students’ talk in the classroom; (b) a decrease in student-teacher ratios; and (c) enhancement of second language teacher development (Bailey, Dale, & Squire, 1992). Despite these positive claims, however, it may be argued that team teaching could cost more money as well as more human resources and create new types of problems such as class scheduling and conflicts between team teachers. One type of collaboration by NESTs and NNESTs is epitomised by team-teaching methods which can now be observed in numerous places in the world (e.g., Brazil, Hong Kong, Japan, Slovenia, South Korea, and Taiwan). I explored the phenomenon of team teaching in two high schools in Japan with an attempt not to adopt, in advance, any value-laden assumptions. I hope my findings will enrich the knowledge in the area of team teaching as well as in the field of SLTE more generally.

The third significance of my study is the inclusion of teacher research elements for participating teachers and students – an Exploratory Practice (EP) experience. Teacher research allows teachers (and students) to participate in research as both practitioners and
researchers and take what they have learned from the research and use it in subsequent
teaching (and learning). Campbell and McNamara (2010) suggest that conducting research
can equip teachers with the vast range of skills and professional dispositions. Allwright
(2003), however, recommends that the nature and benefits of teacher research be constantly
questioned and further researched (see also Borg, 2013). In the course of teacher research,
collaborative teacher researchers are more likely to benefit from their co-participation,
especially if they are sharing teaching practices with the same students in the same classroom.
This connection between teacher collaboration and teacher research has therefore been an
important subject of inquiry, and that was what I pursued through my own study in the
context of team teaching in Japan. More specific to the field of SLTE, teacher research, i.e.,
Exploratory Practice, with or without external support (from researchers or teacher educators),
has recently been recognised as a useful practice for professional development in diverse
contexts. For example, EP has been utilised in assorted kinds of English language classrooms
(e.g., Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Gieve & Miller, 2006; Yoshida, Imai, Nakata, Tajino,
Takeuchi, & Tamai, 2009) as well as in a Japanese language classroom (Okamoto, 2008).
Allwright and Hanks (2009) suggest that more teachers and students should be encouraged to
take responsibility for understanding what they normally do on a daily basis in order to make
their lives enjoyable.

Researchers in the field of applied linguistics have thus come to pay attention to the
three areas within the field of SLTE: N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research.
Although each of the three areas has been relatively well investigated, to the best of my
knowledge there has been no study carried out that took into consideration all three areas in
one study. Furthermore, in my study the three areas were explored from a sociocultural
theoretical perspective which values the process of phenomenon and the participants’
dynamic social activities. From this perspective, although the majority of the previous studies
employed quantitative methodologies and have been informed by normative assumptions
about what constitutes preferable N/NESTs (e.g., Yamanouchi, 2010), team teaching (e.g.,
Benoit & Haugh, 2001), or teacher research (e.g., Lankshear, 2004), I examined, over a
period of time, the overt and covert lives of teachers and students in their actual team-
teaching contexts without limiting its focus to ‘ideal’ N/NESTs, team teaching, or teacher
research. The significance of my study also lies in the fact that I treated students as “key
developing practitioners” (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 2), thereby elevating the roles of
students in the classroom as well as in the research.
Thesis Outline

I have organised my thesis into seven chapters. In Chapter 1, I have provided the introduction to the study by presenting the background of English language and English education in Japan. I have also identified the aims and the significance of the research to situate this study in the field of applied linguistics. Chapter 2 looks at three interconnected and overlapping areas which frame this study. Each area (i.e., N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research) is presented in turn and explained in relation to the other areas through a sociocultural lens under the realm of SLTE. Based on previous studies in those areas, I address five research questions. Chapter 3 introduces the participants and the contexts of this study and presents a methodological framework, including various methods of data collection and analysis used in this exploration. In this chapter, I also discuss relevant research philosophies and ethics with additional information on the criteria for evaluating the research. In Chapter 4, I describe and interpret the perceptions team teachers and students have of team teachers and teaching practices. Chapter 5 deals with the effects of an Exploratory Practice experience specifically on the participants’ perceptions, whereas Chapter 6 is concerned with the effects of an Exploratory Practice experience particularly on the participants’ practices. Finally, in Chapter 7, I summarise findings and propose a conceptual framework. I also develop in this final chapter implications and recommendations for practice and future study.

Conclusion

In order to set the scene for this thesis, I began this chapter with a narrative of my experience on the first day at the research site. I also included the overall background of the study by describing the current assumed situations and official policies of English language education in Japan. I followed this with a brief discussion of the aims of the research and an explanation of the significance of the research. Finally, the organisation of the thesis concluded the chapter. I begin the next chapter with explanations of the field of SLTE and a sociocultural theoretical perspective, followed by a literature review of the three interrelated conceptual areas that are important in this study (i.e., N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research).
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I outline the relevant literature which informs my study. I address through a sociocultural lens a brief overview of three interconnected and overlapping areas – non-native/native English speaking teachers (N/NESTs), team teaching, and teacher research – in the field of second language teacher education (SLTE). Figure 2.1 below represents the conceptual connections of these areas. I aim to explain each area in depth as well as explore relationships among them. Based on the review in this chapter, I introduce my research questions.

Figure 2.1: Representation of each area in my study

Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE)

The term second language teacher education (SLTE) has become an umbrella term for language teacher education in the field of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Wright, 2010). SLTE has secured its position in the field of applied
linguistics and education; extensive discussions (e.g., Johnstone, 2005; Jourdenais, 2009) and a comprehensive collection of position papers (e.g., Burns & Richards, 2009) are now available to us. SLTE generally deals with “research and practice relevant to the preparation and on-going professional development of teachers who teach English as a second/foreign language in diverse contexts around the world” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998a, p. 394). However, despite there being “increasing demand worldwide for competent English teachers and for more effective approaches to their preparation and professional development” (Richards, 2008, p. 158), teachers’ idiosyncratic learning trajectories are surprisingly understudied (Barkhuizen & Borg, 2010). Where language teacher development is concerned, of paramount importance are what individual teachers know and think and how individual teachers learn about teaching. These are believed to be intricately complex processes (Barkhuizen & Borg, 2010; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Wright, 2010). Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy declare: “If teacher educators are in agreement on anything, it is that teacher learning is complicated” (as cited in Spalding, Klecka, Lin, Wang, & Odell, 2011, p. 3). We thus need to deconstruct this complicated world by asking questions such as: “What is the relation between what teachers know and believe, how they act, and how students are influenced by those actions?” (Tedick, 2005, p. 3). Taking an inquiring stance by asking questions like this has become a catalyst for my study.

To capture what language teachers know and think, the most significant work has been in the area of teacher cognition (Johnson, 2006). Influenced by general teacher cognition research, studies in language teacher cognition sought and advanced the conceptualisation of who language teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers (Borg, 2003, 2006a; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Golombek, 2009; Woods, 1996). In a detailed review article, Borg (2003) identifies 64 different studies on language teacher cognition and recognises 16 different researchers’ terms for cognition (e.g., theories of practice, personal practical knowledge, and personal theories). Historically, Richards (1998) presents six subjects that he considers should be included in teacher education programmes: theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning and decision-making, and contextual knowledge. Mann (2005) determines 10 different types of knowledge language teachers should acquire and learn (i.e., content, pedagogical, curriculum, second language acquisition, contextual, personal, practical, experiential, local, and usable knowledge). More recently, Woods and Çakır (2011) assert
that the underlying problem in the field of teacher cognition is not the proliferation of concepts as Borg (2006a) claims but the proliferation of terms used differently when those terms are in fact virtually identical. Derived from recurring themes among these terms, Woods and Çakır outline several distinctions in cognition (e.g., between objective and subjective; between explicit and implicit) and present, admitting the risk of adding to the terminological proliferation, a term understanding, which emphasises the dynamic nature of teacher cognition. All in all, researchers have begun to claim that teacher cognition is not a static entity but a dynamic one to be shaped and reshaped depending on the specific contexts of teachers and students.

One attempt to unravel teacher learning was made by Freeman (2002) who traced the study of teacher knowledge and learning to teach in both general and language teacher education since the 1970s. He organises the review around four major themes: (a) teachers’ learning content and practices, (b) teachers’ mental processes, (c) the role of teachers’ prior knowledge, and (d) the role of social and institutional contexts. He deals with each theme according to three different time periods: before mid-1970s, 1980-1990, and 1990-2000. The first period (i.e., before mid-1970s) saw the prevalence of a process-product view of teaching. In other words, teaching, at that time, was examined in accordance with student learning outcomes, and teachers were regarded as doers and implementers of “top-down approaches which present best practices for teachers to understand and imitate in their teaching” (Crandall, 2000, p. 35). Learning to teach was thus equal to acquiring discrete sets of observable behaviours. It was believed that teachers could learn about the content and process of teaching as transmitted knowledge through teacher education programmes, teaching practicums, and the induction years of teaching (Johnson, 2006). These early conceptions were explained on the basis of causal conditionality (i.e., teaching leads to student learning) and reasoned causality (i.e., teacher training leads to good teaching) (Freeman & Johnson, 2005), and can only work under the assumption that what teachers need are separate sources of knowledge. This knowledge was presumed to be applicable to any individual teacher and teaching context.

The second period (i.e., 1980-1990) witnessed more focus on teachers’ mental lives. In other words, their thinking and actions started to be treated as integral to teaching. The movement was exemplified by emerging notions such as hidden pedagogy (Denscombe, 1982), referring to the socially validated, implicit meanings on which teachers act during
their jobs, and an *apprenticeship of observation* (Lortie, 1975), which refers to the mass of information about school teaching that teachers have acquired when they were students. Also, research on teachers during this period began to become more interpretive, which welcomed complexities. According to Freeman and Johnson (1998b), however, the bulk of the classroom-based research relevant to language teaching in the 1980s still investigated “effective teaching behaviours, positive learner outcomes, and teacher-student interactions that were believed to lead to successful L2 [second language] learning” (p. 398). During the third period (i.e., 1990-2000), the realisation that understanding teachers and their learning involves both complexity and messiness increased. This was considered to be inspired by post-modern concepts such as plurality of views, and relativity of positions and power. Freeman and Johnson (1998b) also observe that SLTE was in the process of being reconceptualised and maintain that teaching and teacher education had become more than just the accumulation of objective knowledge from scholars’ research. More recently, it has been argued that the field of SLTE has become even wider in its scope through the consideration of individual teacher identity and socialisation processes in their context of practice (Freeman, 2009).

SLTE thus started to view individual teachers as key players in understanding and improving English language teaching, and researchers have been calling for the need to listen more to teachers themselves about their particular teaching and learning experiences (Freeman, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 2005; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006; Richards, 2008). Freeman and Johnson (1998b) summarise this point as follows:

> Drawing on work in general education, teacher educators have come to recognize that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals … with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classroom. (p. 401)

Teachers’ backgrounds, prior experiences, and interpretations of the activities in which they are engaged considerably affect their subsequent practices and development (Freeman, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1998). In addition to prior and ongoing experiences that language teachers have, the local contexts in which they practice – social, political, economic, institutional, and cultural – are influential in shaping how and why they do what they do (Johnson, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006; Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Wright, 2010). In other words, the significance of teachers’ social ‘situatedness’ as well as the nature of their
learning has been brought to light (Johnson, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The crux of teacher education is no longer the discovery of the most effective teaching behaviours – the best methods (Prabhu, 1990) or what ought to work (Freeman & Richards, 1993) – even if these practices are still quite common in many parts of the world, including Japan (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Freeman and Johnson (1998b) ascertain that learning to teach is “a long-term, complex, developmental process that operates through participation in the social practices and contexts associated with learning and teaching” (p. 402). The vital role of contexts in teacher learning is echoed by Richards (2008) who posits that “different contexts for learning create different potentials for learning” and that “a setting for patterns of social participation … can either enhance or inhibit learning” (p. 165).

With the aim of unpacking the world of language teacher learning, Tarone and Allwright (2005) call for differentiating pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities. They contend that doing so would provide clearer goals and content for educating teachers at different stages and lead to tailored teacher education (see reviews of teacher development for pre-service teachers in Wright, 2010; for in-service teachers in Mann, 2005). After all, as Johnson (2006) maintains, teachers have “not only a right to direct their own professional development but also a responsibility to develop professionally throughout their careers” (p. 250). Furthermore, Tarone and Allwright (2005) suggest the need to distinguish the terms teacher training, teacher education, and teacher development: training as being concerned with skills, education as being concerned with knowledge, and development as being concerned with understanding. By ‘understanding’, they mean not “merely having a particular skill or having a certain piece of knowledge”, but “whatever helps us to use our skill and knowledge appropriately” (Tarone & Allwright, 2005, p. 7). In addition, they stress that language teacher learning should not be confined to the classroom; language teacher learning also takes place in a variety of settings, whether planned (e.g., formal professional workshops) or spontaneous (e.g., casual chats with colleagues). Informed by these points, it can be said that my research primarily investigates the development of in-service teachers (and their students) inside and outside their classrooms.

Another critical point in relation to SLTE is a key ontological issue about how similar (or different) language teachers are from the teachers of other subjects due to the nature of their subject (Freeman, 2002). With language as both medium and content of the lessons, the job of language teachers becomes necessarily more idiosyncratic, and the teachers have to address in the classroom such matters as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary items,
discourse, and genre. In addition, their status as teachers becomes especially complicated when language teachers both teach and learn the language as a foreign language, as is the case with JTEs. Based on a study that explored this issue, Borg (2006b) postulates that key differences between language teachers and other teachers include: (a) the subject matter (language); (b) the relationship between language teachers and students; and (c) the range of teaching materials, methods, and activities. It is therefore crucial to focus specifically on the teaching and learning of language teachers in comparison to those in general education as some issues (e.g., N/NESTs) are only pertinent to language teachers.

Considering the issues above – the complexities of individual teacher cognition and learning, the importance of contexts, different types of teacher education (i.e., training, education, and development) and teachers (i.e., pre-service/in-service teachers and language/other subject teachers) – language teacher education, language teaching, and language learning are understood to be complex and iterative in the field of SLTE. They influence each other but should not be viewed from a position of absolute causality, i.e., that language teacher education is the only cause of language teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 2005). The field of SLTE has now been widely recognised from both theoretical and empirical perspectives (Barkhuizen & Borg, 2010). However, much research into language teacher cognition and learning, which are the core issues in SLTE, has explored only what teachers know and think or how and why ‘they think’ their learning occurs without direct observations of their actual practices (for exceptions, see Freeman, 1993; Woods, 1996). Even when both teacher cognition and practices are examined in one study, the focus has been mainly on the correspondence between cognition and practices, often within discussions of whether they are convergent or divergent (see Basturkmen, 2012). Moreover, most studies only investigated teachers’ cognition and their learning at a certain fixed time once (see Borg, 2003, 2006a), as opposed to multiple times over time (for exceptions, see Borg, 2011; Feryok & Barkhuizen, 2008). Only a limited number of studies have covered tangible outcomes (e.g., cognition and practices) and actual changing processes of teachers’ experiences over time. Furthermore, the need for studies which examine both teachers’ and students’ perceptions of language teaching and learning practices has been acknowledged (Brown, 2009), and the mismatches between their expectations are believed to negatively affect students’ classroom satisfaction (Kern, 1995). Investigated in my study are therefore teachers’ and students’ perceptions and practices over time in their situated contexts without limiting its focus on convergences/divergences between their perceptions and practices.
In the following section, I examine how a particular perspective (i.e., a sociocultural perspective) can elucidate my study as a useful lens. Since I focussed directly on the collaboration of team teachers and their students, and I included dialogical and interactive exercises (e.g., pair discussions and focus group discussions) in my data collection, there was a significant link between the process of their co-constructed experiences and its impact on the outcome of the participants’ experiences. Employing a sociocultural perspective and emphasising social contexts are currently one of the key ways to understand and support the professional development of language teachers (Freeman, 2009; Johnson, 2009).

A Sociocultural Perspective on SLTE

Due to ontological differences, debates surrounding cognitive and sociocultural approaches are inevitable and tensions between them continue to exist in the field of applied linguistics (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Although employing a cognitive perspective might provide me with information concerning participants’ knowledge and skill acquisition (or lack thereof), given the aims and focus of my research (i.e., exploring participants’ complex perceptions and practices in team-taught classes), I chose to view my research through a sociocultural lens.

The term sociocultural is often used with slightly different meanings and applications in the research of anthropology, psychology, education, and applied linguistics (Johnson, 2009). Despite the differences, sociocultural theory mainly refers to the ideas derived from Vygotsky who was a Russian psychologist and educator. Vygotsky (1978) did not accept the prevalent psychological research at his time which aimed, in most cases, to provide mere descriptions of the static products of human learning. He instead focussed on the transformation of a developmental process of learning as well as a dynamic explanation for higher psychological functions (Vygotsky, 1978). He argues: “the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 24, emphasis in the original). In Vygotsky’s view, a sociocultural perspective is not a theory of human behaviour, but rather a theory of human mind, and the perspective helps us ‘see’ the process and product of intricate human learning by valuing its contextualised social nature (Johnson, 2009). Human cognition is believed to be developed when we engage in social practices and
form social relationships, and human learning is defined as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical as well as social contexts (Johnson, 2009; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), all higher forms of human mental action, which allow us to move from impulsive behaviour to instrumental action, are bound to be influenced (or mediated) by tools, means, or culturally constructed artifacts (e.g., materials, signs, symbols, and languages – most notably in the forms of speaking and writing). This mediation, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) contend, is a central construct of a sociocultural perspective as cognitive development does not occur independently or automatically.

In this light, researchers, like myself, who are informed by a sociocultural perspective need to consider that human cognition is always situated in a certain cultural environment. We should also be aware that human cognitive development is highly interactive and context-dependent as well as mediated by culture, language, and social activities. Crucial here in my view is for researchers to simultaneously examine both what humans think and what they actually do (their practice), rather than focus on only one. Exploring both perceptions and practices through one’s spoken and written words as well as direct observations of one’s performance is central to my study and will hopefully advance discussions in the field of teacher and student learning.

According to Johnson (2009), a sociocultural perspective on human learning can broadly inform four major interrelated aspects of SLTE. In my study, the following four points are applied both to teachers and students. First, a sociocultural lens enables researchers to examine cognitive processes at work and bring value to the inherent cognitive and social interconnection in teacher and student learning. In other words, the perspective provides a window into how teachers and students come to know, how different concepts and functions in their consciousness develop, and how this internal activity transforms their understanding of themselves as teachers and learners and of the activities of their teaching and learning (Johnson, 2009). Given that my study explores the perceptions of teachers and students as well as their practices over time, the perspective plays a vital role in understanding them from cognitive and social aspects.

Second, a sociocultural perspective on SLTE recognises teacher and student learning as a dynamic process that reconstructs and transforms their practices. It values both individual (e.g., teacher and student) and local community (e.g., class and school) needs and thereby makes human agency central to teacher and student education. With regard to human
agency, one essential point to take into consideration is that teachers and students are sandwiched between macro-level regulations and micro-level autonomy. A sociocultural perspective can provide an explanation for the tensions by looking at them from multiple levels (e.g., governmental, institutional, and personal) in order to more fully understand the experiences of teachers and students. This explanatory concept is called activity theory, and it enables us to interpret the networks of human activity from a holistic view (Engeström, 1999). With relevance to my study, the tensions between the macro and micro discourses are even more apparent when the teachers immerse themselves in institutions or work under policies where “they, their students, and their instructional practices are constructed by the positivistic paradigm that defines good teaching in terms of student performance on standardized tests and conceptualizes learning as internal to the learner” (Johnson, 2006, p. 248), as is often the case in Japan. The teachers in this context are generally afraid to make changes in their teaching and tend to continue with what they are good at and what they are used to doing. In other words, teachers teach only technical rules (mostly from the textbooks endorsed by the government) and diligently follow a given curriculum. Stripped of their agency and personal preferences, those teachers and students often feel powerless and consider that they are merely one of the wheels of the larger political machine (Freire, 1993; Johnson, 2006). My hope through this study is that teachers and students can realise the significance of their individual voices and their idiosyncratic local contexts, applying a sociocultural perspective that enables their learning to be situated, continuous, and developmental (Johnson, 2006, 2009).

Third, according to Johnson (2009), a sociocultural perspective requires us to pay close attention to both the content and the process of SLTE and to consider what teachers think language is, how teachers think language is learned, and how teachers think language is taught (Borg, 2006a). Typically, the teachers or students enter the profession or classroom with their knowledge or opinions about teaching and learning unarticulated. By making the perceptions and practices open to conscious inspection (Vygotsky, 1963), my participants can become more cognisant of their everyday experiences and develop new insights into their classrooms. Lastly, Johnson (2009) maintains that a sociocultural perspective on SLTE enables us to scrutinise “existing mediational tools and spaces while also creating alternative ones through which teachers may externalize their current understanding of concepts and then reconceptualise and recontextualize them and develop alternative ways of engaging in the activities associated with those concepts” (p. 15). Some ways to achieve this, as suggested by
Johnson (2009), are reflective teaching (e.g., Schön, 1983) and teacher research (e.g., Burns, 1999). Since my study includes elements of both reflective teaching and teacher research, the perspective has been useful for me and the participants. A sociocultural perspective, not as a methodology but as a theoretical lens, informs my study by valuing the process of conceptualisation of teacher and student learning.

The use of a sociocultural perspective in SLTE has recently gained momentum. For example, Johnson and Golombek (2011) published a volume of research studies which employed a sociocultural perspective within the field of SLTE. The studies cover a wide variety of geographic regions (e.g., Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the United States), teachers (e.g., N/NESTs and pre/in-service), and school contexts (e.g., ESL, EFL, K-12, and higher education). Viewed from a sociocultural perspective, the studies see the value of dialogic and collaborative activities among participants in their professional development. Focussing on teacher identities, Reis (2011), for instance, investigated one non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST) at a university in the United States by using different virtual spaces such as dialogic blogs and an online discussion forum. Through the opportunity, the teacher assistant participant could explore her perceptions of language teaching and learning, and challenged disempowering discourses of the NESTs-NNESTs dichotomy. It is thus suggested that: (a) professional development opportunities (e.g., TESOL programmes) for NNESTs must encourage them to become aware of how they can position themselves and how they can be positioned by others with regard to professional legitimacy in micro and macro contexts; and (b) teacher educators should create mediational spaces where NNESTs, along with others, can deconstruct the discussion of N/NESTs and create their agency. Recognising the power of context, Childs (2011) attempted to ‘see’ the struggle of one novice ESL teacher to conceptualise L2 teaching experience in the United States. The data were collected through several methods such as interviews, classroom observations, stimulated recall, teacher journals, and lesson plans. The findings indicated that the teacher’s conceptualisation of L2 teaching was influenced by the duration of the research, his language learning and instructional histories, supportive relationships, and his agency. Based on the findings, she argues that teacher professional development programmes should recognise the compelling role that the prior experiences of L2 teachers, individual agency, and support system surround the teachers can play in mediating their cognition. Attempts to take into consideration the participants’ experiences and their surrounding contexts were made in my study.
Golombek (2011) traced the cognitive development trajectories of student teachers through dialogic mediation operationalised by digital video protocols in one of her teacher courses in the United States. Golombek, as a teacher educator of the participants, provided different mediational strategies, depending on the needs of the participants, and encouraged the participants’ agency as well as their understanding of the situation from the expert’s point of view (i.e., experiencing intersubjectivity) (see Wertsch, 1985). This mediation promoted reorganisation, refinement, and reconceptualisation of the participants’ cognition. Also seeking appropriate mediation in SLTE, Yoshida (2011) introduced to his teacher-learners in a curriculum design course in Japan an activity of self-reflective interaction using a course management tool (Moodle). The activity provided a space for the participants to articulate and reflect on their experiences, promoting the integration of scientific and everyday concepts. He suggests that it is necessary for teacher educators to consider appropriate quality and characteristics of their support in relation to particular individuals and contexts. I likewise paid attention to several types of mediation and their effects on teachers and students during my study.

Given that their focus rests on teacher learning in inquiry-based professional development through a sociocultural perspective, Poehner’s (2011) and Tasker’s (2011) studies are importantly linked with my study. Poehner (2011) explored experiences of an in-service teacher who participated in Critical Friends Groups (CFG). CFG is not an evaluative tool, but a means for teachers to direct their own learning and reflection in order to “identify student learning goals that make sense in their schools, look reflectively at practices intended to achieve these goals, and collaboratively examine teacher and student work” (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, as cited in Poehner, 2011, p. 191). Poehner found that the highly-collaborative and practitioner-driven CFG activities made it possible for the participant teacher to objectively view the particular dilemma concerning one of her students, reconceptualise it, and consequently adjust her practice. The CFG in the study was of symbolic and psychological value to support the professional development of the teacher. Tasker (2011) investigated, through a teacher-directed collaborative professional development activity (i.e., lesson study), the extent to which engaging in the study leads to conceptualisation changes of EFL teachers in the Czech Republic. Lesson study is a “framework teachers use to explore a gap between where their students are now, and where they would like them to be” (Tasker, 2011, p. 205). His study lasted for 14 weeks and included three teachers. Findings showed that the lesson study had the power to transform the ways the teachers conceptualised student learning and
changed teaching practices. The outcome was only possible, Tasker argues, because the teachers could examine something meaningful to their local teaching context. Similar to CFG and lesson study, the participants in my study collaboratively experienced inquiry-based professional development (Exploratory Practice). As presented, elements and characteristics of the sociocultural perspective have been employed in several research studies on SLTE.

Since both the teachers and students in my study had different types and degrees of assistance from various people (i.e., peers, colleagues, and myself) for their development, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is one key concept along with the wealth of other notions introduced by sociocultural theory (e.g., internalisation, mediation, and regulation) (Daniels, Cole, & Wertsch, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as the distance between one’s current actual developmental level determined by independently solving problems and one’s potential developmental level determined by solving problems in collaboration with more capable (or similar) peers. Based on this idea, Lantolf (2000) describes the ZPD as a ‘metaphor’ for seeing how humans appropriate means and internalise new knowledge. The ZPD is revolutionary at least in two ways. First, it focusses on each individual’s abilities and performances in a new way; that is, it not only looks at how one came to be what one is (retrospectively), but also at how one can become what one not yet is (prospectively) (Wertsch, 1985). In other words, as Vygotsky (1978) contends, investigating individuals’ level of potential development is as important, if not more so, as examining their level of actual development if we are to gain a holistic understanding of their ability and potential. Second, the ZPD focusses on the process of assistance (sometimes in the form of instruction) provided by adults or peers (Wertsch, 1985). The types and forms of interpersonal assistance involved would be integral factors for individuals’ development within their ZPDs. Assistance must be graduated – namely, too much and direct (i.e., do this and do that) decreases one’s agency, while too little and indirect (i.e., you can do it yourself) increases frustration – and it must meet one’s needs at a particular time. This is called by some strategic mediation (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wertsch, 1985). When certain interpersonal communications take place just ahead of immediate development and therefore just beyond one’s ZPD, the experiences facilitate learning (Wertsch, 2007).

A number of scholars now contend that language teacher learning is, at its core, much more social and cultural than it had previously been envisaged. In other words, the transmission mode of teacher learning has now been replaced by various forms of dialogic and collaborative (transformative) teacher learning that push the boundaries of teachers’
ZPDs (Barkhuizen & Borg, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Richards, 2008; Wells, 1999). A rich collection of collaboration literature in general teacher education suggests this promising direction (e.g., Ermeling, 2010; Kaasila & Lauriala, 2010; Tillema & van der Westhuizen, 2006; Wells, 1999). Teacher collaboration has also been widely recognised and promoted in the field of SLTE (e.g., Bailey, 1996; Freeman & Hawkins, 2004; Johnston, 2009; Richards, 2008). From this view, learning is presumed to take place primarily through social interaction between and among people who are in similar positions – that is, within a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). A community of practice refers to the concept that learning occurs within socially constituted settings where participants with common interests and goals develop through sharing and learning skills as well as negotiating and acquiring knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). As a consequence, members of communities of practice can utilise and facilitate collaboration amongst themselves for professional development by articulating, sharing, negotiating, and developing new understanding about their practice (Freeman, 1993) as well as by taking risks, sharing frustration, and being vulnerable (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Within these communities, a process of what Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to as legitimate peripheral participation might occur. This is the notion where newcomers move from being novices to more experienced and start fully participating in practices as a result of interaction with more experienced old-timers in a community. Given that participating teachers in my study are two pairs of team teachers and their students are from the same classrooms in two high schools, the issues of ZPD, collaboration, and communities of practice were inevitably of concern and pertinent to the outcome of the study.

In spite of extensive discussions within the sociocultural perspective that interaction and collaboration are integral to the development of language teachers and learners, there is currently very little active communication among teachers and between teachers and students in team-teaching contexts in Japan. To be more specific, there is only one opportunity a year for team teachers at my research sites to gain formal professional development, i.e., a mid-year conference. That is the only time for JTEs and ALTs to meet and learn from other team teachers – even then, JTEs and ALTs do not have to attend the conference together as a pair. Moreover, there is no scheduled time for teachers and students to exchange ideas and have discussions about their teaching and learning in their contexts. Fanselow (1997) critiques the lack of interpersonal communication among teachers and students and regards independent teacher and student development as unhelpful: “seeking to find out for myself by myself,
alone, is like trying to use a pair of scissors with only one blade” (p. 166). Bearing this in mind, I organised my study so that the participants and I would be able to give and receive a variety of interpersonal communication within and beyond our ZPDs and experience various collaborative activities. In the course of my research, there was always at least one other participant both for teachers and students to share their exploratory journeys like a scissor which has two blades, not one.

I have so far explained the broad field (SLTE) in which my study is situated and the sociocultural perspective through which I look at the teaching and learning of the participants in my study. I continue this chapter with one of the three areas encompassed by SLTE: non-native/native English speaking teachers (N/NESTs).

**Non-Native/Native English Speaking Teachers (N/NESTS)**

Before I review the issue of non-native English speaking teachers and native English speaking teachers (N/NESTs), I discuss a broader issue: non-native speakers and native speakers of English (N/NSEs). The use of the terms *non-native/native speakers of English (N/NSEs)* is ubiquitous and treated as a matter of course, for example, in Japan (see Joe, 2010; Oyama, 2010). In fact, the primary reason for setting up the JET programme was to invite ‘native English speakers’ into the classroom (McConnell, 2000). Earlier in this thesis, I defined JTEs as non-native English speakers and ALTs as native English speakers as a matter of convenience. This is because there exists no definition of NSEs and NNSEs that is universally accepted. Davies (2003) professes that the only way to solve this conundrum is to have a negative definition; that is to say, “to be a native speaker means not to be a non-native speaker” (p. 213, emphasis added). Braine (2010) expressed his feeling candidly: “I have no wish to explore the NS and NNS debate, which, in my view, is unlikely ever to be resolved” (p. 9). Quite a number of researchers have rejected the dichotomy of NSEs and NNSEs and coined alternative terms for NNSEs in aiming to solve this problem. For example, Paikeday (1985) contends that native speakers only exist in linguists’ imaginations and proposes a term *proficient users* for successful NNSEs. Rampton (1990) suggests a term *language experts* for proficient NNSEs to give appropriate credit to them. From the point of view of World Englishes through which localised varieties of English are valued, Kachru (1992) encourages the use of the term *English-using speech fellowship*. Cook (1999) calls NNSEs *multicompetent speakers* whilst recognising the importance of first language (L1) use and its
speakers in the second language (L2) classroom. Even considering these suggestions, however, there is no sign of reaching a consensus on an alternative term for N/NSE in the field of applied linguistics. As such I use these terms in this thesis, while acknowledging their contestability, as I know of no alternative at the moment.

NSEs have seemingly been enjoying their prestigious status for a while as English has become the de facto lingua franca in the world (Canagarajah, 2005; Holliday, 2005). The two prominent factors that appeared to lead to the dominant status of NSEs were: (a) the linguistic theory that considered NSEs as the only reliable and appropriate source of linguistic rules (Chomsky, 1965); and (b) the commonwealth conference held in Makarere, Uganda, in 1961, which came to the conclusion that only NSEs can be ideal language teachers (Phillipson, 1992). In contrast, NNSEs have had a long history of marginalisation and stigmatisation, experiencing discrimination in the job market as well as in general professional life (Braine, 2010). Holliday and Aboshiha (2009) explored the consequences of labelling speakers as native and non-native and affirm that such classifications have more to do with ideological matters than with geographic or linguistic ones. According to Selvi (2011), some NNSEs unfortunately “suffer from the ‘I-am-not-a-native-speaker’ (Suarez, 2000) or ‘impostor’ syndrome (Bernat, 2009)” (p. 187). In other words, NNSEs constantly compare their English competency with that of NSEs and long for the never-attainable level of English proficiency that NSEs hold. In the field of SLA, early studies were conducted following the comparative fallacy (Bley-Vroman, 1983) where one examines learner language only in relation to the language spoken by native speakers. Acknowledged to be somewhat politically incorrect, the issue of N/NSE was treated as a sensitive one and not discussed openly until relatively recently (Braine, 2005).

Some scholars have begun to see the importance and impact of the N/NSE issue and have thus conducted several studies. Based on the fact that there are more numbers of NNSs who use English for international communication than those of NSs, Jenkins (2002) saw the value of researching NNS-NNS interaction, particularly focussing on phonological intelligibility. She suggests that the pronunciation syllabus be revised in order to promote both intelligibility and regional appropriateness from the perspective of English as an International Language (EIL). Piller’s (2002) interest was in what NNSEs thought of other NNSEs. The study showed that some NNSEs could pass as a NSE in the eyes of other NNSEs. The identity of NNSEs vis-a-vis that of NSEs has recently been under scrutiny, and their identity is considered to be co-constructed through interaction (Park, 2007). These
linguistic identities have been described as “complex, dynamic, multiple, and negotiable in specific social contexts” (Faez, 2011, p. 37).

The issue of N/NSE has thus started to appear as relevant since the 1990s, mostly in ESL contexts, and has played a significant role in the issue of N/NESTs. In the next section, I provide a literature review concerning the teachers’ perceptions of N/NESTs.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of N/NESTs**

Based on the N/NSE discussion above, I now elaborate on the issue of non-native/native English speaking teachers (N/NESTs), which directly informs my study. Perfunctory stereotypes about N/NESTs have long existed. Some believe that NNESTs and NESTs are essentially different in terms, for example, of their linguistic abilities, teaching methods, and attitudes towards students. In the Japanese English language teaching context, a strong preference for a standard variant of English (e.g., American and British) spoken by NESTs was voiced by secondary students (Matsuda, 2003) as well as by students’ parents (Takada, 2000), a fact that perhaps deprives NNESTs of their confidence and self-esteem as professionals.

In the recent past, however, the awareness of the N/NESTs issue has expanded our understanding of language teaching and learning. It is now of significance to pay more attention than before to NNESTs since it is said that the number of NNESTs is currently much larger than that of NESTs (Canagarajah, 1999, 2005). One of the very first signs of recognising NNESTs was the TESOL statement on non-native speakers of English and hiring practices in 1991. The statement attempts to prevent the discrimination of NNESTs and consequently led to an emphasis on teachers’ teaching skills, teaching experience, and professional preparation rather than on their language proficiency or native/non-native status (TESOL, 2006). Furthermore, the notion of NESTs’ superiority was challenged by Phillipson (1992, 2009). He argues that the status of NNESTs vis-à-vis that of NESTs is generally considered to be lower because NESTs are automatically applauded due to their native language abilities and are regarded as the best teachers. He calls this value-laden notion the *native speaker fallacy* and contends that: (a) NESTs’ language abilities could be instilled in NNESTs through formal learning; (b) NNESTs are better qualified to teach the language because they have undergone the process of language learning; and (c) NNESTs can still...
teach the target language irrespective of their experience of target language culture. Around the same time, NNESTs gained their credence from a different angle. A colloquium entitled ‘In Their Own Voices: Nonnative Speaker Professionals in TESOL’ was organised by George Braine at the 30th annual TESOL convention held in Chicago in 1996. It was one of the first official gatherings by NNESTs to discuss issues pertaining to their status and sparked the establishment of the TESOL Caucus (The NNEST Caucus) in 1998. The Caucus, which later transformed itself into an Interest Section of the TESOL organisation with more than 1,700 members, marked a milestone in the movement of promoting the issue of N/NESTs (Braine, 2010). The movement to raise the recognition of NNESTs, however politically and socially sensitive it might have been, came into being and continues to increase NNESTs’ self-efficacy through various personal stories and empirical studies (Braine, 2010).

Discussions focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs have been widely reported. Researchers such as Stern (1983) and Widdowson (1992) suggest that NESTs are reliable informants of linguistic knowledge as they are experienced English users. However, some point out that NESTs might lack the linguistic and cultural knowledge of their students (Holliday, 1994; Widdowson, 1992). In contrast, Medgyes (1994) attributed six advantages to NNESTs and observes that NNESTs: (a) provide a better learner model for students; (b) teach language-learning strategies more effectively; (c) supply more information about the English language; (d) better anticipate and prevent language difficulties; (e) are more sensitive to their students; and (f) benefit from their ability to use the students’ mother tongue. In the case of EFL contexts, Cook (2005) adds that NNESTs are more familiar than NESTs with the educational system in which their students study. NNESTs, however, are believed to have lower English proficiency, never achieving NESTs’ linguistic competence (Medgyes, 1992). In addition to researchers’ discussions concerning what N/NESTs are like and what they can offer for their students, actual teachers’ self-perceptions are now available through several empirical studies. These studies have also focussed mainly on positive and negative aspects of NESTs and NNESTs, as shown in the following paragraphs.

Given that interests in the N/NESTs issue stemmed from movements by NNESTs whose aim was to increase the self-efficacy and confidence of NNESTs, it was hardly surprising to learn that most studies of teachers’ perceptions of N/NESTs were concerned with NNESTs’ perceptions of themselves and/or NESTs rather than NESTs’ perceptions of themselves and/or NNESTs. Some of the limited studies in the United States about NESTs’ perceptions revealed that they are confident with their linguistic skills (e.g., Kamhi-Stein,
Aagard, Ching, Paik, & Sasser, 2004; Maum, 2003; Moussu, 2006) and believe themselves to be competent teachers to teach in higher and intermediate-level courses (Moussu, 2006). Moreover, NESTs perceived that NNESTs are good role models for the students and have additional cultural knowledge, while they thought low English proficiency and insufficient knowledge of target language culture were the weaknesses of NNESTs (Moussu, 2006).

There is a surge of research studies connected to NNESTs’ perceptions of N/NESTs. The first empirical study of its kind was that of Reves and Medgyes (1994), in which they surveyed 216 ESL/EFL teachers from 10 countries. They used questionnaires, consisting of 23 items, in order to investigate if: (a) NESTs and NNESTs have different teaching practices; (b) these differences originate from the language proficiency of teachers; and (c) the language proficiency of teachers affects their self-perception and/or teaching attitudes. On completing the data analysis, they noted that the strength of NNESTs included: having the ability to grasp the progress of learners, predicting the difficulties of learners, and sharing L1 with learners for detailed explanation. Part of Moussu’s (2006) study explored the self-perceptions of 18 NNESTs who worked at intensive English programmes in the United States and indicated that NNESTs could perceive the needs and difficulties of students in a more timely manner due to their own experience of learning the language (see also Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Lee, 2000). In the same vein, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) investigated the perceptions of 17 NNS graduate students in a TESOL programme in the United States. The researchers collected data in multiple ways: questionnaires, classroom discussions, in-depth interviews, and the written autobiographies of the participants. The participants believed that NNESTs were more sensitive to the needs of their students and more familiar with their backgrounds. These results concur with Medgyes’s (1994) hypotheses about NNESTs’ advantages. Another important advantage of NNESTs that Medgyes (1994) suggests (being able to provide a learner model) was reiterated by Liu’s study (1999). Concerned with the dichotomy of NESTs and NNESTs, Liu recruited seven NNESTs from an American university as his participants. His data, collected from emails and face-to-face interviews, showed that the participating NNESTs deemed that their students appreciated and respected NNESTs because of their success in learning English. The participants also indicated that their students determined successful language teachers based on the personality and professionalism of teachers rather than on their linguistic competence or target language culture awareness. Liu concludes that we should judge language teachers not only by who they are, but also by what they do, and suggests that we should perceive those teachers on a NS-NNS continuum. This

Interestingly, however, among the 101 NNESTs in primary and secondary schools in Spain in the study by Llurda and Huguet (2003), a quarter of them did not recognise any of the NNESTs’ advantages above and saw only the negative aspects of being NNESTs. In a very different context (Hong Kong), Tang (1997) conducted a survey of 47 NNESTs and Ma (2012b) collected data from 53 NNESTs through questionnaires and interviews. Similar to the results of the studies in other contexts, they both found that NNESTs’ advantages are their knowledge of the first language of the students and their previous experiences as learners of the target language, while NESTs are superior in speaking, pronunciation, listening, vocabulary, and reading. Ma added that NESTs were perceived to lack knowledge about the learning needs of students, and NNESTs were believed to have linguistic disadvantages.

A number of other studies examined the topic of NNESTs’ linguistic abilities. Despite the fact that linguistic abilities are considered to be a crucial disadvantage of NNESTs, they affect their teaching performance in pivotal ways (Bygate, 2009; Kamhi-Stein, 2009). NNESTs’ self-perception of their low English proficiency seems to have a negative impact on their teaching lives. Amin (1997) interviewed five women, non-native speakers of English and native speakers of ‘other’ Englishes (e.g., Indian English), about their teaching experiences in Canada. It was reported that the participants believed that only Caucasian native speakers of North American English could know ‘real’ and ‘proper’ English. Eight female NNESTs from Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Poland, and Spain were the focus of Jenkins’ (2005) study. Using in-depth interviews, the study explored the attitudes of the participants with respect to accents. The study revealed that the participants wanted a native-like English accent. It was regarded as ‘good’, ‘perfect’, ‘correct’, ‘proficient’, ‘competent’, ‘fluent’, ‘real’, and ‘original’. Due to self-perceptions of their English skills, Moussu (2006) discusses that the participating NNESTs in her study were more willing to teach intermediate and lower level students than higher level ones. Rajagopalan’s (2005) study in Brazil also showed NNESTs’ low self-confidence with their English abilities and job frustration: “The fact of not being a native speaker and, worse still, of never being able to become one no matter how hard they try, often becomes a source of anxiety” (p. 287). After investigating 101 Spanish NNESTs in primary and secondary schools through questionnaires and individual interviews,
Llurda and Huguet (2003) found that: (a) secondary teachers were more confident with their language skills than primary; and (b) primary teachers were more influenced by the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). In the same context, Llurda (2009) revealed that NNESTs who had never stayed in English-speaking countries were more supportive of the idea that NESTs are ideal teachers. In Japan, Butler (2007a) conducted a study with 112 Japanese elementary school teachers by using detailed questionnaires, focussing on the respondents’ attitudes towards NESTs and the self-perceptions of their English proficiency. Somewhat expectedly, the research showed that the more teachers believed they had low English proficiency, the more they felt that English should be taught by NESTs.

In addition to the studies about the strengths and weaknesses of N/NESTs, some researchers centred their attention on the classroom teaching styles of N/NESTs, and others on the identity construction of N/NESTs. For studies of teaching styles, for example, Árva and Medgyes (2000) examined in Hungary teachers’ actual behaviours in the classroom as well as their stated behaviours. Their tentative findings, as a result of the analysis of video-recorded lessons and follow-up interviews, were that: (a) NESTs favoured free-flowing classes without particular teaching points; and (b) NNESTs preferred a step-by-step approach with a tangible teaching goal. For studies of identity constructions, Simon-Maeda (2004), for instance, conducted open-ended life story interviews with female EFL educators in Japan (Japanese and non-Japanese) who worked in tertiary-level institutions. She identified intricate professional identity constructions of NESTs and NNESTs as language teachers in relation, for example, to participation in Japanese academic and social activities at their work sites. Inbar-Lourie (2005) recruited 102 EFL teachers (mostly female) in Israel and noted that perceived NESTs’ and NNESTs’ identities were not stable but shifting as they were reliant on the outcome of the negotiation between the person judging and the person being judged. More recently, Park (2012) traced academic and professional experiences of NNESTs (five East Asian women) and their changing professional identities prior to and during their TESOL programmes in the United States through the use of autobiographical narratives, electronic journals, and individual interviews. She presented one NNEST’s identity transformation and discussed implications, including: (a) TESOL programmes should position both NESTs and NNESTs to embrace and promote their particular background knowledge and experiences; and (b) TESOL programmes should encourage both NESTs and NNESTs to understand the diversity among NNESTs and to become conscious of multiple identity options for NNESTs (e.g., bilinguals, multilinguals, and World English speakers).
These studies have shown how imperative it is to take into consideration teachers’ practices inside and outside the classroom when it comes to investigating N/NESTs’ perceptions.

Detailed reviews of the N/NESTs literature (e.g., Braine, 2010; Moussu & Llurda, 2008) have shed light on directions for further research. Based on the reviews, researchers made recommendations, for example, to conduct more longitudinal, observation-based studies in EFL countries. I agree that more thorough studies about NESTs who had never lived in the EFL contexts in which they teach are needed because in these contexts they are most likely to face local linguistic and cultural challenges and encounter different types of learners from their home. I would also like to see more research carried out on NNESTs in EFL countries who have never studied in English speaking countries since it is quite likely that: (a) they occupy the majority of English teacher positions in EFL countries; (b) they have less English competence due to the lack of access to English compared with NNESTs in ESL countries; and (c) they have less confidence in English language teaching due to the conflicts between local educational needs (e.g., high-stakes tests) and imported language pedagogies (e.g., task-based language teaching). Close investigation into N/NESTs’ perceptions of N/NESTs and their teaching practices in EFL countries could therefore prove valuable in the field of English language teaching. I now turn my attention to students’ perceptions of N/NESTs.

Students’ Perceptions of N/NESTs

Studies on students’ perceptions of N/NESTs have emerged only very recently. As with the studies of teachers’ perceptions, their focus has been primarily on the advantages and disadvantages associated with N/NESTs. For example, Cheung (2002) (see also Cheung & Braine, 2007) investigated 420 Hong Kong University students’ perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs through multiple methods (i.e., questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and post-classroom interviews). The participants recognised language proficiency, fluency, and cultural knowledge as advantages of NESTs, whereas they identified empathy, shared cultural background, and L1 use as advantages of NNESTs. Using a discourse-analytic technique, Mahboob (2003) investigated students’ perceptions in an intensive English programme in the United States. He examined the written work of 32 students that solicited the opinions on N/NESTs. NESTs received positive comments from the students on oral skills, vocabulary, and cultural knowledge, but negative comments on grammar knowledge,
lack of experience as learners, and pedagogy. NNESTs, on the other hand, received positive comments on experience as learners and grammar knowledge but negative comments on oral skills and cultural knowledge. A further example of students’ perceptions of N/NESTs is one by Benke and Medgyes (2005). They recruited 422 Hungarian students to explore their perspective of N/NESTs’ teaching practices. They explained that NNESTs were praised because of their knowledge of grammar, the local educational framework, and local tests but criticised due to their poor pronunciation and improper use of language forms. In the context of a Japanese university, Miyazato (2003) found through interviews that the students felt ‘fear’ towards NESTs because NESTs did not share their linguistic or cultural backgrounds. Due to the teachers’ ‘foreign’ appearance as well as ‘genuine’ English, however, the students experienced more ‘joy’ when they could successfully communicate with NESTs. Part of Mullock’s (2010) study examined students’ perception of a good language teacher. The data were gathered through questionnaires from 134 students from two universities in Thailand. The students expressed a preference for NNESTs who have high levels of proficiency in English and for NESTs who have acquired the knowledge of the host language and culture. More recently, Ma (2012a) reported a study which analysed students’ perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of learning English from N/NESTs by interviewing 30 secondary students in Hong Kong. As with previous studies, her study showed that the participants saw NESTs positively because: (a) they have good English proficiency; (b) they facilitate students’ English language and culture learning; and (c) they have more relaxed teaching styles. On the other hand, NNESTs were perceived positively because: (a) they share the same language as their students; (b) they have knowledge of students’ difficulties in language learning; and (c) they can be more easily understood by their students. According to Ma, and as appears to be the case with other studies, many advantages associated with NESTs or NNESTs are the reverse of the disadvantages of their counterparts. For example, one NESTs’ advantage is their high proficiency in English, and one NNESTs’ disadvantage is their lack of high proficiency in English.

Together with the students’ perceptions of N/NESTs’ advantages and disadvantages, some researchers investigated their perceptions of the accent of N/NESTs. For example, Kelch and Santana-Williamson (2002) in the United States revealed that participating students were not capable of distinguishing six different varieties of English: Standard American, Southern American, British, and English spoken by a Portuguese, German, and Japanese. It was concluded that the students’ perceptions of their N/NESTs were attributed to
the extent of familiarity they had with their teachers’ different varieties of English and subject to change. This result corroborates that of Butler (2007b) in the context of South Korea. Others conducted their research to explore influential factors that affect students’ perceptions. Moussu (2002), for instance, recruited 97 students from intensive English programmes in the United States and collected data through questionnaires and individual interviews. She determined that the L1 of the students and the length of exposure to NNESTs were two key factors that affected their perceptions: (a) the South Korean and Chinese students expressed more negative feelings to NNESTs than other students; and (b) longer exposure led to more positive attitudes towards NNESTs. Her later study (2006) repeated her first study on a wider scale (responses from 643 students) and confirmed the results of the previous study (see also Moussu, 2010a). The students’ perceptions of N/NESTs thus appear to be fluid and context-dependent.

As listed, many studies of students’ perceptions of N/NESTs have been conducted in the United States. Recently, though, some examples of such studies in EFL contexts come from Spain (Lasagabaster & Manuel-Sierra, 2005), Saudi Arabia (Al-Omrani, 2008), and Thailand (Grubbs, Jantarach, & Kettem, 2010). These have so far addressed similar findings as the ones in ESL countries (e.g., the native speaker fallacy is permeated in students’ minds; contact time with teachers affects their perceptions; having both teachers in the classroom is ideal). We need to accumulate more studies from diverse cases in EFL contexts in order to broaden discussions of the topic because students in EFL countries, where they have limited access to NESTs and English resources, perhaps have different perceptions of N/NESTs from those in ESL countries, something not fully explored thus far.

The literature of N/NESTs covered ranges from anecdotal stories to empirical studies of teachers’ and students’ perceptions of N/NESTs. Albeit a short history, the studies concerning N/NESTs now include a variety of methods, participants, and contexts: (a) the data collection and data analysis methods used vary (i.e., from questionnaire to in-depth interviews to classroom observation; from thematic analysis to discourse and linguistic analysis); (b) the participants are not only at the university level but also in other institutional sectors; and (c) the contexts are no longer limited to the United States or other ESL countries but have been broadened to include some EFL countries.

The literature continues to evolve, with different interests among researchers becoming evident. For example, Lazaraton (2003) focussed on NNESTs’ incidental cultural
Among the various topics scholars have tackled within the milieu of N/NESTs research, one particularly important topic is team teaching between NESTs and NNESTs. Studies on N/NESTs have discovered that NESTs and NNESTs have their own strengths and shortcomings that their counterparts don’t have. Of particular relevance here is that a team-teaching approach has the potential to take advantage of team teachers’ strengths and thus compensate for each other’s shortcomings. Relating the issues of N/NESTs and team teaching would be beneficial, pedagogically and empirically, for both teacher and student development. I review literature on team teaching in the following sections.

**Team Teaching**

Teaching is an isolated activity. No one really knows what occurs behind closed doors, except for the teachers and students in the classroom. Musanti and Pence (2010) claim that teacher isolation is conventionally confused with autonomy and independence, which carry positive connotations. The collaboration and communication opportunities among teachers are often informal and infrequent (Sandholtz, 2000). Teachers both inside and outside the
classroom tend to feel obligated to play the role of the invincible professional, one who does not need help from others. However, teachers should neither place themselves as ‘bosses’ of the classroom nor be expected to independently solve problems they encounter at school; teacher collaboration should be encouraged (Slavit & Nelson, 2009). There is now an abundance of literature in general education that welcomes collaboration, specifically in the form of team teaching, by different types of teachers in various types of schools (especially in special education) (e.g., Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Chang & Lee, 2010). In addition, the significance of an intra-/inter-disciplinary team-teaching approach has long been acknowledged in the language teaching field as well as in general education (Nunan, 1992; Shibley, 2006; Stewart & Perry, 2005).

Although the term team teaching appears to be uncomplicated at first glance, it has a number of interpretations. According to Sandholtz (2000), team teaching ranges from a simple allocation of responsibilities between two teachers outside the classroom (e.g., separately making different parts of lesson plans) to full collaboration inside the classroom (e.g., sharing equal responsibility for delivering lessons). In comparison, concentrating on the type of in-class teaching practice, Villa et al. (2008) put team teaching under one of four categories of co-teaching. Co-teaching is defined as “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation for a classroom of students” (Villa et al., 2008, p. 5). The four categories of co-teaching are: supportive teaching, parallel teaching, complementary teaching, and team teaching.

In supportive teaching, one teacher has primary responsibility for designing and instructing a lesson, while the other teacher provides individual support to the students in the class. There is a clear division of labour in this type of co-teaching: one teacher leads, and the other supports. Through parallel teaching, co-teachers instruct different groups of students simultaneously in a classroom, whether or not they teach the same content. In complementary teaching, one teacher works in order to enhance the instruction of the other teacher. For example, while one teacher is instructing, the other paraphrases the instruction or demonstrates how to take notes without halting the class. The last type of co-teaching, team teaching, occurs when two or more teachers share the responsibilities of what a normal teacher does; that is, planning teaching, instructing, and assessing the progress of students. Team teaching is believed to be the most sophisticated co-teaching process. Team teachers divide their lessons equally and alternate the leading and supporting roles fluidly so that
students are allowed to experience the strengths and expertise of both teachers (Villa et al., 2008).

Teacher collaboration and team teaching come in different forms and levels of collaboration, and, for the most part, the opportunities for teacher collaboration are determined by individual teachers and their contexts. In the context of Japan, the term *team teaching* can vary in meaning from a lower to higher level of team teaching described by Sandholtz (2000). It can also mean any of the four different types of co-teaching based on Villa et al. (2008). This is largely due to the ambiguous definition of team teaching in the language classroom (Leonard, 2003). In other words, the degree and the type of cooperation by team teachers in Japan can differ depending on each teacher, class, school, and/or subject (e.g., English Expression).

In teacher education, team teaching has been promoted in pre-service teacher education programmes (e.g., Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009) as well as in-service teacher practices (e.g., Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001) at different professional stages of teachers and at different levels of schooling. Combining two or more teachers potentially provides various benefits for teachers and students. Team teachers, for example, can help and inspire each other by cooperatively setting objectives, making plans, implementing lessons, and evaluating the results (Benoit & Haugh, 2001). They are believed also to be able to capitalise on their specialised skills, knowledge, and instructional approaches (Hourcade & Bauwens, 2002). In sum, team teaching, which encourages the strengths and complements the weaknesses of each teacher, is likely to facilitate teaching efficiency and teacher development (Johnston & Madejski, 1990; Villa et al., 2008).

With regard to students’ benefits, team-taught classes are considered to provide an improved lesson quality as a result of a lower student to teacher ratio (Benoit & Haugh, 2001). Buckley (2000) points to two other advantages: there are more opportunities for individual or small group support because two teachers are simultaneously present in the classroom, and the classroom could become livelier due to the teachers’ different personalities, teaching styles, and voices. There is evidence from empirical research (e.g., Mahoney, 1997) that team teaching improved achievement of English language learners and students with special needs in educational contexts in the United States (Villa et al., 2008). More pertinent to language teaching, Bailey et al. (1992) maintain that there is an increase in the amount of talk time and types of speaking opportunities in team-taught classes. Even though some reservations exist
regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of team teaching, such as Armstrong’s contention that “there was little convincing evidence to show that team teaching led to significant increases in student gains” (as cited in Bailey et al., 1992, p. 166), team teaching is generally considered to be a useful pedagogical practice, especially if teachers can mutually help each other in the same classroom.

NESTs and NNESTs can potentially learn from each other, not only with regard to linguistic and cultural matters but also pedagogically, and their collaboration has been widely recommended (Benke & Medgyes, 2005; de Oliveira & Richardson, 2004; Dormer, 2010; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010). This is probably why team teaching by local teachers and foreign teachers has been accepted in various countries. For example, in 1995 South Korea began the English Programme in Korea (EPIK), which had three aims: (a) to improve the English speaking abilities of students and teachers; (b) to develop cultural exchanges; and (c) to reform English teaching methodologies (EPIK, 2012). Against the backdrop of the pressing need to improve the quality of English teaching and learning, in 1998 Hong Kong similarly began hiring NESTs who held teaching and/or English qualifications (Education Bureau, 2012). Taiwan followed the trend of “EFL team teaching” (Chen, 2009, p. 31) where NESTs and NNESTs team teach English to local students. NESTs have been recruited by the local governments since 2001 (Islam, 2011). Team teaching by NESTs and NNESTs is not only relevant to Asian countries but also to other parts of the globe, such as Europe (Slovenia) (see Alderson, Pizorn, Zemva, & Beaver, 2001) and South America (Brazil) (see Corcoran, 2011). The team-teaching arrangement has thus gained increasing attention in language teaching and learning. Some studies, however, have revealed several problems with the arrangement; for example, lack of planning time for team-taught classes (Carless, 2006), the legitimacy of NESTs (Jeon, 2010), and insufficient collaboration between team teachers (Yen, Lin, & Yang, as cited in Chen, 2009).

Having presented an overview of a team-teaching approach in language education as well as general education and introduced the team-teaching schemes by NESTs and NNESTs in selected countries, I now turn to team teaching by NESTs and NNESTs in Japan, the context of my research.
Team Teaching in Japan

According to CLAIR (2012), the JET programme, which promotes team teaching by NESTs and NNESTs in Japan, has successfully received high acclaim, both domestically and internationally, for its role in advancing mutual understanding and being one of the world’s largest exchange programmes. With a steady period of growth since the outset, it also established another positive reputation: the nation’s largest recruiter of English teachers from outside Japan (Noguchi, 2001). Brumby and Wada (1990) defined team teaching as “a concerted endeavour made jointly by the Japanese teacher of English (JTE) and the assistant language teacher (ALT) to create a foreign language classroom in which students are engaged in communicative activities” (p. vi). A number of people believe that ALTs have become an essential part of English education in Japan, as they are employed to create more communication-oriented learning environments and provide more exposure to English and foreign cultures (Galloway, 2009; Miyagi, Sato, & Crump, 2009).

