Departing from Tradition

Departing from Tradition:

Innovations in English Language Teaching and Learning

Edited by

Evelyn Doman and Jay Bidal

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This book is dedicated to Jaemin and Aleesa. You have always been my biggest supporters and the ones whom I rely on when things get tough! I love you!

—From Mommy

This book is dedicated to my wife, Natasha, without whom the hard work takes on less meaning.

—From Jay

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PREFACE

This book was inspired by and originated from the many wonderful presentations given at the English Language Teaching International Conference 2015, hosted by the English Language Center (ELC) of the University of Macau (UM) on 31 January and 1 February, 2015. This conference was notably different from the two previous ELC conferences by virtue of its location on the new UM campus and the addition of "International" to the name, and for good reason—a record 230 participants from 14 different countries, ranging from Indonesia to Japan, from the UAE to Singapore, came to the conference. Of those participants, 108 were presenters offering up a total of 91 sessions and workshops across 20 different categories related to English language teaching and learning.

The theme of the conference, "Departing from Tradition: Innovations in English Language Teaching and Learning", is the title adopted for this book as well. Many of the presenters at the conference acquainted attendees with new and interesting ideas about and approaches to English language teaching, especially within the Asian context. None embodies this striving towards innovation more than internationally acclaimed teacher, author, and lecturer Dr. Tim Murphey, a keynote speaker at the conference, whose paper, based on his inspirational talk, is one of the highlights of this current volume. In selecting submissions from conference presenters to be included in this book, the editors likewise sought those that bring something new to the ELT field, whether they be flipped classrooms, interactive digital reading apps, or the rehabilitation of the supposedly boorish social behavior of interrupting into speaking strategies for participating more fully in English conversation. All told, contributors teaching in six Asian countries—Macau, Mainland China, Indonesia, the UAE, Malaysia, and Japan—have put forward their challenges to traditional approaches to teaching English in this volume.

It is hoped that readers will find within this book research and ideas that will resonate with their own teaching and research aspirations, and push them to try innovative ways to further student learning and their own professional development as English language teaching and learning forge deeper into the 21st century.

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Putting together an edited volume is no easy task. It takes a lot of effort, time, dedication, and collaboration from everyone involved. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported us. First of all, a big thanks goes to the contributors of this volume. Without your chapters, this could not have been possible. Next, we would like to thank the University of Macau and particularly the staff and faculty from the English Language Center who participated in and volunteered their services for our 2015 annual ELT conference, where this book has its origins. A special "thank you" goes to Dr. Tim Murphey and Dr. Yilin Sun, who were the two plenary speakers at our conference.

We are also grateful to Cambridge Scholars for entrusting faith in us to complete this project and to see it to fruition.

Finally, we would like to thank our families for standing beside us during the tedious editing and proofreading stages, which took much of our valuable free time. Thanks for being patient with us when we did not have a lot of time to do the things you wanted to do.

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INTRODUCTION

University and secondary school teachers and researchers from five different Asian countries share approaches and methodologies that they have found to be successful in their classrooms. As most books on the market regarding second language acquisition deal with how English is taught as a second language, this book is unique in that it offers the perspective of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Asia and the surrounding regions, where students often cannot engage with the language outside of the classroom.

This book is divided into five parts, with 2-5 chapters in each part.

Part I Involving Students in Teaching
Part II Teaching Methodologies
Part III Developing Second Language Writing
Part IV Encouraging Language Study through Technology
Part V Developing Second Language Speaking and Vocabulary

In Part 1, Wong and Sze provide recommendations about teaching classroom management to pre-service English teachers based on their knowledge of educational psychology and years of expertise in the classroom. By instructing students about the psychological reasons behind students' behaviors, the authors find that it is easier to equip pre-service teachers with practical strategies that they can use in their own classrooms to manage students better. Their research has shown that this type of instruction prepares pre-service teachers for controlling and organizing their classrooms better.

Also, Doman uses data from focus groups and individual interviews over a two-year period of study to investigate the effects of a peer tutoring program in an English language program at a university in Macau. Five common themes found in the data were that the peer tutors 1) found the ELC class practicum was successful and/or helpful; 2) were able to learn interesting things, such as new teaching methodologies or technologies to use in teaching English; 3) were able to experiment with a variety of classroom activities; 4) felt frustrated sometimes by negative responses from the students, including the added stress and difficulty in preparing for classes; and 5) were satisfied with the good students' performances.

