

Exploring Mediation in Teaching Practice: A Case Study in a TESOL Program

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Presentation Overview



1. Background and a little bit of Theory
2. Research Question and a little bit of Methodology
3. Results and putting on your 'prediction hat'
4. Benefits and Drawbacks as viewed by the trainees
5. Factors for Mediation Success
6. Questions

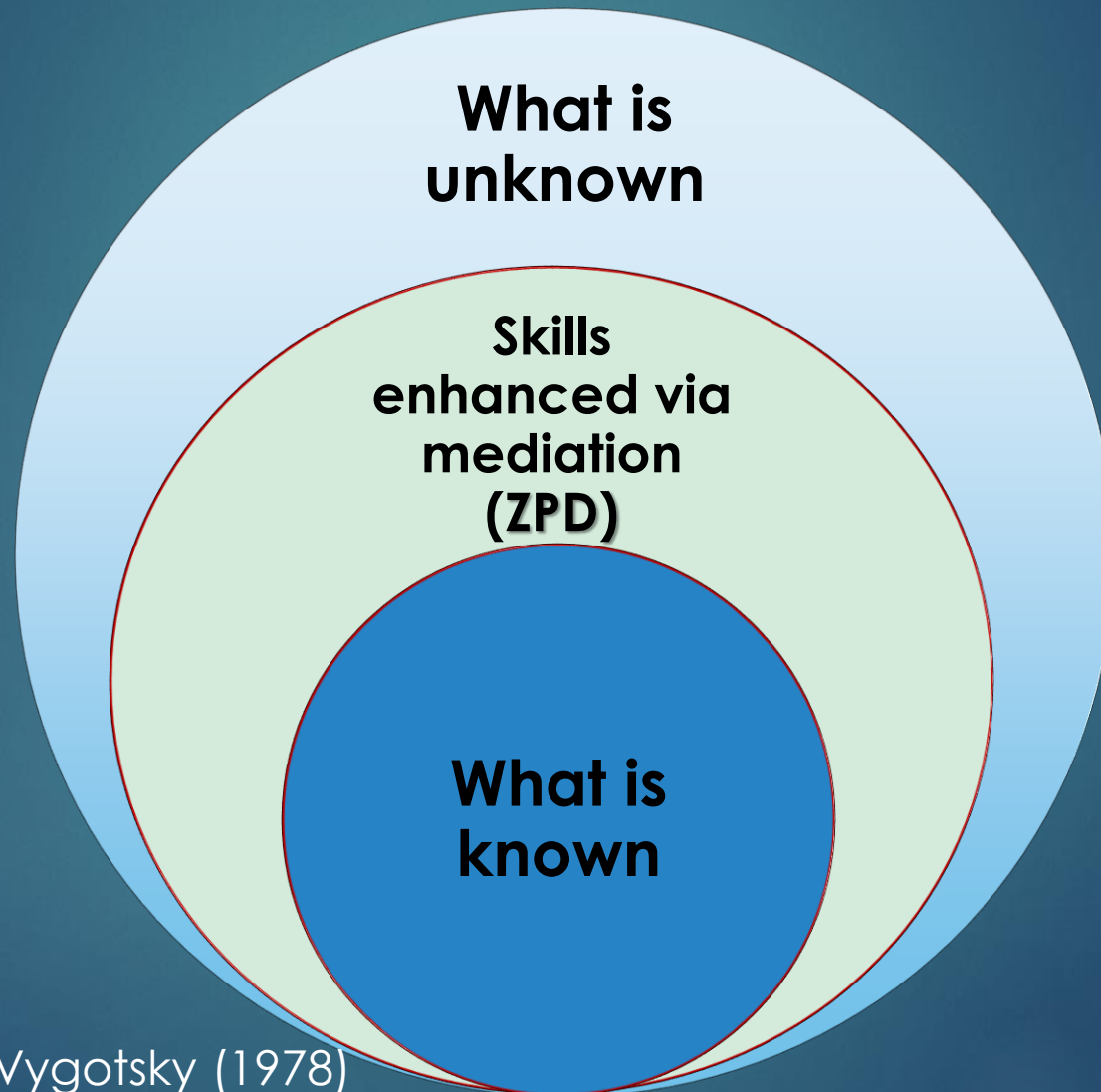
Nagging Trainer Question:

How much should I help/guide with lesson planning, trainee reflection/feedback and teaching?

- Positive experience
- Maximize trainee improvement without sacrificing autonomy



Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)



Adapted Vygotsky (1978)

“Mediation” in Teaching Practice

In-lesson trainer support, such as:

- Hand gestures (timing, pair-check etc.)
- Brief modeling (pronunciation drilling, delayed error correction etc.)
- Eliciting/Offering ideas or advice during pair-work



Research Question:

What are the benefits and drawbacks of trainer mediation during the teaching practice of a pre-service teacher-training course, as perceived by the trainees?

The Cambridge CELTA

4-week intensive course (120hrs contact)

- **Input Sessions**
- **6 hours of observed teaching practice with volunteer ELLs (8-9 lessons)**
- **Trainer-led group feedback (6:1)**
- **Observation of experienced teachers**

Context & Methodology

- Teaching practice on 1 Full Time CELTA Course in a Canadian context
- Stages 1 & 2 (10 contact days/half-way point)
- Movement towards autonomy
- Transparent criteria-based evaluation conducted by in-house trainers
- Case Study – Written and Verbal data collected (Qualitative)

Participants & Data Collection

4 Trainees and 2 Trainers

- Pre-course questionnaire
- Field notes from trainers tracking mediation instances
- Written reflection (2 immediately after teaching)
- Semi-structured Interviews (2 immediately and 1 other delayed)



Instances of Mediation

- Time management/time allocation (including activity adjustment)
- Time warnings (gesture)
- Technology assistance
- Instruction assistance/setting tasks
- Monitoring adjustments/guidance
- Language feedback guidance

Results (Themes)

Emerging Themes from Analysis:

- Benefits and drawbacks to mediation
- Reactions to mediation and absence of mediation
- Initiation of mediation (including discretion/seeking mediation)
- Variety of mediation techniques



What do you believe will be the benefits and drawbacks to mediation, as perceived by the trainees?



Mediation Benefits

- Reduces disappointment/frustration
- Learning 'on the spot'
- Modeling complicated pedagogy/clarification of language items
- Provides support, praise and confirmation (helps confidence)
- Tangible as it uses context/materials of trainee's lesson
- Volunteer language learners benefit from better language clarification
- Provides helpful information to allow the trainee to make choices

Mediation Drawbacks

- Interrupts flow of the lesson – distraction for trainee
- Makes trainee think they are doing poorly (hurts confidence)
- Trainer might take over lesson, taking ownership away from trainee
- Impedes trainee autonomy
- Not realistic to post-course working environment

Factors Leading to Positive View of Mediation

1. Discussion of trainer/trainee roles and criteria prior to teaching practice
2. Asking whether trainees would appreciate mediation prior to the start of the teaching practice component
3. Ensuring trainees are aware that trainer can be approached with questions during the teaching practice lesson
4. Providing mediation discretely, so not to interrupt flow or disempower trainee

Factors Leading to Positive View of Mediation

5. If the need to interrupt arises, trainers should ask permission before modeling or taking over a class
6. Providing mediation with the ZPD level of the trainee in mind
7. Attempting to utilize more dialogic mediation, as opposed to one-way, to improve trainee ownership
8. Providing positive, engaging body language to support trainee and assist with affective needs
9. Reducing levels of mediation as the program progresses to foster better autonomy

Questions?



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