Some researchers, however, have argued that the impetus of the programme derived not from pedagogical concerns but from trade tensions and economic friction during Japan’s economic boom (e.g., McConnell, 2000; Reesor, 2002). They contend that the JET programme was initiated as part of a ‘gift’ to the United States and fails to meet the important objective of the programme – to improve the communicative ability of Japanese students – as it was not the original intention. If these are even partly true, the programme needs to be re-examined and reformed to maximise its potential. Another concern is that although the government invests a large amount of money every year in the programme (approximately NZ$ 400 million) (Ishii, 2009), and a number of people spend significant amounts of time and energy working for the programme, the daily lives of team teachers and team-teaching practices have remained under-explored. For these reasons, studies which critically and thoroughly investigate all the people affected by the programme are urgently needed. General statements such as: “Overall, the JET Program has been very successful up to now” (Koike & Tanaka, 1995, p. 20); and “ALTs and JTEs have been performing the task of team-teaching largely with a great deal of success – there have been failures, but the successes far outnumber the failures” (Leonard, 2003, p. 50) are not adequate enough because they fail to consider the particular perceptions, practices, and development of teachers and students in their situated contexts.
Early discussions on team teaching by JTEs and ALTs have concentrated on descriptive explanations of team teaching and the advantages/shortcomings of team teachers. For example, Brumby and Wada (1990) identified several benefits of team teaching for students, such as increased authentic interaction, more model conversation presentations between JTEs and ALTs, and the promotion of cross-cultural awareness – these benefits are echoed by several research results (e.g., Sakui, 2004; Taguchi, 2002). Tajino and Tajino (2000) suggest that students’ linguistic and interactional competencies improve when the notion of team teaching and ‘team’ itself among team teachers and students are clarified. In addition to these benefits to students, researchers have argued that team-teaching practices benefit both team teachers by exchanging different cultural information and, specifically JTEs, by improving their English communicative abilities through conversing with ALTs on a daily basis (McConnell, 2000; Wada, 1996; Wada & Cominos, 1994).

Negative aspects of team teaching, however, have also been raised. McConnell (2000) found that some JTEs often treat their ALT like “a human tape recorder” (p. 190) and do not see the value of team-taught classes. Iwamoto (as cited in Miyazato, 2009) maintains that JTEs sometimes take a passive role, functioning merely as interpreters. Others (e.g., Adachi, Macarthur, & Sheen, 1998; Hasegawa, 2008; McConnell, 2000) warn that discrepancies exist between the aims and outcomes of team-taught classes and the requirements of student exams. Accordingly, researchers, like Ohtani (2010), recommend that JTEs and ALTs develop proficiency in English and in Japanese respectively for open communication and that the government include courses in teacher education programmes which promote intercultural awareness and consolidate the rationale of team teaching.

Empirical studies on the team teaching have begun to appear. Adachi et al. (1998), for example, collected survey data from nearly 100 teachers and thousands of students. Both the JTEs and ALTs believed that ALTs have positive effects on student motivation, but the student participants considered team-taught classes to be unrelated to and easier than JTEs’ solo classes. Based on the questionnaires collected from 20 junior high school JTEs and 18 high school JTEs, Tajino and Walker (1998b) revealed that the participants had positive perceptions of team-taught classes. Gorsuch (2002) gathered questionnaire responses from 884 JTEs in high schools in order to investigate their perceptions of their own English speaking skills and English language learning experiences in relation to team teaching with ALTs. She also examined how the teaching patterns of ALTs differed between academic and vocational high schools. It was reported that a majority of the JTEs did not teach English
and II classes with ALTs and that the JTEs who rated their English speaking skills high had more team-taught classes and were more willing to accept communicative activities in the classroom. The results of the data also suggested that public academic and vocational high schools did not experience apparent differences when it came to assigning ALTs to team-taught classes. Highlighted was the positive influence that ALTs had on the JTEs, and she concluded that the JET programme and the presence of ALTs were “a dynamic, if unevenly available, form of in-service teacher education” (p. 24) (see also Carless & Walker, 2006). In my view, however, just placing ALTs next to JTEs does not automatically lead to their professional learning. We need to seek ways to maximise the presence of both teachers in the classroom, thereby enhancing the potential of the programme as a whole. Igawa (2009) surveyed 74 JTEs and 31 ALTs. He found that both the JTEs and ALTs think that team teaching positively contributes to students’ cross-cultural understanding and that, as the previous studies have shown, the English communicative abilities of JTEs and the teaching skills of ALTs are key factors for effective team teaching.

The perceptions of a teacher’s own role and the other team-teaching partner’s role were the primary interest in Mahoney’s study (2004). He collected questionnaire data from over 1,400 junior and high school JTEs and ALTs nationwide. He discovered that the participating team teachers were unclear and ambivalent about the roles of JTEs and ALTs. This underlined the lack of clearly defined teachers’ roles and responsibilities, which might have contributed to the confusion among teachers and doubts towards the efficacy of ALTs and the JET programme. Ogawa (2011) conducted a survey study with 71 JTEs and 28 ALTs to examine the preferences of JTEs and ALTs regarding the role of ALTs. The teachers had different, sometimes contrary, expectations about the roles of ALTs. Roloff-Rothman’s study (2012) surveyed 28 JTEs and 34 ALTs about their teaching strategies for motivating students. The JTEs and ALTs were found to share a large number of common perceptions with regard to effective motivational strategies (e.g., recognising the efforts of students; showing students you care about them). She suggests that the trend of ALT utilisation has now focussed more on motivating student learning than promoting cultural exchange. One study which specifically examined students’ perceptions of team teachers and team-taught classes was conducted by Tajino and Walker (1998a). They obtained data from 151 high school students and reported that nearly two-thirds of the participating high school students felt that they would not need JTEs if ALTs spoke Japanese well, whereas more than three quarters of the participating students acknowledged that they would need ALTs even if JTEs spoke English.
fluently. These results suggest that the students might have seen JTEs merely as supporting teachers with Japanese abilities and ALTs as main teachers with ‘authentic’ English.

More qualitative studies which include interviews and observations as data collection methods have recently appeared in the literature. Examining official documents and team teachers’ reflections, Crooks (2001) presented in his report one model of an in-service training programme that Sendai city in Japan launched. He hoped a national policy which promotes compulsory professional development for team teachers, like the one in Sendai, would be put in place. Even though Crooks did not include any direct class observation to see the extent of the effectiveness of the training programme, this programme was something to which MEXT and other local boards of education could have referred. As yet, no such in-service training model for team teachers has been nationally taken up. Hiramatsu (2005) recruited eight JTEs and one ALT from an academic high school and conducted interviews and class observations to examine the JTEs’ and ALT’s perceptions of team teaching. The results indicate that: (a) the insufficient English proficiency of JTEs hindered efficient communication with ALTs; (b) team teaching could be either a threat or stimulus, depending on JTEs’ confidence with their English; (c) there were rigid team-teaching routines and team teachers’ roles; (d) there were few opportunities for teachers to build collegiality; and (e) teachers faced conflicting tension between communicative English and exams. She asserts that there is an immediate need for in-service professional development of JTEs to aid them to reflect on their teaching practices (e.g., through workshops about communicative language teaching) and improve their English communicative competence (e.g., through sabbatical leaves to study abroad). She also proposes that JTEs and ALTs have more opportunities for mutual engagement so that they can promote cross-cultural awareness and build proper professional relationships. Lastly, she welcomes the plan to hire ALTs as full-time teachers so that those who excel in teaching can take advantage of their competence.

Given that team teachers’ and students’ perceptions of team teaching in Japanese high schools were investigated through interviews and class observations, Miyazato’s two studies (2009, 2012) are of prime importance to my study. Miyazato (2009) scrutinised team-teaching relationships between JTEs and ALTs in two high schools by focussing on power-sharing. Her qualitative case study illustrated that the ALTs were granted full autonomy in the classroom because of their language ability, which caused the JTEs to become peripheral participants in their team-teaching practices in spite of the assistance status of the ALTs. Although less proficient in English, however, the JTEs played the role of
language/cultural/psychological mediator for students, due to their familiarity with the background of students and the culture of their class, school, and community. She argues that the social complexities within these power relationships might have negatively affected the team teachers and their classes. This power-sharing issue team teachers experience has been one of the crucial points raised by other researchers as well (e.g., McConnell, 2000; Tajino & Walker, 1998b). Miyazato suggested two implications. First, like Hiramatsu (2005), she recommends that JTEs be provided with opportunities for improving their English language abilities. Second, she suggests that educators question the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992) so that students can recognise the significance of JTEs in EFL contexts and establish appropriate learning goals and identities. In another study, Miyazato (2012) conducted group and individual interviews with 31 students in three high schools to investigate their views on team teachers. They held positive images of the ALTs because of their ‘authenticity’ and ‘exotica’ as well as their inclusion of activity-instruction in class. However, they perceived ALTs’ lack of Japanese language skills and political power in class as a negative. As for JTEs, it was found that the students appreciated their linguistic, cultural, and psychological mediator roles but viewed their lack of target language skills as detrimental to their language learning.

More recently, Johannes (2012) examined, over a 10-day period, the perspectives of 4 JTEs, 2 ALTs, and 112 high school students through mixed methods – questionnaires, class observations, individual interviews with the JTEs and ALTs, and focus group interviews with 16 students. Unlike previous studies (Mahoney, 2004; Tajino & Walker, 1998b), she found that JTEs and ALTs did not have conflicting perceptions of team teacher roles and that a wider mismatch existed between students’ and teachers’ perceptions. That is, the students regarded JTEs as teachers for grammar and examinations, and ALTs for foreign cultures and English pronunciation. However, the teachers were more open to sharing these roles. The study also revealed that the students considered team-taught classes to be more beneficial to developing their English skills than their JTEs’ solo classes. Johannes suggests that a 50/50 partnership is necessary to contribute to the instruction of grammar, culture, pronunciation, and exam preparation.

As can be seen, most researchers interested in team teaching in Japan have addressed team teachers’ general perceptions of themselves, their practices, roles, and team-taught classes, for the most part through anecdotes, surveys, or questionnaires. Very few studies have taken into account all the people concerned in team-taught classes (i.e., JTEs, ALTs,
and their students) and particular personal and contextual factors (e.g., the teaching experiences of teachers, the age of students, type of school, and location of school). In my view, one-dimensional and prescriptive descriptions of team teachers, what team teaching is, and how to team teach are unhelpful at best, and harmful at worst, because they do not lead to critical engagement with the actual practices of teachers and/or relationship building in their unique team-teaching contexts. My primary interests instead lie in exploring perceptions and actual practices of particular teachers and students in particular classes on particular occasions. Furthermore, the majority of the suggestions and implications from the studies reviewed heretofore concern macro levels (e.g., national policies, national teacher education programmes, teacher contracts, and teacher qualifications) that are determined by the government or related organisations, rather than on micro levels (e.g., individual teachers, team-teaching pairs, and classrooms) that are embedded within the everyday practice of teachers and students. As much as it is necessary to make macro level changes initiated by the government, prefecture, or local community (and I do explore some implications of these in Chapter 7), the changes are slow, and individual teachers and students do not dare reflect on macro discourses which they believe are beyond their control. A good example of the weight of these macro discourses is that nearly all the contract and hiring systems of the JET programme have been the same for more than a quarter of a century in spite of the fact that many political, economic, and educational circumstances have changed during those years. On the contrary, on a micro level, teachers and students are able to influence changes that they want to make firsthand and relatively quickly from the ground up. In other words, practicing teachers, in tandem with their students, should be centrally responsible for enriching their classrooms at the grassroots level by believing in themselves and making appropriate decisions, as opposed to uncritically accepting top-down macro policies or externally-generated guidance, very much like the ‘banking concept’ where a specific body of knowledge is transmitted only one-way (i.e., from a giver to a receiver) (Freire, 1993). Teachers and students in the classroom are more likely to be able to judge what is important, urgent, and feasible in teaching and learning a target language in their own contexts.

Moreover, there is a plethora of suggestions and recommendations in the research of team-teaching practices, as I have shown above, about what teachers need to know and do, such as: (a) JTEs should improve their English proficiency; (b) ALTs should acquire Japanese cultural and educational knowledge; (c) team teachers should have more opportunities for mutual engagement and build collegial relationships; and (d) team teachers
should seek consistency between team-taught classes and tests. There is, however, no study so far which has provided any clear examples of what the processes could be like or what actions could be taken by individual team-teaching pairs to achieve those recommendations in relation to their school contexts. I therefore attempt to provide one example of teachers’ and students’ developmental trajectories over time while valuing their individual traits and acknowledging their idiosyncratic situations.

In order to pursue the potential of teachers and students on a micro level and provide one example of their learning experiences, I decided to incorporate teacher research into the design of my study as it first and foremost puts individual teachers and students from actual classrooms in the center stage of their development. The next part of my thesis outlines the concept of teacher research and reviews relevant literature.

Teacher Research

The third key area framing this study is teacher research. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I conceptualise the term teacher research as teacher-initiated investigation of teaching practice (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). It provides opportunities for teachers to participate in research as practitioners and researchers. An embedded notion of teacher research is that teachers can learn and develop by closely examining their own teaching and their students’ learning, collecting data, and using reflective processes (Mann, 2005; Postholm, 2008). As a result of engaging in research, teachers are believed to gain “a complex web of skills, types of knowledge and professional dispositions and attitudes that are the anatomy of teaching and constitute professional knowledge” (Campbell & McNamara, 2010, p. 20) which they then use in subsequent teaching. According to Barkhuizen (2009), research-involved teachers can “develop a sense of agency in their working lives, taking an active role in managing their learning” (p. 113). It is likely that teacher researchers can take greater advantage of their experiences when they conduct research collaboratively because teachers can learn different points of view and embellish their research experiences together.

In a study with teachers in a middle school and a high school in the United States, Brancard and Quinnwilliams (2012) examined teacher collaborations for transformative teacher learning through focus group discussions of their classroom observations over the course of two years. Their analyses of qualitative data indicated changes in teachers’ stated
beliefs about their own and their students’ roles, responsibilities, and capabilities as a result of collaboration. Similarly in the United States, Flint, Zisook, and Fisher (2011) explored teacher learning development in general education. Findings suggested that the shared space of the teachers’ collaborative discussions provided them with opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices and ask each other critical questions. Another example of teacher research, which hinged on the collaboration between a NEST and an NNEST, was conducted in the context of Japan (Hiratsuka & Malcolm, 2011). We cooperatively investigated our high school and university classrooms, focussing on teachers’ non-judgmental stances. We came to believe that collaborative teacher research involving NESTs and NNESTs contributes to the value of cross-cultural scholarship. Germane to team teaching, it is probable that teacher researchers who are also team teachers can effectively share their teaching and research experiences and successfully leverage the advantages of collaborative engagement implicit in team teaching. The combination of a team-teaching approach and teacher research for in-service teachers therefore seems to be an illuminating subject of inquiry.

Notwithstanding the numerous identified benefits of teacher research, there are thus far a limited number of successful cases of research-involved language teachers. Lack of time and support for teacher research are believed to be the major factors that restrain practicing teachers from carrying out research in their classrooms (Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2013). It has also been found that language teachers’ conceptions of ‘research’ are typically aligned with conventional, scientific notions related to statistics, objectivity, hypotheses, large samples, and variables (Borg, 2013). As a result, teachers feel intimidated and have an unrealistic image about what teacher research entails. Although quality of research should not be compromised when conducted by practicing teachers (Borg, 2013), Kumaravadivelu (2001) contends that “doing teacher research does not necessarily involve highly sophisticated, statistically laden, variable-controlled experimental studies, for which practicing teachers have neither the time nor the energy” (p. 550). Teacher research should be feasible, practical, and beneficial to teachers, their students, and fellow professionals (Borg, 2013).

One of the most well-known types of teacher research for professional development is action research (Burns, 2012). Teachers who engage in action research aim to solve immediate problems raised in their classrooms via a spiral of actions (i.e., developing a research plan, acting according to the plan, observing the effects of the action, and reflecting on outcomes for further cycles) (Burns, 1999, 2005; Edge, 2001). Various benefits of
engaging in action research, such as becoming more self-confident and autonomous in different aspects of their work, have been documented (e.g., Wyatt, 2011). According to Burns (2005), ‘related branches’ of action research are action learning, practitioner research, reflective practice, and exploratory teaching. Along similar lines, and germane to my study, the notion that teachers, as well as their students, should be the key protagonists in their learning and research has given birth to a new type of teacher research: Exploratory Practice (EP) (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). I incorporate an EP component into my study because it is the type of teacher research of, for, and by teachers and learners at the grassroots level. EP has allowed me to conduct research with participants, not on participants, thus enabling the traditional hierarchy to be inverted by putting teachers and students on a higher level than outside researchers. I now outline the concept of Exploratory Practice (EP) in more detail and introduce related literature.

Exploratory Practice (EP)

As described in Chapter 1, Exploratory Practice (EP) is defined broadly as a sustainable way for classroom language teachers and learners to develop their own understanding of life in the language classroom, while engaging in learning and teaching practices (Allwright, 2003, 2005; Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Its predominant aims are for teachers and students to understand their daily teaching and learning as well as to enrich their subsequent classes as a result of better understanding of their daily teaching and learning (Allwright, 2003). The conceptual origin of EP came about when Allwright and Bailey (1991) called for a pressing change to practitioner research. They questioned the scientific and demanding types of teacher research popular at that time and suggested that these traditions led to classroom teachers not conducting research in their classrooms. Allwright and Lenzuen (1997) presented a number of accounts of EP work carried out around the world, in particular at the Cultura Inglesa in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Their work, along with the work of others, has helped to develop a new type of teacher research and showed how language teachers and their students can practically conduct EP studies.

In the realm of EP, learners, teachers, and teacher educators are treated equally and they become co-explorers (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006). Allwright and Hanks (2009) believe that learners are: (a) unique individuals who learn and develop in their own idiosyncratic ways; (b) social beings who learn and develop in a mutually supportive
environment; (c) capable of taking their learning seriously; (d) capable of independent decision-making regarding their learning; and (e) capable of developing as responsible learners. Teachers do not teach in a vacuum in language classrooms; they always teach others and at the same time learn from them in the process. In other words, activities of teaching and learning influence each other and must always be negotiated between teachers and learners (Tarone & Allwright, 2005). When advocating EP ideas, teachers and learners explore their classes together by using normal pedagogic procedures (e.g., daily monitoring, activities, and materials) as their investigative tools (Allwright, 2003, 2005; Allwright & Hanks, 2009). The bottom line is that EP does not attempt to solve problems in order to place ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ labels on classroom activities, but it ventures to understand puzzles so as to allow for greater flexibility in exploring teachers’ and students’ practices. This results in an enriched classroom, in comparison to a changed classroom.

Researchers in various contexts have utilised EP as the theoretical framework for their investigations, and the characteristics and principles of EP have been extensively explored over the years (Allwright, 2003, 2005; Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Gieve & Miller, 2006; Yoshida, Imai, Nakata, Tajino, Takeuchi, & Tamai, 2009). Allwright and Hanks (2009, p. 260) formulated seven principles of EP for inclusive practitioner research as below:

**The ‘what’ issues**

1. Focus on quality of life as the fundamental issue.
2. Work to understand it, before thinking about solving problems.

**The ‘who’ issues**

3. Involve everybody as practitioners developing their own understandings.
4. Work to bring people together in a common enterprise.
5. Work cooperatively for mutual development.

**The ‘how’ issues**

6. Make it a continuous enterprise.
7. Minimise the burden by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice.

The above EP principles have been used also by practitioner-researchers around the world to enrich their classroom practices (see below). Like them, I bore the EP principles in mind during my study. Essentially, the principles are divided into three issues: the ‘what’, the
‘who’, and the ‘how’, and they will be discussed in detail as they became the springboard for designing my study and significantly helped me to understand the participants’ experiences during our EP project.

The ‘what’ issues. Allwright and Hanks (2009) contend that the emphasis on understanding the dynamics of language classrooms, rather than seeking measurable improvement of teaching and learning, is pivotal in order to humanise the experiences of teachers and learners. They also assert that in the process of EP life issues need to come before technical ones. Attempts have been made to achieve these issues. For example, Slimani-Rolls (2003) examined the EP experiences of two of her colleagues and her own to see how much the EP principles facilitate teachers’ understanding of their classes and their involvement in research within the context of French classes at a university in London. Based on data collected from their discussions, she observes that following EP principles enables teachers and their students to be fully engaged with research and understand classroom complexities. Gunn (2003) explored second language communicative competence among international students in Thailand by collecting their oral transactions with a native speaker of English and their reflections on their performances. She showed how successfully she and her students could improve their quality of life in language classrooms and develop greater understanding of their puzzles (i.e., how second language communicative competence can be fostered). She concluded that EP practitioners are making valuable contributions to language classrooms around the world by putting an emphasis on life and understanding. At a vocational institution in Finland, Rose (2007), along with her students and colleagues, explored how ‘relevant’ her English courses were for the lives of her students outside the classroom. By reflecting on their classes with her students and through discussions with her colleagues, she realised not only teachers but also students can be agents in the classroom for shaping their English lessons to serve their own needs. She suggests that teachers need to understand classroom dynamics and engage in continuous dialogues about teaching and learning with their students.

EP has also been carried out from an Eastern perspective (Wu, 2006). Wu paid special attention to both Western and Eastern philosophies and analysed them under the rubric of EP. He presented research outcomes in the form of stories and concluded that EP makes a difference in teachers’ and learners’ understanding and lives in the classroom as well as brings about a harmonious wholeness between research and teaching. Within a university context in Japan, Tajino and Smith (2005) sought a possible application of Soft Systems
Methodology (SSM), a tool used for management studies, to EP studies. It was shown that SSM systems and EP principles have several commonalities (e.g., both consider the larger contexts of the participants’ lives rather than simply attempting to solve specific problems) and that they enhance understanding among teachers and students of what they are actually doing together in the classroom.

Some researchers have centred their interest on ‘puzzles’ when they consider quality of life and understanding of language classroom. In an MATESOL programme in Thailand, Gunn (2010) saw her students’ resistance to reflection as a puzzle following EP spirits. It was made clear that the activity of reflecting is multi-faceted and that the reaction of the students to it was influenced by several (sometimes uncontrollable) factors (e.g., willingness to reflect; a lack of understanding of what reflection is). Lyra, Fish, and Braga (2003) focussed on the key mechanism of teachers’ puzzles in Brazil. By grouping and categorising teachers’ puzzles (e.g., motivation, anxiety, teaching, and institutional lack of interest), they discovered that understanding teachers’ and students’ practices in language classrooms in a holistic manner is a continuous, complex, and necessary process for enriching everybody’s quality of life. In the same vein, Kuschnir and Machado (2003) employed EP principles in two separate university classrooms in Brazil in response to unique puzzles they had in their own classrooms (e.g., Does the dictionary really help our students to understand the text?). Interestingly, they puzzled about the process of puzzle development itself. After they compared their puzzlements, they realised that there exists a ‘puzzlement zone’, with its parallel to Vygotsky’s idea of the ZPD (Wertsch, 1985), where EP practitioners meet, interact, and develop in their pedagogic environments. The comparison of the puzzlement zone and the ZPD, they argue, reinforces the emphasis on understanding and mutual professional development and thus strengthens the conceptual framework of EP. As can be seen, consideration about understanding and quality of life in language classrooms is of great importance when it comes to ‘what’ issues in EP studies, something which became useful vantage points for my study.

The ‘who’ issues. The focus on inclusivity, collegiality, and mutual development for all the people involved helps foster stronger engagement of teachers and learners. It also encourages the notion of a common enterprise (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). I now review several EP studies which give special attention to the ‘who’ issues. Po-ying (2007) in China provided a rare opportunity for her students to become decision-makers with regard to their own learning. She investigated the reactions of her students to the experiences through
student journals, worksheets, and course feedback. Her discussions, drawn from the data, point to: (a) the importance of seeking understanding of teaching and learning practices, as opposed to finding solutions to problems; and (b) the advantage of emphasising students’ strengths, as opposed to their weaknesses. Similarly, Zhang (2004), together with her students in China, integrated an EP project into their daily English lessons, attaching great significance to inclusivity and collegiality. Specifically, Zhang attempted to understand how to guide group work in an extensive reading class. She maintains that only by continuous exploration as well as successful cooperation between teachers and students can we navigate the complexities of the language classroom. In order to shed light on the process and outcome of written feedback dialogue in which teachers and students engaged, Perpignan (2003) conducted an EP study, using self-reports, questionnaire activities, and semi-structured interviews in a writing course in Israel. The participants recognised that EP was a valuable framework in facilitating mutual development of teachers and students in general and understanding their dialogical experiences of writing and receiving feedback in particular. In Singapore’s bilingual primary schools, Silver (2008) embarked upon an EP project in tandem with several pre-service student teachers in an attempt to explore the role of language in content teaching and understand both her students’ and her own development. She collected data, consisting of the participants’ discussions and essays, and came to realise that it is essential for her as a teacher-trainer to adopt a more collegial attitude in her relationships with her students and understand their thinking rather than imposing her own.

In the context of a Japanese conversational class in China, Okamoto (2008) and her team-teaching partner incorporated essences of EP. At the end of their five-week EP project, Okamoto realised that both she and her teaching partner benefitted from their improved professional collegiality and friendly relationship. More recently, Zheng (2012) sought learning possibilities in an English classroom at a college in China with reference to some characteristics of EP. With classroom observations, discussions, interviews, and drafts of student writing, Zheng investigated student learning processes of peer feedback activity and observed that there were broadly five cooperative patterns of feedback within the group of learners, namely, collaborative, expert-novice, dominant-dominant, dominant-passive, and passive-passive. Zheng contends that any type of learning patterns could become viable learning opportunities for students as long as students are the key practitioners of learning and there exists close collegiality between the classroom teacher and students. It is clear that
EP practitioners, like me, need to involve everybody, bring people together, and cooperate for mutual development in their study.

The ‘how’ issues. The two principles related to the ‘how’ issues are: (a) making EP a continuous enterprise, and (b) minimising the burden of teachers and students. Integrating EP activities into normal curriculum and pedagogic practice offers the best hope of maintaining control of the workload of the participants and sustaining EP engagement (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Several empirical examples of the ‘how’ issues can now be found. In a university course in Australia, Rowland (2011) used some language learning research literature as a valuable resource for his EP project and provided his students with opportunities to compare the literature with their own language learning experiences during his usual classes. He found that the EP experience shared by him and his students aided them to: (a) recognise the value of class reflection and student empowerment; (b) develop the personal knowledge of the students; (c) understand students as individuals; and (d) appreciate the intersection of learning and life. He concluded that the EP project included in the normal curriculum allowed him to view his students as reflective, critical language experts in their own right. With a plea for ‘balanced research’, where researchers move back and forth between pre-designed and adapted plans in the course of research, Li (2006) gathered data following the EP principles through questionnaires and student feedback from her class at a university in China. Li argues that teacher researchers need to keep in mind their overall research aims and plans; at the same time, she recommends they leave open space for improvisation in order for the research to be sustainable and feasible. Based on her EP experience, she felt that the education field would hugely benefit if more researchers regularly carry out EP activities in their own ‘authentic’ classrooms. In Bartu’s (2003) study, a group of English teachers from various institutions in Istanbul participated in an EP project. The ways in which they made decisions in meetings based on their EP experiences were investigated through discourse analysis. The selected data, consisting of six audiotaped group meetings, showed that the participants did not always fulfil the purposes of the EP project and lacked continuity of engagement partly due to different attitudes and expectations among the participants and the lack of a systematic reflection component. Considering the sustainability of EP by integrating activities into normal pedagogic practice is of paramount significance when conducting an EP project, something I took extra care to do during my study.

As can be seen, there have been numerous studies which have incorporated several EP principles into their language classrooms. They have had substantial impact on the lives of
language teachers and learners. A number of EP practitioners continue to conceptualise EP ideas and apply them to the daily classrooms in useful ways, most notably in Brazil (see Exploratory Practice Centre, 2008). According to Miller (2009), EP colleagues in Brazil have completed their MA or PhD studies by employing EP principles in day-to-day classroom practices. Miller also states that EP has been integrated into professional discourses beyond the field of language teaching and learning; for example, it has been used for teacher consulting, humanist movement orientation, and language institute academic supervision.

I have so far listed relevant EP studies from diverse geographical contexts that have employed various data collection methods and have demonstrated varying levels of engagement in EP beliefs and principles. Quite a few EP practitioners have found that students can indeed be responsible for their own learning by deeply understanding their practices in the classroom through reflective activities. It was also revealed that collegial relationships between teachers and students are needed for enriching quality of life in language classrooms and conducting meaningful EP projects. What deserves attention from the list of EP studies are: (a) the relative lack of exploration in institutions outside of university; (b) the use of similar data collection methods (i.e., individual interviews, classroom monitoring, and students’ work) rather than detailed classroom observations (i.e., with support of video tapes) or face-to-face discussions among teachers and among students; (c) a very limited number of studies in the context of Japan; and (d) the relative lack of negotiation and collaboration among multiple participants in the same school or from different schools (and outsiders) in the process of EP. I took these into consideration when designing my study in the hope that I can make a contribution to the EP literature.

All three areas presented above (i.e., N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research) are interrelated in the field of SLTE. Attending to these areas and the experiences of participants in their particular contexts is the heart of my research. In light of the literature review above, I now address my guiding research questions.

**Research Questions**

I ask the first two questions to inquire into the particular perceptions of participating teachers and students:
1. What perceptions do participating Japanese teachers of English (JTEs), assistant language teachers (ALTs), and students have of JTEs and ALTs in team-teaching contexts?

2. What perceptions do participating JTEs, ALTs, and students have of teaching practices in team-teaching contexts?

I ask the third and fourth questions, which are process-oriented, in order to explore the participants’ particular experiences over time in relation to Exploratory Practice:

3. What effects does an Exploratory Practice (EP) experience have on the teachers’ and students’ perceptions in team-teaching contexts over time?

4. What effects does an EP experience have on the teachers’ and students’ practices in team-teaching contexts over time?

I ask the fifth question to examine the contribution my study makes to the theoretical and practical understanding of Exploratory Practice:

5. In what ways do the findings of my study make a contribution to our understanding of Exploratory Practice (EP)?

**Conclusion**

I presented in this chapter relevant literature in the areas of N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research within the broader field of SLTE. The areas were viewed through a sociocultural lens. I considered the nature of N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research in light of anecdotal, theoretical, and empirical literature, separately and comparatively. Highlighted were various benefits and challenges in each area. I recognised in particular that: (a) the field of N/NESTs should include more qualitative studies in EFL countries, (b) examples of professional development on a local level for team teachers (NESTs and NNESTs) in Japan would prove useful; and (c) EP research in different institutions outside of university in the context of Japan is necessary. As a result, I decided to integrate the three areas in a holistic way, employ various data collection methods (e.g., interviews, class observations with a video camera, and discussions among teachers as well as among students), and have prolonged and close contact with participants in Japan. I concluded this chapter by introducing five research questions. In the following chapter, I discuss in detail data-collection methods and data-analysis procedures that I adopted in this research.
I open this chapter with a discussion of the research approach I have used in this study. The approach follows a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, particularly qualitative and case study research. After providing the theoretical underpinning for the approach implemented in this research, I continue with: (a) a description of the ways in which I selected the participants and secured their participation in compliance with the ethical requirements of my institution, (b) my positionality as a researcher-learner, (c) information about the participants, and (d) a description of the research contexts. Subsequently, I present the methods used and procedures followed to collect data. I then describe how these data were treated, analysed, and interpreted. To conclude the chapter, I discuss criteria for enriching the trustworthiness of this research.

**Research Approach**

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), research is not only for scholars in the academic world; we are all involved in research in our daily lives. Put in the simplest terms, research is a way of finding out answers to questions (Mackey & Gass, 2005). However, designing and preparing a rigorous research study and choosing and executing a proper method of investigation in the applied linguistics field can be a difficult task. Research does not happen in a vacuum, and researchers need to carefully match the methods they employ with their research questions in order to pursue appropriate data (Mackey & Gass, 2012). I intend to elucidate the nature and attributes of the individual participant’s perceptions and practices over time, as opposed to gathering data that would be measured or counted as hard scientific evidence through controlled experimentation (Dörnyei, 2007; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). To that end, I have chosen a qualitative case study approach situated primarily within a constructivist-interpretive paradigm. What follows is a discussion of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, the characteristics of qualitative research, and a rationale for the use of case study.
Constructivist-Interpretive Paradigm

Throughout all stages of a research project, the research paradigm – “a basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17) – can serve as a point of direction and a landmark for researchers. Once it is made apparent, the paradigm can also serve as a signpost for readers to determine how they should interpret and make sense of the research in front of them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It is thus of paramount value for researchers to construct and recognise the research paradigm and make it as transparent as possible (Creswell, 2007). In order to meet this purpose, I will describe the research paradigm below, especially focussing on the constructivist-interpretive paradigm that forms the core theoretical approach to my study.

Although each paradigm has alternative names that are used by other authors in this “terminologically fluid field” (Richards, 2003, p. 37), Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that qualitative research at present generally consists of four major paradigms: (post-)positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical (Marxist, emancipatory), and feminist-poststructural. Each paradigm hinges on three interconnected constructs: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Researchers ask questions such as: “What kind of being is the human being? What is the nature of reality?” (ontology), “What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? (epistemology), and “How do we know the world or gain knowledge of it?” (methodology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 12). Influenced by the traditions in the physical and social sciences, the (post-)positivist paradigm had historically prevailed in the field of applied linguistics, and those who work within this paradigm view the world within a realist ontology and objective epistemology. In other words, they tend to collect data through experimental and quasi-experimental methodologies. The constructivist-interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, holds: (a) a relativist ontology, i.e., proposes multiple realities, (b) a subject epistemology, i.e., provides for knower and respondent to co-construct experience, and (c) a naturalistic set of methodologies, i.e., relies on natural ways of finding and knowing. The critical paradigm looks in depth at power, race, class, and gender issues and treats the findings of research as value-determined rather than as true, or probably true. It privileges subjectivist epistemologies and applies naturalistic methodologies (usually ethnographies). It often leads to emancipatory results and implications. Lastly, researchers who advocate feminist-poststructuralism, mindful of the experiences of oppressed people, are likely to explore problems through a social lens, attempting to deconstruct a social world
logic, and bring people to critique a social text’s inability to represent the world of lived experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The underlying theoretical perspective employed in my study is the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. In the milieu of this paradigm, no reality, ontologically speaking, can be generated by itself, and all realities show different faces at different times even within the same person, phenomenon, or environment. Researchers working within this paradigm have attempted to represent and explain the complex experiences of other people through the lenses of these people (Creswell, 2007; Schwandt, 1994). In terms of epistemology, constructivist-interpretive researchers believe that participants and researchers create and co-construct realities, rather than discover them. Two (or more) people are ‘actively’ involved – consciously or unconsciously – in the process of generating, interpreting, and understanding data, and their interactions lead to the co-creation of collaborative experiences (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Methodologically, researchers in the constructivist-interpretive paradigm keep an eye on the complexity of views in the natural world when entering a research site. In other words, researchers are immersed in research sites interpreting and reinterpreting meanings that participants have about the world in natural settings (Creswell, 2007). Guided by the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, I have, during the course of this study, viewed any reality occurring around me as multi-layered and complex (e.g., my participants and I tried not to find absolute answers but to constantly look for alternative interpretations for data). I have also adopted a transactional epistemology and realised that my participants and I often generated co-created findings (e.g., I asked questions in interviews in relation to what my participants told me). Finally, I have adopted a naturalist methodology and sought a complexity of views in the natural world, rather than in controlled environments (e.g., I have observed the classes of my participants without changes of the curriculum or the class schedule). These conceptual stances in light of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm have enabled me to navigate my study and aided my understanding of the experiences of the participants in a holistic, ethical, and dynamic sense.

Qualitative Research

The term qualitative research was first used in the social sciences in the 1960s (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Since then, qualitative research and quantitative research have been compared, contrasted, and juxtaposed in basic disciplines as well as in applied fields,
including the field of applied linguistics. Generally speaking, qualitative researchers emphasise “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10), while their quantitative counterparts stress “the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). Debates concerning which approach to choose for a research project continue. However, Brown and Rodgers (2002), for example, deny a clear-cut dichotomy of these research types and view them as a matter of degree or falling along a continuum (see also Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Along the continuum, qualitative research always means different things to different researchers at different times. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that the field of qualitative research “crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matter” and is surrounded by a “complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions” (p. 3). As Denzin (1997) puts it: “we are in a moment of discovery and rediscovery as new ways of looking, interpreting, arguing, and writing are debated and discussed” (p. 19). It therefore comes as no surprise to know that there is no single definition available to explain the multi-dimensional nature of qualitative research.

Nonetheless, there are certain recurring characteristics of qualitative research to which researchers can refer. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) discuss the following five broad points, which I relate to my study.

- **Naturalistic**: Qualitative research considers actual settings and particular contexts as the direct and important source of data. In my study, I spent more than four months in the research sites with the participants both inside and outside the school, thereby allowing myself to directly observe and interact with the participants (Creswell, 2009). The prolonged contact with the participants in natural settings helped me reach a “comprehensive, valid explanation of the participants’ social meanings” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 256) and reinforce the understanding of the cultural and social standards by which the participants operate within their contexts.

- **Descriptive data**: Qualitative research is mostly descriptive and the data collected take the form of words, pictures, and/or videotapes. Qualitative researchers try to interpret and present the data with all of their richness as closely as possible to the form they collected. My data ranges from recorded interviews to various types of texts, images, and videos to capture complex details, thus achieving thick description
(Geertz, 1973). Thick description “is an effort aimed at interpretation, at getting below the surface to that most enigmatic aspect of the human condition: the construction of meaning” (Eisner, 1998, p. 15). It enables researchers to look into “the complexities and conundrums of the immensely complicated social world” (Richards, 2003, p. 8). I have sought to describe the details of the participants as well as the contexts of the research sites and present a description of the data as fully as possible.

- **Concern with Process:** Qualitative researchers are concerned with processes rather than products. Focussing on processes has been particularly beneficial in educational research in clarifying teachers’ and students’ daily activities. I concur with this emphasis on processes. In my study, I have attempted to interpret to what extent, how, and why the participants came to understand their experiences, accounted for their practices, and took action in their settings in the way they did (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I offered detailed descriptions of the data collection procedures to highlight the process of this study.

- **Inductive:** Analysing qualitative data tends to be inductive rather than deductive. Qualitative researchers do not attempt to confirm (or disconfirm) hypotheses they predicted before they set out their study. Although I had tentative research questions and goals at the initial stage, my research process was primarily inductive, interpretive, and iterative. I was prepared, to a degree, to adjust the focus of the study in order for the participants and the data to direct the research. Both my positionality, vis-à-vis participants’ positionalities, and our subjective interpretations of the phenomenon, which I could not foresee before collecting data, consistently influenced the data and data analysis.

- **Meaning:** A qualitative approach deals with how different people make sense of their lives. It focusses on their ‘meaning’ or their ‘perspectives’ of particular phenomena. Some researchers go back to their participants with videotapes, audiotapes, and/or drafts in order to capture the participants’ meaning-making more accurately. In relation to my study, I have aimed to discover the participants’ meaningful experiences as richly as possible in the specific settings of their everyday goings-on from their individual points of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). The focus of qualitative research in general, and mine in particular, has been “on the construction or co-construction of meaning within a particular social setting”
(Davis, 1995, pp. 433-434). I therefore checked the collected data with my participants in order to understand our meaning-making experiences together. These recurring characteristics of qualitative research have been particularly valuable for guiding several aspects of the research processes in my study.

**Case Study**

In spite of the fact that case study can include quantitative analyses and historical data (Merriam, 2009), in my research it is presented as a particular exemplar of qualitative research. Like any qualitative study, case study means different things to different researchers and different disciplines (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2000; Swanborn, 2010).

Yin (2008) defines case study, focusing on the whole process of inquiry, as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 18). Likewise, the definition, highlighting a type of case itself, can be understood as follows: “Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Drawing upon many examples of qualitative case study research in the education field, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) define case study as the in-depth study that attempts to reflect the perspective of the participants involved in one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context. Looking at the above definitions, at least one underlying similarity is apparent. As Duff (2008) notes: “most definitions of case study highlight the ‘bounded,’ singular nature of the case, the importance of context, the availability of multiple sources of information or perspectives on observations, and the in-depth nature of analysis” (p. 22). Similarly, for Flyvbjerg (2011), the crucial elements of case study is the selection of the individual unit of study and the setting of its boundaries. Taken together, as long as a case or cases being studied can be bounded by a certain period of time and place within a certain context, the study is likely to be referred to as a case study.

Based on these ideas, my study can be viewed as a multiple-case study of teachers and students in EFL team-taught classes in Japan. There are three different levels of cases for teacher participants and two different levels of cases for student participants within a total involvement time of four months. The first level concerns four individual teachers and four individual students (eight different cases). The second level involves two different contexts...
for teacher and student participants, i.e., two public high schools in Japan (two different cases). Lastly, the third level looks at two different types of teachers, i.e., JTEs and ALTs (two different cases) (see Figure 3.1 later in this chapter). Gall et al. (2007) posit that case study is probably the most widely used approach in qualitative research and that it can be used to investigate a wide range of topics and phenomena. In the field of education, it has been suggested that qualitative case study is a particularly useful and appropriate strategy in the exploration of educational practices (Simons, 2009). Research relating to language teacher education has also effectively used a case study approach (e.g., Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001). Since the aim of my study is to describe particular aspects of teacher and student perspectives of their practices as well as their development over time as fully and incisively as possible, I believe a case study approach is appropriate.

Data Collection

I now shift my attention to data collection, tracing the paths of how participants were chosen and how data were collected. I, however, begin the following sections first by describing who I am as a researcher-learner in my chosen research field, as my particular status, background, and experiences very much affected the selection of participants and the collection of data.

Myself as Researcher-Learner in Situ

I was born and grew up in a northern rural prefecture in Japan. At the age of 12, I started learning English as a foreign language in formal classes in junior high school. I was taught English by team teachers (i.e., JTEs and ALTs) during my junior high school and high school years, at most once a week, and by JTEs alone for the remaining three to four English classes a week. I moved from my home prefecture to a different one to enter a university when I was 18. I majored in English language teaching and spent four years there. Upon graduating from the university, I returned to my prefecture and commenced working as a full-time JTE at a high school. I had worked with more than a couple of dozen JTEs and five different ALTs (sometimes as their supervisor) in two different high schools over the course of 10 years. At the same time, I also became acquainted with a number of JTEs and ALTs outside the schools on a personal level. In the eighth year of teaching, I was chosen by the
local board of education and sent as the first in-service teacher to take courses in a Master’s programme at a university in the prefecture. Subsequently, I received a Master’s degree in English language teaching from the university and, immediately afterward, came to New Zealand to start my PhD. I was 34 years old at the time of data collection for this study.

The geographical area was therefore doubtlessly of great personal importance to me, and I held a strong desire to enrich the English teaching and learning situation in the area. Furthermore, I possessed a solid social, cultural, and historical awareness of local English language teaching and learning as well as the educational policies and practices of public high schools in the area. I envisaged that such knowledge would be an asset as a researcher to understand the contextual background of the participants in my study.

Besides my background and past experiences in the area (i.e., a former high school student and a former JTE), the status and position I had at the time (i.e., a PhD student in New Zealand) became the second crucial point in determining my own prefecture as my research sites. Since my focus of interest was to understand the experiences of teachers and students over time in Japan, I needed to go back to Japan for a considerable length of time. I envisaged that my close involvement and familiarity with the prefecture would enable me to locate myself and travel to the research sites easily and within my budget. Lastly, as I mentioned above, since I had worked and interacted with numerous JTEs and ALTs from the prefecture and I still had contact information for some of them at the time of seeking participants, I decided to exploit these advantages when choosing the participants. The decision-making was accelerated because of my own research experiences in Japan (e.g., Hiratsuka & Malcolm, 2011) as well as other relevant studies to date (e.g., Miyazato, 2006). That is, I was convinced that if the participants and I were strangers to each other, it would be difficult to recruit participants for this kind of intensive study that involves daily classroom observations in public schools.

Accordingly, I endeavoured to find participants from my home territory. I was, however, aware of two caveats. One was affiliated with an insider (or ‘emic’) point of view. Members of the community under study have an ‘emic’ point of view, whereas outsiders (e.g., observers and researchers) who come from a different community have an ‘etic’ point of view (see Anderson-Levitt, 2006). As a past insider of the community under study, I knew I might take for granted the lives of the participants and various aspects of the prefecture, preventing me from detecting the unusual nature of them. Therefore, I attempted, as many
ethnographers do, to make the familiar strange and find the participants’ perspectives (Erickson, 1984; Hammond & Spindler, 2006). The other caveat had to do with the fact that I was a different person in the same body when I re-entered the familiar territory. My different role, presentation, knowledge, and identity did not allow me to regard the context to be the same as it had been before I left. People who already knew me in the sites might have had mixed feelings when they faced me, someone who had become a PhD student in an English speaking country (e.g., feelings related to friendliness, respect, jealousy, and intimidation). Angrosino and Mays de Pe´rez’s (2003) experiences are telling in relation to my study: “The interviews, however, began awkwardly, as many of the participants seemed annoyed at being questioned by someone they assumed already knew the answers … the interviewer was already assumed to be in the know” (p. 684). I therefore interacted with participants with care and sensitivity in order to avoid (or at least mitigate against) difficulties. I emphasised in the process of interviewing that I was only interested in participants’ answers and I encouraged them to speak freely, irrespective of what I knew or thought (see Appendix A).

Decisions and interactions in the research sites formed and reformed the direction and scope of my research. I concur with Holliday and Aboshiha’s (2009) statement that researchers “need to engage with subjectivity. It is asserted that researchers cannot help but interact with the social worlds they study, and that they bring their own ideologies to this interaction” (p. 673). I was once again in the prefecture, this time as a researcher. I was a novice researcher, making new discoveries and experiencing an exciting exploration together with the participants. I was, in that sense, a researcher-learner who was willing to absorb whatever could be learned from the journey. I now address how the co-explorers were selected and their participation was secured.

Selecting Participants and Securing their Participation

I gained approval for this study from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) (see Appendix B). The committee was content with the stated purpose and procedure of the study. In other words, I had identified ethical issues that could arise from the project and explained how they could be resolved. With respect to anonymity, for example, I promised to ensure that, by using pseudonyms, neither the participants nor the schools would be identified in any output from the study and that no identifying information would be revealed about a particular participant.
Subsequently, I started contacting prospective participants with the intention of recruiting two pairs of team teachers (each pair consisting of a JTE and an ALT) from two different public high schools as well as their students from two classes. I decided to begin my search for participants with full-time public high school JTEs. The rationale behind this decision was four-fold. First, full-time JTEs more regularly have team-taught classes (mostly more than once a week) than part-time JTEs. Second, the JTEs who work in public schools could reflect common practice throughout Japan, more so than in private schools or private English conversation schools, when it comes to language team-taught classes. Third, I chose high school contexts over others in the hope that my familiarity and knowledge at the high school level in the prefecture would contribute to the study in a more meaningful way. Last but not least, JTEs, being full-time teaching staff members, are the people who usually have control over team-taught class schedules and decision-making, which means they are in a position to obtain a positive decision from the school principal. I thus started making phone calls to JTEs whom I believed were interested in this sort of inquiry on the basis of their frequent and active participation in professional training sessions, their regular demonstration of open classes for other teachers, and their high English proficiency. To avoid possible ethical issues, however, I did not seek any teacher participant with whom I had already taught and I did not contact schools where I had previously worked. It is also noteworthy that teachers, not I, determined which classroom (and thus which students) to participate in this study. In this way (i.e., regarding locations, team-teaching schedules, participants’ characteristics, and participants’ choices), the selection of the sampling for my study was purposive (i.e., subjects are selected because of specific characteristics) (Patton, 2002; Simons, 2009).

Upon initially contacting JTEs, I quickly found out how difficult it was to recruit teachers. As I outlined my research and invited their participation, some complained about how tough the job at hand for them was. Others did not conceal their envy of my being a student, not a teacher, and they emphasised their overwhelming workload and stressful circumstances. In the end, they answered in chorus: “I am interested, but…” After having communicated with more than 10 JTEs and been rejected by all of them, I decided that I would stop inviting potential participants as soon as I had positive responses from two. I believed that those who would respond positively must be extraordinarily committed and willing to invest a tremendous amount of time to participate. As a result, I inferred it would be socially, morally, and ethically wrong for me to conveniently ‘choose’ the participants.
from those who showed interest. Also, culturally speaking, I believed that once a JTE provided a positive response (albeit informally), he or she would keep his or her word throughout the project (as indeed was the case). Negotiating permission and consent was complicated, and I attempted to be persistent, flexible, and creative (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), whilst trying and hoping that I was treating prospective participants respectfully and appropriately.

The first JTE who showed interest in my research said she was eager to join the study but relayed her principal’s concern to me: “What will we get out of this?” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 88). In responding to this concern, I sent the teacher an email, enclosing four types of Participant Information Sheets (PISs) in both Japanese and English for the principal, teachers, students, and each student’s parents at her school. The PISs contained information about myself as a researcher, the research design and schedule, and what the participation in the study would involve. In the mail, I further explained my study, noting my belief about the relationship of the research goal to English language teaching and learning from the national, prefectural, and local high school’s perspectives in Japan. Subsequently, the participation of her school was confirmed by the principal and the ALT. The JTE and I had exchanged several emails before my first visit to her school in order to design a detailed research schedule, find out the teachers’ schedules, choose the class to investigate, and clarify what the research would mean to all the people concerned.

The other JTE who became a participant in my research was seemingly sceptical about my study and hesitant about being a participant when I first contacted her. Later on, however, she showed her willingness to join the research after she had consulted and gained permission from her principal. As I did for the first participating JTE, I sent her the relevant PISs, and the participation of the JTE and her ALT was later confirmed. I had exchanged emails with the JTE as well as with her ALT before the first visit to their school. Through the email exchanges, we mainly discussed the research design, the participants’ schedules, and what the research would entail.

A meeting was held at one school in the principal’s office with the JTE and the ALT on December 6, 2011. At the other school, a meeting was held in the principal’s office in the presence of the JTE and a vice-principal on December 12, 2011. In congruence with the UAHPEC requirement, I once more explained the study in detail together with the PISs, emphasising the voluntary nature of participation. Afterward, I asked them to sign the
Consent Forms (CFs) for the research. All the principals and teacher participants in the meetings signed and returned the CFs to me at that time – one ALT who did not join the meeting signed and returned the CF at the time of his first interview. For securing students’ participation, I requested the JTEs to carefully explain in Japanese to their students the purpose of the research as well as the extent of their participation. I also requested them to underline that the students’ participation was strictly on a voluntary basis. Both JTEs followed my requests and explained the research to the students in their English classes. The students were given PISs and CFs for them and for their parents to sign. All the CFs of the students and their parents were successfully collected by the end of the month. In order to secure anonymity, the teachers and four focal students chose their pseudonyms, and I selected their school, class, and research site names. I now introduce the participants and research sites.

The Participants

The participants in this study were: (a) two pairs of team teachers (each pair consisting of a JTE and an ALT) from two different public high schools; and (b) 76 second-year high school students from the two classes (four focal students) that each pair was teaching at that time. Aitani (JTE) and Matt (ALT) worked together as a pair at Sakura High School. Takahashi (JTE) and Sam (ALT) were team teaching at Tsubaki High School. Background information on teachers is presented in Table 3.1.

Both Aitani and Takahashi had considerable teaching experience, and both Matt and Sam arrived in Japan through the JET programme in the summer of 2011. Aitani had taught at four schools with 13 different ALTs over the course of her teaching career. Matt was teaching at eight different schools and working with 17 different JTEs. Takahashi had worked at four different schools with 10 different ALTs, and Sam was working at three different schools with 13 different JTEs. The number of teaching classes per week, types of subjects, responsibilities, and duties as a teacher at each school varied significantly according to the individual teacher (see Table 3.2).
### Table 3.1: Background information on teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Sakura</th>
<th>Tsubaki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Aitani</td>
<td>Matt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of school</td>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>Husband and 2 children</td>
<td>Japanese wife and 1 child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received degree</td>
<td>Master (English language teaching)</td>
<td>Bachelor (Visual arts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas experiences</td>
<td>Travelled to UK</td>
<td>Travelled to NZ, Asia, and Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language proficiency</td>
<td>Advanced (English)</td>
<td>Intermediate (Japanese)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.2: Teaching-related information on teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Aitani</th>
<th>Matt</th>
<th>Takahashi</th>
<th>Sam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total years of teaching</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years at the current school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of experienced schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 (1 high school, 3 junior high, and 4 elementary)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 (3 high schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting days</td>
<td>Monday and Tuesday</td>
<td>Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of team-teaching partners</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17 (4 Sakura)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13 (7 Tsubaki)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teaching classes per week and types of subjects</td>
<td>13 -English Conversation -English II -Practical English</td>
<td>6 to 8 (Sakura) -English Conversation 6 to 8 (junior high) 1 to 4 (elementary)</td>
<td>16 -English Expression -Oral Communication -Understanding Different Cultures</td>
<td>10 (Tsubaki) -Current English, -Computer LL -English Expression -Oral Communication -Understanding Different Cultures 6 (other schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment of school management duties</td>
<td>-Head of academic counselling -Drama club</td>
<td>-None</td>
<td>-Head of second grade teachers</td>
<td>-English club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each JTE chose a class on which to focus for the study (i.e., 2A in Sakura and 2B in Tsubaki). While 2A was a general course where the students took three English classes a week, 2B was an international course where the students had six English classes a week. In Sakura, it was arranged by Aitani particularly for this research that Matt went to 2A to team teach when I visited the school (about once a month). In Tsubaki, Sam team taught English in 2B with Takahashi once a week. I observed three team-taught English classes for each pair, and I conducted reflective classes three times in both classes (see “Phase 2: An Exploratory Practice experience” later in this chapter). After the participating classes were selected, I asked the JTEs to choose two focal students from each class according to the following process. The first step in choosing the focal students was to randomly list the students from the class who were not busily engaged with club activities after school hours. They would possibly have more time to participate in the required research activities (individual interviews and a pair discussion). The second step was for the JTEs to divide the list into a male list and a female list. For the final step, I asked the JTEs to choose the third student from the top of each list (i.e., one male and one female) from each class – four in total. As a result, among the 40 students at Sakura, Kanon and Tatsuya were chosen as focal students by Aitani. Similarly, Takahashi chose Sayaka and Yousuke among the 36 students at Tsubaki (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Information on classrooms and focal students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sakura</th>
<th></th>
<th>Tsubaki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td></td>
<td>2A</td>
<td></td>
<td>2B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching subject</td>
<td></td>
<td>English II</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal students</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kanon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tatsuya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soccer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Research Sites

As I explained previously, the research sites I explored were located within a northern rural prefecture in Japan. The population of the prefecture at the time of the study was around 1,000,000, about 0.3% of whom were foreign residents. It was thus a rare opportunity for Japanese people residing in the area to encounter English speaking people on a daily basis, let
alone interact with them. The chances to communicate with English speaking people were almost strictly limited to English lessons at schools. Hence, the research sites represented ‘typical’ EFL contexts in Japan in which the English language is not used as a daily means of communication. For that reason, the schools in this area are ideal research sites in which to observe the extent of grassroots internationalisation and the ways of its actualisation, which is one of the main objectives of the JET programme (CLAIR, 2012).

As illustrated in Chapter 1, the Japanese government made some drastic changes which directly affected the research sites (e.g., the inception of the JET programme and the promotion of English-only classes at public high schools). As of 2011, there were about 60 high schools in the prefecture, each of which had 2 to 10 full-time/part-time JTEs and one ALT. Every full-time JTE taught in one high school; in contrast, most ALTs visited more than one high school (also sometimes junior high schools or elementary schools, as in the case of Matt), although each had a so-called ‘base school’ to which ALTs officially belong as a member of the teaching staff. Every ALT had a JTE who supervised him or her, and ALTs participated in most of the events of their base school, such as the school festival and graduation ceremony. ALTs in the prefecture visited some schools regularly (e.g., from Monday to Thursday) and other schools irregularly (e.g., once every two weeks).

Methods and Procedures

During the data collection period, the level of my mobility and the attitudes of the participating teachers at each school were quite contrasting. That is to say, I was almost forced to stay in a counselling room by myself at Sakura and was asked by the vice-principal to wear a name tag which said ‘visitor’ with a number on it. This was probably partly because there had been tragic incidents where intruders had entered schools and hurt students in Japan. However, both Aitani and Matt dropped by the counselling room quite a few times to have casual chats or eat meals with me and always stayed around for further conversation after their interviews or pair discussions. On the contrary, at Tsubaki, I could freely walk around and interact with teachers as well as students inside the school and was provided a desk next to Sam in a teachers’ room. This was probably in part because I used to work with the vice-principal of Tsubaki and we knew each other well. However, unlike team teachers in Sakura, neither Takahashi nor Sam sought interaction with me other than the fixed time for interviews
and pair discussions. These experiences affected the way in which I collected data, the content of the data, and my diversified experiences in each school.

The duration of the data collection was from December 2011 to March 2012, consisting of three phases – Phase 1, prior to an Exploratory Practice experience; Phase 2, an Exploratory Practice experience; and Phase 3, after an Exploratory Practice experience. During Phase 2, the cycle of data collection, using multiple methods, was repeated three times, i.e., cycle 1 (C1), cycle 2 (C2), and cycle 3 (C3). At the end of each cycle, the data were shared, and the teachers reflected on what they had done so that the results of each cycle could shed light on their practices for the next cycle. This iterative process became an advantage because participants’ experiences were contrasted and compared over time, as opposed to an ad hoc or a one-shot event. In addition, collecting data from two different high schools was particularly informative because it allowed the findings and outcomes to be cross-referenced across numerous activities (van Lier, 2005). Multiple types of data collection methods, as indicated in Table 3.4, were chosen to achieve the aims of the study. I will chronologically describe below the data-collection schedule (see Appendix C), how each method was carried out, and what the rationale for choosing each method was.