Doman is therefore able to make recommendations about the peer tutoring program from a teacher's as well as an administrator's perspective, with a view to other universities possibly adopting this program.

In Part 2, Murphey illustrates how learning, teaching, and creating can be overlapping co-constructed concepts that grow with each other, how "communicative language teaching" is in need of "tender loving care" or Love 2.0, and that there are advantages of seeing our classes as SINDYS (Socially Intelligent Dynamic Systems) that can benefit greatly from critical participatory looping, that is, the returning of self-referential feedback to the students. These are suggestions that the author hopes will have implications for language teachers around the world.

Following Murphey, Doman discusses an experiment with the "flipped classroom," in which activities assigned as classwork and homework in the traditional language classroom are inversed. As a way to increase student engagement and promote the achievement of student learning outcomes, Doman finds that lecture-based lessons outside of the classroom via video recordings and more student-centered activities inside the classroom are beneficial to students' language learning. This chapter provides hints about how to get started with flipping and recommendations for flipping the EFL classroom in an Asian context.

In Part 3, Yao and Wang use the framework of connectionism to present a reading-writing project for university EFL students in China. By using a variety of reading materials as stimulated input and writing as output, the authors found that students' writing in an experimental class was significantly more developed and enhanced than those in the traditional control classroom and that students' attitudes towards the writing process were more positive. By comparing pretest and posttest scores across both groups, Yao and Wang found that scores for content and structure improved significantly for the experimental group, and thus conclude that assigning writing assignments based on reading materials helps to promote students' writing performances.

Gallo and Eastwood undertake a study about students' perceived avoidance of plagiarism while producing research papers based on academic sources. Results from a survey taken by L2 learners who recently began attending American universities showed that the majority of students can define plagiarism, recognize the importance of avoiding plagiarism, and feel confident about not being guilty of plagiarism in their own writing. However, elicitation of techniques for how to avoid plagiarism was less convincing, and points to the need for more instruction concerning proper citation, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Chan finds that corrective feedback is successful in improving Chinese students' writing in English at the secondary school level when it is geared towards students' proficiency levels. Chan finds that indirect or metalinguistic feedback should be first used to foster learners' autonomy in error correction, and that direct feedback should only be used as a last resort when students fail to figure out the correct answer. To ensure that the students are able to understand and correct their writing mistakes according to a coding system created by the author, suggestions were made that the teacher should practice the system of error coding with the students, especially before asking them to correct their work. Also, teachers should dedicate in-class time to error correction if possible so that there is interactive and immediate clarification.

In Part 4, Bidal points out that although e-books and e-textbooks have proliferated in the last few years, barriers to adoption by students exist, one of which is the lack of differentiation between print and digital texts. He presents the example of an EAP e-textbook produced at a university in the United Arab Emirates as a model of how innovative design can be used to both further learning and teaching goals and avoid the sameness that many of the commercial ELT e-textbooks share with their print counterparts. In doing so, he details how the principle of embeddedness, for one, can be harnessed to improve students' affective bond with their course materials through novel design and an appealing layout.

Furthermore, Gammack, Morey and Thornquist provide innovative methods of reading support to L2 English learners in the United Arab Emirates through the use of a gaze-controlled reading application that addresses the difficulties of digital reading for non-native readers. Focus groups with students and teachers revealed that the difficulties that students have with reading online materials can be eased by vocabulary support and augmented context readily available through the application. By analyzing students' eye movements, the app is able to provide a reading diagnosis and assessment. The authors predict that the implications of using this app extend far beyond their context and can be applicable to language teaching and learning around the globe.

Finally, in Part 5, Bidal offers practical advice to instructors when teaching ESL learners about interruptions through a sociolinguistic research approach. Although the traditional view of interrupting has been seen as exclusively competitive turn-taking behavior, Bidal suggests, using examples from DVD commentaries to illustrate his point, that, in actuality, interruptions are often used by native speakers for collaborative building of meaning and rapport. Thus, raising ESL learner's awareness of

such uses of interruption through structured activities can help them to become more active participants in conversations with native speakers.

Cahyono utilizes register analysis in EFL conversation to describe the use of field, tenor, and mode (register) in students' conversation. In order to guide teachers in the appropriate selection of materials, register analysis should be considered, according to the author. Based on the findings of a detailed study, Cahyono said that teachers and curriculum developers should pay attention to the importance of register variables in order to help students to become more aware of context as they speak.