**Phase 1: Prior to an Exploratory Practice experience.**

*Narrative interview 1 (NI1).* Interviews can probe participants’ perceptions and experiences which are normally invisible to others. Referring to qualitative research in education, Seidman (2006) maintains that interviewing may be the best avenue of inquiry if the research aim is to inquire into how teachers or students perceive their lives in the classroom. Although there is no interview approach that can fit all situations, Simons (2009) suggests researchers employ two strategies when facing their interviewees. Firstly, interviewers should establish and maintain rapport with participants in order to elicit rich data. It is apparent that an interview is not one-way communication: “the researcher does not find narratives but instead participates in their creation” (Riessman, 2008, p. 22). In attempting to make participants feel comfortable and open in communicating their stories, I let them choose the place and time to be interviewed. Secondly, Simons recommends that interviewers listen to their interviewees with attentive insight and a curious mind so that they can carefully capture the meaning of what is being conveyed. In this regard, I showed how much I wanted to absorb every single word by displaying encouraging body gestures (e.g., nodding and eye contact) and using back-channelling (e.g., “uh-huh” and “OK”). Furthermore, I endured
Table 3.4: Methods and procedures of data collection

- **Phase 1: Prior to an Exploratory Practice experience**
  
  *Narrative interview 1*

- **Phase 2: An Exploratory Practice experience (Three Cycles)**
  
  *Each cycle (repeated three times)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Classroom observation (of the pair teaching together) ↓</th>
<th>Teacher pair discussion 1 ↓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Reflective class (for students): Video clip observation ↓</td>
<td>Student feedback sheets ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Focus group discussion ↓</td>
<td>Teacher pair discussion 2 ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher EP story (final EP stories were collected after Narrative interview 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Phase 3: After an Exploratory Practice experience**
  
  *Narrative interview 2*

Silence while the participants were organising their thoughts. I hoped that these strategies would help me to accomplish a co-constructed, open-ended exploration. For example, the extract from narrative interview 1 with Sayaka below illustrates the effectiveness of my patience and encouragement (the format of the transcripts will be explained later in this chapter).

  Hiratsuka: Anything else?
  
  Sayaka: The students.
Hiratsuka: The students?

Sayaka: I think the students in the classroom don’t try to use English so much.

Hiratsuka: In what occasion?

Sayaka: When talking to the ALT, students get shy and do not use English, which happens a lot, I think.

Hiratsuka: I see, so you don’t feel like you are using English much even when the ALT comes to the class?

Sayaka: Well ... if a student is proactive and confident, the student would probably go up and talk to the ALT. But I don’t have confidence, and when you don’t have confidence in speaking, you don’t seek for opportunities to talk. And the chances to speak English are limited in the first place here. So if you want to speak to the ALT, I guess what’s important is the amount of confidence. (NI1, S, p. 9)

In this extract, I first encouraged Sayaka to talk about further ideas by asking: “Anything else?” I patiently waited 11 seconds rather than ask another question or make comments. After Sayaka responded with two words: “The students”, I simply repeated those words for her to continue. She followed this with a full sentence, and I further encouraged her to contextualise her comments by asking her: “In what occasion?” Later, I accepted her contribution (“I see”) and paraphrased her response, prompting her to keep talking. She consequently produced a much longer response. The strategies (i.e., patience and encouragement) seemed to generate opportunities for Sayaka to effectively express her feelings and ideas.

I specifically chose narrative interviews as one of the data collection methods for two reasons. Firstly, it is believed that narrative interviews allow participants to take responsibility for the import of the talk and generate detailed accounts, as opposed to suppressing participants’ responses and being limited to the concepts researchers have planned in advance, such as in structured interviews (Chase, 2005). Narrative interviews enable interviewees to freely transcend their present temporal and geographical situations (Riessman, 2008). Secondly, to the best of my knowledge, no research heretofore has employed narrative interviews to listen to language teachers and students regarding the issue of team teaching in Japan. I anticipated that participants’ emerging stories would allow me and readers of my study to share as well as question the participants’ experiences. In fact, when Aitani was asked to tell me stories regarding her team-teaching experiences, she freely changed the focus of her story from current practices to earlier practices and back again to current practices several times. Her story contained rich details and unfolded over one long
turn which lasted for about seven minutes. In other words, she was not constrained in terms of the direction of her responses and the degree to which she wanted to share her ideas and experiences with me. On the other hand, interestingly, narrative interviews in some cases did not always facilitate participants to express their ideas and experiences in an effective way. For example, although Tatsuya knew beforehand that he would have an opportunity to freely tell me about his experience of team-taught classes, it was evident that he was not exploiting the nature of narrative interviews to the fullest. When asked, he first paused more than 10 seconds, talked about one incident in the classroom for only about 30 seconds, and promptly ended his story by simply saying, “it was difficult” (NI1, T, p. 1). Thus, although on the whole narrative interviews effectively helped interviewees to express their ideas, they sometimes did not.

The questions (see Appendix A) for narrative interview 1 were sent to the participants prior to the interviews for them to consider possible responses beforehand. I interviewed the teacher participants for about 90 minutes and the student participants for about 60 minutes. The teachers could choose either English or Japanese in which to be interviewed (all the teachers chose their respective mother tongues), and the students were interviewed in Japanese. All the narrative interviews 1 were carried out in the counselling rooms at each school.

**Phase 2: An Exploratory Practice experience.**

*Classroom observation (CO).* “If qualitative inquiry in education is about anything, it is about trying to understand what teachers and children do in the settings in which they work” (Eisner, 1998, p. 11). As an initial experience of Exploratory Practice (EP), I decided to observe unmodified team-taught classes so that I could see, feel, and comprehend what teachers and students did in their authentic settings. In other words, my participants and I embarked upon our journey, based not on what we thought or believed the participants did, but rather on how the participants actually acted. Unlike most classroom action research that identifies teaching ‘problems’ in their classrooms, my participants and I attempted to observe and understand actual classroom practices as they were without making good or bad judgments. In observing the classes, I imagined myself sitting quietly at the back of the classroom without interacting with teachers or students, i.e., acting as a non-participant, primarily because I did not want to intrude in the lessons. However, it soon became evident that it was unnatural for me not to interact with the teachers or students. I could not behave as
if I were non-existent; neither could the students completely ignore me. I thus communicated with the teachers and students in class. The team teachers at Sakura in fact told me that they wanted to take advantage of my experience and expertise as a former JTE and conduct classes with three ‘teachers’. Each of the entire team-taught class was videotaped with a video camera placed on a tripod at the back of the classroom in order to capture what was happening from moment to moment during the lessons. At the same time, I took classroom field notes (see Appendix D for an example) when I was not communicating with the participants in the classroom. I wrote brief descriptions of the physical environment and the students. I also jotted down details of any kind of event or incident I noticed, especially those that took place where the camera may not have been able to record successfully.

**Teacher pair discussion 1 (TPD1).** Immediately after each classroom observation, each pair of team teachers and I discussed the observed class on that day in the counselling room at Sakura and in the teachers’ room at Tsubaki. Each discussion continued for about one hour, and the language used was English because that was the only language that could be understood well by all the teachers and is the medium through which JTEs and ALTs communicate with each other on a day-to-day basis. In deciding the focus and topic of teacher pair discussions 1, I bore in mind Fanselow’s (1992) belief that researchers and teachers can gain deeper understanding of the results of what they are doing by mining a small amount of data over and over from multiple perspectives rather than by viewing an entire lesson once from one perspective. Merriam (2009) sums it up: “The general lies in the particular” (p. 225). The teacher participants selected a five-minute video clip from the observed class (recorded for 50 minutes at Sakura and for 45 minutes at Tsubaki) after fast-forwarding, stopping, and rewinding the videotape several times. Once the clip was selected, we scrutinised the activity that was occurring in the clip. Hence, the five-minute video clips from the videotaped classes became a convenient and powerful component of our project.

In the teacher pair discussions 1 during the first cycle, it was necessary for us to determine the *theme* which was going to be explored for the remaining cycles in order to narrow the focus as well as to have a degree of consistency over time. In relation to the five-minute video clip that they observed during cycle 1, Sakura’s pair chose ‘Teacher instructions for student classroom activities’ as their *theme*. They wished to understand the ways in which they gave instructions to explain activities to students in the classroom and the reasons behind them. Tsubaki’s pair selected ‘Teacher feedback for individual student presentation’ as their *theme* so that they could facilitate their understanding of how they gave feedback to each
student presentation in the classroom and why they did so in that way. It was at this stage that collaboration with colleagues was particularly beneficial because it mutually helped to identify and examine aspects of practice that each teacher alone might otherwise have let go unnoticed (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005). For instance, at Sakura, Aitani and Matt broadened the definition of their chosen theme (i.e., Teacher instructions for student classroom activities) by negotiating and exchanging their previously held beliefs about it. After talking about their chosen themes, the teachers grappled with questions such as: (a) In what way and to what extent do you want to change your teaching for the following classes? and (b) How will you attempt to do that? (see Appendix A). In addition, whenever I could during the discussion, I played devil’s advocate to explore further possibilities and alternatives, thereby challenging and understanding the ideas about various topics that the participants raised. For example, in one case, I encouraged the teachers at Tsubaki to think of the issues from a different perspective in the following way: “I play the devil’s advocate here. What do you think could be the disadvantage of recasting for this activity, if any?” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 11).

My hope was that our free-flowing, non-conclusive discussions, initiated by the five-minute video clips, would lead to a holistic understanding of the practice of team teachers and learners and thus enlighten subsequent classroom experiences. After each teacher pair discussion 1, I constructed transcripts of the five-minute clips (see Appendix E for an example) for reflective classes that were held a few days after the discussions.

**Reflective classes.** I conducted reflective classes with the students in 2A at Sakura for 50 minutes and 2B at Tsubaki for 45 minutes during cycle 1. To begin, I gave explanations to the students regarding the purpose of the research in general and the reflective classes in particular. Then, the students and I together watched the selected five-minute video clip on my laptop computer while looking at the written transcripts of the clip. Afterward, based on the five-minute video clip and following the student feedback sheets (SFSs) (see Appendix F), the students reflected on the previous class with group members (four or five students in each group). Next, all the students in the classroom and I discussed the previous team-taught class and exchanged ideas with each other, using the blackboard. Within the remaining time (from 20 to 30 minutes), I asked students to complete the student feedback sheets individually and I collected them at the end of the class.
In constructing the student feedback sheets, I chose to utilise a data collection method known as narrative frames, which uses prompts to stimulate written expression of ideas (see Hiratsuka, 2014a). With guidance and support in terms of both the structure and content of what is to be written, narrative frames can help provide participants’ well-considered opinions in story form (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). The decision to use narrative frames was appropriate to my study especially because most students did not have any experience of giving feedback on their English classes (or other classes), and even if they did, they were used to providing feedback only with brief comments or numbers in the form of a classroom evaluation questionnaire. From my own perspective as a researcher, too, the frames were helpful because the data content and length were, more or less, what I wanted to obtain, and the data analysis was, to some degree, straightforward due to the structured nature of the sheets. With the narrative frame support, the students were asked to write their narratives, in both Japanese and English. The reasons for including both Japanese and English narratives were twofold: (a) the students perhaps would feel less threatened and more comfortable to write in Japanese when carrying out an unfamiliar task of this kind (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010); and (b) the students would have the opportunity to meaningfully engage in English writing practice, thus contributing to their English language learning itself (Allwright, 2003).

In addition to the tape-recording and my note-taking, all the reflective classes were videotaped from the front of the classroom, not necessarily to capture the minute-by-minute interaction but to record the general atmosphere. After cycle 1 was over, however, I made changes to the length and content of the feedback sheets for the following reasons: (a) the concern that Aitani held that 2A might fall behind the other classes if the reflection took up too much time, (b) the apparent difficulties that most students experienced in writing according to the format in cycle 1, and (c) the fact that teachers had now chosen their focussed themes. During cycles 2 and 3, therefore, the students at Sakura had normal lessons following the school syllabus for the first half of the class and took part in reflective activities (i.e., watching a video clip from the previous class and writing feedback sheets) for the last half – 25 minutes. In an attempt to get the two cohorts of students to take part in reflective activities for the same amount of time, I decided to give talks in 2B at Tsubaki for the first 20 minutes on English language teaching and learning mainly based on my personal experience and readings, which turned out to be a unique spin-off for the students in the class. After the talks, the students in 2B watched a five-minute video clip and individually completed the feedback sheets within 25 minutes without
any pair or class discussion. Moreover, since each pair decided their own theme on which they wanted to focus for their projects, I made two different feedback sheets, each of which reflected the theme from each school. The feedback sheets for cycles 2 and 3 were thus shorter and simpler and incorporated the selected theme from each pair (see Appendix F).

Before the focus group discussions took place in each cycle in Phase 2, the data management and tentative analysis of the student feedback sheets from each class were completed, and I sent the summaries of the sheets to all the teachers, via email. This was done because the voices of the students could always become the key vehicles for the teachers’ discussions and instructional practices. In other words, I hoped that the opinions and suggestions of the students were fully integrated into subsequent classes, championing the principles of EP (see “Exploratory Practice (EP)” in Chapter 2).

**Focus group discussion (FGD) (all the teachers and myself).** Informal focus group discussions, consisting of a small number of people, have been utilised for many years to collect data to gain knowledge about a particular topic or need by researchers especially when collecting qualitative data (Fern, 2001; Morgan, 1998). If focus group discussions are adopted in a culturally responsive way, individual participants in the group are likely to be able to speak in their own voices in order to express their thoughts and feelings (Rodriguez, Schwartz, Lahanan, & Geist, 2011). Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran (2009) point out that social science researchers in general – and qualitative researchers in particular – tend to adopt focus group discussions to efficiently gather data from more than one participant at a time. Simons (2009) suggests that additional benefits of focus group discussions are: (a) they allow researchers to get a sense of the degree of agreement on issues among group members, and (b) they can provide a means to cross-check the consistency of individuals’ perspectives when used with other data collection methods (e.g., individual interviews). Focus group discussions are valued also because the group dynamics allow participants to make meaning of their experiences through interaction, more so than would be possible in one-to-one researcher-participant interviews (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011; Moloney, 2011). The discussions are therefore an appropriate research method because participants feel less threatened and more encouraged to freely discuss their opinions as one of the group members (Ho, 2006; Krueger & Casey, 2000).

In each cycle in Phase 2, all four teachers and I gathered in Ume city, which was located about half-way between the two schools, and conducted focus group discussions at a
neutral venue (a community centre for C1, a language satellite centre for C2, and a rental space for C3) (see Hiratsuka, 2014b). I gave each teacher participant 6,000 yen (equivalent to about NZ$90) to compensate for their transportation fees for the three occasions. Prior to the discussions, I asked all the teachers to read the previous classroom observation transcripts and the summaries of the student feedback sheets from both schools. Through the discussions, the teachers had the opportunity to articulate their experiences in the presence of their ‘peers’ and compare and contrast their situated contexts. In the same manner as teacher pair discussion 1, the language used in the focus group discussion was English. We launched our discussions by watching in turn the five-minute video clips from each school. Each pair attempted to thoroughly describe, analyse, and interpret their own videotaped classes as well as those of the other pair. This practice became one variation of a Take 1, Take 2, Take 3 approach for classroom observation (Fanselow & Barnard, 2006) whereby the two pairs of team teachers and I, changing the roles of insiders and outsiders, could provide insights and analyses from different perspectives, perhaps enhancing the multi-dimensional and original interpretations of the data (J. F. Fanselow, personal communication, April 15, 2012).

Afterward, all the teachers and I discussed the chosen themes from both schools. The discussions concluded with their suggestions on what they would like to achieve in subsequent classes (see Appendix A).

During the discussions, I attempted to watch out for dominance from individuals. I also tried to avoid a “group think” (Simons, 2009, p. 49) mentality where participants would automatically follow an idea just because it was agreed upon by the majority of the participants. For example, whenever I felt like someone had not taken a turn for a while or had not contributed to the discussion on a particular topic, I asked questions such as: “Anything you want to add, Takahashi?” (FGD, C2, p. 10) and “Anything to add, Sam?” (FGD, C2, p. 23). I did so in order to elicit ideas and thoughts from all the teachers in a balanced way and to be fair to everyone. In order to stimulate the discussion, we sometimes listed the characteristics of teachers’ and students’ practices and attempted to brainstorm the opposite words to describe different practices in the classroom (Fanselow, 1992). For instance, on one occasion during cycle 1, I juxtaposed what types of instruction were actually given (i.e., oral explanation in English by the ALT) with what types of instruction could be given (i.e., written example sentences with worksheets). The length of each focus group discussion was about 90 minutes, and it was recorded by the tape-recorder and my note-taking. The discussions were also videotaped from the corner of the room so as to capture
non-verbal behaviours of the participants (e.g., facial expressions and gestures) as well as to identify who was speaking and who they were speaking to.

**Teacher pair discussion 2 (TPD2).** Teacher pair discussions 2 were carried out immediately after focus group discussions on the same day. Unlike teacher pair discussions 1, in teacher pair discussions 2 one pair consisted of two JTEs and the other of two ALTs. Depending on the participants’ preferences, they chose the language to be used (i.e., either English or Japanese). I imagined teacher pair discussions 2 would be valuable at least for three reasons. Firstly, each teacher was expected to have a chance to talk about their experiences distinctly regarding their status (i.e., experiences as a JTE or as an ALT). Secondly, they were to openly state feelings and opinions which they might feel reluctant to reveal in front of their team-teaching partner. Furthermore, as described in Chapter 2, JTEs and ALTs had had communication problems because of the lack of the appropriate language competence of the teachers (i.e., JTEs’ English and ALTs’ Japanese proficiencies). I therefore thought it would be beneficial for the JTEs to talk to each other and the ALTs to talk to each other in order to exchange their detailed experiences in their respective mother tongues. Interestingly, however, the JTEs chose to use English for their discussion during C2. Partly guided by preformed questions (see Appendix A), the discussions continued for about half an hour. The conversations took place either in a room or in a hallway and were thus not heard by the other pair, and all the interactions were either videotaped or audiotaped.

**Teacher EP story (EPS).** In concluding each cycle, the teachers and I wrote EP experience stories. Writing enables us to centre attention and clarify thinking (Ponte, Ax, Beijaard, & Wubbels, 2004). It therefore seemed appropriate for the teachers and me to write freely about our EP experiences (see Appendix G) and allow ourselves to reflect on each cycle in order to prepare for the continuing project. The stories were all written in English and sent, via email, to all the teachers at the end of every cycle so that there was an open process of sharing and discovery. Worthy of mention was that I, as a researcher, was also part of this process, during which I disclosed my honest emotions and beliefs, a process referred to as self-disclosure (Egan, 2000). Furthermore, the EP story writing quickly became a means by which we could monitor the progress and direction of the project as well as remind ourselves of the project’s purposes and goals. For example, I started the final paragraph of my EP story during cycle 1 as follows: “I was very excited to witness that all of you have been very committed and fascinated with this project. Both pairs have quickly chosen illuminating topics (i.e., ‘Instruction’ and ‘Feedback’) during the first pair discussion” (EPS,
Although it could be argued that constructing EP stories and sending them to all the other teachers might have had some limitations (e.g., writing only positive things to keep a favourable public image), they functioned as a distinctive method for our meaning-making because the communication was achieved through writing and asynchronously.

**Extra class observations, JTEs’ work, and student pair discussions.** Taking into account the available time of the participants and the degree of their willingness, I observed extra classes, assisted in doing some of the JTEs’ work, and coordinated student pair discussions. I was curious to know what types of convergences and divergences there were between the team-taught classes we were exploring in this study (i.e., 2A and 2B) and other team-taught classes conducted by the same teachers. I was also interested in similarities and differences between the team-taught classes by the team teachers and the JTEs’ solo classes. I thus observed with a field notepad a third-year class (Practical English) taught by Aitani alone, a second-year class (English II) taught by Aitani alone, and a first-year class (English Conversation) taught by Aitani and Matt. At Tsubaki, I observed a first-year class (Oral Communication) taught by Takahashi and Sam, a second-year class (Understanding Different Cultures) taught by Takahashi alone, and a second-year class (English Expression) taught by Takahashi alone. Extra class observations provided me with: (a) the teachers’ comprehensive views on and practices of English language teaching, (b) the opportunities to compare the students from focal classes and students from other classes, and (c) ideas on how team-taught classes were treated in general at their schools.

The idea of assisting the JTEs with their work derived from my personal experience as a JTE, literature to date, and some EP principles. My personal experience and the literature (e.g., Miyazato, 2006) suggested that, compared to ALTs, JTEs are extremely busy all year round and overworked day and night, which possibly restricts the opportunity and/or extent of their participation in this kind of project – time-consuming reflective practice, in particular. Moreover, EP applauds making the experience continuous and keeping the burden of the participants to a minimum. I therefore expressed my eagerness to help the JTEs’ work in any way at the beginning of the project. I subsequently assisted Aitani in completing three lesson plans for English I, designing the syllabuses for five different subjects for the following year, and training two students for a speech contest. For Takahashi, I wrote four detailed lesson plans for her future English classes, designed syllabuses for two different subjects for the following year, sorted English test materials, and checked and corrected more than 70 notebooks and 500 worksheets. This extended engagement with the JTEs’ work helped me to
understand the insights and values of the JTEs (and their students in some cases) regarding education in general and English language teaching in particular (e.g., textbook-bound curriculum planning, grammar-oriented homework, and high-stakes university entrance examination).

Around the halfway mark of the project, the two focal students at each school and I had a discussion in a counselling room about various experiences we had had both within and outside the team-taught classes (see Appendix A). I had hoped that the students would be able to co-constructively share and enrich their experiences with their ‘peer’ in much the same way as the teachers did in their pair discussions. Interestingly, the student pair discussions from each school engendered contrasting types of interaction. At Sakura, the discussion lasted slightly over 15 minutes, and the students produced only 1,017 words in total. In contrast, the student pair at Tsubaki continued their conversation, sometimes by overtly arguing, for more than 30 minutes with 5,912 words. Irrespective of the types of data gathered, both pair discussions produced illuminating issues for me to consider.

Phase 3: After an Exploratory Practice experience.

Narrative interview 2 (NI2). The data collection came to an end with narrative interviews 2. The interview questions for narrative interview 2 (see Appendix A) were sent to the participants before the interviews for them to have time to reflect on their experiences. In an identical format to the first narrative interviews, I started the second interviews by asking the teachers and the focal students to tell stories about their experiences in team-taught classes during the four-month-long project. This time, some participants seemed to take more advantage of narrative interviews. It could have been because they had become used to the nature of narrative interviews (or interviews in general) and/or to me as an interviewer over time. Or it could have been because they had a number of immediate concerns to talk about after the experience. Matt, for example, had a richer interview after the project. In response to my initial prompts, he replied with 576 words in narrative interview 2, as opposed to 362 words in interview 1. Depending on what the participants had to say about their EP experience, I afterward asked various follow-up questions which I formed based on my own EP experience (see Appendix A). By and large, participants were invited to talk about their perceptions of their teaching and learning practices and their development (or lack thereof) as language teachers and learners. Lastly, looking forward to the future, all the interviews concluded with a final question: What are your hopes and intentions regarding team-taught
classes from now on? I interviewed the teachers for about 90 minutes and the students for about 60 minutes.

**Ongoing data collection.** I collected some data at unspecified points at the research sites: at times when I felt a need to collect them as well as when I could find the opportunity to do so. Ongoing data collection came from two major sources, namely, relevant documents and my researcher logs.

**Relevant documents.** Written documents, as Simons (2009) contends, can be generally used to search for clues to understand the culture of organisations, the value of policies, and the beliefs and attitudes of the writers. They offer over-all (and sometimes detailed) information and contexts for readers. Written documents can also become tools for researchers to help choose appropriate methods before the study, detect issues worthy of exploration during the study, and confirm (or disconfirm) interpretations of the gathered data both during and after the study. When it comes to teaching and learning, written documents – whether they are institutional (public) or individual (personal) – affect, directly or indirectly, the perceptions and practices of teachers and learners. I collected and analysed related documents which, in turn, served as further evidence of the participants’ implicit and/or explicit perspectives and practices, the foci of my study. The relevant documents included: the curriculum of each school, the schedule of each school, the Course of Study, teacher lesson plans, textbooks, term examinations, and relevant JET programme documents prepared by CLAIR (2012) as well as those by the local board of education. I bore in mind that the documents I collected could be prejudiced and biased by the very people who constructed them (Delamont, 2002; Swanborn, 2010; Yin, 2008) and thereby those documents were not ‘neutral’ in terms of how they were written, why they were written, and what they meant to different people. This assertion enabled me to make viable judgments rather than constrain my views when reading and analysing them. I maintained this stance in the course of my data collection to ascertain the fundamental knowledge of the participants and their contexts and to better make sense of what they said and did (especially the ALTs’ perceptions and practices, which were not as familiar to me).

**Researcher logs (RL).** I wrote my researcher logs every day during my stay in Japan and read them whenever I had the chance at the research sites. This was useful in a number of ways during, as well as after, the data collection period. For instance, I jotted down details of any kind of event I noticed or conversation I had with the participants, especially those that
occurred when the camera or tape-recorder was not available. All the memos I took enabled me to go back to my immediate feelings and thoughts at a given time long after an actual experience took place. I, as a researcher, had been influenced over time by people, contexts, experiences, and the data. It was necessary to preserve the process of each emotion and decision on each occasion. The logs had become the only means with which to keep the door open for conversations between my ‘current’ self and ‘past’ self. Another crucial point was that the activity of writing and reading the logs made it possible for me to distance myself from the immediate surroundings for a short while and reflect on the process and progress of the research. As for organising the logs, Silverman (2005) recommends researchers keep records following a four-part framework: (a) observation notes about experiences; (b) methodological notes about how and what kind of data were collected; (c) theoretical notes describing hunches, hypotheses, and ideas; and (d) personal notes containing feeling statements and other subjective comments. With regard to the first component of the four-part framework, I kept a set of field notes for classroom observations (see “Classroom observation (CO)”) and I wrote detailed descriptions about the events and interaction outside classrooms in the researcher’s log. Whilst attending to the three other components, I composed researcher logs to keep track of “experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems” (Spradley, 1979, p. 76), that is, basically whatever came to my mind, as in a diary. In sum, the records became an instrument for recording noticeable events and informal conversations with the participants as well as for freeing my thoughts and concretising my personal journey.

**Data Analysis**

Data collection and data analysis are closely interlinked and they impact on each other equally. Researchers need to have sharp insight into how to analyse data before, during, and after its collection. In this study, all the audio data were recorded with a SANYO digital voice recorder (ICR-PS182RM), and all the video data were recorded with a Sony Handycam (HDR-SR12). I describe below the steps I took from data collection to initial data analysis by illustrating the procedures of transcription, translation, and data management.
Transcribing, Translating, and Managing the Data

I carried out all the transcribing and translating work at the research sites. For transcribing and translating interviews and discussions, I made every effort to maintain the meaning of the utterances of the participants. In this thesis, I presented cleaned-up discourse from the original (hesitations and false starts were deleted) (see Appendix H). I made this decision because I was primarily interested in the overall content of the participants’ perceptions and experiences. However, whenever I felt it was necessary to have access to further information (e.g., the tone/volume of voice of speakers, the gestures/facial expressions of speakers, and general atmosphere of the interaction), I returned to the original recorded data. For the five-minute video clips gleaned from class observations, I felt a need to employ a more detailed transcript convention. I therefore adopted the convention established by Barnard and Torres-Guzman (2009, p. xi) which allows acknowledgements of the complexity of classroom interaction (e.g., emphasis given by speakers, activity associated with the speech, and interpretive comments). Describing and checking carefully on details of interactions and practices made it possible for me and perhaps the participants to recall the events in the classroom more effectively and to interpret the data more accurately than would have been the case with less detailed transcriptions (see Appendix E). With regard to the format of the data reference following extracts in this thesis, I first put, in parentheses, the type of data collection method (e.g., NI1 for narrative interview 1), followed by the initial of a participant’s name (e.g., K for Kanon), school name (e.g., Sakura), or the type of teacher participants (e.g., JTEs), the number of data collection cycle (when appropriate), and I end with the page number of utterances on the transcripts – e.g., (NI2, M, p. 8), (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 12), (EPS, T, C2, p. 2), and (TPD2, ALTs, C2, p. 7).

In terms of managing and sorting the data, I transferred the files/clips from my tape-recorder/video camera to my laptop computer, and I also backed-up these files onto an external hard drive as well as a USB flash-drive. I then stored the video clips, audiotapes, pictures, and all the transcripts and translations in the qualitative analysis computed software, NVivo 9. In total, nine types of data needed to be analysed:

1. narrative interview transcripts
2. field notes
3. classroom observation transcripts
4. pair discussion transcripts

5. student feedback sheets

6. focus group discussion transcripts

7. teacher EP stories

8. researcher logs

9. various types of relevant official and personal documents.

I classified and saved the data according to the type and the date gathered. Digital and hard copies of the original data as well as copies of the different phases of analysis were kept in a locked cabinet in my house and in my office at the University of Auckland. With the large amount of data acquired, like other qualitative researchers, I had the challenging but illuminating task of watching (re-watching), listening (re-listening), and reading (re-reading) in order to reduce a huge volume of text data to manageable units and pieces for further analysis (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). In following this lengthy trail through my analysis of the qualitative data, I chose to implement constructing grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). I next describe in detail the methods associated with this approach.

**Constructing Grounded Theory**

It is believed that grounded theory has played a key role in a “qualitative revolution” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. ix) in the social sciences. According to Charmaz (2006, 2008), grounded theory has become a tool for learning about the worlds we study and a means for developing theories about them. However, unlike the original creators of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Charmaz’s approach is built on the pragmatist underpinnings and promotes interpretive ways of analyses:

I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10, emphasis in the original)

Based on her constructivist stance, Charmaz (2006, 2008) suggests that grounded theory methods should be interpreted broadly, flexibly, and openly so that the research analysis process is more fluid and interactive than the traditional grounded theory methods which
include positivistic assumptions. In other words, she has regarded “using grounded theory methods and theorizing as social actions that researchers construct in concert with others in particular places and times” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 129): hence the emphasis on constructing. This approach to grounded theory has enlightened my exploration in a fruitful way fundamentally because it is in congruence with the constructivist-interpretive paradigm in which my study is situated, as discussed earlier. Constructing grounded theory methods employ coding in order to shape an analytic frame, linking collecting data and emergent theory. Coding consists of at least two stages: (a) an initial stage where each word, line, or segment of data is named and presented; and (b) a focussed, selective stage where several salient and oft-repeated initial codes are sorted, synthesised, integrated, and organised to create fewer (focussed) codes (Charmaz, 2006). In consequence, sets of focussed codes form several categories and eventually a conceptual framework (theory). In many cases, the final stage of data analysis involves constructing data displays through figures and/or conceptual maps in order to represent how each category is interrelated. The following sections deal with the explanation of data coding and data display with relevance to my study.

Data Coding: Within-Case and Cross-Case Analysis

Every stage of my data coding involved re-watching, re-listening, and re-reading the data, according to the cases within (e.g., Aitani, an individual teacher over time) and the cases across (e.g., Aitani and Matt, two different teachers working at the same school). I thus chose to use an interactive three-dimensional strategy (see Figure 3.1), borrowing from and building on the concept of a two-step strategy described by Merriam (2009). One of the dimensions of the analysis was within-case analysis, in which I pursued the case of an individual teacher/student and learned as much as possible about his/her experience. In the second dimension, an analysis of cross-cases of team teachers and students at each school was performed in order to learn about the tendencies and idiosyncrasies specific to each school (i.e., Sakura or Tsubaki) or each class (i.e., 2A or 2B). The third dimension was another analysis of cross-cases of JTEs and ALTs. This analysis was conducted to discern the possible divergences and convergences between the cases of the JTEs (Aitani and Takahashi) and the cases of the ALTs (Matt and Sam). Each dimension was not static, nor was each analytical activity carried out in a linear fashion. That is, each dimension was interconnected, and the analysis in each dimension continuously affected, and was affected by, the process and outcome of the other two dimensions. This holistic strategy allowed me to more
meaningfully bring forth the dynamics of the participants’ particularities and commonalities at the individual, school/class, and JTE/ALT level.

Figure 3.1: Iterative procedures of within-case and cross-case analysis

By comparing and contrasting within and cross cases in an iterative way, I started initial coding where I paid primary attention to what was said or written by the participants and tentatively labelled some words and segments. I tried to stay close to the data while I remained open to numerous interpretations. Concurrently, I referred to the pertinent literature (e.g., Allwright & Hanks, 2009) and kept track of the salient and important aspects of the data in relation to the research aims and questions. As a result of this process, I came to realise that the original five research questions I constructed prior to data collection – which emphasised the difference of participants’ perceptions and practices before and after the EP project – were too simplistic and linear. That is, during or after the project, the participants more often than not expressed their perspectives of teaching and learning or conducted their practices which had not necessarily been influenced by the EP experience per se. Soon after, I made changes to my research questions and settled with different five. Emanating from the revised questions and each case, several broad initial codes became apparent (see Appendix I), and I went back to the transcripts to do the coding accordingly. For instance, I coded the comment “speaking is the biggest asset that the ALT has” as “1 A-A” (concerning the first research question: ALTs’ perceptions of ALTs) and the comment “so the effects are not the
activities I gave to the students but the tendency or instruction” as “3 T (per)” (concerning the third research question: effects of EP on teachers’ perceptions) (see Appendix J for a copy of one initial coded transcript page).

After I sorted and stored the relevant coded segments into files on NVivo 9 according to the case, time, and the method used, I began the process of focussed coding. Whilst doing focussed coding, I came to consider two different, yet equally crucial, points. One point was that some similar topics were repeatedly discussed irrespective of the case or time. For example, throughout the project, the issue of ‘native speaker’ was mentioned by every participant multiple times. It was thus apparent that the issues frequently raised were important to the participants at the time of the study. Another point was that some less frequent perceptions and practices seemed as salient and critical as frequent ones in understanding participants’ experiences and situations due to the particular nature of the topic concerned. For instance, although team-taught classes were described as ‘break time’ from serious teaching by only one participant (Sayaka) on only one occasion (at the end of narrative interview 1), this rarely appearing perception was potentially as significant as others, if not more so. As a consequence of this recursive process of creating and changing codes, I formed several categories (e.g., “ALTs as authorities and providers of target language”; “ALTs are excluded from core teaching: Are they assistant language ‘teachers’?”) in order to answer each research questions (see Appendix K for a copy of one focussed coded draft page). In total, I analysed: approximately 33 hours of detailed interviews and discussions constituting 316 pages (English only) as well as 343 pages (Japanese and translated English) of typed transcripts; and 320 pages of typed documents (i.e., student feedback sheets, field notes, researcher logs, classroom transcripts, and EP stories) and other relevant documents (see “Relevant documents”). This large amount of data, which was overwhelming to me at first, started to become manageable and comprehensible as the two-stage data coding proceeded.

As explained above, unlike prescriptive grounded theory methods, my process of coding involved the use of both deductive (driven by research questions and pertinent literature) and inductive (driven by gathered data and ongoing data analysis) approaches. These multiple iterations among the data, relevant literature, and research questions as well as careful consideration to the chronological order and types of data collection methods helped me to confirm/disconfirm and interpret/re-interpret data patterns and interconnections. Sometimes each stage of data analysis was unexpectedly straightforward; at other times they
were considerably complex, and the codes were open to change until the very end of the research due to my changing perspectives and a fluid research process.

In Chapter 4, to answer the first two research questions, I examine categories including the participants’ perceptions of: (1) JTEs (e.g., JTEs as Language Models); (2) ALTs (e.g., ALTs as ‘Natives’: Enlightening or Frightening?); and (3) teaching practices (e.g., Unique Practices). In Chapter 5, to answer the question of what effects an EP experience has on the participants’ perceptions, I investigate categories such as replacement, integration, and reconfirmation. In Chapter 6, to answer the question of what effects an EP experience has on the participants’ practices, I present categories such as agency and EP actualisation. Considering the identified categories grounded in the data, I built a conceptual framework in the end to answer the fifth research question.

Data Display

Qualitative data displays come in a number of forms (e.g., figures, tables, and boxes). They can facilitate data description, order, and explanation, thereby engendering new discoveries as well as additional questions for researchers to consider during the process of data analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that data display, when coherently arranged, can “permit careful comparisons, detection of differences, noting of patterns and categories, [and] seeing trends” (p. 92). I sometimes sketched out simple data displays on a blank piece of paper to understand the level and type of relationships among topics and categories. As well as in the process of data analysis, data display can function as a convenient way to conclude data analysis by systematically presenting a conceptual framework. Some researchers create a chain of causality or make generalisations at the end of their research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, what I was interested by means of a conceptual framework was to describe, explain, and understand influential factors for the participants’ experiences with local interpretations. I hope that the data displays depicted in Chapter 7 present my study in an effective way, more so than just words can.

Criteria for Evaluating Research

There is a proliferation of ways to evaluate qualitative study. While the participants and researchers know the research process well, in most cases the readers of the research are
less informed and they sometimes have a difficult time to evaluating the research. Considering the quality of my study, I had to distance myself from the immediate work and figure out ways to properly assess it. In terms of the criteria, I was reminded that there is a legitimation crisis that demands a considerable re-thinking of such terms as validity, reliability, and objectivity. These terms are mainly used by traditional (post-)positivist researchers for internal and external evaluation of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The ideas of validity, reliability, and objectivity cannot legitimately be applied to constructivist-interpretive qualitative research such as this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985), however, argue that (post-)positivist and constructivist-interpretive criteria can, to a degree, correspond to each other as follows: credibility to internal validity (related to truth), transferability to external validity (related to applicability), dependability to reliability (related to consistency), and confirmability to objectivity (related to neutrality). The characteristics and goals of the constructivist-interpretive criteria I employed along with the relevant (post-)positivist terms are described in Table 3.5. I will discuss these criteria below one by one with a brief explanation as to how I attempted to achieve them in my study.

Table 3.5: A summary of the constructivist-interpretive criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Post-) Positivist terms</th>
<th>Constructivist-Interpretive terms</th>
<th>Characteristics of the constructivist-interpretive criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>To what extent did what I claim to have happened reflect the participants’ points of view? The goal was not to seek truth in the sense of ‘reality’, but to be credible from the perspective of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>To what extent can what is found in my research be applied to other people or sites with modifications? The goal was not to make generalisations, but to enhance the possibility of transferring by providing rich contextual descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>To what extent did I make clear the ever-changing processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation? The goal was not to prove the research was completely repeatable, but to describe the research processes and explain the changes that occurred during my study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>To what extent did I, as a researcher, bring my own perspective to the discussions and results of the study based on the gathered data? The goal was not to seek complete neutrality, but to clarify how I influenced the outcome of the research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Credibility

I sought the first criterion, ‘credibility’, through prolonged engagement and triangulation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) regard prolonged engagement as the investment of sufficient time which allows qualitative researchers to learn the ‘culture’ of a studied field. It makes the researchers become a member of the community and build relationships with their participants. Credibility can also be achieved by intimate familiarity with the setting and topic of the research (Charmaz, 2006). In this respect, I already had an advantage since I knew the research sites and the circumstances of the participants quite well as a native (born and grew up), a former student (of 14 years), and a former teacher (of 10 years) in the area. In addition, I spent more than four months at the research sites during the data collection period, which further increased my knowledge of the sites and developed collegial relationships with the participants. I communicated with my participants inside as well as outside the classroom through official and casual conversations a number of times (e.g., during morning meetings, lunch breaks, club activities, and weekends) and in a variety of places (e.g., teachers’ rooms, hallways, gymnasiums, community centres, coffee shops, and restaurants). The content of the conversations was recorded in the researcher logs whenever I could, and those data contributed to my gaining fuller understanding of the participants’ experiences.

The use of different data sources and methods is instructive for improving the value of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is called triangulation and is defined as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 112). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) posit: “Triangulation is the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously…. Readers and audiences are … invited to explore competing visions of the context, to become immersed in and merge with new realities to comprehend” (p. 5). I attempted to achieve triangulation in three ways. First, I aimed at source triangulation by recruiting two different pairs of JTEs and ALTs from two different schools (of course, each JTE and ALT was also different from the other JTE and ALT), and many high school students from two different schools. Second, I employed several kinds of data collection methods, some of which were individual interviews, pair discussions, focus group discussions, and written stories (method triangulation). Third, the participants and I made different interpretations of the five-minute videotapes by way of the three-take approach (see “Focus group discussion (FGD) (all the teachers and myself)” (interpretation triangulation).
Transferability

To what extent can the findings from my study be transferred to other people and contexts? How can I increase the “usefulness” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 183) of the study? Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the data must be rich enough, and the interpretation should be sensitive enough, to attain a high level of ‘transferability’. They state that attaining a high level of transferability allows other researchers and readers to decide whether or not the study is valuable for other occasions and situations. A ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) is again useful here because it yields rich contextual and experiential information which can function as a guide for readers to assess an appropriate degree of transferability to their own contexts. Providing a thick description is beneficial not only for readers but also for the researchers themselves because researchers can accommodate plausible interpretations in the later stage of the study as a result of their detailed descriptions of participants and research sites. I therefore attempted throughout to produce thick description especially when describing the participants, geographical/socio-political contexts of the research sites, and myself as a researcher-learner. In addition, Duff (2008) contends that researchers can check the transferability of their study with their participants by asking how typical they think their experiences are compared to other teachers/students. I thus asked how typical the participants thought their experiences were compared with other JTEs/ALTs/students in other team-teaching contexts so that other team teachers, students, policy makers, researchers and/or N/NESTs in Japan as well as in other countries can decide to what extent my study is applicable to their teaching and learning environments.

Dependability

The level of ‘dependability’ hinges largely on how well researchers can describe and explain the research procedures and processes. To increase dependability, I documented the procedures and processes of my study as much as possible in my researcher log and in drafts of the thesis. I tried to retain all the data in easily retrievable form so that the data was available for scrutiny should there be a request to check any part of the collection and/or analytical processes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I kept the documents in my computer, an external hard drive, a USB flash-drive, and folders of my email accounts for further reference. I was also open to the changes in the design and implementation of my study and committed to present the changes as they occurred and the reasons for them in this thesis. Researcher
logs were kept constantly – everyday during the period of data collection and at least once a month at other times. The entire log enabled me to gather my thoughts in a systematic way and pace the progress of my study. As a result, the log and the draft of the thesis made it possible for me to trace the research process and explicate each decision that my participants and I made.

**Confirmability**

As mentioned earlier, I used a tape-recorder and video camera to collect most data, which increased the accuracy of data (i.e., the level of ‘confirmability’). Moreover, when I transcribed and translated the interview and discussion data, I made every effort to keep the transcriptions and translations as close to the original recordings as possible so that readers of this thesis can gain more understanding of the participants’ experiences through the evidence I present. I also provided many examples of the actual data (e.g., transcripts and field notes – some of them as appendices) in the hope that the participants and future readers can more easily understand and evaluate the results of my study. Lastly, I decided to employ a member checking strategy in order to gain higher confirmability. Member checking, as the words indicate, means that research participants, not researchers, check generated data and the results of data analysis based on their experiences and, if necessary, make suggestions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). This process was conducted in my study with the teacher participants and focal students at the end of each cycle in Phase 2 and when the initial data analysis was completed. The aim of applying member checking was not only for the participants to have the opportunity to make sense of their experiences, the data, and the results of this study in order to increase “resonance” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 182) but also for me to understand to what extent I, as a researcher, included my own perspectives and interpretations in this study. The results of member checking were suggestions or comments mostly about either spelling or word order in the transcriptions and rarely about content or interpretation. Of particular significance here, though, is that I did not treat the suggestions and comments made by the participants as absolute truth or something I had to precisely follow. The reasons for that were: (a) it was possible that the participants did not accurately remember or reflect on what had happened; and (b) it was likely that the participants had their own expectations, ideals, and pre-conceptions as to what and why they said and did.
Nonetheless, I considered all the suggestions and comments together with my participants in order to make the data and interpretations trustworthy.

**Conclusion**

I have sought to demonstrate in this chapter that the methodology I adopted in my study was thoroughly designed and carried out. I started by introducing the research paradigm and approaches that underpinned this study, namely, constructivist-interpretive, qualitative research, and case study. The chosen paradigm and approaches were intended to capture the participants’ rich and complex perceptions as well as experiences. These features matched the purpose of this study and thereby were appropriate to answer the research questions. I continued by presenting one important aspect of any qualitative research, i.e., the researcher’s position. I described my background, standpoint, and role as a researcher-learner. After brief comments on ethical matters, I described the selection of the participants as well as the social and cultural contexts of the research sites. I subsequently explained the various data collection methods employed chronologically, and then made known the iterative stages of data analysis. To conclude the chapter, I provided criteria for how others and I are able to evaluate the quality of my research with close attention to trustworthiness. In the following chapters, I present my findings of the study, specifically in connection with the first four research questions which concern: what perceptions the participants have of JTEs, ALTs, and teaching practices (Chapter 4); and to what extent, in what way, and why an EP experience influenced the teachers’ and students’ perceptions and practices (Chapters 5 and 6) in Japanese EFL team-teaching contexts.
CHAPTER 4: THE PARTICIPANTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF TEAM TEACHERS AND TEACHING PRACTICES

In this chapter, I identify the team teachers’ and students’ perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and teaching practices in team-teaching contexts. I present several salient categories in relation to the first and second research questions, i.e., the participants’ perceptions of JTEs, their perceptions of ALTs, and their perceptions of teaching practices. Inevitably, certain topics were discussed more by some participants than by others as they were more pertinent to them. For instance, classroom pedagogy within the category of team-teaching practices is more relevant to and was discussed more by the teachers than the students. The salient categories are presented in Table 4.1 along with the participants who most evidently held those perceptions. What became apparent was that the participants had a number of particular perceptions with varying positive and negative attitudes. These seemed to have stemmed from the participants’ individual traits (e.g., their age and second language competence), contextual factors (e.g., community/school/class culture), and research-related matters (e.g., timing/place/type of data collection). The data presented is drawn mainly from the teacher and focal student participants; however, I include relevant documents and related literature where appropriate.

Table 4.1: Teachers’ and students’ perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and teaching practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team teachers’ and students’ perceptions</th>
<th>The participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JTEs as language models, learners, and bridges between ALTs and students</td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTEs as fully-fledged teachers: Socially and professionally respected</td>
<td>All the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTs as ‘natives’: Enlightening or frightening</td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTs as foreign assistants: Socially and professionally marginalised</td>
<td>All the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching as unique practices</td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching as open-ended practices</td>
<td>All the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching as secondary and less important practices</td>
<td>All the participants except Kanon and Yousuke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Team Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions of JTEs

I begin by examining the participants’ perceptions of JTEs. JTEs were viewed as language models for students, English language learners, and bridges between ALTs and students. JTEs were also seen as fully-fledged professionals.

JTEs as Language Models, Learners, and Bridges between ALTs and Students

Both the teachers and students knew that JTEs were fulfilling multiple roles: (a) language models and learners; (b) understanding students’ learning processes; and (c) Japanese-English bilinguals.

Language models and learners. JTEs are both teachers and learners of English. That is to say, they are expected to be language models for their students while they strive to be competent English users. For example, one of the focal students at Tsubaki, Yousuke (Y), shared his perception of his JTE, Takahashi (T), as a language model: “Takahashi and Sam sometimes chit-chat next to me, and I can learn how some English expressions are naturally used … she is a Japanese language model of English for us” (NI2, Y, p. 2). Yousuke perceived that Takahashi had acquired enough English to communicate appropriately with a foreigner and thus successfully play the role of being “a more achievable model” (Cook, 1999, p. 200). Similarly, the ALT at Sakura, Matt (M), considered that most of his JTEs were skilful English users and aspiring language models for students. On this point, Medgyes (2001) contends that “only non-NESs can be set as proper learner models, since they learned English after they acquired their native language, unlike NESTs who acquired English as their native language” (p. 436, emphasis in the original). Yoshiida (2009) also reasons that JTEs are more ideal language models for Japanese learners of English than ALTs.

Playing the role of a language model is, however, a challenging task for JTEs since language learning requires both time and effort. Insofar as the English proficiency of JTEs is concerned, the ALT at Tsubaki, Sam (S), emphasised: “It makes sense to me that if you want your students to learn English, it’s best that you are pretty good at English” (RL, C3, p. 25). The JTE at Sakura, Aitani (A), expressed her deep-seated desire to improve her English, a desire which has remained unchanged since the start of her career: “ever since I became a teacher, I had wanted to improve my teaching and English skills because I had never been satisfied with them” (EPS, A, C2, p. 1). Aitani mentioned that she took various English
proficiency tests whenever she could in order to improve, or at least maintain, her English abilities. While some JTEs, like those in my research, are relatively successful in being language models for their students and communicating with ALTs, others are not. Yousuke said bluntly: “I assume there are some Japanese teachers who can speak English well and some who can’t” (NI2, Y, p. 2). Since JTEs are (and perhaps always will be life-long) learners of English (Medgyes, 1992), others also have doubts about the capability of their English. One of the focal students from Sakura, Kanon (K), illustrated this in saying: “I was sometimes unsure about some pronunciation of JTEs” (NI1, K, p. 4). The other focal student at Sakura, Tatsuya (T), expressed his dubious impression of JTEs as language models: “I heard that the English we learn at school from Japanese teachers would not be useful when we talk to foreigners” (NI1, T, p. 10). The majority of the participants thus seemed to agree that a high level of English proficiency is the key to JTEs being ideal language models. At the research sites, several incidents occurred where it was evident that the JTEs were ‘learners’ of English. Sometimes they did not know words used by the ALTs, such as subtitle, and at other times they could not understand questions asked during their discussions. Medgyes (1994) claims that if all other variables are equal, the ideal NNESTs are those who have “achieved near-native proficiency in English” and that one of the most pressing professional duties of NNESTs is “to improve their command of English” (p. 74). The JTEs appear to be constantly judged on their level of English proficiency both by others and themselves.

Given that even the JTEs in this study, who had a high level of English competence, sometimes had difficulty in understanding their ALTs, the English proficiency of JTEs must be a pivotal factor for all concerned when considering the successes and failures of team-taught classes and the relationships between team teachers. JTEs were therefore regarded as language models, whether successful or not, and as English learners in their own right.

**Understanding students’ learning processes.** Since JTEs are ongoing learners of English and have the experience of having once been English learners in the same Japanese educational system as their students, Aitani, Takahashi, Sam, and Sayaka (S) most apparently recognised that JTEs played a crucial role in that they can understand what it is like for students to be English learners in their particular learning contexts and relate to the experience. Aitani elaborated on this characteristic of JTEs vis-à-vis ALTs: “Due to the amount of accumulated experience, the person who can appropriately suggest various elements [e.g., target grammar, vocabulary, and materials] for student learning would be JTEs, not ALTs” (NI1, A, p. 16). The perception that JTEs can understand the English
learning experience of their students was reiterated in more detail by Takahashi: “when our students have trouble understanding what Sam says, the problem is the vocabulary. In that case, I try to use different expressions, simple English” (FGD, C1, p. 25). She also mentioned that she can understand more easily than her ALT what her students want to say in English because she once had a similar level of English to them. This contention was at least partly corroborated by my observation of the Tsubaki class during cycle 1. When a student said, “lead the world” (CO, Tsubaki, C1, p. 1), the JTE, Takahashi, could immediately understand what the student meant, but Sam could not and asked the student to repeat herself several times.

The JTEs thus seemed to be able to ‘sense’ what their students wanted to say and where they had difficulty. In Braine’s (2010) words, NNESTs have “a better ability to read the minds of their students and predict their difficulties with the English language” (p. 28). The JTEs’ perception of themselves as being able to better understand and relate to their students’ learning are echoed by Sam: “I ask them [the JTEs] if they think my lesson will work because sometimes I don’t know … they tend to know more obviously about what Japanese students might like than I do” (NI1, S, p. 1). The ALTs appreciated the JTEs, who were familiar with the backgrounds and learning of their students. The students’ perceptions were similar. For instance, Sayaka at Tsubaki made the following observation about her teacher, Takahashi: “Takahashi may be the most effective teacher of all the teachers I have had … because she knows the difficulties we have with English” (NI2, S, p. 15).

Since the JTEs had themselves experienced having once been learners of English as a foreign language and immersed in the same public school English classes as their students, they were perceived to be able to understand the English abilities and learning processes of their students, thereby providing appropriate support for them. This also allowed the JTEs to effectively assist the ALTs in interacting with their students.

**Japanese-English bilinguals.** Since JTEs are Japanese-English bilinguals and ALTs are usually English monolinguals, the ALTs perceived their JTEs as having a significant responsibility to promote effective interaction in class. Matt, for example, said: “They [JTEs] are obviously native speakers of Japanese … so they can communicate very effectively to the young children…. They can also create a platform for the ALT to have a great effect on the kids to teach well” (NI1, M, p. 4). The ALTs believed that JTEs can facilitate effective class activities by means of the shared L1 (i.e., Japanese) and that they are essential to creating a
‘platform’ on which ALTs and students can rely. Interestingly, however, my study revealed that the participating JTEs did not seem to recognise the advantage of their being Japanese-English bilinguals in team-taught classes, corroborating part of the findings of Llurda and Huguet’s (2003) study.

The students appreciated Japanese-English bilingual JTEs acting as a bridge between the students and their ALT in the classroom. Kanon, for instance, regarded translating what an ALT says as one of the most important jobs performed by JTEs. Sayaka was another student who valued the part her JTE played in helping her to learn English: “Sam plays a leading role in team-taught classes, and Takahashi helps from time to time … by translating some of the parts we don’t know…. Learning becomes easy that way” (NI1, S, p. 2). By the same token, Yousuke commented: “when we don’t understand what Sam said, Takahashi takes over and explains” (NI1, Y, p. 6). Tatsuya considered JTEs to be a psychological anchor. He asserted: “It is easier for me to ask questions to Japanese teachers. So we need a Japanese teacher in the classroom for when we have questions” (NI1, T, p. 7). Complementing the ALTs’ instruction in this way supposedly made the language learning of the students easier and more productive. The students found JTEs to be helpful not only pedagogically but also psychologically because they felt more at ease asking them questions in Japanese when they encountered difficulties. The participants in Miyazato’s (2009) study also acknowledged the pivotal roles of JTEs “to fill the gaps” (p. 50) between ALTs and students.

Despite the fact that the majority of the participants appreciated the JTEs performing these roles in the classroom, challenges were also noted. The ALTs exchanged stories about their JTEs (not those in this study) who, in their opinion, failed to efficiently facilitate communication in the classroom:

Sam: There is one teacher, oh my god … he sometimes doesn’t understand what I say, so I have had lessons that have gone perfectly in my four other classes, and … I ask him to explain something, and he couldn’t, and it’s like nobody can do it, and we are all lost…. It’s real, real rough.

Matt: Yes, I have had that lesson before. It’s an up-hill battle all the way. (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 5)

JTEs were thus expected to facilitate communication for everyone in the classroom by translating English into Japanese, and vice versa. It seemed as though the lessons would not
proceed smoothly unless JTEs could play the role of a bridge because they are de facto the only Japanese-English bilinguals in the room.

Although the JTEs were valued as bilinguals for the reasons mentioned above, their bilingual status sometimes had ironic consequences. The classroom observations and the student feedback sheets showed that an overwhelming number of students demanded that their JTEs use Japanese and often asked them to translate every word an ALT uttered. Aitani’s response during a focus group discussion was honest: “they [students] had wanted me to interpret what Matt had said … some of them complained because I didn’t interpret” (FGD, C1, p. 20). This runs counter to the primary intentions of JTEs, ALTs, or the JET programme, i.e., to have students exposed to a lot of English through communicative activities. Fundamental to the role of JTEs as bilinguals, it appears, are concerns about the extent and practice of Japanese translation. It is likely that the use of the L1 by JTEs should be relevant to and contingent upon the class goal as well as the needs of ALTs and students. No doubt, the English proficiency of JTEs also needs to be taken into consideration if the JTEs are to successfully carry out their role as Japanese-English bilinguals.

JTEs as Fully-Fledged Teachers: Socially and Professionally Respected

I now deal with another perception the participants (most evidently, the JTEs and the ALTs) had of JTEs: JTEs as fully-fledged professionals. With the vast investment of time and effort as well as acquired teacher qualifications and teaching experience, JTEs are generally highly regarded and expected to tackle a tremendous amount of work at their schools.

Given excessive workloads: Japanese ‘English’ teachers? It was immediately apparent how, as full-time teachers, overloaded the JTEs were with numerous responsibilities. They had to complete a myriad of tasks related to homerooms, committees, and clubs within a limited timeframe. On several occasions, Takahashi did not even have time to sit down at her desk between her classes. On one particular day, she had no lunch break because she had to: (a) meet with a number of different teachers, (b) decide on which workbook to use for entrance examinations, (c) review the minutes of the last teacher meeting, (d) organise the agenda for the next teacher meeting, and (e) make phone calls for students with health problems. Her interviews for this study had to be postponed more than once because she had to deal with last-minute urgent matters, including consulting with students and writing letters
to students’ parents. Aitani was leading a similarly hectic life, if not more so. On one particular day, it was snowing heavily and Aitani drove me to my bus stop after school. I thanked her and asked her if she would go straight home. She said that she had a meeting with some of the other teachers at 6 pm and that afterward she would need to stay at school until 10 pm to supervise her drama club and finish her paperwork. During our final interview, she had to leave the room three times because she was called upon by three different teachers.

The ALTs were aware of how frenetic the JTEs’ lives were. Matt stressed the excessive amount of work his JTEs had to do and told me how busy they looked all the time: “The JTEs in Japan are incredibly overworked … it’s very difficult, almost inhuman task, for them to make time to develop systems of interaction with an ALT beyond what is necessary” (NI1, M, p. 12). When asked what his JTEs were busy with, Matt responded: “I can’t tell you, specifically…. Just it seems they are preparing for their classes or marking or perhaps they are involved with other students’ affairs or club activities or blah, blah, blah. Just busy, always occupied” (NI1, M, p. 12). In one of their pair discussions, Matt and Sam expressed their surprise at the heavy workloads of the JTEs:

Sam: They do clubs late every day. For some people, that is not as feasible…. I mean, you’ve got to have a life outside of it, your life, your wife, and kids.

Matt: Fathers [JTEs] have a different approach to how much time they should spend with their family here … they are at school from 7 to 7 … even the moms, they work such long hours. It’s just intense. (TPD2, ALTs, C2, pp. 7-8)

The ALT handbook 2011 (CLAIR, 2011) advises ALTs to be aware that JTEs “may be extremely busy” and to develop “skills in cross-cultural communication to gradually build trust” (p. 26). Indeed, the JTEs worked incredibly hard, and their time and energy seemed to be always under pressure. This appeared to affect the communication between the JTEs and the ALTs for team teaching and resulted in insufficient time for meaningful interaction (see “Secondary and Less Important Practices” later in this chapter). What warrants particular attention here is that the ALTs did not know exactly what the JTEs were busy with and why they worked in such an intense manner at the expense of spending time with their family and friends outside of school. The working style of the JTEs was beyond the understanding of the ALTs.
It is worth noting that the JTEs were constantly occupied with work unrelated to classroom English teaching, such as managing general school affairs, the curriculum, student discipline, and student guidance. The following remark made by Takahashi at the start of the third pair discussion between JTEs illustrates how busy the JTEs felt dealing with non-English matters on a day-to-day basis: “There are just so many things to do at this time of the year involving homerooms. I am overwhelmed!” (TPD2, JTEs, C3, p. 1). Their conversation continued for a while around the topic of work commitments they had that are irrelevant to English teaching, such as teacher transfer procedures, orientations for new first-year students, and items to be ordered for new students. Takahashi concluded that the job of JTEs is “quite chaotic” (TPD2, JTEs, C3, p. 7). With such a considerable amount of her work being unrelated to teaching English, it was not uncommon for Takahashi to forget that she is an ‘English’ teacher: “Almost 100% of the time, my work focusses on students’ lives rather than their English. So I am glad to have had this opportunity [experiencing the project] and realise: ‘Oh, I am an English teacher, that’s right!’” (TPD2, JTEs, C3, p. 8).

In addition to the usual jobs the JTEs had to deal with as public high school teachers, they had extra work unlike teachers of other subjects: work related to the ALTs. Aitani explained why JTEs have extra work involving ALTs’ personal lives: “It is mainly because the people in the school office cannot speak English. They are rather passive…. Somebody has to play the role of taking care of ALTs’ lives” (NI1, A, p. 14). In light of Aitani’s comments above, I asked Sam for specific examples of how his JTE helps with his life in Japan. He replied: “She [his supervisor] handles everything for me. She helped me set up my cell phone … my bank account…. Like, they [supervisors] are just supposed to be there to help you” (NI1, S, p. 20). According to Miyazato (2011), a MEXT official denied an increase in JTEs’ workloads resulting from having to look after ALTs. The official said that caring for ALTs is done simply out of kindness and is optional, not obligatory. The JTEs in my study, however, did not seem to have any choice but to take care of miscellaneous tasks concerning the ALTs’ lives because they were the only English speaking colleagues they had. The ALTs accepted assistance from the JTEs as though it was a matter of course despite the fact that neither their contract nor any related official documents mention the JTEs having any obligation to provide this kind of assistance.

The JTEs are thus given such excessive workloads, mainly unrelated to English teaching, that they sometimes forget they are ‘English’ teachers. I witnessed several occasions when the ALTs and students would stand around waiting for their turn to speak to
their JTEs in the teachers’ room. The JTEs were literally running around the school during the day and continued to work at their desks well into the night. Accordingly, the teacher participants perceived the JTEs to be full-time teachers with an incredible amount of work.

**Qualified, responsible, and long-term.** In order to be a JTE, one has to have a teaching license issued by a board of education in Japan, take various tests (e.g., general knowledge, English language, aptitude, and essay writing), and participate in a number of different interviews (e.g., group, individual, and English). Fewer than five applicants a year were employed as full-time JTEs in this particular prefecture at the time this research was conducted. Once hired, they usually continue to work until they reach retirement age at 60. The rate of turn-over for JTEs is thus conspicuously low.

What was therefore salient about the teacher participants’ perceptions of JTEs was how they viewed them as qualified, responsible, and long-term teachers. For example, Aitani insisted that it is the JTEs who should make the final decision as to which materials are to be used in team-taught classes: “JTEs have the last say when choosing class materials. That’s something only JTEs can do” (NI1, A, p. 16). The ALTs echoed this sentiment. Matt pointed out during a pair discussion with Aitani that she was the qualified and responsible teacher: “I should be clear that, in this case, you, the JTE, should still be in charge because you are the qualified teacher and responsible for this class in the long term” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 13). Considering JTEs’ greater familiarity with their students, Takahashi and Sam were in agreement about who should deal with classroom management:

Takahashi: Classroom management is very important for me. I know more about the students…. You came to this class in August. You don’t know their names yet … so I can give the instruction directly.

Sam: That’s something I can’t do. (TPD1, Tsubaki, C1, p. 7)

In an informal conversation in the teachers’ room afterward, Sam commented that he particularly wanted his JTEs, as responsible full-time teachers, to take care of classroom discipline. Similarly, NNEST participants in Istanbul in Tatar and Yildiz’s (2010) study believe that NNESTs, being the citizens of the country, should have “the responsibility of serving their students well” and “see their jobs not as merely teaching English but also making their students into good citizens” (p. 125). The teachers in this study thus regarded the JTEs as fully-fledged teachers who are qualified, responsible, and long-term teachers. However, this characterisation was not automatic. The JTEs felt there was always room for
improvement and sought professional development opportunities in spite of their busy schedules and well-established reputation as JTEs. For example, after Aitani acknowledged her long-term teaching experience during the third pair discussion with Matt, she admitted that she still had difficulty planning lessons and conducting classes and showed her intention to improve her teaching in the future. Takahashi likewise was keen to develop her professional skills and voluntarily attended workshops and seminars outside of school. During my stay in Japan during this study, Takahashi attended three professional development seminars in other prefectures held by universities and publishing companies.

In contrast, the students did not appear to have a perception of JTEs as qualified, responsible, and long-term teachers; at least they did not in the same way their teachers did. Possible reasons for this are: (a) the students took for granted those JTE attributes as all the other Japanese teachers at school had similar characteristics; (b) they put emphasis on individual teachers’ abilities rather than on their generic qualifications; and (c) they did not care about their teachers in general. Although the reason is not entirely clear, there was a contrast between the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of JTEs in terms of their professionalism (see also “ALTs as Foreign Assistants: Socially and Professionally Marginalised” later in this chapter).

I have so far shown that JTEs were often considered to be language models and learners, understanding students’ backgrounds and learning situation, and Japanese-English bilinguals. This result was somewhat expected, given that JTEs are Japanese citizens and English language learners who have experienced a similar Japanese educational system as well as learning style to their students. The teacher participants also perceived JTEs as accomplished professionals who are socially and professionally respected and who have high workload expectations placed on them. Without doubt, JTEs invested a large amount of time and energy in their careers both before and after they secured a teaching position at their school. I now look at the participants’ perceptions of ALTs.

Team Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions of ALTs

Not surprisingly, all the participants had perceptions of ALTs as ‘native’ English speakers. The teacher participants were also aware that ALTs were professionally marginalised and treated as mere assistants.
ALTs as ‘Natives’: Enlightening or Frightening?

All the participants emphasised ALTs as being native speakers of English, both inside and outside the classroom at the research sites. In this role, ALTs were perceived to be authorities and providers of the target language and cultures. They were also considered to be motivation boosters or hinderers.

**Authorities and providers of target language.** All the participants shared the perception that ALTs are authorities and providers of English. For instance, Matt perceived the role of ALTs as native speakers of English to be unique: “Having a native speaker at hand is a unique thing in that kids are exposed to what is sort of effortless, correct language from the conversational perspective” (NI1, M, p. 8). Agreeing with Matt in one focus group discussion, Sam described an advantage of having an ALT in the classroom: “the biggest benefit is really speaking and listening with the ALT because grammar, reading, and writing can be taught by anyone ... but the native English is something that the ALTs can offer” (FGD, C3, p. 8). Although it is questionable whether ‘anyone’ could teach English grammar, reading, and writing, the ALTs nevertheless appeared to play at least two essential roles: providing a native-level of conversational English and being authorities on the target language. An example of ALTs being authorities on the target language was Matt criticising the textbook they were using: “I will just end up saying what is more natural ... because sometimes the textbooks may be grammatically correct, but no one says that!” (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 13). Sam also considered native speakers of English to be authorities of the language. For example, he assumed that in the future the English communication of his students would be primarily with native English speakers and so decided to evaluate their English speaking abilities based on whether a native speaker of English could understand their speech or not. This could be indicative of his idea of the comparative fallacy (Bley-Vroman, 1983) and the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). The over-reliance on native speakers of English is, however, considered to be problematic by some researchers (e.g., Kachru, 1992; Piller, 2002; Rampton, 1990) particularly because it is believed that in the near future English “will be a language used mainly in multilingual contexts as a second language and for communication between non-native speakers” (Graddol, 1999, p. 57) (see also Hino, 2009).

Takahashi shared with other teachers her perception of ALTs as absolute authorities of English: “It’s very nice to have Sam in writing class. If he says it [the English] is natural, it is natural…. If he says, ‘I don’t use this phrase’. Then, ‘OK. Everyone! Sam doesn’t use this
phrase! Forget this phrase!’” (FGD, C3, p. 18). Takahashi also spoke about ALTs’ English in comparison with her own English: “It takes a lot of time for Japanese people to paraphrase or construct natural English expressions. Of course, native English speaking teachers can do it much more easily... It doesn’t take any energy for them” (NI2, T, p. 4). When Takahashi consulted a teacher manual for her lessons, she sometimes asked Sam to evaluate English sentences in the book. Whatever Sam told her (e.g., this sentence is good/bad; this is not accepted by the young generation nowadays), she always accepted his comments and had no follow-up question. In other words, she had complete trust in his English judgments. Aitani was no different. During the third pair discussion between her and Matt, for example, she readily accepted Matt’s suggestions regarding her English, showing her full reliance on his judgments. The perception of the ALTs being authorities and providers of English was so dominant that the ALTs’ intuitions regarding English were considered to be even more valid in the minds of the participants than the textbooks, let alone the JTEs’ English. This is congruent with Phillipson’s (1992) contention that NESTs have been praised due to their “greater facility in demonstrating fluent, idiomatically appropriate language, in appreciating the cultural connotations of the language, and ... in being the final arbiter of the acceptability of any given samples of the language” (p. 194).

Like their teachers, the students also praised the ALTs’ English, using a rich array of adjectives to do so, such as: “good”, “real”, “natural”, “actual”, “first-hand”, “faster”, “foreign”, and “non-Japanese” (see also Jenkins, 2005). Yousuke’s comments summed up the students’ overall perceptions about ALTs and their English: “The native pronunciation can only be acquired by living in foreign countries for a long time. For example, there are some words or expressions that are used only in foreign countries, which we don’t know here” (NI1, Y, p. 3).

Both the teachers and students at the research sites held strong beliefs about the existence of one ‘right’ kind of English which could be acquired only by living in English speaking countries. Among the participants, there was therefore a ubiquitous perception of ALTs as the sole authorities and providers of English.

Authorities and providers of target cultures. In addition to the target language, Aitani, Matt, Tatsuya, and Sayaka most evidently considered ALTs to be also authorities and providers of target cultures (i.e., cultures in English speaking countries). Aitani asserted: “ALTs can be cultural ambassadors ... some JTEs have been to the United States, England,
or Canada. Or some get information from books. But it’s impossible for a JTE to go to every single country or read every book” (NI1, A, p. 10). Aitani thus believed that ALTs were more suited to be cultural ambassadors than JTEs. What is revealing here is that the ALTs were automatically considered to be authorities of cultures in English speaking countries simply because they were born and grew up in ‘one’ English speaking country. The ALTs might arguably not be as familiar with the target cultures (besides the one associated with home country) as the JTEs. JTEs are generally older than ALTs. They are also foreign language teachers, presumably with an interest in the culture of those foreign language users. This is not necessarily the case with ALTs who vary in terms of university majors and areas of expertise and interest. However, since each participant in the JET programme is expected to share their culture with a local community as stated in official documents (CLAIR, 2012), it was hardly surprising that many participants in this study were engrained with the idea that ALTs should be the authorities and providers of the target cultures. According to Matt, ALTs have dual roles, internationalising Japan and teaching English, and the purpose of having an ALT in the classroom is exposing students “to a foreign person and allowing a foreign person to introduce foreign cultures, both their own and other cultures” (NI1, M, p. 8). Matt seemed to believe that students could benefit simply by meeting ‘foreigners’ as well as by getting access to the cultural knowledge of ALTs. This perception Matt had might stem from the fact that Japan is notably an EFL country and that the research sites were virtually monocultural. The rarity of foreign people and native speakers of English perhaps played a large part in ALTs being considered by several participants to be the sole authorities and providers of the target cultures.

Tatsuya and Sayaka perceived ALTs to be cultural ambassadors as well. When I asked Tatsuya about the differences between the JTEs’ solo classes and team-taught classes, he answered:

Since junior high school, when a foreign teacher came to teach, unlike the classes taught only by Japanese teachers, I was taught not only English but also a different culture. When an ALT came to the class for the first time, the ALT showed pictures of his family and friends. It was fun and interesting to learn how foreign people live. (NI1, T, p. 3)

When I asked Sayaka what she wanted her team teachers to do, she responded: “Although we are studying English, I don’t think we know a lot about English speaking countries like the United States or Australia. So I want to learn more about foreign cultures from ALTs” (NI1,
These students thus considered ALTs to be their best cultural informants in the classroom.

The ALTs created opportunities for learning about foreign cultures because they could directly provide unfamiliar cultural information and a foreign appearance to their students. Two teachers (Aitani and Matt) and two students (Tatsuya and Sayaka) most apparently expected ALTs to be the authorities and providers of cultures of English speaking countries.

**Motivation boosters or hinderers.** The participants accepted ALTs as authorities and providers of the target language (all the participants) and target cultures (Aitani, Matt, Tatsuya, and Sayaka). Because of this and because of their foreign appearance, ALTs often became motivation boosters for their students. I observed, for example, that the students at Sakura were quite enthusiastic about talking to Matt. Some female students were so excited to run into him that they screamed and jumped around in the hallway. The students at Tsubaki were also eager to speak to Sam. Sayaka shared with me her initial interest in Sam: “the very first motivation I had for wanting to speak to Sam was because he is handsome!” (NI2, S, p. 2). The teachers discussed their views about the presence of the ALTs in the classroom during a focus group discussion. They were in agreement that the ALTs could make a difference to student learning:

Takahashi: Having Sam in the classroom makes a difference because, immediately, it becomes natural for them [the students] to use English … when we have Sam in the class, they switch to the English language mode … and talk to you [Sam] and talk to me too!

Aitani: I agree with you (laugh), my students too! When I conduct the class alone, they have less reason to speak English … whereas when we have Matt in our classroom … they try hard to understand our English and … try to speak more English. (FGD, C2, p. 6)

As monolingual native speakers of English, the ALTs appeared to provide a legitimate reason for the JTEs and their students to communicate with others in English (see Galloway, 2009; Miyagi et al., 2009). As I was listening to the discussion of the teachers, however, I could not help but wonder whether what they meant by “makes a difference” points simply to superficial excitement due to the rare presence of the ALTs (see “Infrequent, inefficient, and tokenistic” later in this chapter) or an increase in intrinsic motivation due to the ALTs’ linguistic and pedagogical contributions to student learning. In any case, the ALTs were by and large viewed to be motivation boosters at the research sites.
Takahashi regarded ALTs as motivation boosters from a slightly different perspective. She believed that Sam motivated the students to study English more because he was also a learner of a second language (Japanese). She wrote: “He has been learning Japanese and enjoying it because what he has learned is useful in a real life. Having Sam in the classroom can be a magic that changes our students’ it’s-not-a-big-deal-even-though-I-can’t-speak-English circumstances into a real life” (EPS, T, C2, p. 1).

Although ALTs were considered to be motivation boosters on many occasions, several student participants had reservations. Tatsuya, for example, said that he felt anxious when communicating with ALTs: “when the ALT came, the class was fun. But I was nervous when I had to speak to the ALT in English” (NI1, T, p. 2). Yousuke confessed how nervous he and other students become when a new ALT joins their class for the first time: “I get really nervous, and the class becomes really quiet and tense” (NI1, Y, p. 9). In a similar vein, Sayaka told me that she often hesitated speaking to ALTs and would feel more comfortable to be around ALTs if they could speak Japanese (even in a limited way) rather than only English. Phillipson (1992) contends that teachers of English “should have proven experience of and success in foreign language learning, and that they should have a detailed acquaintance with the language and culture of the learners they are responsible for” (p. 195). On the contrary, ALTs do not generally have any experience of Japanese language learning or a deep knowledge of the culture of their students (CLAIR, 2012) (see “Immature (young) and unqualified (inexperienced)” later in this chapter).

In sum, several participants (Takahashi, Aitani, and Sayaka), on the one hand, regarded ALTs as motivation boosters because they are native speakers of English and language learners of Japanese. On the other hand, some participants (Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke) sometimes perceived ALTs, who have a low command of Japanese and have little contact time with students, to be possible motivation hinderers.

**ALTs as Foreign Assistants: Socially and Professionally Marginalised**

I now introduce another perception the participants (most evidently, the JTEs and the ALTs) had of ALTs: ALTs as foreign assistants. Although it was hardly surprising given their job title that the ALTs were often regarded as mere language assistants, it was nonetheless disappointing to witness that the ALTs were, to a large extent, excluded from
core language teaching and school management. In addition to their job status, what shaped the teachers’ perception of ALTs was the fact that most ALTs were young and did not have a teaching license, any teaching experience, or Japanese language ability. These attributes meant that the ALTs were placed, socially and professionally, at the periphery in their schools. I should note here, however, that the ALTs in this particular study were not necessarily typical ALTs as Matt was 32 years old and had family responsibilities, and Sam minored in education and had tutoring experience in his home country.

**Excluded from core teaching: Assistant language ‘teachers’?** Sam described, often in a frustrated tone, how little work he had: “I definitely would like to put forth more time when I have all this free time. I don’t know where to go. I try to fill my time as much as I can” (NI1, S, p. 6). Later in the project, he elaborated on his perception of ALTs and their work:

> They [ALTs] don’t enjoy going [to their schools]. I mean, they can update their English board in the hallway, but you can’t do that every day, and sometimes they get to plan stuff, but they only plan for four lessons or so a week … so they end up being there and have almost no responsibilities delegated to them…. Some people study Japanese, but you can’t study Japanese six hours straight. (RL, C3, p. 13)

Wanting to know the available time that Sam had, I observed him on one day for a whole period (i.e., 45 minutes) when he did not have a class. During that period, he did not converse with anybody. He sat at his desk in the corner of the teachers’ room and spent the majority of his time reading a book or checking his emails. Afterward, he told me that he had finished reading six books within two weeks at school. Matt also commented that ALTs were assigned only a little work at their schools. He said: “we could be doing so much more to help students in their English learning experience, but it’s really not going to happen much here” (NI2, M, p. 15). Perhaps due to this light workload, ALTs quite often travelled both around the country and abroad, especially during testing periods and long vacations. Most JTEs on the other hand had responsibilities such as marking and grading, teaching intensive courses, and running clubs during those times. Based on the observations at the research sites and my own personal experience as a JTE for 10 years, although JTEs also took holidays and did some travelling, the extent to which ALTs left their school sites and took annual leave for their own personal purposes was notably greater than that of their JTE counterparts. In conjunction with ALTs’ use of long school vacations and annual leave, their shorter working hours each day further reflected the low-pressure nature of their job. When I raised questions about the working conditions of ALTs, Takahashi was quick to point out: “ALTs work only until 4:15 pm…. It would be great if they work at least until 5:15 pm, just like us. Then, they could, for
example, join club activities…. They go back home really early” (NI1, T, p. 10). Both the JTEs and ALTs seemed to be frustrated with the ALTs’ low workloads and short work hours. They were unanimous in their wish to put the free time of ALTs to better use.

In addition to the quantity of ALT work, its quality leaves something to be desired. The teachers mentioned how the ALTs teach the same lessons with the same materials over and over again in different classes:

Takahashi: So you [Sam] repeat the same lesson again and again and again (laugh).

Sam: Yeah, Christmas, too much Christmas (laugh).

Aitani: And next class, New Year, New Year, New Year.

Matt: I really want to set a fire to the Christmas power point presentation in Australia (laugh).

Sam: Yeah, I’m done, no more holidays (laugh). (FGD, C1, p. 22)

The JTEs were not impressed with the ALTs’ classes, which repeated endlessly the same content; at the same time, the ALTs were tired of conducting the exact same lessons multiple times. Sam told me that an ALT friend of his who was in his third year conducted the same self-introduction lessons for almost six months in different classes. Sam summed up: “the work of ALTs offers the least work satisfaction is what I would say. We don’t have that feeling such as taking pride in your work, being happy, feeling accomplished or achieved” (RL, C3, p. 23). One of the ALTs in Hasegawa’s (2008) study made a decision to go back to her home country rather than renewing for the following year mainly because of the feeling of uselessness which arose from the large amount of free time she had at school.

I too observed that the ALTs were often excluded from core teaching at their schools. For example, there was no reference to team-taught classes in the English curriculum, syllabus, or yearly lesson plans in either school. At the beginning of the contract year, all the ALTs received was a visiting schedule for different schools. Matt told me that he was never invited to weekly English teacher meetings where his JTEs discuss matters concerning the English classes and the curriculum. He confessed that he felt side-lined as an English teacher in his schools. Hasegawa (2008) argues that the isolation felt by ALTs comes not only from JTEs but also from other staff members. Indeed, the ALTs in this study were not informed of school events in which they were supposed to participate. Nor were the ALTs allowed to attend monthly teacher meetings. They left school even earlier than 4 pm on days when the meetings were held. According to Matt, it was not a common requirement for JTEs or other
teachers at his school to include ALTs in the discussions of school matters. He explained this, using expressions such as: “I am an unknown quantity” (NI1, M, p. 20) and “we are guests for a short time” (TPD2, ALTs, C2, p. 7). It was as though the ALTs had been left with no choice but to consider themselves “as temporary sojourners in Japan” (Miyazato, 2012, p. 644) by their contracts, the school system, and their colleagues. As feelings of belonging and the need to belong are fundamental human motivations for work (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), the exclusion of the ALTs from core teaching arguably had a huge impact on their level of job satisfaction.

The ALTs frequently commented that they were not contributing to the English learning of their students. For instance, Matt was well aware of the fact that he did not have to think much about grammar points or test questions for his students: “I am not a strong source of their learning” (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 7). Sam also cast doubt on the usefulness of his presence for student learning. He provided an episode from his English club:

I’ve been in English club, but we meet sporadically. So what it normally comes down to is we talk or we play easy games because they [JTEs] don’t normally inform me enough time to plan anything. For a few times I got excited and planned assignments, they were like, “No, no, no, you can’t use that”. I was like, “OK. I will do something else”. And they were like, “Yeah, we did the apple bobbing for Halloween the other day. How about that?” So I got all the stuff, like apples and things. Then I got there and they were like, “No one is coming today”. (TPD2, ALTs, C2, p. 5)

This episode shows how Sam was treated lightly as an ‘assistant’ and could not effectively contribute to the English learning of his students. He shared with me an unfortunate story of some fellow ALTs (not Matt): “some ALTs I know made something personal for class and brought it to their class and their JTEs were like, ‘We are not going to use that’. And that’s really devastating, considering they spent a lot of time doing that” (RL, C3, p. 24). Sam also made some quite controversial comments: “You can get rid of the JET programme, and it won’t make too much of a difference, based on what kids are learning…. If all the ALTs go home tomorrow, it probably would not directly have a huge impact” (RL, C3, p. 27).

The teacher participants did not appear to view the ALTs as professional ‘teachers’ – definitely not the way they did the JTEs. The ALTs were treated as mere assistants (or just foreign people) and only allocated undemanding jobs at their schools. They were marginalised and excluded both socially and professionally to such an extent that one ALT told me that if the schools were to cease hiring ALTs through the JET programme, it would not make much of a difference to student learning.
Immature (young) and unqualified (inexperienced). One characteristic of ALTs that was salient in the interviews as well as in casual chats I had with the teacher participants was: ALTs are mostly immature (young) and unqualified (inexperienced). Takahashi presumed: “the majority of the JET programme participants come here right after they graduate from their university and they are usually young, so they don’t really have social or teaching experience” (NI1, T, p. 2). She was surprised to find out that the ALTs had agreed to participate in focus group discussions on Saturdays, sacrificing their private time because she thought that “the ALTs always have parties on weekends” (NI2, T, p. 6). Matt shared a story with me from the first night of a professional conference for team teachers in which he participated. According to him, there was an ALT who consumed a great amount of alcohol and “ran down the road naked” (RL, C2, p. 1). Matt and Sam relayed a separate, but similar, story about an unprofessional ALT whom they knew from their area. The ALT, according to Matt, would leave visiting schools in the middle of the day, informing others that she had to go to her base school. She would then go to the beach or back to her house. Matt noted: “The person thinks nobody knows about this, but people know” (RL, C2, p. 11). Another ALT Sam knew would call up her school in the morning and tell her colleague that she would not be able to work because she was sick or her car was out of gas. She would then be spotted by people in the community at the beach or out elsewhere with her boyfriend. Sam talked about her: “All knew she was lying” (RL, C3, p. 7). Although JTEs in the area had also been involved in unprofessional incidents over the years, based on the collected data as well as my personal experience as a JTE, I argue that the degree and frequency of the immature behaviour of ALTs outweighs that of JTEs.

The ALTs were also perceived, on the whole, to be inexperienced and unqualified to teach English in Japan. For instance, Matt viewed himself as an inexperienced teacher: “I am not an experienced teacher and not experienced in designing effective team-teaching solutions for a particular unit of study” (NI1, M, p. 5). When I asked Matt why his classes were only limited to first-year students, he speculated: “the JTEs probably figure quite rightly that the JTEs are probably better qualified to teach grammar than the ALTs. ALTs, as it’s written, are English speakers, not really English teachers” (NI1, M, p. 10). Reflecting on his grammar instruction in the class during cycle 2, Matt admitted that he was inexperienced with teaching: “this is where it is clear that I am not a trained teacher”. He then added that his instruction was “a bit loose” (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 13). At Tsubaki, Sam confessed one of his teaching problems, derived from his lack of English teaching experience: “initially, it was
hard to know how fast you speak, I still speak too fast and I know I do” (NI1, S, p. 17). Sam also revealed his feeling, possibly related to his self-confidence and teaching experience, about the frequent changes to his class schedule: “Here, it is different from the U.S. So since I don’t fully understand anything, I don’t think it’s my place to complain” (RL, C3, p. 22). Even though the JTEs in this study did not explicitly mention ALTs being inexperienced or unqualified – due perhaps to Matt’s age and Sam’s prior tutoring experience, many of my former JTE colleagues in the prefecture considered ALTs to be generally inexperienced teachers with no intention of improving their teaching skills.

As for the student participants, Yousuke referred to one difference between the teaching practices of JTEs and ALTs: “the foreign teachers in general write on the blackboard roughly; whereas, Japanese teachers, as you know, write well on the blackboard” (NI2, Y, p. 3). This difference may seem trivial, but it does signal how much experience a teacher has. ALTs were thus regarded as immature and unqualified, especially by the ALTs themselves. Ohtani (2010) states that ALTs “do not have sufficient educational experience or content background to become teachers” especially because they “receive official acceptance only two months before their departure” (p. 39). It is perhaps due to this and a lack of confidence in teaching that the ALTs in this study often refrained from expressing their ideas about their lessons or class schedule.

A different view, however, surfaced in my conversations with some of the students. They did not seem to care so much about the ALTs’ lack of teaching experience or qualifications. When Tatsuya told me during the first interview that he usually asks JTEs questions about tests, I inquired of him if he could ask ALTs those questions. He replied that he did not mind doing so provided that they can communicate well with him (in Japanese). Yousuke, rather more extremely, stated that he does not see the difference between JTEs and ALTs and that “team-taught classes are just like the usual classes…. I don’t mind having ALTs in all of my English classes” (NI1, Y, p. 9). Listening to these students’ comments, I could not help but wonder what it means for ALTs to be inexperienced and unqualified in teaching English in Japan when the ultimate stakeholders of the class (i.e., students) were satisfied with their ALTs. Does this mean that the students were indifferent to English learning in general and thus did not put much thought into the differences in their teachers? Or were they really interested in the personal abilities of ALTs irrespective of their qualifications or experience? Although the answer is not quite clear, there was certainly an interesting contrast between the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of ALTs, particularly
regarding their qualifications and experience: the teachers viewed the lack of teaching qualification and experience in a purely negative way while the students did not.

Takahashi, however, told me that an ALT she had worked with started as inexperienced and came to be a competent teacher over the course of three years: “She had matured and started to become a proper teacher…. In her first year, she got irritated easily … but she began to deal with students better…. I could completely trust her in her final year” (NI1, T, p. 3). Kuroda (2007) also reported on the growth of an ALT in the context of an elementary school. One can see then that although ALTs are largely perceived as being immature (young) and unqualified (inexperienced), they can become competent teachers with accumulated experience. This makes me question the rationale and efficacy of contractually regulating the maximum number of years JET participants can work (i.e., five years at time of data collection). There were in fact at least three fifth-year ALTs at the research sites who had to leave their schools in 2012 even though they and their colleagues did not want it to happen. The contract of ALTs regarding the maximum number of working years thus seems to have facilitated the high turn-over rate of ALTs and affected the image of ALTs as unqualified and inexperienced.

At times ALTs were believed to be enlightening to student learning largely because of their native speaker status, while at other times they were perceived to be frightening to students mainly due to their inability to speak Japanese. The teacher participants also often recognised that ALTs are usually immature and not ready to work in Japanese schools, whereas the student participants did not seem to hold such a view. It was also revealed that in some cases ALTs had become more mature and suited to teaching English over time. The following sections examine the participants’ perceptions of team-teaching practices.

**Team Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions of Team-Teaching Practices**

Some of the salient perceptions the participants had of team-teaching practices were: (a) unique practices because of a native speaker and a team; (b) open-ended practices due to vague definitions; and (c) secondary and less important practices as a result of the participants’ other priorities and infrequent team-teaching schedules.
Unique Practices

Both the teachers and students acknowledged unique practices associated with team-taught classes. Unlike teaching practices in JTEs’ solo or other subject classes, team-teaching practices included the contributions of a native speaker of English and teachers’ teamwork.

Contributions of a native speaker of English. When talking about team-teaching practices, several teachers (Matt, Aitani, and Takahashi) often focussed on the fact that one of the team teachers is a native speaker of English. During the first group discussion, Matt drew everybody’s attention to his native English when describing his lesson: “the instruction delivered only in English pretty much is the key … the purpose is for them [the students] to hear a native speaker” (FGD, C1, p. 12). Aitani did not hesitate to show her desire to fill her team-taught classes with only (native) English: “I would like ALTs to speak a lot…. English is everywhere, that kind of environment … their [students’] chances of encountering English is limited, so I would like them to be exposed to English as much as they can” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 12). Takahashi emphasised the need for English provided by native speakers in the classroom along much the same lines: “I should expose them [students] to native speakers’ English more. They need to get used to listening to native speakers’ English” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 8). Aitani was somewhat definite in her opinions about team-taught classes compared to her solo classes: “it’s easier for me to use English in the ALT’s presence. And when I teach alone, it’s a bit difficult for me because students expect me to explain and expect to understand more [in Japanese]” (FGD, C1, p. 20). She added in her writing: “team teaching with ALT makes it more convincing and more natural to get rid of disgraceful translation in classes, which provides me with chances of creating new teaching styles” (EPS, A, C2, p. 2).

In line with part of Aitani’s comments, Taguchi (2002) found that interaction in English increased by 40-60% in team-taught classes in comparison to JTEs’ solo classes. Sakui (2004) revealed that team-taught classes included much more English interaction and communicative activities than JTEs’ solo classes. Another example of how the participants valued native English in their teaching practices appeared when JTEs prepared reading materials. Aitani said: “when making reading materials and classroom activities, I ask ALTs to run a ‘native check’. This is something we JTEs cannot do” (NI1, A, p. 16).

Matt, Aitani, and Takahashi unequivocally emphasised the value of ALTs and their English in their teaching practices. They seemed to have preferred to offer classes which contain much native English provided by the ALTs. The ALTs also frequently checked the
students’ and JTEs’ English. The important issue here again appears to be the rarity of native-level English speakers at the research sites.

Three students (Kanon, Tatsuya, and Yousuke) also noted the key role that ALTs play as native speakers of English. Kanon highlighted how appreciative she was of the ALTs’ English in the classroom: “I want to listen to natural conversations…. When I can translate the naturally spoken English with good pronunciation, I am happy” (NI1, K, p. 7). Tatsuya emphasised the native pronunciation of ALTs: “I noticed the difference between the English of Japanese teachers and the English of ALTs when I was a junior high student. ALTs came here to show us correct pronunciation” (NI1, T, p. 3). A direct response about the presence of a native speaker came from Yousuke: “there is a difference when we have actual foreign people in the classroom” (NI1, Y, p. 8). He elaborated on this comment later in a student pair discussion: “Team-taught classes are fun. They have dynamic movements…. Sam speaks English to us in a natural speed like a machine gun. We always have to deal with that. I concentrate on the class to catch up with that speed” (SPD, Tsubaki, p. 5).

Kanon, Tatsuya, and Yousuke most evidently regarded team-teaching practices in a positive way because the ALTs’ English had a ‘natural’ speed and ‘correct’ pronunciation. This is reminiscent of the native speaker fallacy: “The teacher who is a native speaker is the best embodiment of the target and norm for learners” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 194).

Apart from the positive contributions of the ALTs, Tatsuya and Yousuke commented on a couple of possibly challenging aspects of having them in class. Tatsuya at Sakura wondered if ALTs could conduct classes with full understanding as class interaction is sometimes carried out only in Japanese. Yousuke at Tsubaki indicated that team-taught classes could become somewhat difficult and create “a space where everybody gets a bit tense” (NI1, Y, p. 9) due to the ALTs’ lack of familiarity with their students. The contributions of the ALTs thus might sometimes be limited or even detrimental to teaching and learning practices. On at least one occasion during the data collection process, however, Takahashi did not have any particular opinion about the contributions of native speakers of English in class. She did not seem to see team teaching as being limited to the language classroom, with the team being made up of a NEST and an NNEST: “Team teaching by Japanese English teachers would also work. We don’t have to have native speakers of English. It is now common to incorporate team teaching in math classes or elementary schools or special education schools, and so on” (NI1, T, p. 6).
Although there were some exceptions, most participants recognised that overall ‘natural’ and ‘correct’ English provided by native English speakers was a key feature of team-teaching practices in the Japanese English language classroom.

**Contributions of teamwork.** All the participants described another characteristic of team-teaching practices: two teachers working cooperatively as a team. Matt praised Tsubaki pair’s teamwork as follows: “In terms of the delivery, I think it was good that the ALT is kind of leading but directing the students … but the JTE is assisting students in delivering the material” (FGD, C1, p. 17). From the beginning of the first interview, Aitani quite explicitly explained the meaning of having a team in class: “Ideally, what team teachers are doing should aim for cultural exchange and language learning, but without limiting ourselves to only those goals, we should take advantage of our own differences. We should combine and share them” (NI1, A, p. 1). She illustrated how she perceived team-teaching practices compared to her individual-teaching practices:

There need to be differences between team-taught classes and JTEs’ solo classes…. When you are working as a team, the class should be able to enjoy different outcomes from particular teams…. If there are two teachers, we can divide our attention and cover many students…. If we are to increase the numbers of teachers, we should increase learning and teaching outcomes accordingly, right? (NI1, A, pp. 4-5)

She added in the same interview that the combined knowledge of the team teachers can facilitate student learning. These benefits of team-taught classes she acknowledged were similar to those reflected in the literature: (a) experiencing different teaching processes and outcomes from those of individually-taught classes (see Buckley, 2000); (b) having a lower student to teacher ratio (see Benoit & Haugh, 2001); (c) providing the combined knowledge of team teachers (see Hourcade & Bauwens, 2002); and (d) collaboratively creating more and different classroom activities (see Buckley, 2000). Later in the project, she wrote: “Team-teaching environment is always filled with various possibilities, and it encourages me to try new innovative ideas when I lose confidence in my English and teaching skills” (EPS, A, C2, p. 2). The teachers from Tsubaki had the following conversation after watching a video clip of a class at Sakura:

Sam: I think, because there were two of you [the teachers at Sakura], while you [Matt] are talking at the front, she [Aitani] can go around and help.

Takahashi: Yeah, it’s good for the students.

Sam: And, that way, if they won’t listen or they are not getting it, there is somebody to help direct them. (FGD, C1, p. 7)
The teachers thus acknowledged the benefits of having both teachers in the classroom. They seemed to believe that the benefits of teamwork positively affected teaching and learning practices.

All the students also identified the value of their teachers teaching as a team. Kanon said: “when there is only one teacher, the teacher only stands in front of the blackboard. But when there are two teachers, one of the teachers always walks around the classroom, so it is easy for me to ask questions” (NI1, K, p. 4). Tatsuya mentioned the practices of team teachers from the previous year: “The Japanese teacher and the ALT demonstrated dialogues in front of us. They were easy to understand. Also the Japanese teacher wrote instructions on the blackboard, and the ALT walked around our desks and supported us” (NI1, T, p. 8). The benefits of having two teachers in class were also highlighted by Sayaka: “They [team-taught classes] are good because we have plenty of opportunities to be exposed to proper English, and when we don’t understand the difficult English, the Japanese teachers can tell us what it means” (NI1, S, p. 3). Yousuke noted that his teachers combined their expertise as team members:

The class goes on smoothly because Takahashi plays the role of translating into Japanese and Sam of translating into English. We can also learn a lot because both teachers interact with each other in front of us. Each teacher has his or her expertise, right? (NI1, Y, p. 5)

The students, like their teachers, recognised the advantages of team-teaching practices. In team-taught classes, they feel they can: (a) ask questions more easily as there is more than one teacher in the classroom (see Buckley, 2000); (b) observe conversations demonstrated by the two teachers (see Brumby & Wada, 1990); and (c) gain from the expertise of both teachers (e.g., Japanese translation by JTEs and the use of native English by ALTs) (see Villa et al., 2008). My study, much like Lipovsky and Mahboob’s (2010) study, underlines that students perceive NESTs and NNESTs to have complementary strengths in the classroom when they work as pairs.

The team consisting of a JTE and an ALT seemed to be effective in most cases. However, as Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) argue, we cannot assume that having teachers work together automatically leads to improved teacher or learner development. It was to be expected that teams would not always function well due to several issues experienced by JTEs and ALTs. For example, the ALTs’ infrequent visits to the schools prevented the team teachers from having fruitful communication (see “Secondary and Less Important Practices”
later in this chapter). Moreover, working with another person necessitated more discussions when planning and conducting classes. Aitani confessed that it is more cumbersome to prepare for team-taught classes than her usual classes. She explained:

It is not only my issue. We have to plan classes together by contacting each other. The ALT only comes to my school two days a week. We cannot discuss things thoroughly by phone or email ... so there are parts left unfinished sometimes.... When more than one person plans a lesson, we need to negotiate a lot and meet half-way because each person is bound to have different ideas. We have to compromise and choose whichever idea we feel is right. This takes a lot of time and energy. (RL, C1, p. 13)

The fact that JTEs speak English as their second language made negotiation even more complicated. Aitani noted: “If possible, we [JTEs] want to avoid having discussions with ALTs about what is to be done in class because we might be hesitant to negotiate in English which is not our mother tongue” (NI2, A, p. 16). Both the infrequent visits of the ALTs and the English abilities of the JTEs seemed to have adversely affected the amount and content of communication between team teachers, limiting the maximum potential of the team.

All the participants positively acknowledged the teamwork of the teachers because they viewed having two teachers who have different areas of expertise to be advantageous. Insufficient coordination between team teachers, however, appeared to have sometimes restricted the productivity of the team.

Open-Ended Practices

According to the ALT handbook 2011 (CLAIR, 2011), team teaching provides “opportunities for active interaction in a foreign language in the classroom, enhances the students’ motivation towards learning a foreign language and deepens the students’ understanding of foreign cultures” (p. 22). CLAIR (2011) offers several suggestions to ALTs to improve team-taught classes, including: (a) teach all four components of language; (b) challenge the students to think; (c) build on past knowledge; (d) cultivate a relaxed classroom; (e) make the lesson relevant; and (f) speak in your native language as much as possible. Apart from the reference that the ALTs should not “conduct classes alone, or be the ‘main’ teacher” (CLAIR, 2011, p. 22), team-teaching practices in Japan seem to be open-ended. The teachers in this study indeed reported that team-teaching practices are vague and that individual teachers saw team teaching from their own perspectives. They had a variety of interpretations.
in particular about (a) teaching approach, (b) the roles of team teachers, and (c) classroom pedagogy.

Teaching approach: ‘True’ team teaching or not? The ALTs viewed ‘true’ team teaching differently. They knew that some teachers regarded their team-teaching practices as effective, and others did not. In other words, individual teachers had diverse ideas about ideal team teaching and evaluated their classes in their own ways. Matt was especially forthright in discussing this issue: “I think the concept of team teaching is quite an open thing. It’s a very intangible concept, what it is to team teach, and exactly what it is that you are supposed to do” (NI1, M, p. 5). He continued, referring to both JTEs and ALTs: “There is no clear path of what it is that you are supposed to do.... Many people say it’s even less clear to JTEs.... So there is a lot of room for variation and personal interpretation” (NI1, M, p. 5). There did not seem to be a rich array of guidance in the participants’ contexts about what should happen in team-taught classes. This is similar to the context of Main’s (2012) study where middle school teachers in Australia were “required to manage the process of forming and developing as a team and then sustaining effective team practices, in many instances, without any guidance or training” (p. 76). Matt did not regard some of his teaching as ‘true’ team teaching: “We [team teachers] don’t know what each other wants to do, and often there will be a rough plan, and it’s just up to me to do whatever I want.... That’s not true team teaching, obviously” (N1, M, p. 4). Matt also compared his team-teaching approach to that of his predecessor:

When he said to me about what to expect [as an ALT], his words were: “We have got a pretty easy position, we don’t have to prepare a lot, the JTEs just will tell you what they want you to do”. Whilst it is maybe easier to let that happen, it is quite frustrating. For me, personally, it’s frustrating when I don’t know what is going to happen. I just arrive in the morning and I have 20 or 30 minutes to get my head around what I have to do in the class, what the JTE would like me to do, as opposed to being given some forewarning and space to create an activity. (NI1, M, p. 13)

This illustrates how team-teaching practices are up to individual JTEs and ALTs. Matt seemed to want to get involved with class planning more for ‘true’ teaching. He told the following story based on his experience in class:

Very recently, I found a couple of instances where, “Matt, could you please read these words?” I read those words and twiddle my thumbs for 20 minutes and walk up and down the aisles, doing nothing.... The big downfall of team teaching is when it is really sort of two separate entities ... rather than a positive addition to each other. (NI1, M, p. 13)
Although he pointed out that from time to time there were other occasions where he could achieve effective teaching where he and his JTEs taught something about Australian culture in combination with grammar rules presented in the textbook – “That way of teaching is fantastic!” (NI1, M, p. 18) – in his experience, the JTEs, for the most part, did not seem to exploit the full potential of team-teaching practices. For him, ‘true’ team teaching takes place when: (a) team teachers know what to expect from the other and what is expected of them (see Tajino & Tajino, 2000), and (b) team teachers effectively cooperate with each other and equally contribute to the planning and execution of lessons (see Johannes, 2012).

Another concern Matt expressed regarding the teachers’ approach to team teaching was the fact that some JTEs become a mere translator: “One teacher consistently, she wants to translate everything I say” (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 4). Matt also stated that certain JTEs use ALTs as tape-recorders (see McConnell, 2000). He claimed: “I guess JTEs who don’t understand team teaching will just utilise ALTs as a tape-recorder” (NI1, M, p. 18). Aitani confessed that she treated her ALTs like a tape-recorder early in her career in spite of her unwillingness to do so because of her lack of pedagogical knowledge about team-taught classes: “I know I shouldn’t have done this, but I had no choice but to use ALTs like a tape-recorder” (NI1, A, p. 3).

Quite a bit of Matt’s comments were echoed by Sam who also regarded the contribution of ALTs to team-teaching practices as non-specific. He mentioned that he had difficulty understanding what was expected of him, especially during the initial stage of his teaching career: “At first, I was kind of at a loss like, ‘What do you want me to do?’ I guess I struggled a bit because no one laid out expectations…. I know other ALTs who felt the same way” (NI1, S, p. 9). Sam also talked about his contract: “The contract is vague. From what I understand, I am obviously required to go to class, and my work time is set … everything else is vague. For the most part, they [his JTEs] will decide what I do” (NI1, S, p. 7). Lack of mutual understanding about team teaching between teachers thus became clear in my study. Crooks (2001) contends that denying the opportunities of systematic professional development for both JTEs and ALTs to learn about team teaching will likely lead to the programme being “less effective, and perhaps never revealing its actual potential to the participants” (p. 36).

The ALTs thus knew that the approaches team teachers choose in team-taught classes vary, depending on the beliefs of individual teachers, the previous (team-teaching)
experiences they had, and the culture of their respective schools. Matt considered that ‘true’
team-teaching practices occur when both teachers contribute to their classes in an effective
way as opposed to individual teachers having more or less responsibility, believing this to be
inefficient. I also found that certain JTEs become mere translators and that some ALTs
become no more than tape-recorders in class.

The roles of teachers: Divided or undivided? When team teachers work together,
they usually divide roles in terms of planning, instruction, and evaluation so that they know
how best to contribute to their practices (Villa et al., 2008). The roles of team teachers in
Japan, however, did not appear to be clearly divided. Matt claimed that his JTEs generally
decide his teaching role because they are, in principle, the main teachers in their team-taught
classes: “It’s up to the JTEs what role we are able to play in team teaching or how much
opportunity we are able to be given to lead or design” (NI2, M, p. 14). For Sam, the role he
plays is flexible:

Sometimes I am an assistant, and I don’t do anything more than check grammar and
read stuff. And sometimes I lead certain activities or help explain things or provide
different ideas for the lesson. So it really depends on the lesson. But again my
situation is different than a lot of the ALTs I know. Some of them are almost not used
at all besides repeating words and standing at the back of the classroom or just
planning games. (NI1, S, p. 12)

The roles of the ALTs were thus not well defined and appeared to be dependent on individual
JTEs and vary in different lessons. The JTEs in this study were also ambivalent about the
roles they and their ALT should play. Takahashi explained this in detail:

The ALT just came last summer, so we haven’t been able to divide our roles
successfully yet. As for Oral Communication classes, we conduct classes planned
100% by him…. As for English Expression classes, since he comes to the classes only
once a week, I plan all the lessons. He comes basically like a guest. Perhaps what
subject we teach has a lot to do with how we utilise ALTs…. Also it depends on the
objective of the subject and on how those classes are usually conducted. (NI1, T, p. 3)

Both Takahashi and Sam seemed to agree that they were still at the stage where their teaching
roles are in flux. Illustrating this, Takahashi and Sam made the following remarks when they
were specifically asked about their role division in their classes:

Takahashi: We don’t decide that kind of roles.

Sam: I guess it depends. Sometimes you lead more, sometimes I lead more.
Takahashi: Sometimes I notice something, sometimes you notice. So whichever teacher who notices the good timing gives feedback first. (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 10)

Aitani also accepted the changing nature of the roles of team teachers. She commented: “The role of ALT and JTE can be changeable. At one time, ALT is the leader of the lesson…. At another time, we both work the same amount…. At still another time, JTE can be the leader” (FGD, C1, p. 14). Particularly noteworthy here is that Takahashi and Sam believed that the ideal role allocation for team teachers is equal and that they tried to achieve this. In contrast, Aitani thought the roles of team teachers should not be inflexibly pre-determined. Villa et al. (2008) argue that successful team teaching takes place when teachers can comfortably alternate their roles. In order for this to happen, they stress that team teachers should together have substantial “time, coordination, and trust” (p. 21).

Although the teachers saw their roles invariably within their respective contexts, the JTEs held one persistent perception: ALTs should be the ‘main’ teachers in team-taught classes. Both JTEs highlighted the fact that they tend to let their ALT lead classes. Allowing ALTs to play the role of a ‘main’ teacher was at odds with what the ALT handbook 2011 (CLAIR, 2011) states, as presented earlier. Aitani touched upon this topic in a pair discussion: “In team-taught classes with ALTs, I tend to be an assistant, rather than a person who would explain first” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 10). By the same token, Takahashi commented: “I try not to speak … usually I speak more but I want students to listen to Sam speak…. I always offer the role of writing…. I want Sam to speak a lot” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 6).

The JTEs and ALTs thus did not strictly divide their teaching roles (e.g., who leads or assists the class, who gives feedback first in class, and who plans the lesson). It seemed that their roles depended on the JTEs’ decisions, the team teachers’ experiences, and which class they were teaching. Some teachers thought that the roles of team teachers should be equal, and others considered that they should be negotiable. Nonetheless, at least one thing they seemed to agree on was that the ALTs should speak as much as possible in their team-taught classes.

Contrary to the teachers, the students clearly saw the division of labour in team-teaching practices. For the most part, they regarded the ALTs as ‘main’ teachers who direct lessons and provide instruction in English, while they viewed the JTEs as ‘supporting’ teachers who sometimes help with Japanese translation. Interestingly, Kanon told me of an
extreme case regarding the roles of team teachers: “They [JTEs] just watch the ALT’s class at the back of the classroom without doing anything” (NI1, K, p. 5).

The team teachers believed that team teaching was quite an open-ended practice and was dependent on the beliefs and experiences of individual teachers as well as the subject and goal of each class. Some valued the flexible nature of team teacher roles, and others strived for reaching an equal division of labour. Nonetheless, the JTEs had one recurring perception of the roles of team teachers: ALTs should be the main source of the target language in class. In the students’ eyes, the roles of their teachers were simpler: ALTs are in charge of team-taught classes by providing native English whilst JTEs offer occasional assistance in Japanese and sit backstage.

**Classroom pedagogy: Rigid or flexible?** The teacher participants considered classroom pedagogy in team-taught classes to be open-ended. Some JTEs employed one pedagogical style all the time in a rigid way, and others were more flexible, depending on the class. For instance, in this study, the ALTs perceived Aitani and Takahashi to be pedagogically progressive and open-minded compared to other JTEs. Matt said to Aitani in a pair discussion: “I don’t think they [other JTEs] think of it [team teaching] as progressively as you do in terms of it really being kind of a give and take affair” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 12). It was obvious how grateful Matt was for Aitani’s openness: “In Aitani’s case, I’m very appreciative of her openness and willingness to allow me to take control to put forward my ideas and activities. Other teachers don’t do that. It’s not necessarily a criticism. Everyone has their own style” (NI2, M, p. 14). This grateful attitude was echoed by Sam when he talked about his JTEs, especially Takahashi:

Takahashi is, I mean, everyone at Tsubaki is much different, non-traditional…. She would disregard [what two of them had planned], but I know some teachers would be like, “It’s in the textbook!” … if they see it in the textbook, “Oh, today’s topic is cloning, and we use these phrases”. And the whole lesson would be about cloning, and it’s not useful at all. (TPD2, ALTs, C3, p. 3)

The classes conducted by the JTEs in this study sounded more flexible than those of other JTEs. Indeed, Aitani and the other teachers at her school conducted lessons differently, as illustrated by the following example: “In second graders, I teach two classes, and other teachers teach other two classes. And other JTEs watched the entire DVD in their team-taught classes, but I chose not to show the entire DVD” (FGD, C3, p. 8).
In addition to the lesson content and classroom material, another pedagogical issue in team-taught classes raised by the teachers was the use of L1 (i.e., Japanese). During one focus group discussion, Aitani illustrated how much and why she used Japanese in her class. Her perception seemed to be changing in a fluid way as she was teaching in the classroom:

I didn’t mean to use that much of Japanese at first, but … when I was explaining the situation … I thought that it was a little bit unclear, so I unconsciously thought that I should reinforce it in Japanese. But, later, I changed my mind. “Maybe I should just stick to English”. (FGD, C2, p. 14)

In contrast, Takahashi was certain about her use of L1 in the classroom: “I use English only in my regular lessons even when I teach alone, and I don’t use Japanese so much in team-taught classes either” (FGD, C1, p. 25). Since Matt was interested in how this English-only approach worked in team-taught classes, he asked Sam if the English-only policy was also applied by other JTEs besides Takahashi. Sam responded that it depended on the classes and the expectations of their students. That is, he and his JTEs used a great deal of Japanese with their first-year students and virtually no Japanese for their second-year students. Some researchers, however, have reservations about ceasing the use of L1 altogether. Macaro (2009) argues that “banning the first language from the communicative second language classroom may in fact be reducing the cognitive and metacognitive opportunities available to learners” (p. 49). He goes on to say: “It may simply be the case that learners want to learn (and perhaps will only learn!) in ways that they think best suit them” (p. 49). In this regard, it is advisable that team teachers in Japan negotiate the extent and type of L1 use with their students. This was to some extent achieved in this study through collecting the student feedback sheets, something I will come back to in Chapter 7.

In addition to the rigid English-only policy, Sam and Takahashi had a somewhat inflexible teaching routine in terms of class structure – first, they explain the activity for the day; second, the students work on the activity in pairs or groups; and then the students share their work with the rest of the class. Here again, Matt was eager to find out whether the fixed class structure they employed was effective or not. Sam answered: “knowing what they are supposed to do is [good] … there are not a lot of new activities to introduce because the text that we follow is pretty uniform and the same throughout” (FGD, C1, p. 21).

The team teachers in Sakura and Tsubaki thus had different interpretations of team-teaching practices especially in terms of the class structure, class material, and language medium. During the third pair discussion with Sam, Matt theorised about three types of JTEs
based on his experience: (a) JTEs who just follow the textbook and focus only on the grammar; (b) JTEs who completely diverge from the track of the textbook and include more cultural matters; and (c) JTEs who are willing to play various roles and introduce a variety of activities, culturally-related or not. Class pedagogy was up to the preference of each individual teacher (in most cases, the JTE) and hence varied considerably. It needs to be acknowledged here that the ALTs were frustrated when their JTEs had a one-dimensional view of teaching practices. When I asked Sam what ALTs want JTEs to do, he answered: “ALTs want JTEs to have the willingness to try new things that aren’t in the textbook because most of the things ALTs suggest may not resemble any of the textbooks or the activities students have done” (RL, C3, p. 25). In an ALT pair discussion, the same topic (different JTEs employing different pedagogies) was brought up:

Matt: One teacher consistently, she wants to translate everything I say…. Others will sit at the back and don’t do anything until I ask them to, so it’s really mixed.

Sam: Yeah, I have had the same thing. Now we are using less Japanese, but initially using Japanese was more of a crutch … and there are some JTEs who would say like, “Oh, we are not supposed to translate. No”. (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 4)

These examples might serve as supporting evidence for the findings of Árva and Medgyes (2000), who reported that NESTs favour free-flowing classes, whereas NNESTs prefer a step-by-step teaching approach.

The classroom pedagogy, including the teaching content, instructional style, and L1 use, was interpretive: some JTEs were rigid and did not allow any variation in their teaching (e.g., only employing the English-only policy; having one routine in all the classes) while others were flexible and changed their classroom pedagogies, depending on the class flow as well as the expectations and comprehension levels of their students.

Secondary and Less Important Practices

Team-taught classes were considered to be secondary and less important. This was particularly apparent when the JTEs and students compared team-taught classes with the JTEs’ solo classes or other school obligations. Limited time for JTEs, high-stake tests for students, and inconsistent teaching schedules for ALTs seemed to have contributed to the participants’ perception of team-teaching practices being secondary and less important.
Available time. Limited time available to JTEs at school was often the focus of teacher interviews and discussions. For instance, Matt made the generalisation that there is scarce contact time for team teachers to discuss their classes: “I guess there is inefficiency there in terms of just the sheer time factor. We don’t get the time to evaluate what is happening and what will happen [in class]” (NI1, M, p. 2). He elaborated on this issue when I asked about what he felt was important to him when working with JTEs: “What is really key is just not having enough time to bounce around ideas … it’s five minutes here, five minutes there … that’s all that is really possible…. It is really hard to achieve anything substantial” (NI1, M, p. 15). In the pair discussion with Aitani during cycle 1, he specified the need for more communication between team teachers. He felt that effective and substantial interaction with his JTEs was not taking place. As I discussed in “JTEs as Fully-Fledged Teachers: Socially and Professionally Respected”, JTEs work in an extremely hectic work environment. This became a major obstacle for satisfactory interaction between team teachers. It was in fact revealed from my fieldwork that Aitani was actually the only JTE at Sakura who regularly (once a week) communicated with Matt to discuss team-taught classes. Even Aitani, who was more willing to talk to Matt than other JTEs at her school, sometimes found it difficult to allocate time for him. She described their insufficient preparation for the class during cycle 2: “When we had winter vacation, Matt and I could not really contact each other. And he was not here yesterday either. So today’s class was almost unprepared. We just dived into the class after a brief talk” (RL, C2, p. 13). She then admitted: “I feel team teaching ends up a very low priority, compared to other classes” (NI2, A, p. 16). Aitani’s heavy workload as a JTE and Matt’s infrequent visits to Sakura limited their time for discussion.

Takahashi was in a similar situation. The demands on her time as a JTE were great. She explained: “The lack of communication is because we [JTEs] have to work on other things during working hours. In many cases, I don’t have free periods or I have to talk with my students” (NI1, T, p. 8). Takahashi prioritised other work that she needed to complete during working hours over team-teaching matters. This was an indication that team-teaching practices were secondary to the JTEs’ other classes or work. The time limitation of the JTEs was so distinct that it had become one of the key topics in pair discussions between Aitani and Takahashi. Aitani asked how Takahashi could find the time to prepare lesson materials when she was busy being the head of the second grade teachers. Takahashi answered with a rationale for the routine in team-taught classes: “I don’t have time. I teach just out of mere habit. So I don’t prepare for team-taught classes with Sam. That’s why we have the routine in
our teaching practice” (TPD2, JTEs, C3, p. 5). In response to Aitani’s question in one focus group discussion, Takahashi admitted that she did not spend much time preparing for team-taught classes: “[We spend] one minute [for preparation] … while we are going upstairs (laugh)” (FGD, C1, p. 20). Like the participants in this study, the majority of the JTEs in Ikeno’s study (as cited in Leonard, 2003) were reported to have spent less than 10 minutes per lesson preparing with their ALTs.