Teng compares the rate at which word knowledge is incidentally acquired by Chinese EFL learners through reading and listening. Using four test types—recall of form, recognition of form, recall of meaning, and recognition of meaning—Teng assessed vocabulary development and retention. Results revealed that new words could be learned incidentally in both modes, but more word knowledge was learned in reading. The author suggests that not only word exposure frequency, but also elaborate word processing is needed in order for students to develop their knowledge of English vocabulary words.

Hong assesses the importance of explicit phonological knowledge by comparing the differences between the phonological knowledge of L1 speakers and that of L2 speakers. The author uses a nonce word experiment to suggest that there is no consistent relationship between English proficiency and the ability to cope with new linguistic items but that the explicit phonological knowledge L2 speakers possess correlates with improved performance in pronunciation when such speakers are given time to analyze a word. It is therefore argued that the significance of explicit phonology teaching should be re-examined.

Finally, Morris adopts a reflective approach to the description of the process of designing and delivering an IELTS-styled speaking test to mature Chinese students. In doing so, he emphasizes the importance for beginning ELT instructors to have a grounding in fundamental assessment principles in order to bring their forays into test creation and delivery in closer line with current best practices.

PART I

INVOLVING STUDENTS IN TEACHING

Chapter One

Classroom Management for English Language Teachers: A Course Model in Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

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Abstract

In educational psychology, classroom management deals largely with student behavior, student engagement and special education needs. Stemming from this perspective, trends of educational psychology research on classroom management have evolved to include an instructional orientation to study ways to manage student learning by organizing and controlling what happens in class. In English language classrooms, classroom management problems are often related to the medium of instruction, class size, students' language proficiency and mixed-level classes. To equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, skills and techniques of classroom management and to prepare them for the reality shock they might experience in managing an English lesson, this paper discusses a classroom management course model in a pre-service teacher education program. The model comprises three components: knowledge base, expert experience and practical reflection. The three components cover both psychological and instructional orientations to approach classroom management. With an analysis of the conceptions of classroom management developed by 20 pre-service English teachers enrolled in the course at a university in Macau, this paper argues that it is crucial to see classroom management from both perspectives and to help prospective English teachers develop critical reflectivity in analyzing classroom events for better teaching and learning effectiveness.

Introduction

Definitions of classroom management vary but in general include actions taken by the teacher to maintain order, elicit students' cooperation or engage them in the lesson. From the perspective of educational psychology, Brophy (2006) states that classroom management "refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities)" (p. 17). He explains that this definition should not be seen as simply handling disruptive behavior, although most pre-service or novice teachers may typically identify classroom management with disciplinary intervention and thus believe that the key to effective classroom management is merely having students respect their authority and obey their commands. In addition to this stance, there is a need to view classroom management as a process of establishing and maintaining an effective learning environment (Brophy, 1988, 2006). In this sense, classroom management emphasizes student learning and encompasses instructional techniques and strategies that organize and control what happens in the classroom, enhance participation and support learning. Barbetta, Norona, and Bicard (2005) agree with this perspective of viewing classroom management and, in their discussion of some common classroom management mistakes that teachers commit, specifically highlight the importance of seeing a direct link between instruction and behavior. As they perceive, effective teaching practices and instructional strategies help create highly effective learning environments, which, in turn, reduce the likelihood of behavior problems.

To many teachers, classroom management is an important concern in their professional life and the ability to deal effectively with disruptive students and restore order in class in some way helps bring about successful teaching. A considerable body of literature has been devoted to this concern in research history. Veenman's (1984) extensive review of 83 studies of perceived problems of beginning teachers from North America, Europe and Australia indicated that classroom discipline was the most seriously perceived problem area in teaching. A decade later, Chan's (1998) study on teacher stress in the Asian context of Hong Kong also pointed out that student behavior management was rated as the second most significant factor causing stress among the 412 secondary school

teachers under study. In more recent years, this universal concern about classroom management has continued in various studies on novice teachers (for example, Martin, Chiodo, & Chang, 2001; Melnick & Meister, 2008) as well as in different studies on pre-service teachers (for example, Berg & Smith, 2014; Cakmak, 2008; Kaufman & Moss, 2010; McNally, I'anson, Whewell, & Wilson, 2005; Stoughton, 2007).