The JTEs thus perceived team-teaching practices to be secondary or less important in comparison with other teaching or school work. This was primarily due to their time constraints and heavy workloads. Communication between the JTEs and ALTs seemed to be insufficient and reached only superficial levels.

**Testing and grading.** Testing and grading were of paramount significance to the school lives of the JTEs and students. The JTEs and students did not usually view team-taught classes to be important because: (a) team-taught classes were not directly related to the high-stakes tests by which the students would be evaluated for entering universities or getting jobs, and (b) the academic performance of the students in team-taught classes was not graded as rigorously as in other classes because team-taught classes do not normally follow a class syllabus and because ALTs are excluded from any grading process.

Matt told me that he had helped JTEs create some listening questions before, but he had never been given the task of marking the work of the students or evaluating their performance in class. In fact, when I visited Sakura for the first time, it was in the middle of a testing week, and both the students and JTEs were busy dealing with term exams. Matt, however, did not seem to have any work in particular for the whole week. At Tsubaki, Sam mentioned that he could sometimes lose entire classes for a day due to testing: “If it’s a test week next week, I might have almost all my classes for kids to review. You’ve got to finish some area of the textbook, so all of my classes can get taken over by JTEs” (RL, C3, p. 22). The concern of JTEs about testing and grading was evident. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Aitani was worried about the learning progress of the students in 2A due to their participation in this project. As a result, we decided to decrease the time used for students’ reflection, and half of the class was used for her to conduct lessons based on the textbook as per usual. In addition, when I observed an extra lesson in one of Aitani’s third-year classes, she used only Japanese and taught her class strictly for the term tests and university entrance examinations. At Tsubaki, Takahashi always began her classes, whether individual teaching or team
teaching, with quiz sheets entitled “Jyukensei no Tamago (Eggs for Test-Takers)”. As a result of a study focussing on high school JTEs, Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) found, like my study, that “EFL teachers, on the one hand, expressed individual wishes towards teaching English as a means of communication, yet on the other hand, they acknowledged that they could not ignore examination-oriented English” (p. 805).

In terms of the students’ perceptions of testing and grading, although Yousuke stated that he would not mind having team-taught classes all the time (see “Immature (young) and unqualified (inexperienced)”), Tatsuya and Sayaka did not feel the same way. In response to a question about the frequency of team-taught classes, Tatsuya said:

When a foreign person comes, we can increase the opportunity to actually speak English, but that’s not enough. I want to prepare for tests too. So it’s a bit too much if they come five times a week. I think having team-taught classes once or twice a week is about right. (NI1, T, p. 10)

Sayaka maintained that team-taught classes could be somewhat troublesome if she had them every day. She also said: “unlike usual classes, when Sam comes around, there are many communicative activities. So we don’t deal with any grammar points, except briefly in the beginning (NI1, S, p. 3). It seemed that Sayaka differentiated the classes for communication from those for tests. She might have also thought that progress in English classes could only be made by accumulating grammar rules for tests. When she told me that she would like to learn more about foreign cultures in team-taught classes, I asked a question about tests, which I thought was the most urgent issue for her. She replied: “I don’t want to have team-taught classes all the time, but maybe once a month? When the test period is over and we have spare time, then it would be OK to learn about foreign cultures” (NI1, S, p. 7). Sayaka informed me that the content covered in team-taught classes does not appear in term tests and that the tests consisted of a number of questions associated with translations, idioms, and grammar rules. She then informed me of her overall impression of team-taught classes: “When Sam comes, the class is not so formal. It is a little bit casual. In that sense, the class is a bit loose” (NI1, S, p. 8). Aligned with the comments that the participants shared with me, I found, by examining the term tests I collected from both schools, that the tests did not directly include what was taught in team-taught classes but contained numerous questions about grammar points and reading comprehension. As McConnell (2000) observes: “the contradiction between the ideal of teaching conversational English and the reality of preparing for entrance exams remains acute” (p. 269).
It was somewhat understandable that many JTEs and students treated team-taught classes lightly because the classes were irrelevant to high-stakes tests and grades, which can crucially determine the lives of the students.

**Infrequent, inefficient, and tokenistic.** Matt, Sam, Takahashi, and Tatsuya most evidently viewed team-teaching practices to be infrequent, inefficient, and tokenistic. Matt shared with me the infrequent nature of his teaching commitments and the consequence of this for the learning of his students: “It can be a little confusing, or I can feel a bit scattered switching school to school…. So I am still learning how to approach each grade or each type of school” (NI1, M, p. 3). He later underscored his irregular appearance: “In my situation with multiple schools and multiple teachers, it’s very hard to communicate well about what’s happening over the year because … I make such irregular appearances” (NI1, M, p. 13). In his final interview, Matt again addressed this issue and decided that infrequent teaching was the main reason for him feeling underused at his schools: “I do feel somewhat underused. But that’s the symptom of being shuffled around different schools all the time. It’s just too disjointed to have a more active or more enriched role in educational process” (NI2, M, p. 15).

In a pair discussion, Sam was surprised to find out that Matt was visiting eight different schools. Matt and Sam concurred about how challenging it is for them to build close relationships with their students when they have to go to different classrooms in multiple schools:

Sam: Well, I know some of the kids, but I don’t know as many as I probably should.

Matt: I mean, you are not in one school either … so that doesn’t make it easier. I know my situation. It’s not really possible to spend much time [with each student].

Sam: Yeah, it’s odd that your job is like, big thing is to get more connected to kids, and you get so many schools that it’s basically impossible. (TPD2, ALTs, C2, p. 6)

To make matters worse, team-teaching schedules sometimes depended on JTEs’ changing feelings. Sam commented on his teaching schedule: “whether I have first-year classes or not really depends on if the teacher [JTE] is feeling like having me, so it varies” (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 2). As a result of this inconsistency, Matt admitted that it was not possible for him to remember every student’s name, and Sam confessed that he was not in a position to be able to critique the behaviours of his students in a serious manner. This perception of team-teaching practices as infrequent was also expressed by Takahashi. She said: “ALTs visit different
schools, and it is almost impossible to make a team all the time. So the important question is how we [JTEs] use ALTs who show up very infrequently” (NI1, T, p. 4). For some students, like Tatsuya, team-taught classes were so few and far between that they did not seem to have a large impact on their lives at school. Tatsuya told me: “I didn’t notice the ALT had not come to our class this year (laugh)” (NI1, T, p. 3).

Team-teaching practices were perceived not only to be infrequent but also to be inefficient. Matt described his current teaching situation as follows:

I have only been exposed to the first grade students and only one class a week, if that. So there is no chance for continuity. The kids are following a textbook [in usual classes], and I just slot in and teach an activity…. It isn’t effective, to be blunt. (NI1, M, p. 5)

Sam too fully understood the inefficiency of his teaching practices. This issue was brought up when he explained possible reasons why the JTEs had not given extensive feedback on his teaching:

My classes are so spread apart. So I only see each class once a week. That makes it hard to follow where the students are at, if they’ve improved…. In order to keep moving forward, I cannot stay on the same topic. If I were to stay on the same subject area for multiple lessons, that could mean I spend a month. (NI1, S, p. 14)

An associated issue was that the ALTs considered team-taught classes to be tokenistic. Matt, for example, perceived his teaching practice as “almost a token gesture” and thought it “hard to do real teaching because I appear rarely” (RL, C1, p. 15). Matt continued: “it is about a foreign presence and just hearing the language a little bit” (RL, C1, P. 15). It seemed that the tokenism was not what Matt expected or wanted. In his first interview, Matt told an illuminating story, which describes how ALTs’ classroom practices and team-taught classes as a whole are treated:

It was very frustrating, a couple of times lately. Half of the class time has been spent marking their written tests that they have done the week before. And the test was returned to the students and they were given the answer sheet. They spent 25 minutes…. And then, the second half of the class was just me demonstrating how to say words. Yep, they would do better with the CD that comes with the textbook. (NI1, M, p. 18)

Token practices also occurred, more or less, in all the schools where Sam worked. The best example came from “the best high school in the area” (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 1). Sam explained to Matt his experience from the school: “I go 10 minutes to each class…. I go to three different classes within each period and do like one 10-minute activity, so I basically
teach the same, mildly boring activity six times” (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 1). Matt exclaimed: “Only 10 minutes! What the hell can you do in 10 minutes?” Sam continued:

What I have been doing is I pick news articles … and I rewrite it, and then we will do a listening activity…. And then, next class I do it again and next class and next class … it’s very boring, very boring, but … everything is so structured there, and you are asked to fit in whatever they [JTEs] want. (TPD2, ALTs, C1, p. 2)

In his final interview, Sam illustrated further token characteristics of his teaching and how limiting they are:

I go in and they [JTEs] ask me to plan an activity, and it takes me maybe an hour to plan the activity and I go to nine different classes over the course of a day…. But if you think about how really useful it probably is, I mean, any JTE can make that activity and any one of them could do the activity…. All I bring is 10 or 15 minutes in each class of native English, and that’s not much when you think about it. It is a joke…. That tends to be the situation for most ALTs. (NI2, S, p. 16)

McConnell (2000) describes this ‘one-shot’ system of ALT visits:

The emphasis on bureaucratic efficiency underlying this method ran directly contrary to the ALTs’ expectations of a deep and meaningful encounter with students and teachers … the school visit became far more effective as entertainment than as pedagogy. It thus perpetuated the notion of the foreign teacher as a curiosity, a “living globe” wheeled out on special occasions. Moreover, the gruelling travel schedule and the necessity of constantly repeating the same lesson made burnout extremely likely. (pp. 125-126)

Some participants, however, underlined a small number of benefits. For instance, Matt believed that one upside of the infrequency of his teaching schedules is that the students are able to see “a fresh face” with “slightly different energy or different ways of approaching teaching” (NI1, M, p. 3). This possible advantage was echoed by Tatsuya: “Aitani is usually the only teacher in the classroom. When that lasts for a long time, I don’t get excited. But when an ALT comes, I feel tense in a positive way” (SPD, Sakura, p. 2). Matt also detected another plus of going to different schools rather than staying at one school. He highlighted the benefit of working at three different institutional sectors: “I have the luxury of being involved in all three levels of schooling from elementary, junior high, high school. So … I have a nice way of seeing how the education system works through that progression” (NI1, M, p. 3). Although some positives were found, the participants by and large perceived the infrequent, inefficient, and tokenistic teaching practices in team-taught classes negatively.

The contributions of a native speaker of English and teamwork were thus acknowledged in team-taught classes. Matt, Aitani, Takahashi, Kanon, Tatsuya, and Yousuke
felt that it was easier and more effective to engage in communicative activities in English when there was an ALT in the classroom. All the participants perceived teams to be able to provide benefits such as utilising teachers’ different expertise and greater attention being paid to students. At the same time, Aitani, for example, expressed several concerns with regard to the team. These included ALTs’ lack of Japanese skills and a need for sufficient interaction between team teachers. I have also revealed that all the teacher participants recognised teaching practices in team-taught classes as open-ended, particularly regarding approaches used by the teachers, the teachers’ roles determined, and classroom pedagogy employed. Teaching practices seemed to be dependent on the beliefs of individual teachers (mostly JTEs) as well as the goals and types of each class. What was also brought to light was that all the teachers and two students (Tatsuya and Sayaka) considered team-teaching practices to be secondary and less important. The JTEs formed this perception primarily because of their limited time. Tatsuya and Sayaka had this perception because their first and foremost priority was getting good grades and high test scores as opposed to improving their English communicative abilities. The ALTs knew that their classes and practices were not a pivotal concern for JTEs and students. The ALTs, Takahashi, and Tatsuya were also keenly aware that their team-taught classes were infrequent, inefficient, and tokenistic primarily due to their irregular schedules. The language learning of the students in team-taught classes might not have developed as much as the JET programme or the team teachers had initially hoped.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

I have shown in this chapter the participants’ perceptions in relation to the first and second research questions, i.e., the participants’ perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and teaching practices. Regarding their perceptions of JTEs, they considered JTEs to be language models, ongoing learners of English, and/or linguistic and psychological bridges between ALTs and students. The teacher participants also regarded JTEs as full-time teachers and expected them to carry out a substantial amount of work. Regarding the participants’ perceptions of ALTs, all of the participants viewed ALTs to be enlightening or frightening native speakers of English. The teacher participants also knew that ALTs as assistants were excluded from core teaching and perceived that ALTs are essentially unqualified and inexperienced young people. All the participants were cognisant of the unique contributions of a native speaker of English and/or teamwork in team-taught classes. The teachers also appeared to be confused or even
frustrated with the open-ended characteristics of team-teaching practices and ended up being indecisive about teaching approaches, the roles of teachers, and classroom pedagogy, whereas the students saw clearly the separated roles of team teachers (i.e., JTEs as assistants and translators; ALTs as main teachers and English providers) and largely accepted their teaching practices. Matt, Aitani, Sam, Takahashi, Tatsuya, and Sayaka viewed team-teaching practices to be secondary and less important than JTEs’ solo classes or other work at school due to various reasons (i.e., the limited available time of the JTEs, the concerns the students had about tests and grades, and the infrequent visits of the ALTs).

What became apparent, therefore, was that the participants had these different perceptions of team teachers and teaching practices to varying degrees (from very strong to very weak) as well as with various, sometimes opposing, attitudes (from very positive to very negative). One example was that the team teachers perceived ALTs to be immature and unqualified, whereas the students did not. Another was that Matt and Yousuke positively viewed JTEs to be language models for student learning – e.g., “she is a Japanese language model of English for us” (NI2, Y, p. 2) – whereas Aitani and Tatsuya did not consider JTEs to be the best language models – e.g., “the English we learn at school from Japanese teachers would not be useful when we talk to foreigners” (NI1, T, p. 10). Some participants were convinced that JTEs are busy, responsible, full-time professionals who can influence student learning more than ALTs – e.g., “you, the JTE, should still be in charge because you are the qualified teacher and responsible for this class in the long term” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 13); others knew that JTEs do not always live up to the expectations of others – e.g., “They [JTEs] just watch the ALT’s class at the back of the classroom without doing anything” (NI1, K, p. 5). While some participants firmly believed that ALTs, who can provide native English, are the main teachers in team-taught classes – e.g., “In team-taught classes with ALTs, I tend to be an assistant, rather than a person who would explain first” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 10), others decided that ALTs did not provide enough learning opportunities for their students – e.g., “Some of them are almost not used at all besides repeating words” (NI1, S, p. 12). It also became apparent that contradictory comments came even from the same participants. For instance, although Takahashi said in an interview: “Team teaching by Japanese English teachers would also work. We don’t have to have native speakers of English” (NI1, T, p. 6), in a pair discussion she remarked: “I should expose them [students] to native speakers’ English more. They need to get used to listening to native speakers’ English” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 8). Yousuke at one time told me: “team-taught classes are just like the usual classes….
I don’t mind having ALTs in all of my English classes” (NI1, Y, p. 9). At another time, however, he noted: “there is a difference when we have actual foreign people in the classroom” (NI1, Y, p. 8).

Literature suggests several benefits and limitations of team teachers and their teaching practices. In my data some of these benefits and limitations were present and others were not. I, however, caution that findings in the literature have been presented in an either-or manner – e.g., “results reveal positive attitudes towards English and the ALTs, that ALTs have increased students’ exposure to English and cultural knowledge” (Galloway, 2009, p. 169), and recommendations to date are sometimes deterministic – e.g., “students … find team-taught classes more beneficial…. These results suggest the school might want to offer more team-taught classes” (Johannes, 2012, p. 181). I argue that comments such as these have major limitations because they make broad generalisations without taking into account the particularities of participants, their surroundings, and research procedures. I instead maintain, as presented in this chapter, that the participants’ perceptions of team teachers and teaching practices inevitably vary, depending on the participants’ individual traits (e.g., their age, second language competence, and prior perceptions/experiences associated with JTEs, ALTs, and team teaching), contextual factors (e.g., workloads, number and quality of team-taught classes, and community/school/class culture), and research-related matters (e.g., timing/place/type of data collection, project members, and researcher). In the next chapter, I present and discuss the effects of the EP project on the participants’ perceptions.
CHAPTER 5: EFFECTS OF THE EXPLORATORY PRACTICE (EP) AS A MEDIATIONAL TOOL ON THE PARTICIPANTS’ PERCEPTIONS

From a sociocultural perspective, inquiry-based approaches to professional development by their very nature have the potential to create a mediational space in which the Vygotskian notion of the ZPD becomes public and in which we can trace how mediational means have the potential to support teachers’ [and students’] professional [and learning] development. Likewise, given the power of language within a sociocultural perspective, it is assumed that the talk or social interaction that goes on in inquiry-based approaches functions as mediational means that support teacher [and student] learning (Johnson, 2009, p. 99).

Several sociocultural researchers, as well as those interested in collaborative teacher research, have engaged in practices where teachers transform their cognition through mediating artifacts such as learning labs (Brancard & Quinnwilliams, 2012), dialogic video protocols (Golombek, 2011), Critical Friends Groups (CFG) (Poehner, 2011), lesson study (Tasker, 2011), and Moodle (Yoshida, 2011). In this study, one of the inquiry-based approaches, Exploratory Practice (EP), became a mediational tool for teacher and student learning. In this and the following chapter, I analyse and discuss the effects on the participants of the Exploratory Practice (EP) project as a mediational tool.

As described in Chapter 3, the EP project, consisting of three cycles, lasted from December 2011 to March 2012. For the teachers, each cycle involved five different parts: (a) classroom observation, (b) teacher pair discussion 1, (c) focus group discussion, (d) teacher pair discussion 2, and (e) teacher EP story. During the classroom observation, the teachers were observed and their classes videotaped. In the first teacher pair discussion, each pair of team teachers watched a video clip of their observed class and discussed it. In the focus group discussion, the teachers were observed and their classes videotaped. In the first teacher pair discussion, each pair of team teachers watched a video clip of their observed class and discussed it. In the focus group discussion, both pairs of teachers watched clips of each other’s classes and discussed them as a group. In the second teacher pair discussion, two JTEs and two ALTs from different schools had separate discussions as a pair. The teacher EP story involved each teacher writing about their own experiences. During the project, the teachers also had an opportunity at the end of each cycle to read feedback sheets written by their students.

The students’ EP experience similarly involved three cycles but with only two parts: (a) classroom observation and (b) reflective class. The classroom observation was conducted in the same way as in the teachers’ EP experience. The reflective class consisted of the students watching a video clip of their observed class and completing student feedback sheets.
In addition to these, the focal students at each school participated in a student pair discussion. As the focus of my thesis is not to discuss EP in and of itself, little will be devoted to the details of the EP project and the manner in which it was carried out. The focus is rather on the effects on the participants of the EP project as a mediational tool, and it is this that will be under discussion in the next two chapters.

In this chapter, I seek to answer the third research question concerning the effects of the EP project on the participants’ perceptions. One important finding of this study is that there were different cognitive developmental processes by which the EP project mediated the participants’ perceptions. In discussing the significance of cognitive developmental processes, Vygotsky (1978) states that “we need to concentrate not on the product of development but on the very process by which higher forms [of thinking] are established” (p. 64, emphasis in the original). Johnson (2009) similarly emphasises the value of cognitive developmental processes: “Once a person’s everyday concepts have become explicit, they are open to discourse processes that can promote reorganization, refinement, and reconceptualization” (p. 63). Although, like Johnson (2009), researchers (e.g., Golombek, 2011; Poehner, 2011; Tasker, 2011) use such terms as reorganisation, refinement, reconceptualisation, rethinking, and transformation interchangeably to describe cognitive developmental processes, in this study I use three distinct, though interrelated, terms to illustrate different cognitive developmental processes. They are: (a) replacement, (b) synthesis, and (c) reconfirmation. Replacement is the process by which the participants’ prior perceptions were abandoned and replaced with new perceptions. If the participants’ previous perceptions were integrated with new perceptions – in other words, new perceptions were accommodated into the participants’ previous perceptions – I classified these cases as synthesis. Reconfirmation means that the participants’ prior perceptions were maintained and any changes of these rejected.

It is unlikely that the participants will completely abandon all of their previous perceptions and replace these with new perceptions (0/100 replacement), synthesise their prior perceptions and new perceptions equally (50/50 synthesis), or reconfirm their initial perceptions and reject all new perceptions (100/0 reconfirmation). The different processes, therefore, could be conceived as falling along a continuum with replacement at one end, synthesis in the middle, and reconfirmation at the other end (see Figure 5.1). I found this framework to be particularly useful for describing the interrelationship among the three processes.
This chapter deals with these processes in detail, providing examples from the experiences of all the teacher participants and focal students. The EP project seemed to have a minimal effect on the perceptions of one of the participants, Takahashi. She felt that the project did little to influence her perceptions, and I address this matter after the discussion of the three processes.

I discuss in particular the effects on the participants’ perceptions of teaching and learning in this thesis. Although several of the participants’ perceptions appeared to have been affected, such as those concerning JTEs, ALTs, and teacher research, it came as no surprise that the participants’ perceptions of teaching and learning were most salient in the data, given that: (a) the EP project consisted of a number of activities directly related to teaching and learning in team-teaching contexts (e.g., class observations, viewing video clips of team-taught classes, and writing stories about team teaching); and (b) the teacher participants decided to investigate certain aspects of classroom teaching as their chosen themes throughout the project, i.e., how they should give instructions to manage student activities in class (at Sakura) and how they should provide feedback after their students presented ideas in class (at Tsubaki). The participants inevitably focussed more on the aspects of the project that were relevant to them as teachers and students; the teachers focussed more on teaching practices, and the students more on student learning.

Considerable variation in the effects of the EP project on the participants’ can be attributed to a number of factors, including, the participants’ individual differences (e.g., their personality), differences in teacher/student pairs from each school (e.g., their experience as a pair), contextual factors (e.g., community/school/class research culture), and research-related matters (e.g., focus and goals of the research).
Effects of the EP as a Mediational Tool on the Teachers’ and Students’ Perceptions

I have identified three perception developmental processes experienced by the participants. These and the ‘minimal effect’ category are presented in Table 5.1 together with the names of participants who most evidently exhibited those effects on their perceptions. I begin by examining ‘replacement’ as it indicates the strongest effects of the EP project on the participants’ perceptions. I then address synthesis, reconfirmation, and minimal effect in turn.

Table 5.1: Effects of the EP on the participants’ perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects on perceptions</th>
<th>The participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replacement</td>
<td>Matt, Aitani, Tatsuya, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Matt, Aitani, Sam, Kanon, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconfirmation</td>
<td>Matt, Sam, Takahashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal effect</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Replacement

The Oxford English dictionary (OED) defines the term replacement as: “The action or an act of replacing something” (OED, 2014), and the term replace as: “To take the place of, become a substitute for (a person or thing)” (OED, 2014). In this thesis, I use the term replacement to refer to cases where new perceptions take the place of the participants’ previous perceptions. As discussed, in this category I include cases that are located towards the left end of the continuum in Figure 5.1.

Since replacement means the abandoning of previous perceptions, this process could be considered to be the strongest effect of the EP project. Based on my analysis of the data, I found that at least two teachers (Matt and Aitani) and three focal students (Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke) experienced the process with regard to their perceptions of teaching practices. Two focal students (Sayaka and Yousuke) were likely to have replaced their previous perceptions of student learning with new ones.

Replacement of perceptions about team-teaching practices. In this section, I begin by illustrating the teachers’ perception replacement about team-teaching practices by referring to the following topics:
- Roles of team teachers
- Value of team-taught classes
- L1 use
- How to provide instructions for student activities in class (the Sakura pair’s theme)

Matt identified the role of ALTs in his first interview as follows: “the ALT’s role is to introduce native level language, to interact with students and let them experience conversing with a native speaker … and again the role is to be internationalising, so, to be introducing a foreign culture” (NI1, M, p. 21). Regarding the role of JTEs, he said: “the JTE’s role in the team-teaching environment is to direct in a similar way to the ALT, but really to provide the platform with Japanese translation for the native speaker to teach in an effective way” (NI1, M, p. 21). After the EP project, however, he appeared to have radically changed his perceptions of the teaching roles of ALTs and JTEs, from being static in nature to more fluid: “This experience has shown me that there is no absolute when it comes to team teaching … in the case of Aitani and myself, I think we are both always generally inclined to explore different ways, different methods” (NI2, M, p. 3). He continued:

It’s really come to me that for us to successfully team teach, it’s all about fluidity and changing up our methods. So sometimes I’ll have a more dominant role in the room, and next class Aitani has the dominant role…. No matter how much you plan a class, the occasion will arise where the need for improvisation comes about. So the role is to be willing to be flexible and to improvise and to interact genuinely with a team-teaching partner. So there is no absolute. (NI2, M, p. 3)

Although a number of previous studies advise that the roles of JTEs and ALTs should be more clearly defined (e.g., Johannes, 2012; Mahoney, 2004; Ogawa, 2011; Tajino & Tajino, 2000), Matt’s comments suggest that their roles might not be so prescriptive but instead be open to negotiation within each team-teaching pair so that they can effectively carry out their teaching according to their particular geopolitical, socio-political, sociohistorical, and socioeconomic contexts (Johnson, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006; Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Wright, 2010).

Aitani also appeared to have replaced her earlier perceptions of team teaching. In the second pair discussion she said to Matt:

Before I did the first cycle, I had an opinion about team teaching. Like if we are to do team teaching, the activity should be something special. But after the first cycle, after we talked together, I changed my mind. Like the activity itself doesn’t need to be special. If we do the activity together, then it should be OK. And we can say that the teaching experience is effective and meaningful. (TPD1, Sakura, C2, pp. 1-2)
Her newly generated perception regarding team-taught classes reappeared in her final EP story:

> When we first started this project, I blindly tried to make up some ‘special activities’… now at the end of Cycle 3, I suddenly noticed that I had been fooled by the word ‘special’. And the moment I noticed it, I felt that the new possibilities of activities are widely opened before us…. TT [Team-teaching] situation has become far more than just a useful experience. (EPS, A, C3, p. 2)

After much reflection during the project, Aitani no longer believed that team teaching needed to be ‘special’ or different from her individual teaching. As soon as she realised this, she saw team teaching to be full of possibilities.

Aitani also appeared to have replaced some of her perceptions of teaching methods in team-taught classes. When I asked her during the third pair discussion with Matt why she did not use Japanese at all for the observed class in cycle 3, she and Matt had the following exchange:

Aitani: The reason why I did not use it was … it was not from the second cycle, but from the first cycle. Many students from the other class, [class name], complained that I didn’t translate what Matt said into Japanese…. I did some explanation in Japanese, but still they weren’t satisfied…. So this time I think I wanted to give English explanation as often as I could….

Matt: So if you enter the mode of translating something, then that will open their expectation to do everything.

Aitani: Yeah, I thought so. (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 13)

Aitani did not hesitate to provide Japanese translations in the class when requested to by her students during cycle 2 (see “Synthesis of perceptions about team-teaching practices” later in this chapter). However, Aitani felt that she should not use Japanese in class 2A after she taught in another classroom (not included in this study). This perception change regarding the use of L1 appeared to have derived from having conducted team-taught classes, discussions with other teachers, and the review of student feedback sheets. Aitani shared with me, in her final interview, a replaced perception related to giving instructions in team-taught classes:

Before this project, when there was an ALT, I was trying very hard to explain the ALT’s instructions while the ALT was providing instructions in order to help the students understand it. But after we started our team-taught classes in 2A, I decided to take an optimal balance when Matt was explaining…. I now avoid the situation in which both teachers are speaking at the same time. (NI2, A, p. 5)
Aitani consciously inspected (Vygotsky, 1963) the teaching practices of her team during the project and consequently saw the benefits of complementary teaching (see Villa et al., 2008). She then began to provide support only when necessary, rather than giving instructions to the students simultaneously with Matt. Aitani’s perceptions of team-teaching instructions for student activities thus made a drastic turn.

I now introduce the students’ replacement of perceptions about team-teaching practices in relation to:

- Value of team-taught classes
- Team-teaching style

In an interview with Tatsuya, the replacement of a perception regarding team-taught classes became apparent:

To be honest, I didn’t like them [team-taught classes] at first…. I disliked them…. But I now think they are fun. I think I had fun in the third observed team-taught class … maybe because we had never met the ALT before the first class, and we have got used to the ALT…. I think both the students in the class and the ALT changed. (NI2, T, p. 3)

Tatsuya replaced his earlier perception of team-taught classes (“I disliked them”) with a new one (“I now think they are fun”). He attributed this replacement to the fact that students in his class and their ALT had become used to each other. He later reiterated why he liked team-taught classes more than before:

I now feel like the team-taught classes are practical because the ALT comes and speaks English with real English pronunciation…. When I was taking English classes before, I thought to myself, “This is not useful”…. I am not sure if I will use English in the future, but I can now feel the practical benefits of English when a foreigner comes. (NI2, T, p. 8)

Tatsuya did not like team-taught classes previously because he was not used to the ALT. Nor did he like English classes in general because he did not see the point of learning English. Nonetheless, he replaced these perceptions because he experienced more team-taught classes and got to know the ALT during the project.

Sayaka had changed her perceptions of team-taught classes quite considerably by the end of the project. She spoke about the shift in perspective in the final interview:

I feel that Sam makes an effort to speak to me more now. Before, when Sam came to our classroom, I was like, “Lucky! We don’t have to take serious English classes”. But it is not like that with the current team-taught classes. We can get individual feedback
for the content of the textbook, and we sometimes write our ideas in English to Takahashi and Sam, right? We didn’t have those kinds of team-taught classes before…. I feel more comfortable learning English in their classes now. (NI2, S, p. 11)

Sayaka’s comments suggest how desirable it is for team teachers to understand their daily team-teaching practices and, if necessary, change them to enhance students’ motivation and learning outcomes. As discussed in “Secondary and Less Important Practices” (see Chapter 4) and shown by other studies (e.g., McConnell, 2000; Reesor, 2002), team-taught classes are often placed in the periphery and treated as secondary to other priorities by JTEs and students in public schools in Japan. However, Sayaka abandoned her previous negative attitudes towards team teaching, regarding it as a pleasant English learning opportunity due to the changes of her ALT and team-taught classes during the EP project.

Like Sayaka, Yousuke talked in his final interview about a radical change in his perceptions regarding teaching practices:

Everything in the classroom happens one-way, from teacher to student, and I was OK with that before…. But if students can suggest ideas to make the class better, it will potentially result in benefitting both parties. So by expressing our ideas for classes, teachers might raise their awareness and come up with some ideas, thinking: “My students might understand better by this” or something like that. Although I haven’t talked to Takahashi about this yet, this way of thinking applies to their feedback in class, right? When students make mistakes, how about pointing out their mistakes explicitly sometimes? The teacher might be more conscious of what feedback entails in this way…. I never thought criticising or correcting teachers was a good thing…. It might be humiliating if the teachers were told by their students what to do…. But teachers should consider their students’ opinions. Now I think what is good or bad teaching depends on humanity, teachers’ humanity. (NI2, Y, pp. 12-13)

Although Yousuke previously accepted one-way knowledge transmission from a teacher to students (Freire, 1993) (“Everything in the classroom happens one-way”), he began to critically think about what teaching involves in his situation (“by expressing our ideas for classes, teachers might raise their awareness”). After the EP project, he believed that teachers needed to listen to the opinions of their students (Barkhuizen, 1998; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006) and that teachers’ humanity should play a significant part in their teaching (Byrnes, 2013). Yousuke’s comments show how students can be critical language learners and key contributors to their own classrooms. As Allwright and Hanks (2009) say: “working together to understand classroom life … is the best way for learners and teachers to make their language classroom lives both satisfying and productive” (p. 284).
It is thus likely that during the project at least the pair of team teachers at Sakura (Matt and Aitani) and the three focal students (Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke) replaced their earlier perceptions of teaching practices (e.g., teachers’ roles, the rationale and style of team teaching, L1 use, and giving instructions in class). Given how significant the nature of perception replacement is, the effects of EP experiences on those participants’ perceptions appeared to be profound.

**Replacement of perceptions about student learning.** In this section, I focus only on the students because there was no clear evidence that the teachers replaced their perceptions about student learning. My examples used here refer to the following interrelated topics:

- Value of English language learning
- Learning style
- Learning attitude

Sayaka altered her ideas about English language learning with her ALT, Sam. In her final interview, she recounted her experience with the project:

I think I said in the beginning of this project that I could take time off from serious work and relax in team-taught classes. But recently I feel I want to speak to Sam instead of Takahashi when I have questions. Although the length of the time to be able to talk to him is not long at all, I began to communicate with him in English. (NI2, S, p. 1)

It is not uncommon that team-taught classes were considered to be ‘a release time’ by students mainly because communicative abilities in English were not their major concern (Hasegawa, 2008). Sayaka was no exception. Her perceptions of learning in team-taught classes, however, took a dramatic turn, and she became more inclined to communicate with Sam in English. She later commented on her English learning in general as follows:

I thought before that I could live and get by without English because I was not interested in going abroad or anything. So I thought I would be satisfied with my English classes so long as I can prepare for entrance examinations. But somehow my attitude has changed, and I now want to use and speak English. Although I liked English and wanted to speak English before, I couldn’t do it. My grammar was hopeless … so I was hesitant to use English. But now I’m like, “I don’t care. I can learn English by making mistakes”. (NI2, S, p. 4)

As became obvious among the participants in my study (see “Testing and grading” in Chapter 4) as well as in other studies (e.g., Hasegawa, 2008), there is often a perception that team-taught classes are not relevant to high-stakes tests or examinations (“I would be satisfied with my English classes so long as I can prepare for entrance examinations”). Because of this and
her unwillingness to make mistakes, Sayaka neither took team-taught classes seriously nor dared to bring herself to speak English. Having experienced the EP project, however, she became willing to learn and use English through making mistakes (“I don’t care. I can learn English by making mistakes”).

Another focal student at Tsubaki, Yousuke, talked of his experience in the project at some length:

Although everything we did during the project was related to English and English classes, I probably didn’t learn much about the English language itself. Rather I learned how I can study English and how I can take English classes…. I have had many English classes so far, and teachers have taught us English, but I have never been taught how to learn English before. I was blindly taking those classes, just feeling insecure about it. But through the project and thanks to this interview opportunity, I came to know that when we learn, we have to take responsibility for our own learning. By participating in this, I was asked to give my opinions about how the teachers gave feedback, and I suddenly became conscious of teachers’ feedback…. I also became conscious of how I write English like, “Oh OK, this needs to add ‘s’ because it is ‘HE’” or something like that…. I now believe that when we are just casually taking classes without putting much thought into them, we miss many important points that are useful for our learning … but raising awareness even only a little bit can make us realise important aspects of English or its classes. I learned that we can learn many things from ordinary, daily things. I learned how to learn. (NI2, Y, pp. 10-11)

Yousuke was “just a passive student in English classes before” (NI2, Y. p. 12), but he seemed to have grown into an active learner who began to take learning seriously as a result of the project (see also Allwright & Hanks, 2009), benefitting not only from acquiring more knowledge about the English language (“I probably didn’t learn much about the English language itself”) but also by developing new ways of learning English (“I learned how I can study English and how I can take English classes”). Towards the end of the project, Yousuke appeared to have treated learning to learn as a means to an end, the end being learning to liberate and empower himself to be a critical thinker in order to realise his potential, rather than treating learning to learn merely as an end in itself (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). In particular, the consciousness-raising activities regarding his teachers’ practices (e.g., writing feedback sheets and participating in a student pair discussion) became mediational tools, enabling Yousuke to be reflective and therefore gaining the capacity to build his own knowledge about learning and teaching. Consciousness is “the objectively observable organization of behaviour that is imposed on humans through participation in sociocultural practices” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 187), and in Vygotsky’s view consciousness constitutes the highest level
of mental activity. The EP project as an inquiry-based mediational tool succeeded in enabling Yousuke to experience and re-experience consciousness-raising and conscious inspection (Vygotsky, 1963) in relation to language teaching and learning in his context. It eventually led him to change his perception of language learning from being a passive activity to a more proactive one.

Perception replacement about student learning thus occurred most evidently in Sayaka and Yousuke. The EP project mediated their perceptions of learning practices (e.g., English speaking and consciousness raising) through the process of replacement. Given the highly-influential nature of the replacement process, participating in the EP project must have been a significant experience for those who had their perceptions replaced. This is especially the case for Sayaka and Yousuke whose perceptions of teaching and learning appeared to have been replaced.

**Synthesis**

Most of the participants experienced the developmental process, ‘synthesis’. The Oxford English dictionary defines the term *synthesis* as: “A body of things put together; a complex whole made up of a number of parts or elements united” (OED, 2014). In this thesis, I am using the term in a similar way to describe the process whereby the participants’ previously held perceptions and new perceptions of teaching/learning were integrated. As discussed before, in this category I include cases that are close to the middle point of the continuum in Figure 5.1 where the participants synthesised their prior perceptions and new perceptions. It was noticeable that three teachers (Matt, Aitani, and Sam) and two focal students (Sayaka and Yousuke) *integrated* their previous perceptions of teaching practices with new ones and that three teachers (Matt, Aitani, and Sam) and three focal students (Kanon, Sayaka, and Yousuke) *accommodated* new perceptions about student learning into their prior perceptions.

**Synthesis of perceptions about team-teaching practices.** The examples used in this section to illustrate the teachers’ synthesis processes concern the following topics:

- Roles of team teachers
- How to provide instructions for student activities in class (the Sakura pair’s theme)
- How to give feedback after student responses in class (the Tsubaki pair’s theme)
Matt appeared to have synthesised his perceptions of his teaching and thereby gained more respect for his role as an ALT. He referred to his teaching role in the final interview:

In my case, being quite new to this field, this project has been invaluable in terms of giving me a point of perspective from which to view my role, my job…. I now sort of have more respect for the part I can play in team teaching here. (NI2, M, p. 2)

Matt came to feel that he was a more legitimate peripheral participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in team teaching at his school. He perceived himself to be a professional rather than being excluded from core teaching and frustrated about his position as an ALT (see “Excluded from core teaching: Assistant language ‘teachers’?” in Chapter 4). Although teacher research of this kind will not necessarily always enhance the efficacy and the pride of ALTs as teachers and should not be seen as a definite solution to these issues, the synthesis of Matt’s perception regarding his role does suggest positive possibilities.

Matt also synthesised his perceptions of classroom teaching practices, particularly regarding the value of well-prepared questions and activity instructions. During the first focus group discussion he made the following comments after watching a video clip of his class:

Some of the questions were more challenging, and some groups really did need help quite a bit…. In one question in particular, it was my fault. It was not well designed, didn’t give them enough information, and it was impossible for them to understand from the scene what it could mean. So I realised they needed some help. (FGD, C1, p. 10)

By looking at the students’ reactions both in class and in the video clip, he realised his questions and instructions were not as well thought out as he imagined and thus developed new approaches to preparing and executing his teaching. In the second pair discussion with Aitani, Matt learned for the first time that in the observed class Aitani had already explained the activity in Japanese before he did so in English: “I didn’t realise you have already done that. That’s why they already knew what they had to do next (laugh)” (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 9). Due to his lack of Japanese ability, he was not aware that the students had in fact already been instructed in Japanese by his teaching partner. Watching the video clip and discussing it with others made him realise how their instructions were actually provided for student activities. This incident might serve as evidence that JTEs and ALTs do face challenges concerning ineffective communication between them (Hiramatsu, 2005). It may also show that EP projects like this one could function as a mediating tool to provide an opportunity for
both team members to discover and acknowledge misunderstandings and increase open communication.

Matt’s perceptions of what constitutes teacher instructions were also developed as a result of blending two different ideas: “when we said that the thing we wanna focus on is instruction, it’s also to do with the way we have designed the class … not just the way we speak to deliver the idea” (FGD, C1, p. 14). When Matt decided on his pair’s theme, he had in mind only the ways in which teachers deliver instructions for classroom activities. As the project progressed, however, he appeared to begin to accommodate the idea of planning and designing instructions outside the class into his prior perception of what teacher instructions are. At the end of the project, he articulated what he learned about his pair’s theme:

> Of course, prior to the project, everyone would be aware that giving the instructions is very important. But the question of how important has certainly been brought into focus by this research…. So through the three classes … combined with the students’ reactions and their feedback, they just made me see … the importance of simple, clear instructional delivery. So regardless of what language is used, instructions should be succinct and understandable. (NI2, M, p. 10, emphasis added)

Matt synthesised his perceptions of how to provide instructions for student activities and concluded that teacher instructions should be succinct and understandable for his students. This realisation came about not only through conducting classes and watching video clips, but also in making his thoughts explicit by speaking about them – ventriloquation (see Bakhtin, 1981).

During the last stage of his EP experience, Matt summarised his perceptions of teaching practices, especially regarding his pair’s theme and the other pair’s theme:

> I’ve learned a lot from everyone about the ups and downs of how to provide instructions, how to deliver instructions. But also in terms of your [Tsubaki’s] chosen theme of feedback. That’s been very interesting to see the focus on positive reinforcement of students’ participation or what they are doing. (FGD, C3, p. 22)

The EP project appeared to be successful in mediating Matt’s perceptions of his teaching practices. Not only was it helpful for him to have a chosen theme that he could focus on, but the opportunity to share his thoughts and findings with other participants as well as compare their respective focus themes was also beneficial.

Aitani also provides examples of synthesising her perceptions. Like Matt, one example was in relation to their chosen theme. When asked why she decided not to explain
something in Japanese for the students during cycle 1, she told us that she thought drawings would be enough for them to understand her instructions:

> Usually when I started to explain, in English or Japanese, they would get what I say differently. So it would tend to take more time. So I think the connection between numbers [and the tasks they are supposed to work on] is clear enough. So I just drew them. (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 14)

She seemed to have integrated her previous perception of giving instructions (giving explanations orally) with a new one (drawing diagrams on the blackboard). Aitani synthesised her perceptions of L1 use in class as well. She previously thought that she had to use only English in class, but by the second cycle she felt that it was not always necessary and that she could help her students by using Japanese when they were at a loss:

> [I used Japanese] to remove their fears and misunderstanding. I think it’s sometimes good to use Japanese to help them understand…. I don’t think I changed my attitude completely, but I must confess that I didn’t have the sense of restriction about using Japanese, as I felt last time. (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 7)

Aitani did not change her attitudes enough to warrant replacement of her previous perception, as indicated by her statement: “I don’t think I changed my attitude completely”. However, her perception of L1 use underwent synthesis, and she felt more comfortable using Japanese in the second observed class.

Another perception she synthesised was regarding her ability to judge the difficulty of the activities she included in class. During cycle 3, she had prepared two activities, thinking one would be easier for the students than the other. After seeing the reaction of the students in a video clip, she realised that in fact the opposite was true: “It’s really difficult to predict if … certain activities are difficult for students or easier for them. It looked easier than the other to me” (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 10). These synthesis examples of Aitani’s perceptions can be attributed to several mediational activities provided during the EP project, such as being observed while team teaching, discussing these observations with other teachers, and reflecting on students’ responses and their learning over the course of the three cycles.

Evidence of Aitani’s perception synthesis about team teaching in general was particularly observable towards the end of the project. Aitani contributed her thoughts during the final focus group discussion as follows:

> Before this project, like Takahashi, I didn’t think deeply of the state of team teaching or how our team teaching should be. I didn’t have any clear ideas. But this project inspired me to promote this line more…. And of course the idea that Takahashi
Aitani’s perception of team-taught classes was synthesised by interacting with other project members. She seemed to have discovered another rationale of team-taught classes (learning new ideas for her solo classes) in addition to a previous one (exposing students to more English). At the end of the project, Aitani wrote: “Of course TT [team-teaching] activities with an ALT don’t have to stick to communication; they can also focus on reading/writing activities. If we limit the area, we are to hinder its possibilities” (EPS, A, C3, p. 2). Her synthesised conception about team-teaching practices was thus made explicit through conversing with others and writing her EP story. She seemed to have developed a different outlook on team teaching by the end of the EP project by envisioning a richer possibility for team-taught classes.

Matt and Aitani also collaboratively synthesised their perceptions of teaching. In their final pair discussion, for example, I asked them about their concerns regarding their theme. They externalised their current understandings about it, reconceptualised it, and recontextualised it (Johnson, 2009):

Matt: The students’ English ability [is my concern]…. I think certainly it is not constructive to be delivering instructions using language that isn’t in that band of proximity. That defeats the purpose altogether of someone being in the room to assist in their educational experience. It has to be limited to the delivery that is native and natural and challenging but is also within their reach that is appropriate….

Aitani: But I think your English and instructions, the level of language are totally OK with my students. Of course it’s difficult for them but I think it’s a bit difficult, it’s a bit above their ability, so some good students, smart students, would want to understand more, would like to listen to your English more. So I don’t think it’s totally a bad thing to use difficult, complicated expressions at times.

Matt: Maybe the way I should say is it’s more me repeating things and speaking for too long that makes it inappropriate, probably not the actual vocab used or expressions used…. Probably what is best to do is, as you said, speak less, demonstrate in other ways. My instinct is to speak more and try to cover my tracks with more words. (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 22)

Matt and Aitani appear here to be referring to their students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) (“it’s not constructive to be delivering instructions using language that isn’t in that band of proximity”). Interesting, however, is that while Aitani and Matt were
discussing their students’ English ability, they themselves were co-constructing their own ZPDs with regard to teaching practices. In particular, Aitani seemed to have acted as a supportive colleague with critical comments (Edge, 2002) who provided Matt with interpersonal assistance (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) (“I don’t think it’s totally a bad thing to use difficult, complicated expressions at times”). The exchange of ideas between the two took place based on their personal experiences and within their ZPDs, thereby enabling them to learn as teachers and develop their perceptions of teaching in a timely and effective manner (Wertsch, 1985). Tracing the interactions in the cultural context of pair discussions between Matt and Aitani through a sociocultural lens allowed me to observe the intricate process of their perception development and realise how “the context in which the interaction occurs is of crucial importance” (Tudge, 1990, p. 156, emphasis in the original).

Sam also experienced perception synthesis. He explained how his perceptions of teaching practices, especially in terms of their chosen theme, teacher feedback, were affected by newer ideas he acquired during the project: “we focussed on feedback given in the context of them [the students] speaking…. We have learned what kind of feedback we give and how we can give it in other ways besides grading papers” (NI2, S, p. 11). Previously, Sam did not attend closely to what feedback entailed and considered it to be limited to grading papers or writing comments on papers outside the classroom. The EP project, however, enabled him to accommodate new perceptions of feedback; that is, as being responses to his students’ answers in class.

It was apparent that two students at Tsubaki, Sayaka and Yousuke, experienced synthesis of perceptions of team-teaching practices. The examples below concern teachers’ feedback after student responses in class. Sayaka realised that her teachers’ responses to each group of students in class varied. She explained this in her final interview: “Maybe this is just common sense, but I realised that the teachers gave different responses to different groups even when some groups presented the same ideas. When I was taking the class, I didn’t know about it” (NI2, S, p. 6). By watching the video clips of the observed classes, Sayaka noticed for the first time that her teachers provided different feedback to different groups in the class, thereby allowing her to synthesise her perceptions of her teachers’ teaching practices.

Sayaka and Yousuke seemed to have collaboratively begun synthesising their perceptions of their teachers’ team teaching. This was noticeable at the end of their pair
discussion when I encouraged them to think more about the ways in which their teachers provided feedback:

Hiratsuka: After you [Yousuke] said something in English in today’s class, neither teacher said to you something like, “It was not said with perfect grammar. This part of your sentence is wrong” or anything like that, right?…. Is that what you want? What do you think?

Yousuke: I don’t know if the teaching style is good or not. I mean, I noticed the mistake I made by myself after I said it, so it’s OK. But when I was in the classroom, going through the motions, I never thought about how the teachers gave feedback in class…. Now that I think about it, I think the way they did it is not good.

Sayaka: No, it is not.

Hiratsuka: Oh, it is not good?

Yousuke: Well, we should be corrected if our sentences contain mistakes. At the same time, though, is it possible for the teachers to correct all the mistakes we make? Is it even practical within a lesson?

Sayaka: I don’t think so.

Yousuke: If we are explicitly corrected every time, we would run out of time in the lesson…. And, practically speaking, maybe the current practice is the most efficient as far as the daily lesson goes. But if we think about whether we can learn English in that way or not, being corrected is better.

Sayaka: What is the answer for it? [asking Yousuke]

Yousuke: I don’t have the answer. Why are you asking me? (laugh)

Sayaka: Well, Yousuke, you have noticed your mistake by yourself, so it’s fine. But some of us don’t know when and how we make mistakes. I previously thought that as long as we can convey our overall ideas when we speak English, it is OK. But now that I have looked at the video clip and thought about it more, I have started to have doubts….

Yousuke: Now that I think about it hard, I don’t know which is better.

Sayaka: I don’t know either. (SPD, Tsubaki, p. 17)

In this discussion, the students and I explored “how what we think is effective might not be and how what we think is not effective might be” (J. F. Fanselow, personal communication, August 28, 2013). Yousuke first expressed that he was not sure if his teachers’ feedback in class was good or not, but after some consideration he decided: “the way they did it is not good”, and Sayaka agreed: “No, it is not”. Both students then attempted to further understand the teaching process and its outcome by engaging in an examination of the issue and tried to figure out why it was conducted in the way it was and not in another way (e.g., “is it possible
for the teachers to correct all the mistakes we make … within a lesson?”; “if we think about whether we can learn English … being corrected is better”). What was important in the interaction was not the product (i.e., the answer) (“I don’t have the answer”), but the process (i.e., inquisitive attitudes) (“now that I have … thought about it more, I have started to have doubts”) (Edge, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). As a result, their previous perceptions about teaching practices were synthesised, some of which were eventually replaced by the end of the project (see “Replacement of perceptions about team-teaching practices”). One of the most significant features of my study was being able to analyse the processes of the students’ perceptions through a sociocultural lens. This is because the sociocultural perspective “emphasizes the development of the individual in social interaction; specifically, the individual is formed through … the interaction that occurs within the zone of proximal development” (Rosa & Montero, 1990, p. 83).

Matt, Aitani, Sam, Sayaka, and Yousuke thus appeared to have experienced the synthesis process regarding their perceptions of teaching, including, teachers’ roles, teacher instructions in class, teacher feedback in class, and the use of L1. By integrating their previous perceptions and accommodating new perceptions, they created synthesised perceptions of teaching practices during the EP project. This sometimes took place on the individual level and at other times collaboratively through interaction with others, with each participant developing their perceptions idiosyncratically.

**Synthesis of perceptions about student learning.** The examples used in this section to illustrate the teachers’ synthesis processes concern the following topics:

- Students’ abilities
- Students’ consciousness

Matt accommodated a new perception of his students’ learning into previous ones by observing their reactions in class during cycle 1, and he explained this to all the teachers in a focus group discussion: “it was interesting to see if they could get anything out of the quick exposure to the scene, and purely English instructions and English texts and questions. Some students could do it faster than others in understanding” (FGD, C1, p. 10). He expressed a realisation about his students’ varying levels of understanding in his English-only class. Through watching a video clip in cycle 3, Matt also became aware that some students quickly made a great deal of progress with a given activity: “Oh, they are quick off the mark!” (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 11). Although Matt felt that the activity worksheet he had designed was too
difficult for his students, video watching mediated his reconceptualisation of his students’ performance.

Like Matt, Aitani became more cognisant of her students’ learning as a result of watching video clips and engaging in discussions. She discovered during her third talk with Matt that some students completed their tasks easily without her help:

Students’ reactions were different according to each student. I didn’t go near the students who were videotaped. When I went near other students, those students had difficulty. So I helped them, and it took a little bit of time, but the students who were videotaped were alright and seemed to understand your instructions very well. (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 23)

Because teachers are constantly making a number of decisions in class and are occupied with multiple tasks, they might not be able to properly judge the level of their students’ comprehension. Five-minute video clips, acting as a mediating artifact, provided the teachers at Sakura with a chance to take a step back and observe their classes in detail in a non-pressured environment. Viewing and discussing video clips of the teachers’ own classes seem to have been an important addition to their holistic teacher education experience.

For Sam, newly developed perceptions about student learning came about at the end of the project. He said:

The students actually noticed the slight difference in the way we did [feedback] in the last class and reacted to that to some extent. And I think that’s important to realise and recognise that even the small changes, we might not think it’s a huge deal, some of the students will notice. (NI2, S, p. 1)

He added: “the students really notice how the class goes … they certainly notice the difference between me and my predecessor” (NI2, S, p. 10). He mentioned this revelation again in his final EP story: “Students are consciously considering our methods of feedback much more than I would have thought. It makes me feel as if I need to put more consideration into the way I generally give feedback for all my classes” (EPS, S, C3, p. 1). Johnson (2009) says that in the field of SLTE, “the focus of attention should be … on teachers as learners of teaching” (p. 115, emphasis in the original). Sam as a learner of teaching seemed to have viewed student learning in a new light and experienced the “relationship of influence” (Freeman & Johnson, 2005, p. 79) between his teaching and his students’ learning.

Three of the focal students (Kanon, Sayaka, and Yousuke) appeared to have synthesised their perceptions of student learning. The examples below relate to:
• Value of English language learning
• Learning attitude
• Learning style

When I asked Kanon the question: “Have you changed after taking those [observed and reflective] classes?” her response came quickly: “After taking those classes, I realised I didn’t have much knowledge … the meaning of some vocabulary and grammar rules…. I didn’t have enough understanding of English, which made me want to study English harder” (NI2, K, p. 9). She elaborated on why she became motivated to study English harder and described her newly created perception about student learning:

I have come to think that whether or not we can learn more or change the spectrum of understanding depends on the ways teachers teach and students learn. Even if some students don’t like English or are not good at English, if we change the ways of teaching and learning, we can change our attitudes. (NI2, K, p. 9)

Kanon’s comments demonstrate that learners are “capable of taking learning seriously, of taking independent decisions, and of developing as practitioners of learning” (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 15). In other words, students like Kanon are able to positively develop their perceptions of their own learning when afforded opportunities to do so.

Sayaka commented in her final interview on a discovery regarding team-taught classes after watching video clips of previous classes: “Our class was noisier than I expected … I was like, ‘The class is very noisy! How could the students present their ideas amongst that noise? Is anybody listening?’ Such were my thoughts when I was watching the clip” (NI2, S, p. 6). She then told me that she had begun to hold different perceptions about her English learning, feeling that she needed to put more effort into studying English. I was interested to find out the reason and asked her what had brought this about. She answered:

The stories you told us [in reflective classes] was the reason, of course. That was personally the most memorable event. When I was listening to your story, I thought: “This person’s story is interesting”. That was number one. I felt like I should try to study English a little harder. (NI2, S, p. 9)

Stories I told at Tsubaki had a large impact on Sayaka’s perception synthesis regarding her English learning. Two points are worth mentioning here. One concerns the ecological feature of research. Li (2006) argues that an EP practitioner “should keep in mind his or her overall research aim and plan, and meanwhile leave some open space for moment-to-moment decision-making as needed” (p. 440). I made changes not only to data collection methods, as was the case with Li (2006), but also to the research schedules and the way the class time was
spent depending on the availability and needs of the participants: hence my talks in the reflective classes at Tsubaki. The second point is how compelling and instrumental storytelling is when it comes to making changes in students’ learning and their perceptions. Sayaka told me: “They [the stories] were about your own experiences…. When you talked about yourself and your experiences, I could learn from them” (NI2, S, p. 8). Personally-meaningful storytelling in class as a pedagogic strategy can be seen as a topic which merits exploration among practitioners as well as researchers.

Yousuke shared with me his experience of synthesising his perceptions of language learning. At the beginning of his final interview, he said: “I am now more conscious of or pay more attention to English sentences made by me and other students in class” (NI2, Y, p. 1). In response to the question: “What were the influential experiences during the project?” he answered:

It’s definitely these interviews ... the initial interview, observing classes, and your talks. And then I was completely like, “Take notice!” Actually I was not completely convinced by your talk. I didn’t understand what you were saying at first, but when I personally experienced it, I realised: “This is what he meant!” From then on, I changed quite a bit. To be fair, I noticed my mistakes even before, but I began to notice and pay attention to my mistakes about four times more after I heard your talk. (NI2, Y, p. 11)

There was a shift in Yousuke’s view of his English learning and his mistakes in particular (“I began to notice and pay attention to my mistakes”). Multiple activities during the project, such as class observations, my talk related to the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), and narrative interviews before and after the EP experience, appeared to have enabled him to take notice of his mistakes in a different way.

It was apparent that Matt, Aitani, Sam, Kanon, Sayaka, and Yousuke synthesised their perceptions of student learning (e.g., the speed of students’ progress, the levels of students’ comprehension, and strategies for English learning). By synthesising their prior perceptions and new perceptions during the EP project, these participants developed their perceptions of English language learning as well as learning in general. They attributed their distinct development in perception to various EP project activities.
Reconfirmation

The third type of process that some participants experienced was ‘reconfirmation’. The Oxford English dictionary defines reconfirmation as: “The action or an act of confirming again” (OED, 2014) and confirm as: “To make firm or more firm, to add strength to, to settle, establish firmly” (OED, 2014). In this thesis, however, I use the term reconfirmation in a more limited sense to describe cases where the participants maintained their previous perceptions as they were. If the participants’ previous perceptions were strengthened and turned into something different, I interpreted this perception process as synthesis (or replacement for extreme cases). I therefore include in this category cases that are located towards the right end of the continuum in Figure 5.1. Based on my data analysis, I viewed that at least three teachers (Matt, Sam, and Takahashi) had reconfirmed their previous perceptions of teaching practices. There were no clear cases of participants reconfirming their previous perceptions of student learning.

Reconfirmation of perceptions about team-teaching practices. In this section, I illustrate the teachers’ reconfirmation of team-teaching practices by referring to the following topics:

- How to provide instructions for student activities in class (the Sakura pair’s theme)
- Difficulty level of classes
- Teaching methods/techniques
- Roles of team teachers
- How to give feedback after student responses in class (the Tsubaki pair’s theme)

While watching a video clip of Sakura’s observed class during the first focus group discussion, the teachers at Tsubaki, Sam and Takahashi, tried to figure out what the students in the class were supposed to do with the given task:

Sam: It looks as if they are answering the questions based on the pictures in the front. And they are doing it in groups of four, it looks like. So something is happening in the picture, and the students have questions?

Takahashi: And they need to put numbers? According to the story?

Matt: Mmm, it is hard to follow. (FGD, C1, p. 5)

Before this focus group discussion, Matt had already become aware in the first pair discussion with Aitani that the instruction he provided in the class was complicated and that the students had difficulty completing the task. The focus group discussion then served as a
mediating activity, enabling him to reconfirm the perception – that the task was indeed difficult for his students.

In a conversation with me which took place in the hallway immediately after the third observed class, Matt also reconfirmed his need to improve ways to provide instructions for student activities:

It was hard for the students to understand the instructions at first. I guess the old saying, you can only go as fast as the slowest person goes, applies here. Someone who really doesn’t understand tends to slow everything down. So I need to improve, as I said in the last [second EP] story, how to instruct, how to give a clear introduction. (RL, C3, p. 30)

In the second EP story, Matt wrote: “By attempting to take a more measured approach to the formation of instructional ideas, I hope to develop a better method of helping students understand what is being asked of them” (EPS, M, C2, p. 2). He saw the need for providing appropriate instructions if his students were to understand classroom tasks. He then recognised once again the urgent need for the improvement of classroom instructions after conducting the third team-taught class and observing that his students initially struggled to understand the instructions. Matt thus reconfirmed the importance of effective instructions for student activities as a result of writing his story, conducting a class, and conversing with me.

During cycle 3, Matt was also able to reconfirm a previous perception about the level of difficulty of his classes. The reconfirmation occurred due to the third pair discussion with Aitani and reading the student feedback sheets: “The feedback from our class was something we’ve sort of predicted in the discussion the three of us had after the class: it was a bit challenging … too much English” (FGD, C3, p. 21). Matt came to see during the third pair discussion with Aitani that the class during cycle 3 was quite difficult for his students because it was filled with an excessive amount of English. He then confirmed again how challenging the class was when he read students’ feedback sheets. For example, one of the students wrote: “I don’t think it is useful to continue listening to English instructions without understanding the contents” (SFS, Sakura, C3, p. 7). In the end, Matt projected this reconfirmation to other teachers in the third focus group discussion.

The teachers at Tsubaki also reconfirmed several previous perceptions about teaching practices in team-teaching contexts. For instance, agreeing with what the team teachers at Sakura said during the second focus group discussion, Sam commented that calling on one
student in class while the other students are not engaged in any task is not an effective teaching technique:

I would have tried to make sure the kids will stay on task a little bit. Because when only one student is working, the longer they are without having something to do, the more they will fall out. This is the same for all kids. (FGD, C2, p. 16)

Sam seemed to have held the perception that one type of teaching practice (i.e., calling on students one by one) was ineffective based on his experiences (“This is the same for all kids”), and he reconfirmed this perception through discussing the idea with other project members. Sam also reconfirmed the preferred style of team teaching with Takahashi during the project. In the final interview, he said:

I think something good came out of this was Takahashi and I discussed what Takahashi wanted to do within the classroom and what the plan was and what she expected out of me as far as my role and that being of course she wants me to speak a lot and we try not to use any Japanese. (NI2, S, p. 1)

Sam appeared to have reconfirmed what he was expected to do as an ALT in the context of team teaching with Takahashi (i.e., to speak English a lot). In the same interview, he talked about his positive perceptions of their team-taught classes: “Now I have a clearer idea about what she expects from me, but as a whole the class will not change very much…. I think we are both pretty happy and confident and what we are doing is working” (NI2, S, p. 6). The EP project became a mediational tool for Sam to realise once again the strengths of their team-taught classes and his role within them.

Takahashi also reconfirmed her perceptions of teaching practices. When the teachers exchanged ideas about how long teachers should wait for students to respond before they start talking (see Rowe, 1974), Takahashi presented her thoughts:

It will be easier for us teachers to conduct one-way class without waiting for them before they start talking. But … we need to be patient … it’s very important for us to have a good balance, encourage them to speak, but we have to wait enough. (FGD, C2, p. 11)

It appeared that prior to the EP project she had the idea that teachers should wait for student responses long enough to achieve two-way communication before moving on to the next phase of the lesson. This idea surfaced during the conversation with others, and she reconfirmed it. Takahashi also emphasised how little time there was for feedback in class, which seemed to have been the case for her for quite a while: “I thought we didn’t have much time, as expected. If only there was a little more time, we can allocate more time for feedback
and deepen our understanding” (NI2, T, p. 4). Furthermore, like Sam, Takahashi reconfirmed the perceived advantages of her team-teaching style and determined to keep doing what she had been doing for her students:

Before I started this project, I didn’t think so much about team teaching. My interest was focussing on … conducting English classes in English! … so this project didn’t affect my own teaching style so much, but it kind of reinforced my belief. I was like, “OK. I will keep doing like this!” (FGD, C3, p. 10)

The EP project was not so influential in changing Takahashi’s perceptions, but it led her to reconfirm for herself the benefits of her current teaching practice. Noticeable here, besides her perception reconfirmation, is the fact that the immediate interest of Takahashi at the time of the project concerned teaching English in English, which was a policy to be instituted by MEXT in April 2013. The gap between Takahashi’s immediate interest (i.e., teaching English in English as a JTE) and the project’s overall focus (i.e., team teaching) no doubt influenced the degree and type of EP effects on her perceptions.

Matt, Sam, and Takahashi thus seemed to have reconfirmed their perceptions of teaching practices (e.g., teacher roles, giving instructions, and teaching methods) over the course of the project. A contrast between the teachers and students regarding perception reconfirmation was observed. While there were instances of teachers’ perception reconfirmation in the data, there was no obvious evidence of students’ perception reconfirmation. I see two possible explanations for this. One is that the students might not have had as many pre-conceived perceptions about teaching and/or learning as their teachers in the first place, or at least they were not conscious of them. It is possible that the students neither took classes very seriously nor thought deeply about the ways in which their teachers taught in class or the ways in which they learned prior to this study. This lack of student agency about language learning was evident, especially at the beginning of the project (see “Agency” in Chapter 6). Without pre-conceived perceptions or awareness of their perceptions, the students cannot reconfirm them. Another possible explanation is that, unlike their teachers, even if the students did have pre-conceived ideas prior to the EP project, they might not have been so confident in those convictions so as to keep them. To put it differently, their previous perceptions might not have been concrete enough to be fully maintained for reconfirmation after the students experienced several potentially perception-changing EP activities. Their previous perceptions were hence more likely to be integrated and changed into transformed
ones or to be abandoned and replaced by new ones. This, along with other unknown elements, resulted in the students not reconfirming their perceptions.

However, the case of Aitani was unique among the teacher participants. She was the only teacher who did not appear to have reconfirmed her previous perceptions. From what I experienced at the research sites, my explanation of her case is that since she was so eager to participate in the project and so willing to accept new experiences as well as others’ ideas whenever they were available, she consistently synthesised or replaced her previous perceptions rather than reconfirmed them. Aitani was therefore perhaps the most influenced participant of all by the EP project in terms of the perceptions of teaching and learning practices.

**Minimal Effect**

The final category I discuss regarding the EP effects on the participants’ perceptions is ‘minimal effect’. There was one participant, Takahashi, who stated repeatedly that the EP experience did not affect her perceptions. It could be argued, however, that even if her perceptions of teaching and learning remained unchanged in content, by being conscious of her existing perceptions through articulating, sharing, and negotiating them as well as by comparing them with others’ perceptions during the EP project, she must have at least reconfirmed her former perceptions. Despite Takahashi’s contentions that the EP project had no effect on her perceptions, some of the other participants (see below) believe that her perceptions were in fact affected by the EP project, as do I.

Takahashi believed that her views on her teaching goals, teacher roles, and ideal English classes had not been influenced by the project. She shared this quite categorically in her final interview:

I haven’t changed anything through this project…. I changed my teaching motto about 10 years ago. And I have continued to create language classes where students and I can learn and communicate together since then. So my teaching hasn’t changed even after this experience. Especially my teaching goals and the roles of teachers, I didn’t change them…. I want them [ALTs] to be in the classroom as a communicator because classrooms should be the place where we can communicate…. So the ideal English classes I imagine remain the same even after this project. I told you this before, but my idea of ideal English classes is the same. That doesn’t need to change, and it was not changed. (NI2, T, p. 1)
Takahashi also told me that her perceptions of teacher feedback were not affected: “I cannot think of anything I have learned about feedback from this project” (NI2, T, p. 4). Her comments suggest that the effects of EP or similar teacher research on teachers’ perceptions depend at least on: (a) teachers’ prior teaching experiences (“I changed my teaching motto”), (b) the degree and duration of teachers’ prior perceptions (“10 years ago”), (c) how positive/negative teachers feel towards their prior perceptions (“my idea of ideal English classes is the same. That doesn’t need to change”), and (d) teachers’ interests and the focus of the research (“my teaching goals and the role of teachers”). These factors have been also discussed in relation to teacher research and teacher cognition (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2003, 2006a, 2013; Freeman, 2002; Lortie, 1975).

Other participants, however, had different ideas about Takahashi’s EP experience. Sam expressed during his final interview his beliefs about what effects the EP experience might have had on Takahashi’s perceptions of teaching practices:

I don’t know if she has learned anything, but maybe more reinforced the idea of our roles and that our roles are working and that we are to some extent achieving our goals…. I get the feeling … she has learned that what we are doing is what we want and where we should be at. (NI2, S, p. 9)

In line with Sam’s comments, there were in fact instances where Takahashi seemed to have reconfirmed previous perceptions of her teaching practices (see “Reconfirmation”). Since reconfirming previous perceptions, being cognisant of current teaching practices, and talking about them affect teachers’ perceptions as well as lead to their professional development (Freeman, 1993; Golombek, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Vygotsky, 1963), the EP project most likely mediated Takahashi’s perceptions, however little she might have reported the effects to have been. As Johnson (2009) says: “the very act of speaking about one’s current understandings makes those understandings explicit to oneself and to others. Once a person’s everyday concepts have become explicit, they are open to discourse processes that can promote reorganization, refinement, and reconceptualization” (p. 63).

Aitani also pointed out some effects on Takahashi’s perceptions that the EP project might have had:

Takahashi was saying that she didn’t really learn anything from this project last time I asked her…. She told me that the turning point of her teaching career had come a few years ago. And probably her teaching has been based on that experience. And her teaching probably has included bits and pieces of different ideas until now. That is her current state. But at least she was listening to what I learned or what Matt learned in
our discussions, so she must have compared her ideas with ours and found their similarities and differences. So she might not have acquired new ideas per se, but she must have encountered different ideas from the discussions and taken them from us to some extent, right? So in that way she probably has learned something. (NI2, A, p. 6)

Aitani felt that the EP project had inevitably influenced Takahashi’s perceptions by providing her with the opportunity to listen to others and compare her ideas with those of others. Fanselow (1990) emphasises the value of language teacher professional development through learning from other teachers by comparing their teaching with that of others:

Here I am with my lens to look at you and your actions. But as I look at you with my lens, I consider you a mirror; I hope to see myself in you and through your teaching. When I see myself, I find it hard to get distance from my teaching. I hear my voice, I see my face and clothes and fail to see my teaching. Seeing you allows me to see myself differently and to explore variables we both use. (p. 184, emphasis in the original)

Although Takahashi herself did not perceive any effects on her perceptions of the EP project, other participants thought otherwise. There is also evidence in the data, as shown in “Reconfirmation”, that her perceptions of teaching practices were affected by the project in the form of reconfirmation. Nonetheless, the case of Takahashi shows that each participant experiences an EP project uniquely and that teachers’ previous experiences, their perceptions and the focus of research will have a significant impact on the overall experience of the participants as well as the outcome of research.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

I have shown in this chapter that the EP project, which included multiple activities such as class observations, reflective classes, and various kinds of discussion, mediated the participants’ perceptions of team-teaching practices and student learning in different ways. On the whole, the EP project affected the teachers’ perceptions of teaching and students’ perceptions of student learning more than the converse. I categorised the effects of the EP on the participants’ perceptions into three cognitive processes: (a) replacement, (b) synthesis, and (c) reconfirmation. Replacement most evidently occurred in five participants: Matt, Aitani, Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke for perceptions of teaching; and Sayaka and Yousuke of student learning. Replacement had the most impact of the three processes identified in the EP project. The synthesis process seemed to be experienced by the largest number of the participants: Matt, Aitani, Sam, Sayaka, and Yousuke for perceptions of teaching; and Matt,
Aitani, Sam, Kanon, Sayaka, and Yousuke of student learning. Reconfirmation was observed in Matt, Sam, and Takahashi, but only in relation to perceptions of teaching practices. In the case of Takahashi, she felt that the EP project had no effect on her perceptions. However, some of the other participants and I believe that she had at least reconfirmed her perceptions as a result of participating in the project.

It was apparent that the effects on the participants’ perceptions were seen by them to be more positive than negative. For example, the teachers gained more knowledge of themselves (Wyatt, 2011), their teaching partner, their role as team teachers, and teaching and student learning practices. Likewise, the students appeared to be more informed about their team-taught classes, their team teachers, the teaching practices employed, and their own learning as a result of the EP experience. The project thus seemed to have promoted deeper understanding of teaching and learning of both the teacher and student participants, perhaps subsequently allowing them to gain positive attitudes towards those practices in their contexts.

An important finding, discussed throughout this chapter, is that the EP project as a mediational tool influenced the perceptions of each participant variably (see Table 5.1). There was, however, a pattern in the way the processes differed, and this pattern was more salient among the teachers than the students. As shown in the data, it seemed that the JTE at Sakura, Aitani, replaced and synthesised her perceptions but did not reconfirm her previous perceptions, and was the most influenced by the EP project. On the other hand, the JTE at Tsubaki, Takahashi, confirmed her perceptions several times but did not show much evidence of replacing or synthesising her perceptions of teaching or learning. She was therefore the least affected participant.

In relation to these findings, one issue to consider, among others, is the extent to which the teachers, as professionals, might have felt compelled to present a positive presentation of self in public in order to reduce the risk of losing face. For instance, Takahashi, and to some extent Sam, might have felt the need to present a positive image of self and so reconfirmed their previous perceptions more than they replaced or synthesised them – e.g., “this project didn’t affect my own teaching style so much, but it kind of reinforced my belief” (FGD, C3, p. 10); “of course she wants me to speak a lot” (NI2, S, p. 1). This possibly inhibited their meaningful self-examination during the EP project (see Golombek, 2011). On the other hand, Aitani, and to some degree Matt, replaced/synthesised their previous perceptions and openly shared their uncertainty, vulnerability, and frustration.
(Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) regarding their teaching during the EP project – e.g., “In one question in particular, it was my fault. It was not well designed, didn’t give them enough information, and it was impossible for them to understand” (FGD, C1, p. 10); “It’s really difficult to predict if . . . certain activities are difficult for students or easier for them. It looked easier than the other to me” (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 10). This might suggest that they had built up appropriate collegial bonds with other project members and felt safe participating in the project. Trusting others and feeling secure is believed to be a prerequisite for professional growth and a key to conducting successful collaborative research (Brancard & Quinnwilliams, 2012; Flint, Zisook, & Fisher, 2011; Poehner, 2011; Tasker, 2011).

Another issue, related to the above, concerns the experience the participants had as ‘pairs’. Sam made the following comparison between his pair at Tsubaki and the pair at Sakura:

I think the thing that was interesting too was we didn’t really seriously change very much with our class in the process of this. And I know the other group did. And I think we were much more content with our class function and I’m still pretty happy, even after this, with the way we ran the class before and the way we do now. (NI2, S, p. 1)

Both Sam and Takahashi at Tsubaki reconfirmed previous perceptions of their teaching more readily than Matt and Aitani at Sakura, and Sam and Takahashi neither replaced nor synthesised their perceptions as much as Matt and Aitani. The data in general, together with Sam’s comments, suggest that although the effects of the EP project on the participants’ perceptions vary from one individual to another, individual teachers’ EP experiences might have been affected by their teaching (research) partner at the same school. This is hardly surprising, given that each pair had taught in the same school for some time in addition to the period of the EP project and shared the experience of the same EP project activities as a pair (e.g., pair discussion 1). Nevertheless, it is still interesting to note that each pair of team teachers constructed different communities of practice at their respective schools where together they had varying joint enterprises (e.g., interests, goals, and styles) as well as different levels of participation in and engagement with the EP project (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). This seemed to have led to the participants experiencing similar outcomes to those of their partner, but different outcomes from the other pair.

This was not limited to the teacher participants. The peer student from the same school (class) as well as the communities of practice created by that pair appeared to have
been significant factors affecting the students’ perceptions. For example, while Kanon seemed to have only synthesised her perceptions of student learning and Tatsuya appeared to have only replaced perceptions of teaching, both Sayaka and Yousuke at Tsubaki replaced and synthesised perceptions of teaching and learning. Further investigation into the relationship between the pairings of the participants and the effects of EP or similar teacher research on the participants’ perceptions is warranted.

The divergent effects of the EP project on the participants’ perceptions were likely to have stemmed from: (a) the participants’ individual traits such as personality and perceptions/experiences associated with team/teaching, learning, private time, and EP/research; (b) pair discrepancies such as their experiences and relationship as a pair; (c) contextual factors such as workloads, the number/the quality of team-taught classes, and school/class research culture; and (d) research-related matters such as focus and goals of the project, timing/place/type/duration of data collection, quality and quantity of data, project members, and researcher. As a result of these disparities and other unknown elements, the effects on the individual participants’ perceptions of the EP were multifarious. In the next chapter, I focus on the effects of the EP project on the participants’ practices.
CHAPTER 6: EFFECTS OF THE EXPLORATORY PRACTICE (EP) AS A MEDIATIONAL TOOL ON THE PARTICIPANTS’ PRACTICES

A sociocultural perspective … recognizes that learning is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal mediational control by individual learners, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity. (Johnson, 2009, p. 2)

I now deal with the effects of the EP experience on the teachers’ and students’ practices, particularly regarding their teaching, learning, and research participation. Since what the participants ‘did’ (i.e., practices) in their teaching and learning affected, and was affected by, what they ‘thought’ (i.e., perceptions) about it (Freeman, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1998), there will inevitably be some overlap between the findings and discussions relating to the participants’ practices in this chapter and those in the previous chapter concerning their perceptions.

The EP project as a mediational tool most saliently affected two interrelated participant practices: (a) their agency and (b) their EP actualisation. I classify agency as the cases in which the participants became responsible for their teaching, learning and/or research participation during the project by making choices (e.g., they decided to become highly engaged with the project) and/or by taking control (e.g., they suggested alternative teaching/learning ideas) (Johnson, 2009; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). EP actualisation means that during the project the participants understood and put into practice any of the seven EP principles involving the ‘what’, ‘who’, and ‘how’ issues in their teaching, learning and/or research experience. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no study thus far which has looked at EP participants’ practices specifically in relation to the EP principles, and this study is one attempt to do so. In certain cases, however, the EP project had only a minimal effect on the participants’ practices, particularly regarding their agency and EP actualisation.

As was the case with the participants’ perceptions discussed in the previous chapter, there were differences in the manner in and extent to which the EP project affected the participants’ practices. These seem to derive from the participants’ individual differences (e.g., their personality), pair discrepancies (e.g., their experiences as a pair), contextual factors (e.g., workloads and school/class research culture), and research-related matters (e.g., focus and goals of the project).
Effects of the EP as a Mediational Tool on the Teachers’ and Students’ Practices

Two salient practices of the participants that the EP project affected were agency and EP actualisation. These and the ‘minimal effect’ category as well as their subcategories are presented in Table 6.1 along with the names of participants who most apparently displayed those practices. I begin by examining agency, and subsequently address EP actualisation and minimal effect.

Table 6.1: Effects of the EP on the participants’ practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects on practices</th>
<th>The participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming responsible by making choices</td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High level of engagement with the EP</td>
<td>Matt, Aitani, Kanon, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Serious about future teaching/learning</td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming responsible by taking control</td>
<td>All the teachers, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alternative teaching/learning</td>
<td>All the teachers, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suggestions for further EP studies</td>
<td>All the teachers, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EP actualisation</strong></td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘What’ issues</td>
<td>All the teachers, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Who’ issues</td>
<td>All the participants except Takahashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘How’ issues</td>
<td>All the teachers, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimal effect</strong></td>
<td>All the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal effect on agency</td>
<td>All the teachers, Sayaka, Yousuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal effect on EP actualisation</td>
<td>All the teachers, Kanon, Tatsuya</td>
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Agency

Agency in this study is defined as participants showing responsibility during the EP project for teaching/learning as practitioners and/or for research participation as researchers. In particular, they did so by making choices (e.g., being highly engaged with the EP; being serious about their future teaching/learning) (Duff, 2012; Feryok, 2013; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Smolcic, 2011; van Lier, 2008) and by taking control (e.g., providing alternative teaching/learning practices; making suggestions for further EP studies) (Benson, 2011; Duff,
2012; Engeström, 2007; Feryok, 2013; Holland & Lachicotte, 2007; Johnson, 2009). It is worth noting here that the participants often displayed agency not only individually, but also collaboratively, in the midst of interaction with others. Smolcic (2011) explains that human agency is not “a characteristic or property of an individual, but it is a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and negotiated within the social system” (p. 18) (see also Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993). Hence, the participants, individually or collaboratively, did not merely conform to the resource provided to them (i.e., the EP project), but instead seemed to have appropriated and reconstructed it to transform their experiences in an attempt to meet new needs and challenges (Donato, 2000; Johnson, 2009). In other words, they demonstrated agency in their particular settings, both intermentally through collaborative activities (e.g., pair discussions and group discussions) and intramentally through self-reflective activities (e.g., video watching and EP story writing) during the EP project which functioned as a mediational tool (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993).

**Becoming responsible by making choices.** The EP project seemed to have encouraged all the participants to become more responsible language teachers/learners and/or researchers. This was particularly evident in: (a) Matt, Aitani, Kanon, and Yousuke choosing to participate in the project with high levels of engagement as researchers; and (b) all the participants becoming serious about their future teaching/learning as practitioners and announcing those intentions.

**High level of engagement with the EP activities.** Among the teachers, Matt and Aitani at Sakura in particular became highly engaged with the EP project. The examples below concern:

- Choice of video clips
- Provision of ideas
- Choice of a research class

In the third pair discussion, Matt and Aitani were extremely careful about choosing a five-minute video clip of their class. They stopped, rewound, played the clip several times, and wanted to know precisely (by the second) where the video clip that they were about to choose began. This was rather surprising, considering that during cycles 1 and 2 they quickly chose five-minute video clips without much consideration. They might have begun to
understand more about what being an EP practitioner involves, i.e., understanding that the minute details of their practices are of paramount importance.

It was noticeable from her comments that Aitani was becoming a responsible teacher-researcher. During cycle 2, Matt was unsure about whether the video clip they had selected was appropriate for their chosen theme: teachers’ instructions for class activities. However, Aitani did not share his uncertainty and seemed very willing to present her ideas to him: “But you [Matt] did instruct and explain the things that we were going to do. So that should be included as an instruction” (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 5). There was further indication in her final interview that Aitani was highly committed to the EP opportunity. She told me that she had made a decision to take part in the project with her usual English II classes: “I decided to invite the ALT to my usual English II classes for this project rather than Oral Communication classes. I felt the need to do something different” (NI2, A, p. 2). According to Gorsuch (2002), the majority of JTEs do not team teach English I or English II with ALTs. Aitani’s case might serve as evidence that JTEs are in fact willing to take the initiative with their teaching and try something new in their team teaching if they are given an opportunity. Aitani also described how she and Matt began to make the most of their pair discussions and had richer conversations as time went by:

We had three pair discussions, and initially we just exchanged information that we could not take time to talk about during class, and that was it…. So the first time and second time, we could not really figure out what to talk about, so the discussions were not deep enough. But in the third discussion, we could talk a lot more…. We not only talked about the students’ reaction to the activity, but we also talked about a lot of ideas for lessons and our experiences. (NI2, A, p. 10)

As the cycle progressed, the teachers at Sakura became more open about discussing their students’ reactions, teaching ideas, and respective classroom experiences with each other. This was something which they had not been doing prior to the EP project.

Of the student participants, Kanon at Sakura and Yousuke at Tsubaki showed their commitment to the EP project most evidently. This was demonstrated in the following topics:

- Willingness to challenge learning capacity
- Genuine participation

Having experienced the EP, Kanon came to see a discrepancy between what she wanted and what her classmates wanted from English classes: “other students were saying that they wanted the teachers to speak more Japanese, but I found it strange to say that for
English classes” (NI2, K, p. 10). She took her learning seriously and therefore came to think that receiving more Japanese translation in class, as other students suggested, is an easy way out and not suitable for English learning. She added that she wanted the JTEs to speak “natural English”, not “modified English” (NI2, K, p. 5), so that she could be exposed to authentic English and be placed in challenging, but stimulating, circumstances. Kanon thus looked critically at learning as a learner-researcher and expressed her desire to make her experience in English classes better. She started to shape her English lessons to serve her own needs (see Rose, 2007) and wanted her teachers to provide a high challenge zone (through non-modified English) where, Vygotsky (1978) argues, learning is most likely to occur.

Yousuke was similarly affected by the EP project and developed into a responsible learner-researcher, actively participating in the EP activities. He said the following in the final interview:

When you first interviewed me, I thought I had to say something good because that was an interview. I said something in favour of team teaching without much consideration, like, “team-taught classes have been good” or something. I tried not to make waves. Back then, I didn’t know the true meaning of this research. But after observing classes, comparing classes, and listening to your stories in reflective classes … I feel I have changed. (NI2, Y, p. 1)

He confessed that in the first interview he made positive comments about team teaching because it was an ‘official’ interview and he did not want to “make waves”. He did not know the “true meaning” of EP then. After experiencing the project, however, Yousuke no longer felt he needed to pretend. He gained better understanding of the concept of EP and participated in the EP activities as a responsible researcher (“I feel I have changed”).

Matt, Aitani, Kanon, and Yousuke thus made choices to become more deeply engaged with the EP activities. This was apparent through their careful selection of a research material (video clip), the way they provided their ideas more overtly, and their willingness to challenge themselves rather than staying within their comfort zones over the course of the project.

**Serious about future teaching/learning.** The EP project appeared to have led all the participants to become more serious about their future teaching or learning and they expressed their particular intentions for it. It is important for sociocultural researchers to focus on individual’s abilities and actions through inquiries into how one can become what one is not yet (prospectively) as well as how one came to be what one is (retrospectively)
(Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Exploring the participants’ intentions for future teaching and learning in this study is therefore as essential as investigating the participants’ current practices. The examples from all the participants used below to describe their future intentions relate to:

- How to provide instructions for student activities in class (the Sakura pair’s theme)
- Teaching methods/techniques
- How to give feedback after student responses in class (the Tsubaki pair’s theme)

Having experienced the EP project, Matt decided that in the future he would make sure not to leave his students at a loss because of complicated instructions: “My experience … made me see the importance … of simple, clear instructional delivery. At this point in the conversation, regardless of what language is used, instruction should be succinct and understandable and should avoid freaking the students out” (NI2, M, p. 6). He was determined to apply what he had learned in the project to future teaching (“instruction should be succinct and understandable”). Although Aitani revealed some tentativeness by asking Takahashi during one of their pair discussions when to introduce unknown words (see “Minimal Effect” later in this chapter), she was more assertive about her teaching practice in her final interview:

We don’t want to use only pre-planned expressions from the teaching plan or textbooks. When we have new activities, it is natural to run into new expressions. In the future, I would like to achieve a right balance in introducing known and unknown expressions. (NI2, A, p. 8)

The teachers at Tsubaki also declared their intentions for future teaching. In one focus group discussion, Sam addressed his interest in pursuing appropriate ways to deal with wait time: “If you go too fast, then that kind of puts them off, but you can’t wait all class for them to come up with an answer. I’d like looking at that and trying to figure out what’s most appropriate” (FGD, C2, p. 10). During the final pair discussion, Sam, Takahashi, and I examined teacher feedback for students in class. Sam noted: “hopefully to some extent I want to provide students with corrections to help them realise their mistakes”. Takahashi added: “I want to think about how to give feedback when it comes to writing activities as well” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 13). In other words, they will continue exploring various feedback techniques for their students. The EP project thus seemed to have motivated the teachers to apply the lessons of the EP project to various facets of future classes.
The students also appeared to have become more serious about their learning, as can be seen in their stated intentions for the future. The examples below refer to the following interrelated topics:

- Learning style
- Learning attitude
- Provision of newly generated ideas to teachers and other students

In the final interview, Kanon announced her intentions regarding her future learning when she mentioned her experience watching the video clips: “We could watch our previous classes objectively. That was very meaningful to make the classes better…. We should express our ideas in class more” (NI2, K, p. 6). Kanon seemed to have increased agency for her learning and made explicit her intention (“We should express our ideas in class more”). Similarly, at the end of the project, Tatsuya at Sakura told me his opinion of learning English: “I think the more we listen to English, the more we can learn, so we should listen more” (NI2, T, p. 5). The EP appeared to have helped him arrive at the belief that he needed to listen to English more in the future to be a better English user. Whether his belief is valid or not, it is clear that Tatsuya has come to consider his learning and learning techniques more seriously through the EP project.

Sayaka at Tsubaki said to me in the final interview: “I felt like I should try to study English a little harder” (NI2, S, p. 9). According to her, this determination came from participating in several EP activities such as talking to her peer (Yousuke) and listening to my talks in reflective classes. Yousuke commented on his future action in the final interview as follows:

For example, this idea is still in progress, but I am thinking of presenting ideas derived from these conversations to my teachers. I also want to stand in front of the classroom and say to everyone: “Don’t you think this class should be like this?” or something…. Even small action would make people more aware, and as a result their ideas would move in a slightly different direction, right? (NI2, Y, p. 16)

The EP project was so influential that Yousuke became inclined to put his ideas forward directly to his teachers as well as to raise critical awareness in his fellow students. His comments echo the words of Allwright and Hanks (2009): “Teachers are officially in charge of the practice of language teaching in the classroom, but they have to leave the actual practice of language learning to the learners. Only the learners can do their learning” (p. 2).
The students at Tsubaki also collaboratively showed their intentions for future learning. Towards the middle point of the project, though, their learning attitudes were somewhat negative and overall indifferent:

Yousuke: I sometimes feel bored in some classes.
Hiratsuka: Don’t you feel the need to change those classes?
Sayaka: It cannot be helped.

Yousuke: I sometimes think so, but it cannot be helped. (SPD, Tsubaki, p. 5)

At that time, Sayaka and Yousuke implied that they had no choice but to be passive learners. They appeared to have given up taking responsibility for their learning and depended entirely on their teachers. After I prompted them to focus particularly on the ways in which their teachers provided feedback in the pair discussion, however, both seemed to begin acknowledging how significant it is to pay closer attention to what is happening in class. It might have been the point of transition for their becoming agents in the EP journey:

Hiratsuka: So do you think you can make your English better without being corrected?
Sayaka: I would assume whatever I say is correct if the teachers do not correct my English. I don’t think I will notice my mistakes by myself.

Yousuke: I don’t know if I feel what I said is correct. I think after I answer teachers’ questions, I feel like I have overcome difficulties (laugh). Yeah, I guess just getting out from difficult situations is different from actually learning something.

Hiratsuka: I am very interested in what you just said.
Yousuke: Maybe I will pay attention next time then.
Sayaka: Yeah, I’ve never paid attention like this before. (SPD, Tsubaki, p. 13)

Sayaka assumed that she would be unable to notice her mistakes unless her teachers explicitly corrected them. Yousuke felt that there is a difference between just answering teachers’ questions and learning something meaningfully. As the discussion progressed, they declared their intentions that they would in the future devote more attention to teaching and learning in class.

All the teachers and students thus showed an enhanced sense of agency through the EP project by making explicit their future intentions about teaching/learning. The stated
intentions covered wide-ranging topics such as methods of instruction, teacher feedback, learning styles, learning attitudes, and expressing ideas to teachers and other students.

**Becoming responsible by taking control.** The EP project as a mediational tool appeared to have also helped the participants become more responsible teachers/learners and/or researchers by taking control. All the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, generated alternative teaching/learning ideas and sometimes implemented them in practice. Furthermore, all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, made suggestions for further EP studies.

**Alternative teaching/learning ideas.** Dewey (1933) maintains that it is through an attitude of open-mindedness and a willingness to seek alternatives that teachers come to understand their own assumptions about themselves, their students, and the nature and impact of their teaching practices. In a similar vein, Fanselow (1987) recommends language teachers be reflective and find alternatives for their teaching practices: “Only by engaging in the generation and exploration of alternatives will we be able to see. And then we will see that we must continue to look” (p. 474). We can therefore argue that the generation and offering of alternative ideas regarding teaching/learning practices on the part of the participants is an indicator that they are taking responsibility for their own teaching, learning, and/or research activities as practitioners/researchers. During the project, the teachers suggested alternatives, particularly in relation to:

- How to provide instructions for student activities in class (the Sakura pair’s theme)
- L1 use
- How to give feedback after student responses in class (the Tsubaki pair’s theme)

Matt mentioned in the third pair discussion with Aitani an alternative method for giving instructions because he thought the method he used in class during cycle 3 was too complicated: “I think mainly the fault was mine in that it was just far too complicated…. What I was wishing I had done was, simple, minimal, using some visual aids, perhaps” (TPD1, Sakura, C3, p. 19). In the second focus group discussion, he discussed an alternative method for how to run a particular aspect of his lesson. In the class during cycle 2, a student was nominated to write her answers to a particular exercise on the board. The other students were not engaged in any activity at this time and were left to sit and wait until the nominated student finished writing. Matt suggested that while the other students were waiting for the student to finish writing, they “should’ve been writing something down themselves” (FGD,
C2, p. 14). As a result of reflection, therefore, Matt was able to examine the team-teaching practices employed and proposed alternatives.

During the second focus group discussion, Aitani reconsidered her L1 use in the classroom:

I should have used less Japanese…. Maybe I shouldn’t have said or explained all the things they should do in the activity in Japanese. Maybe I should take time in explaining it so that they can understand, and use simple English and give them more chances to listen to English. (FGD, C2, pp. 13-14)

Aitani regretted the amount of Japanese she used in class and started to consider alternative practices (i.e., taking more time for explanation and using less Japanese and more English). She shared these potentially effective alternative practices with others in the focus group discussion.

In the final pair discussion at Tsubaki, Takahashi, Sam, and I watched a video clip of their class during cycle 3 and discussed teacher feedback in response to students’ comments. The teachers began by saying that recasting (see Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001) is the most appropriate technique to provide feedback in communicative language classrooms. I followed this up with a question, and our conversation continued:

Hiratsuka: OK, but I play the devil’s advocate here. What do you think could be the disadvantage of recasting for this activity, if any? What could be the possible problem if you only give them recasting feedback?

Takahashi: Some students want to listen to clear explanations in Japanese.

Sam: Yeah, in Japanese.

Takahashi: So, for such students, recasting is to be unclear, not understandable. They need more clear explanation, grammatically in Japanese.…

Sam: … like she said, for students who want to know why what they said was wrong, it might be a problem. (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 11)

After being prompted, Takahashi and Sam saw the potential negative side of recasting and commented that some students might prefer to receive direct explanation in Japanese. This shows how dialogic and collaborative (transformative) activities can push the boundaries of teachers’ ZPDs for their learning (Barkhuizen & Borg, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Richards, 2008; Wells, 1999) as well as how context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge can emerge from classroom teachers who have substantial knowledge about their students and their situated circumstances (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).
During the second focus group discussions, Takahashi and Sam collaboratively generated an alternative guiding method for their students. After watching a video clip of their second observed class where groups of students had to choose a pet’s name from three possibilities, stating either their agreement or lack thereof with their previous group, they entered into the following exchange:

Sam:   So every group said, “I agree”, and every other group said, “I disagree”…. They have maybe 10 different ways of saying this but they all used the same expressions.

Takahashi: Actually we covered all different expressions in the first part of this class. We should have had them use the other expressions.

Sam:   They have their textbook open so we would be like, “If they say this, you cannot repeat, you have to try something else”. (FGD, C2, pp. 6-7)

Reflecting on the class by watching the clip, they realised that all the students repeatedly used the same expressions (“I agree” and “I disagree”). It became clear to them that they could have provided their students with an alternative, i.e., having the students use different expressions in the textbook. The teachers were able to develop the alternative teaching practice as a result of mediational activities, i.e., watching video clips of the observed class (Golombek, 2011) and interacting with their teaching partner.

Two students at Tsubaki, Sayaka and Yousuke, clearly both considered and put into action alternative learning practices regarding their:

- Learning attitude
- Learning style
- Provision of critical comments

Towards the end of the EP project, Sayaka increasingly took charge of her learning. I asked her in the final interview why she changed her attitude to learning, and she responded:

Sayaka: When Sam comes to teach, he is playing a leading role, and Takahashi helps a little bit … I thought it was difficult to follow especially because I didn’t understand what Sam was saying. But I’ve gotten used to the style recently, and … I have become interested in speaking English more….

Hiratsuka: Did you feel like that before I came?

Sayaka: No.

Hiratsuka: You know you don’t have to say what I want to hear.
Sayaka: Yeah, I really mean it … I wanted to become friends with Sam before, but as I said earlier, I didn’t like making mistakes, so I did not use English at all. Besides, I didn’t have many opportunities to speak it in the first place. So I never thought I would spontaneously ask him something before. (NI2, S, p. 3)

Sayaka initially considered team-taught classes to be “difficult to follow”. However, she gradually changed her views as she became familiar with their teaching style (“I’ve gotten used to the style recently”) and experienced more of the EP project (“Did you feel like that before I came?; “No”). Having more team-taught classes as part of the EP experience enabled Sayaka to modify her learning attitude (“I have become interested in speaking English more”) as well as implement an alternative practice (“I would spontaneously ask him something”). In the final interview, Sayaka commented on students being passive learners and confessed to me that she did not like taking classes where students were passive. I followed up with a question:

Hiratsuka: What do you mean by being passive?

Sayaka: We just do what we are told to do. We don’t take any initiative.

Hiratsuka: Did you feel you took the initiative during this project?

Sayaka: Before I experienced this project, I was like, “It doesn’t matter because I will not be pointed to and asked to answer questions”. But now, when I don’t know the answers to some questions in class, I first discuss with other students, and when I still don’t know, I make a move and ask the teachers. So I guess it is better now in that respect. (NI2, S, p. 15)

Instead of being a passive learner, thinking that “It doesn’t matter because I will not be pointed to and asked to answer questions”, Sayaka began asking the other students and her teachers about things she did not understand, becoming more active and therefore “better”. At one point during the final interview, Sayaka overtly criticised ‘fun classes’ with ALTs in her junior high school and stated that students in team-taught classes “need to be truly interested in English to learn English, which is more than just having fun” (NI2, S, p. 13). She no longer considered ‘fun classes’ to be appropriate for her learning and presented this idea directly to me, thereby suggesting that she was becoming a proactive learner with an alternative perspective on team-taught classes.

Similarly, Yousuke seemed to have enhanced his agency as he suggested alternative learning styles and made critical comments on teaching and learning. In his first interview, he did not appear to have given any thought to the teaching or learning practices in his English classes:
Hiratsuka: Do you want your teachers to do anything? Change their lessons perhaps?

Yousuke: Do I want them to do anything? Change?

Hiratsuka: Do you have any questions to your teachers or have comments on English teaching or learning?

Yousuke: Questions?.... I don’t have anything to say right now. (NI1, Y, p. 11)

In contrast to this, his final interview was full of insights into his new learning style:

I feel I have changed ... it’s not only about my English, but I have become strongly conscious of how we take classes in all subjects. Before, I was just writing sentences from the blackboard in class, and that was all. But ... now I prepare for classes and compare my prepared answers with right ones, and then I notice differences and learn things more and more. (NI2, Y, p. 1)

As a result of the EP project, Yousuke experienced a change in his learning style. He began to prepare for classes and notice mistakes in his answers more than before. He also became aware of the importance of an alternative approach for learning:

One important thing is that students offer their opinions.... When that happens, improvement can occur. It is easier for students to just remain silent and do nothing. But we can only tell what our learning trajectories are like when we take action.... If we don’t take action, the quality will only go down.... That’s what I learned from this project. (NI2, Y, p. 13)

In his first interview, he did not “have anything to say”. But in his final interview, he stated that “one important thing is that students offer their opinions” and believed that as a consequence of this “improvement can occur”. The EP project positively mediated Yousuke’s learning (“That’s what I learned from this project”). He increased his agency by perceiving alternative learning styles and by making critical comments, thus becoming a responsible learner who is willing to take action for improving the quality of English classes.

All the teachers generated alternative ideas for their teaching regarding, for example, their respective themes and L1 use. Among the student participants, Sayaka and Yousuke in particular exhibited their agency as responsible learners by recognising, and sometimes demonstrating, alternative learning styles. They also took control of their learning by providing comments critical of their learning, an alternative practice that was not apparent at the beginning of the project.

**Suggestions for further EP studies.** Providing suggestions for further EP studies might serve as an indicator that a participant has taken ownership of the project as a
responsible researcher. All the teachers seemed to have understood and taken control of their research activities. The examples used below pertain to:

- Participants
- Chosen themes
- Class observations
- Outside researcher
- Planning and conducting classes for the students of the other pair
- Research focus
- Five-minute video clips

Matt suggested that the EP project might involve a greater number of participants: “Having more groups may be interesting but maybe not as efficient in sort of intimate sharing of information. It would take longer for more people to become comfortable enough to talk. Given more time, it might work” (FGD, C3, pp. 22-23). He also suggested that the number of themes explored could be increased: “Each pair could afford to look at two themes” (FGD, C3, p. 23). Further examples of him being a responsible researcher came from his final interview. Firstly, he showed aspirations for conducting a similar kind of EP project with different participants: “As this sort of one-off project at this point has done, it has been so valuable, but if we had the opportunity to continue to do it with other combinations of people, we would gain so much” (NI2, M, p. 7). Secondly, he proposed an alternative method of class observation: “the presence of a third teacher … could be eliminated. Ideally if you could just have cameras … they [the students] would be less aware of the observation … less likely to behave differently” (NI2, M, p. 8). He felt it would be less intrusive for the students if the external researcher (in this case, me) could be excluded from class observations. He also talked about possibilities with different project members, the optimal number of the cycles, and the potential of a similar EP project as a teacher development opportunity:

it would be fun, for example, to interact with the same pair a number of times. It could be a pair from the same district, so you could come together more easily and more often…. I think it would be interesting to try and do it on a more regular basis. If the board of education could involve this type of project as part of their team-teaching curriculum … I’m sure the students will really be able to value from that. (NI2, M, p. 10)

Aitani also suggested an alternative method for conducting EP studies. In the final interview, she commented:
I wanted to watch Takahashi’s class in person in the classroom. Even though I watched the five-minute video clips and listened to the flow or organisation of the classes, sometimes I was not able to get a grasp on the whole class. So the discussion would have been more to the point if we could have directly watched their classes. (NI2, A, p. 13)

Aitani wished that she could observe an entire class of the other pair in person in order to have discussions which are “more to the point”. She seemed to have become a responsible researcher picturing in her mind an EP project which could be more meaningful for her personally. Her comments clearly point to the importance of taking into account both the teachers’ available time and various types of class observations when planning professional development opportunities for language teachers.

In the third focus group discussion, Sam provided his suggestions for how themes could be chosen in an EP project: “it would be interesting to compare if two groups chose the same theme of doing, like, instructions to see what they do and compare them” (FGD, C3, p. 22). In his final interview, he reflected on the whole EP experience and proposed other possible ways to conduct an EP project. He seemed more certain than before about what an EP project could entail for its participants:

I think that alternatives that you can consider as to what to add or take away would be if me and Takahashi would actually go and see their class or even switch classes. Like you plan for our class and I plan for your class and teach your class to see how and what the students think and be confronted with a completely different style of teaching. (NI2, S, p. 14)

Like Aitani, Sam wished they could watch the other pair’s classes in person. He also proposed that they plan and conduct classes in the other pair’s school so that they and their students could experience various teaching and learning approaches and broaden their perspectives. Sam also suggested narrowing the focus of the research: “Maybe it [the goal of the project] was a little broad, maybe we could have been a little more focussed. But at the same time because it was broad, it allowed me to explore a lot of different possibilities” (NI2, S, p. 14). He thus offered three alternative suggestions for an EP project: (a) participating pairs choose the same theme and compare their thoughts and results; (b) participating pairs teach each other’s classes; and (c) the research focus be narrowed down more rather than being so open-ended.

Takahashi also provided a suggestion at the end of cycle 1 about the use of the five-minute video clips:
It took me time to understand the other team’s teaching because I didn’t have any information about it [the observed class] beforehand, like whether it was at the beginning of the lesson or the end of the lesson. It might have been better if both teams had chosen the same part of the lesson, such as the presentation of the new material or the explanation of the rule by ALT. (EPS, T, C1, p. 1)

Takahashi wanted to compare the same phase of classes from both schools as it took her a while to figure out what was going on when she watched the video clip of the other pair in the first focus group discussion. She thus assumed the role of a practitioner-researcher who is in charge of her own research by devising an alternative method for choosing the five-minute video clips. When I read her comments, I, as an outside researcher, had to immediately make a choice as to whether or not I should incorporate her suggestion into the ongoing EP project. In the end, I did not do so because: (a) the two pairs had already chosen different themes, requiring them to focus on different phases of the classes; (b) Takahashi was the only one who made the suggestion, and the other three teachers did not respond to her comments after having read her suggestion; and (c) I presumed that as the project progressed she would get used to the existing process for recording and reviewing video clips and that transcripts of the classes and explanation provided by the other pair would help her understand what was happening. However, at the same time I felt like I was defeating the purpose of teacher research (EP) by not having integrated her idea into the project. The incident showed me how complicated it is to strike a balance between the aims, needs, views, and abilities of the researcher and those of the participants.

Among the student participants, Sayaka and Yousuke at Tsubaki offered recommendations for further EP studies, particularly related to:

- Class observations
- Reflective classes

Sayaka referred to the placement of the camera in the observed classes: “I wanted to see many more groups in the video clips within a class…. The camera was fixed on the same group throughout the class” (NI2, S, p. 12). She also expressed her feelings about watching the video clips: “I think the duration of the video watching was a bit too short…. I wanted to watch the clips a little longer” (NI2, S, p. 12). Her comments indicate that she was interested in the experience of other students in the class (“I wanted to see many more groups”) and eager to examine the classes as a whole both more broadly and at a deeper level (“I wanted to watch the clips a little longer”). She expressed such interests as a responsible EP project member who has come to take control of her learning.
Yousuke also seemed to have taken control of the EP project and connected more with the associated research activities. One such example can be seen in his comments during the final interview when he made suggestions for improving the reflective classes and student feedback sheets:

The feedback sheets could have been more open-ended … maybe it might have been the case that we could write easily because of that style, but to make the sentences flow from one to next was difficult…. Also when you were showing the video clips, I was wondering if the students in the back could see them clearly. We have a screen in the classroom, so we could have used a projector…. And I wanted the English feedback sheets. I could have brought them back home maybe for two days…. We could hand in the Japanese ones right away, but maybe we could hold on to the English ones until the next class or something? Then some people might have been able to write a lot more. (NI2, Y, pp. 8-9)

Yousuke appeared to be in charge of his learning and had thought further about the EP experience. He voiced his opinions on how best to conduct the reflective classes in his learning context. He felt that: (a) the student feedback sheets could have been more open-ended, (b) we could have used a projector to show the video clips, and (c) the students could have had more time to write the English feedback sheets.

Although the participants seemed to be generally content with the design and procedures of the EP project, all the teachers and two students, Sayaka, and Yousuke, became more responsible and took control of the research. They provided numerous research options relating to such issues as the participants, chosen themes, and classroom observation methods.

**EP Actualisation**

As presented in “Exploratory Practice (EP)” in Chapter 2, EP hinges on seven principles. Two principles concern the ‘what’ issues, i.e., focussing on quality of life and emphasising understanding (Principles 1 and 2), three principles involve the ‘who’ issues, i.e., bringing everybody together for mutual development (Principles 3, 4, and 5), and the final two relate to the ‘how’ issues, i.e., making the exploration continuous and minimising the participants’ burden (Principles 6 and 7). During the EP project, the participants actualised these EP principles by understanding and adhering to them.

In order for the project members to gain initial understanding of EP, I introduced the EP principles with a handout at the beginning of the first focus group discussion. I wanted to emphasise the ‘quality of life’ in language classrooms and the significant meaning of
‘understanding’ within the EP framework. These are usually not valued in most conventional post-observation meetings among teachers or by teacher educators (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Fanselow, 1992). I started as follows:

When it comes to discussions after classroom observations with supervisors or other colleagues, we tend to criticise other teachers’ teaching … and we usually talk about what we should do, or this is what we should probably have done or something. But instead of having that kind of one-sided conversation, I want you to have more open-minded conversations…. So we should not have that kind of judgmental minds. EP is not necessarily to change our class but to understand what is actually happening in class. (FGD, C1, p. 3)

A collaborative exploration with two pairs of team teachers (and their students) for actualising the EP principles thus began. Smith (1998) describes the spirit and process of the EP project that we were aiming for:

How will teachers ever be able to examine critically the significance of their behaviour in the classroom? They probably won’t if they have no stimulus to shift them out of their habitual way of viewing their world. The solution, once again, is that learning takes place as a consequence of collaboration. Teachers should consider asking their questions and pursuing their inquiries in company with other teachers … and especially with their students. Everyone’s consciousness and understanding can be raised with frank and open inquiry, not to reach conventional or “right” answers, but to reveal the underlying dynamics of every aspect of school activity, social and emotional as well as intellectual. (p. 92)

I now present below how the participants actualised the EP principles, according to the three pertinent issues: the ‘what’, the ‘who’, and the ‘how’.

**The ‘what’ issues.** Allwright and Hanks (2009) recommend that teachers and students emphasise quality of life and understand the dynamics of language classrooms rather than finding technical methods or seeking measurable changes in teaching and learning. In this study, all the teachers and two focal students (Sayaka and Yousuke) were notable in achieving the goals of the ‘what’ issues. Towards the end of the final interview, I asked Matt if similar EP projects could be an option for teacher professional development in his context. His answer was highly positive:

This is more personal, more relative to your experience … it [his current professional development opportunity] is in no way near as constructive as this has been. When the focus is on you as an individual, inevitably you are more inclined to strive to develop yourself to be engaged with specific ideas rather than go along for the ride as many would do in the mid-year conference, not take much in, don’t take that seriously; whereas, in this case of more specific exploratory practice you are encouraged to obviously reflect seriously on your perspective. (NI2, M, p. 17)
Matt considered the project to be successful and more constructive than his current professional development opportunity provided by the board of education. He thought the success was due to the EP experience being closely relevant to his local teaching contexts (“When the focus is on you as an individual, inevitably you are more inclined to strive to develop”). This is an important aspect that has been raised in previous research (e.g., Borg, 2013; Tasker, 2011). Matt recognised himself as a knower and a thinker, who played an active role in the project (Barkhuizen, 2009; Freeman, 2002). In his final EP story, Matt wrote:

When I agreed to participate in this research project I had a limited understanding of its focus and what it would require of me. When it became apparent that the idea of teacher-as-researcher was an integral part, if not the central element, of the project, I began to realise that the potential for me to develop my teaching knowledge was much greater than I had expected. My initial assumption that I would have a more passive role in the research was happily eclipsed…. Aitani’s and my combined approach to this exploratory practice project encompassed a propensity to explore our teaching styles and broaden students’ language learning experiences through a wide array of methods. (EPS, M, C3, p. 2)

He was pleasantly surprised to be able to seize the unique opportunity to actively participate in the research and develop his teaching knowledge rather than taking a passive role (“My initial assumption that I would have a more passive role in the research was happily eclipsed”). As an EP practitioner, Matt was able to facilitate his understanding of his team-taught classes by dealing with various classroom issues and trying out several teaching approaches (“Aitani’s and my combined approach … encompassed a propensity to explore our teaching styles and broaden students’ language learning experiences”). His positive comments echo the voices of the participants in other EP research (e.g., Gunn, 2003; Slimani-Rolls, 2003).

From the beginning of the project, Aitani appeared to have comprehended what EP involves and attempted to gain deeper insights into teaching and learning rather than finding ad hoc solutions for problems. In a focus group discussion, she started sharing her opinion about how to think about the quality of teaching and learning by saying: “We are not supposed to say, ‘this is good or that was bad’”. She then elaborated further:

I don’t think we should say it [the lesson] was good because they [their students] felt, “Oh we understood the whole process”, or it was wrong because they were like, “Oh we didn’t understand”. In both classes, they thought about the pictures and the film and tried to express in English, so in their own ways they did their work quite well. (FGD, C1, p. 14)
She avoided reaching any decisive judgment about their teaching or her students’ learning (“We are not supposed to say, ‘this is good or that was bad’”). Rather, her interest was in describing what happened and advancing her understanding of that (“they thought about the pictures and the film and tried to express in English”). A further example of advancing her understanding of teaching became apparent when Aitani told Takahashi that she finally acted against the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992) rather than just thinking about taking action. In other words, she made a connection between theoretical knowledge and personal practice based on her experience during the EP project, and realised “praxis” (Johnson, 2006, p. 239): “Even if teachers happen to be foreign people, the classes don’t need to be special or anything like that. I knew about it in my head, but I actually experienced it this time” (TPD2, JTEs, C3, p. 7). Although filling the gap between theory and practice is believed to be difficult to accomplish (Johnson, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2012), Aitani managed to make something impersonal fundamental to her personal professional life and develop her understanding about language teaching through the EP experience.

When Aitani mentioned some work I did for her (i.e., making lesson plans), it became obvious that she gave serious consideration to ‘quality of life’ and considered it to be of value in language teaching and learning: “I could gain a lot from your lesson plans. Not only in terms of classroom activities themselves, but also in terms of how you think about English teaching. You value teachers’ and students’ lives and make class materials personalised” (NI2, A, p. 3). When I drew her attention to the differences between the class observations by officials from the local board of education which emphasised ‘best’ teaching practices and those in the EP which treasured ‘understanding’, she expressed her feelings and evaluated the efficacy of the EP principles:

This EP project was stimulating because we did not limit ourselves to pursuing the best teaching practices. I felt this project was actually more reasonable. Whether one person regards the class as good or bad is subjective in the end…. In that way, the EP principles are reliable and credible. (NI2, A, p. 9)

Aitani thus saw the importance of taking into account the lives of teachers and students in a larger context rather than attempting to find the ‘best’ practices in a restricted sense (see also Tajino & Smith, 2005). Aitani found herself dealing not with laborious ‘problems’ but with illuminating ‘puzzles’ during the project (Hanks, 2009) and regarded the EP principles as “reliable and credible”. She reiterated these feelings during her final interview when she talked about her experience with EP story writing:
I wrote EP stories based on my perplexity. I kept thinking, “What should I write about?” I felt like I was searching for clues in the dark. I didn’t have any apparent direction or perspective. I carefully looked around and tried several new things…. I always had questions about my teaching and was constantly thinking where to take those ideas…. That’s why writing EP stories took longer than I wanted. But that’s exactly what exploration is about, isn’t it? (NI2, A, p. 12)

Following the EP spirit, Aitani wrote about her ‘puzzles’ in the EP stories. She sometimes had to stop and take time to think about her teaching deeply, not already knowing what to write (“I was searching for clues in the dark”). But the uncertainty did not stop her from exploring. On the contrary, she seemed to have accepted and enjoyed the process of the unpredictable journey of trial and error (“that’s exactly what exploration is about, isn’t it?”).

Aitani spelled out in her first EP story that previously she thought that educational research was too complicated and beyond her ability and that she had never thought of participating in this sort of academic study (see also Borg, 2013). However, she apparently enjoyed the EP study: “I now feel this project itself takes on the nature of exploration in that the choices of goals, the collection of data, and the series of interaction all seem to be conducted in ‘exploratory’ ways” (EPS, A, C1, p. 1). She also wrote about her thoughts on the quality of life in language classrooms:

Hiratsuka explained that ‘quality of life’ is equal to ‘lessons’ themselves…. What about my lessons? Can they be described as ‘life’ …? … I will do my best to work for the quality of my life. I am still in the middle of puzzles in this ‘exploration’, longing for any discovery. (EPS, A, C1, p. 1, emphasis in the original)

Aitani came to agree with me and saw language classes as inseparable from teachers’ and students’ lives. She put a lot of thought into this and decided to work hard for the quality of her life in the context of her lessons. She seemed to be fully immersed in the exploratory nature of the research (“I am still in the middle of puzzles”) and longed to seize a moment of clarity. It was also clear in her second EP story that she was taking full advantage of the project as a fully-fledged EP practitioner:

In participating in this EP research, we are provided with the golden opportunity to learn, try, and expose ourselves to a number of new possibilities. To take full advantage of this rare opportunity, I would like to put my thoughts together, take time to reflect upon the goals and effects of the activities, and provide my own reasons for every performance in the lessons. Conducting all-English classes is not my ultimate goal anymore…. Now I would like to design my lessons so that they should develop both students’ and teachers’ lives. (EPS, A, C2, p. 1)
She availed herself of “the golden opportunity” and exploited “a number of new possibilities” during the project. Understanding her classes and being mindful of quality of life became her new ultimate teaching goal over conducting English-only classes. She appeared to have begun appreciating the possibility of a harmonious whole comprising her teaching, students’ learning, and lives outside the classroom (“Now I would like to design my lessons so that they should develop both students’ and teachers’ lives”) (see Wu, 2006).

Sam was also concerned with the ‘what’ issues in EP. Following the EP principle of ‘understanding one’s teaching more’, Sam began to reflect on his teaching more than before through keeping teaching records:

The careful review we did for our own classes through this project only makes me believe more strongly in the idea of reviewing the class and changing it … so now as soon as the class is done, I will write stuff down and save it on the computer … so next time, it’s been changed, it will perhaps run better. At least that’s the goal. (NI2, S, p. 7)

Reflective activities in the EP project led Sam to want to review and improve his classes, thus enhancing his understanding of his teaching practices. It was also clear from his EP stories that the EP gave him the means to develop better ideas about how to teach: “The opportunities to openly discuss, observe, and critique our own classroom and another pair’s classroom has been a positive experience” (EPS, S, C3, p. 2). He also wrote specifically about his pair’s theme, teacher feedback in class: “Our topic of feedback is one that I have not previously put much thought towards. I am happy that we are taking the time to reflect and evaluate on the feedback we provide the students with” (EPS, S, C1, p. 1). During a pair discussion with Takahashi, Sam also explained how their class was relevant to the lives of their students outside the classroom: “They hear us use the words, and the target phrases within a good context, I think. We use activities that can be put to use in a real world” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 13). This relates to EP Principle 1, ‘quality of life’.