Despite the fact that teachers in general consider solving classroom management problems as one of their prioritized tasks, not enough attention has been paid to these problems in the setting of teaching English as a foreign language. Kang's (2013) and Sakui's (2007) studies are among the very few that look into classroom management issues arising from the difficulties of using communicative language teaching with large class sizes and the dilemma of using L1 instead of the target language when handling class discipline. From a more theoretical point of view, Wright (2012) stresses the importance of understanding the shifting climate in the language classroom due to trends of pedagogic and technological changes and diverse student populations in order to manage classrooms in the context of second language learning. More specifically, Scrivener (2012) identifies several classroom management issues faced by teachers of English as a foreign, second or other language and these are related to the medium of instruction, class size, students' language proficiency and students' mixed language abilities in the same class. To handle these problems more effectively, it is essential for prospective English language teachers to be aware of what managing language classrooms involves and to be able to develop their own conceptions of successful classroom management even before they enter the profession. Teacher education programs need to address this dimension adequately just as with other aspects of teaching expertise.

In view of this, the present paper aims to introduce a classroom management course model in an undergraduate pre-service English education program in Macau and explain the rationale behind this course model in its role in preparing prospective English teachers for the challenges they will face in language classrooms. In addition, the paper reports on how the course was run in one semester of the academic year and discusses the conceptions of classroom management developed by a group of 20 pre-service English teachers enrolled in the course.

Program context

The pre-service English education program discussed in the present paper is a four-year Bachelor of Education program offered by the Faculty

of Education in a public university in Macau. Students enrolled in the program are pre-service English teachers and, upon successful completion of the program, will receive a bachelor's degree with qualifications to teach English language in secondary schools in Macau. The program requires students to complete a total of 135 credits (equivalent to 43 forty-two-hour courses at university and two months of teaching practicum in a local secondary school) over the span of four years. Of the 43 courses, 32 are compulsory, covering general education areas, core education areas, content areas and pedagogical content areas, and 11 courses are electives. Among the list of electives is a classroom management (secondary level) course. This is a new course offered to year-4 students in the program in response to past students' feedback on their practicum experience during their final year of study. Past students often came back with frustrations about class discipline and management problems and they expressed a desire to be equipped with better knowledge, skills and strategies for managing language classrooms in terms of dealing with students' behavior and their learning engagement. With the advent of this classroom management (secondary level) course in the academic year of 2014/15, 20 pre-service students in the program enrolled in the course in a fourteen-week semester.

Course model

The design of the course is built upon Brophy's (1988, 2006) stance on classroom management, which includes perspectives from both psychology and instruction. In other words, the course focuses on not only handling issues related to students' behavior and class discipline but also introducing instructional techniques for enhancing student learning in the language classroom. As shown in Figure 1-1, there are three major components in the course model: (a) the knowledge base component, (b) the expert experience component and (c) the participatory case study component. In terms of a fourteen-week semester, four weeks of class time are allocated to each component, with the first week for course introduction and the final week for course wrap-up and review. By the end of the semester, students are expected to integrate their learning and experience from all three components by constructing their own conceptions of classroom management as they leave the course and get ready for independent real-life teaching.

Fig. 1-1 The classroom management course model
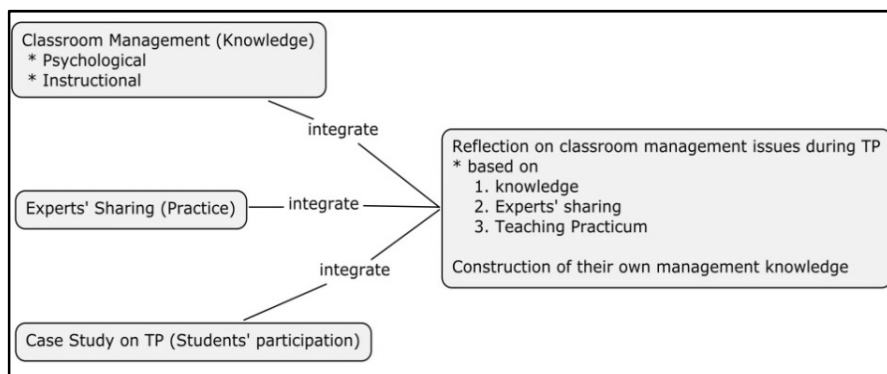
The knowledge base component provides students with theories of classroom management from the perspective of educational psychology and covers topics such as problem behaviors, students with special needs and school-wide positive behavior support. In addition, students are introduced to language class management concepts, skills and strategies and examine instructional techniques to facilitate interaction in a communicative classroom. This includes how the teacher can adjust his/her language in terms of grammar and lexis, speed of delivery or quantity of message to cater to the different proficiency levels of learners, how to deal with mixed-level classes through split-and-combine workflows, differentiated worksheets and multi-level tasks, how to determine when to or not to use L1 or the target language in class and how to encourage learner participation and monitor pair and group work while conducting communicative tasks.