Takahashi told me that she enjoyed the process of the EP project and speculated that Sam did also: “It was interesting to join the project especially because we rarely had had the opportunity to listen to the students’ voices. ALTs in particular never have that chance. So I think he found it interesting. I enjoyed it too” (NI2, T, p. 3). I regard the fact that Takahashi and Sam enjoyed the EP experience as evidence of their having focussed on the happiness (quality of life) that can result from teaching and research.

Discussions between Sam and Takahashi indicated that they were, at least to some
extent, actualising the ‘what’ issues of the EP principles. For example, during a pair discussion, they told me that their students had difficult time speaking up in class not because they lacked the English abilities but because they needed time to choose one name for Sam’s pet from three options. I followed up with a question:

Hiratsuka: So you thought the reason why the students were not able to give comments was because the students were still thinking about which option to choose, not because they lacked English abilities?

Takahashi: Today, yes. Not always. There are a lot of factors.

Sam: Maybe some days they are not confident.

Takahashi: Or teachers’ instructions are not clear.

Sam: There could be many reasons.

Takahashi: Many, many reasons. So we have to think about the reason on the spot and we have to change the teaching plan like we did today. We don’t need to stick to the teaching plan because we cannot expect the students’ reactions sometimes. (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 9)

In this excerpt, both the teachers agreed that there is no one absolute method when it comes to teaching and learning. They thought there were multiple reasons why it might have been difficult for their students to make comments in class (“There are a lot of factors”; “There could be many reasons”). They seemed to have discovered that understanding practices in the language classroom in a holistic manner is a continuous and necessary process for enriching everybody’s experience (“Maybe some days they are not confident”; “We don’t need to stick to the teaching plan because we cannot expect the students’ reactions”), like the participants in other EP studies (e.g., Lyra, Fish, & Braga, 2003).

Of the focal students, Sayaka and Yousuke in particular seemed to have recognised the importance of the quality of life and showed evidence of understanding more about teaching and learning over the course of the EP project. Sayaka remarked in her final interview that she had never seriously thought about previous classes or what sort of class she wanted to take but that the project encouraged her to think about them:

I never thought of what sort of class I wanted to be in before. A class is a class. I just had to take it. That’s how I felt. But I began to become interested in certain things more and more. Based on the experience, I now know that as long as I am interested in something, I will spend time and learn a lot about it. (NI2, S, pp.13-14)
Sayaka shifted her outlook on how she takes classes and how she learns in general. She became aware that she could invest time and energy for meaningful learning when what she learns matches what she is interested in.

Yousuke placed emphasis on the lives of teachers and students in the classroom and attempted to thoroughly understand them. During the final interview, he described his experience with EP activities such as listening to my talks in reflective classes, one of which was related to the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990):

I didn’t necessarily think I was learning English per se in the project, but you were talking about things that were directly related to English learning.… I made many discoveries, which I normally cannot in usual classes…. I was like, “Oh, this is noticing!” I was noticing ‘noticing’. And your talk was about making learning directly relate to our life experiences. (NI2, Y, p. 6)

He appreciated a different type of ‘learning’ during the project, which encompassed a broader issue connected to the quality of life in language classrooms. In the project he was learning about how to learn English (“things that were directly related to English learning”) rather than learning the specifics of the English language itself, as is ordinarily done when English is taught as a school subject (“learning English per se”). He also saw how learning was directly related to personal life experiences outside the classroom.

All the teachers and two of the focal students (Sayaka and Yousuke) thus exhibited the spirit of EP and variously achieved ‘what’ issues by understanding multi-faceted classroom practices as well as by focussing on quality of life as a fundamental foundation for fostering their teaching and learning.

The ‘who’ issues. In the language classroom, the focus should be on inclusivity, collegiality, and the mutual development of all the people involved (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). In this study, all the teacher and student participants, except Takahashi, seemed to have embraced the ‘who’ issues: involve everybody as practitioners (Principle 3), work to bring people together (Principle 4), and work cooperatively for mutual development (Principle 5). Matt, for instance, noted during the first pair discussion with Aitani that the discussion allowed him to listen to his teaching partner’s teaching philosophy and her expectations about him as an ALT for the first time. This suggests that communication between JTEs and ALTs is often scarce (see Hiramatsu, 2005) and that the project brought the team teachers together in a common enterprise (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Matt also said that the students’ feedback sheets enabled him to delve for the first time into his students’
thoughts regarding their team-taught classes. The students’ input appeared to have been a mediational means through which teachers and students could be brought together by sharing ideas and negotiating class goals.

Actualising Principles 3, 4, and 5, Matt agreed with his teaching partner’s remarks on several occasions during their pair discussions – e.g., “Yeah you are right” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 6); “Yeah that’s right” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 7); “Indeed” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 7); “I agree with Aitani that …” (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 7). He likely strengthened his professional collegiality and friendly relationship with his teaching partner through the EP project, much like the team teachers in Okamoto’s (2008) study. Matt also often involved his teaching partner as a practitioner in their discussions by seeking her input – e.g., “Do you agree with that?” (TPD1, Sakura, C1, p. 8); “What do you think, Aitani?” (FGD, C1, p. 10); “What was the activity we did after that? Can you describe it again?” (FGD, C2, p. 14). Thus, he frequently adopted a collegial stance in his relationships with his teaching partner and appeared to have collaboratively cultivated their professional expertise (see also Silver, 2008).

Specifically referring to the focus group discussions, Matt applauded the project for encouraging people to unite for mutual development: “It was a very informative and very beneficial experience to come together in that group…. There was certainly a lot to be said for the same pairs coming together several times” (NI2, M, p. 10). Matt also mentioned in his writing the key premise of EP Principles 3, 4, and 5 – involve and include everybody for development:

An endless loop of feedback comes into being! At the outset of this project I didn’t realize how much I would come to appreciate the feedback given by both the rest of the research group and the students in relation to the classes I am involved in. The feedback we have received had allowed Aitani and me to gain a heightened sense of how instruction is delivered and interpreted. With this fresh perspective we are able to better explore our chosen theme. (EPS, M, C2, p. 1)

Contrary to his initial expectation, the EP project brought him new understanding regarding his teaching practices. The feedback given by the other project members as well as by his students seemed to have enabled him and his teaching partner to better explore their giving of classroom instructions.

Similarly, Aitani worked closely with other project members. During cycle 2, she elaborated on the reason why she began to hold fresh perspectives on her teaching:
I told you before that I learned something new from the pair discussions with Takahashi. But the path I took to make several realisations was not only from the pair discussions. I am sure they helped, but there were many other factors such as looking at my classes as an outsider with Matt and watching classes by Takahashi’s pair with those teachers and you. So my mind must have been unconsciously affected by all of them. Had it not been for interacting with others, I don’t think I could have reached this current state of mind. (RL, C2, p. 14)

Aitani regarded each project member who contributed in their own way to dialogic mediational activities as crucial to her learning experience. She also identified the benefits of the particular way the classroom observations during the project were conducted: “You put a camera where it could capture the students as well. So it was good…. It is not a real class observation unless we can pay attention to both the teachers instructing and the students responding” (NI2, A, p. 9). Her comments suggest that the observations brought teachers and students together in the exploratory inquiry and that the project overall resonated with Principle 3: involve everybody as practitioners. Moreover, when sharing her experience with the focus group discussions, Aitani emphasised how important it was to participate in the project with multiple members:

Team teaching at Tsubaki was dealing with a different subject, so we could listen to something we had never thought of. As I imagined, it was better to have two than one, and three than two and so on. The more people there were, the more ideas we could share and utilise. (NI2, A, p. 11)

Aitani also acknowledged a range of possibilities for collaboration with other teachers and me (Principle 5):

I cannot forget to mention the power of a team. Two teachers in a class, two pairs of teachers, five members of this project team. Through the whole interaction we can all share the gains, difficulties, and possibilities of teaching. (EPS, A, C3, p. 2)

She recognised “the power of a team”, consisting of five members. Through the interaction with the other team members, she could articulate, share, and negotiate new understanding as well as take risks and share frustration (Freeman, 1993; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Sam told me after participating in the EP that his initial goal, deepening his understanding about team-taught classes, had been achieved. He argued that the project was successful mainly because we had sufficient time for, and various types of, discussions with other project members. The following comments point particularly to the opportunity where we could examine on video and discuss different team-taught classes:
We were able to discuss just the general role of team teaching with another pair and got the chance to look at someone else’s teaching and have ours reviewed by someone else. That too is more than I expected. I didn’t expect anyone else to look at my lesson and be able to make suggestions or ask us why we did this or why we’ve been doing this or something…. That’s something almost no ALT would really get to do. (NI2, S, p. 8)

Even though such teacher collaboration as experienced by the teachers in this study has been widely emphasised in the field of SLTE (e.g., Johnston, 2009; Richards, 2008) and general teacher education (e.g., Ermerling, 2010; Kaasila & Lauriala, 2010; Tillema & van der Westhuizen, 2006; Wells, 1999), ALTs do not usually have the opportunity to observe or to be observed team teaching. Nor do they usually engage in discussions about their classes with their teaching partners, let alone with teachers from other schools. Sam felt that the EP project was his first opportunity to work collaboratively with JTEs and another ALT, closely examining “why we did this or why we’ve been doing this”.

All the focal students attempted to collaborate with others in experiencing the project. Kanon, for example, gave considerable thought in her final interview to what others (i.e., other students and their teachers) might feel and experience:

Kanon: Not all the students share the same ideas or opinions, right? So teachers should listen to their students’ opinions as much as possible. I think teachers need to have the ability to deal with different students’ needs and ideas.... I don’t think teachers grow as professionals if teachers always impose their opinions on their students....

Hiratsuka: What can we do to include students’ opinions?

Kanon: If I were a teacher, it might be troublesome, but I would write down questions on the blackboard and have my students answer them. And rather than correcting their answers right away, I would have everyone answer the questions and elicit the reasons for their answers. And I would like to negotiate and think about how I can best teach. (NI2, K, p. 12)

By putting herself in her teachers’ shoes, Kanon engaged in exploration into teacher and student development. She imagined herself being a teacher and offered one way to include everybody in the classroom (“rather than correcting their answers right away, I would have everyone answer the questions and elicit the reasons for their answers”). Like the participants in Zheng’s (2012) study, she became a key practitioner of learning as a result of reflection and imagination. The other focal student at Sakura, Tatsuya, also considered another person’s (Kanon’s) situation, suggesting the value of collaboration between students: “I am glad I could listen to somebody else’s opinion.... I could understand what the other student was
thinking … and refer to it” (NI2, T, p. 6). The EP activities as a mediational tool required him to view learning from a perspective not of his own.

Sayaka imagined herself being in her teachers’ position, working to bring people together in her mind. She said in her first interview that students could improve their English if teachers instilled confidence in class. I was fascinated by the comment and sought more from her by asking: “What can the teachers do to achieve that?” She replied: “Teachers can not only teach how to write English but they can also teach us how to speak English, maybe (laugh)” (NI1, S, p. 10). Sayaka also mentioned how having a discussion partner enhanced her EP experience. She said:

Sayaka: When I had a discussion with Yousuke, I was simply amazed at how much he could talk. I was thinking, “I cannot talk like this” (laugh). Like it or not, my ideas were influenced by Yousuke’s ideas, I remember.

Hiratsuka: Do you think the discussion with him influenced your English learning?

Sayaka: Yes. I think I changed my thinking. (NI2, S, p. 8)

Yousuke had a considerable impact on Sayaka’s EP experience and influenced her thinking about teaching and learning. The EP project, joined by multiple members, appeared to have become an invaluable framework for encouraging Sayaka to more fully understand the situation of her teachers and peers (see also Perpignan, 2003; Zhang, 2004).

Yousuke gave careful consideration to the experiences of other project members. For instance, his concern was with the ways in which the teachers provided feedback in class: “The teachers must have their own reasons why they don’t correct students’ mistakes or why they sometimes provide unclear feedback. Probably they change their feedback according to the flow of the class. Sometimes it cannot be helped, I think” (NI2, Y, p. 1). It was apparent that he advanced his understanding of his teachers by putting himself in their shoes. He sympathised with his teachers who have to take into account various elements in the classroom which often emerge unexpectedly (“Sometimes it cannot be helped”). I argue that this sympathetic attitude is in alignment with the ‘who’ issues in EP. At one point during the final interview, he envisioned teaching Japanese in a foreign country, progressing his understanding further about ALTs: “What would happen if I went abroad and became an ALT? This was a casual thought triggered just once by this project. I thought about what would be expected of me if I were an ALT” (NI2, Y, p. 3). The EP project promoted unique lines of thinking in Yousuke’s mind (“What would happen if I … became an ALT?”), a piece.
of evidence that learning might occur out of curiosity to want to know more about others. Like Sayaka, Yousuke found the student pair discussion productive and the presence of another student helpful:

I felt much more secure during the pair discussion with Sayaka than during the interview by myself. … When you get stuck in a one-on-one interview, you cannot do anything. But when you are with somebody else, you can ask the person…. I could speak more when I was with her … and my mind was in a good state. (NI2, Y, p. 7)

After having experienced the EP project, Yousuke sympathised with the ‘who’ issues in which bringing everyone together is pivotal. He said the following in his final interview:

I think only people can change people…. For example, when we prepare for university entrance examinations, if one person takes the preparation seriously, two people start to take it seriously…. In our classroom, first thing we can do is to talk to a group of people around you and suggest some things. And gradually from there, the conversations will spread to others like, “Oh, what about this?” (NI2, Y, pp. 16-17)

He thinks students can take learning more seriously and generate more ideas when they communicate with other peers and share their thoughts because “only people can change people”. He seemed to be willing to play a significant role for teacher-student mutual development in the near future by providing opinions as a decision-making practitioner (see Po-ying, 2007).

Three teacher participants (Matt, Aitani, and Sam) in particular actualised the EP principles associated with the ‘who’ issues, valuing the cooperation and collegiality among the teachers and students in their classrooms. Likewise, all the focal students seemed to have appreciated the collaborative activities in their EP experiences and appeared to have cared about their teachers and classmates in the process.

**The ‘how’ issues.** There are two interconnected principles related to the ‘how’ issues in the realm of EP. One is making an EP experience a continuous enterprise (Principle 6); the other is minimising the burden of participating in an EP project by integrating the activities of the project into the normal pedagogic and learning practices (Principle 7). Teacher research in general (e.g., Borg, 2013) and EP studies in particular (e.g., Li, 2006) advocate providing teachers and learners with feasible and practical research practices so that they might continue their exploration in actual language classrooms. In this study, several features of the EP project seemed to have led all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, to actualise the ‘how’ issues. For example, Matt expressed in his final EP story a determination to continue his exploration:
A strong outcome of our participation in the research project is that we will certainly endeavour to continue the exploration of our own capabilities in the sphere of team teaching. I expect that we will continue to take more time to reflect and improve upon our teaching practices. (EPS, M, C3, p. 2)

Having experienced the EP project and seen the new possibilities for team teaching, Matt was certain that he and his teaching partner would continue reflecting on their teaching and improving their classroom practices in the future.

Aitani had already taken action during the EP project for a further developmental venture. She told Takahashi in their third pair discussion that her EP experience would continue in the next school year with other English teachers at her school. In her final interview Aitani reiterated her plan of including other teachers in future EP experiences and gave her reasons for doing so:

Thanks to this project, I could think deeply about team teaching. And I started to involve other teachers at my school and spread the effects of the EP project. I didn’t want this project to be like, “OK. This project is done and over. Let’s move on”. I assume this project was carried out in order to have continuous effects. I didn’t plan to do this, but in the process of the project, I started to think of this idea, and it grew more and more over time. In the end, I took action. (NI2, A, p. 3)

Her idea of extending EP was already forming during the project, and she eventually “took action”. One of the reasons for her deciding to continue her journey with her colleagues and students was that she was not fully satisfied with the level of achievement in the EP project: “I cannot confidently say I have achieved the goal of the project…. It is up to how what I have learned from the project will have influences on my future classes…. Continuous changes are needed” (NI2, A, p. 6). For Aitani, the EP experience was not only confined to the limited numbers of classes in this project but also for many future classes to come. She summarised: “Our EP doesn’t end here, it will continue as we follow the road of teaching” (EPS, A, C3, p. 2). Johnson (2006) argues that second language teachers have “not only a right to direct their own professional development but also a responsibility to develop professionally throughout their careers” (p. 250) because second language teacher education should be “normative and lifelong” (p. 239). Aitani appears to have turned into an EP practitioner who has made professional learning a continuous enterprise.

Sam also showed interest in continuing exploration with other teachers at his schools: “It was good, I think, to really discuss what we want to happen in class and where we want each other to be. It’s probably something we should definitely do with other teachers” (NI2, S,
p. 1). He wrote in his final EP story that the final focus group discussion had triggered in him a desire to seek opportunities to question his teaching methods and review his classes:

The last group discussion was useful. It was a conclusion to the research project. Again it was beneficial to receive and give feedback regarding our lessons. I felt as if the discussion and review process was something that should not be ended. Good teachers should always be questioning their methods and continually reviewing their lessons. (EPS, S, C3, p. 1)

Dewey (1933) says that it is through wholeheartedness (continual self-examination) that teachers arrive at profound understanding about themselves and their classes. Sam appeared to be on his way to becoming one of the “good teachers” who constantly investigates his teaching practices. Sam has therefore followed, at least to some extent, Principle 6: make EP a continuous enterprise.

Takahashi mentioned that the class observations they experienced during the project were not something out of the ordinary and that the activities of the project were integrated into her usual teaching: “I was teaching as usual, so I could behave naturally…. The class observations were not a set-up. You've analysed some students’ reactions in the classroom, right? I know their reactions were real” (NI2, T, p. 2). This comment demonstrates that we succeeded in examining the participants’ normal pedagogic and learning practices during the EP project, something that aligns with Principle 7. Like Rowland’s (2011) study, I argue that the integration of the EP project into the normal curriculum was the primary reason for it being so fruitful in helping the participants become reflective experts and critical thinkers.

Sam and Takahashi discussed both pairs’ themes and the length of the video clips in their final pair discussion. They agreed that it was good to focus on one theme at a time, prompted by a short video clip. Takahashi decided that we would not have been able to carry out the project successfully if we had included more activities or if the video clips were longer: “It would be tough and tiring, and we cannot continue” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 14). Had the EP project been conducted differently, the burden might have been so great for the teacher participants as to render it unfeasible and unproductive. It is worth reiterating here that I attempted to lessen the JTEs’ burden further by helping them complete some of their work (see “Extra class observations, JTEs’ work, and student pair discussions” in Chapter 3). This support might have been essential for the JTEs, who were the busiest of the participants, to participate in all the EP activities during the project. This is another example of how Principles 6 and 7 were actualised.
Among the student participants, Sayaka and Yousuke seemed particularly successful in understanding and actualising the principles associated with the ‘how’ issues. Sayaka mentioned in her final interview the advantages of having three cycles:

I was extremely nervous to be observed by you at first. I was well aware of the camera too. I initially thought I should not behave normally. I thought I had to show my best behaviour. ... Probably at the very beginning, all of us were feeling like that. But you came a couple of times, right? Then gradually everybody became like, “Oh, he is here again” or something like that. (NI2, S, p. 6)

Even though she initially felt she had to show her “best behaviour” in the observed classes, after I visited her classroom a couple of times she no longer felt pressured and took part in the classes as usual. This is in accordance with Principles 6 and 7: the project was a continuous enterprise and did not create an extra burden for the participants.

In the first interview, I prompted Yousuke to offer his opinions about the class observations he had previously experienced. He said: “I’ve never thought about it. Well, those high-ranking people come for inspection…. They come and observe classes to get an idea of each school” (NI1, Y, p. 11). He considered previous classroom observations by officials at the board of education to be inspections, the purpose of which was to get to know each school. In contrast, he did not view the classroom observations in the EP as special occasions but as something integrated into normal teaching and learning:

The observation in the project became sort of a habit in team-taught classes…. I don’t know how to say it, but there wasn’t any difference in our attitudes in those classes after some time…. It was just the very beginning that we were nervous … then it was just normal. We were not taking the classes more seriously than usual or anything. (NI2, Y, p. 6)

The class observations became “sort of a habit” for Yousuke. He and his classmates appeared to have considered the observed classes to be “just normal”, illustrating the ‘how’ issues in EP. Yousuke and I specifically discussed the EP principles in his final interview, during which I disclosed the purposes and goals of the project to him. He had insightful opinions about the EP principles and aspired to understand his learning further. His EP adventure appeared to last for a while even after the project:

What you are hoping to achieve seems to be a very good environment…. It would be ideal to have a situation with students and teachers working together, but it is very difficult at the moment in this current situation…. What would we do? Where can we start? ... even a small action can make people aware…. Of course we need some key experiences like this project. But first we need someone to be the key person. We can start from there, and then one person becomes two people, and two people become
four people and so on…. Even if people decide to study English hard, the environment or the atmosphere would not be always conducive to learning. I think making it real and continuing it is difficult. Also teachers and students need to have a collegial relationship…. The harmony in the classroom, or the chemistry in the air, they all have to pre-exist. Can we do it? … I cannot picture exactly yet … but we need to take action soon. That’s for sure. (NI2, Y, pp. 16-17)

He agreed that creating an environment where students and teachers can work together collaboratively is of significance for the quality of language classrooms (“It would be ideal to have a situation with students and teachers working together”). However, he believed that his current situation was not conducive to creating such an environment. Yet, it was evident that Yousuke wanted to be “the key person” in the near future, someone who will make the learning experience of other students worthwhile and keep the EP experience alive. In other words, he appeared to be willing to put EP ideals into practice by making harmonious classrooms where continuous enterprises can be pursued with small changes (“even a small action can make people aware”; “I cannot picture exactly yet … but we need to take action soon”) (Principles 6 and 7). Stevick (as cited in Murphey, 2013, p. 184) once remarked: “I have begun to suspect that the most important aspect of ‘what goes on’ [in language classrooms] is the presence or absence of harmony – it is the parts working with, or against, one another”. Smith (1998) argues that introducing change in the classroom can best be done cooperatively by all the stakeholders. Yousuke seem to have understood these concepts well.

The comments from all the teachers and two students (Sayaka and Yousuke) indicate that Principles 6 and 7 (the ‘how’ issues) were, at least to some extent, fulfilled in this EP project. They strived to continue their EP experiences both during and after the project. They also seemed to have succeeded in integrating the EP activities into their normal teaching and learning practices, with minimal disruption.

Minimal Effect

I have shown so far that all the participants, although varying, exhibited their agency as practitioners and/or researchers. They also showed signs of EP actualisation over the course of the project. However, it was probably to be expected that the EP project would at times have only a ‘minimal effect’ on the participants’ practices. Johnson (2009) states that “when human agency plays a central role in development, there are always differences in how different people react to the same set of circumstances [EP experiences] at different times” (p. 116). We should therefore expect a range of effects experienced by the participants,
including little to no effect. I discuss below the minimal effect of the EP on the participants’ practices, particularly regarding their agency and EP actualisation.

**Minimal effect on agency.** The participants were not at all times engaged in the project or taking the initiative of their teaching, learning, or research participation. Rather, the effects of the project on their agency were sometimes minimal. The examples below taken from all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, relate to:

- Low engagement
- Lack of suggestions for the EP

On some occasions, the teachers did not appear to be enthusiastic about participating in the project. In fact, Matt was the only one who carefully read the transcripts of the third observed classes and the summaries of the student feedback sheets from both schools before the final focus group discussion. The other teachers all confessed that they did not have time to read them. It might have been that: (a) the teachers were too busy, professionally and privately, to thoroughly engage in teacher research in general (see Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2013); (b) the teachers did not find value in the particular activity (reading the transcripts and summaries), contrary to my intentions (see Borg, 2013); and/or (c) the presentation of the transcripts and summaries was not reader-friendly.

When the teachers were asked if they would like to change anything in the project during cycle 2, none of the teachers stepped forward to amend the design of the project in a personalised way. Matt replied: “No. I think at this point, you seem to have devised a fairly well-balanced approach” (TPD1, Sakura, C2, p. 14). Aintani responded: “I don’t have anything that I feel should be added or deleted” (RL, C2, p. 15). Sam simply stated: “That’s OK” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 13), and Takahashi said: “Nothing special” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 13). These comments might mean that the project was well designed, and the participants were satisfied. Another possibility is that they were being polite. Or they did not care about the project so much. A further possible explanation might be that the participants needed some time to build trust with me before they could be honest and become responsible for their research practice (see Borg, 2013; Childs, 2011). In Takahashi’s case, though, it might have been that she had given up making suggestions as her previous offering was not taken up (see “Suggestions for further EP studies”).

Takahashi admitted during the final interview that she could not take full advantage of the EP project and that she did not gain from the project as much as she might have. She
attributed this to her hectic life as a JTE. Below is our conversation from her final interview that illustrates her lack of engagement as a teacher researcher:

Hiratsuka: How were the group discussions you had with the five people in Ume city?

Takahashi: How were they?

Hiratsuka: What did you think? For example, this part was good, or this one was not useful or anything like that?

Takahashi: Well, as I didn’t know what the goal of EP was in the first place, there were times when I thought, “Why are we gathering like this? Why do we have to leave our school?”…. Was there any purpose for the discussions?

Hiratsuka: Uh, I personally had reasons.

Takahashi: Of course, you had them, yeah? But you cannot tell me?

Hiratsuka: Well, I wanted to know what experience you had with them. So listening to your story like this is very interesting. Now, you wrote EP stories at the end of each cycle, right? How was it?

Takahashi: How was it?

Hiratsuka: Any thought on that? After writing, before writing, or during writing.

Takahashi: Nothing special. I don’t have any thoughts on that....

Hiratsuka: With regard to this project, did you have anything you wanted to add or delete or anything like that?

Takahashi: I cannot think of anything. (NI2, T, p. 9)

As the excerpt shows, the final interview with her was not as smooth or engaging as I had hoped. She did not seem to put much thought into her experience with the EP project (“How were they?”; “How was it?”; “I don’t have any thoughts on that”; “I cannot think of anything”). She did not understand the purpose of the EP project, in particular that of the focus group discussions (“Why are we gathering like this?”). She was not an agent who tried to take control of the EP project for her own benefit, but was somebody who considered me to be a knowledge source (“Of course, you had them [reasons to conduct the discussions], yeah? But you cannot tell me?”). The aim of the EP project, the rationale behind project activities, and Takahashi’s demanding schedules appeared to have affected her lack of engagement with the project. Because Takahashi did not appear to have taken part in the project as a fully responsible practitioner-researcher, her growth is likely to have been minimal.
The EP project did not always encourage the students to increase their agency either. It seemed that Sayaka and Yousuke in particular needed some time to become agents of their own learning. The same applies to the EP project as a whole. Around the project’s halfway point, I asked Sayaka and Yousuke what they thought about their teachers participating in the project in order to enrich their classes. They were rather indifferent. Yousuke told me: “I have no thoughts on it”. Sayaka agreed: “Same here” (SPD, Tsubaki, p. 3). Considering that Sayaka and Yousuke exhibited significant agency towards the end of the project (see “Agency”), the effects of EP studies on students’ practices seem to be at least partly dependent on the duration of the research (Borg, 2013; Childs, 2011). It was also revealed in Sayaka’s final interview that she was not entirely engaged with writing the feedback sheet as a responsible learner or researcher. When I asked her what she thought about the purpose and the reason of writing the student feedback sheets, she replied: “I wrote down what I thought about the classes because you asked us to do so” (NI2, S, p. 7).

A lack of agency was thus observed in all the teachers and two focal students (Sayaka and Yousuke), especially at the beginning of the project and when the participants were busy. Agency appeared to be affected by their individual traits, the other project members, and the contexts in which they worked or studied (van Lier, 2002). Other important factors include various research-related issues such as the design, goal, and duration of the research as well as the number and types of the activities they experienced.

**Minimal effect on EP actualisation.** There were also occasions when several participants, most evidently all the teachers and two students (Kanon and Tatsuya), did not always follow the EP principles. I introduce the minimal effect on EP actualisation in relation to:

- Inclination for ‘best’ practices
- Cultural, political, and educational conditions
- Knowing and believing in absolute answers
- Minimal continuation/collaboration
- Minimal involvement

Even at the final stage of the project (i.e., cycle 3), Matt showed an inclination towards seeking the ‘best’ teaching methods (Prabhu, 1990) or ‘what works or not’ (Freeman & Richards, 1993). He commented: “That [the third pair discussion with Aitani] was a very enlightening discussion in terms of … a specific activity. It worked or didn’t work in the
context of that instruction” (FGD, C3, p. 4). He also stated: “I want to think about the students’ space and the best way to fit the delivery of the instruction into the space” (FGD, C3, p. 5). This, in my opinion, goes against the idea of focusing on the quality of life (Principle 1) or working to understand language teaching and learning (Principle 2).

Kumaravadivelu (2006) notes that a teaching method “should no longer be considered a valuable or a viable construct, and that what is needed is not an alternative method but an alternative to method” (p. 67). The awareness that understanding teaching and learning in language classrooms involves both complexity and messiness rather than simple answers should be promoted (Freeman, 2002, 2009; Freeman & Johnson, 1998b; Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2012).

Aitani identified circumstantial constraints to achieving EP ideals. When she explained to me why JTEs cannot try new teaching practices, either in their solo classes or team-taught classes, she outlined the dilemma that JTEs often encounter. It emanated from the importance of students’ test scores, which, according to her, encouraged JTEs to employ the grammar-translation method:

Even if we want to break out of the habit of employing the grammar-translation method, we get back to it in order not to drop students’ test scores…. If we always emphasise communication activities, our students won’t get good scores. (NI2, A, p. 18)

She appeared to view the interplay between the grammar-translation method and students’ test scores from the position of absolute causality (Freeman & Johnson, 2005). That is, the grammar-translation method results in students’ high test scores. She explained further her dilemma in a piece of writing entitled “What Stops Me”:

My teaching style in general is Grammar-Translation method. At the bottom of this practice is my fear: Students may not understand what is being taught unless they are provided with translation. ‘Understanding’ is a tricky word for me. My mind tells me that understanding of a foreign language doesn’t necessarily mean translating it into one’s mother tongue. But my unconscious behaviors easily betray my mind, and often make me end up with acts of translation. The Board of Education demands that we provide easy-to-understand lessons for students, but what does it really mean? What is the very thing that students are supposed to understand? (EPS, A, C2, p. 1)

Aitani found it hard to free herself from old habits and, despite her best intentions, ended up adopting the grammar-translation method in order for her students to ‘understand’ the content of her lessons. She experienced tensions with regard to the concept of ‘understanding’; her desire, her students’ needs, and the intentions of the board of education appeared to be
simultaneously at play (Denscombe, 1982; Engeström, 1999). These might have minimised the act of focussing on quality of life or working to understand teaching and learning in the EP sense. The state of Aitani’s teaching and the effects of the EP project on her practices were constantly shaped by the ever-changing contexts in which she lived and worked (Johnson, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006; Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Wright, 2010).

The teacher who held rather inflexible beliefs about his teaching practice was Sam. He regarded expressing oneself as the only goal of language learning: “If you can express yourself and make errors, I still consider it a success because the point of language is to express yourself. So if you can do it with errors, that’s OK. Errors will get fixed in time” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 11). Sam conducted his classes according to this belief, emphasising only communicative aspects of language teaching and learning without much attention to grammar rules or student errors. I argue that this one-sided view, whether or not it is accepted by others in his context, is incongruous with the exploratory features of EP. Another example which shows that Sam did not actualise the EP principles was his lack of sufficient communication with his teaching partner outside the project: “We haven’t really talked separately, from the group or from you, a lot about what we’ve done” (NI2, S, p. 9). In other words, Sam and Takahashi did not carry on their professional communication as team teachers beyond the EP project activities, which is far from realising continuous professional development together.

The teacher whose practices were least influenced by the EP project was probably Takahashi. One example came from the second pair discussion with Sam when she revealed her enduring beliefs about grammar teaching and learning. She seemed to believe in one perspective so strongly that she did not have any room for other ideas: “This is what a certain professor said about grammar knowledge: ‘students don’t learn by being instructed’. I want to believe that. They just need time to practise” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C2, p. 12). Takahashi did not seem to want to accept any ideas regarding student language learning other than the one: “students don’t learn by being instructed”. This narrow point of view does not align with the idea of ‘understanding’ in EP. These comments might also show that objective knowledge generated by scholars outside the classroom tends to be regarded as more significant by in-service teachers than accumulated experiences they acquired from their own classes (Borg, 2003, 2006a; Freeman, 2002, 2009; Freeman & Johnson, 1998b). In other words, in-service teachers might be subject to “ventriloquation of authoritative discourses” (Ilieva, 2010, p.
It was also evident that Takahashi was not so excited about the EP project in general. Even though we spent a lot of time clarifying the EP principles during the first JTE pair discussion, Takahashi did not give much thought to them during or after the project. The following exchange took place in her final interview:

Hiratsuka: What were your thoughts on the EP principles? And what experiences did you have about them through this project?

Takahashi: What are the principles?

Hiratsuka: Well, for example, we should aim to develop all the people concerned.

Takahashi: All the people concerned?

Hiratsuka: Yeah, not only teachers or researchers, but students and all the people concerned.

Takahashi: So what did I think about them?

Hiratsuka: Yeah, for example.

Takahashi: Oh, they are good. (NI2, T, pp. 5-6)

She was not eager to engage in the interview, nor did she critically think about the EP principles (“What are the principles?”; “Oh, they are good”). Her comments reaffirmed for me that different attitudes and expectations among research participants sometimes impede the achievement of EP goals (see Bartu, 2003). The focus of the conversations between Takahashi and me shifted to the issue of minimising the burden by integrating research work into normal pedagogic practices (Principle 7). She told me that she was overwhelmed by her school work during the project. I then asked her a question about the work I did for her (e.g., writing lesson plans):

Hiratsuka: What did you think about the work I did for you? Was it helpful?

Takahashi: Well, it was actually the case that I had to take time to think about what I can ask you to do. So research can never be naturally done…. When researchers come to school, we have to think about which room we let them stay in or who takes care of them. They are all unusual things, and we have to think about and deal with those extra issues. (NI2, T, p. 7)

For Takahashi, research by definition is always something special and additional whether or not she receives any support from outside researchers to lessen the burden of her work. This is contrary to the ‘how’ issues in EP that emphasise continuity and ordinariness in the process.
of the study. At this point in the interview, I was curious to know her opinions about teacher research (EP) conducted without help from a third party researcher and asked her if teachers might have any concerns about carrying out such research by themselves. Examples of concerns teachers have, such as the lack of knowledge of research methods, have been documented (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2013). Takahashi replied to my question by saying: “teachers usually collect class evaluation questionnaires from students. So I guess research is just an extension of that…. My students always complete class evaluation questionnaires at the end of the school year. It’s just like that, right?” (NI2, T, p. 7). Although a number of participating teachers in previous studies (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2013) understood research as a scientific and statistical endeavour involving objectivity, large samples, hypothesis testing, and variables (see also Aitani’s comments in “The ‘what’ issues”), Takahashi seemed to feel that a one-off questionnaire amounted to ‘research’ and did not regard research as a unique opportunity to promote quality of life or facilitate understanding, a core constituent of EP. However, quality or rigour of research should not be compromised when conducted by teachers; that is, not all forms of teachers’ reflective practice (e.g., one-off questionnaire) should be considered ‘research’ (Borg, 2013).

Takahashi also spent a considerable amount of time in the final interview expressing her negative opinions about research in general and the EP project we experienced in particular: “If you have to sacrifice your private time, then conducting research would be difficult. The teachers are already sacrificing their private time, occupied with club activities and other work. They need to have time for their family members” (NI2, T, p. 11). She concluded: “Research should be conducted only by graduate students in graduate schools because it is not suitable in actual schools…. Teachers should do what teachers are required to do at school” (NI2, T, p. 13). Takahashi insinuated that teachers are (only) expected to teach and that research should be conducted by graduate school students. This partly echoes one of the teacher participants from Portugal in Borg’s (2013) study, who noted: “I suppose I connect research to doing some sort of qualification/teaching course” (p. 97). I continued our interview by saying that, as a former JTE in the prefecture, I attempted to construct a research format that would be suitable and feasible for in-service teachers to explore issues related to their own contexts. Takahashi responded: “Yeah, I understand. But this time too, we were given a topic: team teaching. Maybe I didn’t understand the whole process of this research. But we didn’t choose that topic” (NI2, T, pp. 13-14). Takahashi’s comments reminded me of Allwright’s words (2004):
it is virtually inevitable that teachers will sometimes perceive researchers’ research topics as irrelevant to anything they care about. They may still be willing to cooperate, but will probably be left with the lasting perceptions that academic research has nothing worth having to offer in return for their cooperation. (p. 3)

The EP project did not seem to assist Takahashi in achieving some of the core goals reflected in the EP principles. This outcome might have derived from her previous beliefs and experiences of (teacher) research, her values regarding private time, and the topic/focus/goals of the EP project.

Sam and Takahashi as a pair did not always achieve understanding of their teaching practices either. In the final pair discussion, Sam commented on feedback options they could provide in class: “For this kind of activity with group speaking, I don’t see many other options…. their answers are not long enough to give real feedback” (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 5). Takahashi agreed. They therefore did not attempt to seek alternative teaching practices and continued not to provide ‘real’ feedback because their students’ responses were too short (however, see Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013 for various types of oral corrective feedback in class). Another example which shows that Sam and Takahashi did not follow the EP principles also appeared during their pair discussion:

Hiratsuka: The students were saying that by having group activities they can communicate with each other a lot, but have you ever considered, during the group activity, that you wanted the students to speak English more?

Takahashi: Well.

Sam: No.

Takahashi: No?

Sam: Have we?

Takahashi: Yes. I tried that when I wasn’t teaching with you several years ago.

Sam: Oh you tried then. I think it’s hard to enforce.

Takahashi: It would be a big project. What I was involved in was a three-year project.

Sam: Yeah, almost every student has to be willing to do it…. It’s hard to enforce that policy even with two teachers … you could never make students do it. (TPD1, Tsubaki, C3, p. 6)

They had never shared their views about students’ language use in group activities before, and they had rather fixed ideas about it. Neither Sam nor Takahashi saw an alternative to language use in group activities and acknowledged that having the students use English
during group activities is “hard to enforce” and “a big project”, and “you could never make students do it”. I wondered whether what they said was really the case with their students or if they had merely been speculating based on their pre-conceived notions. It is not until we actually try alternative teaching and learning practices and carefully take note of the results that we come to know what actually takes place in the classroom (Fanselow, 1992). In fact, studies in other contexts (e.g., Storch & Aldosari, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) have shown that there is only a modest use of L1 by students during group/pair work activities in second language classes even if they are given permission to use their L1. In sum, Sam and Takahashi did not always appear to successfully explore teaching and learning in an EP manner (Principle 2) or work cooperatively for mutual development (Principle 5).

There was also a tendency to value one teaching approach over another, as became evident in the JTE pair discussions:

Aitani: Do you check newly introduced words first or later?

Takahashi: In reading classes, later.

Aitani: What about English I or English II classes?

Takahashi: When I want the students to improve their reading comprehension, later.

Aitani: OK, later. What about in writing classes?

Takahashi: In writing classes, I leave it up to my students. However, I tell them not to use Japanese-English dictionaries too often. (TPD2, JTEs, C3, p. 11)

The JTEs, especially Takahashi, had firm beliefs about the right way to teach. They were primarily concerned with effective teaching behaviours that they believed always lead to positive learner outcomes (Freeman, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998b, 2005).

The students similarly did not always actualise the EP principles. Kanon described her experience with the student pair discussion as follows: “It was difficult to give my opinion…. Although it might be the case that he had the same opinion, I thought he might have been thinking different things. So I could not really say what I was thinking well” (NI2, K, p. 7). Kanon was worried about her partner’s opinions to the extent that she could not freely express hers and failed to work cooperatively for mutual development. In the case of Tatsuya, although he seemed to have benefitted from the EP project by realising that he could learn from his ALTs, and he began to like team-taught classes more than before, at the end of the project he still had a negative attitude towards JTEs and regarded their solo classes as useless for his future: “The usual classes by Japanese teachers will not be useful at all when we go to
foreign countries. I read it in a book somewhere. So I want to have a real foreigner in the
classroom” (NI2, T, p. 8). This is counter to the EP principles such as focussing on quality of
life as the fundamental issue and working cooperatively for mutual development. In the worst
case scenario, the EP project might have in fact ‘facilitated’ the native speaker fallacy
(Phillipson, 1992) in his mind and led him to think that team-taught classes with a foreigner
are better than JTEs’ solo classes.

For the reasons discussed above (e.g., previous beliefs and experiences of research,
students’ needs, the intention of the board of education, and the topic/focus/goals of the EP
project) and probably others not mentioned, all the teachers and two students (Kanon and
Tatsuya) had difficulties actualising various EP principles (e.g., focussing on quality of life,
working to understand the classroom, working collaboratively, and continuing exploratory
endeavour).

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented possible answers to the fourth research question: How did
the EP project as a mediational tool affect the participants’ practices? It is likely that the
project led all the teachers and students to gain agency as practitioners and/or researchers.
This was demonstrated mainly by their becoming more responsible for their teaching,
learning, and/or research participation. In particular, participants made choices to become
highly engaged with the project (Matt, Aitani, Kanon, and Yousuke) and/or take future
teaching/learning seriously (all the participants). It was also apparent that several participants
became responsible, taking more control of their teaching, learning, and/or research practices
by generating alternative ideas (all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke) and
by offering suggestions for further EP studies (all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and
Yousuke). It seems that the EP project also led the teachers and students to understand and
realise the EP principles in their teaching/learning. Participants valued the ‘what’ issues,
focussing on quality of life and emphasising understanding rather than problem-solving (all
the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke), the ‘who’ issues, involving everybody
for mutual development (all the teachers and students, except Takahashi), and/or the ‘how’
issues, continuing their exploration and integrating EP-related activities into normal
teaching/learning (all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke). Although all the
participants appeared to have achieved agency and EP actualisation, there were also
occasions where the effects of the EP experience seemed to be minimal with regard to participants’ agency (all the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke) and EP actualisation (all the teachers and two students, Kanon and Tatsuya) (see Table 6.1).

On the one hand, then, the EP project might have been an influential mediational tool which was capable of affecting the practices of all the participants. On the other hand, the EP project was not always able to transform the participants’ practices. What this might mean is that EP projects like this one (with comparable amounts of data collected over an extended period of time) are likely to generate examples of both significant and minimal effects on the participants’ practices (at least in terms of agency and EP actualisation) at different times. Nonetheless, a possible explanation for the large number of examples of significant EP effects on the practices of all the participants in this study is that the participants said or did (a) what they thought they should say or do as participants and/or (b) what they thought the outside researcher (in this case, me) wanted them to say or do, thereby perhaps resulting in pretending or deceiving, consciously or otherwise (see the discussion about a positive presentation of self in public in Chapter 5). This may have resulted in them making several positive comments about the effects of the EP project on their practices that were not truly reflective of their experience. A possible example of this came from Takahashi who somewhat contradicted herself in her final interview. Early in the interview, she said: “It was interesting to join the project especially because we rarely had had the opportunity to listen to the students’ voices…. I enjoyed it” (NI2, T, p. 3). Later in the same interview, however, she commented: “If you have to sacrifice your private time, then conducting research would be difficult…. Research should be conducted only by graduate students in graduate schools because it is not suitable to actual schools” (NI2, T, pp. 11-13).

Similar to the EP effects on the participants’ perceptions, there were also salient patterns in the way the EP project affected the participants’ practices relating to their experience as ‘pairs’. For example, Matt and Aitani, the team teachers at Sakura, were the only two who experienced each of the categories and subcategories of the effects of the EP on the participants’ practices (see Table 6.1). It is not an exaggeration to say that the participants’ experiences during the project were largely affected by their teaching partner or peer student. The participants almost always emerged in the same categories and subcategories as their partner. This might suggest that each pair of teachers/students constructed idiosyncratic communities of practice in their respective contexts with each pair demonstrating different and changing joint enterprises (e.g., interests, goals, and styles) as well as varying levels of
participation in and engagement with the EP project (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). It is likely that this led to the participants experiencing similar outcomes, in terms of their practices, to those of their partner, but different outcomes from the other pairs. Aitani was well aware of the fact that the makeup of the different pairs had a considerable impact on each participant’s EP experience:

I cannot even imagine what the experience would have been like if it was with somebody else. Matt is very cooperative and is interested in English education…. Also all the discussions would depend on the other pair of team teachers. The discussions depend on what they think, how they think, if they had a turning-point in their professional lives, or if they are destined to have it through this project…. In many ways, the other pair was different from us. If the other pair was similar to us, then we would have shared similar experiences. (NI2, A, p. 14)

Another interesting, related finding is that Sayaka and Yousuke were the students who exhibited more evidence of agency during the project than Kanon and Tatsuya and more examples of minimal effect on agency. One might assume that the participants who were significantly affected by the project would have fewer examples of minimal effect than those who were less significantly affected, as were the cases with the effects on perceptions (see Chapter 5) and the effects on EP actualisation. I can think of several possible reasons for this outcome. One is related to the amount of data I collected from the focal students in both schools. That is, the data of the focal students at Sakura, Kanon and Tatsuya, was significantly less than that of the students at Tsubaki, Sayaka and Yousuke. This might indicate that if I could have gathered more data from the Sakura focal students, I might have been able to find as many, if not more, explicit examples of significant/minimal effect on agency from them as the Tsubaki focal students. Another reason might stem from differences in the students’ personalities. The focal students at Sakura were not as outspoken as those at Tsubaki. This might imply that with Kanon and Tatsuya, I could not succeed in “getting below the surface to that most enigmatic aspect of the human condition: the construction of meaning” (Eisner, 1998, p. 15) as much as I could with Sayaka and Yousuke. These, and other unidentified elements, might explain why there were fewer examples of minimal effect on agency – or those of other sub/categories – from the student pair at Sakura. We cannot ignore the potentially significant role that the particular characteristics of a given individual and pair as well as research-related matters such as the quantity and quality of data available play in the outcome of EP or other teacher research.
The different effects of the EP project on the participants’ practices seemed to derive at least from: (a) the participants’ individual characteristics – e.g., age, personality, and perceptions/experiences associated with team teaching, learning, private time, and research; (b) discrepancies between each pair – e.g., experiences and relationship as a pair; (c) contextual factors – e.g., workloads and school/class research culture; and (d) research-related matters – e.g., focus and goals of the project, timing/place/type/duration of data collection, quality/quantity of data, project members, and researcher. All the factors mentioned here, along with other unknown factors, collectively influenced the type of effect and the extent to which each participant experienced each effect. In the next and final chapter, I construct and explain a conceptual framework based on the findings and discussion presented in this and the previous two chapters. I also provide implications for individual teachers, students, and other stakeholders as well as suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I aimed to explore teachers’ and students’ perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and teaching practices as well as the effects of teacher research experiences in the form of collaborative Exploratory Practice (EP) on their perceptions and practices in Japanese EFL team-teaching contexts. To that end, I employed a qualitative multiple-case study approach situated primarily in the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Data were collected from two pairs of team teachers and their students from two classes (four focal students in total) in two public high schools, using several data collection methods (e.g., individual interviews, classroom observations, pair discussions, and focus group discussions). I analysed the data with a constructing grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) which provided flexible analytical processes for building a conceptual framework. This final chapter, divided into four major parts, draws together the findings and discussion presented in previous chapters and provides recommendations and implications for stakeholders and researchers. The first part addresses summaries of findings and relevant literature followed by a conceptual framework, which shows diagrammatically the findings of this study and their interrelationships. The second presents implications and recommendations for teachers and students as well as for school administrators, teacher educators, and language policy makers. The third part regards recommendations for further research and the limitations of my study. To conclude, I write a narrative of my experience on the final day at the research site.

The Participants’ Perceptions of Team Teachers and Teaching Practices

I began Chapter 4 by dealing with the first research question (What perceptions do the participants have of JTEs and ALTs?). It was highlighted in this study that JTEs were thought to be more appropriate language models than ALTs because they themselves were once language learners like their students (Cook, 1999; Liu, 1999; Moussu, 2006). As expected, however, it was found to be challenging for JTEs to successfully play the role of language model as they are NNESTs. Researchers have argued that the level of NNESTs’ language proficiency crucially influences their self-image, teaching practices, and students’ perceptions of them (e.g., Lasagabaster & Manuel-Sierra, 2005; Mullock, 2010; Rajagopalan, 2005; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999); in particular, JTEs’ language
abilities have significant impact on their communication with ALTs (Hiramatsu, 2005). Another perception of JTEs held by some participants (Aitani, Takahashi, Sam, and Sayaka) was that they are linguistic and psychological bridges between ALTs and students. JTEs were viewed to be familiar with the backgrounds and learning experiences of their students (see also Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Cheung, 2002; Ma, 2012a; Mahboob, 2003; Miyazato, 2009; Moussu, 2006). All the participants (ironically except the JTEs) also perceived JTEs to be the only Japanese-English bilinguals in class who can promote efficient interaction between teachers and students. Previous studies about N/NESTs have also endorsed this as a unique contribution that only NNESTs can make (e.g., Cook, 2005; Mullock, 2010). Furthermore, all the teacher participants considered JTEs to be fully-fledged teachers who are socially respected by the members in their communities and are professionally obligated to work hard. The JTEs in this study were always occupied with work related to school operations, classroom management, and the lives of their ALTs (see also Miyazato, 2011). The JTEs were also seen as qualified, responsible, and long-term civil servant teachers who were ultimately responsible for the students and their learning (see Tatar & Yildiz, 2010). In addition, the JTEs in this study strived to be better English teachers through professional development opportunities outside the school.

All the participants perceived ALTs to be authorities and providers of the target language and/or target culture. The native-level English and cultural knowledge that ALTs possessed were uncontested. The scant exposure to English-speaking people in the participants’ contexts presumably escalated their perception of ALTs as irreplaceable. Other researchers have observed this belief in different contexts (e.g., Butler, 2007a; Lasagabaster & Manuel-Sierra, 2005; Llurda, 2009; Mahoney, 2004; Medgyes, 1994; Miyazato, 2009; Rajagopalan, 2005). ALTs were regarded as both enlightening and frightening. On the one hand, Aitani, Takahashi, and Sayaka saw ALTs to be motivation boosters because their students could experience ‘joy’ from the ‘real’ English of ALTs (Miyazato, 2003). Takahashi also pointed out that ALTs being second language learners of Japanese encourages their students to study English more, something others have found of importance (e.g., Bailey et al., 2001; Casanave, 2012). On the other hand, Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke sometimes thought ALTs to be motivation hinderers because they were foreigners who had little knowledge about the lives and the L1 (i.e., Japanese) of their students. The NESTs’ lack of knowledge of their students’ mother tongues and cultures has been similarly discussed elsewhere (e.g., Lasagabaster & Manuel-Sierra, 2005; Mahboob, 2003; Miyazato, 2003). All the teacher
participants furthermore regarded ALTs as mere language assistants who were marginalised in their work environments. Although ALTs are financially well taken care of (Hasegawa, 2008; McConnell, 2000), their work is evidently unchallenging. Their working hours are shorter than those of the JTEs, and the interactions of the ALTs in this study with their co-workers and students appeared superficial. They often felt isolated in their schools and took no pride in, nor satisfaction from, their job; they were excluded from core teaching and considered themselves to be ‘guests’ for a short time (McConnell, 2000; Miyazato, 2012). There was a contrast between the teachers and students in terms of perceptions of ALTs being immature/young and unqualified/inexperienced. The teachers perceived ALTs to be immature and inexperienced English teachers, as has been reported in other studies (e.g., Crooks, 2003; Hasegawa, 2008; McConnell, 2000; Ohtani, 2010). One pivotal factor that contributed to this perception was the high turn-over rate of ALTs, which is partly due to their contract dictating the maximum number of years they are allowed to stay in the job (i.e., five years). Despite these views generally held by JTEs at the research sites about ALTs, Takahashi told me a story about an ALT who grew over time into a reliable teacher (see also Kuroda, 2007). Unlike the teacher participants, the students in this study did not seem to hold these perceptions.

I subsequently addressed in Chapter 4 the second research question (What perceptions do the participants have of team-teaching practices?). All the participants valued the presence of native English and/or the teamwork by two teachers in their team-taught classes. While the inclusion of a native speaker of English was thought to be positive as it can provide ‘correct’ English for JTEs and students (see Sakui, 2004; Taguchi, 2002), Tatsuya and Yousuke mentioned that team-taught classes could become somewhat difficult due to the ALTs’ lack of familiarity with their students and the Japanese language (see Yoshida, 2009). Furthermore, although all the participants saw the benefits of team teaching, such as exploiting combined expertise (Hourcade & Bauwens, 2002), getting access to model dialogues (Brumby & Wada, 1990), and providing more attention to students (Benoit & Haugh, 2001), insufficient coordination between team teachers seemed to have raised problems (see also Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). One interesting finding from my study, unlike Tajino and Walker’s (1998) study where the participants appreciated ALTs more than JTEs, is that the teachers and students were grateful for the presence of both JTEs and ALTs equally in team-taught classes. A plethora of studies have suggested that having both a NEST
and an NNEST in a language classroom is an ideal situation for student learning (e.g., Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Carless, 2006; Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010).

Another perception of team-teaching practices shared by all the teacher participants was that they are open-ended. This is echoed by other studies (e.g., Leonard, 2003; McConnell, 2000; Ohtani, 2010). The participants in my study held this perception with regard particularly to the teaching approach of individual teachers, the roles of team teachers, and classroom pedagogy. Some participants considered ‘true’ team teaching to be each teacher equally contributing to the class (see Johannes, 2012) without making JTEs mere translators (see Iwamoto, as cited in Miyazato, 2009) or making ALTs human tape recorders (see McConnell, 2000), whereas other participants had more flexible ideas about what team teaching involves (see Tajino & Tajino, 2000). Regarding the roles of team teachers, whilst the teachers were ambivalent overall about their role divisions – some wanted the roles to be flexible and others more fixed – the students were more certain about the division of labour between their teachers: ALTs are the main teachers, and JTEs are the supporting teachers. This is not in line with the intentions of the JET programme (CLAIR, 2011). On this point, other studies have suggested the roles of team teachers be more clearly defined (e.g., Johannes, 2012; Mahoney, 2004; Ogawa, 2011; Tajino & Tajino, 2000). Finally, the teachers saw the classroom pedagogy employed by the team teachers to be open-ended. They had the impression that the focus of the class, class materials, and the medium used varied considerably, depending on teachers, students, and subjects covered (e.g., English Expression). Corroborating Árva and Medgyes’s (2000) and Miyazato’s (2003) findings which showed that NNESTs (JTEs) generally prefer to follow a rigid class procedure, the ALTs in this study believed that the majority of JTEs were inflexible with their teaching styles. However, the JTEs in this study were considered to be more adaptable to the ideas of the ALTs.

Another perception of team-teaching practices held by the majority of the participants (Matt, Aitani, Sam, Takahashi, Tatsuya, and Sayaka) was that team-taught classes are secondary and less important. This is due to the limited time available to JTEs, the weight given to testing and grading for students, and the infrequent and inefficient schedules of ALTs. Several researchers (e.g., Dormer, 2010; Okamoto, 2008) emphasise how busy local NNESTs are with their daily work and how little time they have for planning and discussing classes with their team-teaching partner. Incongruence between tests and the content in team-taught classes has been extensively discussed (e.g., Adachi et al., 1998; Hasegawa, 2008;
McConnell, 2000), and harmonisation between them is believed to be a necessary step forward to making team teaching more effective. In addition, Matt, Sam, Takahashi, and Tatsuya viewed team-taught classes to be infrequent, inefficient, and tokenistic as ALTs usually visit each classroom only intermittently. Researchers such as Hasegawa (2008) and McConnell (2000) claim that this phenomenon is the main reason for the low quality of team-taught classes. Matt and Tatsuya, however, underscored a few advantages of this practice (e.g., team-taught classes can be refreshing due to their rarity).

It is worth reiterating that the participants had these different perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and team-teaching practices with varying (sometimes opposing) positive and negative attitudes. This outcome stems perhaps from: (a) the participants’ personal characteristics such as age and second language competence; (b) their immediate surroundings such as the cultures of their community, school, and class; and (c) research-related matters such as the timing, place, and methods of data collection.

There currently exist ample studies on teachers’ and students’ perceptions of team teachers and team-teaching practices in Japan. However, what distinguishes my study from these is: (a) it investigated team teachers’ (JTEs’ and ALTs’) and their students’ perceptions in the same study; (b) it explored the participants’ perceptions of team teachers and teaching practices; (c) it employed numerous qualitative data collection methods, including under-used ones such as narrative interviews, pair discussions, and focus group discussions; and (d) it was conducted over an extended time period (four months) with data collected at several different points throughout the study. My study, which has these unique characteristics, therefore contributes to the knowledge particularly in the fields of N/NESTs and team teaching.

**Effects of the EP on the Participants’ Perceptions**

In Chapter 5 I explored the third research question (*What effects does an EP experience have on the participants’ perceptions?*). There were three developmental processes by which the EP project as a mediational tool affected the participants’ perceptions of teaching and learning practices: replacement, synthesis, and reconfirmation. Replacement refers to cases where new perceptions take the place of previous perceptions. Since replacement means the abandoning of previous perceptions, this process could be considered
to be the most significant effect of the EP. Two teachers (Matt and Aitani) and three focal students (Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke) most evidently experienced this process, particularly with regard to the roles of team teachers, the value of team-taught classes, the use of L1, and the Sakura pair’s theme (how to provide instructions for student activities in class). For instance, Matt came to believe that the roles of team teachers should be flexible rather than inflexibly pre-determined, in contrast to recommendations made in previous studies (e.g., Johannes, 2012; Mahoney, 2004; Ogawa, 2011; Tajino & Tajino, 2000). After experiencing the project Aitani realised the benefits of complementary teaching (Villa et al., 2008). Although team-taught classes are often treated as secondary (McConnell, 2000; Reesor, 2002), Tatsuya and Sayaka underwent perception replacement, enabling them to appreciate team-taught classes more than before. Yousuke replaced his prior perceptions about teaching practices and became a critical language learner who is capable of making key contributions to his classrooms (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006). Sayaka and Yousuke in particular had their previous perceptions of student learning replaced with new ones. Although Sayaka placed little emphasis on communicative activities in team-taught classes at the beginning of the project, due to their lack of relevance to high-stakes tests, she became more willing to use English. It was Yousuke who radically changed his perceptions of learning from being a passive activity to a more proactive one (Allwright & Hanks, 2009).