The expert experience component provides students with opportunities to meet local in-service teachers, who share stories of their practice in relation to classroom management. There are altogether three sharing sessions and each time one or two in-service secondary school teachers are invited to be guest speakers in class. The first sharing session is conducted by a veteran teacher with more than thirty years of language teaching experience in a government school with an inclusive setting. The other two sharing sessions are conducted by teachers with fewer years of experience as compared to the veteran teacher in the first session. In the second session, two experienced teachers who have taught English in private schools for eight to ten years are invited and, in the third session, two novice teachers with one year of English teaching experience in private schools are invited. This special arrangement takes into consideration

the range of experience that can be covered, from the first year to the third decade of teaching. Drawing on rich experience, the veteran teacher from the government school provides more case-study sharing in terms of handling student behavior and catering to students with special needs. The experienced and novice teachers, on the other hand, focus on teaching activities in English lessons, especially in terms of organizing the English lesson for very proficient students as well as very low-level students. In particular, they share their experience in managing grammar lessons, which most pre-service teachers fear to teach. While the veteran and experienced teachers talk about the reality of teaching and how to accommodate personal beliefs and professional theories into real-life teaching, the novice teachers are fresh in the field and talk about whatever reality shocks they have experienced in this first year and how they coped with them.

The participatory case study component asks students to reflect on their teaching practicum experience, which takes place concurrently with the classroom management course. Students work in groups and have to identify from their practicum two classroom management issues, one arising from student behavior and one from instructional techniques, and present the issues in two case studies to the whole class. While discussing the cases, students are expected to comment on what they think went wrong from a classroom management perspective and to suggest what they think they would have done differently if they had had a second chance to deal with the same issues. The case study presentation allows students to look closely into their teaching practice and reflect on real-life teaching based on the theories learnt in the first few weeks of the course, the expert experience shared in the several expert sharing sessions and the teaching events encountered during the practicum.

Construction of classroom management knowledge

The launch of this classroom management course took place in the first semester of the 2014/15 academic year. Twenty students from the English education program enrolled in the course. As they went through the three phases of building up a knowledge base of classroom management, gathering valuable insights from in-service teachers and reviewing their own practicum experiences, these students were able to produce thoughtful reflections on what managing an English language class meant to them and what it involved.

A number of interesting findings were collected from the students as each group made their reflection reports after their case study

presentations. These findings can be categorized into three major insights. The first insight is related to the medium of instruction in English lessons. Despite the ultimate goal of using English as the classroom language in communicative teaching, it is necessary to be flexible and take into account learners' target language proficiency. Judicious use of L1 is acceptable when full use of English becomes an unintelligible option in class due to learners' very low proficiency. In terms of managing class discipline, some L1 can be useful when misbehaving learners have no idea about what or what not to do. This in a way supports what Kang (2013) suggested in his study of Korean EFL teachers' language use for disciplinary purposes. There should not be a one-size-fits-all rule—it might lack practicality if EFL teachers must handle class discipline problems in the target language only.

The second insight is related to the teacher's role in class. A language teacher should be omnipresent and understand his/her own class well. While being appropriately authoritative in giving instructions and setting up rules, he/she should make an effort to get to know the learners personally, their backgrounds, their target language proficiency and their joys and difficulties in the language learning process. Showing their caring and maintaining a good rapport with learners is important and this can be done through daily small talks with the students in the target language. In addition to this kind of authentic chat, the teacher should allow interaction opportunities in different lessons. Where large class size might be a concern when conducting communicative tasks, teachers can put learners into pairs for scaled-down activities rather than adhere to group work only. This might be a possible solution to one of Sakui's (2007) concerns about having large classes for communicative group work in her study of classroom management in Japanese EFL classrooms.

The third insight is related to the perception of an inter-relationship between teacher instruction, student behavior and student performance in class. Better instruction leads to reduced misbehavior and in turns brings out more satisfactory performance. Some learners might have low motivation in learning another language, thus bringing about disruptive behavior in class. If the teacher is able to understand the link between instruction and behavior, he/she can more effectively handle those learners with a lack of interest in the lesson. In general, it is found that disruptive behavior declines when the teacher is able to engage different learners in activities according to their abilities or levels and organize the lesson with more effective instructional techniques such as calibrating the teacher's language use to cater to the learners' needs or involving quieter or more passive learners in the lesson.

Conclusion

This paper introduces and discusses in some detail a classroom management course model in an undergraduate pre-service English education program at a public university in Macau. While various positive comments on the course have been collected from students' evaluations, a number of implications can further be made for teacher preparation institutions and teacher educators in Macau. First, classroom management should be a compulsory, not an elective, component in teacher preparation programs and the concept of classroom management should be viewed from the dual perspectives of managing disruptive behavior and organizing classroom instruction in order to create an environment that facilitates learning and engages learners. Second, while knowledge, skills and techniques as well as practical experience in classroom management are important dimensions, the ability to reflect on and analyze classroom events critically is equally important. Previous research studies (for example, Deaton, 2013; Martin, Chiodo, & Chang, 2001; Martin, 2004; Stoughton, 2007) have stressed the need to be reflective practitioners in order to help improve classroom management practices. Third, frontline teachers should be aware of the inter-relationship between a teacher's instructional techniques, students' behavior and teaching/learning effectiveness. Lastly, teacher educators should help teachers (especially novice teachers) see the importance of preventive measures over intervention, the value of reflection on their teaching and the necessity of building a network of support among colleagues when facing classroom management problems.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE BASICS OF PEER TUTORING:
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PEER
TUTORS' EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

This chapter will examine qualitative data from an innovative program called "Peer Tutors Across the Campus" (PTAC)—a program that allows peer tutors to assist instructors in university-level EAP courses held in Macau. Research on peer tutoring has been explored in the context of writing centers and tutoring labs worldwide where peer tutors work as Writing Fellows or in supplemental instruction programs. However, little or no research has investigated the potential of using peer tutors in the classroom, where they can assist the teacher on a regular basis. This case study originates in the goal of using peer tutors in EAP courses at a university in Macau where students have continuously demonstrated low proficiency in their ability to produce English orally and in writing, and many have been seen to struggle in other university courses which are held in the medium of English. Therefore, a solution had to be found for students who needed extra help in developing their English language skills. Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews of peer tutors involved in the PTAC program point to the effectiveness of this program as well as to the overall satisfaction with integrating peer tutors into the language classroom.

Keywords: peer tutoring, teaching assistants, English for Academic Purposes, teacher mentoring, reflective practice

Introduction

A peer tutoring class, more officially referred to as Peer Tutors Across the Campus (PTAC), was introduced at a university in Macau in hope of promoting students' English proficiencies in lower-level General Education English courses that were required for graduation. Third and fourth-year students majoring in English Education in the School of Education at the university volunteered to take a three-credit elective course on peer tutoring in which they were exposed to three hours of English language teaching theory with the author of this chapter and then three hours of practice teaching with a mentoring teacher from the English Language Center (ELC). The peer tutors were assessed based on their completion of the following course requirements:

Assessment

Demonstration 1	10%
Demonstration 2 and PowerPoint	20%
Final presentation	10%
Homework	20%
Internship (ELC class)	40%
TOTAL	100%

This chapter will detail the experience of the peer tutors using Grounded Theory. A qualitative approach will be used to present the data from the findings from a two-year study of the program.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study was triangulated through two separate focus groups and individual interviews over a two-year period of the study. The findings from the focus groups and the individual interviews were coded according to themes. The themes were not pre-determined, but were only specified after listening to and transcribing the data according to common patterns in the students' responses. The five most common themes were 1) the peer tutors found the ELC class practicum was successful and/or helpful; 2) the peer tutors were able to learn interesting things, such as new teaching methodologies or technologies to use in teaching English; 3) the peer tutors were able to experiment with a variety of classroom activities; 4) the peer tutors sometimes felt frustrated, by both negative