Synthesis is the developmental process experienced by most of the participants. It seemed that Matt, Aitani, Sam, Sayaka, and Yousuke accommodated new perceptions about teaching practices into their prior perceptions, particularly relating to the role of team teachers, both pairs’ themes (teachers’ instructions for student activities and teachers’ feedback on students’ comments), the use of L1, and the value of team-taught classes. Matt obtained more confidence in his role as an ALT through the project (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Although ineffective communication between team teachers has been an issue in team-teaching practices (e.g., Hiramatsu, 2005), Matt interacted effectively with his JTE during the project and became more aware of what was occurring in their classes. Matt and Aitani collaboratively synthesised their perceptions of teaching, particularly regarding their chosen theme. They externalised their understandings about it and thereby reconceptualised it together. They also became supportive and critical colleagues to each other, significantly affecting their ZPDs for development (Edge, 2002; Johnson, 2009; Tharp & Galimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). Sayaka and Yousuke cooperatively engaged in an examination of their teachers’ practices. They valued the process (inquisitive attitudes) rather than the product (the
answers) during their interactions (Edge, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). Matt, Aitani, Sam, Kanon, Sayaka, and Yousuke integrated their previous perceptions of student learning with new ones, particularly regarding students’ abilities and consciousness, the value of English language learning, learning attitudes, and learning style. For instance, Matt, Aitani, and Sam, as learners of teaching (Johnson, 2009), became more cognisant of how their students reacted to their activities in class. Kanon, Sayaka, and Yousuke synthesised their perceptions of (English language) learning and developed as practitioners of learning (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) by, for example, increasing their motivation to study English.

Perception reconfirmation took place only with regard to teaching practices and only with teachers (Matt, Sam, and Takahashi), in particular pertaining to both pairs’ themes, difficulty level of classes, teaching methods/techniques, and the roles of team teachers. For example, Matt came to realise once again through pair and focus group discussions that his instruction in class was unnecessarily complicated. More than once Sam and Takahashi saw the benefits and shortcomings of certain teaching methods they employed (e.g., calling students one by one and their use of L1). Lastly, it was revealed that one participant, Takahashi, felt that the EP did not affect her perceptions of her teaching goals, teachers’ roles, or what constitutes an ideal English class. However, some participants (Aitani and Sam) and I believe that her perceptions were in fact affected by the EP project since at least being cognisant of our current teaching practices and talking about them mediate our perceptions and thereby lead to professional development (Freeman, 1993; Golombek, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Vygotsky, 1963).

The effects of the EP as a mediational tool on the participants’ perceptions were seen by them to be generally positive (see also Wyatt, 2011). It is also interesting to note that the participants’ experiences with the EP project seemed to have been affected by the pairing of the teachers/students which constructed different communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). The various effects of the EP project, therefore, appeared to have stemmed at least from the participants’ individual traits (e.g., their personality), the respective pair’s characteristics (e.g., their experiences and relationship as a pair), contextual factors (e.g., workloads and school/class research culture), and research-related matters (e.g., timing/place/type/duration of data collection). When Childs (2011) investigated the L2 teaching experience of a teacher in the United States, she found, as I did in this study, that the teacher’s conceptualisation of L2 teaching hinged on the duration of the research, his language learning and instructional histories, and supportive relationships.
There are several studies which have documented the trajectories of teacher cognition as a result of teacher development opportunities. When Borg (2011) investigated how teacher education courses impact on in-service teacher beliefs, he concluded that the courses enabled the participating teachers to generate new beliefs (replacement). Golombek (2011) found that the mediational tool employed (digital video protocols) promoted the reorganisation and reconceptualisation (synthesis) of student teachers’ perceptions. In Reis’s (2011) study, a teacher participant changed (synthesised) her perception of herself as a non-native speaking teacher of English and began to challenge the disempowering N/NESTs discourse. Brancard and Quinnwilliams (2012) reported that changes (synthesis) took place in the stated beliefs of teacher participants with regard to their own and students’ roles, responsibilities, and capabilities due to their participation in learning labs where the participants had opportunities to observe and discuss their own and other colleagues’ classes. Tasker’s study (2011) showed that the participating teachers transformed (synthesised) their perception about student learning through the use of an exploratory framework (lesson study). Examining the impact of an 18-month course (DELTA) on EFL pre-service teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching in Turkey, Phipps (2007) found that the pre-service teachers confirmed (reconfirmed) their beliefs rather than changed them. As can be seen from these studies, most have not specifically paid particular attention to different types of processes by which teachers’ (or students’) perceptions are affected. Furthermore, the studies often used such terms as reorganisation, reconceptualization, change, and transformation interchangeably. The different developmental processes defined and discussed in my study (i.e., replacement, synthesis, and reconfirmation) as well as various mediating factors (i.e., individual participants’ traits, pair characteristics, contextual factors, and research-related matters) therefore add new insights to discussions of teacher research, particularly in relation to Exploratory Practice.

**Effects of the EP on the Participants’ Practices**

In Chapter 6 I sought to answer research question four (What effects does an EP experience have on the participants’ practices?). I showed that the participants exhibited agency by becoming responsible teachers, learners, and/or researchers who are capable of making choices on their own (Duff, 2012; Feryok, 2013; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Smolcic, 2011; van Lier, 2008) and by taking control of their practices (Benson, 2011; Duff, 2012;
Engeström, 2007; Feryok, 2013; Holland & Lachicotte, 2007; Johnson, 2009). The participants also actualised the EP principles concerning ‘what’, ‘who’, and ‘how’ issues (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). In certain cases, however, the EP project had only a minimal effect on the participants’ practices, particularly regarding their agency and EP actualisation.

Matt, Aitani, Kanon, and Yousuke most evidently displayed their agency by making responsible choices, i.e., participating in the EP project with a high level of engagement and/or being serious about future teaching/learning. For example, in reference to his participation in the EP project, Matt became highly engaged in the project and began to choose video clips for reflection more carefully. Aitani shared her ideas with others more freely towards the end of the project. Kanon showed willingness to challenge her learning experience, and Yousuke started taking part in the project more honestly than before. Becoming more serious about his teaching, Matt expressed a readiness to apply what he had learned in the project to future classes. Aitani said to me that she would try to strike the right balance in introducing known and unknown expressions to her students. Sam and Takahashi decided to explore various feedback techniques in the future. Kanon and Tatsuya expressed their interest in speaking and listening to English more in order to become better English users. Sayaka and Yousuke changed their learning styles and attitudes in a positive way (see Po-ying, 2007) and, in the case of Yousuke, exhibited his intention to provide newly generated ideas to his teachers and peers.

All the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, took more control of their teaching/learning by generating alternative ideas and by making suggestions for further EP studies. For instance, Matt presented an alternative method for giving instructions that he would like to try in class (i.e., simple, minimal instruction). Aitani shared her thoughts about wanting to use less Japanese and more English in the future. As a result of dynamic dialogic activities (Barkhuizen & Borg, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Richards, 2008; Wells, 1999), Sam and Takahashi collaboratively identified a potentially negative consequence of recasting and arrived at the conclusion that some students need more grammatical explanation. Sayaka began asking others questions about things she did not know rather than being a passive learner. Yousuke stated that what he learned from the project was the importance of students being able to offer their opinions to their teachers. As for suggestions for further EP studies, Matt made a suggestion about the participants (i.e., more pairs of team teachers from the same area). Aitani suggested including direct classroom observations, as opposed to video watching, to make the after-class discussions among teachers more meaningful. Sam
suggested ways to choose themes in an EP project: different pairs could work on the same theme and compare results, rather than each pair choosing a different theme as was the case in this study. Takahashi wanted to choose the same phase of observed classes for video clips so that everyone could understand and contrast their class activities more easily. Sayaka suggested that videotaping a number of groups in the classroom, rather than just one, and showing longer video clips in reflective classes would yield more productive experiences for students. Yousuke suggested: (a) a projector be used when showing video clips, (b) the student feedback sheets be more open-ended, and (c) students be given more time to write the English feedback sheets.

Previous studies have addressed the vital role that engagement in professional development activity can play in the increase of teachers’ agency (e.g., Childs, 2011; Reis, 2011; Tasker, 2011; Wyatt, 2011). With particular relevance to my study, Ermeling (2010) claims that teacher professional development can more readily increase teachers’ agency when teachers work in teams, are led by trained leaders, use protocols focussed on inquiry, and have stable settings. When Flint, Zisook, and Fisher (2011) in the United States explored teacher learning development in general education, they found that the teacher participants’ mutual debriefing about their teaching enabled them to fully engage in the study and facilitated their asking each other critical questions. They argue that the success of the teacher development relates to the fact that the professional development activity (e.g., debriefing) lasted an extended period of time (three years) and attended to genuine inquiries of the participants. Yoshida (2011) observed that pre-service teachers in Japan, as mediated by a course management tool (Moodle), created alternative ideas about the curriculum. My study, like these, can serve as a beneficial addition to the field of teacher research particularly because it has inquired into the possible positive relationships between teacher development opportunities in the form of EP and the increase of teacher (and student) agency.

With regard to EP actualisation, all the teachers and two focal students (Sayaka and Yousuke) appeared to have achieved the goals of the ‘what’ issues where the focus is on quality of life and understanding (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). For instance, Matt became aware that the EP project, more than his current professional development opportunities, focussed on his personal context and teaching practices (Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2013; Freeman, 2002; Gunn, 2003; Slimani-Rolls, 2003; Tasker, 2011), thereby making it possible to facilitate his understanding about teaching. Aitani strived to understand the quality of life in language classrooms by grappling with ‘puzzles’ (Hanks, 2009), as opposed to finding
‘best’ practices (see Tajino & Smith, 2005; Wu, 2006). Reflective activities in the EP project led Sam to try more eagerly to understand and improve his classes. Sam and Takahashi sometimes agreed that there is no single best feedback method when it comes to their teaching. This demonstrates the meaning of understanding in a holistic manner within the EP framework (see Lyra, Fish, & Braga, 2003). After the project, Sayaka came to realise that as long as she was interested in something, she would spend time learning about it. Yousuke succeeded in coming to understand how English lessons are directly related to personal life experiences outside the classroom.

The ‘who’ issues stress inclusivity, collegiality, and mutual development of all the people involved in language classrooms (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). In this study, all the participants, except Takahashi, appeared to champion the principles related to the ‘who’ issues. For example, Matt often involved others by seeking input, thereby developing collegiality. He also mentioned that the student feedback sheets enabled him for the first time to gain insight into his students’ thoughts on their team-taught classes (see Silver, 2008). Aitani confessed that each project member contributed in their own way to her learning experience. Sam attributed his successful experience with the EP to sufficient time for, and various types of, discussions with other project members. Teacher collaboration, as experienced by the teacher participants, is recommended in the field of SLTE as well as general teacher education (e.g., Ermelling, 2010; Johnston, 2009; Okamoto, 2008; Richards, 2008; Wells, 1999).

All the focal students also saw the benefits of collaboration. They empathised with others and worked towards bringing everybody together in a common enterprise. For instance, both Kanon and Tatsuya imagined themselves being another student or a teacher and used the EP project as a viable learning opportunity to understand more fully the situations of others (see Perpignan, 2003; Zhang, 2004; Zheng, 2012). Sayaka and Yousuke also put themselves in their teachers’ or peers’ shoes when examining teaching and learning in their classrooms (see Murphey & Falout, 2010). They regarded the student pair discussion as invaluable and the presence of another student helpful.

Two interconnected principles constitute the ‘how’ issues: making EP continuous and minimising extra burden during EP (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). All the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, appeared to have achieved the ‘how’ objectives in the project. Matt, for example, expressed his interest in continuing to reflect on his teaching and improve
team-taught classes. In an attempt to spread the effects of the EP project, Aitani decided to carry out EP with other English teachers at her school in the next school year. Sam was keen to continually examine his teaching methods and review his lessons (see Rowland, 2011). Takahashi mentioned that the class observations she experienced had been integrated into her usual teaching. Sayaka realised that conducting the EP project within normal class schedules was advantageous to continuing her EP experience. Yousuke told me that the EP activities began to become “sort of a habit”. He was also willing to put EP ideals into practice in the future by creating a harmonious class environment (see Murphey, 2013; Smith, 1998).

The EP project, however, sometimes had only a minimal effect on the participants’ practices. All the teachers and two students, Sayaka and Yousuke, did not always make choices about, or take control of, their teaching, learning, or research activities. For instance, all the participants, except Takahashi in her writing during cycle 1, did not make any suggestion about the EP project and merely followed the design and procedure of the project until the end. It seems as though the participants needed some time to build trust with me (and other project members) before they could freely provide their opinions and become responsible for their research (see Borg, 2013; Childs, 2011). Takahashi admitted that she could not take full advantage of the EP experience and lacked engagement with the associated activities due to her busy schedule. All the teachers and two students, Kanon and Tatsuya, at times had difficulties in actualising the ideals of the EP principles. For example, Matt exhibited his inclination for seeking ‘best’ teaching methods and talked extensively about ‘what works or not’. Aitani identified some circumstantial factors (e.g., familiar teaching methods and high-stakes tests) as constraining her ability to realise the EP principles. The fact that Sam often believed strongly in a single concept (e.g., expressing oneself is the ultimate goal of language classes) is incongruent with the idea of EP. Takahashi was not highly involved with the EP. In the final interview, she criticised EP because she believed that research should be carried out only by graduate students, not by teachers (see Bartu, 2003; Borg, 2013).

These findings might serve as evidence that EP projects, when substantial amounts of data are gathered and a great deal of time is spent, provide many examples of different effects. Similar to the result of the effects of the EP on the participants’ perceptions, the EP appeared to have affected their practices according to the pairings of the teachers/students which functioned within their particular communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). One interesting, connected finding was that the student pair at Tsubaki, Sayaka and Yousuke, evidently
showed more examples of their agency and minimal effect on agency than the student pair at Sakura, Kanon and Tatsuya. This is partly because of the differences in their personalities as well as the discrepancies in the quantity and quality of the collected data. In sum, these various outcomes with regard to the effects of the EP on the participants’ practices might have been due to the participants’ individual traits (e.g., their personality), the respective pair’s characteristics (e.g., their experiences and relationship as a pair), contextual factors (e.g., school/class research culture), and research-related matters (e.g., focus and goals of the project).

My study, unlike previous EP studies, has looked specifically at how the participants understood and put into practice the seven EP principles concerning the ‘what’, ‘who’, and ‘how’ issues. My study also showed different effects of EP, including a minimal effect, thus enriching the literature in the field of EP in particular and teacher research more generally. The next section draws a comprehensive conclusion by introducing a dynamic conceptual framework based on the findings and discussion thus far.

**Locating and Relating Concepts**

In answering the fifth question (*In what ways do the findings of my study make a contribution to our understanding of EP?*), in this section I locate and relate, through a framework, various concepts that emerged during the course of this study. In other words, I have made sense of this study on a more abstract level and have reached a coherent conclusion by systematically presenting the findings of my study, showing their relationships, and weaving them together. When constructing the conceptual framework, I gave priority to discovering patterns and connections among the participants’ experiences rather than seeking linear reasoning or causality since the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, in which I situated my study, understands concepts to be interpretive and located in particular positions, perspectives, and experiences (Charmaz, 2006).

Earlier in this thesis I framed my study by conceptually connecting three interrelated and overlapping areas: N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research. These were placed in the broader field of SLTE and viewed from a sociocultural perspective (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). My study first contributes to discussions in the field of N/NESTs and team
teaching by examining the participants’ perceptions of team teachers and team-teaching practices (see the overlapping part of N/NESTs and team teaching circles, ①, in Figure 7.1). It also adds beneficial insights into the fields of N/NESTs, team teaching, and teacher research by investigating the effects of the EP on the participants’ perceptions and practices (see ② in Figure 7.1). In light of the particular areas identified, and the findings and discussion in this study, Figure 7.2 represents a sociocultural conceptualisation of language teachers’ and students’ perceptions and practices in relation to the effects of Exploratory Practice in Japanese team-teaching contexts.

The area ① in Figure 7.1 relates to the box at the top of Figure 7.2 with the title: “Perceptions”. The area ② in Figure 7.1 relates to the box at the bottom of Figure 7.2 entitled “Exploratory Practice (EP)” which includes two smaller boxes: “Effects on Perceptions” and “Effects on Practices”. These boxes, comprising the main components of the model, will be individually discussed, and the relationship between them clarified below.
Figure 7.2: Conceptualising the findings of my study

**① Perceptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>a particular perception of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JTEs (e.g., as language models)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALTs (e.g., as ‘natives’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>team-teaching practices (e.g., as unique)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards the content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Influential elements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>individual traits (e.g., age and second language competence)</th>
<th>contextual factors (e.g., workloads)</th>
<th>research-related matters (e.g., type of data collection)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**② Exploratory Practice (EP)**

**Effects on Perceptions**

- **Content:** a particular perception of teaching and learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of (positive) effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replacement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards EP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional influential elements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perceptions of EP/research, etc.</th>
<th>experiences as a pair, etc.</th>
<th>class research culture, etc.</th>
<th>focus/goals of the EP project, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Effects on Practices**

- **Content:** agency and EP actualisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of (positive) effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards EP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional influential elements**

| perceptions of EP/research, etc. | experiences as a pair, etc. | class research culture, etc. | focus/goals of the EP project, etc. |
Perceptions

Teacher and student participants of an EP project hold various perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and their team-teaching practices. Their perceptions may include: JTEs as language models and fully-fledged teachers; ALTs as ‘natives’ and mere foreign assistants; and team-teaching practices as unique, open-ended, and secondary and less important. Participants hold each of these different perceptions of JTEs, ALTs, and teaching practices (content) to varying degrees (from very strong to very weak). Participants also have varying attitudes to the content (from very positive to very negative). Their respective perceptions may be generated due to various influential elements, including: participants’ individual traits (e.g., their age and second language competence); contextual factors (e.g., workloads and school/class culture); and research-related matters (e.g., timing/place/type of data collection).

Irrespective of the content, degree, and attitude associated with participants’ perceptions, they might nevertheless experience different levels of EP effects on their perceptions and practices. Thus, I cannot argue, based on the findings of my study alone, that certain perceptions held by certain participants can directly influence the effects of an EP project on their perceptions or practices. However, since there is evidence in other studies that previous perceptions influence current perceptions and possibly practices (teaching practices in particular) (Borg, 2003, 2006a; Freeman, 2002; Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1998), participants’ perceptions may, more or less, influence the effects of EP on their perceptions and practices. This is reflected by the arrow from ① to ② in Figure 7.2 being depicted with dotted lines.

Exploratory Practice (EP)

Effects on perceptions. An EP project affects its participants’ perceptions of teaching and/or learning practices (content). The effects of EP on participants’ perceptions may be overall positive, and the level of the effects may vary from replacement to synthesis to reconfirmation to minimal. Participants’ attitudes to EP can range from very positive to very negative. It seems that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the level of effects on participants’ perceptions and their attitudes towards EP. For instance, if there is a higher level of EP effects on participants’ perceptions, it is likely that their attitudes towards EP are more positive; at the same time, if participants’ attitudes towards EP are more positive, there
is a higher level of EP effects on their perceptions. Although it is not known whether one is the precursor to the other, there does seem to be a correlational relationship between the two. For example, I have shown in this study that those who most evidently experienced the replacement process (Matt, Aitani, Tatsuya, Sayaka, and Yousuke) had a positive attitude towards our EP project, whereas Takahashi, whose perceptions our EP project had a minimal effect on, had a negative attitude towards it. In addition to several influential elements that may shape EP participants’ perceptions (discussed in the previous section), there are other elements that might affect the effects of EP on their perceptions. They include: participants’ individual traits (e.g., personality and their perceptions/experiences associated with EP/research), issues with a pair (e.g., participants’ experiences and relationship as a pair), contextual factors (e.g., school/class research culture), and research-related matters (e.g., focus/goals of an EP project).

**Effects on practices.** An EP project affects its participants’ practices in particular with regard to agency and EP actualisation (*content*). Like the effects on perceptions, the effects of EP on participants’ practices may be largely positive, and the level of the effects on participants’ practices may vary from most significant to minimal. Similar to the discussion about the effects of EP on participants’ perceptions, it appears that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the level of effects on participants’ practices and their attitudes towards EP. If there is a higher level of effects of EP on participants’ practices, it is more likely that their attitudes towards EP are more positive, and vice versa. For example, it was revealed in this study that those who most evidently showed a positive attitude towards our EP project (e.g., Matt, Aitani, Sayaka, and Yousuke) appeared to have experienced significant effects of our EP project on their practices, whereas Takahashi, who had a negative attitude towards our EP project, seemed to have experienced a minimal effect on her practices. The additional factors that influence the effects of an EP project on its participants’ practices, as with its participants’ perceptions, may include: participants’ individual traits (e.g., their perceptions/experiences associated with EP/research), issues with a pair (e.g., participants’ experiences and relationship as a pair), contextual factors (e.g., school/class research culture), and research-related matters (e.g., focus/goals of an EP project).

The effects of an EP experience on perceptions and those on practices influence one another (see the double-headed arrow between the two lower-level boxes in Figure 7.2). In my study, for example, those who experienced high levels of effects of our EP project on their perceptions (e.g., Matt, Aitani, Sayaka, and Yousuke) experienced significant effects on
their practices, and the one who experienced a low level of effects of our EP project on her perceptions (Takahashi) underwent only a minimal effect on her practices. Although it is not particularly clear from my study whether the effects on perceptions created a foundation to generate similar effects on practices, or vice versa, there is a relationship between the effects on EP participants’ perceptions and practices. Lastly, there is sufficient evidence that the effects of an EP project influence its participants’ perceptions (hence the arrow from ② to ① in Figure 7.2).

The framework has important theoretical value because, first of all, it allows other researchers and practitioners to be cognisant of diverse content, degrees of investment, attitudes, and other influential factors involving teacher research especially in the case of EP. This helps them understand and have expectations about what participating in such research entails. Furthermore, when they do experience their own teacher research/EP, they can compare and contrast their journey with the EP project in this study and thus make judgements about the relevance of my findings to their particular contexts. The framework functions as a guide which perhaps enables future researchers and practitioners to gain a sense of confidence to continue their journey as well as to embrace their own unique discovery. Pertaining to research, the framework points to numerous areas needed to be examined and therefore advances several issues of inquiry such as N/NESTs, team teaching, teacher research, teacher cognition, and classroom research, to name a few.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Teachers and Students

The main contribution of my study is that it has highlighted the powerful and positive effects of Exploratory Practice on team teachers. This carries with it significant implications for both JTEs and ALTs particularly with regard to JTEs’ English skills and their knowledge of the target culture, ALTs’ Japanese language and Japanese educational/cultural awareness, and team teachers’ professional development.

One of the most salient themes in my study, also extensively discussed in previous studies (e.g., Hiramatsu, 2005), is that JTEs need to improve and maintain their English skills as language models and as English users. Considering the fact that JTEs have excessive workloads and limited time as responsible teachers and that they live in an EFL context, it
might be helpful if they could form study groups regularly (if at all possible, on weekends) with ALTs and other JTEs. Pair discussions, focus group discussions, and story writing in English, like those in this study, would be a practical and effective way to increase both JTEs’ proficiency in English and their confidence (see de Oliveira & Richardson, 2004; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005). This arrangement could also aid them to increase their knowledge of the target culture and to become authorities and providers of the target culture in class. It is also possible that the activities would enable ALTs to increase their understanding of the Japanese language and Japanese educational/classroom culture, thereby allowing them to become better equipped to teach English in Japan (see Hiratsuka, 2014b).

According to the JTEs and ALTs who participated in my study, team teachers do not usually have the chance to systematically reflect on their teaching or articulate their perceptions of themselves, their teaching partner, teaching practices, or learning practices (see Hiratsuka, 2013). Considering that the participants in my study had different and often contrasting perceptions of team teachers and their practices, teachers should (re)consider and discuss the impact of these issues on their teaching and learning (e.g., how the roles of team teachers can be defined; to what extent they should use Japanese; and what to include in tests), individually or collectively with their teaching partner and/or students, through an EP project like the one in this study. This should not be carried out in order to reach a one-size-fits-all agreement, but rather to explore teaching and learning at a grass-roots level generating ideas tailored to their particular contexts. On the one hand, since JTEs are full-time teaching staff members who usually have control over the schedules and decision-making of team-taught classes, they can perform a key role in planning and implementing an EP project in their classes. On the other hand, since ALTs often work for more than one school, they are in the position to invite JTEs and their students from different schools to come together to create a local research group where teachers and students can experience mediational activities in the form of an EP project. For instance, after ALTs become accustomed to working in their schools (e.g., about six months after their arrival: December, in my study), JTEs and ALTs could choose an EP project’s members (e.g., three pairs of team teachers and their students from three classes), method (e.g., focus group discussion), and duration (e.g., three cycles within six months). I believe these suggestions help us take advantage of the team-teaching scheme and achieve more effectively the stated goals of the JET programme: enhancing foreign language education and developing international communication in Japan.
Both JTEs and ALTs would also benefit from sharing personally-meaningful stories in their classes based on their experiences as language learners and teachers, as I did in the reflective classes at Tsubaki. In this way, their students learn not only about the English language itself but also about the rich learning experiences the teachers have had.

My study revealed that the EP experience was invaluable for students in other ways too: engaging in interviews and reflective activities (e.g., discussions with their classmates and watching video clips of their classes) enabled them to understand more about their perceptions of, for example, their team teachers and their teachers’ practices. Furthermore, they became responsible for their own learning by developing their learning styles and attitudes. It is therefore reasonable to recommend that students, together with other students and/or with their teachers, join EP studies so that they can be more cognisant not only of the English language but also of the ways in which they perceive, learn, and use English in situated contexts. In particular, it was highlighted in my study that using student feedback sheets in reflective classes assisted the students to express their ideas to their teachers (as well as writing spontaneous English sentences; see Hiratsuka, 2014a). They could engage in such activities in their daily English classes and have their voices heard. These recommendations will make students’ experiences in language team-taught classes more rewarding.

School Administrators, Teacher Educators, and Language Policy Makers

School administrators, teacher educators, and language policy makers were not of prime interest in my study for reasons I mentioned in previous chapters. In particular, they do not usually make changes in policies that have an immediate impact on the lives of teachers and students. Nonetheless, my study has pointed to a number of implications and suggestions for those outside the classroom.

Firstly, I suggest that school administrators, teacher educators, and policy makers reduce JTEs’ workloads. Notwithstanding financial and resource constraints, these stakeholders should strive to achieve this by, for example, hiring more JTEs, allocating some JTE work to other subject teachers, recruiting English proficient staff in the office who can take care of ALTs, and having ALTs themselves deal more with their own personal matters so that JTEs have more time and energy to interact with students and ALTs. This will also free up more time for JTEs to engage with professional development opportunities, including
studying English. Secondly, I suggest that school administrators, teacher educators, and policy makers encourage and organise workshops or presentations about English and cultures in English-speaking countries hosted by ALTs for teachers and students as well as for people in the community. Doing so will allow ALTs to capitalise on their respective expertise, meaningfully utilise the large amount of free time they have, and thereby be recognised as legitimate members of their schools and communities.

Thirdly, it is essential to examine carefully, through studies such as mine, the efficacy of ALTs, team-teaching practices, and the JET programme beyond the prevailing rhetoric. In its current state team teaching is not as effective as many had hoped; for example, team-teaching practices were viewed by the participants in this study to be secondary and less important than JTEs’ solo classes or other school obligations. In my opinion, only when JTEs and students feel the need for team-taught classes, should they be included in the curriculum. In other words, school administrators, teacher educators, and policy makers should assign ALTs according to the teachers’ and students’ needs, as opposed to trying to allocate them in every school throughout Japan without a needs analysis (see the Liberal Democratic Party [LDP], 2013). These stakeholders could also consider redressing issues associated with ALTs, such as their hiring processes, initial qualifications and experience, job status, and the maximum years they are allowed to work. I believe that the Japanese government should begin hiring foreigners for two distinct positions: teaching professionals and cultural ambassadors, rather than amalgamating these different yet important roles and expecting ALTs to perform both. Those who have teaching experience or English-related degrees (e.g., linguistics and TESOL) should be differentiated from other ALTs, as in the case in Hong Kong (see Education Bureau, 2012) and Taiwan (see Islam, 2011). Moreover, I believe that those ALTs who are considered to be appropriate teachers by their colleagues and students should be hired as full-time teachers as well as given the opportunity to stay as long as they desire. In order for this to occur, the evaluation of ALTs should be carried out with better methods than those currently used (i.e., a JTE in charge at a base school generally only writing about whether ALTs were present at school or not!).

Finally, it is possibly most worthwhile, based on evidence from my study, for school administrators, teacher educators, and policy makers to provide time, space, resources, and professional support for teachers and students to embark upon teacher research (EP) through which they can locally and personally engage in issues interesting to them (Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2006; Tasker, 2011), as opposed to the current
professional development opportunities which normally come in the form of one-day or two-day workshops including a lecture by a third party, typically a university professor (see Webster-Wright, 2009 for a similar discussion in general teacher education). Key to the success of these locally-situated collaborative projects are: (a) participation not being compulsory; (b) the project design, focus, goals, duration, and procedures not being prescribed; (c) the project outcomes not being connected to any materialistic reward (e.g., salary raise or promotion); (d) if a third party from outside the school is involved, he or she neither evaluating the participants or the project nor playing the role of an ‘advisor’ or an ‘academic’ who suggests what to do or how to do their projects (see also Borg, 2013).

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The participants in this study have already made a number of insightful recommendations for further studies based on their EP experiences (e.g., involving more pairs of team teachers from the same area; including direct class observations) (see “Suggestions for further EP studies” in Chapter 5). When taking into account their suggestions, future researchers and practitioners should give thought to participants’ available time, workloads, level of collegiality, knowledge of the local/target language and community/school/class culture as well as their wants and needs in their particular contexts.

My recommendations for future studies pertain particularly to: (a) research participants and contexts; (b) the field of team teaching in SLTE; and (c) the field of teacher research (EP) in SLTE. First, I made attempts in this study to investigate the most typical team-teaching contexts in Japan (i.e., team teaching English with JET participants in public schools). We need to continue in this effort by examining varied participants and research sites in order to gain a complete picture of team teachers’ and students’ perceptions and experiences. In future studies, participants might include: male JTEs, female ALTs, novice JTEs, experienced ALTs, JTEs with more or less English proficiency, ALTs with more or less teaching experience and Japanese proficiency, prospective or past JTEs and ALTs, ALTs from various English-speaking countries (e.g., Canada, England, India, and Nigeria), JTEs from non-public schools, non-JET participant ALTs, part-time JTEs, non-Japanese students, and returnee students. It could also prove useful to conduct a similar study in different prefectures in Japan, especially those with varying degrees of: (a) rural and urban settings, (b) foreign people, (c) number of students in a classroom, and (d) the number of team-taught
classes. We will also need to continue investigating in diverse educational sectors (e.g., elementary and junior high schools) and in other countries (e.g., Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan).

Second, my study has stressed how useful collaboration is in the participants’ team-teaching contexts for the development of both teachers and students. Looked at through a sociocultural lens, it became clear how powerful dialogic and collaborative activities are in transforming teachers’ and students’ perceptions and practices. My participants, in concert with other members in the project, developed as practitioners and researchers, as was evident in the way their ZPDs (Vygotsky, 1978) and puzzlement zones (Kuschnir & Machado, 2003) were affected. It is therefore important to encourage such collaborative activity through research to understand more about teacher and student development. For example, team teachers and learners might profit from studies which centre on the participants’ relationships and dynamics of the pairs’ practices. Such studies can examine the intricacy of how, why, and to what extent JTE-JTE, JTE-ALT, ALT-ALT, JTE-student, ALT-student, and student-student interaction takes place through micro-discourse analysis inside and outside the classroom. These studies might enable teachers and students to reflect on their practices and achieve more collegial relationships. Future inquiries might also involve a more detailed comparison between team-taught classes and JTEs’ solo classes in order to gain a fuller understanding of how these classes influence each other and how what teachers and students learn from both team-taught and JTEs’ solo classes (e.g., pedagogical knowledge and learning style) might be transferred to the other classes. In other words, these studies might generate answers to a fundamental question about team teaching: What exactly does team teaching do for teacher and student development?

Finally, future researchers can use different activities in their EP projects from those in my study and compare their results with mine. They can also adjust the duration of their project, the number of cycles, or the intervals between the cycles, depending on participants’ and researchers’ preferences. This will broaden our knowledge about the nature of teacher and student development relating to teacher research (EP). With regard to the focus of data analysis, future researchers could more carefully delve into how strongly (intensity), how quickly (speed), and how often (frequency) the effects of an EP project on participants appear as well as how long (sustainability) the effects last after the project. Tackling these under-explored issues will move our current understanding of teacher research in SLTE in new directions. Moreover, future researchers need to examine the interplay of participants’
perceptions and the effects of EP more so than I have in this study. The relationship between the effects of EP on participants’ perceptions and those on their practices also warrants a closer investigation in order for us to shed more light on the intricate processes of EP participants’ experiences.

Limitations of the Study

It is important for me as a researcher to be aware of the boundaries and limitations of my study. I discuss them in particular with regard to transferability, my positionality, and methodological procedures. Firstly, like most qualitative research studies (especially those employing a case study approach), generalising the results of my study for others in different contexts may be difficult, if not impossible, since the participants involved consisted of only two pairs of team teachers and their students from only two classes. Moreover, my study alone will not be able to judge the “usefulness” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 183) of the efficacy of Exploratory Practice in Japanese EFL team-teaching contexts because, for one, this particular case lasted only four months. Nonetheless, ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) about the participants’ situations and research procedures as well as the participants’ comments on how typical they thought their experiences as teachers/students were will help the readers of this thesis to enhance the possibility of transferring the findings of my study to be utilised appropriately in their contexts (see “Transferability” in Chapter 3).

Secondly, while my positionality as a former student (of 14 years) and a former JTE (of 10 years) at schools similar to those in the research sites was advantageous particularly for recruiting the participants and understanding their ‘emic’ perspectives (see “Myself as Researcher-Learner in Situ” in Chapter 3), I need to acknowledge that this positionality might have generated some biased interpretation when analysing data. Since in this study it was not feasible to involve others in analysing data (i.e., conducting peer checking) (see Dörnyei, 2007), in order to evaluate the degree of bias I employed several strategies such as triangulation and member-checking (see “Credibility” and “Confirmability” in Chapter 3).

Finally, methodologically speaking, the EP project we experienced lacked one crucial element of the teacher-learning equation from a sociocultural perspective: scientific concepts (e.g., second language acquisition theories). Johnson and Golombek (2011) argue that ‘everyday concepts’, which are formed in the usual environment of schooling, are
“insufficient, even detrimental, in the development of teachers’ expertise” and that ‘scientific concepts’, generated from academic and professional disciplines, are necessary for teachers to “move beyond their everyday experiences towards more theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices” (p. 2). The integration of scientific and everyday concepts for language teacher education has been recommended and documented elsewhere (e.g., Yoshida, 2011). However, I was reluctant to introduce established theories or findings of previous applied linguistics research for fear that our conversations would turn into one-sided lectures where I provide all the ‘answers’ and/or the participants would not generate their own ideas. Since Exploratory Practice was formulated in order to counteract an unproductive split between researchers and teachers (Allwright, 2003, 2005; Allwright & Hanks, 2009), I was committed to attending to and trusting the participants’ experiences and judgment. In other words, I did not want to play the role of an authority who provides externally-generated ‘knowledge’, the relevance of which they might not even perceive in their contexts (see Borg, 2013). Nevertheless, it might be worthwhile to conduct EP projects which incorporate scientific concepts, possibly in the form of lectures or workshops, so that participants and researchers can see how the development of participants’ perceptions and practices occur under particular circumstances.

Another limitation of my methodology in terms of the EP project was that the participants did not have the opportunity to disseminate their EP experiences to other teachers or people in the community through, for example, a presentation or publication at the end of the project. This was because I had to comply with the ethical requirements (e.g., participants’ anonymity) of my institution. Barkhuizen (2009) explains that a failure to make teacher research public “would mean missing the opportunity and ignoring the responsibility to contribute to discussions and debates in the field of language education” (p. 124). Kumaravadivelu (2006) also emphasises the benefits of sharing the outcome of research with others (see also Borg, 2013). As participants in EP studies should be able to enjoy sharing EP processes and outcomes with other project members as well as with people in the community, ethical constraints of an outside researcher’s institution might need to be reconsidered.

**Conclusion**

I had waited impatiently for the day to come. When it did (April 14, 2012), however, my mind became blank. I was walking down the street in Ume city with familiar faces on that
brilliantly sunny day. Matt and my old colleagues were next to me, choosing which restaurant to go to for lunch. They recommended I eat Japanese food for my final meal in Japan. Sam and my friends from high school were following right behind us, busily introducing themselves to each other. Further down the road, Aitani and Takahashi, who are long-standing friends as veteran JTEs, did not seem like they would stop chatting anytime soon. A number of people were out on the street, embracing the pleasant weather. The sun was beaming on their faces. The river, which cuts through the city, had been abnormally swelled by the melted snow. At last the time of thaw was here. It was only a couple of weeks ago that I had said my good-byes to students at Sakura and Tsubaki on two brutally cold, snowy days. I remember their individual faces vividly. In particular, the time I spent with the focal students had left an indelible imprint on my memory. On my final day at Sakura, Kanon murmured that even though English might be of no use in her future as her dream is to be a careworker in her hometown, she would like to continue studying to be a fluent speaker of English. Tatsuya and I exchanged farewells while we were passing a soccer ball and chatting about his recent performance as a goalkeeper in his team – outside of the EP project, our conversations were always limited to soccer. At Tsubaki, Sayaka told me that her interest was preschool education. She thanked me for letting her be part of the project and asked me to take a picture with her. The impact of the project on Yousuke was so significant that he told me that he had decided to go to my old university to study English further. He indeed went on to the university and was studying English with a focus on international business at the time this thesis was completed. I was blessed to have met them. Now, looking at the teachers’ smiles, something heavy dawned on me: the journey was coming to an end. I heard myself say: “Why am I not happier? Why am I not more relieved? Haven’t I been longing for the ‘data collection’ to be over?” The fact of the matter was that, not knowingly, the EP experience had become part of my life, and thus I did not want it to end. The participants had become my precious friends, and therefore I was not yet ready to bid my farewell.

To be honest, I don’t remember much from that day. My mind was somewhere between remembering farewell remarks, attending to last-minute errands, and worrying about flight schedules back to New Zealand. However, I do remember that on that day I repeatedly drifted into pondering in a kind of dream-like manner what the exploration had meant to me and to the participants.

What is exploration? What can we learn from it? How do we feel when participating in it? We don’t know exactly what exploration entails unless we experience it ourselves. We
might have seen or heard about its processes and outcomes through video tapes, pictures, illustrations, or stories told by others. However, that is never the same, not even close, not at all. When we get to the end of it ourselves, a whole different story awaits us. One might be satisfied or disappointed. One might get overly ecstatic or utterly disgusted. What happens at the end? Did we get a medal that says we have reached the destination? No. Did we become more famous or make more money than before? No. One might then ask: “What is the point of spending all the time, money, and energy?” What matters, at least to me, is the rich experience we share. That’s what makes who we are, so to speak. On the surface the purpose of an exploration appears to be the same to everyone: reaching the finish line, right? Everybody appears to arrive at the same place at the same time at the end of a journey. If we look closer, though, we arrive at our ‘own’ destination. In the process of our EP exploration, we sometimes felt like joyfully running fast or quietly walking slowly. There were times when we had to use our familiar tools in unexpected ways or when we happened to discover unknown characteristics of ourselves, partners or peers, or other group members. We might have been surprised to see how our journey unfolded, depending on its timing, goals, focus, place, and duration. At times, we felt we were going along fine. We were energised with plenty of motivation and resources; the goal seemed to be just around the corner. At other times, we felt we were not going anywhere. We misunderstood others’ comments and predicted activity results wrongly; the finish line was nowhere to be seen. We gathered our puzzlements and became increasingly uncertain about what we were doing. Despite the adversity, we did not bail out. We showed persistence and practised patience. We then experienced the pleasure of genuine exploration. We all continue our journey and engage time and again in explorations that are similar (or not) at different times in diverse situations, knowing very well that we will encounter some difficulty. Exploration is instantly addictive and forever exhilarating. I now conclude my thesis with words from the teacher participants:

Matt: My intentions are to ... try to make sure that I continue to deliver the best possible experiences for my students.... I now intend to develop my own thinking further on this point. It’s been a great starting point, or springboard if you like. It gave me momentum in regards to these ideas, chosen themes, and the idea of exploratory practice in general!

Aitani: I think what develops us is trying and experiencing new and various things ... only what we personally experience will enrich our body and soul. Conversely, if there is something that hinders our development, that would be habituation. Whilst habituation can
sometimes be positive, the problem lies in having these feelings to the point where we want to remain in the same comfortable zones for convenience.

Sam: I think even the best teachers after 20 years are still taking time to look at what they did after they did it to think about how they can do it better.... It’s something you grow. It’s a skill. Lesson planning gets better and the way you conduct gets better; all of that improves over time. I don’t think you will ever meet anyone who is really good at teaching and tell you: “Oh, I never think about what I do”.

Takahashi: I believe that we teachers construct our own personal theories based on accumulated teaching experiences in a natural manner, without labelling them as ‘research’. It is normal for us to do so because that’s the way we are. Yes, we are professionals. Yet, it is still helpful, I would say, to have this kind of opportunity from time to time.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questions and Topics

- Phase 1 (Prior to an EP experience)

Narrative interview 1 (All the teachers and four focal students)
“I would like you to tell me any stories regarding team teaching. I might ask you questions for further discussion later. You might think I have answers to some questions I ask, but I would like to know your answers. So please answer my questions freely”.

Follow-up questions (for teachers)
What do you think about your role in team-taught classes?
What do you think about your partner’s role in team-taught classes?
What do you think about your current teaching practices in your team-taught classes?
What are your thoughts now on participating in this project?

Follow-up questions (for students)
What do you think about the way your JTE teaches in team-taught classes?
What do you think about the way your ALT teaches in team-taught classes?
What do you think about the current teaching practices in your team-taught classes?
What are your thoughts now on participating in this project?

- Phase 2 (An EP experience) (Three cycles)

Teacher pair discussion 1 (Each pair of team teachers and myself)
- Choose a five-minute video clip from the video-taped class.
- Describe, analyse, and interpret the chosen clip while stopping and replaying it.
- Take the time to discuss your theme.
- Answer the following questions:
  In what way and to what extent do you want to change your teaching for the following classes?
  How will you attempt to achieve that?

Focus groups discussion (All the teachers and myself)
- Watch the two chosen five-minute video clips and consider the description, analysis, and interpretation from each pair.
- Describe your experience with the project so far.
- Please share and discuss the themes.
- What would you like to achieve in the next cycle?

Teacher pair discussion 2 (One pair of two JTEs and the other of two ALTs)
- Describe your experience with the project so far.
- Please share and discuss the themes.
- What would you like to achieve in the next cycle?

Student pair discussions (Two focal students from each school and myself)
- Describe your experience with the project so far.
- Please share and discuss your team-taught classes.
- What would you like to achieve in the subsequent team-taught classes?
Phase 3 (After an EP experience)

Narrative interview 2 (All the teachers and four focal students)
“I would like you to tell me any stories regarding team teaching based on your EP experience”.

Follow-up questions (for teachers)
What do you think about (your role/your partner’s role/current teaching practices) in team-taught classes after the EP experience? Do you think (you/your partner/the other team/your students) have learned something? If so, how and why? What are your hopes and intentions regarding team-taught classes from now on?

Follow-up questions (for students)
What do you think about the way your JTE and ALT teach in team-taught classes after the EP experience? Do you think (you/your classmates/your teachers) have learned something? If so, how and why? What are your hopes and intentions regarding team-taught classes from now on?
APPENDIX B: Approval Letter from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC)

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

27-Sep-2011

MEMORANDUM TO:

Assoc Prof Gary Barkhuizen
App Lang Studies & Linguistics

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 7496)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project titled Exploring the perceptions and development of teachers and learners in team teaching language classrooms in Japan on 26-Sep-2011.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 26-Sep-2014.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to the Committee for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify the Committee once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of the Committee would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC secretary at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: 7496.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, App Lang Studies & Linguistics
Mr Takaaki Hiratsuka

[This letter was printed on 21/06/2013 11:43:39 a.m.]
Appendix C: Data Collection Schedule

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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Extra Day Tsubaki</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>All the EP Stories for C2</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Class Observation C3 Sakura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Class Observation C3 Tsubaki</td>
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<tr>
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<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Reflective Class C3 Sakura</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Reflective Class C3 Tsubaki</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix D: Example of a Classroom Field Note**

Tsubaki #3 (1st period) all the students were seated before the bell rang.

They are working on (受験生の卵) 2 sentences some are working on “第4回考査テスト勉強スケジュール”

Blackboard: As is often the case with him, he arrived at his office punctually.

I am not the person that I was (what) when you last saw me. dokkyoudai

the four students in the back weren’t answering correctly at all for either of the sentence.

Aim—complaint, apology, sympathy

textbook lesson 17 Basics p. 92 (homework), checking answers with the ALT.

Ex1-1 please excuse me for arriving late.

2 You’ll have to apologize to your teacher for forgetting

3. It’s a pity that you can’t come ~

4. I really want to complain about the noise they make.

5 I’m sorry to hear that your house…

(the focal girl didn’t answer any of the questions and copied everything from the black board)

2. (students getting up and answering questions)

Black board

situation 1 your brother ate all of your birthday cake! (sad face icon)

situation 2 you ran over your friend’s dog! (sad face icon)

situation 3 your friend is allowed to graduate from school!

Aim choose 1 situation → write at least 2 sentences

when the third group was presenting, the fourth group was doing janken to decide who goes.

so we will start from the back 37:35~42:35
Appendix E: Transcript Convention and Transcripts for Class Observation

Transcript Convention

1, 2, 3 = speaker turn (when the speaker changes after more than one-second pause)
A, M, T, S = initial letters of teacher’s name
St = unknown student
Ss = more than one student speaking
(A: ) (Ss: ) = overlapping speech (initial letters of the speaker)
(laugh) = laughter
I, II, III, (4), (5) = pause (length of seconds)
Bold = emphasis given by speaker
(xxx) = unintelligible speech
{ } = activity associated with the speech
Italics = original speech in Japanese
(Italics) = translation of original speech in Japanese
(Based on Barnard & Torres-Guzman, 2009)

Sample Transcript

Transcripts from the second observation at Tsubaki (18/01/2012 1st period, 23:20~28:20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker Turn</th>
<th>Time Span</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0:00:0 - 0:10.6</td>
<td>So your group chooses Momotaro, do you want to pick second (xxx), this right here?</td>
<td>Sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0:10.6 - 0:32.3</td>
<td>Yes, do you agree or disagree with group nan (what) one, two, three, four, group four? (12) Group four, OK. Everyone, listen!</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0:32.3 - 0:42.0</td>
<td>We disagree with group four. (T: You disagree with group four, what is it?) I, Kuro. (St: Hora Kurojan (See, it was Kuro))</td>
<td>St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0:42.0 - 0:55.0</td>
<td>OK. Momotaro, Kuro. {pointing at each group} So, this group, what do you think?</td>
<td>Sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0:55.0 - 1:35.9</td>
<td>(6) Do you agree with group four or do you agree with group five? Momotaro, Kuro. (6) {a student stands up} Talk to the class. (20) Still thinking?</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Range</td>
<td>Audio Description</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:35.9 - 1:46.9</td>
<td>OK. Different group, (pointing at a group) group two? (asking Takahashi) (T: Group two) OK. Tell us what you think.</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:46.9 - 2:11.2</td>
<td>Ore? (Me?) Eetto (Let’s see), I agree Kazuki tte ittayone, ittayone? (You said it, you said it, right?) (a member in the other group shook her head) I agree group one. (S: What does group one think?) E? (What?) Ittenai? (You haven’t said anything?) (St: Mada itte nai (No, I haven’t)) Aaaaa, eeeeee.</td>
<td>St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:11.2 - 2:13.0</td>
<td>So you disagree with four and five? (St: Yes) OK. Try. (4) I?</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:13.0 - 2:27.9</td>
<td>I disagree group three and group four. E? (What?) (S: Four and five) (T: Four and five) Ahh, five, aaaaa, four and five. (T: And what is?) I (4) choose Kazuki.</td>
<td>St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:27.9 - 2:29.4</td>
<td>Kazuki (laugh), OK. Alright, so /// let’s see here how about this group?</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:29.4 - 2:41.7</td>
<td>(4) I disagree four and</td>
<td>St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:41.7 - 2:45.0</td>
<td>I disagree /// with! with</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45.0 - 2:55.1</td>
<td>With! /// four and five, I choose Kazuki.</td>
<td>St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:55.1 - 2:59.8</td>
<td>OK. Looks like a lot of people want Kazuki.</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:59.8 - 3:02.7</td>
<td>Eeeeee, I disagree (laugh).</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:02.7 - 3:13.0</td>
<td>OK, /// (looking at each group) that group, group six</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:13.0 - 3:53.4</td>
<td>Ore? (Me?) (St: Disagree desho? (Right?)) (19) Our group disagree (22)</td>
<td>St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:53.4 - 4:00.9</td>
<td>So, so what does your group think? Tell us what your group thinks. (4) What / does / your / group /// think?</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00.9 - 4:11.7</td>
<td>Eee our group think /// Kazuki? Kazuki is /</td>
<td>St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:11.7 - 4:37.8</td>
<td>So you agree with group (T: two and) two and seven. So your group agrees with group two and seven. OK. Maybe one more group? (asking Takahashi) So /// group one, tell us what you think. (looking at group three)</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:37.8 - 4:39.3</td>
<td>(5) Group one is here.</td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:39.3 - 4:43.1</td>
<td>Oh yes, group three, I'm staring at group three.</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:43.1 - 5:00.3</td>
<td>(5) Dokodakke? (Where is it?) Kazuki (laugh) Kazu, eeee. Watashi iuno? (Do I have to say it?) Nante iebaii? (What should I say?) I, I ///</td>
<td>Ss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Students’ Feedback Sheet

For cycle 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have just observed a video clip taped from the last team-teaching class. I felt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>while watching the clip because I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difference between previous team-teaching classes and this videotaped class was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (liked/disliked) this class because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and In addition, the class was particularly because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furthermore, what I noticed was (the JTE/ the ALT/ both teachers/ students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another point I noticed was that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

275
Based on this, I would like in the future for (the JTE/ the ALT/ both teachers/ students) to do more and less so that At the same time, I would like (the JTE/ the ALT/ both teachers) to in order for us to Overall, I think team-teaching classes are This is the end of my story.
たった今前の授業のビデオを観ました。ビデオを観ている時私は

と感じました。なぜなら

だからです。

以前までの TT の授業とビデオの TT の授業の違いは

私は  で、

なのでこの授業が（好きです／嫌いです）。また、この授業は

なぜなら

だからです。

特に気が付いた点は（日本人の先生／ALT／生徒達）

だったところです。おそらくそれは

だからでしょう。
更に、（日本人の先生／ALT／生徒達）は

でした。これに基づいて

（日本人の先生／ALT／二人の先生）には今後

できるようにもっと

して欲しいし、

もう少し

を控えて欲しいです。また、（日本人の先生／ALT／二人の先生）には私達が

できるように

して欲しいです。全体的に TT の授業は

だと思います。終わり。
For cycles 2 and 3 (Sakura)

I have just observed a video clip taped from the last team-teaching class. I

while watching the clip because I

The difference between previous team-teaching classes and this videotaped class was

I (liked/disliked) this class because

In the future, I would like (the JTE/ the ALT/ both teachers) to

more and less

so that

In terms of teachers’ instructions for activities, I

because

Therefore, in the subsequent classes, I would like teachers’ instructions to be

For example,

Overall, I think team-teaching classes are

This is the end of the story
たった今前の授業のビデオを観ました。ビデオを観ている時私はと感じました。なぜならだからです。

以前までの TT の授業とビデオの TT の授業の違いは。

私はで、なのでこの授業が（好きです／嫌いです）。（日本人の先生／ALT 二人の先生）には今後できるようにもっとして欲しいし、を控えてほしいです。

また、先生方のアクティビティに関する説明は、

だと思います。なぜならだからです。今後の授業では説明をして欲しいです。

（具体例：）

全体的に TT の授業は

だと思います。終わり
For cycles 2 and 3 (Tsubaki)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have just observed a video clip taped from the last team-teaching class. I while watching the clip because I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The difference between previous team-teaching classes and this videotaped class was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (liked/disliked) this class because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the future, I would like (the JTE/ the ALT/ both teachers) to more and less so that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In terms of teachers’ feedback during the class, I because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therefore, in the subsequent classes, I would like teachers’ feedback to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I think team-teaching classes are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the end of the story.
たった今前の授業のビデオを観ました。ビデオを観ている時私は

と感じました。なぜなら

だからです。

以前までの TT の授業とビデオの TT の授業の違いは

。　

私は で、 なので

この授業が（好きです/嫌いです）。 （日本人の先生／ALT 二人の先生）には今後

できるようにもっと

して欲しいし、 を控えてほしいです。

また、私達の発言に対する先生のフィードバックは、

だと思います。なぜなら

だからです。今後の授業ではフィードバックを

して欲しいです。

（具体例 ）

全体的に TT の授業は

だと思います。終わり
Appendix G: Teacher EP Stories

Please freely write about your experiences from this cycle.


For example, you can write about your experiences of some of the following:

- Yourself
- Your partner
- Your team
- The other team
- Your students
- EP principles
- Class observations
- Pair discussions
- Focus group discussions
- Team teaching
- Joining the research
Appendix H: Transcript Convention and Sample Transcript

Transcript Convention

Hiratsuka = me

(laugh) = laughter

*Italics* = original speech in Japanese

(*Italics*) = translation of original speech in Japanese

Sample Transcript

Transcripts from the second pair discussion 1 at Sakura (13/01/2012, pp. 5-6)

**Hiratsuka:** Yeah, so this was five minutes. So we can probably say that this was the introduction to the task or activity that the students will construct their own sentences using the expressions?

**Aitani:** Yeah, the expressions were: “It is ~ that” and “It is ~ to”.

**Matt:** Even though we didn’t really give the instruction in the five minute clip, is that OK? Like the instructions came after that for them to write their own sentences? Or should it be needed?

**Aitani:** But you did instruct and explain the things that we were going to do. So that should be included as an instruction.

**Hiratsuka:** I don’t know how and to what extent we will restrict and limit the definition of instructions, but this is, to me, a good instruction by using the models. In the end, at the end of the class, the students will do this kind of activity, so this can work as an instruction?

**Matt:** Sure, it’s something, a guideline instruction, as you say, the model to use particular vocabulary.

**Hiratsuka:** What are the differences and similarities? What’s the rationale behind it?

**Matt:** So the differences between this and the previous, the first cycle was a complex activity, as Aitani was saying, introducing the theme and grammar to the students, so there were a lot to explain and a lot to instruct different students and different groups. And there was very complicated language, and complicated instruction was given. Whereas in this case, it was very simple, really as you said, giving plain models and asking the students to insert the original ideas into the same format. That’s the main comparison from me.
Appendix I: Initial Codes

Related to research question 1

1 J – J (JTEs’ perceptions of JTEs)
1 J – A (JTEs’ perceptions of ALTs)
1 A – J (ALTs’ perceptions of JTEs)
1 A – A (ALTs’ perceptions of ALTs)
1 S – J (students’ perceptions of JTEs)
1 S – A (students’ perceptions of ALTs)

Related to research question 2

2 J – P – T (JTEs’ perceptions of teaching practices)
2 A – P – T (ALTs’ perceptions of teaching practices)
2 S – P – T (students’ perceptions of teaching practices)

Related to research questions 3

3 T (per) (effects of EP on teachers’ perceptions)
3 S (per) (effects of EP on students’ perceptions)

Related to research questions 4

4 T (pra) (effects of EP on teachers’ practices)
4 S (pra) (effects of EP on students’ practices)

Each topic was ordered chronologically and methodologically, and compared and contrasted within cases and across cases.
listening activities and conversing with the students, and that would be the focus, because you can learn the grammar out of the textbook, but speaking is the biggest asset that the ALT has. (M: mmm) ///

66 M: And it’s bit of a / it’s bit of a conundrum. Hahaha if you like the word, it’s complicated because students aren’t tested in speaking skills (S: un) We have to find the balance between you know cultivating the ability to use the language and actually you know using the time and energy wisely towards the end goal of achieving the goal well (A: un) mmm but inevitably you know oral communication skills is going to help their listening skills // probably help their writing skills too, you know it’s all, it’s all ah // accumulative that will help in the end. (13)

67 A: Hopefully, ahh if we can integrate four skills, reading, writing speaking and listening, ahh can they can learn vast skills in English? So // in that sense, learning English in oral communication classes makes sense but ahh still we can do ahh same thing in other classes, so that’s the reasons we decided to start team teaching in English 2. So / even if the activity, we are to provide ahh are restricted to one or two skills, not including communicative activities, but still they can benefit from them (M: yeah) and board of education asked us to promote English lessons while we can teach communication but // communication is not the // divided thing? Aah there are // well, in / those four English skills, so even if students are to learn one skill, they can learn they can learn to communicate but hopefully if they can learn in a balanced way. Un. They will benefit better. (M: un) Un (9)

68 I: Just wanted to ask one question. As I was listening I got curious about one point but were you TEs affected in any way by team-teaching classes for your individual classes? Do you have any other approaches when you are teaching alone because of the fact that you had a team-teaching project like this? (A: mmm) Is there any like // transferred knowledge or approach from the team-teaching classes to your individual classes now or it’s kind of a different world you are talking about?

69 A: Mmm well, even before starting this project, I had hoped that // team-teaching experiences would affect my other classes (I: un). So I think I could become, tending to use more English and give more English instructions than before, ahh not so the effects are not that the activities I gave my students, but the tendency or instruction I give during the classes. //